

# St. Gaspar Bertoni



## The Spiritual Journal

[Memoriale Privato]

1808-1813

With a Commentary by Fr. Joseph Stofella, CSS

Translated by

Fr. Giancarlo Mittempergher, CSS

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### Premise for the Year 1808

#### July

**1. 'Some obey ... in order to quiet their fears...'**

Fr. Bertoni as a boy. St. Aloysius Gonzaga. St. Ignatius of Loyola. Doctrine of St. Teresa and of St. John of the Cross.

**5. '...Repetition of the Meditation of the Garden...'**

Ignatian Norm. From the Meditation of Fr. Lodovico Da Ponte. Fr Gaspar to the Seminarians.

**9. 'It is never necessary to neglect any virtue...'**

Fr. Gaspar's extracts and his friends from Fr. A. Rodriguez' *Exercise of Perfection*.

**11. 'After Mass... a very vivid sentiment of faith in the Presence of Our Lord...'**

From the *Model of Abandonment* Fr. L. Lallement on the mystical gifts.

**12. 'Those who are too inclined to activity...'**

An Ignatian Principle. Extracts from the *Life* of the saint. The principle: *conquer yourself* as the measure of holiness. The Ignatian *Exercises*.

- 'During Mass and the Thanksgiving, reverential fear.'**  
 Subjection to God. Ignatian extract.
- 13. 'It is never necessary to abandon our friends.'**  
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**'The ways of God are marvellous.'**  
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- 18. 'Discretion is the queen of virtues'**  
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- 22. 'In fervent religious communities, and in those that are relaxed there are defects: but ...'**  
 From Rodriguez, the teaching of St. Bonaventure.
- 24. 'Redeeming time ...'**  
 From the *Imitation of Christ*  
**'Do not be conformed to this world, but ...'**  
 St. Paul *Ad Rom.*, and *Ad Eph*: Fr. Segneri: *Manna of the Soul*. Fr. Gaspar to the people: 1803, 1807. To the Seminarians: *Let the old things recede!*  
**'During Mass...the actual continuing offering... in the sacrifice.'**  
*Imitate what you handle.*  
**'He who despises little things...**  
 Extracts from Rodriguez: Ecclesiastes, St. Bernard, Cassian St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Basil.
- 30. 'For the examination of conscience, one should choose a saint...a s a mirror.'**  
 The examination of one who is called to perfection. The Patron saint of the Servant of God: St. Ignatius Loyola. Doctrine of the *Imitation of Christ* and of Fr. L. Scupoli.  
**'Seek God alone**  
 Ignatian detachment [from extracts]. Doctrine of Fr. Scupoli  
**'All depends on the willing to serve God at any cost**  
 A norm from the Ignatian *Exercises*, from Fr. Bertoni's Retreat to the Seminarians and Priests. Will and wishful thinking: from Rodriguez. St. Teresa and resolved souls.  
**'It is necessary to think of Heaven at the end of an avenue ...'**  
 Cf. the dream of St. John Bosco [1874]. Charity and mortification.

## August

- 9. 'He who does not follow the inspiration to flee from some danger...'**  
 Si 3:27. Commentary of Cornelius a Lapide.  
**'Self-love often disguises itself as zeal ... murmuring...**  
 Ignatian extracts.  
**'St. Teresa and a charge to change methods.'**  
 Self-diffidence and confidence in God: principle of the Saint. And also for St. Ignatius and Fr. Scupoli.  
**'If our faults were revealed and were on the lips talked about them...'**  
 St. Francis Xavier, and St. Francis of Assisi: from Rodriguez.
- 17. 'When charity enters into a soul...'**  
 St. Mary Magdalene. Motto from St. Augustine.  
**'In Prayer begin with Christ and His Passion.'**

- St. Francis Borgia and St. Teresa. Doctrine of the Saint.  
**'In the matter of vocations...'**
- St. Gaspar. Fr. Marani.  
**'Having confessed the sin and arousing sorrow for it...'**
- From the *Spirit of St. Francis de Sales*.  
**19. 'Let him who stands see to it that he should not fall. Humility...'**
- From Fr. DaPonte: St. Peter's Fall.  
**20. '...enter into someone else's domain in his way, to leave by our own...'**
- From Fr. Daniel Bartoli's *Life of St. Ignatius*.  
**24. 'In the depths of one's own nothingness, God is found...'**
- Mystical experience. Fr. DaPonte's doctrine.  
**'... seeing an image of the Trinity ...'**
- Another mystical experience. Taken from *A Model of Holy Abandonment*.  
**'The Divine Office prayed with much devotion...'**
- St. Gaspar's 8 norms.  
**31. "I cannot" in the matter of mortification...'**
- I can do all things in Him who gives me strength... Let him pick up his Cross...*  
 The spirit of mortification, measure of holiness.  
**'Great temptations are matter and means of great holiness...'**
- St. Ignatius St. Francis Xavier. Fr. Gaspar to the Seminarians.

