

Appendix II

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

The Influence of St. Thomas Aquinas in St. Gaspar Bertoni’s Charism” Missionarii Apostolic in OBSEQUIUM Episcoporum: Abandonment to God, Availability to the Church

Introduction:

Before the final approval of LG 25 - so much discussed subsequently - a very particular scrutiny was given to some of the expressions:

*... fideles autem in sui Episcopi sententiam de fide et moribus nomine Christi prolatam concurrere, eique religioso animi **obsequio** adhaerere debent. Hoc vero religiosum voluntatis et intellectus obsequium singulari ratione praestandum est Romani Pontificis authentico magisterio etiam cum non ex cathedra loquitur...*

*... singuli praesules... nexum inter se et cum Successore Petri servantes... quod adhuc manifestius habetur quando, in Concilio Oecumenico coadunati, pro universa fidei et morum doctores et iudices sunt, quorum definitionibus **fidei obsequio** est adhaerendum...*

The difficulty of rendering this passage into English may be noted by comparing two English translations of the Dogmatic Constitution:

“... the faithful are to accept the teaching (of the Bishops in communion with the Roman Pontiff) and adhere to it with a religious assent of soul. This religious submission of will and of mind must be shown in a special way to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra* ...”

“... This authority is even more clearly verified when, gathered together in an Ecumenical Council, they are teachers and judges of faith and morals for the universal Church. Their definitions must then be adhered to with the submission of faith...”²⁶⁵

In the “Flannery” translation, these pertinent passages are rendered in a slightly different way:

“...the faithful ... are obliged ... to adhere (to such teaching) with a ready and respectfully allegiance of mind. This loyal submission of will and intellect must be given in a special way, to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he does not speak *ex cathedra* ...”

“... This is still more clearly the case, when assembled in an Ecumenical Council, they are, for the universal Church, teachers and judges in matters of faith and morals, whose decisions must be adhered to with loyal and obedient assent of faith...”²⁶⁶

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²⁶⁵ *The Documents of Vatican II.* Walter M. Abbot, SJ, General Editor. NY: Herder & Herder/ Association Press 1966, pp. 47, ff.

²⁶⁶ *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents.* General Editor, Austin Flannery, OP, Dublin/Clonskeagh: Dominican Publications/ Talbot Press. 1st Printing, pp. 379, ff.

In the gradual formulation of his particular grace, St. Gaspar Bertoni [1777-1853 - Founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ, canonized on November 1, 1989], used the words *in obsequium* most often. His charism might be described as “**Abandonment to God, Availability to the Church**”²⁶⁷. Much influenced by St. Ignatius of Loyola, Fr. Bertoni also received deep insights for his spirituality from the Angelic Doctor, as well as from the Word of God.

1. *In obsequium* in the Vulgate

To translate the history of ancient Israel, the Latin makes use of these words a number of times. In the story of the army commander of the King of Aram, healing comes to Naaman through the interest of a young girl in the service of his spouse²⁶⁸. The terms are found again when the officials of Judah come to pay court to the king²⁶⁹. As the army of Judas Maccabaeus laid siege to the Citadel of Jerusalem, some of those under attack made their way to the king and stated that they had been content to serve the king's father²⁷⁰. In the collections of the sayings of Ecclesiasticus, the praises of wisdom are sung: whoever serves her, ministers to the Holy One²⁷¹. Later in the same book, in glowing account of Israel's history, the honor paid to Cabel ends with the principle that all the sons of Israel should see that it is good to follow the Lord²⁷².

In the New Testament, outside of one unusual text in John²⁷³ found in Christ's discourse on the hostile world, He warns the Apostles that anyone killing them will think that this is a holy duty for God [*obsequium*].

It is in Paul, however, that there may be found the most rich use of the terms *in obsequium*. It occurs several times in his Letter to the Romans. When Paul speaks of the privileges of Israel, he states that they were adopted, given the glory and the covenants, and the Law and the ritual were drawn up for them²⁷⁴ - a variant reading for ritual is *obsequium*. Later in the same Letter, he asks for prayers so that the aid that he carries to Jerusalem might be accepted by the saints. In a variant reading of the Vulgate, this refers to his ministry²⁷⁵. Perhaps most importantly, though, for the

²⁶⁷ cf. Joseph Henchey, CSS, “Abandonment to God and Availability to the Church: St. Gaspar Bertoni [1777-1853]”, in: *ANGELICUM* LXVII (1990), pp. 87-108.

²⁶⁸ “... *puellam parvam, quae erat in obsequio uxoris Naaman...*” [cf. 4 Reg. 5:2; cf. also Ps 123:4].

²⁶⁹ “... *qui delentus obsequiis eorum acquievit ei...*” [2 Par. 24:17].

²⁷⁰ “... *ambulare in praeceptis eius et obsequi edictis eius...*” [1 Macc. 6:23].

²⁷¹ “... *qui serviunt, obsequentes erunt sancto...*” [Eccli 4:15].

²⁷² “... *bonum est obsequi Domino...*” [Eccli 46:12].

²⁷³ “... *qui interficit eos, arbitretur obsequium se praestare Deo...*” [Jn 16:2].

²⁷⁴ “... *legislatio et cultus [obsequium] et promissiones...*” [Rm 9:4].

²⁷⁵ “... *et ministerium meum pro Ierusalem acceptum...*” [or: *obsequii mei oblatio accepta fiat in Hierosolymam...* [Rm 15:31; cf. also Ph 2:30: ... *erga meum obsequium...*]

purposes of this present study, Paul invites the Romans to make an oblation of their entire lives, as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God ²⁷⁶.

In his Second Letter to the Corinthians, Paul offers a kind of “apologia” for his ministry, and responds to the accusation that he is weak - he maintains that his every thought is captured, brought into obedience to Christ ²⁷⁷. Then, in his Letter to the Philippians, there is a reference to faith, their own sacrifice and offering ²⁷⁸. These texts will have much influence on St. Thomas.

Modern exegetical and theological reflection have been fascinated with the mystery of **Christ’s “Loving Obedience”** toward the Father, perhaps offering Trinitarian insights, remembering the definition of the Council of Florence: **“... everything (in the Trinity) is one where there is no opposition of relationships”** ²⁷⁹. The very “being of the Son”, of Jesus Christ, is intimately tied in with His carrying out the Father’s Will ²⁸⁰. Christ’s obedience unto death in realizing the Father’s Plan is a kind of **“constitutional obedience”** - Christ’s entire earthly existence does offer a revelation into the Mystery of the Trinity, with the **kenosis** serving as the new image of God ²⁸¹. In developing the principle revealed by Jesus that ‘whoever sees Him, sees the Father’ [cf. Jn 14:9, ff.], exegetes maintain that Jesus’ obedience finds its principle and ultimate foundation precisely in His Filiation ²⁸² - Jesus is “turned toward His Father” [cf. Jn 1:18]. His Mission is most often represented as “obedience” toward the

²⁷⁶ ... *Obsecro itaque vos, fratres, per misericordiam, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam Dei placentem, rationabile obsequium vestrum...* [Rm 12:1; cf. also 1 Pet. 2:5 ff.].

