

[E] The Final Rendition of the *Compendium Rude*:

MssB # 9908, the Printed Copy

The Title: A Plan for the Apostolic Missionaries

CF## 1-8

There are some significant additions, omissions and changes, both regarding the rendition studied just above [cf. **MssB # 9948**] - and also regarding the reading of the ***Compendium Rude*** that survived the final text which has come down to us from Fr. Bertoni [cf. **MssB 9908**]. Now, more in particular:

[I] The Content

1: The entire line is Latin, with a slight spelling difference for ***Missionarj:***¹⁴² ***as the Father sent Me, I now send you...!*** [cf. **Jn 20:21 – the central ideal here is Jesus, personally sent by His Father**]. [*In MssB 9848, the ending is “j”* - whereas in the final copy, it is double “ji”.

Apostolici: as the Father sent Jesus, so, He sends His Apostles [cf. **Acts of the Apostles**¹⁴³] ***on His Personal Mission.***¹⁴⁴

The significant addition here are the words ***in obsequium Episcoporum***¹⁴⁵ - ***obsequium*** is found in the Latin Vulgate for **Rm 12:1**, make of your “bodies” [life] an **oblation to the mercy of God, almost a Eucharistic offertory** - it is also found throughout the Latin translation of St. Ignatius’ original ***Constitutions***¹⁴⁶, the root word being used as one of the synonyms of the Spanish ***servicio, servir, servo, to*** translate “**service**”, so commonly used by Ignatius to translate his own “**mysticism**”

¹⁴² cf. Donald Senior, CP – Carroll Stuhlmueller, CP, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*. Maryknoll NY: Orbis 1983

¹⁴³ cf. C.K. Barret, *Acts I-XIV [Vol. I] – Acts XV-XXVIII [Vol. II]*. The International Critical Commentary London/NY: T & T Clark 2002.

¹⁴⁴ cf. Raymond E. Brown, *Priest & Bishop. Biblical Reflections*. NY: Paulist 1970; *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*. NY: Paulist 1979; *The Churches the Apostles left behind*. Paulist 198; Raymond E. Brown -John P. Meier, *Antioch & Rome*, Paulist 1982; A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*. Grand Rapids MI: Kregel [1871] 2002; Oscar Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*. NY: Bantam 1958; Lucien Legrand, *L’Apôtre des Nations?* Paris: Cerf 2001; John MacArthur, *Twelve Ordinary Men*. Nelson/W. Publishing Group 2002; John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*. Vol. 3: *Companions and Competitors*. Chapter 26. Doubleday 2001, pp. 125-285; Francis A. Sullivan, SJ, *From Apostles to Bishops*. Newman 2001.

¹⁴⁵ cf. Joseph Henchey, ‘La formula *in obsequium* nel linguaggio di S. Tommaso’, in: **ANGELICUM LXIX** [1991], pp. 454-470.

¹⁴⁶ cf. **CSJ n. 8, maius Dei obsequium semper intuendo; n. 49: ad Dei obsequium**, etc. etc.

of service". *In obsequium* also appears in Fr. Bertoni's Constitutions ¹⁴⁷. The "substantive form" of the over-all "End" of the Congregation, both spiritual as well as apostolic, renders each person Christ-like, in His commitment to His Father - and the Apostles' carrying out Christ's own Mission received from His Father.

2: The "manner" [*modus, modalitas, obedientia missionaria*] of living this End is described by Fr. Bertoni with a literal insertion of the Decree he received, dated Dec.20, 1817, naming him an "Apostolic Missionary". The exercise of the *apostolici muneris* seems to be noted in **CF # 7**, speaking of certain members being promoted as Professed in the community, to take on the *perfectum opus sacerdotum, assumentem apostolicam missionem* - these are studied under *sacerdotale officium* [cf. **CF # 69, ff.**] and the *Graviora Ministeria* of the "Professed" Apostolic Missionaries [cf. **CF ## 158, ff.**], the *varia et propria ministeria* [cf. **CF # 185**]. All this is studied throughout.

There are two Stigmatine interpretations of this Decree from the *Propaganda Fide* ^{xvi}:

- on the one hand, for many confreres this has meant that the **Parish Missions**, for which apostolic service Fr. Bertoni received this decree, are the central apostolic work of the entire Congregation – the view in 1854, of Fr. John Marani ¹⁴⁸;

- for others, also among so many of the early confreres [as is evident from the very early General Chapters], many have held that this Decree communicates rather an **Apostolic Spirit of Missionary Obedience** of carefully accepting, following the direction of the Bishops, in the **service of the Church**. This is expressed as the *modus* of assuming the broad Apostolic Mission, sub *Episcoporum directione, obsequium praestare per varia et propria suae vocationis munera; haec autem quandoque ardua et difficilis sit...* [cf. **CF # 185**] ¹⁴⁹. There are two major aspects to be pondered here – **Jesus Christ and Ecclesial Service**:

1. The radical, total following/imitation of Jesus Christ, by abandonment through Him to the entire Trinity:

The Spirituality of Fr. Bertoni may be described as a **Mysticism of Service, honoring God the Father, in imitation of God the Son, following the inspirations of God, the Holy Spirit**. St. Gaspar synthesizes this in his Diary:

... We must make a portrait of Jesus Christ in ourselves... ¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ *Obsequium* in CF ## 1; 151; 195; 237; 220.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. *Compendio delle Costituzioni, o regole di P. Gaspare Bertoni*, in: CS II, pp. 161-165.

¹⁴⁹ It might be useful to cite here the oft-quoted entry in Fr. Bertoni's Spiritual Diary: *Pereami che il Santo ne facesse buon accoglienza, e ne invitasse a promuovere la maggior gloria [di Dio], siccome egli fece, e per le stesse vie, benché non in tutti que' modi ch'egli pote' usare...* [cf. MP – September 15, 1808].

¹⁵⁰ cf. MP, February 26, 1809: *Dobbiamo fare un ritratto in noi stessi di Gesu' Cristo...*

The theme in St. Gaspar seems to be, that **as the Father sent Jesus**, so does **He send His apostles** [cf. Jn 20:20, ff.] **CF 2** presents several verbs and descriptions of ecclesial obedience: ***sub directione et dependentia Ordinariorum...quibus omnino parere debeant...ac licentiam prius cum facultatibus ab eis recipere, servata semper eorundum ...moderatione...***: this means to follow the apostolic direction and to live in missionary dependence on the Bishops, to whom the Stigmatines are to manifest all regarding the Apostolic Mission. The Stigmatines are to receive the permission and the faculties beforehand, and observe always the moderation of the Bishops regarding all that pertains to the apostolic task.

St. Gaspar, the **Model of Holy Abandonment** regarding the all Holy Trinity, is also an example of **apostolic service to the Church**. Following the Ignatian interpretation of ***Modus***, this provides for St. Gaspar and for the Stigmatines, the ***Modus of the Congregation is the Founder's sensus Christi is the sensus Congregationis.***¹⁵¹ As Fr. Gaspar himself was the ***living Rule*** for the Community – so, **Jesus Christ Himself is Fr. Bertoni's and his/our Mode of acting, Model.** The **spirit** of the Founder for the Stigmatines is eminently **Christological** – and the Congregation can say that Jesus Christ is our ***forma vitae, vivendi*** - this is **our manner of imitating the Apostles**, who followed Jesus Christ.

The **Modus** provides the **Stigmatine specific manner of following/imitating Jesus Christ**. The ***Modus*** provides a living nucleus, a **faith-choice**, rich with the nuances of a **hope-filled Apostolic Mission**, with a universal **Charity**, to serve the Church **gratuitously, anywhere in the Diocese, or the World.** As Fr. Bertoni wrote in his ***Autografo: In every exercise in behalf of souls, observe exactly the direction of Bishops, and obtain from them the ordinary faculties and permissions***¹⁵²

This is the ***Institutum Vitae*** for a Stigmatine. This ***Modus*** describes for us in broad strokes the **nucleus of our spirituality of Abandonment to God, and Availability to the Church**. Herein is implied those specific traits that would be essential and proper to the charism, as described, then, throughout the ***Compendium Rude*** - **to be fished out in the course of the rest of the 314 Original Constitutions**. The entire Stigmatine ***modus procedendi, operandi***, has been approved by the Church – this is the Stigmatine ***line of conduct***, this is the spirit of the Congregation. There is here in St. Gaspar a marvelous example of **radical evangelism, a total following after/ a radical imitation of Jesus Christ sent by His Father**, with indifference^{xviii} and availability, always seeking the **greater Service of God and the Church [magis]**.

¹⁵¹ cf. P. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, *El nuestro modo do proceder – il nostro modo d'agire*. Conferenza del P. Generale al Corso Ignaziano del CIS, letta in inglese il 18 gennaio 1979. cf. Notizie dei Gesuiti d'Italia. Supplemento al n. 9/10 – 1979. [This is presented in the web-site: www.st-bertoni.com [under “Constitutions”, NADAL, *Modus*].

¹⁵² *Autografo* # 2.

1. A radical, total availability to the Church in an ever more intense *Mysticism of Apostolic, Missionary Service*:

This is **Missionary Obedience**, a life-long conscious attitude of fidelity and service to the Church. This is Fr. Berton's way of *sentire cum Ecclesia*, feeling with, and serving the Church. To carry out the Apostolic Mission means to be **sent by the Church**, as mediated through the Congregation. It asks of each the life-long discipline of **availability** and **flexibility**, without rigid structures. No one Mission is the definitive one; there is a universality of Services [cf. CF 185]. The broad Apostolic Mission is developed by St. Gaspar in **Part IX** of his *Original Constitutions*¹⁵³.

#3: One significant difference regarding the gratuitous service here is that in **MssB 9849**, the verb is **servient** - in the final edition [**MssB 9908**] it will be the

¹⁵³ cf. CF ## 158-186. The Capitular Commission on the *Original Constitutions* [*Convergenze* - October 11, 2003 – Waltham MA – cf. Appendix VI, for the English translation of the document, at the end of these Retreat notes] offers this interpretation:

n. 6: Il *munus apostolicum* [=servizio apostolico]. Il progetto bertoniano per il Missionario Apostolico apre ad un vasto orizzonte ministeriale: la celebrazione dei sacramenti [CF 162], il servizio alla comunità cristiana, contenuti nella formula *Verbi Dei quodcumque ministerium* [CF 163], la formazione dei chierici [CF 164] e la cristiana educazione della gioventù [CF 165-166]. Il Berton, nello stesso tempo, per custodire la dimensione missionaria dell' *Euntes docete* [cf. Mt 28:19], *non ammette la cura ordiaria delle anime*. [CF 290].

...questa varietà di servizi ministeriali si traduce nell'impegno per i giovani, per il Clero. i religiosi e nell'esercizio della parola di Dio, propria alla tradizione bertoniana...

Un ministero traduce l'ideale del Missionario Apostolico bertoniano quando più si inserisce in un progetto ecclesiale dinamico di evangelizzazione e/o di rievangelizzazione [progetti diocesani o nazionali riguardanti le Comunità cristiane, il Clero gli istituti religiosi e i giovani].

n. 7: S. Gaspare Berton, formato nella spiritualità ignaziana fin da giovane chierico, sotto la guida di D. Galvani, coltivò un profondo amore e zelo per la Chiesa. Se ebbe il titolo di *Missionario Apostolico* per la Missione popolare in s. Fermo. Fu anche missionario dei giovani, guida e maestro per il clero, convinto sostenitore della necessità di rinnovamento della comunità cristiana. Imbevuto delle Parole del Signore, profeticamente avvertì la necessità di risposte più adeguate alle urgenze dei tempi: approfondì con amici chierici e sacerdoti lo studio della Teologia di s. Tommaso e la Morale di s. Alfonso, ed in un crescendo di esperienze mistiche ed apostoliche, maturò il progetto di una Congregazione di Missionari Apostolici. Il Berton restò *regola viva* per tutti i suoi figli; nelle sue Costituzioni traspare il suo spirito missionario e la ribadita esigenza di perfezione spirituale e dottrinale, alle quali incessantemente tendere.

n. 8: L' *obsequium Episcoporum* è, in primo luogo, servizio e comunione con il Vescovo, espressione della disponibilità ecclesiale e del fiducioso abbandono in Dio; è ancora impegno ad una preparazione che si esprima al Massimo, chiedendo che ogni confratello tenda alla perfezione del ministero, evocata nella formula *Missionario Apostolico*.

infinitive, *servire*. The Founder presents a *Mysticism of Service*. The gratuity in the exercise of the Apostolic Mission is a corner-stone of both the Ignatian rule, and also that of Fr. Bertoni. In all three renditions of the *Compendium Rude* from the hand of Fr. Bertoni, these first three numbers hold the same order: the “End”, the “Manner”, and “Gratuitous Service”. The order of the items in the *Compendium Rude* beings to change now:

4: In the first rendition [cf. **MssB 9846**] where the *Compendium* occupies only a single line, the order is: “End”, “Means”, “Manner”, the “Grades”, and the “Regimen” – presenting just five of the principal items.

In **MssB # 9848**, **# 4** is the quocumque, “geographical abandonment” [cf. **Mt 28: 19-20; Mk 16:15-16; Lk 24:47; Ac 1:8 +; 2:38 +**] - just any place where there is a need in the judgment of the Bishops. In the final version, the *gratis* is **CF # 3**.

In **MssB # 9849**, the order changes: **CF # 4** is the statement that all members need to be *immunes*, in adjectival form. This is the order in the previous **MssB # 9848**, but the abstract state, *immunitas* is used.

In the final edition, the printed *Compendium Rude*, **MssB # 9908**, **CF # 4**, the order is the same as immediately precedes, and the *immunes* appears in adjectival form, qualifying in another way, the Apostolic Missionary. [As for the perpetual care of religious women, cf. **CSJ n. 588**].

This living immune from dignities would also include the title of “Apostolic Missionary” conferred for distinguished apostolic services. It is the ideal of the title that is to be lived.

5: In **MssB # 9848 # 5** is the *immunitas*, in abstract form.

In **MssB # 9849**, **CF # 5** is the *Quocumque* [cf. **Mt 26: 13; Mk 16:15; Jn 1:10; 10:36; 11:27; 12:47; 16:28; 17:21, 23, 25**], the same order presently found in the definitive printing. The verb is found in the present participle, indicating dynamic activity. This is the geographical form of abandonment, the living of the totality of the *obsequium*. [The ideal of an international membership is alluded to also in **CF # 193**].

6: This is a composite number made up of several central Apostolic Missionary values:

a. The **Means** - the Latin *Media* here, is the Italian *mezzi*, in **MssB # 9948**.

