

St. GASPAR BERTONI

A Trinitarian Charism of Hope

J. Henchey, CSS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

page

PART ONE
St. Gaspar Bertoni -
A Trinitarian Charism

A. The Stigmatine Founder and the Trinity

Introduction: His *Memoriale Privato*

1. Trinity and Mission

a. Creation and Grace

b. Incarnation

c. Stigmata

d. ***Kenosis***

2. God as Father

Summary

B. Fr. Bertoni's Devotions and the Stigmatine Life

Introduction: [CF ## 221-223;262].....

1. Mission[s] - Service - ***Obsequium***

a. Mission/ Missionary

b. Service

c. ***Obsequium***

d. Ministry [- ies]

1.] Singular

2.] Plural

2. The Person

a. Guests

b. The Sick

3. The Community

a. Common Life

b. Recreation.....

c. Apostolate of the Pen

d. Conversations

Summary.....

C. A Lived Devotion to the Trinity

1. Unity in Pluralism: The Trinity, the Central Mystery □.....

2. The Stigmatine "Habit"

3. Bishops of Verona

4. Appeal for Unity

D. The Trinity: Unity in Pluralism

Introduction:

- 1. Specialization.....
 - a. Specialization.....
 - b. Unity
- 2. Trinity

Summary:

E. The Stigmatine Call to Unity

Introduction:

- 1. Hope for Unity
 - a. Parallels with St. Ignatius of Loyola
 - b. Difficult, Future, Good of Unity in Fr. Bertoni’s Rule
 - c. Fr. Bertoni’s Example: ‘Fraternal Humility’
 - 2. An Idea from the First Stigmatines
- a. Fr. Innocent Venturini [1803-1864]
 - b. Shared Sermon Preparation
 - c. Fr. Louis Bragato [1780-1874]

F. “For the Greater Glory of God”

Introduction:

- 1. St. Ignatius of Loyola
- 2. Fr. Gaspar Bertoni

END NOTES

+
+++
+

PART TWO

St. Gaspar Bertoni’s Trinitarian Hope

[A Reflection on his own Texts]

Introduction: The Hope of the Apostolic Missionary and the *Kenosis*

- [1] John Tauler, OP
- [2] St. John of the Cross
- [3] St. Gaspar Bertoni

A. Primary Motive: Divine Mercy

- 1. A Hope based on God, the Father
 - 2. A Hope based on God, the Son
- a. The Glorious Christ
 - b. Union with the Glorious Christ, Spouse of the Soul
 - c. Union with the Mission of the Glorious Christ, Spouse of the Church
- 3. A Hope based on God, the Holy Spirit

B. Secondary Motive: Human Misery

C. Privileged Means for Fr. Bertoni’s Hope

- 1. The Eucharist

2. Sacred Scripture
3. Mary: Virgin, Mother, Spouse.....
4. Personal Prayer
5. Personal, real Poverty.....

D. The Missionary Hope of the Church

Presentation:

1. Preaching.....
2. Priests and Religious
 - a. Priests & Seminarians
 - b. Consecrated Persons

3. Youth

CONCLUSIONS

- [1] Hope and Development.....
- [2] Hope and Joy
- [3] Hope and Perseverance

+
+++
+

PART THREE
Biblical and Theological Reflections

[A] Ps 131: Abandonment into God's "Arms"

Text.....

Introduction

Exegetical Note:.....

1. Profession of Humility
2. Profession of Total Abandonment.....
3. Liturgical Adaptation

+
+++
+

[B] The NT: Christ's Life and Prayer

Presentation

[I] The Lord's Prayer

Presentation

{A} General Considerations

Presentation:

{B} The Third Petition

Presentation:

+
+++
+

[II] The Prayer of Gethsemane and Salvific Suffering

Presentation

"Explanations" of the Mystery
A. Heschel
Job
Suffering Servant

Jeremiah
NT People
Advent of Jesus Christ
Apocalypse
Summary

+
+++
+

[C] Theological Reflections
The Influence of St. Thomas Aquinas on St. Gaspar Bertoni's Charism
Missionarii Apostolici IN OBSEQUIUM Episcoporum

Abandonment to God, Availability to the Church

Introduction:

1. ***In Obsequium*** in the Vulgate
2. ***In Obsequium*** in St. Thomas
 - a. Models of ***Obsequium***
 - 1.] Christ's redounds to the Father
 - 2.] The Holy Spouses - Mary & Joseph
 - 3.] The Angels
 - 4.] Other NT Personalities
 - 5.] The Apostles
 - b. ***In Obsequium*** - an Ecclesial Attitude
 - c. ***In Obsequium*** - in the Consecrated Life
 - d. ***In Obsequium*** - in the Life of the Faithful
3. ***In Obsequium*** - in the Modern Magisterium
 - a. Vatican I
 - b. Vatican II and Post-Conciliar Documents
 - 1.] Dei Verbum
 - 2.] Lumen Gentium
 - 3.] Canon Law
4. ***In Obsequium*** - in St. Gaspar Bertoni

+
+++
+

END NOTES

**FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF THE MOST BLESSED TRINITY
in the Charism of
St. GASPAR BERTONI**

A. The Founder and the Trinity

August 24, 1808:

At St. Joseph's Convent. At the base of one's own nothingness, God may be found. While experiencing some sublime insights regarding God, I also had a much deeper understanding of myself.

This evening I saw a painting of the Most Blessed Trinity. This inspired much reverence and love for the Three Persons. The Eternal Father was depicted with His arms open, which explained His Mercy to me, and the ready communication of His gifts.

Thereafter, the Office was said with much devotion and for the glory of God. [1]

September 27, 1808:

Meditation today was on the Incarnation. I experienced feelings of gratitude for the Most Holy Trinity, and of correspondence with Jesus Christ. I was obliged to love God even before he became man: how much more now. [2]

September 28, 1808:

During Meditation today and afterwards, there was the desire for martyrdom, and prayer for it, along with deep interior exhortation.

This evening, expression of pardon. There was a sentiment of great love toward the Most Holy Trinity, in giving us the Son. Toward Him, there were feelings of much tenderness together with a very vivid faith, and a great desire for union. There was also the yearning for association in His sufferings and shame - with a prayer for the grace to suffer and even to be disregarded as He was. [3]

• • •

1. The Trinity and Mission:

a. Creation and Grace: Fr. Bertoni's interest in the Trinity is concentrated in the doctrines concerning the Indwelling, the Eucharist, Mission and Hope. In accord with many of the Fathers, there is a kind of cycle: the descent through creation; the sharing of the Divine Nature, for an eventual return to eternal life in the bosom of the Trinity. The universe comes forth from God - grace is offered - for one to be elevated to eternal life. Fr. Bertoni is much more concerned in the documents of his that have come down to these times with the Divine Plan of Salvation [the so-called 'Economic Trinity'] than He is with the inner workings of the Trinity, or the 'Immanent Trinity.'

b. Incarnation: this pattern is noted in Jesus Christ: He descends to us from the Father - lives among us in total abjection and lowliness, His *Kenosis* - in order to lead us back to the life of the Trinity. The entire emphasis is on the Mission of the Son, so intimately tied in with His Personality: Jesus has been sent to accomplish our return. The Mission distinguishes the Son, but does not separate Him from the Father.

c. Stigmata: For the Stigmatines, the Paschal Mystery is seen in terms of Jesus' life carrying out this Plan of Redemption. The Five Wounds of Christ are the visible signs of this Paschal Mystery: the descent, the living among us, and the return to the Father [cf. Ph 2:5-11].

d. Kenosis [cf. Ph 2:5-11]: This biblical passage - even though not often quoted explicitly by Fr. Bertoni - is one that seems to figure throughout his thinking and life - the KENOSIS of Jesus Christ. In some way, we might think of a kind of Kenosis of the Father [who so loved the world that He gave up His only son - whom He did not spare: cf. Rm 8:32; Jn 3:16] - and the Holy Spirit who has not come to say His own word, but only to remind the Church of the Message of Jesus [cf. Jn 16; 13,f]. The KENOSIS of Christ lends itself to this outline:

- Jesus did not cling to his equality with God: 'Pre-existence';
- But, He emptied Himself: His entire earthly sojourn:

- His Incarnation - assuming the form of a slave;
- His Redemption - His death on the Cross.

- And the Father raised Him on high - for the divine glory: the Exaltation.

The one classical principle finds a multiple application: *Bonum est diffusivum sui* : would offer some appreciation of the Mystery of the Trinity - the Sacraments - the Church and the Apostolic mission.

The great pattern is this: AS the Son is the Father's Apostle/Missionary, SO He sends His own Apostles, JUST AS He was sent by the Father:

"... Jesus came and stood among them. 'Peace be with you', and he showed them His hands and His side... 'Peace be with you... AS the Father sent Me, SO I am sending you... [cf. Jn 20:21].

This is the 'Mystique of Service': the Trinity is not only contemplated, but it is also the heart of the message that is 'handed on to others.' It becomes clearer and clearer that the trinity is the ultimate source and principle of the Apostolic Mission. As Christ 'cooperated/collaborated' with the Father, each believe, each Stigmatine is sent, called to work as Christ did for the extension of the Father's Glory.

Among the 'Models of the Church', there will have to be room left for ecclesial obedience: Jesus, obedient unto death, is the primordial Model of the Church. While the holy Spirit breathes where He will, Fr. Bertoni saw Him as the source of the Stigmatine Vocation: this vocation is a work begun by the Holy Spirit, and He will bring it to completion [4]. Fr. Bertoni believed, too, that the Spirit has been active in the naming of the hierarchy. It is through the Bishops that the Stigmatines discern the Apostolic Mission for the community. The choice of the apostolates, as the assistance of Bishops - is left up to them, as the Incarnate Divine Will for the Stigmatine ecclesial service.

Jesus is the ICON of the Invisible God [cf. Col 1:15] - Jesus really is the 'Symbol of God'. By probing His humanity, one has a deeper sense of the divinity. The humanity of

Jesus is a window into the Trinity, a mirror for Christianity. Fr. Bertoni seemed most aware of this:

August 17, 1808:

“In prayer, begin with Christ, and from His Passion - then the spirit should be left free for wherever the Lord may attract it...” [5].

In his Constitutions on the Progress of Stigmatines in ecclesiastical disciplines, Fr. Bertoni noted the following in his original rule:

“Since the Apostle says: ‘for I am determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified’ - and since Christ said of Himself: ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end’ - therefore, all the confreres shall start here, that is, to learn by heart, if possible, the Christian Doctrine as set forth for everyone’s understanding in the Catechism of Cardinal Bellarmine. Moreover, those who devote themselves to study, shall every now and then, return to it, putting a deeper knowledge and hold on it from the Roman Catechism” [6].

There is a biblical foundation for all this:

“...whoever sees me, sees the One Who sent Me...” [cf. Jn 12:45]

“... to have seen Me, is to have seen the Father...” [cf. Jn 14:9]

“... He is the radiant light of God’s glory, the perfect copy of his nature...” [cf. Heb 1:3]

The Stigmatine ‘image’ of God, ideal, in some way can be understood through the Devotions to the Holy Spouses [manifesting the diversity of Gifts, and family unity, dedication to Christ, abandonment - and the Sacred Stigmata, indicating the total self-giving of Christ, His abandonment to the Father’s Plan - and the Apostolic Mission [cf. Jn 20:20,f.].

God has ‘removed the veil’, regarding Himself in Jesus Christ as is God’s Work of Art, and of Him we are invited to draw a portrait in our own lives [7]. He is the Father’s Symphony, His Master-piece, made manifest under a variety of aspects in the charism of St. Gaspar Bertoni.

The Second Vatican Council has noted that there is a ‘growth’ in the faith in the lives of the believers as they correspond to God’s word. It seems most evident that this passage was truly ‘experienced’ by Fr. Bertoni:

“... There is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts [cf. Lk 2: 19, 51], through the intimate understanding of spiritual things they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through Episcopal succession the sure gift of truth...” [8].

God is the supreme mystery - but, He has been made known through Jesus Christ:

“... No one has ever seen God; only the Son, who has made Him known. The Son is turned eternally toward the Father... [cf. Jn 1:18].

This idea of God is completed in Revelation in all that is sufficient for salvation - but, the progressive understanding of Him, and His Plan will go on until the end of time, through the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of those docile to him. The Mystery of God and human destiny are being unfolded also in the Stigmatine charism through the grace of God, the mediation of the Son and the continuing sanctification of the Holy Spirit.

2. God as Father:

This is Christ's basic revelation of 'the One Who sent Him', God, the Father. Very early in the Creed, the Church has prayed for centuries: 'I believe in Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of the father.' As the Son is the perfect IKON/Image/Copy of the Father, as the Son 'emptied' Himself [kenosis], this is the revelation the Church has of the Father:

*... God did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up to benefit us all... [cf. Rm 8:32].
...Yes, God loved the world so much that He gave up His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not be lost, but may have eternal life... {cf. Jn 3:16}.*

In the Trinity, everything is one and the same, where there is not the opposition of relationship. [9]. Jesus is 'constituted' by being 'sent' - the Father is distinct from Him, but not separated - by His 'sending' of the Son. Christ Himself informs us that He has made the Father known:

“... Everything has been entrusted to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him...” [cf. Mt 11: 27].

In a certain sense, the Stigmatine is 'constituted' by the Apostolic Mission - the path to holiness traced by Fr. Bertoni is union with the Trinity in trying to follow Christ as closely as possible, in so far as He is 'sent' by the Father. The 'traditional' treatment, or presentation of the charism of Fr. Bertoni might have emphasized more his 'ascetical' points. There is a real effort in the Second Vatican Council era to understand the charism also from a biblical, 'theological' perspective - there is a 'mysticism of service' evident to the student of Fr. Bertoni's writings. Throughout, much emphasis has been given to the 'discipline', the 'hiddenness' in Fr. Bertoni's spirit - however, there is a wonderful description of his paradoxical charism presented on the first centenary of the foundation of the Congregation, by the late Fr. John Baptist Tomasi, the Superior General in 1916:

“...Our first Confreres were able to bring together these values:

1. A real effort to live modestly, and yet enjoyed a wide reputation for their witness to holiness;
2. Real penance, coupled with genuine joy;
3. A deep sense of poverty, yet maintaining the upkeep of their properties;

4. A disciplined life, yet most apostolic;
- 5.. Real obedience, and at the same time, a wide multiplicity of activity;
6. Continual up-dating, along with deep piety..." [10].

Fr. Bertoni's spirituality was not constituted by his hiddenness, but only at times, manifested by it. In striving to fathom the very heart, or the central core of his spirit, most would agree that his spirituality centers on Abandonment to God and Availability to the Church. This is modeled on, and flows from Christ's own obedience, love for His heavenly Father.

'Abandonment' has been understood in a variety of ways by theologians: for some, 'abandonment' is that state that flows from the heroic fulfillment of all three of the theological virtues. This might be the position of St. Francis de Sales, with his special emphasis on the Treatise of Divine Love. Others might have understood 'Holy Abandonment' as heroic faith. It seems that St. Gaspar Bertoni lived abandonment as heroic hope. the center of his whole restlessness, as well as his interior peace, was his quiet confidence: his absolute trust in Divine Providence [11].

How Fr. Bertoni came to 'abandonment' seems to have been a combination of various elements in his life:

- on the 'natural' level: it seems to have happened to him in the events of life: deaths of loved ones; family troubles, in the division of his father from his mother; physical illness over a long period of time; failure in some apostolates; the Congregation that did not develop in his life time.
- on the level of the spiritual direction received: first from Fr. Louis Fortis, the future 'Prepositus General' of the Jesuits - and also Fr. Nicholas Galvani, his spiritual father during his seminary and early priestly years. He is remembered by Stigmatines in the Necrologies for January 6th, as a 'Benefactor' to the community. It was he who made the gift of the house and Church of the Stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi in Verona to Fr. Bertoni.
- his studies: deep appreciation for St.. Thomas Aquinas, St. Alphonsus Liguori and St. Ignatius of Loyola.
- supernaturally, on the level of grace: his avowed 'Christocentrism', the crucified and risen Christ - Christ as spouse of the soul and of the Church.