²⁷⁷ ... *et in captivitatem redigentes omnem intellectum in obsequium Christi ...* [2 Co 10:5].

²⁷⁸ ... *ita obsequium fidei vestrae... .. deerat erga meum obsequium...* [Ph 2:17, 30].

²⁷⁹ Council of Florence, Decree for the Jacobites: “.. **omniaque sunt unum, ubi non obviat relationis oppositio...** [D-S 1330. Denzinger-Schonmetzr, *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*. Editio 36. Barcinone/Friburgi/Romae: Herder 1876 - “...**everything (in them) is one where there is no opposition of relationship...**” - *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*. Revised Edition. Edited by J. Neuner, SJ, and J. Dupuis, SJ. Staten Island, NY: Alba 1981, n.325, p.11.

²⁸⁰ Kazimierz Romaniuk, *L’Amour du Pere et du Fils dans la soteriologie de Saint Paul*. Rome: Biblical Institute Press. *Analecta Biblica* 15 A. 1974, pp.264, f.: ... *sa mission etait de faire la volonte’ du Pere...* [cf. Jn 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; 15:10; 19:30]. ... *etre Fils signifie precisement obeir...*

²⁸¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, ‘Mysterium Paschale’. in: *Mysterium salutis. Nuovo Corso di dogmatica come teologia della storia di salvezza*. Vol. 6. ‘L’evento Cristo’. Brescia: Queriniana 1973, pp. 184, ff. cf. also: ‘Esistenza nella kenosis come obbedienza fino alla morte di croce...’, pp. 236,ff.

²⁸² Ignace de la Potterie, SJ, “Obbedienza e filiazione in Cristo”, in” *Il mistero del cuore trafitto. Fondamenti biblici della spiritualita’ del Cuore di Gesu’*. Bolgnoa: EDB 1988, pp. 47, ff. : ... **l’obbedienza trova il suo principio e il suo fondamento ultimo proprio nella figliolanza di Gesu ... La specificita’ filiale di Gesu’ si manifesta proprio in questo ... tutto quello che dice, fa ... viene dal Padre ...; come Persona, Gesu e’ solo il Figlio del Padre ...**

Father, which manifests His inner life²⁸³. The **oblation** that Jesus offers, according to the Document to the Hebrews, is a supremely “**personal**” gift on His part, and is a manifestation of His **salvific love**, revealed in **His self-giving** - this has its ultimate source in His filial docility toward His Father²⁸⁴.

By the “**obedience of faith**”, each believer enters into communion with this loving obedience of Jesus Christ - in Him, each one pronounces an “amen” to God. It is through the life of faith that one “follows/imitates” Jesus Christ²⁸⁵.

2. *In Obsequium in St. Thomas*

There are two tests in particular where St. Thomas develops more extensively his understanding of *in obsequium*. In III Sentences he discusses the nature of *latria*, and offers a variety of insights for consideration. He states that **obsequium** can be offered to different persons, but that **in a special and supreme manner it pertains to God**, in Whom there is the supreme reason of **majesty and dominion**. The service (**obsequium**) that is due to God merits the special name *latria*. It can be understood in three ways:

- when it stands for that which is manifested to God’s honor, such as sacrifice, genueflections, and the like - this is simply the “material” of the virtue;
- secondly, it can be used for the act of the virtue, its manifestation;
- the term is used to describe that habit by which the **obsequium** is offered - this is **the virtue of the latria**, known by four separate names:
 - it is called **pietas**, whenever it refers to the **effect** of devotion;
 - **theosobia**, or **eusebia** refer to the divine **worship** intended;
 - **religio** is the determination of the **works** of worship offered to God;
 - it is called **latria** when it means that **service** is exhibited in recognition is due to God as Creator²⁸⁶.

²⁸³ Ignace de la Potterie, SJ, “The Biblical Basis of the Theology of the Heart of Christ. Jesus’ Sovereignty, His Obedience to the Father, His Filial Consciousness”, in: *Towards a Civilization of Love. A Symposium on the Scriptural and Theological Foundations of the Devotion to the Heart of Jesus*. San Francisco: Ignatius 1985, pp. 59, 63, ff.; 67: ... **His inner life, which was composed of obedience to the Father and love for the Father, was the human expression and perfect image of His divine life, that is to say, the life of the Son who is eternally turned toward the Father** (cf. 1 Jn 1:2; Jn1:18).

²⁸⁴ Albert Vanhoye, SJ, “L’oblazione di Gesu’ sacerdote”, in: *Spiritualita’ oblativa riparatrice*. Bologna: EDB 1989, pp. 57-75. cf. especially pp. 65, 73.

²⁸⁵ Jean-Marie Faux, SJ, *La Foi du Nouveau Testament*. Bruxelles: Institut d’Etudes Théologiques. 1974, pp.261-269.

²⁸⁶ III Sent., d. 9, q.1, Sol 1 - secundum impressionem Petri Fiaccadori - Parmae. New York: Misurga Publishers 1948 - Vol. VII, I - p. 105, b.: ... *Similiter cum obsequium diversis possit exhiberi, speciali quodam et supremo modo Deo debetur...*

St. Thomas again discusses **obsequium** at some length in his Commentary on Romans 12.²⁸⁷ He reflects on these words of St. Paul:

... *Obsecro itaque vos fratres, per misericordiam Dei ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem, rationabile **obsequium** vestrum...*

It is by the mercy of God that the ministry has been committed to each [cf. 1 Co 7:25]. Following St. Augustine, the Angelic Doctor points out that the visible sacrifice through which each person offers one's own self and goods **in obsequium** of God. Each person has a three-fold good that can be offered:

- the **good of one's soul [as in obedience]**: this is offered through the humility of devotion and contrition, as is prayed in the *Miserere* [cf. Ps 51:17], where the Psalmist's sacrifice is presented as "this broken spirit ... this crushed and broken heart..."

- **one's exterior goods [as in poverty]**, through alms-giving;
- when one exposes **bodily life [the vow of chastity offers aspects of bodily goods]** to death for the Reign of God, as **Christ offered Himself** as an **oblation** [cf. Ep 5:2] - and when Paul states that he rejoices over the sacrifice, or the **obsequium** of the Philippians' faith [cf. Ph 2:17];

- **secondly**, when one gives his/her body over to fasting and vigils [cf. 1 Co 9:27];

- **thirdly**, when the body is committed to works of justice and carrying out divine worship.

The **Host** that was **immolated** to God, according to the old law, had to have four characteristics:

- it has to be integral and uncorrupted;
- it had to be immolated;
- pleasing to God;
- fourthly, seasoned with the salt [of wisdom].