Spiritual Perfection¹⁵⁴ [cf. **Ph 1:6; Ps 118:66; 1 Tm 4:16**]: as has been noted, this is presented in Part IV, CF ## 47 & 48: the former are the “positive” means, such as prayer, Divine Office and Mass; half-hour meditation; 20-minute spiritual reading; three-fold examen - sermons and domestic exhortations. Annual retreat for 8 or 10 days; weekly sacramental confession; manifestation of conscience to the Superior - fraternal correction. In **CF # 48** are listed the “negative” means, the removal of defects, increase in virtues, self-denial, perfect observance of precepts, etc. This was also **# 6** in **MssB # 9849**.

¹⁵⁴ cf. Suarez VIII, cc. 1-9.

This perfection might also be considered in **Parts X & XI**, Common Life; the living of the Vows [**Part VII**], and a number of the Constitutions, regarding life-style, food, clothing, and the life [cf. **CF## 6; 32; 69; 100; 133; 134; 137**]¹⁵⁵.

b. Intellectual Development [cf. **Is 43:10; 50:4; Ezk 6:13 (etc); Ho 2:22; Zc 4:13; Jn 10:14, 27: 14:7, etc.**]: in **MssB ## 9848 & 9849**, this is **# 7**. In the **CF** this is **Part IV, cc. 2-6, ## 49-68**. There are also references to this **in CF ## 173; 175**, ff.

c. Common Life: in **MssB ## 9848 & 9849** this is **#8** - this is also covered in **CF, Parts III, X & XI, ## 43, ff** [the "only penance"]; **## 187-197**.

d. The Perpetual Observance of the Vows: this is covered at some length in **CF, Parts VI & VII, ## 83-151**. In **MssB ## 9848 & 9849**, this is presented as **# 9**.

e. The Program of Common Life, regarding Food, Clothing, Rooms: is to be measured by the more observant clergy. In **MssB ## 9848 & 9849**, this is presented as **# 10**.

f. It needs to be pointed out that in MssB # 9849, there is added an entire sentence which does not appear in the final *Compendium Rude*, but is the last entry under Chastity, as Part VII, Section III, c. 4, *Concerning Moderation of Externals, necessary for Life*, [cf. **CF # 137**]. As will be seen, this is the clearest entry regarding the clothing of religious, close to fulfilling the three conditions set by St. Ignatius: that it be fitting; accommodated to the place where one lives; and that it not be repugnant to poverty¹⁵⁶. Fr. Bertoni's requirements are that it be "honest", that it bespeak poverty, that it be suited to the ministries, for the people among whom we live, that it be clean and not torn. This sentence, then, does not appear in the final rendition of the *Compendium Rude*.

7: The Promotion of the Grade:

- Profectus Juridicus:

- Profectus Apostolicus – *gradatim usque ad Perfectum opus Sacerdotum*: [cf. according to different *gifts, graces* - cf. **Rm 12:4, ff.; 1 Co 2:12; 12:4-30; 14:1-40; 1 P 2:4**]: of Membership as an **Apostolic Missionary**, one of the few, as **the 'Professed'**. Promotion, in general is found in **CF Part V, ## 69-82**¹⁵⁷.

¹⁵⁵ cf. Suarez, I, c. 5; V, cc. 1-3.

¹⁵⁶ cf. CSJ n. 577; Suarez I, c. 5. For Ignatian "habit", cf. CSJ, nn. 8; 81; 296; 297; 577; 579.

¹⁵⁷ Qualities required for the Promotion to the Grade of Apostolic Missionary: This text was developed by the XIth General Chapter Capitular Commission -1881-1889, for the Proposed Text of the renewed Constitutions, Part IV, c. III, n. 4 - prepared for the XIIth General Chapter:

Chapter IV

Concerning those to be promoted to the Sacerdotal Office [¹⁵⁷ a],

And to the Grade of Apostolic Missionary in our Society [¹⁵⁷ b]...

4. At length, after a Priest member has spent some years in the ecclesiastical ministries, he could be elevated to the Grade of Apostolic Missionary. But, no one is to be endowed with this Grade unless he has completed his thirty-fifth year, and ten years of vows in our Sodality.

Moreover, there are required in him besides outstanding piety, love for regular discipline, and zeal for the salvation of souls, that he be endowed with suitable doctrine, i.e., that he has passed with praise his last exams, after having completed the entire curriculum of theology; also, that he be of great merit to the Institute, Either because he was engaged in giving the Sacred Missions [¹⁵⁷ c]; or, the Spiritual Exercises [¹⁵⁷]; or, for a full three years, he had been the Director of some House of ours; or, had been teacher of the sacred disciplines for four years [¹⁵⁷ d] or was dedicated for many years in instructing the youth; or, lastly, he had performed well some other office, or duty for the good of the Sodality. [¹⁵⁷ e] [¹⁵⁷ f]... The judgment of this merit is absolutely up to the Superior and the General Councilors, who, by a plurality of secret votes, will promote those to the Grade of Apostolic Missionary, who are endowed with these qualities we have noted above: they will then announce, by Decree, their promotion to the entire Sodality ...

[¹⁵⁷ a] This would seem to reflect what St. Gaspar Bertoni meant in the ordinary promotion of students to the Priesthood - CF # 7. - the section that follows here and which is underlined, would fulfill that which the Stigmatine Founder meant by the *perfectum opus Sacerdotum, assumentes apostolicam missionem* - this was not any one ministry in the minds of so many of these early Fathers, but would include the *graviora ministeria* [CF # 158] - the *varia et propria suae vocationis [arduae et difficilis] munera* [CF # 185] - also called the *ministeria accomodata* to achieve the *finis* of the Sodality, the salvation of souls. [CF # 262].

[¹⁵⁷ b] This number 4, Chapter IV, and its title were eliminated, as may be noted from the "List of the Proposals made by the Deputed Commission" because the Holy See did not allow the use of the title *Apostolic Missionary*. This list of qualifications found here in n. 4, however, does reflect the mentality of many of the confreres of this time - however, this broad interpretation of the *Apostolic Mission* is what many early confreres understood as the *perfectum opus... graviora ministerial ... varia et propria munera* of the Stigmatine Apostolic Mission.

[¹⁵⁷ c] There is a certain historical primacy here, as the Founder was inspired to establish the Community from this kind of Apostolic Mission - the *modus operandi* of preaching Parish Missions is to obtain the full authorization of the local ordinary - in the spirit of the *Fourth Vow of the Society of Jesus*.

[¹⁵⁷ d] The whole area of **Clergy retreats and formation** were also a privileged form of service of the early Community as a central part of its Apostolic Mission - the early Community also banded together by the theological discussions held among priests under Fr. Bertoni's direction. [It would help if someone could make a detailed study on the Apostolic Mission to the Clergy, and to Consecrated Life - like the brilliant study of Fr. DePaoli on the Parish Missions.

This Promotion happened first through the Promotion as students – then, up to the Priestly Ordination [cf. **Pars V, CF ## 69, ff.**] – then the **Vows [Partes VI & VII]** – then, the ***Schola Affectus*** [Pars VIII] – and finally, perhaps 20 years after Priestly Ordination, the ultimate Profession as an ***Apostolic Missionary*** [Pars IX].

- regarding the “***Professed***”: in **MssB ## 9848 & 9849**, this is **# 11**: this is promotion to the **supreme priestly work**, the “**apostolic mission**” - whereas, **the promotion of the Students** is found in **CF, Part VIII, ## 152-157**; **the specific promotion to “Profession” is found in CF Part IX, ## 158-186.**

- regarding the **promotion** of the other members, in **MssB 9848 & 9849**, this is **# 12**.

8: in **MssB ## 9848 & 9949**, this is **# 13**. In the final copy of the ***Original Constitutions***, this is **CF Part XII, ## 298-314**. In **MssB # 9849**, there are two names for the Superior General: ***Praelatus*** and Praeses - and he will name the local superiors and minor officials. This is the **Community, Corporate Obedience, within the Community – [ad intra]**.

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[¹⁵⁷ e] As has been noted, serving in Seminary teaching was much revered by the early Community’s Apostolic Mission.

**[II] Personal Reflections on the Stigmatine' Founder's First Constitution:
*Missionarii Apostolic in Obsequium Episcoporum***

A. Apostolic Missionaries

Introduction:

[1] Fr. Bertoni received the honorary title of "Apostolic Missionary" from the Holy See with a Rescript dated December 1817. This was given to him because of Parish Missions preached under the direction of a Monsignor Louis Pacetti in May of 1816. Shortly thereafter, all parish missions were forbidden by government decree, which remained in force all throughout Fr. Bertoni's entire life.

[2] A discussion in the Stigmatine community has existed through the years, and there are two positions regarding the precise meaning of the Stigmatine Apostolic Mission for the assistance [help/service] of Bishops:

[a] One of these would interpret Fr. Bertoni's ideal of Apostolic Mission as restricted primarily to the preaching of Parish Missions, as the central apostolate to which all else would be subordinated. This seems to have been the position of Fr. John Mary Marani, the Stigmatine Founder's first successor as Superior General, and for many years his confessor. However, there are several statements from Fr. Marani which may not be contradictory, but do present some difficulty in interpretation:

(1) A Report of Fr. Marani, dated December 14, 1853. In this report addressed to the civil and religious authorities, Fr. Marani wrote - naturally 'hiding' the real purpose of the Stigmatine community: "... the scope of the Institute of Don Bertoni is that of assisting the Bishop in his needs, and therefore, also the Pastors, in their necessities and needs. Fr. Bertoni was most responsive to them..."¹⁵⁸ In this statement Fr. Marani does not specify what these ministries are.

[2] In a later document, called a ***Compendium***, written some six months later, there is a different presentation of the Stigmatine Apostolic Mission - for some confreres, to be understood that since Fr. Marani was writing to Church authorities, he could pull out all the stops, as it were, and relay the "true" physiognomy of the Community. Fr. Marani wrote:

The members of this Community are called Apostolic Missionaries for the assistance [***obsequium***], i.e., the help [***auxilium***] of the Bishops, under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph her Spouse... This Society proposes for itself the purpose of assisting [***obsequi***], i.e., helping [***auxiliari***] the Bishops in those areas in which they need help on account of the changing times and changing circumstances... The principal areas in which the Sodality offers its help [***auxilium***] are, in addition to the [parish] missions,

¹⁵⁸ cf. CS II, pp. 142, ff.

the following... [there is found here a lengthy list of apostolic services]..."¹⁵⁹

There are some distinct additions here: a preference for the word *auxilium* over the Founder's preferred *obsequium* - and the addition of the *praeter missiones* - meaning that the central ministry of the Stigmatine Community would principally be the Parish Missions, and then everything else. Fr. Marani repeated this in a non-published document dated December 21, 1853: "... the schools are only accessory to the established goal of Fr. Bertoni..."

This insistence on Parish Missions then became repeated fairly often during the latter part of Fr. Marani's administration which lasted from 1853-1871, when he died. A good example of this would be the short work Fr. Marani wrote to give a resume' of the Community, with the purpose in mind of obtaining Church approval. This work was entitled *Cenni intorno alla Congregazione*, dated September 30, 1855:

... The Community is not limited to this, or to that type of occupations, or to restricted cases, or matters. Rather, it is meant to serve God in all those areas and in every good work, for the assistance of souls. For this, the Congregation desires to have men ready and prepared, among those who have embraced this manner of living. It is, however, proper to this new congregation that, in addition to occupying itself in the Sacred Parish Missions, that it should teach ... [and then once again there follows a long list of other apostolic activities]¹⁶⁰.

In accord with this idea, the Constitutions of the Founder would be read accordingly. [In another study on the web-site [www.st-bertoni.com], *Fr. Gaspar Bertoni's Original Constitutions and Fr. Francis Suarez, SJ, De Religione Societatis Iesu* - it is most evident that the vast majority of these constitutions are copied *verbatim* particularly in all those sections dealing with the "end", "scope", "Missions" of the Community. [CF # 162, for example, speaks of prayers for the "Missions" - taken word for word from Fr. Suarez, which embodies St. Ignatius' idea of Jesuits praying for their own Apostolic Mission] - and this is interpreted by some confreres to mean "Parish Missions." However, if this position is true - there is hardly any further specific mention of Parish Missions in the Original Constitutions of St. Gaspar Bertoni, particularly in his very important **PART IX [CF ## 158-185, on 'The Grade of the Professed'** - where he treats of their activities] - whereas the Founder does dedicate a number of Constitutions to the **instruction of youth**, to the **teaching of Catechism**, the **guidance of seminarians**. At any rate, even those familiar with the Stigmatine spirit for years have thought - and still do - that the "Apostolic Missionary" - either originally in the Founder's intentions - or, by force of circumstances, has shifted. For many, the original idea was much broader than Parish Missions.

¹⁵⁹ cf. CS II, pp. 155, ff.

¹⁶⁰ cf. CS II, p. 177.

[b] The second interpretation: and the one better known to most confreres up to the present time is that "Mission" in Fr. Bertoni's mind, means something more broad. Several General Chapters have looked at it as ***quodcumque Dei verbum ministerium, 'any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever.*** Arguments for this would be, for example - a few years after Fr. Marani's death, a unanimous House Council at the Stimate sent in a petition to the General Chapter, asking that the schools of the Stimate be reopened - and the first reason given was: because *schools correspond to **one of the principal ends of our Congregation, which was born, and became loved, through teaching.***

This document was dated February 24, 1874, less than three years after the death of Fr. Marani - and a good sixteen years before the General Chapter of 1890, when the schools were considered ***an end equal to that of parish missions.***

Furthermore, it is significant that the Stigmatine Founder has not left any description of the Parish Missions, how they should be conducted, what preparation should be engaged for them, and the like - in such sharp contrast to St. Alphonsus and St. Paul of the Cross. Their congregations have among **their principal works** the preaching of Parish Missions - and, as would be expected, a good part of their original Constitutions is dedicated to the particular manner of conducting them.

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1. **Fr. Bertoni's Own Words:**

- a. For the Feast of St. Ignatius, Fr. Bertoni wrote:

30th JULY 1808

For the examination of conscience one should choose a Saint of the same vocation as a mirror. In this way one finds matter for confession every day. Whatever falls short of that Saint's perfection is faulty.

It is worthwhile to consider the method of Fr Bertoni in his daily Examination of Conscience. It is not surprising that during these examinations he sometimes was given remarkable gifts and graces. We have an example on 27 October 1808 when he wrote:

...In the first point of the Midday Examen, i.e. the thanksgiving, while prostrated on the floor in the sight of Heaven, I felt a deep sense of the divine presence with love and self-offering...