Fr. Bertoni was much convinced that all of created being is simply a gift of the Creator. There is nothing that creatures could ever have done in order to be brought into this world - 'nothingness' has no reason of itself for being - has done nothing of itself to 'merit' existence. [12].

Life itself is sheer 'gift'. If existence is indeed a gift, there must be a Giver. Since life, existence, are so fragile - they must be sustained, kept in being. This on-going creation defies any thought that God is on a 'sabbatical.' The Christian God is not a 'lazy', non-caring, 'sleeping' giant - but is actively engaged in each day's events:

“... can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair of your head is counted. So, there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows... [cf. Mt 10:29,f.].

“...that is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it. For life means more than food, and the body more than clothing.

Think of the ravens. They do not sow or reap; they have no storehouses and no barns; yet, God feeds them. And how much more are you worth than the birds!

Can any of you, for all his worrying, add a single cubit to his span of life?

If the smallest things, therefore, are outside your control, why worry about the rest?

Think of the flowers; they never have to spin, or weave; yet, I assure you, not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these. Now, if that is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and gone tomorrow, how much more will he look after you, you men of little faith! But, you must not set your hearts on things to eat, and things to drink; nor must you worry...

Your Father well knows your needs... set your hearts on His kingdom, and these other things will be given you as well..

There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom...’ [cf. Lk 12:22-32].

Fr. Bertoni’s insistence on Poverty [13] seems much more related to this more comprehensive ideal than to discipline. Christian poverty offers a fertile soul for hope and trust. There is an inverse relation between possessions and hope: the less one has, the more one may hope to be.

Fr. Bertoni’s idea was that it not simply that creatures received a gift long before, at the moment of their coming into existence - rather, this gift is renewed daily, always, by on-going creation. Conservation is a kind of continuing creation. At this moment, God preserves life, this day is a new gift: this is repeated in all days, at all hours, in each instant. What is so often taken for granted: time, gifts, joys - all are donated.

The Scriptures present the mystery of Creation in a variety of ways:

a. The Divine Breath:

“... God fashioned man from the dust of the soil. Then he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living soul...” [cf. Gn 2;7].

“... His breath made the heavens luminous... [cf. Jb 26:13]

b. His Fingers:

...I look up at the heavens, made by your fingers, at the moon and the stars You set in place - ah, what is man that You should spare a thought for him, the son of man, that you should care for him? [cf. Ps 8:3].

c. His Hands:

“... I it was who spread out the heavens with my hands, and now give orders to their whole array... [cf. Is 45:12]

“... My hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens... [cf. Is 48:13]

d. His arms:

“... Yours was the arm and Yours the prowess... You control the pride of the ocean... the heavens are yours... [cf. Ps 89:13,f.]

“... Awake, awake! Clothe yourself in strength, Arm of Yahweh...! [Is 51:9].

e. He spread out the skies like a Tent:

“... Thus says God ... He who created the heavens and spread them out... [cf. Is 42:5; Jb 9:8; Ps 24:1, ff.]

The Scriptures themselves present a great sense of hopeful trust in the Creator:
“... As tenderly as a father treats his children, so Yahweh treats those who fear Him; He knows what we are made of, He remembers that we are dust. A man last no longer than grass, no longer than a wild flower he lives, one gust of wind and he is gone, never to be seen there again; yet his love for those who fear Him lasts from all eternity and forever...’ [cf. Ps 103:15,f.].

“... Yahweh, my heart has no lofty ambitions, my eyes do not look too high. ... Enough for me is to keep my soul tranquil and quiet, like a child in its mother’s arms, as content as a child that has been weaned... [cf. Ps 131].

The gift of being, existence, life - are but a first step in the Divine Plan. All activity in some ways, flows from the central Source of all life, and is meant to return there. There is great goodness in this cycle, or process - and an enormous possibility to grow spiritually and also culturally, or intellectually. Fr. Bertoni has made special note of this in his ‘Law of Progress’ as noted in his Original Constitutions:

Part IV: Concerning Progress

Chapter I: One’s Own Perfection [14].

Chapter 2: Concerning Perfection in the Ecclesiastical Disciplines [15].

Fr. Bertoni’s underlying ideal is very close to that of St. Paul in his speech before the Council of the Areopagus:

“... in fact, God is not far from any one of us, since it is in him that we live and move and exist, as indeed some of your own writers have said...’ [cf. Ac 17:28].

The next step in living out this sublime hope is the enormous respect for grace in the heart of Fr. Bertoni. In a key Constitution 185 [16], Fr. Bertoni speaks of the ‘special grace of [the Stigmatine] vocation that is more powerful than all dangers and difficulties...’ [17].

While simple creation is a tremendous gift, that of redemption has added considerably to that:

“... You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for ... [cf. I Co 6:20].

“...You have all been bought and paid for ... [cf. I Co 7:23]

“... remember the ransom that was paid to free you from the useless way of life your ancestors handed down was not paid in anything corruptible, neither in silver nor gold, but in the precious blood of a lamb without spot, or stain, namely Christ - Who, though known since before the world was made, has been revealed only in our time, the end of all ages, for your sake...” [cf. 1 P 1:18].

This gift of grace strengthens the bond and the relationship between humanity and God. The dignity of creation depends on the level of participation in the godly, in the divinity. the gift of Grace/Vocation is described in Peter’s Second Letter:

“...In making these gifts, He has given us the guarantee of something very great and wonderful to come: through them you will be able to share the divine nature... [cf. 2 P 1:4].

The challenge is to become a New Creation:

“... Adam prefigured the one to come ... [cf. Rm 5:12, ff.]

“...as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father’s glory, so we, too, might live a new life...” [cf. Rm 6:3-11].

“... the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth... [Those who love him] they are the ones he called long ago and intended to become true images of His son... [cf. Rm 8:23,29].

“...as death came through one man, in the same way, the resurrection of the dead has come through one man... we will be modeled on the heavenly man ... {cf. 1 Co 15:20-28, 35-49].

“... we are turned into the image we reflect... [cf. 2 Co 3:18].

... And for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation ... [cf. 2 Co 5:17].

In a homily welcoming in the new Year of 1803, Fr. Bertoni seems to have referred to some of the aspects of this ‘New Creation’:

“...’Create in us a new heart!’ [cf. Ps 51:19]... Who else can produce out of nothing, or call someone to new life - other than God alone...? [18]

In his homily for the Sunday ‘in Albis’, April 5, 1807, Fr. Bertoni developed beautifully a kind of New Creation brought through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are Fr. Bertoni’s comments:

“... If we are planted, in-grafted into the similitude of Jesus’ death [cf. Rm 6:3], we will also be in His resurrection..... Just as the body of Christ, buried in the ground, had the salvation of the world as its fruit, so we, too, through our own repentance may be buried in penance to bear fruit in justice... Our lives are now hidden with that of Christ [cf. Col 3:3]. This blessed fruit has already been produced - it must now be allowed to come to maturity ... if you wish to see me, said the holy Eleazar, look for me in the wound in the side of Christ...!’ [19].

It is in this context of Creation/Grace that Fr. Bertoni understands vocation. Believers do accept the nothingness from which everyone is called forth by a loving

Creator - and an extraordinary goodness is divinely breathed into every human being. In his Hymn to Wisdom, Paul may allude to this:

"...take yourselves for instance, brothers, at the time when you were called: how many of you were wise in the ordinary sense of the word - how many were influential people, or came from noble families?

No, it was to shame the wise that God called what is foolish by human reckoning and to shame what is strong that he chose what is weak by human reckoning... those whom the world thinks common and contemptible are the ones that God has chosen... the only knowledge that I claimed to have was about Jesus, and only about Him as the crucified Christ... [cf. I Co 1:26, ff.].

Fr. Bertoni makes note of this ideal in his original Constitutions:

"...Since the Apostle says: 'For I am determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ and him crucified' [cf. I Co 2:2] - and since Christ said of Himself: 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End' [cf. Apoc 1:8]..." [20].

SUMMARY

Fr. Bertoni's charism flows out from the Most Blessed Trinity: beginning with the traditional teachings regarding the Indwelling of the Most Blessed Trinity and the Eucharist, Fr. Bertoni discerns the hand of the Trinity in everything.

His heroic hope is expressed as a holy abandonment [21]. His holy abandonment is presented as a superior form of confidence and hope in God [22].

A careful analysis of the Lord's Prayer would indicate that the intimate relationship with the Father will culminate in the 'end-time.' To share in Divine Filiation, this is the 'special grace of our vocation', one that is superior to all difficulties, and dangers - this is 'costly discipleship.' Christ is identified with the poor, the struggling. Through His own Filiation, Christ with his Sacred Stigmata is inviting all to the eternal nuptials. The Immolated Lamb, with the marks of His immolation still evident on his Body, invites all to come to the nuptials with the Church. It is on this note that all of Scripture draws toward its end:

"... The Spirit and the Bride say, come. Let everyone who listens, answer: COME! [cf. Rv 22:17].

The theological virtues are the sublime 'experience' of God through the Holy Spirit to which all are being challenged by Grace. It is the Spirit of God sent into the human heart that enables all to cry out ABBA! [cf. Ga 4:6].



B. St. GASPAR BERTONI'S DEVOTION TO THE TRINITY

and
THE STIGMATINE LIFE

Introduction:

In the Founder's Original Constitutions, there is much insistence on Mission[s], the 'other' person, and on community. All of these seem to flow from Fr. Bertoni's basic Trinitarian orientation.

Practically every single number of the Original Constitutions from Part X on of the Stigmatine Founder [23] are taken almost *verbatim* from the Commentary of Fr. Francis Suarez, *De Religione Societatis Iesu* .[24].

Turning to Part X of St. Gaspar Bertoni's Constitutions, this constitutes the largest single concern of the Constitutions: The Union among the Members [25] - and Part XI, on the Familiar and Friendly Conversation within the community and in its apostolic mission to others [26].

Under Section I of Part X of his Original Constitutions [27], Fr. Bertoni treats explicitly of the Trinitarian dimension of charity. In speaking the interior inclination or dispositions of one's soul for charity, the Stigmatine Founder follows Suarez almost word for word:

CF # 221 "This depends especially on our interior spiritual progress, for as true charity, that is, **the love of God and Christ** increases, so also the union among the confreres is increased and perfected in so far as each one unites himself to **God and to our Savior**." [28].

CF # 222 "Because this bond of unity is especially strengthened by prayer and meditation, according to that saying: 'In my meditation a fire shall burn', therefore, this is undoubtedly the surer and sounder way of acquiring this unity." [29].

CF # 223: "Moreover, there is nothing which causes us to love another more than to perceive his special endowment of virtues and gifts of the **Holy Spirit**, and to contemplate him as the image of **God** painted with the most beautiful colors of grace. If, therefore, all strive within themselves to grow in these virtues and gifts and to consider them often in others, and if they regard others as superior to them in soul, rejoice over their spiritual gifts, and give thanks to **God**, mutual charity shall flourish among them in a wondrous manner." [30]

The clear designation of the Persons of the Trinity seems evident: "God", "Christ - Savior" - and the "Holy Spirit". There may also be a hint of St. Paul's 'fraternal humility', "*always consider the other person to be better than yourself*" [cf. Ph 2:3]. There are also many other lessons from these Constitutions, along with their evident Trinitarian imprint:

- there is present here Fr. Bertoni's great dream of continuing progress and development. This is the subject matter of his entire Part IV of his Original Constitutions

[31]: and includes both the spiritual growth of each member, as well as the intellectual [or, technical] development of all. This principle of vitality is evident in Fr. Bertoni's own charism that grew and intensified all through his life . In the Latin texts for these Constitutions there may be noted a number of key words that communicate this sense of vibrant commitment:

- *spirituali profectu* ;
- *incrementum* ;
- *augetur et perficitur* ;
- *maxime crescit* ;
- *studeant in his virtutibus et donis crescere* ;
- *mutua inter eos caritas crescet* .

The spirit of Fr.. Bertoni's dynamism is clear in this insistence in such a brief space - however, familial/fraternal charity is the core of all he was about.

- charity is a single virtue, with a variety of dimensions: contemplative, apostolic, 'ad intra... ad extra':

"... you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins... Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them , put on love... [cf. Col 3:12, ff.].

- charity: love for God and for others also depends on the Eucharist, personal prayer. Community just does not happen - it is the basic apostolate, due to the Founder's insistence on other Stigmatines as the first Apostolic Mission, in a Constitution derived *verbatim* from Suarez:

CF# 262 "Since the end of the Congregation is the salvation of souls, consequently, it assumes ministries appropriate to this end: therefore, religious should primarily and zealously work for the spiritual benefit of their own Confreres before that of non-members, because charity is very well ordered. As it, therefore, inclines one to seek his own spiritual salvation before that of others, it first intends and seeks the spiritual benefit of the entire body of the Congregation, before that of those outside the Congregation." [32]

[1] MISSION[S] - SERVICE - 'OBSEQUIUM' -MINISTRY/MINISTRIES: these are all key words in Fr. Bertoni's vocabulary - and, in some way, they are synonymous. The sheer repetition of them would show this to be true. An associated idea is 'the greater glory of God', some form of which is founded in many of the Original Constitutions [33]. It can indeed be said that Fr. Bertoni found in the Trinity his *ALPHA* and *OMEGA* - he had a most sublime and inspiring sense of the Glory of God. Fr. Bertoni saw his community as 'Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops'. This *obsequium* is service in the Reign of God.

Fr. Bertoni's motivation was that of bringing an ever more valuable service to the Church - his ideal was that his followers would offer an ever more competent *obsequium Episcoporum*. As Christ was sent by his Father, so the Son then sends the Apostles in the confirming vision of the Sacred Stigmata that first Easter night [cf. Jn 20:20, ff.]. The Spirit is sent by the Father and/through the Son, to remind the Apostles of all that Jesus had taught them [cf. Jn 16:13,ff.]. This 'ICON' is the lowly and obedient Christ, marked with His Five Wounds, totally dedicated to the Plan of the Father in the Holy Spirit.

This filial love for the Trinity, and this missionary love for the Church, is meant to increase as long as life lasts - the Stigmatine is called to be 'a contemplative at home, and a missionary outside'. These roles might also be understood as each Stigmatine being a contemplative missionary at home, and a missionary contemplative outside, 'for the greater glory of God.' The prayer of the Stigmatine is missionary - the contemplation of the mystery of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have made Fr. Bertoni an 'Apostolic Missionary'. While prayer energizes the Mission, the Mission is meant to empower the prayer of the Apostle. The Christian vocation is an invitation to share in the very Mission of the One sent by the Father in the Holy Spirit. In Fr. Bertoni, the Trinitarian mysticism was not divorced from his asceticism: the vows and common life are missionary in scope.

1. MISSION[S]/MISSIONARY: appear in a number of Fr. Bertoni's Original Constitutions [34]. In fact, the booklet opens with these words, so well known within the Stigmatine Community:

CF # 1: "End: 'Apostolic Missionaries' at the service of Bishops." [35].

CF # 2: "Method: 'under the direction and dependence of the Ordinaries of those places in which missions are given. They shall wholeheartedly obey these Ordinaries in everything which pertains to the exercise of the Apostolic Ministry; first, obtaining their consent, with the necessary faculties; and always observing their wishes as to the place and time of exercising this ministry.' [Ex Decret. S. Congr. Prop. , Dec. 20, 1817]. [36].

Fr. Stofella offers an explanation in his Note here. This is the end toward which the Congregation tends, namely, the formation of individuals who by their zeal and apostolic traits would merit the title 'apostolic missionary.'

The entire subsequent structure of the Constitutions, like those of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the great model for Fr. Bertoni, then develops along the ideals of this Apostolic Mission [38]. Fr. Bertoni continues his idea along these lines:

CF # 7: "There shall be a distinction of classes, and promotion to a class shall be determined according to the qualities of the subjects.

"Those who excel in learning and piety shall be promoted to the perfection of the priestly ministry, undertaking the Apostolic Mission.

"Others, however, who have sufficient strength and talents, both physical and spiritual, shall be promoted to the perfect assistance, as helpers of the Missionaries" [39].