### September

- 5. 'Humble yourself in all things.'**
- Fr. Scupoli's doctrine. Fr. Gaspar and the motto of Bro. Giles. The complete biblical text.
- 11. 'At the end of Mass much recollection and ...'**
- Supernatural graces. Leave God for God.
- 13. 'God calls us to emulate angelic purity.'**
- St. Ignatius' Constitution [Rodriguez]. The Archangel Gabriel in Fr. DaPonte. St. Gaspar's Constitution.  
**'It is necessary to be prepared for greater temptations...'**
- Fr. DaPonte's teaching. Fr. Gaspar to the Seminarians.  
**'...do not be over-burdened with penances and occupations...'**
- Fr. Scupoli's doctrine. St. Ignatius' text.
- 15. 'Introduction to the Annual Retreat... A Visit to St. Ignatius' altar.'**
- Providential importance of this visit. The Saint's words and spirit.  
**'I fear Jesus passing by...'**
- Fr. Lenotti's explanation. St. Augustine's interpretation.  
**'Cooperating with one grace, merits a second.'**
- Much connected with the preceding.  
**'God deigns to talk first as 'Father' before being 'Judge.'**
- St. Augustine's saying: *I fear Jesus passing by and remaining.*  
**'Let us have our accounts ready ... before the Master asks for them.'**
- Give an account of your stewardship!*  
**'Give yourself back to yourself!'**
- St. Bernard's *On Consideration. Most pious Meditations.*  
**'We often have God on our lips to give him to others...'**
- This goes back again to: *Give yourself back to yourself.*  
**'The dignity of the priest makes me tremble.'**

Fr. Gaspar to the people in 1802. The same idea to the Seminarians in 1811. Pius VII th and the Prelates of his time.

**17. 'Death. *The past is no longer...Only the present is here...*'**

Rodriguez: Give attention to this very day... St. Ignatius at Manresa. Jacob and Rachel. From half day to half day. From *Biblical Preaching* of Fr. V. Houbhy, SJ. Good use of time.

**21. '...No longer time for reading, but for acting...'**

St. Bernard again: *On Consideration*.

**25. '...Reign of Christ ... Follow Our Lord at the cost of life...'**

Fr. Bertoni's Manuscript n. 92: points of meditation from Fr. DaPonte. From a text of this Father.

**'...Mass offered with much recollection... and Catechism with much zeal...'**

The whole day of grace. Proposals of imitation.

**27. '...The Incarnation ... Gratitude to the Most Holy Trinity ...'**

Graces of prayer. From Fr. DaPonte.

**'...Pardon. Great love for the Trinity...'**

Gifts of prayer and heroic proposals. From Fr. DaPonte. *To suffer and to be rejected for You*.

**28. 'The desire and humble petition for Martyrdom.'**

Follow Jesus more closely.

**'For those who lack internal mortification ...'**

Ignatian norm: see Rodriguez and St. Francis Xavier.

**29. 'it is a very great good to suffer something out of love for God...'**

Gospel texts.

**[Fr. Stofella's Note]**

From his notes on St. Francis of Assisi. Penance. Cross. Love. *Be imitators of me*. From Segneri's *Manna of the Soul*.

### October

**8. 'The inspiration of so combating the little defects...'**

'Ascend to virtue with all diligence.' The good use of time. Fr. DaPonte's doctrine on the inspirations: St. Bonaventure's text [From his Meditation on the Annunciation]. Fr. Gaspar and Leopoldina Naudet.

**9. 'St. Dennis and the Maternity of Mary the Virgin. During Mass, at the Secret...'**

A day of memorable graces. A remembrance of his First Communion, and of one of St. Teresa's norm. An Ignatian yearning that was mercifully heard.

**10. 'Tears during Mass and recollection afterwards: and silence.'**

**11. 'Clarity of mind in study. Affections during the Rosary.'**

Registered as gifts from Heaven.