This maxim of Fr. Gaspar provides an insight into what should be every examen of conscience for one called to perfection.

Fr Bertoni had chosen St Ignatius of Loyola as model for his priestly vocation. He will tell us expressly in this JOURNAL on that 15 Sept. The first biographer, Fr Giacobbe, wrote that Fr Bertoni ***admired and studied much the works and***

virtues of St Ignatius, and had reproduced them very faithfully. ¹⁶¹ In fact Fr. Gaspar studied the Life of St Ignatius directly of at least four authors, i.e., Fr. John Peter Maffei, Fr. Peter Ribadeneira, Fr. Daniel Bartoli and Fr. Francis Marani. Of the hand written extracts from the four authors which we possess, several could be part of this *Journal*. They reveal not only admiration for the Saint, but also his endeavor to imitate him.

The original idea of modeling his life on that of a Saint could have come to Fr. Bertoni (after his boyhood practice of imitating Saint Aloysius Gonzaga), from the *Imitation of Christ* where he read: *Look at the living examples of the Holy Fathers* ¹⁶². He found inspiration also in Fr L. Scupoli's ***Spiritual Combat***:

... Compare your works with those of the Saints and other servants of God. In comparison with theirs you will know that your best and greatest works are of very low quality and worth. If you then compare them with those of Christ... (I am not talking on the side of his divinity, but purely as they have been humanly performed with sincerity and pure love)... you will see that yours are insignificant... ¹⁶³

The *Imitation of Christ* and the classic of Scupoli appear as the first teachers of Fr. Bertoni. We shall have a further proof in this *Journal*.

b. There is much evidence that the Stigmatine Founder was deeply influenced by St. Ignatius of Loyola and his sense of "Apostolic Mission":

Introduction to the Retreat: In a visit with a few companions to the altar of St. Ignatius, I experienced much devotion and recollection, great interior sweetness, some tears, even though the visit was brief. It seems as though the Saint was welcoming us, and **invited us to promote the greater glory of God, like he did, and by the same ways,, even though not in all those means that he was able to employ...** ¹⁶⁴

In a letter to Mother Naudet, Fr. Bertoni wrote:

... Fr. Galvani is totally Ignatian. He has offered me the Stimate as an opportune place to establish **a Congregation of Priests who would live under the Rule of St. Ignatius...** ¹⁶⁵

c. In a document that has come down to us under a descriptive title in the Stigmatine Founder's own handwriting, ***Autografo del Fondatore***, the Stigmatine Founder offers this general presentation of the basic Stigmatine purpose, without any specification of ministries:

¹⁶¹ *Summarium Additionale*, Document 36, p. 456.

¹⁶² *Imitation of Christ*, Book I, c. 18.

¹⁶³ *Spiritual Combat*, c. 32.

¹⁶⁴ cf. MP, September 15, 1808.

¹⁶⁵ cf. Letter 54, August 17, 1816.

[1] The purpose of this Union or Congregation of Priests is to serve God, our Lord, and His Church gratuitously, in so far as any expectation of earthly reward is concerned.

[2] In all ministry on behalf of souls to abide strictly by the direction of the bishop, and to obtain from him the general faculties and permissions.

[3] To be ready to answer any call of the bishops to preach, to hear confessions, to give instructions, whether in the city, or in the country, or in any place of the diocese, in the seminary, or to the laity.

[4] In order to do this with greater dispatch, it is necessary to be free from the particular and perpetual care of souls in parishes or fixed places, especially where it may entail the obligation of residence to which an ecclesiastical dignity is attached.

[5] For the attainment of this end, each one is to attend seriously to the perfection proper to our state.

[6] Furthermore, all are called to apply themselves earnestly to the acquisition of all the ecclesiastical sciences, especially moral theology.

One of the great "principles" of Fr. Bertoni is a varied progress, such as: growth in spirituality, and development of intellectual competence, to serve the varying and changing needs of the bishops, '**anywhere in the diocese or the world.**'

d. In his Original Constitutions, there is one rule that seems to go to great lengths to describe the multiple and varied services to which the Stigmatine Congregation is called to dedicate itself in the assistance of Bishops - a rule almost totally taken *verbatim* from Suarez' Commentary on the Constitutions of St. Ignatius:

... The scope of this community is to offer service [*obsequium praestare*] to the Church, under the direction of the Bishops, through the various and proper tasks of its vocation. This is at times a very difficult thing. Should it seem to be exposed to dangers when this lofty ideal is compared to human frailty, nonetheless this proposal of our devotion is not imprudent or temerarious - and for these reasons:

- **first, because this vocation is entrusted not to human strength, but is left up to the grace of the Holy Spirit to be carried out: 'He who has begun and inspired this work, He Himself will carry it to perfection' - if He is not hindered by us. For this is the special grace of this vocation, and it is superior to all dangers and difficulties.**

- **secondly**, by this goal that we have, we do not propose to expose ourselves to dangers, nor ever to go to one place rather than to some other one. We propose to follow the direction of the Bishop whom the Holy Spirit has placed to rule the Church of God. This is a cautious means to employ, to keep from erring in the ways of God. It is in the providence of religion that takes over, both in disposing and preparing members, as well as in choosing them, confirming and supporting them in all hope" [CF # 185]¹⁶⁶.

2. **In Fr. Bertoni's actions**: In his broad vision, the charism of the Stigmatine Founder has room for the talents and good will of those who really desire to serve the Church through the Bishops. The following are just a few examples taken from our early history:

a. **Fr. Modesto Cainer**: perhaps because of a total lack of self-confidence, and also because of enormous personal difficulty, Fr. Cainer experienced in various phases of the priestly ministry, he never felt up to accepting the office of a regular school teacher, or confessor. And the Stigmatine Founder never forced him to do so, and was content in asking him to fill in once in a while as a substitute teacher...¹⁶⁷.

b. **Fr. Michelangelo Gramago**: we have this extraordinary description of him:

...The dread of public speaking actually took his breath away, and this happened each time the Founder asked him to teach catechism at the Most Blessed Trinity Parish - the excessive hardship that this caused him really made him sick. Fr. Bertoni was most pleased with his heroic efforts to obey; however, he never again forced this hardship on him..."¹⁶⁸.

c. **Fr. Louis Bragato**: a real indication for some interpreters of the extent of the Stigmatine Founder's ***obsequium Episcoporum*** was his willingness and decision to sacrifice his most qualified man for the needs of the bishop, the Church, over the particular needs of the Stigmatine Congregation. A good example of this happened in July 1835. The Bishop of Verona had been asked to obtain an Italian speaking Court Chaplain for the Royal House of Hapsburg, in Vienna. Fr. Bertoni responded by offering Fr. Louis Bragato, his close friend and confidant. The incident is noted in the old House Chronicle:

...Since **it is the will of God**, manifested through our most zealous Bishop, that our brother, Fr. Bragato, be taken from us, and leave for assignment in Vienna. Tomorrow, July 6, 1835, he will leave on the express. We will all pray for him so that God might indeed bless the work that he is going to undertake. **'Hallowed be Thy Name! Thy Will be done!'**

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Suarez, Book I, c. 6 [pp.592, f.; but more especially, Book 6, c. 6, pp. 862 a & b.

¹⁶⁷ cf. *Memorie intorno ai Padri e Fratelli*, 1866, p. 47.

¹⁶⁸ cf. *Memorie intorno ai Padri e Fratelli*, p. 53.

A few months later, Fr. Bertoni wrote to Fr. Bragato:

169 ... **your person, which was the dearest and most useful that we have...**

There is no doubt that in the struggling community of the Stimate at that time, the absence of such a valid collaborator, must have left a deep hole¹⁷⁰

d. Fr. Matthew Farinati: In 1817, the Vicar General of the Diocese, Monsignor Dionisi, asked Fr. Gaspar to send one of his priests to assist those with typhoid fever in the public prisons. Fr. Bertoni accepted this invitation, and among all who had volunteered for it, he assigned Fr. Farinati. Father went most willingly to carry out this ministry of charity. However, from this work in the prison compound, Fr. Farinati contracted an illness which led him to an early grave. Fr. Bertoni always envied the lot of Fr. Farinati, who was called to sacrifice his life in the exercise of his ministry, and to die a martyr of charity¹⁷¹.

3. Some of the 'Varied and Proper' Ministries of Fr. Bertoni's Own Life: these were either conducted by him personally, or authorized by him for the early Stigmatine community:

a. 1800-1816:

Assistant in his home Parish of St. Paul's in the 'Campo Marzio' section of Verona:

- 1.] Indefatigable studies¹⁷²;
- 2.] Preacher, confessor, catechist¹⁷³;
- 3.] The "Missionary to the Youth" - the Apostle of Youth. The Oratories. Retreats at the seminary for priests and seminarians¹⁷⁴;
- 4.] Spiritual Director at the Convent of Blessed de Canossa. Bishop's consultant for theological matters.

Assistant in the Parish of St. Firmus 'Major'

- 1.] Spiritual Director of the local clergy¹⁷⁵;
- 2.] Leader of theological discussions for priests¹⁷⁶;
- 3.] Varied Ministry in the Diocesan Seminary¹⁷⁷;
- 4.] Hospitals and Prisons¹⁷⁸;
- 5.] The Parish Mission at St. Firmus' [May 4-26, 1816]¹⁷⁹.

¹⁶⁹ cf. *Epistolario*, p. 311.

¹⁷⁰ cf. Nello, *Modello di Sant'Abbandono*, p. 174.

¹⁷¹ cf. *Breve Cronaca*, I, pp. 27, ff.; Nello, pp. 173, f.

¹⁷² cf. Stofella, *Life* pp. 48, ff.

¹⁷³ cf. ib., pp. 51, ff., cf. *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, Sermons from his early priesthood.

¹⁷⁴ cf. Stofella, pp. 54, ff.

¹⁷⁵ cf. ib., pp. 75, ff, 89.

¹⁷⁶ cf. ib., p. 78.

¹⁷⁷ cf. ib., pp. 79, ff.; 94, ff.

¹⁷⁸ cf. ib., p. 100.

- b. The Stimate: 1816 - until the closing of the Schools
- 1.] Teaching school - November 1816 ¹⁸⁰;
 - 2.] Marian Oratories ¹⁸¹;
 - 4.] Confessor and Spiritual Direction of priests and religious ¹⁸²;
 - 5.] Other varied apostolates:
 - a.] Ministry of the Word - to various groups, but especially to Priests and Seminarians; Novenas, Octaves, Tridua, Spiritual exercises, Meditations, examinations of Seminarians' Vocations; assistance to the sick and dying; specialized catechetics.
 - b.] Ministry of the Press ¹⁸³.
- c. After the Closing of the Schools at the Stimate:
- 1.] Spiritual Direction, Confessor ¹⁸⁴;
 - 2.] Marian Oratories ¹⁸⁵;
 - 3.] "...Especially Christian doctrine..." ¹⁸⁶;
 - 4.] Seminary Professors;
 - 5.] Specialized ministry among the priests and seminarians.

4. The Testimony of Fr. John Baptist Lenotti, a Novice of the Founder:

Frs. Marani and Bragato came to the Stigmatine Founder as ordained priests - while Fr. Lenotti, his second successor, was trained by him in his Novitiate. Fr. Lenotti has left some important lines on discerning the real intention of Fr. Bertoni for his community. Fr. Lenotti served as Novice Master from about 1855-1865, and during these years he delivered a number of 'Domestic Exhortations' on the Original Constitutions of Fr. Bertoni. Here are a few of his ideas:

... An Apostolic Missionary is a religious - soldier [endowed] with a spirit of sacrifice... of generosity... ***Paratus ad omnia*** [prepared for all]... we are Missionaries, not only when we are actually engaged in the field of battle, for example: in the pulpits, in the missions, or in the confessional - but also while we are at home... ¹⁸⁷.

... It is seen clearly that Fr. Bertoni's intention was that of instituting a Congregation, which, **just like the Company of Jesus** which is in a special way dedicated, oriented toward the service [***ossequio***] and the dispositions of the Roman Pontiff - **our Congregation is dedicated and determined in a most special and outstanding manner** to the service and assistance [***ossequio***] of the Bishops. However, there is this difference: that while the Professed of the Company of Jesus do make a vow of

¹⁷⁹ cf. ib., pp. 115, f.

¹⁸⁰ cf. CS I, p. 414; CS II, p. 25; Ep, p. 238; BC I, p. 66; Stofella, o.c., pp. 136, ff.

¹⁸¹ cf. Stofella, pp. 143, ff.

¹⁸² cf. ib., pp. 151, ff.

¹⁸³ cf. ib., pp. 153, ff.

¹⁸⁴ cf. BC I, p. 67.

¹⁸⁵ cf. ib., pp. 67, ff.

¹⁸⁶ cf. ib., pp. 69, f.

¹⁸⁷ cf. CS III, pp. 404, ff.

obedience to the Roman Pontiff, our Professed do not make a vow of obedience to the Bishop. However, they do strive in every way to help him, to assist him obsequiously, as all our members are in a particular way dedicated to him.

... my brothers, it is necessary to learn how to manage well the Divine Word, by study and with holy readings, and to employ it well according to the circumstances: in the confessional, in the prisons, in the pulpit, on the rostrum, from the altars, in giving Missions, Retreats, conducting the oratories, while being engaged in friendly conversations..¹⁸⁸

We are Missionaries to serve God, our King, Jesus Christ, our Captain - and to serve the Church, our neighbor, by prayer, good example, study, preaching...¹⁸⁹.

What is the purpose of our Congregation? Therefore, let us strive to carry it out through this mass of private conversations, etc. How much good can we accomplish in this way! By this means of private conversations what enormous good for souls did not St. Francis Xavier accomplish, that **great Apostolic Missionary**...!¹⁹⁰.

It is interesting to note that St. Francis Xavier was not engaged in Parish Missions and yet still merits the title "Apostolic Missionary".

5. The Testimony of Some Contemporaries of Fr. Bertoni, his ecclesiastical superiors with whom his plan was shared, or to whom it had been submitted:

a. Monsignor Belloni, the Vicar of the Cathedral Chapter of Verona :

... they are priests who, by their special ecclesiastical profession, dedicate themselves and spend themselves exclusively for the assistance [*ossequio*] of the Diocesan Ordinary, for the greater glory of God and the good of souls. They do this at any time, **and in every area of the sacred ministry, in accord with the needs**. They give retreats to the Clergy, or to the people, are dedicated to catechetics in any church where they may be sent, in the explanation of the Gospels, in the various novenas, or octaves, and in the assistance of the sick, or those in prison, for the conversion of the wayward. They give of themselves based on the most healthy principles, showing prudent and tireless zeal...¹⁹¹

b. Bishop Joseph Grasser to whom Fr. Gaspar confided his whole apostolic dream. On June 18, 1831, Bishop Grasser wrote a letter of recommendation to the Holy Father:

... We testify that Fr. Bertoni is a Priest of holy life, endowed with outstanding doctrine and charity, who has made himself all things for all, especially in the training of Seminarians, in the giving of retreats, spiritual direction, the

¹⁸⁸ cf. CS III, pp. 409, ff.