St. Thomas interprets St. Paul's **rationabile obsequium vestrum** to mean that discretion, discernment is needed in making of one's body a "**host**", through **martyrdom**, through **abstinence**, or through any work of **justice**. In all of this, the goodness and justice of a person are found principally in interior acts, by which one believes, hopes and loves. These interior actions are to be exterior in the manner of end, or purpose. The theological life is the principal **obsequium** that one can offer to God. This way of life prohibits conformity to this world, and asks for the interior reformation [conversion] of one's mind with the discernment of the divine will.

²⁸⁷ In Epist. ad Romanos. Cap. XII, Lectio 1 - Vol. XIII, pp. 120, ff.: ... *visibile sacrificium, quod exterius Deo offertur, signum est invisibilis sacrifici, quo quis se et sua in Dei **obsequium** exhibet...*

a. Models of *Obsequium*:

1.] Christ's *obsequium* redounds to the Heavenly Father: Particularly in his Commentary on John, and the scene of the washing of the Apostles' feet, St. Thomas analyzes profoundly this *obsequium* of humility. In this, Christ shows Himself to be their minister, servant [cf. Mt 20:28] - and on the **mystical level**, this pertains to the Incarnation and Passion of Christ. He has come to save humanity from tribulation by laying aside His majesty and assuming human smallness. This is symbolically presented in the **putting off of the outer garment**, putting on the towel. In washing the feet and returning to table, Christ shows the Paschal Mystery, dying on the Cross and raising up again by returning to table²⁸⁸.

Christ's *obsequium* of humility offers important lessons: the type of humility was most sublime, in that the divine majesty was set aside to wash the feet of the servants. The fullness of the *obsequium* was shown in washing and drying the feet performing the task Himself and not through others.²⁸⁹ The *obsequium* of Christ's humility needs to be imitated - in order to be a servant as He is, as in removing His outer garment, He reaches that much has to be laid aside²⁹⁰.

So great is the dignity of Jesus Christ that His *obsequia* shown to the Apostles redounds ultimately to the glory of God, and all that will ever be done for the faithful through Christ redounds to the Father. This is shown in all that is done to the least of Christ's brothers and sisters, is done also for Him [cf. Mt 10:40] - and the *obsequium* exhibited to Christ redounds to His Father²⁹¹.

In the Old Law, it was prescribed that the oblation be doubled on the Sabbath, and offered in the Temple. The Apostles were **totally dedicated** to greater than the Temple, namely to Christ Himself - Christ's Body is this Temple²⁹².

In Chapter 26, Matthew prepares for the Passion of Christ, which he accomplishes in three ways: first, by the words of Christ Himself, predicting it; secondly, by the evil counsel taken together by His enemies - and thirdly, by the *obsequium* offered by the woman who anoints His feet. St. Thomas explains that the expensive ointment that represents the good deeds of the believers rendered precious when offered to God²⁹³ - this is the *obsequium* being asked of the Church.

²⁸⁸ Super Evang. Io. Caput XIII, Lectio 2, n. 1 - Vol. X, p. 527 b: ... *praemittitur praeparatio Christi ad humilitatis obsequium ...*

²⁸⁹ ib., n.2. p. 528 b: ... *ponit Christi obsequium ...*

²⁹⁰ ib., Lectio III, l. pp. 530, a, b: ... *Postquam Dominus extendit humilitatis obsequium ...*

²⁹¹ ib., n. 9, p. 533 b: ... *obsequia eis impensa quoddammodo videantur redundare in Deum ... obsequium Christo exhibitum redundat in Patrem...*

²⁹² Super Evang. Matt., Caput XII, Lectio I, 1 - Vol. X, p. 116 a, b: ... *quia fiebat ad obsequium templi et Dei...*

²⁹³ ib., Caput XXVI, Lectio I. Vol X, p. 241 s: ...*tertio facto et obsequio ...*

The **Blood of Christ** is offered for the spiritual **obsequium** of God, it is offered in His service. In the Old Law, the blood of the animals could cleanse only the external stains, such as contact with a dead body. In the New Law, God is life [cf. Jn 14:6] - Christ, Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, offers this service²⁹⁴. The notice Pilate put on Christ's Cross was in three languages:

- in **Hebrew**, in that Christ dominated over all **theology**, in that the knowledge of divine things was handed over to the Israelites;
- in **Greek**, to show that Christ dominates over all **philosophy**;
- in **Latin**, to show that Christ is the supreme moral principle, as the Romans were known for their **moral** science.

This was done so that all intellects would be led into captivity, into the **obsequium** of Christ [cf. 2 Co 10]²⁹⁵.

St. Thomas concludes this idea in the **Summa** teaching that Christ's Passion in two ways is the cause of our reconciliation: first, **by taking away sin**, by which humanity became God's enemies - and secondly, inasmuch as the Passion is **a most acceptable sacrifice to God**. The proper effect of a sacrifice is to appease God, just as anyone would overlook an offense committed on account of some **pleasing act of homage** [**obsequium**] that might be shown²⁹⁶.

2.] **The Holy Spouses, Mary and Joseph**: In contrast to the Gentiles, who came to the fruit of grace without servng [**obsequio**] the Law, the Jews obtained it by keeping and servng [**obsequium**] it, is St. Paul's teaching to the Galatians.²⁹⁷ He also taught the Romans that the dignity of the People of the Old Law was that in their worship, they offered Him homage [**obsequium**]. This is how they served Him while all other peoples served idols.²⁹⁸ In the call of the Prophet Isaiah, St. Thomas teaches that the sending of the Prophet was an **oblatum obsequium**. The voice of the Lord is heard asking: 'Whom shall I send? Who will be **Our** Messenger? [*Et quis ibit nobis?*] St. Thomas comments that the first part of the question: *Quem mittam?* - refers to the unity of the divine essence - and the plural [*nobis*] reveals the plurality of persons. **The prophet offers himself as the oblation**²⁹⁹.