**'When in a religious Community...'**

*Activity followings being*. St. Teresa's Teaching from her *Interior Castle*.

**12. 'Whoever is drawn by the Spirit ... is to abandon himself totally in God...'**

Fr. Gaspar's deepest vocation. Models: St. Cajetan of Thiene and above all, St. Ignatius Loyola. Ignatian extracts. Doctrine from the *Imitation of Christ*. Underlying principle: 'Very few are they ...'

**'13. 'Reading about the internal presence of God ...'**

The little work *On Beatitude*, attributed to St. Thomas in the *Life of Fr.*

*Baldessare Alvarez*, and in the *Meditations* of Fr. DaPonte. The presence of God within us.

**16. 'Catechism taught with much zeal and fruit.'**

Gift of God.

**21. ‘ God has deigned to reveal to someone, etc.**

Is Fr. Gaspar referring to himself? Contacts beyond the Grave! From the *Miscellanea* of Fr. Lenotti.

**‘Desires kill the lazy!**

St. Gaspar to the Acolytes. From Rodriguez.

**22. ‘Joy in adversity ... and real poverty.**

Real poverty in the Bertoni home. Its causes. Fr. Gaspar and his own father. Sentiments of the Servant of God. A thought regarding his mother.

**‘...imitate Christ in poverty and in the demands of poverty.**

This is not the desire of the lazy man. The example of the Saint of Assisi.

**23. ‘During Mass much recollection.’**

**24. ‘While making the Way of the Cross...’**

Jesus’ clear and distinct word to the soul. A of the former of the Seven Last Words of Good Friday.

**25. ‘During Mass, brief but vivid enlightenment...’**

This is among the Saint’s most sublime notes. A recollection of Paul’s words: / *no longer live now...* [Ga 2:20],

**26. ‘Whoever wants to save his own life...’**

**27. ‘In the 1<sup>st</sup> Point of the Noon Examen...’**

Grace of prayer. A portrait worthy of the Servant of God.

### November

**16. ‘Progress in early rising, in fasting...’**

A reference back to September 25<sup>th</sup>. Imitation of Jesus Christ.

**‘Certain spiritual people begin their building up-side down...’**

St. Ignatius’ maxim. Another Ignatian principle. Two-fold teaching of St. John of the Cross.

**17. ‘The horror of the just for pride and vain glory.**

Fr. Gaspar to the people in 1801. Doctrine on Humility in St. Augustine’s *On Virginity*.

**20. ‘The appearance of the Bishop during Fr. Gaspar’s Catechism lesson.**

The Saint’s sentiments. Fr. Cajetan Giacobbe’s note.

### December

**2. ‘We ought to be vigilant that we do not fail the Lord, being sure that...’**

St. Ignatius: *On Religious Perfection*. A reading from Bartoli.

**‘... There is so much holiness in the laity: so much imperfection and vice in Priests...’**

Episcopal observation of 1809. Fr Gaspar to Seminarians and Priests in 1810; and to the Seminarians in 1811.

**3. ‘The Lord shows His Cross and then out of love carries ours...’**

Extracts of Fr. Gaspar from St. Francis Xavier and from St. Ignatius of Loyola. *The Imitation of Christ*. St. Francis of Assisi. Fr. Gaspar to the Seminarians and Priests and to the Clerics in the Seminary.

**4. ‘On going to bed, feelings of compunction... During Mass, vivid sentiments...’**

Teaching from the *Imitation*. Brief commentary on the note.

**7. In the matter of perfection... seize the moment ...**

*Vocation of the Apostles in the Gospel and in DaPonte.*

**11. 'Very vivid sentiments during the *Te igitur* of the Mass.**

The Sunday Masses. Great gifts of God. St. Gaspar's sentiments and expressions.

**17. 'Reviewing Scupoli [*Spiritual Combat*] and reading the *Imitation of Christ*.**

Doctrine from Scupoli on the gaining of perfection and combating every negligence. Doctrine from the *Imitation*.

**'Mistaken opinions also among holy men. The Venerable Palafox.**

His conflicts with the Franciscans, etc. and especially with the Jesuits. The *Reposition* of his Cause of Beatification, from Pastor.

**20. 'The great advantage in spiritual undertakings to find two people of the same mind.**

Fr. Gaspar, Fr. Farinati, Fr. Cajetan Allegri.: *a three-fold chord*. For the ministry and for the quest for perfection.

**'Respect for the variety of the calls for perfection.**

Cf. the Meditation on the *Reign of Christ*. Fidelity in corresponding.