Even though all 'classes' of membership have been abolished by Vatican II [40] - there is the spirit of the Founder which remains: there is to be a gradual assumption of ever

more important duties [*graviora ministeria*] as one progresses spiritually and in the intellectual life. The core of the charism remains: ‘Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance, service, of Bishops.’

In the gradual promotion of the members according to Fr. Bertoni’s Constitutions [cf. Part V], a series of prescriptions has been set down:

CF # 74: “At times, the candidates shall accompany the Missionaries as aides; and, at times, they shall also hear the confessions of women.” [41].

CF # 75 “Then they shall also hear the confessions of women regularly, and be assigned to serving in Missions” [42].

CF # 76 “Finally, they shall be entrusted with the direction of the Missions, and make use of all means needful for the salvation of souls” [43].

In Part IX, “On the Grade of the ‘Professed’”, there is a description of the work of the ‘Professed’ members, the ‘Apostolic Missionaries.’ The Means by which the Institute promotes the Salvation of Others’ includes the following:

CF # 162 “The administration of the sacraments, especially of Penance and Holy Eucharist, beseeching God, even by the celebration of Holy Masses, to grant the fruit of preaching and of confessions.” [44].

This Constitution, including the Ignatian ideal of offering Mass for the success of the Apostolic Mission, may be found in Book I of Suarez. It comes from his discussion regarding the institution of the Society of Jesus, in general - and in particular, regarding those means by which the Company of Jesus achieves its purpose [45].

Throughout, there is much emphasis on the Ministry of the word of God - assisting the priestly and the consecrated] life, and the youth. ‘Mission’ appears in both the singular and the plural form [46].

2. SERVICE:

It has been said that when St. Ignatius wrote his original rule in his native language, he verbalized his own ‘Mysticism of Service’ by repeating the same Spanish verb *servir* , over and over again. In the Latin translation, his secretary [Fr. Polanco] varied the Founder’s rendition with three Latin verbs and substantives :

- *servire/servitium*;
- *auxiliari/auxilium*;
- *obsequi/obsequium* .

Fr. Bertoni speaks of ‘service’ on a number of occasions in his Original Constitutions, and often as a synonym of these other words [47]. The verb appears in his third Constitution:

CF # 3: “To serve God and the Church wholly gratuitously” [48].

In developing the requirements for admission, Fr. Bertoni emphasizes much this willingness and ability “to serve”:

CF # 26 “Those who are accepted to do the work of the priestly ministry must have fitness of memory; furthermore, they must be desirous of virtue and spiritual perfection, of peaceful character, active and constant in whatever they undertake for the service of God; they must have zeal for the salvation of souls, and, moreover, a great love for this Congregation....” [49].

3. OBSEQUIUM

In St. Ignatius’ Constitutions there is abundant use of this synonym for ‘service.’ It also is used in the Founder’s terms for presenting the ‘end’ of the Community. It is found very often in his writings, and relatively frequently in his Constitutions [50] - from the opening Constitution that defines Stigmatines as: *Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium [seu auxilium] Episcoporum* . It is a Eucharistic term that would offer some insight into the relationship of loving obedience of Jesus Christ, of His oblation toward His Father. The Latin Vulgate uses it in a key text of St. Paul where he asks the Romans to make of their bodies a living oblation [*obsequium*] to the mercy of God [cf. Rm 12:1,f.].

Fr. Bertoni quotes it *verbatim* from Suarez when he describes the Distribution of Studies for the candidates for membership:

CF # 57: “Therefore, there shall be individuals who specialize in one or another of these branches of knowledge for a longer time and with greater diligence; that is of the utmost importance for the various services [*ad varia ecclesiae obsequia*] we must render to the Church according to the diversity of time and circumstances.” [51].

This Constitution # 57 speaks of the characteristic ‘variety’ of ‘obsequia’ always to be determined by the changing times and needs of the Church. When speaking of promoting studies within the Congregation, the Founder uses the rule of prudence, so that studies may go on for a longer time:

CF # 62 “It shall be incumbent on the Superior to see that the students do not apply themselves to study at times that are harmful to physical health; that they get enough sleep; that they observe due moderation in their studies in order that they may devote themselves for a longer time to mastering the arts and sciences on behalf of the Church’. [*in Ecclesiae obsequium*]” [52].

Once again, this is a word-for-word use of a text in Suarez - who, in turn, has taken it from the Constitutions of St. Ignatius of Loyola, Part IV, c. 4, § 1 - with a notable exception: the text from St. Ignatius concludes *ad Dei gloriam* [53], whereas Fr. Bertoni has: *in Ecclesiae obsequium* .

The Divine Son, Who has come ‘to serve’ and not to be served - Whose food it is to do the Father’s Will [cf. Jn 4:34] - remains the Model, the Source, the Goal of the

Apostolic Mission, that service rendered to God through the Church. This 'oblation' can be described as *obsequium*. .

4. MINISTRY/MINISTRIES: in both the singular and plural, this word also offers an extraordinary insight into Fr. Berton's charism [54]. A rapid survey of the Stigmatine Founder's Constitutions would show that both aspects manifest a plurality of proper apostolates:

a. In the Singular:

CF # 7: "...Those who excel in learning and piety shall be promoted to the perfection of the priestly ministry, undertaking the Apostolic Mission..." [55].

CF # 48: "... absolutely shunning idleness, by assiduous involvement in those things that pertain to the ecclesiastical ministry, to the observance of discipline and to the obedience due to Superiors..." [56]

CF # 62 "...that they observe due moderation in their studies in order that they may devote themselves for a longer time in mastering the arts and sciences for the service of the Church..." [57].

CF # 125: "But whenever there is a question of studies which are deemed necessary or helpful, overcoming all fatigue, negligence, or tediousness, they shall apply themselves to them eagerly and wholeheartedly, striving to master them for the glory of God and greater service to the Church." [58]

CF # 163: "The Ministry of the Word of God under every aspect..." - [this section is drawn from Suarez].

CF # 195 "Since the chief part of charity is to anticipate the mutual rendering of service, honor and benefit..." [60].

CF # 255 "Besides, the principal end of our Congregation is the conversion of souls, this is greatly realized by conversing..." - [this entire huge, final section of the Founder's Constitutions is taken almost word for word from Suarez] [61].

b. In the Plural:

CF # 26: "Those who are accepted to do the work of the spiritual ministries must have fitness of mind..." [62].

CF # 57: "Therefore, there shall be individuals who specialize in one or another of these branches of knowledge for a longer time and with greater diligence; that is of the utmost importance for the various services we must render to its Church according to the diversity of times and circumstances." - [this is taken *verbatim* from Suarez] [63].

CF # 158 "Only priests are to be admitted to the 'Profession', for the principal government of the Congregation pertains to the 'Graduate Fathers'. To them also belong the more important ministries, and these require the priestly dignity." [64]

CF # 162 "The administration of the Sacraments, especially of Penance and Holy Eucharist, beseeching God, even by the celebration of Holy Masses, to grant the fruit of the Missions, of the preaching, and of confessions." - [this section is also taken from Suarez] [65].

CF # 182 "Their duty is to teach not only by preaching, by giving the Spiritual Exercises and by lecturing on the truths which are useful and necessary to know for the attainment of eternal life, but also by explaining the rudiments of faith and morals, especially to the uneducated and to children, in public and private catechetical

instructions and in the oratories. This also is highly beneficial to the Church, and is to be highly recommended to them.” [66].

CF # 185: “...the end of our Congregation, which is to serve the Church by means of the various and proper ministries of its vocation under the direction of the Bishops... with this program we do not propose to expose ourselves to dangers, or to go to this or to that place, or to perform this or that action of our own will: but to follow the direction of the orthodox Bishop placed by the Holy Spirit over the Church to God...” - [this, too, is taken, for the most part, *verbatim* from Suarez] [67].

CF # 262 “Since the end of the Congregation is the salvation of souls, consequently it assumes ministries appropriate to this end: therefore, religious should primarily and zealously work for the spiritual benefit of their own confreres before that of non members, because charity is very well ordered...” - [this is taken from Suarez] [68].

•••

[II] THE PERSON:

Fr. Bertoni’s Original Constitutions manifest a sublime concept of fraternal caring and sharing. With the broad diversity of ecclesial service and specialization, the differences in intellectual preparation and apostolic work - were not meant in the least to hinder harmony within the community, or lessen the commitment to the Apostolic Mission. As was noted above, this is particularly evident in Part X of the Original Constitutions, the “Interior Disposition of the Soul”, with a distinctly Trinitarian imprint: as the love of God and Christ increases through the Holy Spirit, through participation in the Eucharist, contemplating the Word of God - in all this, each confrere is challenged to recognize better the developing likeness of God in one’s fellow Stigmatine, noticing the gifts and virtues of the others, depicted within them by the Holy Spirit [69].

This idea of intense fraternal love is present in two very special categories of persons that Fr. Bertoni has more amply described in his Rule: Guests and the Sick:

[a] GUESTS: ‘Hospitality’ [70] is a theme that comes to the Stigmatine Rule, from the monastic tradition - through Francis Suarez’ commentary *De Religione Societatis Iesu*.

It has ancient biblical roots, and is most highly recommended as a basic Christian value. Fr. Bertoni saw unity as all the more necessary, especially for a community with such a varied apostolic mission.

Fr. Bertoni dedicates Chapter VI, under the ‘Positive Means’ of Part X, the Union among the Members, to the matter of Hospitality toward Confreres [71]. These Constitutions can be found practically *verbatim* in Suarez [72]. While there was a distinction in membership: with the ‘Professed’, those elevated to the ‘Grade’ of Apostolic Missionary - and the ‘Spiritual Coadjutors, Priests with simple vows - and the Brothers. In the matter of hospitality, this would all be done away with:

CF # 245 “This is to be extended to all the confreres without any distinction of family, or country, without respect of persons or limitation whatsoever. Great charity is

to be shown towards all, whether they are professed members or novices, well or sick, known or unknown.” [73].

This seems almost “Benedictine” in its orientation - however, it is found in Suarez’ Tract from the Book where he treats of the positive spiritual means leading to the perfection of the members in their treatment of their fellow human beings. Fr. Bertoni copied this Constitution word for word from Suarez [74].

The level of hospitality must be that of truly distinguished families toward their dear friends or relatives:

CF # 246 “Let this charity first of all be shown by receiving them with those external manifestations of special friendship which are usually employed, according to the custom of the place, by distinguished persons towards their friends, or even towards their own kindred” [75]

Once again, this is a *verbatim* citation from Suarez, where he treats of the hospitality that is to be extended [76]. This is followed by what became the old Aspirants’ Rule of the Stigmatines, known as “# 122, the rule of touch”!

Throughout this entire section of both the Commentary of Suarez, and the relatively lengthy texts that Fr. Bertoni copied very carefully there is much emphasis on the harmony of goals, uniformity of ideals. At the same time, there is indicated a genuine appreciation for individual personalities. In discussing the matter of poverty in receiving guests - on the one hand, nothing should be spared. Yet, from a very practical bent of mind, much consideration has to be given for the differing needs of guests. In this, Fr.. Bertoni quotes St. Basil’s Longer Rule:

CF # 249 “[St. Basil] finally concludes: ‘Sufficiency varies, however, according to the physical condition and present needs. One, because of his work, requires more substantial food and a larger amount. Another needs a lighter and more digestible diet. The foods that are served should be offered to all, and be such that they might be nourishing and had at a good price. At table, cleanliness should be observed, even a certain elegance - but, all being such that it does not exceed the limits of our means’” [77].

This citation from St. Basil found in Fr. Bertoni’s Original Constitutions came to him directly from Suarez [78].

[b] THE SICK:

Fr. Bertoni dedicates Chapter V of Part X to the ill and the infirm, and their special care. In this Chapter, the authorities who are brought to the fore are the Founders of ancient monasticism and forms of common consecrated life, such as St. Basil, in both his shorter and longer Rules - St. Benedict, Pachomius, Lupus and Rule for Monks - as well as St. Augustine, St. Jerome and also St. Bonaventure. There are nine Constitutions here [79]. This is the longest single Chapter of Part X, and once more - practically every number can be found in Suarez, word for word, with a few exceptions.

The central rule of this Chapter, of course, is that the infirm are to be thought of as *the Lord's own brothers* , and that all are to serve them as Christ Himself would be served [80]. One of the more unusual numbers is this following:

CF # 240: “Lupus, in his Rule for Monks, says: ‘If someone is taken sick, let him be transferred to a larger place, and so comforted by the assistance of the senior brethren, that he feel no desire for the comforts of the city, nor for maternal affection.’” [81].

In Suarez’ commentary he gives as the source of this principle a work of St. John Chrysostom, quoted by Lupus, in defense of the monastic life [82]

•••

[III] COMMUNITY:

This would merit an entire study of itself. Fr. Bertoni dedicates Chapter III of Part X to bringing a bout uniformity in every day living [83]. Perhaps the original Rule of St. Ignatius did not stress community as much as the commentary of Fr. Suarez has- but, it is this latter especially that Fr. Bertoni has followed throughout this entire Part. For the Stigmatine Founder, community remained a central concern. The vows are meant to assist an apostolic missionary charity - not only in uniting one to God, but also to bringing about a certain fairness in externals.

[a] COMMON LIFE Likeness, even externals can help to bring about this elusive ‘union’ - the example of the early Church described with theological idealism as having ‘one heart and soul’, ‘summaries’ that deeply impressed Fr. Bertoni [84]. This ‘idealized’ theology of Acts has served through the centuries as the inspiration the ideal for community life. the Founder offers the suggestion to honor God in the other:

CF # 228: “Wherefore St. Augustine says: ‘Let all help with one heart and soul’ [cf. Rule c. 2] - as if he meant to say: to be of one heart in helping, it is necessary to be of one soul. He adds: ‘Let each honor God in the other, for you have been made His temple’ - because God alone is ;the One who makes brethren to live together in unity’ [cf. Ps 132:!, Vulgate]. And thus, this uniformity aids greatly in making God known in all, and as a consequence, uniting all in God” [85].

This, too, is a quotation from Book VII of the commentary of Suarez, chapter 8, regarding special elements leading to uniformity [86]. Modern biblical commentaries speak of this Psalm quoted here as one of the ‘Psalms of Ascents’, regarding perhaps the brotherly relationships meant to bind priests and Levites in the Temple of the Holy City.

[b] RECREATION: The Stigmatine Founder gives surprising emphasis to this when one thinks of his own dedication to the Apostolic Mission - and his enthusiastic ideal for on-going formation, intellectual and spiritual betterment. He dedicates Chapter 7 to this of Part X, a full seven, and rather lengthy Constitutions [87]. It is indeed remarkable as we learn from his biography and Original Constitutions of his plan of total

dedication to the Church. His plan calls for an intense spiritual life, life-long formation, or up-dating.

While his times did not know of “burn-out”, this amount of recreation time that he required is important to consider. He tells us that while it is for health, the underlying reason may very well be Aristotle’s idea for friendships to grow - there has to be communication. The ancient monks saw recreation as beneficial for both body and soul. The Stigmatine Founder sees even in recreation a way of achieving the purpose for the foundation of the Congregation: conversion that comes also through conversation:

CE # 255: “Moreover, since the principal end of our Congregation is the conversion of souls, this is to be realized for the most part by conversing with our fellow man, speaking to them of divine things, kindly and prudently. For this they derive much benefit from the conversations they hold among themselves, which quite often should be about the things of God. Thus, let them in practice learn to keep silence during the times prescribed, to speak prudently and fruitfully, for this is the best kind of silence, as St. Ambrose indicated; ‘Pythagoras,’ he says, ‘imposed silence on his disciples that by keeping silence they would learn to speak. David instead, prefers that we learn to speak by speaking; in fact, how can we learn without practice? or make progress without exercise?’ He concludes: ‘ Thus let him who wants to acquire a manner of speaking which is prudent and circumspect not repudiate the natural means, and at the same time, let him make use of those means for properly safeguarding the tongue.’ [88].

This rather lengthy constitution is taken from this same Chapter VIII of the Commentary of Suarez [89].