¹⁸⁹ cf. CS III, p. 411.

¹⁹⁰ cf. CS III, p. 531.

¹⁹¹ cf. *Novissima Positio super virtutibus*, Jan. 11, 1966, p. 14.

instruction of the youth in catechism and virtue, and is outstanding for his assistance to the clergy...

c. Bishop Mutti the next Ordinary of the See of San Zeno testified:

...Fr. Gaspar Bertoni's Congregation has no other purpose than that of offering **any kind of spiritual service to the Diocese, in accord with the wishes of his Ordinary...**¹⁹²

d. Bishop Riccabona has left this testimony:

... From its beginning, this congregation has never ceased from existing and of showing itself most dedicated to **any ecclesiastical ministry whatsoever [qualunque]** to which they might be invited by their Bishop... they are assiduous in hearing confessions, preaching, in giving missions, and especially in giving retreats to the clergy, in explaining the Catechism, in observing all the Feasts in the Marian Congregations in their two churches, in assisting the dying, those in prison, those condemned to capital punishment; furthermore, they supply in the Seminary as Professors of philosophy and theology... and they render their services to the great satisfaction of all...¹⁹³.

e. Fr. John Perrone, SJ: this theologian [praised by Cardinal Newman] was one of the Consultors for the old S. Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. He was assigned the task of reading and evaluating the Stigmatine Founder's Original Constitutions. Among his remarks, he stated the following on March 4, 1855:

... The end of this Union is to supply Bishops in whose dioceses this Union might be found, with Evangelical workers, who are always prepared for every request of these bishops, in the judgment of their respective superiors, to offer any ministry whatsoever that the Bishops might choose to ask them...Such is the idea or the general outline of this Institution. It is a copy of the Company of Jesus with a few accidental differences ...¹⁹⁴

6. **Jesuit Influence**: the Apostolic Mission of the Stigmatine Congregation seems to be **the same** as that of St. Ignatius, keeping in mind **the more limited *modi*** that the Stigmatine Founder believed he would have at his disposal. A brief look at St. Ignatius' ideal might shed some light on our own:

a. The 'Formula' of St. Ignatius:

... Whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the cross in our Society, which we desire to be designated by the name of Jesus, and to serve the Lord alone and the Church, His Spouse, under the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ

¹⁹² cf. *Summarium Additionale*, Doc. XXIII, p. 250; cf. also CS II, p. 149.

¹⁹³ cf. *Summarium Additionale*, Doc. XXIII, p. 251; cf. also CS II, pp. 151-154.

¹⁹⁴ cf. CS II, p. 167.

on earth, should after a solemn vow of perpetual chastity, poverty and obedience, keep what follows in mind: He is a member of a Society founded chiefly for the purpose to strive especially for the defense and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine - by means of:

- public preaching
- lectures
- and any ministrations whatsoever of the word of God;

and further, by means of:

- the Spiritual exercises,
- the education of children and unlettered persons to Christianity,
- and the spiritual consolation of Christ's faithful, through hearing confessions and administering the other sacraments.

Moreover, this Society should show itself no less useful in reconciling the estranged, in holily assisting and serving those who are found in prisons and hospitals, and indeed in performing any other works of charity, according to what will seem expedient for the glory of God and the common good.

Furthermore, all these works should be carried out altogether free of charge and without accepting any salary for the labor expended in all the aforementioned activities.

b. The entire Part VII of the Jesuit Constitutions is dedicated to the 'Missions' - in this broader Ignatian sense. In this section, there is an important Constitution that serves as a guide-line in the actual discerning which ministry should be chosen with such an open and broad apostolic ministry:

... To proceed more successfully in this sending of subjects to one place or another, one should keep the greater service of God and the more universal good before his eyes as the norm to hold oneself on the right course. It seems that in the vineyard of the Lord, which is so extensive, the following procedure of selection ought to be used. When other considerations are equal, that part of the vineyard should be chosen which has the greater need ... consideration should also be given to where the greater fruit ... [to go places] where our indebtedness is the greater ... to do the more universal good, the more it is divine ... for that reason, preference ought to be shown to the aid which is given to the great nations, such as the Indies, to important cities, or to universities which are greatly attended by numerous persons..¹⁹⁵

c. The Jesuit *Epitome* to the Constitutions describe 'Missions' as follows:

...By 'missions' are meant those apostolic expeditions, undertaken by order of the Supreme Pontiff or, of the Superiors of the Society, for the ever greater glory of God and the assistance of souls.

The 'Missions' are among the principal ministries of the Society; and therefore, all the members ought to be sent on them, and be always ready [*semperque parati*] to travel to different places, and to live life in any part of the

¹⁹⁵ cf. Constitutions SJ, # 622

world, where the greater service of God [*maius Dei obsequium*] might be hoped.¹⁹⁶

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Summary

[1] As an instrument of Church renewal, the Parish Missions have long served as a privileged means, and may soon reappear as such, as in the life of St. Anthony Mary Claret¹⁹⁷. The "Mission" idea came to him through St. Alphonsus Liguori. He, like St. Paul of the Cross, established his community basically for the Parish Mission Apostolate. In his turn, St. Alphonsus did not create the Parish Mission, but this particular form of preaching was very well known in the Naples area ...¹⁹⁸ As is known, St. Gaspar Bertoni received the title Apostolic Missionary from the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, December 20, 1817. In his second Constitution [CF 2], Fr. Bertoni quotes at some length from this Decree, in describing the **Modus** of the **Finis** [his first Constitution] for his Congregation: ***Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops.***

[2] St. Ignatius, however, had a broader concept of "Apostolic Mission" - even though the saint never formally defined the term. Nonetheless, the entire **Part VII** of the Jesuit Constitutions [nn. 607-654] is dedicated to the Distribution of the Incorporated Members [i.e., the 'Professed'] in Christ's Vineyard and their relations with their Fellow Men. The first two chapters of this Seventh Part are:

Chapter I: Missions from the Holy Father.

Chapter II: The Missions received from the Superior of the Society.

a.] The Stigmatine Founder developed this Seventh Part of St. Ignatius' Constitutions by following a most developed Jesuit Commentary on the Ignatian Rule by the Jesuit Theologian, Fr. Francis Suarez, entitled ***De Religione Societatis Iesu***. For the Stigmatine Founder, St. Ignatius' Part VII is **Part IX** of the Original Constitutions [## 158-186] of the Stigmatines. The reason for the numerical difference is that Fr. Bertoni wrote in as separate "Parts" of his Constitutions some matters that for St. Ignatius were **entitled *General Examen and its Declarations*** and ***Particular Examen***, including ideas such as Admission of Candidates and Formation. These were intended by the Jesuit founder as separate booklets to be placed in the hands of prospective candidates and the Jesuit formation personnel. Immediately after his explanation of "Mission", that required the dispersion of the members in the vineyard of the Lord, the Stigmatine Founder, following St. Ignatius, as **Part X [CF ## 187, ff.]**, describes the important **Union** in the Congregation.

¹⁹⁶ cf. Epitome, # 612.

¹⁹⁷ cf. J. M. Lozzano, CMF, *Mystic and Man of Action - St. Anthony Mary Claret - A Study in the Development of His Spiritual Experience and Doctrine*. Tr. by J. Daries, CMF, Chicago: Claretian Publications 1977.

¹⁹⁸ cf. Lozzano, p. 209; cf. also P. Hitz, CSSR, *To preach the Gospel*. New York: Sheed & Ward 1963, pp. 107-110.

b.] In the Stigmatine Original Constitutions [## 161-163], following Suarez very closely, Fr. Bertoni explains the 'means' by which the Congregation is to work for the salvation of humanity. In this section are explained ***the various and proper ministries*** of the Stigmatine vocation [cf. CF # 185].

c.] Like St. Ignatius, Fr. Bertoni has a very broad concept of ***the ministry of the Word of God***. For example, he states:

... Furthermore, the principal end of our Congregation is the conversion of souls; an end which in good part the Congregation intends to achieve through conversation with its neighbors, by speaking to them with gentleness and discretion about spiritual matters. Hence, the religious confreres are to draw much profit from the conversations they have among themselves - most often, these should be about the things of God [CF #255]

These "Private, evangelical Conversations" ¹⁹⁹ were thought of by St. Ignatius as one of the privileged means for continuing the good effects of preaching. It was a means much employed in the early Stigmatine community. The Stigmatine Founder thought also that regular letters among the confreres assisted the bond of unity in that charity can be attained in living the sublime ideal of a united plurality, each with a different area of appreciation, dispersed anywhere in the diocese and the world. Fr. Bertoni himself was a great letter writer.

d.] One of the basic Stigmatine Apostolates is that of serving the Church in the Ministry of Reconciliation. Therefore, the Ministry of the Word of God was admirably exercised here, in being a 'friend' to the penitent:

...First of all, to carry out completely the office of Confessor, often it is necessary to treat familiarly with the penitents, even outside of Confession: either for their instruction, or their Spiritual comfort - as also to keep them in the practice of frequent Confession and in living a good life... [cf. CF # 227].

3. Pope Paul VI in his Encyclical, ***Evangelii Nuntiandi*** [December 8, 1975], highly praises this form of evangelization: the Holy Father stated that along side the proclamation of the Gospel made in the usual manner, this other form of transmission of the Word, person, to person, remains most important:

... The Lord Himself often made use of it - as witness His personal conversations with Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, with the Samaritan woman, with Simon, the Pharisee, and with others - as with the Apostles. In the last analysis, is there any better way of transmitting the Gospel than by sharing with others one's own experience of the faith? It should not happen that with the urgency to announce the

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Thomas H. Clancy, SJ, *The Conversational Word of God. A Commentary on the Doctrine of St. Ignatius of Loyola concerning Spiritual Conversation with Four early Jesuit Texts*. St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Courses 1978.

Good News through to the masses, this should lead to the neglect of that announcement by which the person's conscience is reached, deeply moved by a most extraordinary word that one individual receives from another. We cannot praise sufficiently those priests who, through the sacrament of Reconciliation, or through pastoral dialogue, show themselves ready to guide others in the ways of the Gospel, to confirm them in their efforts, to lift them up should they fail, and to assist them always with discernment and availability ...²⁰⁰.

4. Following the choices made by the General Chapter of 1970, there are three particular areas of the Ministry of the Word more evident to our Stigmatine history, that ought to be developed to be within the competence of the community. The Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata is being called now to serve the Church under **'any ministry of the Word of God, whatsoever'**; but particularly in these three areas:

- preaching;
- assistance of priests, seminarians and religious;
- the apostolate to the youth²⁰¹.

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B. The Apostolic Mission of Preaching

This field of the Sacred Ministry is most evident in the Stigmatine Founder's own life, as well as found in his words:

... God raises up in the Church individuals then illumined by the Holy Spirit, or preachers to correct and repair, put to right the scandals, disorders, weaknesses of Prelates...²⁰²

He saw the preaching vocation as a whole vocation:

... We intend to speak here about a vocation vested with special circumstances... this is the vocation of the new ministers, endowed with the new spirit and called by the Holy Spirit, the Innovator and Restorer of all things, to renew and restore His ministry, and through this - the Church. This He will do by abolishing the old human spirit, exciting the new and divine spirit, based on the indefectible rectitude and firmness of the First Rock...²⁰³

... On this reading [I Samuel] we say that the actual carrying out of the vocation of the new ministers is rather their cooperation offered to Divine Providence in the reform of His elect - both of the People as well as of the Minister. Their task is to put aside the old spirit, hardened and rebellious against His light. This cooperation flows from the innovation of the divine spirit, which comes through the grace of the Holy Spirit, Creator ...The Spirit

²⁰⁰ cf. EN # 46

²⁰¹ cf. CF ## 163, 164; Commission of the IXth General Chapter, 1887

²⁰² cf. Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, Commentary on First Kings - Mss B # 5110.

²⁰³ cf. Fr. Bertoni's Meditations to the Seminarians of Verona, on First Kings - Mss B 11]

sometimes illumines even those outside the faith, as the Book of Job says: 'He smashes great men's power, without inquiry, and sets up others in their places' [Jb 34:24]. Also, the Book of Wisdom: 'In each generation she passes into holy souls, and makes them friends of God and Prophets' [cf. Ws 7:27]²⁰⁴.

These "New Ministers" will be called to assist in the renewal of the Church:

... This is the reform that shows how capable these Ministers are, full of gratitude to God for having illumined them. They are most ready for their great fervor, even when they are newly converted, to serve god in great undertakings.

... The ideal of the Ministry of the Word is: Not to preach to the pocketbooks, but to the minds; not to the ears, but to the hearts; not to be praised, but to be followed; not to draw attention to themselves, but to draw their listeners to Christ. From this faith, they will not be separated even in death ... they have espoused the truth with the ring of faith. This is the character of these ministers, renewed and reformed by the new Spirit with firmness and constancy. They do not pervert the series of truths, saying that some propositions are true, but leaving others aside, or by suggesting rather doubtful propositions which admit of false explanations... It is so necessary to speak clearly and openly...²⁰⁵.

Based on St. Gregory the Great, one aspect of St. Gaspar Bertoni's hope was for a band of competent, specialized ministers of the Word, to assist in the necessary renewal, purification of the Church.

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C. The Apostolic Mission to the Clergy, Religious, Seminarians

Fr. Bragato spoke of the years during which Fr. Bertoni came to the Seminary of Verona to preach to the Priests and Seminarians. A part of Fr. Bragato's testimony reads as follows:

... It usually made such a deep impression on me [during the Retreats preached by Fr. Gaspar in my seminary years] when I would hear of the fruit that the priest was called upon to give by his example: that integrity, seriousness, holiness, that he ought to inspire in all. And this is just what I saw in Fr. Bertoni²⁰⁶.

Fr. Bertoni lived in a period of intense renewal in the Diocese of Verona under a succession of Benedictine Bishops. Fr. Ceresatto wrote about the Stigmatine Founder:

²⁰⁴ cf. Fr. Bertoni, *Meditations on First Kings* - Meditation 20. Mss B 703

²⁰⁵ cf. Nello, II-II, pp. 250, ff.