It is in this tradition of **faith and service** that Mary and Joseph are chosen. In her election, Mary willingly gives her free acceptance for a sedulous and prompt

²⁹⁴ In Epist. ad Heb., Caput IX, Lectio III. Vol XIII, p. 740 b: ... *sanguis Christi ad spirituale obsequium...*

²⁹⁵ Super Evang. Io., Caput XIX, Lectio IV, 2. Vol. X, p. 618 b:... *in obsequium Christi, ut dicitur in 2 Co 10 ...*

²⁹⁶ Summa Theol III, q. 49, a. 4 c: ...*propter aliquod obsequium acceptum quo ei exhibetur...*

²⁹⁷ In Ep. ad Gal, Caput III, Lectio 9. Vol XIII, p. 412 a: ... *sine obsequio legis ...*

²⁹⁸ In Epis ad Rom., Caput IX, Lectio 1. Vol. XIII, p. 92: ... *et obsequium, quo sc. Deo serviebant ...*

²⁹⁹ In Isaiam, Caput VI, n.2 - Vol. XIV, p. 457 b:... *Secundo ponitur oblatum obsequium ...*

obsequium.³⁰⁰ In her response to the Angel, she offers to God **the free gift of her obedience.**³⁰¹ It was indeed fitting that Mary and Joseph should be married and their Espousals was indeed a true matrimony. In the purpose assigned by God, marriage must also see to the upbringing of children. Mary and Joseph fulfilled the duties of husband and wife, by which they help one another in rearing their off-spring.³⁰² Furthermore, the Holy Spouses needed to be instructed concerning Christ's birth before He was born, since it was their duty to show reverence to the conceived child, and to serve Him even before He was born.³⁰³

In Joseph's marriage to Mary, we find the heart of the biblical message concerning him. The Angel instructs him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit [cf. Mt 1:20, ff.]. St. Thomas explains the three tasks which the Angel performs here: divorce between the Holy Spouse is prohibited; he reveals something of the Mystery of the Incarnation and tells Joseph of his own future **obsequium** regarding the Child.³⁰⁴ The Angel shows that the mystery is primarily between the Holy Spirit and Mary - but that he, Joseph, also has an important role, his **obsequium** of the Child is made known to him.³⁰⁵ Joseph's particular **obsequium** is briefly touched upon then, by Matthew – who seems to describe the 'annunciation' of Joseph. When the first-born comes to birth, they called His Name, Jesus³⁰⁶. In his response to the question why did the Holy Family flee into Egypt - it was to give the ancient persecutors of Israel, the "First-born of God", the possibility of rendering service to the Only-begotten Son of God³⁰⁷.

3.] **The Angels:** it is of the very nature of the Angels to minister and to be subjected to God. In some way, St. Thomas teaches, the Apostles witnessed this in Christ's Passion [cf. Lk 22], in the Resurrection and in the Ascension. The Angels ascend and descend in so far as they ministered unto Christ and offered their homage to Him [**obsequendo et ministrando**]³⁰⁸. In His darkest hour, Jesus claims that He could have twelve legions of Angels. In St. Thomas' Commentary, he points out that all who do the will of God may be called Angels, or messengers [cf. Is 18:2] - and all who serve [**obsequuntur**] are indeed Angels³⁰⁹. After the Resurrection, on entering the empty tomb, the Apostles find two Angels - St. Thomas interprets this to mean: that this was also to instruct the Church that all the orders of the Angels, both those assisting and those ministering, offer their services [**obsequabantur**] to

³⁰⁰ III Sent., d. III, q. II, a. 1. Vol VII, 1, p. 45 b: ... *ad obsequium...* 'Ecce ancilla Domini'...

³⁰¹ III, q. 30, a. 1 c: ... *Tertio, ut voluntaria sui obsequii...*

³⁰² III, q. 36, a. 2, ad 2um: ... *et obsequii nascituro ...*

³⁰³ III, q. 29, a. 2 c: ... *sibi invicem obsequuntur ad prolem nutriendum ...*

³⁰⁴ Super Evang. Matt., Caput I, 4. Vol X, p. 16 a: ... *ipsius Joseph futurum obsequium...*

³⁰⁵ ib., n. 4, p. 17 a: ... *ipsius Joseph obsequium ...*

³⁰⁶ ib., Caput II, 5. p. 19 b: ... *Sequitur obsequium. Lc 2...*

³⁰⁷ ib., p. 25 b: ... *ut obsequeretur Unigenito. Is 19, 1...*

³⁰⁸ Super Evang. Io., Caput I, Lectio XVI, 4. Vol X, p. 329 b: ... *Angeli ... in quantum ei adsunt obsequendo et ministrando ...*

³⁰⁹ Super Evang. Matt. Caput XXVI, 6. Vol. X, p. 236 b: ... *Quicumque enim obsequuntur Deo, Angeli dicuntur. Ps 103:4 ...*

Christ³¹⁰. In one of those very lengthy articles and responses of the *Prima-Secundae*³¹¹, St. Thomas instructs concerning the role of the Angels in the Holy of Holies of old. There was a table, called the Propitiatory raised above the wings of the Cherubim. At the prayers of the high priest, the people received propitiation. It was held up, so to speak, by the Cherubim, in obedience [*quasi Deo obsequentibus*], as it were, to God.

4.] Other New Testament Personalities:

- The **Magi** are described as offering their *obsequium* not to any earthly king, but only to the Heavenly King³¹².
- In **John the Baptist's** gesture of humility, stating that he was not even worthy to loosen Christ's sandals, St. Thomas sees in this the very humblest *obsequium*³¹³.
- **Lazarus** is presented as "our friend", and St. Thomas describes this as flowing from the many benefits and *obsequia* that the deceased had rendered to him³¹⁴.
- In his Commentary on John, the Angelic Doctor makes frequent use of *obsequium*, and its derivatives, to express the relationship of different people toward Christ. **Martha and Mary** are singled out for the *obsequium* exhibited toward Christ.³¹⁵
- **Mary [Magdalene?]** is presented as offering an important *obsequium* in the anointing of Christ's feet, and in the effect this had in permeating the house with the sweet odor of the balm.³¹⁶ There is great humility in this service the woman renders in preparation for His death and burial - her action is called *obsequium*.³¹⁷ This action on the part of the woman is a delicate service rendered to Christ.³¹⁸
- Judas, though, is displeased with this *obsequium Christi*.³¹⁹ St. Thomas reasons that Judas was not happy with the presence of Christ that asked for a specific *obsequium*. Christ makes clear to him that in a little while He will be gone, and that Judas will no longer be burdened with His presence.³²⁰
- John's Gospel gives special praise to **Joseph of Arimathea**. St. Thomas points out that while the disciples did lose confidence in Jesus during His passion, Joseph expresses his trust, by publicly offering his services - *publice obsequendo*.³²¹

³¹⁰ Super Evang. Io. Caput XX, Lectio 2, n.2. Vol. X, p. 626 b: ... *omnes Angelorum ordines ... Christo obsequuntur...*

³¹¹ I-II, q.102, a.4, ad 6um: ... *quasi Deo obsequuntur...*

³¹² Super Evang. Matt. Caput II, 1. Vol X, p. 22 a: ... *non praestaverunt [Magi] obsequium regi terreno ...*

³¹³ Super Evang. Io. Caput I, Lectio 13 4. Vol. X, p. 317 b:... *quod est minimum obsequium ...*

³¹⁴ ib., Caput XI, Lectio III, 1. Vol. X, p. 491 a, b: ... *beneficia et obsequia ...*

³¹⁵ ib., Caput XII, Lectio I, n. 3, 4. Vol. X, pp. 505, b, f.: ... *[Martha et Maria]... ponit obsequium Cristo exhibitum...*