[c] ‘APOSTOLATE OF THE PEN’ a wonderful font for a deeper appreciation of the spirit and mind of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni are the letters of his that have come down to us. He also has dedicated five Constitutions to the exchange of letters among the confreres [90]. His over-all ideal is the ‘one heart and soul’ of the Acts of the Apostles describing the early Church. Citing St.. Basil, who quotes the ‘example of the Apostles’, Fr. Bertoni was convinced that good news should be shared: *bonum est diffusivum sui*!. The Constitution reads thus:

CE # 259: “ St. Basil says: ‘He who through the grace of God has done something good, should also let it be known to others, for the great diffusion of God’s glory’. He cites the examples of the Apostles for this [Rule for Monks, 70]” [91].

Again, Fr. Bertoni has taken this from the Commentary of Suarez, where the Jesuit theologian is responding to objections posited earlier in his text, for the sake of clarifying his position. Suarez places the objection that conversation and communication among confreres take much time - and that further, in much speech, there will always be sin lurking - and there is the constant danger of disagreements cropping up. He responds to these arguments - and in his response he offers the text cited by the Stigmatine Founder for his Original Constitution # 259 [92].

Letter writing remains an excellent means of maintaining contact, and also for encouraging one another in the service of the Lord.

THE TRINITARIAN IDEAL: this Part X of Fr. Bertoni's Original Constitutions, that treats of the Union of the Members, is the longest of all, comprising some 80 Constitutions [93]. The concluding Constitution of this Part, once more returns to the intra-Trinitarian life as this is meant to move all believers to that harmony and union that would actually make 'all for one and one for all':

CF # 266 "St. John Chrysostom, elegantly commenting on the words of Chapter 16 of St. John's Gospel, 'that they may be one even as we are', says very well: 'Nothing can be compared to the harmony and mutual union of wills: for by it the individual multiplies himself. If indeed two or ten persons agree among themselves, there is no longer once individual, but each individual has multiplied himself ten times, and in the ten you shall find unity, and the ten in each individual.' Further on he says: 'This is the excellence of charity, and how it brings it about that one can be multiplied and inseparable; that he can be found in many places at the same time; that he can be in Persia and in Rome: what nature cannot do, love can.'" [94].

For Suarez, too, these are the concluding lines of his rich Chapter 8 of Book VIII, much quoted by Fr. Bertoni. [95]

[d] FAMILIAR AND FRIENDLY CONVERSATION: an entire Part XI is dedicated by the Stigmatine Founder to this exercise, so necessary to keep the community together [96]. Once again, the central ideal that is presented is that of Jesus Christ and His Apostles:

CF # 271: "Let each one keep before his eyes the example of Christ our Lord, who though habitually living with men, even eating and drinking with them, nevertheless not only observed perfection, but also adhered to a state of life which was the most perfect." [97].

CF # 272 "Let everyone else be mindful of the example of the Apostles, who in their intimate dealings with men, 'becoming all things to all men that they might save all', nevertheless kept a state of perfection." [98].

CF # 273 "The Council of Mainz, held under Leo III, established: 'That ministers of the altar and monks are to abstain altogether from worldly business', and then added: 'Still a becoming occupation is not to be denied them for providing for their various needs; for we read that the holy Apostles were also engaged in business.'

"Thus from the conduct which the Apostles observed in procuring the salvation of souls, we justly conclude that to converse with our fellow men for this reason, according to the rule of our Institute, is not contrary to the religious state." [99].

All of these Constitutions - as well as the next few which emphasize the example of the early monastic life - are all taken from the ninth Book of Suarez that deals specifically with the Apostolic Mission, or the "Means, or Ministries which the Society

employs for the Salvation of its Neighbors.” Suarez’ text almost covers about one half of a column of his large tome [100].

•□•□•

[IV] THE EARLY CHURCH:

The immediate effect of Jesus’ life in the Trinity was the sharing of it with the Apostles and the early Church. The ‘Apostolic Life’ early on meant that life in union with Christ: revealed in the Scriptures, present in the Eucharist, in community. Fr.. Bertoni presents the Acts of the Apostles as the ideal:

CF # 189: “Let everyone keep before his eyes, as a norm of this harmony, what is read in the Acts of the Apostles about the conduct of the first faithful who are the source from which all religious orders have their origin and form: ‘They were of one heart and one soul, and held all things in common and distributed them among all according as anyone had need. They took their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and being in favor with all the people. and great grace was in them all.’[cf. Ac 2:44, ff.]” [101].

This is taken from Suarez, as has been seen [102].

CF # 226 “The characteristic means, however, is that of poverty, in the highest degree proper to religious by reason of their vow, as is splendidly taught by St.. Basil: ‘In the religious state’, he writes, ‘ all things are common - hearts, minds, bodies and everything necessary for subsistence and way of life; God is common to all, the exercises of piety are common, and the labors are common.’ The same thing is said by Cassian, who cites the words of Chapter 4 of the Acts: ‘They had but one heart and one soul’; and he observes that right afterwards is said: ‘And they held everything in common.’ [v. 32,f.]” [103].

As has been noted, this Constitution is taken word for word from Suarez [104].

CF # 232 “However, this should not prevent the needs of each from being justly attended to, according to the words of the Acts; ‘Distribution was made to each as he had need’ [cf. Ac 2:45;4:35]- for this is precisely what charity demands.” [105].

This is from Suarez [106].

CF # 261 “Hence, also in the Church there was the ancient custom among the faithful of exchanging communicative letters [as they were called]. In this way Catholics maintained contact with each other and gave testimony of their own faith, as St.. Optatus and St. Augustine record.” [107] - which is likewise from Suarez! [108].

SUMMARY

What seems to come through here is the enormous respect for each person - 'personality' reaches its summit in the theology of the Most Blessed Trinity. Much might be obtained by reflecting on 'relationships': those within the community, those outside - measured along with our relationship with God. The very challenging 'abandonment to God, availability to the Church' present challenges not only as regards the Apostolic Mission, but also regarding the primary apostolate - that of each Stigmatine toward his own confreres.

St. Gaspar Bertoni's understanding of the Trinity would have been most inspired by St. Thomas Aquinas and also by St. Ignatius of Loyola. In the Thomistic tract, there is much emphasis on relationships, personality and mission. Perhaps the Stigmatine 'character' would be intimately bound up with these. It does not seem that the Founder's grace, charism has died with him - a charism is a gift of one for the entire Church. For his Apostolic Mission, Fr. Bertoni learned much from St. Ignatius and also from Suarez' Commentary 'On the Religion of the Society of Jesus'.

Any analysis of the Stigmatine Founder's spirit will find this recurring dynamic presence of the Trinity: the persons are all equal, distinct, but not divided - each involved in the Father's Plan of Salvation:

The Father did not spare - but offered up His only Son [cf. Rm 8:32; Jn 3:16].

The Son did not cling to His equality with God - but, emptied Himself, by being 'obedient unto death.' - And the Father raised Him on high, with a name above all names. [cf. Ph 2:5-11].

But when the Spirit of truth comes He will lead you to the complete truth, since He will not be speaking as from Himself, but will say only what He has learnt ... he will glorify Me, since all He tells you will be taken from what is mine. Everything the Father has is mine; that is why I said: all He tells you will be taken from what is mine. [cf. Jn 16:13, ff.].

•

•□•□•



C. Fr. Bertoni's Lived Devotion to the Trinity:

[I] Unity in Pluralism: 'Various and Proper Ministries'

1. The Trinity: A Central Mystery for St. Gaspar Bertoni:

As has been noted above [109], in the later summer of the year 1808, Fr. Bertoni noted in his Spiritual Diary his passing by an image of the Most Holy Trinity. What impressed him was the Father's open arms - which for the Stigmatine Founder was some insight into the mystery of Divine Mercy, and the divine 'prodigality', or the easy communication of His gifts. Just about five weeks later, in the early autumn of that same year [110], Fr. Bertoni ponders the extraordinary divine love within the Trinity, in sending the Son to us.

There seems to be in this a sense of the divine Mission - and the great sharing of all one is and has. Fr. Bertoni's dream was to hand on only what had first been thoroughly contemplated:

CF # 49 "In this clerical Congregation, which aims not only to contemplate on divine things, but also to teach contemplated truths to others, the members shall possess not an ordinary, but a perfect knowledge of all those things which pertain to faith and morals; therefore, it is necessary that the religious clerics of this Institute eagerly strive to acquire such a knowledge perfectly." [111].

This paragraph is taken word for word from Suarez' Commentary, where he speaks of training the Jesuit Scholastics regarding the purpose, or the end of the Society of Jesus, to be achieved by more than ordinary knowledge. In Chapter I of his

Book V, Suarez asks whether in the Society of Jesus the religious might be destined to proficiency in studies. In his affirmative response, Suarez quotes St. Thomas Aquinas on teaching only what has been profoundly contemplated. Fr. Bertoni was much impressed with St. Thomas' principle and Suarez' response, so much so that he took it exactly for his Original Constitutions [112].

Clearly, then, the Stigmatine community has a prayer-filled Apostolic Mission as its primary purpose.

The manner of realizing this Apostolic Mission is presented as quite varied:

CF # 155: "It shall be the concern of this Father Master to form the Novices well in the spiritual life; and every week, on stated days, he shall explain to them the whole rule of our Institute, and the means of working profitably for the good of our neighbor." [113].

The Constitution seems to indicate that there is variety, plurality of 'modes' of assisting our neighbor. Fr. Stofella notes that these regulations regarding the 'Third Probation' are taken from Suarez' Commentary [114].

This 'plurality' of the 'more important ministries' is noted in Part IX, by Fr. Bertoni in Part IX, where he treats of the 'Grade of the Professed', which means the 'Apostolic Missionaries' properly so called:

CF # 158 "Only priests are to be admitted to 'Profession': for the principal government of the Congregation pertains to the Graduate Fathers; to them also belong the more important duties of the ministry, and these require the priestly ministry." [115].

As Fr. Stofella noted, this Constitution is taken [*verbatim*] from Suarez [116]. Fr. Stofella also indicates that CF # 185 outlines for us 'the principal task of the Members' [117]:

CF # 185: "... Since the scope of the Congregation is to offer service to the Church by means of the various and proper ministries of her vocation under the direction of the Bishops, which is at times an arduous and difficult thing... but this is indeed the special grace of our vocation, a grace superior to every danger or difficulty..." [118].

This is taken almost word for word from Suarez [119] where he speaks of the 'content' of the Fourth Vow of the Society of Jesus, presenting its Apostolic Mission.

In the Stigmatine history, Fr. Bertoni sacrificed one of his closest collaborators, Fr. Luigi Bragato, at the request of the German - speaking Bishop Grasser, who requested the saint for a confessor to serve the Italian Empress in the royal court of Vienna in the year 1835. Fr. Tabarelli would be the seminary professor of two future Popes [Pius XII and John XXIII], as well as of many Cardinals and Bishops. Some of his former students reached positions of prominence in the Dioceses of the United States of America - from whom would eventually come invitations for the Stigmatines to come

to the new world. Examples of 'the more important ministries' along with these would be: parish missions; theological conferences with priests, seminary teaching; retreats and spiritual direction for people from all works of life; experts in catechetical instructions; the founding of oratories and the direction of youth groups. these are some of the examples of the 'varied and proper ministries' of the Congregation in its history.

Yet, among the Stigmatine Founder's contemporaries were those who found it very difficult to preach or to teach, to give learned conferences. Men such as Fr. Michaelangelo Gramego and Fr. Modesto Cainer had talents that were used in other areas of the Apostolic Mission. In his great compassion, Fr. Bertoni never forced any ministry on anyone - with its broad scope, there was room for all.

In the varied and proper ministries offered by the original Constitutions, it is the bond of fraternal, familial charity that kept the men together. The ideal was that they could enrich one another by community living and recreation together. The longest part of the original Constitutions, covering about 80 Constitutions, is Part X, regarding the Unity of the Congregation [120]. This, then, is immediately followed by about another 30 Constitutions in Part XI, dedicated to 'Familiar and Friendly Conversation' [121].

In the Stigmatine Founder's own life, the Mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity is tantamount. This reality has been made known, brought to us through Jesus Christ. Hence, Fr. Bertoni's charism is 'Christological'. Christ has been sent as the Father's Apostles, Missionary. The Trinity, then, is the fountal mystery - the spring-board also, for his Eucharistic reflections. The love for the Trinity, expressed through the Eucharist, is evident in the practice of offering the Eucharist for the discernment of, and for assistance and success in the Apostolic Mission:

CF # 162 "The administration of the Sacraments, especially of Penance and Holy Eucharist, beseeching God, even by the celebration of Holy Masses, to grant the fruit of the Missions and of the preaching and of confessions." [122].

This text seems based on Suarez' Commentary, Book I where he, in an introductory manner, takes up the matter of the means the Society of Jesus uses to achieve the salvation of its neighbors. Suarez notes that sacrifices are offered for the Church, to assist in the conversion of infidels and the correction of heretics [123].

[2] THE HABIT OF THE APOSTOLIC MISSIONARY: IN IMITATION OF CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES:

Perhaps somewhere within this concept of a very broad Apostolic Mission, and the sense of 'abandonment' to the incarnation of the Will of God through the Bishops' needs - why it is that there is no specific 'habit' of the Apostolic Missionary. In the Original Constitutions, it is simply stated:

CF # 6: Perfection of Self, Perfection in Ecclesiastical Sciences... The rule of life regarding diet, apparel and lodging shall conform to the standards set by the more

exemplary clergymen among whom they live; and shall be of edification to the faithful for its Christian parsimony and religious poverty.” [124]

This is further specified:

CF # 137: “One’s attire should be plain and appropriate at the same time bespeaking poverty and fitness for the various ministries and persons with which we deal; and it should be clean and not shabby.” [125].

Suarez speaks of the reason why St. Ignatius of Loyola did not legislate a specific habit for the Jesuits. Suarez notes that one reason is ‘apostolic’. Among the ‘privative’ means the Society uses in living its program is that the Society will not be bound by the choir, in order to be open for its various missions; they will not take on the perpetual care of nuns. A third such means is that the Society does not have a specific habit - but simply assumes the garb of those clerics who live their lives in the proper manner. The Jesuits are asked to follow the customs of the clergy and the area where they are assigned, so that they might have easier access to all their fellow human beings, whether unbelievers, or the faithful [126].

There is a rather extended commentary by Suarez regarding [lack of] the Jesuit habit, that also appears in William Humphrey’s English translation [127]. Among the ‘privative’ means the Society uses are the following: the Society is not bound to choir; it does not accept the perpetual care of nuns - nor does it have its own specific habit.

“The Society is truly and properly called and is a religious body of clerics and priests. it is so called and is declared to be so by the Council of Trent, and by many Bulls of the Pontiffs. It is so called not only by reason of its habit, but by reason of its own institute and functions; for, of its primary end, it demands actions which are proper to clerics, such as the purification, enlightenment [intellectual] and perfection[spiritual] of the faithful. It is to be distinguished, therefore, from those bodies which are called Orders of Clerics merely because they have retained the clerical habit, although of their special aim they have no function for which clerical order is in itself necessary. The Society is not called a body of clerics because it wears the habit of clerics, but it wears that habit because it is in itself a most special manner a religious body of clerics, and primarily aims at the perfecting of its members in the clerical state, and in order that they may fulfill their clerical functions more becomingly, more holily and with greater fruit.

“Although some bodies of regular Clerics have a special habit, such as the Canons Regular, yet for prudent reasons, having regard to the character of the times and the principal end of the Society, St. Ignatius willed that the Society should have no special religious habit. The heretics of his time so hated monks that their very habit was obnoxious to them, and since the Society specially desired to gain them to Christ, it would not offend them by appearing in a novel habit, that being in itself a thing indifferent. The absence of a habit, it was considered, would procure more easy access to heretics, while it would at the same time facilitate intercourse with the faithful. It was convenient also in the case of pagans that those who converted and regenerated them should resemble in outward appearance the pastors by whom they should

afterwards and ordinarily be governed. With regard to the attire of the members of the Society, St.. Ignatius desired three things:

- that it should be respectable;
- that it should follow the custom of the country;
- that it should not be at variance with their profession of religious poverty.