**'... I have chosen you ... Do not oppose the Lord.****23. 'To persons well disposed spiritually... not to desire life, etc.'**

Commentary. Fr/ Gaspar and Fr. Marani. An objection. A Wisdom text.

**'...Seek God alone...'**

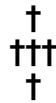
St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross. *Summary of the Rule of St. Ignatius.*, Rule 17.

**'The vow of obedience for the one who is the superior. Etc.**

St. Ignatius' example. Fr. Olivaint's work *On the Obedience of St. Joseph*.

**25. 'In the three Christmas Masses...**

A profusion of gifts. The need of imitation and correspondence.



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**Fr. Stofella's Premise for the year 1809****January****4. 'One's bearing ...'**

The *Summa* of St. Thomas. A text from St. Ambrose. Constitutions.

**'...Whoever would desire interior recollection ...'**

The *Summa* again. Sirach. St. Ambrose. Rodriguez.

**11. 'During Mass ... sentiment of Christ's Presence and that of the Father.'**

Among the more memorable graces. St. Teresa's doctrine.

**19. 'Discretion ...'**

St. Benedict: the Rule: *Concerning the Abbot to be ordained*.

**23. 'I believe that only a few priests are ... And St. Augustine.**

St. John Chrysostom's Commentary from Cornelius a Lapide on St. James. Fullness of the priesthood. St. August and Holy Orders in general.

**'Two Saints appeared to St. Andrew Corsini ...'**

A somewhat rigorist concern. Fr. Gaspar and St. Alphonsus. *Whoever perseveres unto the end...* A text from St. Peter and St. Paul.

**'We have lost the art of speaking...'**

**'Fascination for what is seen.'**

St. Augustine.

**'Every day meditate on Ps 15 [14].'**

From St. Benedict's Rule. Three Psalms of the Saint.

## February

### 1. **'Frequent memory of Christ's Life.'**

A gift of prayer. The *Perfection* from the notes on St.. Francis.

**'... At Mass, a sentiment of Christ's presence ...'**

Infusion of graces. Mystical life.

**'A disposition for Christ's shame.'**

Fruit of mystical gifts.

### 4. **'When prayer is not first made well...'**

Fr. Gaspar to Priests on *Union with God*.

### 14. **'She coupled a force and energy of spirit...'**

The example of a soul who seems to be cut along the style of St. Teresa. Teresian texts.

### 15. **'1<sup>st</sup> Day of Lent. Fr. Joseph preached...'**

The sermon theme: *n order to die well, etc.* Fr. Joseph, a question that remains unanswered. Preaching to the poor people. A hint from the texts. A passage from Segneri.

### 16. **'Do you follow the crowd ... Do not judge, etc.'**

Sources of the texts. Flashes of the Judgment.

### 19. **'If we only considered ... It is not enough to listen ... Herod and John the Baptist.'**

Fr. Gaspar and Fr. Fedelini. The Baptist's statement to Herod: *It is not licit...*

### 22. **'A rod watching ... boiling cauldron'**

Hell. Jeremiah's text/ [Cornelius a Lapide]. A passage from Segneri.

**'...Three necessities ...1...2...3... Demosthenes...'**

*He who despises little things... Doctrine of St. Teresa. The Reign of heaven suffers violence... Seek to enter ... If anyone wishes to come after Me ...* Fr. Gaspar and St. Francis of Assisi. To Leopoldina Naudet. Good will: doctrine from the *Imitation*. Classical example: Demosthenes.

**'...If the matter of our salvation depended on God alone ...'**

*I do not want the death of the sinner.*

### 26. **'We need to make in ourselves a portrait of Jesus Christ.'**

Fr. DaPonte. Fr. Surin.

### 27. **'God does not command the impossible.'**

St. Augustine. The Council of Trent.

**'Four Kings received warnings from God...'**

Saul's melancholy.

### 28. **'To be saved, lighten the boat, one's conscience, work, obey, etc.'**

Fr. Gaspar to the obstinate sinner. Uninterrupted prayer. The *Our Father*. Fr. Gaspar and Leopoldina Naudet.

### 29. **'Ask for the grace to follow Him Let him who serves follow Me...'**

Note of Msgr. Martini. Doctrine from the *Imitation*.

## March

**2. 'Joy according to this world .. according to God...'**

From the *Imitation of Christ*. Fr. Gaspar to the people in 1804.