²⁰⁶ cf. Stofella, *Life of Fr. Bragato*, mss. f. B. - Nello II-II, p. 588.

... As far as the clergy of Verona is concerned, Fr. Bertoni was called by Providence to be their Apostle ... His preached Meditations and Instructions on First Kings resembled a trumpet call concerning the urgent reform of the priestly spirit²⁰⁷.

Good example, the witness of the priestly and religious life, was the "second purpose" for which Fr. Bertoni established the Community²⁰⁸

D. The Apostolic Mission to the Youth: Oratories and Catechism

Fr. Giacobbe, the Stigmatine Founder's first biographer, stated in the Diocesan Process:

... I can recall how Fr. Girardi, Pastor of St. Paul's on a First Communion Day, gave to Fr. Bertoni the responsibility to begin a youth group. From this, Fr. Bertoni began **the Marian Oratories** which then spread to other Dioceses.

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Therefore, Fr. Bertoni served as the Apostolic Missionary in the quality of Preaching, which he offered the diocese in which he was born, lived, died and always loved - with a few outside forays in his life-time. He was likewise the **Apostle to the Clergy, Seminarians and Religious** and served as the **Apostle of Youth**. He dreamed for a good part of his life of a truly dedicated, competent, available group of Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops, anywhere in the Diocese or the world.

He expressed this in some of his Prayers:

Grant that we might come to know the spirit of your Spouse, the Church, so that by knowing her, we might love her; by loving her, we might desire her; and by desiring her, we might open our mouths to recommend her, and our hearts

...

We adore Your most wise government, and we pray You to have us imitate Your Spouse in being conformed to her in everything, and truly to respond to these words of yours ...: 'Whoever wishes to come after Me, let him take up his Cross...'²⁰⁹.

His spirituality saw a key aspect from the life of Jesus in His personal relationship to His Father:

... The correspondence of the elect is manifest with obedience to the Church, diffidence toward oneself, and confidence in Christ, and with working in accord with discipline²¹⁰.

²⁰⁷ cf. Ceresatto, *Life of the Founder*, pp. 172, ff.

²⁰⁸ cf. Nello, "The Plan of Renewal of the Priestly Ministry", p. 221.

²⁰⁹ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Mss B 4933; 4693.

²¹⁰ cf. ib., Mss B 4997.

The sacramentality of God's Will was clearly the needs of the Bishops:

...'Take command, God, as befits Your power, that power, God, You have wielded on our behalf' [cf. Ps 67:28] - so that as we receive the mission, from that one font, through the Catholic Bishops, and sharing in the jurisdiction of that one High Priest, and font of all jurisprudence in our Church, we, too, might share in His firmness ...²¹¹

The Stigmatine Founder nourished a high ideal for a select group of Ministers truly dedicated to the Cause of the Lord:

... The Lord separates and distinguishes in His army a division of perfected workers, in the confession of the true faith, and in the exercise of all the virtues ... This will be a division of heroic workers, imitators of the Apostolic Life. So, with this army of exemplaries, united together to come to the help of their neighbor, and to weaken the forces of evil...²¹²

The Stigmatine Founder was deeply committed to community life, for the sake of prayer and apostolic preparation. He also saw great strength in united forces that come together:

... In preaching and joining with companions and disciples of the same spirit... In this society there should be order; a freedom in all and obedience in all ...²¹³

In Fr. Bertoni's apostolic dream, the Stigmatines are called to be Missionaries - living the life modeled on the first Apostles - their obsequium to the Bishops flows from Christ's loving obedience to His Father.

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E. *In Obsequium*

This expression, which appears in Vatican II, was very dear to the Stigmatine Founder. Some initial idea of it may be had by looking at the use the recent Council made of it:

... Hearing the Word of God with reverence [*obsequium*] and proclaiming it confidently... [cf. DV 1].

... The 'obedience of faith' [cf. Rm 16:26; cf. 1:5; 2 Co 10:5] must be given to God Who reveals, an obedience by which man entrusts his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission [*obsequium*] of intellect and will to God who reveals, and freely assents to the truth revealed by him... [DV 5].

²¹¹ cf. ib., Mss B 6282.

²¹² cf. ib., Mss B 6585.

²¹³ cf. ib., ## 6918; 6920.

The consideration of the word, which is most difficult to translate into English, will follow these directions:

- in Sacred Scripture;
- in the Eucharist;
- in St. Ignatius;
- in Fr. Bertonni.

1. **Usage in Sacred Scripture:** While the contexts in these texts may not help much, perhaps a general idea might be obtained by citing the few texts in which ***obsequium*** is found:

2 K 5:1, ff.:

Naaman, army commander to the king of Aram, was a man who enjoyed his master's respect and favor, but the man was a leper. Now on their raids the Arameans had carried off from the land of Israel a little girl who had become a servant of Naaman's wife.

The text here is not asking one to become a "little girl" in regard to the Church, unless in the context: 'Unless you become as little children...' However, it is asking **the total self-giving of the slave in the interests of the Church** - the great model here could be Paul, the 'slave/servant of Jesus Christ.'

Jn 16:2:

They will expel you from the synagogues and indeed the hour is coming when anyone who kills you, will think he is doing a holy duty for God.

The Latin Vulgate translation here is ***obsequium***. Again, it is not that ***obsequium*** is asking for fanaticism - but, all authentic service in the Church indeed is **a sacred service**. Even in English, 'service' can mean military, social, enforced, free, devotional, etc. The service of the Church in Fr. Bertonni's heart was indeed a holy deference toward God in obedience to the Church.

Rm 9:4:

I would willingly be condemned and be cut off from Christ, if it could help my brothers of Israel, my own flesh and blood. They were adopted as sons, they were given the glory and the covenants, and the ritual was drawn for them, and the promises were made for them...

Here the English translation does not assist us much, in that it better reflects the original text and not the Latin translation. However, the ideal of St. Paul in the earlier part of the text does offer an ideal for the Apostolic Missionary.

Rm 15:31:

... But, I beg you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the Spirit, to help me through the dangers by praying to God for me. Pray that I may escape the unbelievers in Judea, and that the aid I carry to Jerusalem may be accepted by the saints. Then, if God wills, I shall be feeling very happy when I

come to enjoy a period of rest among you. May the God of peace be with you all.

Again there is some insight offered to us by the English translation. Paul was convinced that what he was bringing to Jerusalem was indeed worth while. All that is in the Stigmatine Founder's charism would encourage each of the Apostolic Missionaries to the thought that no matter how poor they make one think that the 'gift to Jerusalem' is, that in God's eyes, it is **united to Jesus** through consecration, and hence, is most worthwhile. Furthermore, there is the characteristic of the early Stigmatine community here, that of sincerely praying for the Mission of one another. This is a form of re-capitulation – *through Christ our Lord*.

2 Co 10:5:

... Our war is not fought with weapons of flesh, yet they are strong enough in God's cause, to demolish fortresses. We demolish sophistries and the arrogance that tries to resist the knowledge of God: every thought is our prisoner, captured to be brought into obedience to Christ...

The great struggle in the Apostolic Mission must be waged in hope. The ultimate reason for the confidence of the Stigmatine Founder was the Wounded and Resurrected Christ. In his charism, the obedience to the Bishops, he thought of, in faith, as obedience of Jesus Christ to His Father, through the Holy Spirit.

Ph 2: 17, 20:

...And then, if my blood has to be shed as part of your own sacrifice and offering - which is your faith - I shall be happy and rejoice with all of you, and you must be just as happy and rejoice with me... It was for Christ's work that [Epaphroditus] came so near to dying, and he risked his life to give me the help that you were not able to give yourselves...

The two-fold use of the term again offers us some insight into our service of Jesus Christ through the Bishops of the world. On the one hand, the ***obsequium episcoporum*** will always be a sacrifice, an offering, an oblation in faith, hope and love. In some senses, the attitude of faith does demand the 'surrender' of the intellect and will, the abandonment of one's entire self to God. It is toward this ideal that we are tending toward the ideal of the Stigmatine Founder.

Secondly, the ***obsequium*** does involve risk - for some it meant the gift of their lives, as in the example of Fr. Matthew Farinati, Fr. Caesare Dolzani, Fr. William Contino: these last two mentioned, IInd World War casualties - and the many Stigmatines who persevered through to the end in a monotonous, though, necessary, useful apostolic service.

Rm 12:1:

... Think of God's mercy, my brothers, and worship him, I beg you, in a way that is worthy of thinking beings, by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God.²¹⁴

This may offer us the most important text in this regard: the 'body' here indicates the whole human person in relation to the world, one's entire life. Through the 'body', our whole existence, the 'world' we all are, in which each lives - offers to God a certain 'area' of each of us, individuals, unique personalities, made to the image and likeness of God. This **holocaust** that each one is invited to offer of each believer's entire life, is unique. All 'sacrifices' in the Old Law came to be associated with the memorial of ancient Israel something that commemorated a past event, tried to improve a present, and instilled hope for the future. What happens in such an offering is that what was originally liturgical turns into fervent eschatology. In sharp contrast with the bloody sacrifices of ancient times, **this one is more closely united to the Eucharist**. This is **a living sacrifice**, oft-repeated, and gradually becomes more and more identified with that one sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

What was at one time liturgical, in the formalized consideration of that - something reserved for special times and for the sacred confines of the Temple, this becomes extended to **the monotony of the daily routine, of all of our human lives**. This broadened idea of '**offertory**', '**sacrifice**', '**oblation**' - would replace any restricting mentality that would restrict prayer totally to the Temple. 'Worship' is now joined to life. There really cannot be any divorce between what is celebrated on the altar, and the life that is lived. It might be said more drastically that either the whole of our Stigmatine lives is worship, and that the assemblies we lead, the classes we teach, the sacramental acts we administer, the discourses we deliver, and all the various aspects of the Ministry of the Word of God that we offer - provide inspiration for an ever further response. Otherwise, there might be a real risk of allowing the apostolate to become more self-serving than a genuine **oblation, offertory - obsequium**. Liturgy alone cannot sustain the Apostolic Mission - even though the Mission certainly will forever need re-charging, nourishment and inspiration. It will be 'confronted' when the Apostolic Missionary truly listens to the word he serves.

Here, in St. Paul, the underlying idea is that the total offering of the Stigmatine life is also 'worship'. What is at stake here is the deeper meaning our Founder had of 'devotion' taken from St. Thomas:

... True devotion consists in the decisive will that is ready to give itself to God, and to be dedicated to those things which pertain to His service²¹⁵.

²¹⁴ Cf. Raymond Corriveau, C.S.R., *The Liturgy of Life. A Study of the Ethical Thought of St. Paul in His Letters to the Early Christian Community*. Paris/Montreal: Desclee/Bellarmin 1970.

²¹⁵ cf. Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, p. 203.

Veneration takes place 'unspiritually', unless there is **conversion of heart**, and, in our charism, one that inspires **renewed apostolic charity, expressed through zeal**. Authentic worship will always mean agreement with God's Will, His praise in thought, will and action. Authentic praise of the Stigmatine will mean to accept the cure of each one's own sorrowful Stigmata - a truly Apostolic Missionary life is the response to the message of the Sacred Stigmata.

St. John reminds us: ***God is spirit, and those who worship, must worship in spirit and in truth*** ... [cf. Jn 4:24]. Adoration of this kind is the Eucharistic Liturgy, which can never be considered as just a ceremony offered by a single celebrant. It becomes alive when all truly 'participate' in it by conversion, and he willingness to be distributed. Even ancient Israel was told:

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart, to sing the praises of God, who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light [cf. Ex 19:6; cf. Rv 5].

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2. **The Stigmatine Life and the Eucharist:**

In a certain sense, it may be said that the vocation of the entire Church - and hence, of all of us is **Eucharistic**. The terminology of the Eucharist is used so often to describe our vocation in particular. One example of this may be found in the Decree of the Council on the Missions:

... Missionaries should fully understand that their life has also been **consecrated** to the service of the missions ... by means of the ministry of the missionaries - which deal principally with the Eucharist as the source of perfecting the Church, they are **in communion with Christ**, the Head, and are leading others to this **communion** ...[AG 39].

In PO, the Church teaches her priests that they in turn, are to instruct the faithful **to offer** to God the Father the divine victim in the sacrifice of the Mass, and to join to it the **offering** of their own lives. This is also in line with the thought of St. Paul: 'Think of God's mercy, and worship him, I beg you, in a way that is worthy of thinking beings - by **offering** your loving bodies as **a holy sacrifice** truly leasing to God' [cf. Rm 12:1, f.]

With these principles in mind, we can very well compare our lives and our vocations to the Eucharist we are offering together. We may consider our lives a religious, as an **offertory**, a **consecration**, and a **communion**.

a. **Offertory:**

In the sacrifice of the Mass, there is the Offertory of very ordinary gifts - and maybe, at times, gifts that we feel are not all that valuable. But, in the Eucharist, these gifts do not have extraordinary features about them - they are but the gifts of

humble worshippers, wanting to share in the one divine sacrifice. By the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the offertory presents are changed profoundly in the consecration. They still look the same, and maybe even feel the same, and they do maintain more or less the same features and blemishes, but whatever their qualities or defects might have been - these are all elevated then to a higher level of existence and purpose. These consecrated gifts then manifest their basic purpose - that of bringing all of God's People together in a united communion.

These characteristics are a fairly good exemplification of our call from God. We all came some years ago to our Congregations, with our ordinary gifts. Maybe, in our own eyes, our gifts might not have been all that wonderful, or seemed very unimpressive - but, God's view of the world and of everyone in it has so often been different from our own. While we do believe, we beg for some share in God's vision of this world and of one another.

Throughout the pages of the OT, the Lord God of heaven and earth spoke of His choice of Israel, and of individuals in the nation. In the words of Isaiah we read:

**... I, Yahweh, have called you to serve the cause of right; I have taken you by the hand and formed you... [Is 42:6]
[You] are my servants whom I have chosen, that men may know and believe me and understand that it is I [cf. Is 43:10]...**

From that biblical revelation on vocation, we learn that we are all very ordinary gifts, and that this was the story with his special servant revealed to us in II - Is. The Book of Dt also speaks on vocation in this light:

... If Yahweh has set his heart on you, and chosen you; it was not because you outnumbered other peoples: you were the least of all peoples. It was for love of you... [cf. Dt 7:7].

He is just asking us to believe this again this day. Our offertory gift is most precious in His eyes - because each of us is struggling to give back to Him all that we have and all that we are, or could be.