“St. Ignatius may be said not so much to have instituted a new religious Order as to have restored that Order of Religious Clerics which, as we have seen, existed before the institution of monks, and was founded by Jesus Christ in the Apostles; and which had as its proper end the preaching of the Gospel and the defence and propagation of the faith.

As Pius IV says in his Bull: ‘As they have assumed the name of Jesus, so do they strive by deed and doctrine and example to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ, and follow in His footsteps.’”

As would be expected, there was no formal ‘vestition ceremony’ - there was no regular religious habit for the Jesuit Novices. Everything is reduced to this: to live under obedience to the Society, as a member not yet united to it through any vows, but simply with the resolution of entering into the Society, and of living and dying in it, as is noted in the Fifth Part of the Jesuit Constitutions [128].

It seems quite evident then, that for Fr. Bertoni ‘the [religious] habit of the Apostolic Missionary’ is simply that of ‘the more perfect clerics’ among whom they live - and also depending upon the variety of the ministries the Apostolic Missionaries would be called upon to perform by the bishops, in accord with the variety of times, places and circumstances of the Church’s needs. Throughout, there is this insistence on the ‘variety of ministries’ - each of which will create for the Apostolic Missionaries a profound interest in the various fields of the community’s competencies. There is a real community risk in the ‘specialization’ that is needed - unintended, it could divide, rather than enrich.

The charism of Fr. Bertoni is one that passes from contemplation, reflection, thought and planning - to action, service, ministry - to the specific Apostolic Mission. It is very much a work of ‘collaboration’ with God and sharing with one’s confreres. ‘Just as’ the Father sent His only-begotten Son, so also the Son sends His Apostles - in showing His Sacred Stigmata on Easter night [cf. Jn 20:21, ff.]. As is evident especially from his Spiritual Diary [Memoriale Privato] Fr. Bertoni pondered the inner mystery of God and was much inspired by the Trinity involved in the salvation of the world. Fr. Bertoni contemplated the Father sending the Son in poverty, humility, and even shame - all for the sake of the furtherance of the reign of Heaven. In contemplation and prayer, as well as in community sharing, there emerges a discernment that is needed in the acceptance of the specific Apostolic Mission for the assistance of Bishops.

For the choices to be made, the XIIth Part of the Original Constitutions [129], places much insistence on hearing the views of the confreres:

- the superior is bound to take counsel with the confreres [130];

- reunions, or chapters should be held [131];
- the superior shall have councilors, not associates, in his government [132];
- however, in affairs of greater moment and of a lasting nature, the right of making decisions does not reside with the superior alone [133];
- in matters of lesser importance, the superior will be assisted by the advice of his confreres [134];
- an Admonitor should be appointed to admonish the superior of his faults [135].

3. THE WITNESS OF THE BISHOPS OF VERONA: [136]: they all had an impact on Fr. Bertoni, a priest of the Diocese of Verona - and perhaps in some instances, also on the development of his charism.

a. Bishop John Avogadro [SJ]: ordained Gaspar Bertoni a priest on September 20, 1800. In these early years as a priest, through his zealous pastor, Fr. Girardi at St. Paul's in the 'Campo Marzio' section of Verona, Fr. Bertoni became the 'Missionary of the Youth.' His early efforts were in the Marian Oratories, to which was joined the dedicated teaching of catechism. We still have Fr. Bertoni's early catechetical instructions to children both from the time his was still a seminarian, as well as in his early years as a priest. His apostolate to the youth also included schools from the time Fr. Bertoni entered the Stimmate, November 4, 1816.

b. Bishop Innocent Liruti, OSB: was the Ordinary of Verona for almost 20 years from 1808-1827. It is during this time that Fr. Bertoni became more and more committed as the 'Missionary' to the Clergy, to the seminarians and also to religious. He was called upon to serve as the Spiritual Director to the Diocesan Seminary of Verona - he was also the preacher of the conferences of renewal for the priests called to live in the seminary - and gave much of his time as the 'Angel of Counsel' - as confessor, spiritual director and advisor to many priests, religious and laity. Perhaps with tendencies toward 'Jansenism', Bishop Liruti did not have many 'confidants', but Fr. Bertoni was one of those in whom the elderly Bishop placed much confidence. It is also during this period that Fr. Bertoni's health problems began and were to plague him for the last 40 years of his life.

c. Bishop Joseph Grasser: came to the Diocese at a younger age than Fr. Bertoni was at that time - and he would die prematurely as the Bishop of Verona [1828-1839]. It was through him that the invitation to allow Fr. Bragato to go to the royal court of Vienna as Confessor to the Italian Empress in Austria. On July 15, 1831 [137], Fr. Bertoni received special permissions from the Vatican. Instrumental in obtaining these is the letter that Bishop Grasser wrote in Fr. Bertoni's behalf, dated June 18, 1831. In his letter to Cardinal J. Albani, Bishop Grasser - who knew Fr. Bertoni and his special 'work' intimately - described the saint as follows:

"...Your Eminence:

"... with this letter, We testify that Fr. Gaspar Bertoni is a priest outstanding in holiness of his life, his learning and charity, making himself all things to all. He is above all dedicated to the formation of the Clergy, through retreats and counseling - and also to the forming of youth in religion and virtue. The other members of his community are outstanding in their zeal..." [138].

c. Bishop Aurelio Mutti: with the untimely death of Bishop Grassi, the Holy See named another Benedictine as Bishop of Verona but only for a short time, until he was promoted to the See of Venice. In that capacity on December 7th, 1853, just six months after the death of Fr. Bertoni, the new Archbishop of Venice described the Stigmatines in these words:

“... there is no other scope of this Institute other than that of offering every kind of service to the Diocese, in response to the indications and the determinations of the Ordinary. We can state regarding that period of time in which We had the responsibility of the Bishop’s Chair in Verona, that in accord with the spirit of their community, the priests belonging to the Congregation, showed themselves to be always responsive to Our invitations, committing themselves with the same solicitude, zeal and charity:

- in the hearing of confessions;
- as well as in the assistance of the dying;
- in ministering to those in prison, including those under capital punishment;
- hence, We do not hesitate to affirm that we could not have been able to expect from them any greater or more advantageous service of the Diocese than they gave.” [139].

d. Bishop Benedict Riccabona: then succeeded to the See of Verona from 1854-1861 - being then transferred to the Diocese of Trent, where he died in 1879. In a letter to the Holy See, dated July 22, 1854, he thus presented Fr. Bertoni’s community:

“...From its very beginning, this Congregation has never ceased from existing and showing itself to be dedicated in any ecclesiastical ministry whatsoever to which it might be invited by their Bishop. In Verona, and in his diocese, they are known, loved, and venerated by people from all walks of life, for their dedication to hearing confessions, preaching, giving Missions, principally in giving priests’ retreats, teaching catechism, observing the Marian feasts in their two Churches, assisting the dying, the imprisoned, those condemned to capital punishment. These priests have been called to supply in the local seminary as Professors of philosophy and theology, and have performed there to the satisfaction of all. It is rare that a bishop would have men ready to employ in every circumstance and for any unexpected need whatsoever. These men have almost as the law of their community not only to be educated and prepared, but also ready for any ministry whatsoever to which their obedience to the superior might call them in the service of the Bishop.” [140].

This remarkable document of Bishop Riccabona repeats Fr. Bertoni’s quodcumque [regarding: ‘any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever’] [141] under the consideration of ‘The Grade of the Professed’, i.e., the Apostolic Missionaries - and the Ordinary of Trent does this three separate times:

- “in any ecclesiastical ministry whatsoever” [*in qualunque ministero ecclesiastico*];
- “ready for every circumstance and any unexpected need whatsoever” [*a qualunque inaspettato bisogno*];

- “ready for any ministry whatsoever” [*apparrecchiati a qualunque ministero*].

This Document still retains its importance in the Stigmatine history - in that it was in virtue of the Testimonial Letter of the Bishop of Verona that the Holy See granted the Decree of Praise, April 16, 1855. Almost 40 years later, Pope Leo XIII, through the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, bestowed the Decree of Approbation with these words:

“...The members of this Institute look above all to assisting the Bishops in working for the salvation of their neighbors, with any ecclesiastical ministry whatsoever, through any spiritual work of charity, with the exclusion, however, of the ordinary and perpetual care of souls and nuns. [They do this] especially with the sacred missions, with giving retreats, by teaching catechism, specialized preaching, and with the Christian education of youth, dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to guiding them in piety and study, in their own oratories, as well as in the seminaries and in their own schools...” [142].

e. Luigi Cardinal di Canossa [1862-1900]: he was the nephew of St. Magdalene di Canossa, and as Bishop of Verona, he was named Cardinal in 1877. On various occasions, he praised the work and the person of St. Gaspar Bertoni. In a letter to Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General of the Stigmatines, the Cardinal stated:

“... Regarding his reputation for holiness, I can assert with full knowledge that his reputation was well known, being on the lips of all - not only within the city, but throughout the Diocese and even beyond. And since he was so well known, on many occasions, I personally had recourse to him for advice, comfort, and spiritual direction... My aunt, too, Magdalene, many times, went to him for various matters and to get his advice, and repeatedly spoke to me about the veneration in which he was held, being considered a saint... The well-known surgeon, Luigi Manzoni, mentioned many times to my late Father, with me present, how he, as a professional man, was simply amazed when he would have to repeatedly lance Fr. Bertoni’s leg, from the femur all the way to the knee. These lancements were extremely painful - and the surgeon concluded: ‘I never saw a patient like he was, undergoing all those painful incisions: I believe he is a saint.’ ... In his preaching, too, I heard him many times: he spoke with such gentleness and conviction that whoever would listen to him, would be not only convinced of what he was saying, but deeply moved...” [143].

Throughout his long life, as Bishop of Verona, the old Cardinal had often praised the Stigmatines for the many and wonderful Parish Missions throughout the Diocese. And once again, in his 36th year as Bishop of Verona, Cardinal di Canossa remembered Fr. Bertoni and the enormous impression that the Founder of the Stigmatines had exercised on him, as a boy, long years before in his Pastoral Letter sent out to the whole Diocese :

“... it was in the first years of this century that a young priest, Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, instituted the Oratories, first in the Parish of St. Paul, in the Campo Marzio section of Verona - and then in St. Firmus Major. Under his assiduous and wise direction, those Oratories became models and the spring-board of many others. In a little less than ten years they were established in all the parish and subsidiary Churches of the City, as well

as in very many other parishes of this Diocese... In this fertile soil of the Oratories, there were gently developed the seeds of numerous vocations to the priesthood and religious life...

“And We, too, now in these declining years of advanced age, go back in happy memory to those years of my own youth - when, by the grace of God, I, too, was a member, and then for many years, a Prefect of one of these Oratories... The Book of Ecclesiasticus offers great praise to the early patriarchs [cf. Ecclus. XLIV: 10-16] - and this praise might be applied in some way to those Apostles of the Youth of Verona - yet, in great part, the credit is due to him who was the rime mover in our midst of this great work. It was Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, who has perpetuated the work of the Oratories in that fine Congregation that he founded later at the Stimante - he lived and died among us with such ardor of holiness, that precisely in these days, to our own indescribable joy, the Cause of his Beatification is being introduced. We express every hope that this cause might proceed happily, so that we might one day venerate on the altars, the Father of our Oratories...” [144].

•••

The testimonies of these bishops - individually and cumulatively - state repeatedly that Fr. Bertoni’s plan was that his community be dedicated to a broad apostolic mission: the Apostle of Youth was also the Missionary to the Clergy and those in the Consecrated Life - as well as being both competent and dedicated to a wide variety of preaching assignments. It seems that each of the Bishops praised him for some particular emphasis: the aged Cardinal remembered him especially for his Oratories; Bishop Grasser appreciated Fr. Bertoni’s work among the Clergy; Archbishop Mutti emphasized the ‘one-on-one’ ministry, in the Confessional, assisting the dying, and the imprisoned - including those on ‘Death Row.’ Bishop Riccabona, writing so that the Congregation would receive its Decree of Praise, emphasized the very broad spectrum of the apostolic mission to which the community is dedicated: ‘ it is rare that a bishop would have men ready to employ in every circumstance and for any unexpected need whatsoever...’ [145].

4. The Appeal for Unity: with this program of ‘varied and proper’ ministries within the Apostolic Mission, Fr. Bertoni offers this insight:

“... [the Stigmatine vocation is] arduous and difficult...but there is a special grace more powerful than any danger or difficulty...with this program we do not propose for ourselves to be exposed to dangers, or to go to one place rather than to another, or to carry out this, or that apostolate, of our own free choosing. Our vocation is to follow the direction of the Bishop, placed by the Holy Spirit to rule the Church of God: this is a sufficiently sure means not to wander from the path of the Lord...” [146].

As Novice Master, Fr.. Lenotti gave a series of Domestic Exhortations in which he showed the close parallel between the Stigmatines and the Plan of St. Ignatius: “...like the Company of Jesus is in a special way dedicated, directed in its service and to the dispositions of the Roman Pontiff - so, our Congregation is dedicated and determined in a very special manner and characterized through the service and *ossequio* of Bishops...” [147].

Fr. Bertoni's Constitutions manifest an extraordinary openness toward the future in hope - also by not being 'locked in' to any single ministry. Through its nearly 175 years of history, many Stigmatines have been both dedicated to, and competent in: the preaching ministry - in assisting priests and seminarians, as well as assisting those in the consecrated life - and most imaginative in youth work. All is for the development of the Plan of Salvation - since the main purpose of the Stigmatines is the conversion of souls [148] - this scope is also described as the salvation of souls, with ministries accommodated for this purpose [149]: both of these Constitutions are taken verbatim from Suarez. However, with this wide variety of apostolates, there becomes even more urgent the living of community charity [150].

One of the privileged means suggested by the Stigmatine Founder is the offering of the Eucharist for the success of the Apostolic Mission. "Among the Means by which this Institute promotes the salvation of our neighbors, are the following:"

CF # 162: "The administration of the Sacraments, especially of Penance and the Eucharist, beseeching God, even by the celebration of Holy Masses, to grant the fruit of the Missions and of confessions"

This Constitution is based on Suarez, who also includes here the frequent offering of sacrifices, which might assist the Church for the conversion of infidels and the correction of heretics as well as for the advancement of the faithful. [151].

The words of St.. Paul might be applied here:

"... There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same Lord who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose... one may have the gift of preaching with wisdom given him by the Spirit; another may have the gift of preaching instruction, given him by the same Spirit; another the gift of faith, given him by the same Spirit..." [I Co 12:4, ff.].

Based on the life of the early Stigmatines, the Constitutions state that the first apostolate will always be 'other Stigmatines':

CF # 188 "If, therefore, we must practice charity towards all, especially must we practice it toward those who are our spiritual brothers, as the Apostle says [Ga 6:10]: 'If one has no care for his own, especially those of his own household, he has denied the faith and has become worse than an infidel.'" [152].

+
+++
+

C. THE TRINITY: UNITY IN PLURALISM

[I] SPECIALIZATION

Introduction:

From the outset, the Original Constitutions indicate that there will be a wide variety of apostolates, flowing from union with God and a committed community life. The challenge is 'Diversity in Communion', *e pluribus unum* ! The various services of the Church [CF # 57]; the various and proper ministries [CF # 185] are to be accommodated to the goal in mind [CF # 262].

Fr. Bertoni presented the ideal for his Congregation in these terms:

CF # 1:End: Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops [153].

CF # 6:Means: Perfection of Oneself.

Perfection in the Ecclesiastical Sciences... [154].

This two-fold perfection is gradually achieved through spiritual and intellectual Progress, as this is described by the Stigmatine Founder in his Part IV of his Constitutions: 'Concerning the Progress [of the Confreres]' [155].

The supreme goal of knowledge is presented by Fr. Bertoni in these terms:

CF # 5:1 "Since the Apostle says: 'For I am determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ and Him crucified'; and since Christ said of Himself: 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end'. Therefore, all the confreres shall start here, that is, to learn by heart, if possible, the Christian Doctrine as set forth for everyone's understanding in the Catechism of Cardinal Bellarmine. Moreover, those who devote themselves to study, shall every now and then, return to it, getting a deeper knowledge and hold on to it in their study of the Roman Catechism." [156].