³¹⁶ ib., n.4, p. 506 a:... *obsequium ...*

³¹⁷ ib., p. 507 a: ... *caput Christi iungit qui ipsum obsequitur ...*

³¹⁸ ib., Lectio II. p. 508 a: ... *et obsequium hujus mulieris...*

³¹⁹ ib., n. 6. Vol. X, p. 507 a: ... *effusum in obsequium Christi ...*

³²⁰ ib., p. 508 b: ... *tulit obsequium Christo impensum...*

³²¹ ib., Caput XX, Lectio VI, a. Vol X, p. 622 a.: ... *publice obsequendo...*

5.] **The Apostles:** Jesus, the Divine Good Shepherd, shows that He knows His ‘own’ and that His flock really knows Him. The flock is His by predestination, vocation and grace. They offer Him service in their love [**obsequuntur**]³²² The Apostles are in a special category - they were called by Jesus personally, and they left all things to follow Him [cf. Mt 19:27]. Their response was the diligent service they offered Him out of love [**diligenter et reverenter ei obsequabantur**].³²³ Even though Paul was called after the Resurrection, he presents himself as a “**servant** of Jesus Christ”. St. Thomas points out that there are two kinds of “servants”: those who minister out of fear, against their own will; and those who serve **out of love**. This is the service of friends who seek to bring benefit and to serve the friend for his well being. In this, St. Thomas quotes Aristotle’s idea of “friendship”³²⁴. **Faith is indeed a sacrificial offering** - in converting others, the Apostle offers to God a sacrifice to those he converts. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep - the Lord did this to complete the service.³²⁵

b. **Obsequium:** this is an essential Ecclesial Attitude. The uniqueness of the glory of the Word is brought out in four ways:

- first, in the testimony which the Father gave the Son;
- secondly, it was brought out in the service of the Angels;
- thirdly, it came through the submission [**obsequium**] of nature. For all nature obeyed Christ and heeded [**obsequabatur**] His slightest command;
- fourthly, we see it in the way He taught and acted³²⁶.

Hence, all of nature is **in obsequium Christi** - and, in a special way, was the **star of the Epiphany**, created and placed at the service of the recently born Christ. This star was made for His **obsequium**.³²⁷ In the Plan of God, even evil itself is at the service of divine justice [**obsequabatur divinae justitiae**],³²⁸ though even a venial sin [of ingratitude] removes a virtuous act of obedience [**obsequitur**] to God.³²⁹

With **obsequium** so present in Christ Himself in His attitude toward the Father, and in so many biblical personalities, St. Thomas very logically applies it to the members of the Church:

³²² ib., Caput X, Lectio IV, 2. Vol. X, p. 480 a: ... ‘*Et cognoscunt me meae...*’ *me diligentes obsequuntur...*

³²³ ib., Caput XIX, Lectio IV, aa. Vol. X, p. 620 b: ... (*Apostoli*) *secuti sunt Iesum... diligenter et reverenter obsequabantur...*

³²⁴ In *Epist. ad Rom.*, Caput I, Lectio I. Vol. XIII, p.4 b: ... *Paulus servus... servitus amoris ... est beneficere et obsequi amico ...*

³²⁵ In *Epist. ad Phil.* Caput II, Lectio IV. Vol. XIII, pp. 517, a-518 b: ... *erga meum obsequium...*

³²⁶ *Super vang. Io.* Caput I, Lectio VIII, n.2. Vol X, p. 307 b: ...*Tertio vero ad naturae obsequium...*

³²⁷ *Super Evan. g. Matt.* Caput II, Lectio II. Vol. X, p.21 b: ...*ad obsequium eius factum.*

³²⁸ *Ad Heb.* Caput XI, Lectio VI. Vol XIII, p. 767 b: ...*etsi obsequatur ... divinae justitiae...*

³²⁹ II-II, q. 107, a. 3 ad 1um: ... *homo Deo obsequitur ...*

- **Bishops**: since the bishop institutes ministers to the altar and founds the Church, there pertains to him particular divine services [*divinis obsequiis*]. As in divine worship he acts in the similitude of Christ. The bishop very specially is said to be “the **spouse** of the Church” as is Christ ³³⁰.

- **Priests**: in the conferral of the Order, the bishop performs two duties: he prepares the candidates by instructing them regarding their proper office, and hands on the power of Order to them. This “preparation” consists in three actions: blessing, the imposition of hands and anointing. By the blessing, the candidate is deputed for the divine services [*divinis obsequiis mancipatur*]. ³³¹ St. Thomas also offers an article in which he expresses concern regarding simony: whether it is lawful to grant spiritual things in return for an equivalent of service [*obsequio*], or for other remuneration. In the first objection, the Angelic Doctor quotes St. Gregory who states that the equivalent of service [*munus ab obsequio*] denotes the interests of the Church. In the response to this objection, the word **obsequium** appears about five times:

...If a cleric renders a prelate a lawful service, directed to spiritual things [e.g., to the good of the Church, or benefit of her ministers], he becomes worthy of an ecclesiastical benefice by reason of the devotion that led him to render the service, as he would by reason of any other good deed. Hence, this is not a case of remuneration for service rendered, such as St. Gregory had in mind... ³³².

- **Ministries**: St. Thomas comments on St. Paul’s first chapter to the Philippians [v. 20, *magnificabitur Christus in corpore meo* - that Christ is magnified in two ways in our bodies: in one way, as we dedicate our body to His service [*ad obsequium eius*]; and, in another way, by risking our body for Christ ³³³.

- **Discipleship**: when Christ gets into the boat, for St. Thomas this represents either the Church, or the Cross: the disciples of the Lord follow Him in the Church through their keeping of the mandates: **obsequium**. ³³⁴

- **Members of the Church**: receive from Christ, the Head of the Body - and the Head receives from the members through their **obsequia**. ³³⁵

³³⁰ IV Sent, d.24, q.3, a.2, q.1a. 3, ad 3um. Vol. VII, II, p. 901 b: ... *mancipare aliquid divinitus obsequiis... Episcopus specialiter sponsus Ecclesiae dicitur, sicut Christus...*

³³¹ ib., q. II, a 7, p. 898, b: “... *Per benedictionem, divinis obsequiis* ...

³³² II-II, q. 100, a.5, ad 1um: ... *munus ab obsequio...*

³³³ In Epist. ad Phil, caput I, Lectio III. Vol. XIII, p. 509 b: ... *corpus nostrum deputamus ad obsequium eius* ...