Another description of our offertory gift from the pages of Sacred Scripture is this familiar line:

...Do not be afraid - he tells us - for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. Should you pass through the sea, I will be with you... Should you walk through fire, you will not be scorched... Because you are precious in my eyes... and I love you ... [cf. Is 4:1, ff.]

b. Consecration

The lowly and insignificant gifts of ours are then consecrated. The Lord God told Jeremiah, and tells each of us:

...Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you: before you came to birth, I CONSECRATED you... [cf. Jr 1: 4, f].

No matter how lowly, or insignificant we may still feel, we are His, and He loves us. Much like a desert eagle - who saw Israel and everyone of us here - struggling in our own wildemess, He has picked us up; He has elevated us and He is directing us toward etemal communion with Himself.

There is no real consecration without some suffering - everything that was consecrated was then set aside for the worship of the Lord. Worship and sacrifice were so intimately associated in ancient times that they were almost confused. Sacrifice is an offering - recalled before our very eyes, in the separate consecration of the bread and wine, to show the separation of the body and the blood during the sacrifice on Calvary. Therefore all of our sufferings in some way enter into the concept of our offering: so, we read in the Illrd Canticle of the Suffering Servant:

...The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue. So that I may know how to reply to the wearied, he provides me with speech. [cf. Is 50:4]

In this sense, all suffering has an apostolic value - our entire consecration is a two-fold gift: for God, and for humanity.

Again, these Servant Hymns promise us in the words of God Himself:

... My servant will prosper ... he shall be lifted up, and exalted to great heights... [cf. Is 52:13]

The lowly gifts are never the same again - consecration is much like a New Creation: The hand of God has reached down and elevated the lowly humanity with us all, bringing it ever more close to His image and likeness. After consecrating us to His service, He invites us to make this perpetual and final - it is the Church that asks temporary profession. Before God, we are trying to give the best that we have.

The final result of consecration - when our offertory is complete and our sacrifice is truly total - we will be generally liberated from all slavery. We have been called to a service of worship, devotion and continuing dedication - and are being asked to make this last as long as our lives do.

c. Communion

Lastly, our Eucharistic vocation of Hope leads us of its nature to Communion. Our consecrated offertory gifts are mean to serve from now on, in a very special manner, to construct, to build u community: we are meant to 'edify' the People of God, from the experience we all derive of God from our daily struggles. One of the greatest of all of God's servants is the unknown figure in the Book of Consolation of Isaiah. This Servant is told - and these words are being likewise addressed to all of us:

... You are My Servant... in whom I shall be glorified... It is not enough for you to be My servant ..." [cf. Is 49:6].

He is preparing us for the final revelation of Jn 15, where the Servant is truly a friend. Ours is a ministry and a mission of consolation and hope, first to one another, and then to all of God's People.

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Summary

The Eucharist is a Sacrament of Hope and it is the story of our vocation told in symbolic sacramental manner. If we can believe that, can we not at the celebration of the Eucharist - each one of us - begin anew at this "New and Everlasting Covenant", begin all over again?

Can we not make a new offertory procession of the past? Can we believe once more that God truly loves us all, that He will accept our poor offertory gifts? Cannot God Himself consecrate all of the past - remove all the blemishes - and renew all our good points? Cannot this be our offertory - that will be consecrated - elevated from its defects - so that each one of us might be a Sacrament of Hope and Perseverance for whatever it is that might lie ahead of us?

We can ask ourselves this question addressed to another assembly a long time ago:

...And now, Israel, what does Yahweh ask of you? Only this: to fear Yahweh, your God - to follow all His ways, to love Him, to serve Yahweh, your God with ALL your heart, with ALL your soul, and to keep the commandments and laws of Yahweh that for your good I lay down for you TODAY? [cf. Dt 10:12].

The prophet Micah has said it even more simply:

... This is what Yahweh asks of you, only this: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God [cf. Mi 6:8].

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3. Obsequium according to St. Ignatius²¹⁶

In the ideal of St. Ignatius, codified in his Constitutions, there is evident a 'mysticism of service'. The Founder of the Jesuits originally wrote the Constitutions in Spanish, and these were eventually translated into Latin by his secretary, Polanco. For the many, many times that Ignatius used the Spanish words *servir* / *servicio* the translation into Latin used a variety of terms, such as *auxilium* / *auxiliari*, *obsequium* / *obsequi*. If one were to read the Latin text of Part VII, concerning the Missions of the Roman Pontiff, repeatedly the Latin expressions:

²¹⁶ cf. **Appendix III** of this Retreat.

missio, missiones, in obsequium recur so familiar also in the Stigmatine Founder's writings.

The following are a few examples taken from the Rule of St. Ignatius:

...The Jesuit may be able to proceed with greater spiritual energies toward greater service and glory of the Divine Majesty [***ad maius obsequium***].²¹⁷

...Such spiritual coadjutors should also be asked whether, as something characteristic of their vocation, they will be content and at peace, to serve their Creator and Lord in low and humble offices and ministries whatever kind they may be, for the benefit of the house and the Society; and whether they will be ready to spend all the days of their lives in those occupations believing that in this they are serving and praising their Creator and Lord, by doing all things for His divine love and reverence²¹⁸.

The Jesuit Constitutions in which ***obsequium*** is found are very numerous²¹⁹. However, it is particularly in **Part VII** of the Jesuit Rule that is of interest to us - especially in the light of the fact that some understand the Stigmatine Apostolic Mission in this light shed by St. Ignatius, with certain adaptations. St. Ignatius' idea of "Apostolic Mission" is an ***obsequium***, offered to God, to Jesus, to the Holy Spirit, to the Church, to the Roman Pontiff, to the Jesuit Superiors. The following are a few examples taken from that Part VII:

...The [Jesuits] may be sent in some places or others by the Supreme Vicar of Christ, our Lord, or by the superiors of the Society, who for them are similarly in the place of His Divine Majesty; or, they themselves may choose where and in what work they will labor, when they have been commissioned to travel to any place they judge that the greater service of God [***maius Dei et Domini nostri obsequium***] and the good of souls will follow; ... where much fruit of glory and service of God is expected [***ubi magnus divinae gloriae et obsequii***].²²⁰

... [some places are] not conducive to the common good of the Society and the greater service of God [***et maius obsequium Dei*** ..].²²¹

... the Jesuit is to be sent in the manner that His Holiness judges to be a greater service of God and of the Apostolic See [***ad maius Dei et Sedis Apostolicae fore***].²²²

... The Supreme Pontiff may leave it to the superior to judge who would be fit for such a mission; the superior, while pondering the greater universal good ... undertaken in the service of God... [***ad Dei obsequium suscepta***...].²²³

²¹⁷ cf. Constitution SJ # 51

²¹⁸ cf. Constitution SJ # 118.

²¹⁹ What follows here is a partial listing from the Jesuit Constitutions: ## 4; 8; 13; 49; 51; 59; 82; 114; 118; 119; 134; 149; 161; 162; 176; 192; 194; 204; 205; 208; 212; 213; 214; etc.

²²⁰ Constitution SJ # 603.

²²¹ cf. ib., # 608.

²²² cf. ib., # 609.

²²³ cf. ib. # 611.

... The Superior will try to help [the Jesuit] by what further counsels he can, that in everything God our Lord and the Apostolic See may be better served...²²⁴

... The Superior can also be helpful by some instruction, not only in his own Missions, but also in those of His Holiness, in order to attain better the end which is sought in the service of Christ our Lord [*quod ad Christi Domini nostri obsequium quaeritur*...].²²⁵

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There is some small difficulty in the Jesuit structure for those not familiar with St. Ignatius' great gift from God - the Society has **two vows of obedience!** These are the third and also fourth vows. However, on a closer approach to this Missionary charism, one sees that while it is true that all religious by virtue of the vows of Religion, are subject to the Holy Father in a special way - the Fourth Vow of the Jesuits has as its 'matter' **the Apostolic Missions to be assigned by the Holy Father himself**. This would include all the spiritual ministries of the Society without exception, which are in conformity with the end, or purpose of the Company, as spelled out in the *Formula* and in the remainder of the Constitutions which explain this. This *Formula* is made up of Papal constitutions approving the Company of Jesus.

For the Stigmatines the *Compendium Rude*, the fundamental paragraphs that introduce the Original Constitutions, serve as a kind of *Formula*. Then the rest of the Constitutions serve to spell these paragraphs out in more detail.

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4. In the Writings of St. Gaspar Bertoni

In his description of the Stigmatine charism, the Stigmatine Founder very often uses the word *obsequium*, as has been noted. He uses this word in relation to God, to Christ, the Eucharistic *obsequium*, toward the Word of God, Mary, the Church and authority. The following are a few examples of this:

a. Toward God:

...It is easy to estimate how deep is your love, how great your hunger for the Divine Word, the fervor of your wanting to serve [*ossequio divino*] God - when you must meet head on the very strong attractions of this world.²²⁶

...Put before your mind's eye a King, divinely chosen, to whom all the Christian leaders and people owe reverence and service [*ossequio*]...²²⁷

...The third grouping of individuals would be those ready to surrender even the most sincere affection, and equally disposed to retain or give up something -

²²⁴ cf. ib. # 612.

²²⁵ cf. ib. # 614.

²²⁶ St. Gaspar Bertoni, *Pagine di Vita Cristiana* [PVC], Sermon 16, p. 262.

²²⁷ St. Gaspar Bertoni, *Retreat to Priests and Seminarians: The Reign of Christ - CS I*, p. 167.

depending on what would be the more convenient for the divine service [ossequio].²²⁸

In this divine ***ossequio***, Fr. Bertoni found apt expression for his "Holy Abandonment" - he would at times, quote the words of St. Paul on the way to Damascus: Lord, what do YOU want me to do? [cf. Ac 9:6].²²⁹

The word ***ossequio*** is noted throughout in the Stigmatine Founder's meditation on faith, as did St. Thomas Aquinas in his theological explanations of Faith:

... To believe is an obeisance [***ossequio***] that the intelligent creature offers to its Creator: an obeisance [***ossequio***] that is not stupid, not thoughtless, but one that is most reasonable ... Faith is indeed glorious for the ones whose reason is the most beautiful aspect of nature. This is the oblation that St. Paul speaks of: ***rationabile obsequium vestrum*** [cf. Rm 12:1]. By believing, one makes a servant of his intellect in regards to the Faith [cf. 2 Co 1:5], but this 'slavery' does not proceed from weakness nor from ignorance. St. John Chrysostom says that such a surrender is a characteristic of one who is indeed generous, and of truly philosophical bent of mind, one that is truly sublime and above the ordinary mentality...²³⁰

For students of theology and Vatican II, this ***obsequium of the intellect and will***, this 'surrender' is one of the expressions of Vatican I, to describe the workings of grace within an individual accepting the faith. The act of faith is an 'obedience', an obeisance, an 'abandonment' of one's entire self to God [cf. DV 5].

... to readily follow the impulse of the Holy Spirit; to offer from this moment on your hearts to Jesus Who is asking them of you; to make the firm resolution to serve from now on, for the rest of the days of your life, that God Who merits so much your best service [ossequio].²³¹

... It should be said that those who would like to dedicate themselves entirely to the service [ossequio] of God, should not only make the offer to accept the fatigue to do so. Their offering should rather be one of ever greater undertakings and activities... Here one sees at least the rough outlines of what went on in Christ and in His Apostles; and right now there is more need than ever for something like this...²³²

b. Toward Jesus Christ

Fr. Bertoni presents the Sorrowful Wounds of Jesus Christ as an incentive for his listeners to offer their ***obsequium*** to Him:

²²⁸ cf. id., Mss B # 2538.

²²⁹ cf. Nello, p. 154.

²³⁰ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, MSS B 1555.

²³¹ cf. PVC, p. 205 - Sermon II, On Devotion.

²³² cf. Nello, II, p. 144

... This is how the Just Man dies, in a most torturous manner, condemned by the most unjust sentence after a most terrible betrayal. This is how the sufferings of Jesus came to an end. However, His enemies even wound His dead body. They open with a lance His right side with a gaping wound which pierces His heart and His other wise... Would that we could have received that dead and bloody body to make up for this most atrocious wrong, with the just offering [*ossequio*] of tears...²³³

... St. Ignatius suggests: poverty, disdain for oneself, humility. The chosen must first achieve a spiritual affection for poverty [cf. Ignatius, 46]. : 'Blessed are the Poor in spirit' [cf. Mt 5:3]. Moreover, if the reason of the divine service [*ossequio*] and election are understood, this will lead one to follow after Him with the same poverty [cf. Ignatius, 146]: 'If you wish to be perfect, go sell what you have, give it to the poor, and come follow Me!'²³⁴.

c. **Toward the Spirit of Love**

All of this forms "a Law of the Spirit" and of love - which Law essentially consists in the grace of the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, this requires that to the internal affections and motions of the heart, there is to be added the external service [*ossequio*] of the tongue and the even more solemn deeds of the hand.

d. **Toward the Most Blessed Sacrament:**

St. Mechtilde attests that the Son of God appeared to her once and ordered her to venerate in every way possible by obeisance [*ossequio*] toward the divine sacrament, His most sacred Heart - and that there was nowhere any book which could contain all the favors that derive from this devotion ... similar sentiments of obeisance [*ossequio*] we read having been lived by saints Bernard, Bonaventure, Brigid, Frances of Rome, Francis de Sales and by many, many other individual favored by God.²³⁵

e. **Toward the Divine Word:**

... One walks worthily of this vocation, submitting our intellect with humble obeisance [*ossequio*] to believe the divine Word:

- with all humility: by not resisting with obstinate contradiction the authoritative judgments of the legitimate shepherds who have a right from God Himself to propose this to us and to explain its true meaning.

- with 'meekness': overcoming with unshakable patience the calumnies, the ridicule, the opposition that came to us from the enemies of the faith and of the peace of the Church.

- 'patience': and assisting us with mutual love to walk, carrying the burdens of one another. In this way, we all walk together in the same vocation, supporting one another in charity. Be solicitous to maintain the unity of spirit.

²³³ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Sermon 4 - The Passion, in: PVX p. 186.

²³⁴ id, "The Standard of Christ", in: CS I, p. 191.

²³⁵ cf. Nello II, p. 185; Mss B 1760.