CF # 5:2 "They shall study Sacred Scripture in its entirety, first textually, and then according to its Catholic commentators." [157].

In these Constitutions, it is clear that Fr. Bertoni understood that 'Perfection in the Ecclesiastical Sciences' was also intended to serve as a means of spiritual perfection of the members of the community. the Stigmatine Founder sees Christ crucified, the Alpha and the Omega, as the recapitulation of all knowledge. He also takes a paragraph from the Jesuit commentary by Fr. Suarez:

CF # 5:6 "All this has been said of the Congregation in general, that is, of the aggregate of its members. Absolutely speaking, a mastery of all the above-mentioned sciences is necessary to the Congregation, though it would be difficult, or morally impossible for each member to master all these subjects by himself, along with

Sacred Theology. Yet, in the Congregation, taken as a body, this is not impossible, and so care must be had that a true pre-eminence in all these sciences exists.” [158].

Fr. Bertoni took this almost word for word from the Jesuit Commentary. Fr. Suarez treats of this in his Book V [159], on the progress of the Jesuit scholastics in their studies. The Stigmatine Founder had this dream of a body of men, each competent in a given field - and each dedicated to the furthering of the Reign of God, committed to community life. For this goal to be achieved, there is always needed a quality library:

CF # 60: “Every house shall be equipped with a common library furnished as completely as possible, according to the requirements and nature of the studies pursued.” [160].

This stipulation was geared to the qualification of all the members. In the present moment of the history of the Church, there is the repeated appeal for an up-dating: going back to the sources, and yet moving ahead toward a New Evangelization - an on-going formation. The Stigmatine Founder hoped that the community would be truly able and prepared. This grandiose plan was much admired by the bishops who first came to know of Fr. Bertoni and his work. Bishop Benedict Riccabona [+ March 31, 1879], considered as a ‘Benefactor’ to the Stigmatine Congregation, much admired the preparation of the early Stigmatines whom he knew. He offered his summer home to the students so that their studies would not be interrupted, during the long struggles with the Italian government. The library that was established there prepared some very brilliant young students.

The emphasis is that this be done in a community, family life. Therefore, it is most important that the health of the students be taken care of in their dedication to their very serious studies - once again the Stigmatine Founder has taken this from the Jesuits:

CF # 62: “It shall be incumbent on the superior to see that the students do not apply themselves to study at times that are harmful to their physical health; that they get enough sleep; that they observe due moderation in their studies in order that they may devote themselves for a longer time to mastering the arts and sciences on behalf of their service [*obsequium*] of the Church” [161].

This closely paraphrases a citation from Suarez, Book V, who in turn uses the Jesuit Constitutions as his source [162].

This injunction seems to be a practical understanding of the situation of candidates, striving for approval and also for progress. The Constitution is taken from Part IV, treating of the ‘Progress’ in the Spiritual as well as in the Intellectual life of the Congregation. The study envisioned here is a real challenge to the physical and intellectual capacity of the candidate - one of the ideals here seems to be that on-going preparation is part of the asceticism of the community. Very few penitential practices are noted in the Original Constitutions - but, much emphasis is given to continuing formation.

The Original Constitutions offer the virtue of prudence as important to the Stigmatine life of study - true learning, expertise in any field, are the work of a life-time. One might think of a phrase of the English spiritual writer, C.S.Lewis, 'Slow-Paced We Come!' The modern ideal of the entire Church is on-going, permanent religious and intellectual conversion as the daily situation of the Church. Fr. Bertoni's challenge is presented thus:

CS # 59 "Special attention and care shall be taken that those who study do not endanger their health, or lack anything that is necessary for them. Therefore, with regard to their diet and apparel, and their appropriate and needful recreation, the Superior shall do his best to dispel all their worries and preoccupations about such matters, so that the students may the more easily put up with their burden of study and be satisfied with the care and attention afforded them by religious life" [163]

Suarez took his thoughts from the Jesuit Constitutions (Chapter 4, § 1) - which Fr. Bertoni consulted here. [164].

"On behalf of the Church" [*in Ecclesiae obsequium*] - and 'For the greater Glory of God' are the major concerns throughout - these joint intentions permeate the Constitutions of St. Ignatius, and St. Gaspar Bertoni was much inspired by this spirit. These studies can never be allowed to lessen piety:

CF # 66 "Likewise it shall be incumbent on Superiors to see that the stress in studies be not detrimental to their love of piety, and that too many exercises of piety be not a hindrance to their necessary studies." [165].

Again, this is found in Suarez, who cites as his source the Ignatian Constitutions [166].

1. Specialization and Community:

There is a paradox in fidelity to the past - and creativity toward the future; going back to the sources in order to share the 'New Evangelization' for the new millennium. One Stigmatine means of doing this might be contained among the 'paradoxes' noted by the Superior General, Fr. John B. Tomasi, in 1916: "... the full development of the single activities of the members... with constant study..." [167]

a. Specialization: the Stigmatine Founder's Original Constitutions emphasize this to a great extent - the ideal is developed specifically in Part IV, treating of 'Progress' in the Spiritual and Intellectual Life:

CF # 49: "In this clerical Congregation, which aims not only to contemplate on divine things, but also to teach contemplated truths to others, the members shall possess not an ordinary, but a perfect knowledge of those things which pertain to faith and morals; therefore, it is necessary that the religious clerics of this Institute eagerly to strive to acquire such a knowledge perfectly." [168].

In this instance, Fr. Bertoni has taken this Constitution and the next one directly from the Commentary on Suarez. As the scope of the Congregation is ‘any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever’ [170], this exalted purpose will require the life-long effort to excel in some aspect of the Word of God - and to increase this expertise also technically, along with the invaluable lived experience that increases with the passing of time. The Founder returns to this idea in the very next number:

CF # 50 “In order to be able, therefore, to enlighten minds which dwell in darkness, to counteract the onslaughts of heresy, to know how to defend one’s religion, or to solve the moral problems which arise, and to give a satisfactory answer to all in all things, it is of prime importance that each one be adequately trained in the science of theology, both positive and scholastic, speculative and moral.” [171]

Once again, this important section of Fr. Bertoni’s Original Constitutions, are taken word for word from Suarez [172].

This Constitution sees the faith as something to be defended - but the challenge of the Stigmatines is also to enlighten minds, to search for solutions for the complex problems of the time. To this day, this Constitution offers a genuine challenge. The Stigmatine Founder’s approach is always to have a broad based support for an on-going up-dating process, all through life.

In the area of specialization, the needs of the Church and the changing times are predominant considerations. The entire program is one that is to be determined by the very broad ‘apostolic mission’:

CF # 57 “Therefore, there shall be individuals who specialize in one or another of these branches of knowledge for a longer time and with greater diligence: that is of the utmost importance for the various services [*obsequia*] that we must render to the Church, according to the diversity of the times and circumstances.” [173].

This important Constitution once more has been taken *verbatim* from Suarez’ commentary on the high level of competence that is required of the Jesuit Scholastics [174] - this is Fr. Bertoni’s dream for the Stigmatines: true competence in each branch of the sacred sciences especially for the varying times, circumstances and needs of the Church as expressed by the Bishops.

As there is no single apostolate envisioned by Fr. Bertoni, there will always be a real need of those who have a competence in the various sacred sciences. But, since the end of the Congregation is not only the specialized ministry toward the clergy and the consecrated state, there are also other apostolic needs that have to be met. Making allowances for the language of the times, the Founder asked for true competence in other fields as well:

CF # 58 “Although these studies in the Congregation refer primarily to Theology and Sacred Scripture, and our members shall chiefly and more often strive to attain a knowledge of these sciences, nevertheless, some members shall devote themselves more at length to the study of even the minor branches of knowledge, in

order to specialize and distinguish themselves in them, for the realization of the ends mentioned above.” [175].

This is a Rule from the Jesuit tradition, copied by Fr. Bertoni from his preferred Commentary, composed by Fr. Suarez on the Jesuit Constitutions [176].

This entire section on the broad sweep of ‘specialization’ in the mind of Fr. Bertoni is taken directly and almost totally from Suarez. Underlying all of this, is the spirit of apostolic abandonment: the actual work, ministry, that the Stigmatines will be called upon to do will depend always on the changing, various needs of the Church as history unfolds. The great diversity of ‘missions’ envisioned by Fr. Bertoni, taken from his Ignatian inspiration, require a very varied preparation. While ‘pluralism’ can indeed be an enrichment for the mind, it can present a real challenge for the unity of wills.

The theme of ‘specialization’ receives a further application in Part IX of Fr. Bertoni’s Constitutions [CF ## 158-186]. This is the Part that is concerned with the ‘Professed’, that is, those raised to the dignity of the ‘Apostolic Missionaries’ properly so called. It is to them that are assigned the ‘more weighty ministries’ [*graviora ministeria*] of the Apostolic Mission: these Constitutions are taken word for word from Suarez.

The Original Constitutions ## 158, 159 offer a familiar refrain:

CF # 158 “Only priests are to be admitted to ‘Profession’: for the principal government of the Congregation pertains to the Graduate Fathers; to them also belong the more important duties of the ministry. [*graviora ministeria*] and these require the priestly dignity.” [177].

This is copied precisely from Suarez where he gives his ‘theology’ of the Fourth Vow [178]- the ‘Professed’, or the ‘Graduate Fathers’ are those with the fourth vow, the Apostolic Missionaries in Fr. Bertoni’s plan. This is why there is needed a ‘more than ordinary knowledge’, and a very holy life:

CF # 159 “A more than ordinary scientific culture is required, and a very good proof of probity of life, of exemplary manners, and of dominion over the passions.” [179].

This is the expression taken directly from Suarez [180].

The area of concentration of the community envisioned is always ‘any Ministry whatever of the Word of God.’ Great benefit might be garnered by all who would truly pray over the Dogmatic Constitution of the IInd Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum* . In this document, there is a central article dedicated to the development, increase of the faith within the Church. Pondering on it, in the light of the Stigmatine charism, each could find much with which to be inspired, as these important ideas:

“... This tradition which comes from the Apostles, develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and

study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts [cf. Lk 2:19,51] - through the understanding of spiritual things they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through Episcopal succession the sure gift of truth..." [181].

b. Unity: Specialization, competence, learning can separate and divide. Not even the religious habit would unify - as each one wears what would be best in accord with the better clerical customs wherever each might serve the Church (cf. CF # 137). Throughout, there is much insistence by Fr. Bertoni on the wide variety of ministries and plurality of specializations, on that distinction noted in the Fourth Gospel:

"... By this love that you have for one another, everyone will know that you are My disciples.." [cf. Jn 13:35].

Part X of Fr. Bertoni's Original Constitutions emphasize very much this Unity, or Union of the Community. This is the broadest part of his entire legislation - and much of it is taken exactly from the Commentary of Suarez. For Fr. Bertoni, this is the over-riding challenge: union in diversity, community with plurality, a family committed to a wide variety of ministries. Christ's words in John's Gospel are meant to be the only 'distinctive mark' the community would have (cf. CF # 187). The idealized example of the early Church described in the 'Summaries' found in the Acts of the Apostles (cf. 4L32-35, not unlike 2:4-47) Fr. Bertoni quotes Ac 4:32 twice [182].

Fr. Bertoni lists first the 'negative means' for obtaining charity, in Chapter I of this Part X, which has a 'negative' title, 'Of Not Offending the Confreres.'" (cf. CF ## 191-196). This is followed by five Chapters of 'negative' means (cf. CF ## 197-220). This entire Section is taken almost *verbatim* from Suarez (183). The challenge remains unity in such diversity.

2. The Trinity:

St. Ignatius Loyola has a 'Proemium' to his Constitutions which emphasizes the Trinity:

CSJ # 134 "Although it must be the supreme wisdom and goodness of God, our Creator and Lord, which will preserve, direct and carry forward in His divine service, this least Society of Jesus, just as he deigned to begin it; and although what helps most on our own part toward this end must be, more than any exterior constitution, the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Spirit writes and engraves upon hearts; nevertheless, since the gentle arrangement of Divine Providence requires cooperation from His creatures, and since too the Vicar of Christ our Lord has ordered this; and since the examples given by the saints and reason itself teach us so in our Lord, we think it necessary that constitutions should be written to aid us to proceed better, in conformity with our Institute, along the path of divine service which we have entered." [184].

As has been noted, Fr. Bertoni's devotion to the trinity was also much enkindled by his contemplation of a painting. This same fascination for painting is noted in his Original Constitutions when he presents the Holy Spirit as an artist:

CF # 223: "Moreover, there is nothing which causes us to love another more than to perceive his special endowment of virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to contemplate him as the image of God painted with the most beautiful colors of grace. If, therefore, all strive within themselves to grow in these virtues and gifts and to consider them often in others, and if they regard others as superior to them in soul, rejoice over their spiritual gifts and give thanks to God, mutual charity will flourish among them in a wondrous manner."

This beautiful thought that is so "Bertonian" once more, as Fr. Stofella had pointed out in his presentation of Fr. Bertoni's Original Constitutions, is taken directly and word for word from Suarez - as are the Constitutions that precede # 223, and those that follow [186].

Once more, the Trinitarian dimension of Fr. Bertoni's charism comes through: in addition to admiring the portrait that the Holy Spirit paints in others, there is also an idea that is very close to St. Paul's presentation of 'fraternal humility' found in his introduction to the Christological hymn found in Philippians:

"... There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself... in your minds, you must be as Christ Jesus: His state was divine, but He did not cling to his equality with God, but emptied Himself...[cf. Ph 2:3, ff.] [187]

There is a two-fold tendency in the virtue of Christian humility: toward superiors, above us - and toward equals and inferiors. The second aspect is peculiar to Christianity and this humility God gave to us in Jesus Christ. The humility of the Christian is his/her response to this manifestation of loving and humble condescension by which God bestows supernatural grace on un-deserving creatures. It is at the same time participation of the creature in the divine act of condescension which empties itself in the supreme service of love to humanity. Humility of the child of God is a filial response to the love of the Creator and Savior.

By grace and the divine filiation, the disciple is elevated to participation in the divine nature, and by faith and love each is brought to some realization of the infinite distance which separates humanity from the Creator and Father. Each is invited to follow the path of humility of Jesus Christ in loving service toward the least of creatures and in obedience to the heavenly Father. Only love gives to humility the clear insight into the good qualities of our neighbor. Thus love is in the service of humility, and humility in turn is altogether in the service of love [188].

SUMMARY

Fr. Bertoni's great dream was real fraternal unity in a wide variety of ministries in the one Apostolic mission - and in the great pluralism of specializations. This is a

challenge his original rule still offers today. As Fr. Stofella noted, Fr. Bertoni took this ideal from the Jesuit Suarez' Commentary [189].

Fr. Bertoni's ideal reads thus:

CF # 228 "Wherefore, St. Augustine says; 'Let all help with one heart and soul' (Rule c. 2) - as if he meant to say: 'to be of one heart in helping, it is necessary to be of one soul', he adds: Let each honor God in the other, for you have been made His temples.' - because God alone is 'the One Who makes brethren to live together in unity': and thus this uniformity adds greatly in making God known in all, and as a consequence, uniting all to God" [190].



E. THE STIGMATINE CALL TO UNITY
"Future Good, Difficulty, but Possible"

Introduction:

[1] Hope concerns a future good, that is difficult but possible. In the mind of the Stigmatine Founder, the Stigmatine vocation is considered 'arduous and difficult...the scope of our Congregation is to serve the Church through the various and proper duties of its vocation..." [191].

[2] One of the real problems for the Stigmatine community seems to be the fact that on the one hand, there is this wide variety of ecclesial services - each one of which is demanding more and more competence in widely different fields. And yet, at the same time, Fr. Bertoni has made a strong appeal for fraternal family unity, based on the ideal of the early Church [192]. The challenge, then, seems to be the paradox of a wide variety of services, and yet a deep communion within. The Stigmatine union has often been tested, especially in times of pluralism. Christian charity is not the 'natural' response for human beings - this is the Christian ideal to love one another with the same love with which the Father loves Jesus (cf. Jn 15:9; 17:23).