³³⁴ Super Evang. Matt. Caput VIII, Lectio 3. Vol X, p. 86 a: ... *per obsequium mandatorum*

³³⁵ III Sent., d.13, q.2, a. 1, obj. 6. Vol VII/I, p.139: ... *ut nutrimentum et alia obsequia...*

- **Servants**: are called to minister and to offer their **obsequia** to their superiors.³³⁶ There is a fear that is in accord with reason and it is this that legitimately servants manifest that they be not deficient in the services [**obsequia**] they owe.³³⁷

c. **Obsequium**: and the Consecrated Life:

In a definition of a vow, St. Thomas states that it is a certain ordination to the one making the profession to the worship, or service [**obsequium**] of God.³³⁸ By the religious life, a person deposes **all of life to God's Service** [**obsequio**].³³⁹ Religious communities can indeed be established for the works of the active life, in that each person who is a part of it individually intends all that pertains to the divine service [**obsequium**].³⁴⁰ In one of the objections raised against religious teaching and preaching, St. Thomas quotes St. Gregory who stated that it is impossible to fulfill ecclesiastical duties [**obsequiis**]. In his response, the Angelic Doctor shows that sometimes religious may be occupied in such service.³⁴¹

By serving [**obsequuntur**] their neighbor for God's sake, religious are obedient to the divine love.³⁴² St. Thomas clearly teaches that the religious state is directed toward the perfection of charity. The services [**obsequium**] which we render to our neighbor, in so far as they are referred to God, are "sacrifices" that redound to God Himself [cf. Mt 25:40], and religious can be in the world only for the sake of serving God [**propter divinum obsequium**].³⁴³

St. Thomas thought it was fitting for a religious order to be founded for preaching, or hearing confessions, teaching. What is required is that all orders be directed **to the good of our neighbor**, and the **service** [**obsequium**] of God. In the service [**obsequium**] no sacrifice is more acceptable than zeal for souls. If some are willing to minister to the faithful gratuitously, they can be supported by charity. If none can be found, the ordinary prelate is bound to support them.³⁴⁴ Communities may be established for the purpose of study, in reference only to that doctrine which is according to Godliness. It is not fitting for religious to seek any other learning, as their whole lives are dedicated to the service [**obsequiis divinis**] of God.³⁴⁵ Whether religious communities may possess goods, the Angelic Doctor teaches that the Lord did not forbid all care, but only such that is excessive is harmful. The possession of

³³⁶ In Epist ad Gal., Caput VI, Lectio 2. Vol. XIII, p.438 a:... *inferiores debere superioribus et obsequi ... prompte... perseveranter ... communiter...*

³³⁷ II-II, q. 125, a. 1, ad 2um: ... *ne deficiat ab obsequiis ...*

³³⁸ ib., q. 88, a. 5 c: ... *votum ...in divinum cultum, seu obsequium ...*

³³⁹ ib., a.12, ad 1um: ... *homo totam vitam suam Dei obsequium deputat...*

³⁴⁰ ib., a. 188, a.2, ad 1um: ... *ad divinum obsequium spectant...*

³⁴¹ ib., q. 187, a. 1, ad 3um:... *docere et praedicare pertinent ad ecclesiastica obsequia ...*

³⁴² ib., a. 2 c: ... *dilectioni divinae obsequuntur ...*

³⁴³ ib., q. 188, a. 2 c, ad 3um: ... *obsequia ... dicuntur esse sacrificia ...*

³⁴⁴ ib., a. 4 c, et ad 4um: ... *et ad obsequia... gratis ...ministrare ...*

³⁴⁵ ib., a.5, ad 3um: ... *ad religiosos, quorum tota vita divinitus obsequiis mancipatur ...*

much wealth increases the weight of care, which is a great distraction, and hinders one from being **given over wholly to God's service** [*in Dei obsequium*].³⁴⁶

In showing that it would be licit, under certain circumstances, for a parish priest to enter religion, St. Thomas teaches that the obligation of perpetual vows stands before every other obligation, and it belongs to bishops and religious to be bound by perpetual vow to devote themselves to the divine service [*ad vacandum divinis obsequiis*].³⁴⁷ Clerical monks may also be devoted [*obsequentes*] to the sacred ministry.³⁴⁸ St. Thomas also asks whether professed religious are held to obey their lawful superiors in all that is directly contained in the rule, and also those matters indirectly contained there, as all those things that pertain to their mutual assistance [*ad mutua obsequia*].³⁴⁹ The entrance into religion, then, pertains very much to God, since thereby a person devotes himself entirely to the divine service [*divinis obsequiis*].³⁵⁰

The perplexing matter of the duties of religious toward their parents is discussed several times by St. Thomas, from different perspectives. The obligation toward parents is often described by the use of the term **obsequium filiorum erga parentes**.³⁵¹

d. **Obsequium in the Life of the Faithful:** the act of faith is suitably distinguished as “believing God ... a God ... in God”. Particularly when the object of faith is considered in the intellect being moved by the will, an act of faith is to believe in God. Here, the First Truth is referred to the will through having the aspect of a final “end.” To believe God in a God, and in God is one and the same act, having different relationships to the object of faith.³⁵²

Prayer and service pertain to the worship of faith.³⁵³ Faith is surely not against reason, but is above it - faith does not deny, or destroy reason, but is captured and brought into obedience to Christ [cf. 2 Co 10:5].³⁵⁴

³⁴⁶ ib., a. 7 c: ... *qui est vacare divinis obsequiis* ...

³⁴⁷ ib., q. 189, a. 7 c: ... *ad vacandum divinis obsequiis* ...

³⁴⁸ ib., q. 189, a. 7 c: ... *ad vacandum divinis obsequiis* ...

³⁴⁹ II Sent., d. 44, q. 2, a. 3. Vol. VI, p. 789 b: ... *quae pertinet ad mutua obsequia* ...

³⁵⁰ II-II, q. 189, a. 3 c, et ad 3um: ... *per hoc homo totaliter mancipat divinis obsequiis* ...

³⁵¹ St. Thomas several times returns to the matter of Religious caring for their own parents, making use of **obsequium**: I-II, q. 100, a. 5, ad 4um; II-II, q. 101, a. 2 c; a. 4 ad 3um; q. 189, a. 6 c et ad 1um.

³⁵² II-II, q. 2, a. 2, c, et ad 1um et 4um: ... *credere in Deum*...

³⁵³ In Epist I ad Tim., Caput II, Lectio I. Vol. XIII, p. 592 a: ... *ad cultum fidei, ex orationibus et obsequiis* ...

³⁵⁴ III Sent., d.23, q. 2, a. 4, ad 3um. Vol VII/1, p. 252 a: ... *captivans in obsequium Christi, ut dictum est in 2 Co 10*...