By the grace of God, this unity of spirit, or of the faith, we do possess: what we must do is conserve it, keep it...²³⁶

f. Toward Mary:

... It seems to me that Mary herself wishes to bring together on this special day, such a most pleasing service [ossequio].²³⁷

... O venerable Name of Mary! With what profound obeisance [ossequio] should not this Name be pronounced by us from now on. Wretched sinners that we are, with how much confidence can we not invoke this Name! Since she does have such authority of dominion over the person of her Son - then how can she not be the Mistress of all His wealth, of that immense sea of grace and mercies?

g. Toward the Church;

It is here that the Stigmatine charism is distinguished - in dedicated availability to the Church, through her Bishops. This was Fr. Bertoni's way of following after/ imitating/ putting on the mind of Jesus Christ, in His personal relationship of loving obedience to His Father, and total self-giving to His Spouse, the Church:

... It is necessary, therefore, to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ Who once emanated the Commandments of the Decalogue, and Who in our time, instructs and governs the hierarchical Church [Ignatius, Rule 13, *Sentire cum Ecclesia*]
 ...²³⁸

At one period of his life, Fr. Bertoni was assigned by his Bishops to assist a number of priests trying to make their way back, through conversion, to the full living of their vocations... Among his sermons of those times, the following passage may be found:

... Jesus of Nazareth went down to Nazareth and 'He was subject to them'. The life of obedience is clearly the way to perfection... How much disobedience is there not found among priests! Disobedience to Pastors, to Spiritual Directors, if indeed they have any - to the Bishops, to the Pope, to the Church - in whose place they put themselves, and re-interpret their orders, and prove to be so upsetting... Their 'freedom' is their withdrawal from obeying Christ, Who so humbly commands through the mouth of His Vicar on earth, and those superiors united to His Vicar in faith and charity; while they throw off a yoke that is sweet, light, gentle and glorious - they seek one that is much more harsh, heavy, inexorable, shameful ...²³⁹

²³⁶ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Sermon 35, in: PVC, pp. 259, ff.

²³⁷ cf. id., PVC p. 302.

²³⁸ Quoted by Fr. Bertoni in his Retreat to Priests and Seminarians, in: CS I, p. 244.

²³⁹ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Retreat to Priests: "The Private Life of Jesus", in: CS I, p. 182.

Fr. Bertoni was disposed to undertake **any Ministry of the Word of God whatsoever**, always trusting in the voice of his ecclesiastical superior. As a diocesan priest, he certainly recognized in this voice the voice of God ²⁴⁰.

For Fr. Bertoni, **obedience, or the assistance, service of Bishops**, was but the logical conclusion of his fundamental spiritual principle of holy abandonment:

...You should not precede, but only follow the Lord, Who illumines your path, and will suggest to you which way to follow, once you have asked Him, and in what manner you should proceed and correspond ²⁴¹.

††

5. **Episcoporum** :

There are three points that can be considered here:

- a. **The Legitimate Interpreters of the Word of God are the interpreters of the Stigmatine Apostolate.**
- b. **The Priesthood in Fr. Bertoni's Plan.**
- c. **The Expression: "More than others" in the Stigmatine Service of Bishops.**

††

a. **The Bishops: The Legitimate Interpreters of the Word of God - the Legitimate Interpreters of the Stigmatine Charism:**

Being a Diocesan Priest, and a confidant of a series of Bishops of Verona, who had Church renewal high on their list of priorities, Fr. Bertoni made this great sense of fidelity to the "Local Church" an essential and determining part of his charism. The Bishops, he deeply believed, were appointed by the same Holy Spirit Who inspired the Scriptures [ac. Ac 20:28; cf. CF # 185]. As they are the legitimate interpreters of God's Word, for Fr. Bertoni, they are also the interpreters of the way the Stigmatine would serve the Church, **through the various and proper ministries** of the Stigmatine vocation, as envisaged in the Original Constitutions ²⁴² - based almost entire on *De Religione Societatis Iesu*, by Fr. Francis Suarez, SJ. In a way, the 'epiphany' of God's Will for him was the Bishop's apostolic needs.

1.] Fr. Bertoni looked on the apostolate clearly through the eyes of his faith:

...Obedience to the Church in her Prelates ... that which the Church proposes is not based on human judgment alone, but on the divine... ²⁴³.

²⁴⁰ This is the testimony of Fr. Cajetan Borsaatti, Prison Chaplain - cf. *Summarium Additionale*, pp; 119, ff.; Nello, II, p. 499.

²⁴¹ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, *Memoriale Privato* [MP], January 12, 1811.

²⁴² cf. CF # 185.

²⁴³ St. Gaspar Bertoni, Mss B # 4998; cf. also Nello, II, p. 191

a.] For Fr. Bertoni, the Magisterium is a God-given instrument to offer powerful assistance in interpreting the divine will:

... Through the Magisterium of the Church, 'the divine will of sign' becomes manifest, in what concerns the reprobation, or destruction of what is merely human interpretation - and also in what pertains to the renewal and restoration of the divine spirit in her ministers...²⁴⁴.

b.] According to the Ecclesiology of the times, he saw the great need for One Church - as in our own time, there is the problem of "Parallel Magisterial", rejected by Pope John Paul II at Puebla, and many times since. In Fr. Bertoni's time, with its political and doctrinal situation, he saw the ideal of a united Church:

... Whoever makes two Churches, i.e., whoever would set up a party that would think differently from the Roman Church, is outside the true Church...²⁴⁵.

2.] With great faith in the Magisterium, he did not think that those called to serve in that way had any other reason for being. He saw the great need for prayer in the members of the hierarchy, being entrusted with "the sure charism of truth" [cf. DV 8]:

...A Pastor must be a man of prayer. Such a person encounters reality in the way the Providence of God has decreed it. The man of prayer, therefore, is not precipitous, impulsive: he sees all as ordered, tranquil. He awaits the right moment, and for the proper combinations of circumstances. To have the proper lights that give confidence, confirmation, that reach to the right understanding concerning the choices that are in accord with God, deep prayer is necessary in Prelates...²⁴⁶

a.] His synthesis of the Apostolic Mission is summarized as **a service of the Church of the Vicar of Christ - through the Bishops**. He once prayed:

...'take command, God, as befits your power, that power, God, you have wielded in our behalf' [cf. Ps 69:29] - so that we, through the Catholic Bishops, might share in the firmness of that one High Priest and source of all jurisdiction in your Church ...²⁴⁷

Behind these words there is some indication that Fr. Bertoni may have held as his own theological opinion, one that was at variance with his own, Bishop Liruti. The Bishop had written in a public document [dated: February 11, 1811] that every

²⁴⁴ cf. id., Mss B; Nello II, p. 223.

²⁴⁵ cf. id., Mss B. # 6040; cf. also Nello, p. 257.

²⁴⁶ cf. Mss. B, # 6192 - cf. also Nello, II, p. 285.

²⁴⁷ cf. Mss B # 6282.

Bishop receives his jurisdiction directly from God. For Fr. Bertoni, the jurisdiction came to Bishops through the mediation of the Pope ²⁴⁸. Hence, his real intention was the full service of the Church, the Vicar of Christ, but always through the Bishops.

b.] In his spirituality, the Stigmatine Founder looked on obedience as one of the surest signs of the presence of the Spirit, a basic Ignatian principle:

... The sign which confirms all the others is the presence of the Holy Spirit - with Whom one receives the grace of the Word, the affection and effectiveness, together with charity and the love of the Word. A sign of the fullness of the Holy Spirit is the excelling humility - the sign of excellent humility is perfect obedience, which is the sign of signs, i.e., the seal of all other testimonies...²⁴⁹.

Here we are close to the kernel of Fr. Bertoni's spirituality: he simply rejects any claim to the authentic presence of the Spirit where there is not first the evidence of humble submission to authority. One cannot pretend to be docile to God if he is not first docile to his ecclesial superiors ²⁵⁰

c.] In the terrible struggle to share the message of Jesus Christ, Fr. Bertoni commented on a passage from Job:

...'Is not man's life on earth nothing more than pressed service, his time no better than hired drudgery' [cf. Jb 7:1]. Each one of the faithful is like a soldier in the struggle, and the Pastor is like a Captain...²⁵¹.

d.] The lack of obedience, dedicated, united service - eventually leads to division:

...Anyone who is called to be a Shepherd in relation to his own flock is, in his turn, a Lamb in relation to the Supreme Shepherd. Such Shepherds are called to live among their sheep, as sheep themselves of the First Shepherd, who is 'the Servant of the Servants of God' towards the faithful. Sane doctrine, which is in accord with that of the First Shepherd, removes vice: 'Where two or three are gathered in my Name, there I am in the midst of them' [cf. Mt 18:20]. Otherwise, the result would be schism, which defeats the Holy Spirit²⁵².

3.] Fr. Bertoni nurtured a profound respect for Bishops throughout his entire life:

²⁴⁸ cf. Nello, II, p. 287, Note # 109.

²⁴⁹ cf. Mss B # 6441.

²⁵⁰ cf. Nello II, p. 289.

²⁵¹ cf. Mss B # 6534; cf. also Nello, II, p. 339.

²⁵² cf. Mss B # 6660; cf. also Nello II, p. 343

... however, since I already knew from other sources that the Bishop intended me to obey him alone in this, I did not act upon other orders. I did want to write to you about all this, but had to wait for further clarification from the Bishop...²⁵³.

††

b. The Priesthood and the Apostolic Mission in Fr. Bertoni's Plan

1.] It is true that the IInd Vatican Council has abolished every form of 'class' in the religious life - and it is also true that Pope Paul VI's Encyclical, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, has intensified, broadened our idea of 'evangelization.' Nonetheless, there are still some aspects of the Ministry of the Word requiring sacramental orders. Some of these apostolates would be the Eucharistic Homily and Sacramental Reconciliation.

a.] In the time of the Stigmatine Founder, almost every middle class home had its 'servants', as did every wealthy family. This idea of "class" in societies in which the monarchical system of government was still a vivid memory, all this had a profound influence on religious life.

b.] It is also most true that individuals are eminently products of their times. This is particularly so of the Stigmatine Founder, who might indeed be contrasted with the original thinker, his contemporary, Fr. Anthony Rosmini. There is no doubt that Fr. Bertoni, perhaps somewhat timid, reflective by nature, was surely a creature of his own history.

c.] However, it does not seem that the Stigmatine Founder's insistence on the specific role of the priesthood was solely from the aspect of a society steeped in the 'class' system. It seems, rather that the importance of the priesthood in the Original Constitutions derived from its central idea, the **Apostolic Missionaries for the assistance of Bishops**.

d.] In that part of the rule where the Founder begins to 'spell out' the specifics of the Apostolic Mission, we find the following:

... [The members who would become 'Apostolic Missionaries' will be characterized as follows:

- by the taking on of the clerical state, and being endowed with every disposition that they might do this with perfection²⁵⁴;
- they will be assigned to the administration of the Sacraments, especially that of Penance and the Eucharist, along with the celebration of Holy Mass to obtain the fruit of the Missions, of the preaching, and of the confessions²⁵⁵.

²⁵³ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Ep, pp. 28, ff.; cf. also Nello II, p. 427.

²⁵⁴ cf. CF # 161; cf. also # 49.

²⁵⁵ cf. CF # 162.

2.] As is well known, the Stigmatine Founder spoke of this characteristic:

...Fr. Galvani, who is said to be totally Ignatian, has offered me the Stimate as an opportune place to establish a Congregation of priests who would live under the Rules of St. Ignatius²⁵⁶.

Most Holy Father ... the least of Your servants, the under-signed - priest, with a few of his companions, living the priestly and common life, for 22 years have served the Spouse of Christ gratuitously. We do this to honor in this Spouse the common Creator and Savior of us all... And this is my own firm decision, as well as that of my companions: to spend ourselves totally in serving Our Lord and His Church, if He thinks us worthy to do so...²⁵⁷.

3.] While the Society of Jesus was being assembled in its General Congregation to discuss this problem of the abolition of classes, striving to remain faithful at one and the same time to their fundamental charism, as well as to Vatican II, they received this Letter from Pope Paul VI, dated December 3, 1974 [Feast of St. Francis Borgia]. In part the Pope's Letter reads:

... Where do you come from? Who are you? Where are you going?... We speak to you in the name of Christ and - as you like to consider us - as the highest Superior of the Society, by reason of the special bond which from the time of its foundation, always links the Society itself to the Roman Pontiff..

We know, therefore, who you are... you are members of a religious, apostolic, priestly order, united by a special bond with the Roman Pontiff, a bond of love, and of service, in the manner described in the Formula of the Institute...

... You are religious ... You are, furthermore, apostles, i.e., missionaries ... and the very diversity of ministries to which the Society is dedicated, draws from such sources its most profound reason for that apostolic life, which always must be lived in the 'full sense.'....

Then, you are also priests: this, too, is an essential characteristic of the Company, while not forgetting the ancient and legitimate tradition of the excellent Brothers. Even though not endowed with sacred orders, they, too, have played an honored and effective role in the Company.

...However, the priesthood was formally required by the Founder for the Religious elevated to the 'Professed.' There is good reason for this - because the priesthood is necessary for the Order established by him, which has for its principal purpose the sanctification of human beings through the Word and sacraments...

²⁵⁶ cf. Letter 54, in: Ep p. 130.

²⁵⁷ St. Gaspar Bertoni, Letter to Pope Gregory XVI, in: Ep p. 340.

... Effectively, the priestly character is required by your dedication to the apostolic life, we repeated, understood in the 'full sense': by the very charisma of the Priestly Order, which configures one to Christ, sent by the Father. This is the heart of the Mission, to which as Jesuits, you are deputed, flows principally from this.

You are therefore, priests... who administer the grace of God with the sacraments, priests who receive the power, and have the duty to participate organically in the apostolic work of nourishment and of union of the Christian community, especially with the celebration of the Eucharist...

... Finally, you are united to the Pope by a special vow ...

††

4.] In the plan of the Stigmatine Founder, the **Apostolic Missionaries** are born **for the assistance of Bishops** - collaborators in the Mission of the Apostles. The hierarchical authority, as it is presently exercised, served for the Stigmatine Founder as the sacramentality, the 'epiphany', of the power of Christ, the Lord. In this power, and by means of this power, Jesus Himself gathers, sanctifies and governs His own in the Gift of the Word and of His Holy Spirit. The Shepherds of the Church in history have been placed in their authority, also by the grace of the Holy Orders received. This gives them a share in the power of the fullness of the Priesthood enabling them to act in a particular manner, in the Name of Christ, the Head. The Sacrament gives to Bishops some of the spiritual power over the Body of Christ, the Church, the People of God. By divine institution the sacrament of Orders is the formal determining principle of the hierarchical communion of the Church. This sharing in the power of Christ enables the Bishops to act in the Name of Christ over the Body of Christ: both the People of God and the Eucharist.

a.] In the Stigmatine Founder's ideal, the members submit humbly in their vocation to this hierarchical authority, thus offering also to the Church a witness of the submission of Jesus to His heavenly Father. Furthermore, in the words of the Founder himself [cf. CF # 2], the Stigmatine receives from the hierarchy the power to continue the personal mission of Christ to gather, to sanctify and to lead the People of God to the Father.

b.] The Stigmatines do not make a special vow of obedience to the Bishops because it is simply juridically impossible, if they are to remain 'religious' and not Diocesan Oblates. However, the Stigmatine is called in his 'difficult vocation' to offer a dedicated obedience', one that is determined in a totally special manner, one that is outstanding in its service to the Bishops - this is Fr. Bertoni's own phrase. This covers all that pertains to the apostolic Mission. The ***obsequium*** of the Stigmatine has as its object that which concerns the **Apostolic Mission**²⁵⁸.