[3] The paradoxes of the Stigmatine vocation have been noted through the years. In 1916, the first centenary of the community foundation, there was no public celebration because of World War I then raging in Europe. Fr. John B. Tomasi, Superior General at the time, wrote a Circular Letter commemorating the event, in which he described these paradoxes as being so evident in the early community:

"... the continuous quest for the hidden way, and the wide reputation that all enjoyed; an austere way of life, coupled with genuine joy; an authentic spirit of poverty,

and yet houses and churches that were debt free and unostentatious; a true life in community, and yet the most varied activities; a most complete pooling of resources and yet the full development of the different activities of the confreres; true commitment to study and work, coupled with a solid piety” [193]

[4] Fr. Bertoni’s dream is a united family dedicated to a widely diversified, increasingly competent Apostolic Mission for the Assistance of Bishops. The very source for Stigmatine hope in Christ is in itself paradoxical: “... by His wounds, ours are healed!” (cf. Is 53:5; 1 P 2:21, ff.).

(I) Hope for Unity

Presentation

(1) In the ideal presented here, unity, despite trying diversity, manifests itself as the supreme and constant hope of the community. This ‘pluralism’ that tears at unity is already evident in the ‘internationality’ of the Congregation. Yet, there is this paradox: Pope John XXIII spoke of ‘socialization’ as one of the signs of the times:

“... Certainly one of the principal characteristics which seem to be typical of our age is an increase in social relationships in those mutual ties, that is, which grow daily more numerous and which have led to the introduction of many and varied forms of associations in the lives and activities of citizens, and to their acceptance within our legal framework...” [194].

(2) This coming together of peoples of different continents, nations and languages, was highly esteemed by Pope John XXIII as one of the more promising signs of our times. Yet, paradoxically, religious communities still have the ideal of Jesus Christ upon which to measure their lives. While this seems to be a promising help to internationality, there are these challenges:

- this tendency toward association usually involves one’s own field of interest and specialization, but has not so much to do with daily living. In a religious community, many may indeed find more association outside the institute than within. In the theory of ‘parallel development’, sometimes our very specializations have created an even wider diversity of interests and activity;

- pluralism: there is indeed a wide difference of theological and spiritual opinion alive today in the sacred sciences. As discussions seem almost interminable and almost irreconcilable when one relies solely on human resources alone, some would lose much active interest in trying to succeed in true community sharing;

- in the area of first formation, there is a well-founded caution of disrupting candidates too soon from their native culture.

These and many other challenges are being lived through by many communities: the ‘Catholic’ Church needs to ‘inculturate.’

1. Parallels with St. Ignatius:

a. Under some aspects, the Stigmatine Founder may be thought of as having lived in 'simpler' times - however, historians could also dispute this. He came from a divided city and a divided home. With his vision of faith, he saw that the 'arduous and difficult' vocation of living together as brothers, notwithstanding the 'proper' ministries that are so 'varied', 'accommodated' to the task at hand: unity in such circumstances, he was convinced, is far more the work of God than the result of community efforts.

b. The Jesuit founder, whom Fr. Bertoni sought to emulate so closely, dedicated the entire concluding part of his Constitutions to this unity: Part X, CSJ ## 812-827: "How the Whole Body of the Society can be preserved and developed in its well being." St. Ignatius wrote:

CSJ # 812: "The Society was not instituted by human means; and neither is it through them that it can be preserved and developed, but through the omnipotent hand of Christ, God and our Lord. Therefore in Him alone must be placed the hope that He will preserve and carry forward what He deigned to begin for His service and carry forward what he deigned to begin for His service and praise for the aid of soul [ad obsequium et laudem suam et auxilium animarum inchoare dignatus est]. In conformity with this hope, the first and best proportioned means will be the prayers and Masses which ought to be offered for this holy intention through their being ordered for it every week, month and year in all the regions where the Society resides."

St. Ignatius alludes here to a passage from St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians:

"...I am quite certain that the One Who began this good work in you, will see to it that it is finished when the Day of Jesus Christ comes..." [Ph 1:6].

This is a verse that not rarely appears in Fr. Bertoni's writings - he cites it in his very important Constitution # 185, which Fr. Stofella notes presents 'the principal duty of the Congregation' [196]:

"... Even though our Stigmatine vocation is an arduous and difficult call... the program of our particular dedication may nonetheless not be called imprudent or temerarious for these reasons:

"In the first place, because we believe that the realization of our dedication (to the Church) does not depend on the capabilities of human beings alone, but flows from the grace of the Holy Spirit: since, the One Who has inspired and begun this work, He Himself will bring it to completion, when our own abilities are not sufficient to keep it going..." [197].

Fr. Stofella states that this Original Constitution of Fr. Bertoni is taken from Suarez, Book I, Chapter 6. However, one may also read that chapter of Suarez where he treats of the Fourth Vow of Jesuits to the Pope - and the entire Constitution is found word for word, except for the first five, or so, lines [198].

1.) This offering of the Eucharist and fervent prayer for the Society in general and for the success of its Apostolic Mission is a key Ignatian idea that recurs frequently throughout his Constitutions:

CSJ # 424: “The function of the rector will be first of all to sustain the whole college by his prayer and holy desires and then to bring it about that the Constitutions are observed...” [199].

2.) The office of prayer is a particular task enjoined on the Father General for the unity of the whole Company of Jesus:

CSJ # 790 “(The Superior General) will achieve this kind of government primarily by the influence and example of his life, by his charity and love of the Society in Christ our Lord, by his prayer which is assiduous and full of desires and by his sacrifices, to obtain the grace of the aforementioned preservation and development. On his own part, he should hold these means in high esteem and have great confidence in our Lord, since these are the most efficacious means of gaining grace from His Divine Majesty, the Source of what is longed for. especially should the General do this as necessities occur...” [200].

d. The entire Part VII of the Jesuit Constitutions is dedicated to the Missions of the Society of Jesus. For the Jesuits, ‘mission’ may be defined as follows:

Epitome SJ # 612: “By the word ‘mission’ is intended any apostolic expedition whatsoever performed in response to an order received by the Supreme Pontiff, or the Superiors of the Society, for the greater glory of God and the assistance of souls, as most often happens outside of our own residences.” [201].

1.) St. Ignatius composed a special rule in his Part VII, under Chapter 2, those Missions undertaken at the request of the Superior of the Society (cf. CSJ ## 618-632). The Saint wrote:

CSJ # 631: “Such aids would be prayer and Masses applied especially in the beginnings of undertakings or when greater need of such succor is observed, because the matters are important or the occurring difficulties great...” [202].

2.) Fr. Bertoni has a similar rule in our original Constitutions:

CF # 162 “...(we should) implore from God, even with the celebration of holy Masses, the fruit of the Missions and the preaching and the Confessions...” [203].

In Fr. Stofella’s translation, there is no translation apparent for ‘Missions’ - he might have included it under *concionum* . This entire section of the Stigmatine Founder’s Original Constitutions (Part IX, Chapter II) may be compared to the commentary of Suarez on St. Ignatius’ Rule, when the Jesuit theologian discusses the ‘Means’ by which the Apostolic Mission of St. Ignatius is carried out. This entire section of Fr. Bertoni may be noted in Suarez [204].

In whatever way one might choose to translate *Missionum et concionum et Confessionum* in Fr. Bertoni's Original Constitution (# 162), it is a common practice to pray sincerely for the 'Apostolic Mission for the Assistance of Bishops' that the Stigmatine community is called to offer. the 'Mission' of the Jesuits is the manner in which the Jesuits are distributed in the vineyard of the Lord.

St. Ignatius saw government (Part IX) as a means of union, and Part X is the concrete expression of how to preserve and develop the well-being of the Society.

2. The Difficult, Future Good: the Hope for Unity:

a. In the Stigmatine Founder's Original Constitutions, Part X - the longest single section of his rule (including ## 187-266: about 70 of his Original Constitutions) - is dedicated to the difficult, lived practice of unity. In addition to this long section, he adds Part XI (another 30, or more Constitutions) to the 'familiar conversation' and 'contact' with other human beings for their spiritual betterment. Almost every one of these Constitutions is taken from Suarez [205]. Fr. Bertoni's final Part XII, on government has only about 16 numbers (cf. CF ## 298-314). So, it might be noted that in Fr. Bertoni's Original Constitutions of 314, about 100 of them deal in some way with the Apostolic Mission of charity.

b. Prior to Part X, which is entitled: *Concerning the Unity, or the Union of the Institute* - he offers an Introduction, consisting of four numbers, each one with a biblical phrase:

CF # 187: "Let all have as the aim and distinctive sign of their vocation the saying of Our Lord Jesus Christ: 'By this love that you have for one another, everyone will know that you are My brothers' (cf. Jn 13:35)..." [206].

CF # 188 "If, therefore, we must practice charity towards all, especially must we practice it toward those who are our spiritual brothers, as the Apostle says: 'If one has no care for his own especially those of his own household he has denied the faith, and has become worse than an infidel' (cf. Ga 6:10). [207].

CF # 189 "Let everyone keep before his eyes, as a norm of this harmony, what is read in the Acts of the Apostles about the conduct of the first faithful who are the source from which all Religious Orders have their origin and form: ' They were of one heart and one soul, and held all things in common and distributed them among all according as anyone had need. They took their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and being in favor with all the people; and great grace was in them all.' (cf. Ac 2:44, ff.)" [208].

CF # 190: "Let everyone to the best of his ability keep this union of charity and concord, shunning everything which is opposed to it, namely, dissensions and discords, all of which must be studiously avoided, bearing in mind the words of Psalm 132: 'How pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.'" [209]

Suarez quotes both Ac 2:44, ff. and Psalm 132 in his Commentary, Book VIII, c.6, n. 3 & 4 [210].

c. The Stigmatine Founder states at least twice that the first area of apostolic interest for the community should be that of one's own confreres. One of these times is the recently quoted Original Constitution 188, quoting Galatians 6:10. The other is this following text:

CF # 262 "Since the end of the Congregation is the salvation of souls, consequently it assumes ministries appropriate to this end: therefore, religious should primarily and zealously work for the spiritual benefit of their own confreres before that of non-members, because charity is very well ordered. As it, therefore, inclines one to seek his own spiritual salvation before that of others, so also among others, it first intends and seeks the spiritual benefit of spiritual brothers, and of the entire body of the Congregation, before that of those outside the congregation." [211].

This text and many before and after it, are taken bodily right from the text of Suarez, where he treats of the 'means' by which the Society fulfills its Apostolic Mission in the Company of Jesus - Suarez calls this special concern for one's confreres the ultimate means of increasing fraternal charity [212].

d. After this very positive presentation of the Introduction to Part X, the Stigmatine Founder offers a First Section (from numbers 191-220, about 30 Constitutions) concerning the Negative Means to be considered in removing the impediments to charity:

- not to offend the Confreres (## 191-196);
- to avoid contrast of opinions in so far as this is possible (## 197-201);
- to eliminate contentiousness (## 202-207) [213].
- avoiding particular friendships (## 208-213);
- the discretion, moderation and measure to be brought to the love of one's Confreres (## 214-217);
- how to recognize private, disordered affections (## 218-22) [214].

e. There follows then, a list of Positive Means, and these too are attributed to Suarez by Fr. Stofella (## 221-266), 45 Constitutions:

- the internal propensity, or inclination of one's mind (here the Stigmatine Founder suggests a greater love for God and Jesus Christ). Fr. Bertoni says that this union will be fanned - much like a fire - through meditation (## 221-223);
- external circumstances which contribute: it is here that Fr. Bertoni suggests uniformity in obedience and in poverty (## 224-226)
- this likeness should be manifest in everything: food, clothing - and each one is presented with the challenge of seeing God in everyone else (## 227-229);
- concerning common table and lodgings (## 230-233);
- the special care of the sick (## 234-242);
- the hospitality to be shown to the confreres (## 243-249);
- common recreation and conversations (## 250-256);
- letter writing to distant confreres (## 257-261);

- the mutual concern among the confreres for their spiritual growth (## 262-266).

All of these many Original Constitutions of Fr. Bertoni can be found almost word for word in Suarez [215].

This Part X, with its 9 Chapters, ends with an ‘elegant’ citation from St. John Chrysostom:

CF # 266 “St. John Chrysostom, commenting on the words of Chapter 16 of St. John: ‘That they may be one even as we are,’ says very well: ‘Nothing can be compared to the harmony and the mutual union of wills: for by it the individual multiplies himself. If indeed two, or ten persons agree among themselves, there is no longer one individual, but each individual has multiplied himself ten times, and in the ten, you shall find unity, and the ten in each individual.’ Further on he says: ‘This is the excellence of charity, and how it brings it about that one can be multiplied and indivisible; that he can be found in many places at the same time; that he can be in Persia, and in Rome: what nature cannot do, love can.’ [216].

This is a *verbatim* citation from Suarez’ commentary - and with these words, he concludes in Chapter 8 of Book VIII [217].

g. Then follows an entire Part XI: Concerning the Familiar Conversation with one’s Neighbor, ordered to their Salvation” (there are more than 30 Constitutions here that Fr. Bertoni wrote, ## 267-297). These Constitutions are practically all copied word for word from Suarez’ Commentary [218].

1.) This entire matter might be re-read today with fresh enthusiasm, in the light of Pope Paul VI’s Encyclical of December 8, 1975, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* , and his emphasis on Indispensable Personal Contact:

”...For this reason, side-by-side with the collective proclamation of the Gospel, the other form of transmission, the person-to-person one remains valid and important. The Lord often used it (for example, with Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, the Samaritan woman, Simon the Pharisee), and so did the Apostles. In the long run, is there any other way of handing on the Gospel than by transmitting to another person one’s personal experience of faith? It must not happen that the pressing need to proclaim the Good news to the multitudes should cause us to forget this form of proclamation whereby an individual’s personal conscience is reached and touched by an entirely unique word that he receives from someone else. We can never sufficiently praise those priests who through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, or through pastoral dialogue show their readiness to guide people in the ways of the Gospel, to support them in their efforts to raise them up if they have fallen, and always to assist them with discernment and availability...” [219].

2.) Fr.. Bertoni dedicates an entire Chapter III to this idea: How the Purpose of the Congregation can be achieved through Familiar Conversation (cf. ## 277-281). He suggests also that the Confessor should seek to be the ‘friend’ of his penitents, as the Introductory number to this chapter - which is taken *verbatim* from

Suarez, as has been noted [220]. The Stigmatine Founder also suggests that the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation are among the principal ministries of the Apostolic Missionaries, the 'Professed' Members, the 'Graduate Fathers':

CF # 162 "The administration of the Sacraments, especially of Penance and Holy Eucharist, beseeching God, even by the celebration of Holy Masses, to grant the fruit of [the Missions], of preaching and of confessions." [221].

a.) The Stigmatine Founder looked upon spiritual progress as the imitation/following of Christ, as putting on the mind of Christ Jesus - something like painting a portrait:

MP: Feb. 26, 1809 "We must make a portrait in ourselves of Christ Jesus." [222].

b.) Fr. Bertoni uses a similar idea in his letter to Fr. Bragato, dated June 4, 1836:

"... read the Gospels often, and from the words and deeds of our Lord, draw on them through consideration and meditation, and apply to yourself that which is necessary in the circumstances in which you find yourself. Form yourself on that model, from Whom all the saints drew their ideas.

"Would you like a beautiful copy, as all beginners in art use in order to remain faithful to the design? Then take the life of St. Francis Borgia, written by Bartoli, and you will have something to comfort you, and to lead you to the perfect development of your drawing on the model, i.e., in the life of Christ our Lord, the author and the One Who completes our faith..." [223].

c.) Among the Positive Means for the living of the unity in the Institute, Fr. Bertoni once more returns to the image of a work of art:

CF # 223: "Moreover, there is nothing which causes us to love another more than to perceive his special endowment of virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to contemplate him as the image of God painted with the most beautiful colors of grace. If, therefore, all strive within themselves to grow in these virtues and gifts and to consider them often in others, and if they regard others as superior to them in soul, rejoice over their spiritual gifts, and give thanks to God, mutual charity shall flourish among them in a wondrous manner." [224].