In a beautiful teaching on Prayer, St. Thomas shows how it expels sadness and increases hope - for whenever the king admits anyone into his intimate circle and conversation, one acquires a greater confidence in petitioning and obtaining.³⁵⁵

In showing that sacred doctrine might indeed be a matter of argument, St. Thomas responds to the objection that if the basic argument of theology is from authority, it would not be unfitting as is seen in this analogy: since grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it - **natural reason should minister to faith as the natural bent of the will ministers [obsequitur] to charity.**³⁵⁶ In demonstrating that perfection consists in the observance of the commandments, the Angelic Doctor shows that there is already a perfection inherent in nature which is developed by growth - similarly, there is **a perfection of charity realized by its being intensified.** There is that spiritual growth whereby a person refrains even from what is lawful, in order to be the more freely dedicated to the service [divinis obsequiis] of God.³⁵⁷ This is the area of the counsels.

Meditation is the cause of devotion in so far as through it one conceives the thought of surrendering oneself to God's service.³⁵⁸ In commenting on the last verses of Hebrews 12, St. Thomas teaches that we have been given grace to worship God in the way He finds acceptable, in reverence and fear - this induces that **obsequium** that is required of us. God is supremely served by interior obsequium, as noted in the **Miserere**: the Lord does not scorn the spirit, the heart that is being offered.³⁵⁹

3. ***In obsequium in the Modern Magisterium***

The words express three realities: the full homage of intellect and will in faith; a religious submission of will and intellect, even when the doctrine has not been proclaimed in definitive manner; and the sincere obedience and reverence of religious to the authority of bishops.

a. Vatican I: in its definition of faith, the Council used this formula: "... we are bound to yield by faith **the full homage of intellect and will to God Who reveals.**"³⁶⁰ For some interpreters, this **obsequium** of the will pertains to that previous submission by which a human being, recognizes that human reason is not the supreme rule of all truth. Through the will, a person accepts using another manner of knowledge permitting contact with **total Truth.** This "**salutary faith**" was described in these terms in which the Council of Trent offers a description of the act of faith: "... adults... are awakened and assisted by divine grace, they conceive faith from hearing

³⁵⁵ In Ps 40, n.6. Vol. XIV, p.312 b: ... *ad familiare obsequium et colloquium* ...

³⁵⁶ I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2um: ... *naturalis inclinatio voluntatis obsequitur caritati* ...

³⁵⁷ II-II, q. 184, a. 3, ad 3um: ... *ut liberius divinis obsequiis vacet* ...

³⁵⁸ II-II, q. 82, a. 3 c: ... *homo concipit quod se tradat divino obsequio* ...

³⁵⁹ In Epist. ad Heb., Caput XII, Lectio 5. Vol. XIII, p. 783 a: ... *Maxime autem servitur Deo per obsequium interius, Ps 50, et Lc 1:74...*

³⁶⁰ D-S 3008; *The Christian Faith*, n. 118, p. 42.

[cf. Rm 10:17], and are freely led to God, believing to be true what has been divinely revealed and promised ...³⁶¹

Faith, then, is clearly based on the authority of God - while Vatican I defined faith more in itself, Trent saw it dynamically as that which prepares for justification.³⁶²

b. Vatican II and Post-Conciliar Documents:

1.] **Dei Verbum:** in this Dogmatic Constitution, the Council refers back to Vatican I, as that Council in its turn had quoted the Council of Trent. *Dei Verbum* uses ***obsequium*** twice in its early articles: “...Hearing the Word of God with reverence, and proclaiming it confidently, this most Sacred Synod takes its direction from these words of St. John [cf. 1 Jn 1:2-3] [cf. DV 1]. The Council continues then in Chapter I: “...The 'obedience of faith' [Rm 16:26; cf. 1:5; 2 Co 10:5-6] must be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man entrusts his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals’, and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him...”³⁶³

In addition to reiterating the previous conciliar definition, these words of DV 5: [...*se totum libere Deo committit* ...] in the recent Council teaching, seem to refer to that “**spirit of faith**” already evident after Vatican I. It has been described as that **disposition to live in conformity with one’s faith**, a **filial abandonment** into the hands of God, a confidence in the effectiveness of prayer. This involves the gift of oneself- to God, implying continuing conversion, a complete renewal of one’s manner of living. This “new birth”, an attitude of totality toward God, underlines the importance of confidence, dependence on the Absolute, the generous openness to that gift that God offers in penetrating the life of a believer³⁶⁴. Such an attitude of faith present by Trent and Vatican I is the germ of the beatific vision, and makes of it a gradual realization of the truth believed.³⁶⁵ St. Paul’s expression: ‘obedience of faith’, cited in DV 5, is already faith, hope and charity.³⁶⁶

³⁶¹ Sessio VI, Cap.6: ... *Disponuntur autem ad ipsam dum excitati divina gratia et adjuti, fidem ex auditu concipientes, libere moventur in Deum, credentes vera esse quae divinitus revelata et promissa sunt ...* cf. D-S 1526; *The Catholic Faith*, n. 1930, p. 557.

³⁶² Roger Aubert, *Le problème de l’acte de foi. Données traditionnelles et résultats des controverses récentes*. 4ième ed., Louvain/Paris: Nauwelaerts/Beatrice - Nauwelaerts 1969, pp. 157,ff.

³⁶³ DV 1: ... *Sancrosancta Synodus verbis S. Ioannis obsequitur dicentis* ... Flannery: “... the Sacred Synod assents to the words of St. John...”

DV 5: ... *Deo revelanti praestanda est oboeditio fidei... (cf. Rm 16:26; Coll. Rm 1:5; 2 Co 10:5-6), qua homo se totum libere Deo committit ‘plenum revelanti Deo intellectus et voluntatis obsequium praestando (Vat. I, 3008), et voluntati revelationi ab Eo data assentiendo...* [“... By faith, a man commits his entire self to God...” - Flannery].

³⁶⁴ cf. Aubert, o.c., pp. 691, ff., especially p. 695.

³⁶⁵ o.c., pp. 703, ff.

³⁶⁶ cf. Jean-Marie Faux, SJ, *La Foi du Nouveau Testament*. o.c., pp. 289, ff.

2.] Lumen Gentium 25: has been much discussed since the Council,³⁶⁷ but this is beyond the scope of the present study. A number of Canons also apply the principles of LG 25: Canon 218 speaks of the due allegiance to the Magisterium of the Church [*servato debito ... obsequio...*]. Canon 752 clearly distinguishes between the “assent of faith” and the “religious submission” [*religiosum tamen intellectus et voluntatis obsequium...*] even when the Supreme Pontiff, or the College of Bishops, declare upon a matter of faith, or morals, but do not intend to proclaim that doctrine by a definitive act. The very next Canon speaks of the adherence of the faithful “with a religious submission of mind” [*religioso animi obsequio adhaerere tenentur ...*] to the authentic Magisterium of their bishops in union with the Roman Pontiff. The precise nature of this religious submission is not further specified, but is asked of teachers of sacred doctrine and of all the faithful.

3.] Canon 678, § 1: pertains to the obedience of religious to bishops: “... In matters concerning the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship and other works of the apostolate, religious are subject to the authority of the bishop, whom they are bound to treat with sincere obedience and reverence...” *...devoto obsequio ac reverentia...*].