²⁵⁸ cf. also Constitutions SJ, n. 527.

c.] The Church herself is the 'fomal Founder' of the Congregation - the originality of the Stigmatine community resides in the **total abandonment** to God, exteriorly expressed through **availability** to the Bishops of the Church, the Spouse of Christ. The Stigmatine Congregation was born to fulfill the **Apostolic Mission** for the assistance of Bishops. In the original vision of the Founder, there is the configuration to Jesus, sent by the Father for the redemption of the world, through the suffering of His Sacred Stigmata. This is why Jesus 'offers' Himself [cf. Rm 8:32; Jn 3:16. and is 'consecrated' by the Father [cf. Jn 10:14, 18; 17:19], and is 'distributed', as the High priest, Servant of the Father - self-sacrificing Spouse of the Church [cf. Ep 5: 21, ff.]

d.] The universal character of the **Apostolic Mission** is expressed in geographical terms [*quocumque*] - in terms of personnel, involving every single Stigmatine [*quicumque*] - and is expressed in pastoral terms, b y the vocation to be prepared as a body to assume any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever [*quodcumque*]. It is a share in the **Apostolic Mission** - the one Jesus received from His Father, and shared with His Apostles, which implies gratuity as an ideal. It is firmly rooted in the Eucharist and in the sacramental life of the Church. For the basically 'sacramental' purpose of the mission, the Stigmatine Founder saw his community as 'sacerdotal.'

e.] Very often, the term 'clerical', in this context, has proven to assume a pejorative meaning. However, the original purpose of the Stigmatine Founder is often clouded in the heated and justified discussions that do ensue regarding his charism - however, 'clericality' should not be discussed just from within the Congregation and its own history - but, far more by looking at the **Apostolic Mission** in St. Gaspar Bertoni's ideal.

f.] In the Stigmatine ideal, there is a plurality of ministries, and a variety of members - but, all united, as the Most Holy Trinity, in the Plan of Creation, Redemption and sanctification. The Stigmatine Founder's repeated insistence on the priestly ministry seems to have been inspired by his idea of **Apostolic Mission**. Collaboration in the Mission of Evangelization committed to the Church by her Founder, and a share in the very Mission of Jesus Christ: this pertains to all the baptized, consecrated as each one is in Jesus Christ, into His death and resurrection [cf. Rm 6:1, ff.].

g.] However, to promise a full obedience to Bishops for the Mission of the Church also means to be dedicated to **the various and proper ministries** of the Congregation, in behalf of the Church, the Spouse of Christ. The principal ministries, as these are presented by the Founder, are sacramental.

5.] In the process of discernment for the acceptance of apostolates, it would seem in the light of these reflections that the **various and proper ministries** can only be accepted if in some way they further the central apostolates that have emerged in the history of the Congregation: specialized

preaching, the assistance of priests, religious and seminarians - and the apostolate to the youth, in its various aspects.

a.] The competent service of the Divine Word demands grace, and great personal commitment to it. The Stigmatine **Apostolic Mission** calls for a life- long spiritual growth, an on-going intellectual development.

b.] Any meditation on the Stigmatine **Apostolic Mission** would show that the **various and proper ministries** of this vocation, means a committed service offered to the Eternal father, through the Holy Spirit, in Jesus Christ, Priest-Servant and Spouse, in obedience to the Bishops of the Church.

c.] All the members of the Stigmatine Congregation, without exception, are dedicated to the same Mission of Jesus Christ, in differing ways - all Stigmatines are consecrated to God to serve the one Apostolic Mission of the universal Church, that of leading humanity to the Most Blessed Trinity, through holiness and apostolic competence.

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c. "More than others"

The XXIXth General Chapter of 1970, the Extra-ordinary General Chapter called for the renewal of the Constitutions [and also to elect a successor to the Very Rev. Gilbert Fini, CSS, who died in office in the 4th year of his second term as Superior General] decided on the following for the second 'Fundamental Constitution':

...The Congregation is for the assistance of bishops more than the other institutes, because of a more acute missionary sensibility to the needs of dioceses...

The subsequent General Chapter in 1976, thought better of this reading, and among its "Guidelines for the Pre-Capitular Commission" [n. 11], there was this following directive:

...Constitution 2: Keep the content, but take out the competitive spirit, which seems to be behind the expression *more than others*.

This same difficulty had been confronted a number of times in the history of the Society of Jesus. The Company of Jesus is called to the **"greater" service** of the Roman Pontiff. The Jesuit theologian, Francis Suarez, discussed this matter specifically several centuries ago²⁵⁹, and offered this consideration:

...14. In obedience to the Roman Pontiff, the Society does enjoy something proper ... In the early institution of this community, this is evident in the words

²⁵⁹ Fr. Francis Suarez, *De Religione Societatis Iesu*, Lib. I, c. II, n. 14. Paris: Viv es 1860, pp. 567 a - 567 b.

of the Pontiffs who approved it... In no other religious communities is there found this proposal, and one that is repeated so many times. Obedience to the Pope is the primary scope of this community.

...This may be clarified further. No other religious institute consecrates itself to this means of a special vow. The Society of Jesus does this by a special vow, by which is Professed oblige themselves to obey the Pontiff in the **Missions** for the salvation of humanity, and the defense or spread of the faith.

This does not mean that all the religious of the Society take this vow - they who do profess it, comprise the principal part of the Society; the work they do responds to the principal purpose for which the Society was founded...

1.] A Bit of History

a.] In the initial discussions concerning their Constitutions, the Companions of Ignatius, under his leadership, discussed the particular obedience of the Jesuits concerning their Apostolic Mission toward the Roman Pontiff. This difficulty of serving the Pope 'the more' [cf. *ad maiorem Dei Gloriam*] surfaced. The question was resolved as it came up. They say very clearly that all the members of the Church, incorporated into Christ through Baptism, owe obedience to the Pope. However the phrases used to resolve the dilemma are found in the Formula which prefaces the Jesuit Constitutions:

...For the **greater** devotion to the obedience to the Apostolic See, for a **greater** abnegation of our wills, and for **a sure direction** of the Holy Spirit.

In the spirituality of the Stigmatine Founder, there is a parallel ideal: in the reverential acceptance of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, there is the profession of faith that the Holy Spirit will guide the Congregation more surely by means of the bishops²⁶⁰.

b.] St. Bonaventure offers this reason for a second, special vow for the Franciscans: even if all the clergy, and all religious are firmly held to obey, there can still be **a special obedience**, in so far as from such an act of faith, consecrated, then, but faithful service there would be received a particular grace and merit²⁶¹.

2.] The Spiritual Exercises preached by the Stigmatine Founder [taken from those of St. Ignatius] require a submission to the Church by all the faithful - however, the **specific** 'Stigmatine' submission is found in the community's **availability to the Bishops**, concerning the **Apostolic Mission**, according to Fr. Lenotti. This is meant to emulate the **abandonment of Jesus to His Heavenly**

²⁶⁰ cf. A discussion on this point, in: *La Formula dell'Istituto SJ. Recherches* 12. Rome: CIS 1977, pp. 75, ff.

²⁶¹ cf. *Insuper Promitto. Los votos solemnes peculiares del nos Ordenes.* J.G. Harbatz. Roma: CSJ 1963, p. 105.

Father. It is in the 'spirit' of the *Original Constitutions* not to have the 'ordinary' care of parishes, chaplaincies of Convents, in the canonical structures that were in vogue at that time. The juridical climate is much changed now, and so often parishes are mission centers for a very varied apostolate - and chaplaincies often have associated with them professorships, or other missionary endeavors. The Stigmatine spirit was one of 'mobility', **availability** - the willingness to move on. Stigmatine obedience, in the ideal, implies the **more than ordinary** - its 'specificity' is found in the fact that service of the Church, in availability to its Bishops, strives to live out an aspect of the life of Christ, namely His relationship within the Trinity. The **Apostolic Mission** of the Stigmatine is meant to be a competent effort at evangelization and sanctification.

3.] Surely, in the light of the IInd Vatican Council [cf. LG 22], and its recent documents²⁶² - there is little doubt that every ecclesiastical mission flows from the source of divine love.²⁶³ In the light of this love, all the faithful are called to obey the Church - and the recent Magisterium will say 'especially priests and religious.' Nevertheless, even with these enjoinders, **Stigmatine submission is meant to retain a particular, special character.** Stigmatine obedience is directed primarily toward the **Apostolic Mission**, offered for the Assistance of **Bishops**. Stigmatine '**service**' [*obsequium*] places an entire Congregation at the service of Bishops, with a promised competence and particular dedication, the on-going preparation of its members, for any form of the Ministry of the Word of God whatsoever, especially: preaching, the assistance of priests, seminarians and religious - and youth work. Without any sense of triumphalism, the Stigmatine vocation is invited to offer heroic witness to ecclesial obedience.

4.] This **Apostolic Mission for the assistance of Bishops** will always remain deeply a part of the Church - by the very injunction of seeking the faculties from the local Ordinaries, or remaining faithfully within the scope of the permissions received - all of these prescriptions offer some insight into the mind of the Founder. The place of the Stigmatine community in the Church is based on the relationship of Jesus to His Father, and the resulting free and personal choice of each Stigmatine to act solely in the name of the Church, under obedience to the Bishops. While all that pertains to the interior religious life is in some way 'exempt' from the local Ordinaries, the **Apostolic Mission for the Assistance of Bishops** offers a variety and proper ecclesial service entrusted to the Congregation in the strength of its vocation, in the name of the Church.

5.] The hierarchical constitution of the Church is more expressly based on the sacramental economy, and notably on the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Orders. The tie between the apostolic obedience of the Stigmatine to the Bishops is based on the authority of the Bishops chosen by the Holy Spirit. Stigmatine obedience, particularly now in the light of *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, which speaks of the

²⁶² cf. *Mutuae Relationes*. Pentecost 1978, n. 4: The Bishops and Religious intent on the one Mission of the People of God].

²⁶³ cf. AG 2; cf. also *Enchiridion Vaticanum* VI, pp. 432-509.

'first apostolate' of religious being 'witness' - can offer a 'catechesis', a lived expression of these truths.

Conclusion

The Stigmatine spirit in this regard was expressed well over a century ago by Fr. Lenotti, to the Stigmatine Novices of another time.

...It may be seen clearly what the intention of Fr. Bertoni really was - that of instituting a Congregation, which - like the Company of Jesus - in a special manner is dedicated, directed to the service [*ossequio*] and to the dispositions of the Roman Pontiff; then, this Congregation would be dedicated and determined in a totally special and outstanding manner to the service and obeisance [*ossequio*] of Bishops...²⁶⁴

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²⁶⁴ cf. CS III, p. 409.

[III.] A PLAN for *APOSTOLIC MISSIONARIES*.**Compendium Rude CF ## 1-8]**

FINIS	GENERALIS	A.M.D.G.	TRINITY		
			EUCHARIST		
		SALUS ET PERFECTIO	MEMBRORUM		
			PROXIMORUM		
	SPECIALIS	AD INTRA	PROFECTUS SUPSIUS		
			PROFECTUS IN DOCTRINIS ECCLESIASTICS		
			PROFECTUS JURIDICUS		
		AD EXTRA	MISSIO APOSTOLICA [CF 1]	JUVENTUS	
				CLERUS, CONSECRATI	
				QUODCUMQUE DEI VERBUM	
			MODALITAS MISSIONARIA [CF 2]	LICENTIAM PRIUS	
				CUM FACULTATIBUS	
		SERVATA ORDINARIORUM MODERATIONE			
QUALITATES	GRATIS [CF 3; 184]				
	IMMUNITAS [CF 4; 290]				
	QUOCUMQUE [CF 5; 193; 245]				
PROFECTUS	SPIRITUALIS [CF 6a]				
	INTELLECTUALIS [CF 6b; cf. Ps 118; 1Tm 4:16; CF 127] [<i>attende tibi et doctrinae 2 Tm 4 :16</i>]				
	JURIDICUS: Postulans – Novitius [CF 7a]	SCHOLASTICUS			
		COADJUTOR	MATERIALIS		
		MISSIONARIUS APOSTOLICUS	SPIRITUALIS		
	[CF # 7 b; Pars IX ## 158-186]				
	APOSTOLICUS [CF 7b]	GRAVIORA			
		ACCOMODATA			
USQUE AD PERFECTUM OPUS SACERDOTALE					
OBEDIENTIA CORPORATIVA [CF 8]: Praelatus ad Vitam					

[Per *EXPERIMENTA* Ignatiana i.e., Exercitium progressivum variarum Missionum

[CSJ nn. 64-70] [CF ## 72-76][CF 38: Novitiatus;

[CF ## 41, 42: Post Novitiatum];

CF 89, Concl. to Part VII] - Ad SACERDOTIUM – et solum post lungas ultiores [20 annos??]

EXPERIENTIAS, ad PROFESSIONEM Solemnem [cf.PART IX]

[1] Exercitia Spiritualia [30 dies]

[2] In xenodochis [30 dies]

[3] Peregrinatio [30 dies]

[4] In officiis abjectis

[5] In Catechismo

[6] Praedicatio [variae formae], Sacramenta

PART	NUMBER [##]	Content
I	9-26	Pre-MISSION
II	27-39	Ad-MISSION
III	40-46	(Probation) For-MISSION
IV	47-58	(Progression) Progressive-MISSION
V	69-82	(1 st Promotion) First-MISSION
VI	83-89	[Vows in General] 1 st E-MISSION
VII	90-151	(Vows: In Particular) 2 nd E-MISSION
VIII	152-157	(<i>Schola Affectus</i>) In-MISSION
IX	158-186	Apostolic MISSION
X	187-266	[Charity] Co-MISSION
XI	267-297	(Communication) Trans-MISSION
XII	298-314	[Corporative Obedience] Sub-MISSION

CONTEMPLATIO AD SPEM!

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