This is taken word for word from Suarez' treatment of the Positive Means by which fraternal charity is conciliated in the Society [225].

This 'considering others to be superior to oneself' is a difficult concept of 'fraternal humility' forwarded by St. Paul:

"...There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody

thinks of his own interests first, but everybody thinks of other people's interests instead..." (Ph 2:3, ff.). [226].

3. There are examples of this in Fr. Bertoni's own life:

a.) The Stigmatine Founder decided to make an offer of all his goods to the newly re-instated Society of Jesus in Verona. Fr. Bertoni was most anxious that the Jesuits might establish a novitiate in Verona, as soon as possible following their return. For all practical purposes, he made an outright grant, no strings attached, reserving but a few rooms for himself and the few Stigmatines who had followed him. This was in the year 1837. As it turned out, the Jesuits did not need what he was offering - but, later on, the Venetian Province considered him a 'special benefactor.' [227]

b.) He then turned to the Vicar of Christ: on August 9, 1838, Fr. Bertoni wrote a letter to Pope Gregory XVI and offered all that he and the community owned [228]. He did this in the belief that these properties could be put to much better use for the *obsequium* of Christ the Lord, and for the greater usefulness of the Church. Fr. Bertoni lived the conviction that all these sacred places truly 'belonged to Jesus Christ and the Church, who were the rightful owners of all his property, and that he - Fr. Gaspar Bertoni - was but the 'Procurator.' [229].

c.) Modern theology has developed this concept of humility called 'fraternal', that flows from fraternal charity, based on the example of Jesus Christ [230]:

- that humility which is the virtue of the creature-status, the response of created beings to the Creator, the recognition and affirmation of our utter dependence on God. As for humility toward superiors, or those above us, Christianity has in common with many other systems of thought - but a humility exercised toward equals and inferiors seems to be specifically 'Christian';

- God has taught humility in person (cf. the 'KENOSIS of Christ, Ph 2:5-11). this is a 'humility' which has 'descended' from on high 'to dwell among us.' The 'Magnificat; recorded by St. Luke, is filled with this thought of the awesome mystery of divine humility;

- the Incarnation is the very 'Humility of God'. The humility of Jesus differs from that of all others: His is the humility of sinlessness, of omnipotence. Hence, His is supreme humility. He lacks the two basic conditions from our humility: personal creature-hood and sinfulness. So, indeed, He can truly say: 'Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.' (cf. Mt 11:29).

- this 'Christian' humility is a grateful, adoring love. Humility transforms our knowing and our loving. It flows from profound faith, hope and love. Only the truly humble is capable of a complete and the just estimate of the good qualities and merits of one's neighbor. Such humility is both the result of love, and is its most perfect expression - only love gives to humility the clear insight into the good qualities of one's neighbor. Humility is always Christ's gift which bears with it the task to prepare the way for Him: 'He must

increase, but I must decrease' (cf. Jn 3:30), The degrees of humility correspond exactly to the degree of love - truly Christian humility conforms to true love.

(III) An Idea from the Early Stigmatine Community

Sharing more in one another's ministry - is an ideal from those early times. There are several incidents in the life of the early community at the Stimate which seem to shed some light on the community, participating - through prayer and interest - in the apostolates of others. Here are several possible examples:

1. Fr. Innocent Venturini (1803-1864): throughout most of his years at the Stimate, Fr. Venturini was dedicated to a form of explanation of Christian Doctrine, known by the name of the *Quarta Classe*. It was customarily held between the two Feasts of the Holy Cross, one in May and the other in September. Perhaps something like the American "Bible Camps", or special catechetical instruction for the summer months, Fr. Venturini became a specialist in this ministry [231].

Among the many works conducted under the *Ministry of the Word of God Whatsoever*, the early Stigmatines were much dedicated to this form of catechetical instruction. It was a ministry very dear to the heart of Fr. Bertoni - suggested about 8 times in his original Constitutions, and four of these as specially recommended to the 'Professed,' the Apostolic Missionaries. It is a ministry described by Fr. Lenotti as "one that was rather difficult." the day the Founder died, those who were absent from his room were out teaching the *Quarta Classe*. [232].

With the closing of the schools in the summer months, the early Stigmatines dedicated much time to this difficult ministry [233] - it was a work that absorbed almost all of the membership.

Fr. Lenotti dedicated a Domestic Exhortation to this subject [234]. In some way, the entire community participated in the preparation and the hearing of these classes. All agreed, that Fr. Venturini's huge success in this aspect of the Apostolic Mission was due not a little to Fr. Bertoni - and this, not only because of his personal advice and counsel. The Stigmatine Founder had introduced this method among the early members of the community. Before presenting themselves to their 'public', they would appear in the community refectory, would present their lessons to the assembled confreres, to receive from them their observations and corrections [235].

2. Shared Sermon/Conference/Catechism Preparation this custom seems to have been a fairly common practice among the early members of the Stigmatine community. There is some record of the Feast of the Espousals in the year 1825, as one example. That year, the Feast fell on a Sunday, and hence, the number of priests coming to the Stimate to celebrate the Eucharist was somewhat reduced. The preacher for the evening devotions was Fr. Gaetano Brugnoli- yet, in the papers that have come down to us, before reaching the final copy that he actually delivered, there is evidence of other hand-writing: that of Fr. Bertoni, Fr. Marani - along with that of Fr. Brugnoli [236].

It seems clear that in the early Stigmatine community, for the three major festivals of the year (the Stigmata of St. Francis on September 17th; the Feast of St. Francis, October 4th; and the Feast of the Espousals, January 23rd) - it seems that the members of the community collaborated in the preparation of the sermons to be delivered. In this same year 1825, there is a panegyric delivered again by Fr. Brugnoli - and again, in its preparatory phases we find the hand-writing of both Fr. Bertoni and Fr. Marani [237].

Fr. Stofella comments that at the Stimate, not rarely - but apparently very willingly - much of the Ministry of the Word of God was done in collaboration [238]. Fr. Bertoni's ideal is present throughout this important sermon delivered for the Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis, in this same year, 1825. At this time of his life, Fr. Bertoni was confined to his room and chair because of a series of surgical operations, and was not able to write much [239]. This was the Founder's 'Silver Jubilee' Year of priestly ordination - he did celebrate on September 20th that year, but there is no record of any special commemoration of the day.

3. Fr. Louis Bragato (1780-1874) in 1835, Fr. Bragato was perhaps the most talented, or prepared member of the early community. He had been the Diocesan Prefect of Studies in the Seminary. On July 1st that year, the Bishop (Grasser) came to the community to ask Fr. Bertoni for the services of a Priest at the Imperial Court of Austria. the Italian Empress, Maria Anna Carolina Pia of Savoy - had asked the Bishop for an Italian priest to serve at the Royal Court as Confessor, and Almsmoner. Throughout this decision making process, the entire Community was together in prayer and sacrifice, in the hopes that this new venture would work out. There is no doubt that Fr. Bragato's departure cost the community dearly, as is evident from the Chronicles of those days:

"... The Stimate will have to be blessed by the faith and holiness of our Superior - how we need them now!" [240]

The early Stigmatine 'style' of a very broad Apostolic Mission was that of collaboration - sometimes physically, and intellectually and sometimes by prayer and sustained interest.

This might all be summarized with this line from Fr. Bertoni, written on January 29, 1840, to his dear friend, Fr. Bragato - who had then been in Vienna for about five years:

"... Be cheerful: if you ever want a happy thought, just return in your mind to Fr. Gramego's room. Have your wings ready to go beyond the clouds to the Heavenly Father, and find support in the Glorious Wounds of your Savior: 'Seek the things that are above, where Christ is' (Col 3:1). Just sit there as one of the faithful in the beauty of that peace (cf. Is 22:18): because all comes to an end, and does so quickly, but that eternal peace does not ever come to an end. And please pray for us and know that we do this for you..." [241].

+

+ + +

+

F. “THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD”

Introduction:

The analytical index of the Italian edition of the Jesuit Constitutions simply translates the Latin edition. In the English edition [242], the caption ‘Glory’ is followed immediately by “God” - and it is readily clear that ‘the Glory of God is the supreme norm of the Society of Jesus’. The last entry prior to the formal Constitutions and its Preamble states as follows:

CSJ # 133 “... all things are being directed and ordered toward the greater service and praise of God our Lord.’ [243]

1. St. Ignatius:

It is manifestly not by chance that in St. Ignatius’ Constitutions, certain phrases ceaselessly recur: *the service of God ... the Glory of God ... the greater glory of God...the service and praise of God...* These expressions come again and again like a refrain and conclusion to highly delicate prescriptions. In the first Spanish text of the *General Examen* and of the ten Parts of the *Constitutions*, the following statistics emerge:

- *servicio de Dios* - 140 times;
- *gloria... maior gloria... honor de Dios* - 105 times;
- *servicio, alabanza (gloria)* - 28 times.

This implies that on the average, one or another of these formulations occur on every page. While so much of the Ignatian Constitutions deals with studies, it was still necessary to keep the proper motivation for the intellectual life for the studious Jesuits.

St. Ignatius shows himself to be a saint of paradoxes: he asked for the practice of radical abnegation, a complete renunciation of one’s ease, honor, and especially of one’s own judgment and will through a complete obedience. Yet, there do not seem to be long sections devoted to the prayer life of the Jesuits. Along with all these demands for abnegation, the Jesuit ‘experiments’ during formation are unusual. The Jesuit Constitutions expose unformed souls to the general run of human beings, either in hospitals or in harsh pilgrimages. [244]

The spiritual teachings of the Ignatian Constitutions are in harmony with his *Spiritual Exercises* - in both documents, there is the almost ceaseless recalling of the supreme end of ‘the service of God’, or of ‘God’s Glory’ to be procured in ever greater measure. Along with this ‘theocentrism’ of intentions, there is also the constant thought of the interior direction of grace. This thought is constantly translated into the formulas: ‘in the Lord’, ‘according to what is judged in the Lord’, ‘according to the suggestion of the Holy Spirit.’ The Prologue placed at the head of the definitive text of

1556 starts out precisely with recalling the principle that 'as it was our Creator and Lord in His sovereign wisdom and goodness Who designed to begin this least Society of Jesus, so it is He Who will preserve, govern and foster its growth in His holy service' and that 'the inner law or charity which the Holy Spirit traces and engraves upon the heart will contribute to this more than any written constitutions.' [245].

Ignatius is known for his 'mysticism of service' - voluntary and unselfish service in a cause noble among all others. His is indeed a spirituality of service - of unselfish service for the glory of God, of voluntary service embraced through love, of heroic service even to the total denial of oneself. The source of all this seems to be the confluence of two factors:

- powerful supernatural logic: a strong sense of reason and common sense, that goes straight to the decisive point for a life supernaturalized in its entirety;

- there is also an enthusiastic love for Jesus, the incomparable Leader - an enthusiasm which moves a person following to him to embrace even poverty and insults in order to be associated with Him in winning the world to the service and glory of the Father [246].

The Ignatian ideal is simply this: service, the doing of God's will, with Christ as the Leader, in following Him and in union with Him - in these ideas Ignatius brought in no innovations. By his devotion to the mysteries of the Gospel, and by his tender piety toward the humanity of Christ, he simply inserted himself into the great medieval current of devotion to this holy humanity, and especially into its Cistercian and Franciscan streams. In some highly personal fashion he absorbed this already long tradition into himself. Then he drew from it in order to add something more concrete and attractive to his own thoughts about service of God and conformity to his will.

This seems to be the message which God entrusted to Ignatius through the mystical favors with which He almost overwhelmed him: service through love, apostolic service for the greatest possible glory of God, a service given in generous conformity to the will of God, in the abnegation or sacrifice of all self-love, of personal interest in order to follow Christ, the Leader whom he ardently loved [247].

It has been noted that Ignatius drew from many sources: Francis, Dominic and also St. Alphonsus. The chief Ignatian traits are inseparable: true prayer, genuine familiarity with God, abnegation of oneself, and courageous mortification of disordered passions: also, a tender devotion to Christ, His Passion, and His holy Mother; finally, an ardent zeal to labor, at least through prayer and penance, for the salvation of souls and the glory of God. [248].

In Fr. Bertoni's mysticism, the 'various and proper ministries' of the Apostolic Missionary become all united for the greater honor and glory of God, and His ever greater and more competent service on the part of the Stigmatines.

2. Fr. Gaspar Bertoni:

In Fr. Bertoni's Original Constitutions, Stigmatines are called to 'serve' God and the Church gratuitously (n. 3) - and this *obsequium* is to be offered under the direction of the Bishops, through the various and proper tasks of their vocation (n. 185). It is all for the greater honor and glory of God - a very central motivation to the heart of Fr. Bertoni, in his two-fold ideal, noted in both the 'Progress in Holiness' and Progress in Knowledge':

CF # 65: "All shall guard the sanctity of their lives, and direct their intention to the glory of God and the salvation of souls, because 'without a pure intention and the imitation of the saints, no one can understand the sayings of the saints,' as St. Athanasias says. Let them often beseech God Who is the Lord of sciences to grant them the necessary knowledge." [249].

Apparently, Fr. Bertoni received this quotation from St. Athanasias from Suarez [250]. In developing his ideal of studiosity the Stigmatine Founder returns once more to the central theme of the service [*obsequium*] and glory of God:

CF # 125 "But whenever there is a question of studies which are deemed necessary or helpful overcoming all fatigue, negligence, or tediousness, they shall apply themselves to them eagerly and wholeheartedly, striving to master them for the glory of God and the greater service to the Church" [251].

Fr. Stofella offers Suarez (Book V, chapter 1, pp. 801-806) as the source for these constitutions.

CF # 133 "Finally, in the fourth place, everything pertaining to one's personal appearance, such as dress and the like, should be unassuming, so that, whatever common poverty allows and permits the religious for his use, modesty will utilize with all propriety for God's glory and our neighbor's edification" [252].

In his Part X, Fr. Bertoni presents the negative means to be employed in the living of charity. Much of this is taken from Suarez:

CF # 218 "The signs of such a love (Particular and Disorderly Friendships) are had first of all: if the motive of greater affection be not the greater honor of God, or the greater advantage to religion and souls, or the greater virtue and holiness discernible in such a person: for what cannot be reduced to these motives, is foreign to the order of religious charity. Likewise, St. Basil says that blood relationship, no matter how close, claims no special attention in religious life, but must be disregarded" [253].

This is taken word for word from Suarez [254].

Another means of communicating God's glory is through letter writing, and the example of the Apostles is cited:

CF # 259 "St. Basil says: 'He who through the grace of God has done something good, should also let it be known to others, for the greater diffusion of God's glory'. He relates apostolic examples of this" [255].

This is from Suarez , as Fr. Stofella noted [256].

In the Government of the Congregation, it is for the honor of God and the common good to call the Council together:

CF # 303: “In affairs of lesser importance, the Superior assisted, as far as he deems advisable, by the counsel of his confreres, shall have all the power of ordering and commanding what seems to him to be more advantageous to the glory of God and the common good.” [257].

Fr. Stofella has indicated that these numbers on government come from Suarez, Book X, chapters 1-3.

CF # 304: “A Monitor shall be appointed. After having prayed, and with due respect and humility, he shall admonish the Superior of any fault he suspects him of being guilty of regarding the greater service and glory of God. Such an office with respect to Superiors is extremely necessary, as St. Basil taught” [258].

SUMMARY

Fr. Nello dalle Vedove offers three Chapters dedicated to the Glory of God in his published doctoral thesis, *A Model of Holy Abandonment* . He writes:

- The Creature is ordained to the Search for the Glory of God;
- The Quest for God’s Glory implies the Exercise of the most Perfect Love;
- The Continuous Search for God’s Glory transforms Life into an Incessant Act of Religion [259].

this was a theme of his own Spiritual Diary - as noted on July 14, 1809: do everything for the glory of God and for his holy love. [260]

For Fr. Bertoni, a ‘devout life’ means the incessant holocaust of oneself to God, in an uninterrupted praise offered to the Divine Majesty and in a reverent carrying out of the Will of the Creator. [261].

+
+++
+