4. *In Obsequium in St. Gaspar Bertoni*

Fr. Bertoni, priest of the Diocese of Verona, Italy, and Founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ, was beatified by Pope Paul VI, on All Saints’ Day, in the Holy Year, 1975 - and canonized, on the same date, by Pope John Paul II in 1989. Fr. Bertoni’s spirit was studied around that latter date at a Symposium held on the occasion of the Canonization.³⁶⁸ An ardent student of St. Thomas, Fr. Bertoni was also much influenced by the Constitutions and the spirit of St. Ignatius of Loyola, and his Apostolic Mission to the Church.

In the Ignatian Constitutions, the entire Part VII is dedicated to the “Missions”³⁶⁹ and the frequent recurrence of the *obsequium* as described there by the Jesuit Founder,³⁷⁰ and his *servitium, auxilium, obsequium*. In the Ignatian charism, the

³⁶⁷ The Kung Dialogue. Facts and Documents. A Documentation on the Efforts of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith and of the Conference of German Bishops to achieve an appropriate Clarification of the Controversial Views of Dr Hans. Kung [Tubingen]. Washington DC: U.S. Catholic Conference 1980; cf. also Charles E. Curran, Faithful Dissent. London: Sheed & Ward 1987.

³⁶⁸ ‘Symposium Bertonianum’ In occasione della solenne canonizzazione del Fondatore degli Stigmatini, S. Gaspare Bertoni. [Sabato, 28 ottobre 1989. Pontificia Università S. Tommaso. ANGELICUM] Verona: Edizioni Stimmgraf.

³⁶⁹ Septima Pars. *De iis quae pertinent ad admissos in corpus Societatis ad proximorum utilitatem per vineam Domini distribuendos.* nn. 603-654. cf. also Antonio M. DeAldama, *Repartiendo en la vinya de Cristo. Comentario a la Septima Parte de las Constituciones de la Compania de Jesus.* Roma: Centrum Ignatianum; cf. also Dionigi Spanu, *Inviati in Missione. Le istruzioni data da S. Ignazio.* Roma: CIS 1979.

³⁷⁰ Jesuit Constitutions, Pars VII, Caput I: “De Missionibus Summi Pontificis”:

Missions of the Holy Father are the “intention of the Fourth Vow”.³⁷¹ The “Mission” is defined in the *Epitome* of Part VII.³⁷²

The Stigmatine ideal was described by the second Superior General, Fr. Giovanni B. Lenotti [1871-1875], as a parallel to the Company of Jesus, which is in a special way dedicated, directed to the service [*ossequio*] and to the dispositions of the Roman Pontiff, as the Stigmatines are *in obsequium Episcoporum*.³⁷³

One of Fr. Bertoni’s own images in the following/imitation if Christ was the persevering effort to “**draw a portrait of Jesus Christ**” in one’s own life.³⁷⁴ Fr. Bertoni achieved this in his personal life by offering his service to God, acceptance of

n. 603: ... *quacumque maius Dei et Domini nostri obsequium et animum profectum... ubi magnus divinae gloriae et obsequii proventus speratur...*

n. 608: ... *et maius Dei obsequium mittere cogitaret...*

n. 609: ...*a Summo Pontifice mittatur ut Eius Sanctitas ad maius Dei et Sedis Apostolicae obsequium fore...*

n. 611: ... *sint ad huiusmodi missionem aptiores; .. ad Dei obsequium...*

n. 612: ... *missionem suam et scopum ... ut in omnibus ad Dei et Sedis Apostolicae obsequium utilius suum impendat ministerium...*

n. 614: ...*sed etiam Summi Pontificis missionibus iuvare poterit; ut melius quod ad Christi Domini nostri obsequium quaeritur, consequatur...*

n. 615: ... *qui sanctam intentionem Pontificis in Christi Domini nostri obsequium...*

n. 616: ... *divini obsequii posthabebit ...*

³⁷¹ ib., cf.n. 605.

³⁷² *Societatis Iesus Constitutiones et Epitome Instituti*. Roma: Apud Curiam Praepositi Generalis 1949. cf. *Epitome*, Pars VII, Titulus II: *De Praecipuis modis distribuendi nostros in vinea Domini*. Caput I. *De Missionibus*, p. 553: ...*Missiones dicuntur expeditiones apostolicae iussu Summi Pontificis, vel Superiorum Societatis susceptae, ad maiorem Dei gloriam et animarum auxilium, ut plurimum extra loca residentiae nostrae...* [n. 612, 1].

n. 612, n. 2: ... *ubi maius Dei obsequium ... speratur...*

³⁷³ cf. G. B. Lenotti, “Finis: Missionari Apostolici in Obsequium Episcoporum”, in: *Collectanea Stigmatina. Collezione di documenti e studi riservata agli Stigmatini*. Roma: Curia Generalizia 1961, pp. 408, ff.: ...*Si vede chiaro che l’intendimento del P. Bertoni deve essere stato di istituire una Congregazione, la quale, come la Compagnia di Gesu’ e’ in modo speciale dedicata, indirizzata all’ossequio e alle disposizioni del Romano Pontefice, avesse ad essere dedicata e determinata in modo tutto speciale e segnalato al servizio ed ossequio dei Vescovi ... I Nostri non facciano il voto di obbedienza al Vscovo, ma cerchino in ogni guisa che possano aiutarlo, assisterlo ossequiosamente, in modo particolare a lui dedicati ... Due le principali armi del Missionario: la spada della Divina Parola e la spada dell’Orazione... La Spada della Divina parola: ... nel confessionale, nelle carceri, sul pergamo, sul palco, dagli altari, negli Esercizi, Missioni, Oratori, Ritiri, conversazioni familiari, ecc., animandola dallo Spirito del Signore...*

³⁷⁴ Personal Diary, *Memoriale Privato*, February 26, 1809, in: *Lo Spirito del Beato Gaspae Bertoni*. Verona: Stigmatini 1914. Reprinted 1977, p. 229: ... *Dobbiamo fare un ritratto i noi stessi di Gesu’Cristo...*

long illnesses and his entire life as a Model of **Holy Abandonment**. For him, **obsequium** is a key expression of this spirituality. As Christ's own **obsequium** redounded to the glory of the Father - so Mary and Joseph, the Holy Spouses offered their precious **obsequium** to Christ. Fr. Bertoni presented the challenge of offering an ecclesial service, an availability to the Church, through his **in obsequium Episcoporum**, in the assistance of Bishops. For the Apostolic Mission, the bishops incarnated the divine will for the Stigmatine Founder in the choice of the specific service this community is called to render.

Whether it was the **obsequium** of his own life - or the services offered to the Church through the bishops - the ideal of the Stigmatine charism is to serve Christ and the Church, as an **obsequium** that redounds **to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!**

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