**5. 'The Devil wants to ruin people... Do not put things off from day to day.'**

St. Teresa. From *The Imitation of Christ*. Fr. Scupoli. Fr. Gaspar to Leopoldina Naudet. Fr. Gaspar to the Acolytes. Cornelius a Lapide and St. Augustine.

**6. 'The present world is a large hospital... A knight ...'**

Segneri. *The Christian Institute*, and *Manna of the Soul*. St. Thomas' teaching on Prayer in general and on that which is offered for others.

**10. 'There are several kinds of fear... servile, initial, filial. In my heart...'**

Fr. Gaspar to the people 1800. The Fear of God in the *Summa* of St. Thomas.

**13. 'When the Devil tempts us he makes use of ... terrors or loves... If in this world, there were authentic goods...'**

St. Augustine's teaching. Augustinian texts. Doctrine from the *Imitation*. That of Fr. DaPonte. The Ignatian use of creatures. Fr. Gaspar and St. Teresa of Jesus to the Seminarians and Priests and to the people.

**'There would suffice only one maxim sufficiently meditated.**

Ignatian Doctrine. Fr. Gaspar to the Acolytes. St. Francis Xavier's example. The saint to the King of Portugal.

**'Just Father, the world has not known You...'**

Fr. Marani's Note.

**14. 'If we do not accept the loving invitations of the divine Mercy...'**

Fr. Gaspar to the People in 1802: The Universal Judgment.

**15. 'Jesus hid His face ...'**

St. John and Micha. The Commentary of Cornelius a Lapide. St. Augustine.

**'Here on earth penance is short, light and useful. In hell, ...'**

Mercy and Justice: Segneri's *Manna of the Soul*. Fr. Gaspar to his oratorians during Carnival of 1806.

**16. 'Those not corrected by scouring, do not emend.'**

Two versions. Original text.

**'Without the Cross no one ... The three Crosses: of Christ, of Dismas, and the sad thief...'**

The *Summa* of St. Thomas. Fr. DaPonte. St. Paul and St. Augustine. *The Imitation of Christ*. Reticence.

**'At Benediction ... tenderness, love and offertory... I shall draw everything to myself...'**

Sweetness of contemplation. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Point of the *Contemplation toward Love*.

[Bertoni-Nepveu]

**17. 'The habitual sinner ...'**

The *Bible Preached* of Fr. V. Houbry: two characteristic texts. Fr. Gaspar to the people in 1804.

**19. 'It is not enough to correct ...'**

Heli and his sons.

**22. 'An inefficacious proposal ... Good will etc. To re-direct the passion'**

Rodriguez. Augustinian text. Excuses. The passions and St. Thomas. Rodriguez again.

**'The Lord would like to speak...'**

St. Teresa. St. Augustine.

**27. 'Temptations return.'**

Fr. Gaspar to the Seminarians.

### May

**8. 'Universal mortification. Saul and Hagag.'**

Scupoli and Rodriguez.

### June

**29. Resist beginnings!**

From the *Imitation of Christ*.

### July

**14. 'Do not do anything if not for the glory of God.'**

Scupoli.

**15. 'To act out of the instinct of nature even for an instant...'**

Life of Fr. Surin. Other French Jesuits well known to Fr. Gaspar.

**16. 'Disavow the practice of doing our own will...'**

Fr. Scupoli: also in the *Spiritual Combat*.

**17. 'Good example and Venerable Paul of the Cross.'**

From the Ordinary Process of Viterbo.

**23. 'The inspirations of God The Devil and the Lord's work. The 'undertaking' and its demands. Poverty, etc.'**

From the *Imitation of Christ*. Rodriguez. A Particular Examen: Fr. Gaspar to Leopoldina Naudet. Fr. Gaspar to the Seminarians. *Poverty*: St. Ignatius' doctrine.

**24. 'A great war with Hell... Humility ... Detachment ...'**

Pauline texts. St. James. Rodriguez: St. Gregory the Great.

**'Mass united with Jesus Christ, etc.'**

**29. 'God does not refuse anyone ...'**

'The Reign of Christ' and 'The Two Standards.' Fr. Gaspar to the Seminarians.

**'... As though from the face of the snake...Resistance to temptations.'**

Commentary on the text. From *The Imitation of Christ*.

**30. 'On the Meditation on the going to the Jordan.'**

Meditation of Fr. DaPonte. Prayer.

**'At the sung Mass a sentiment of reverence ... The Creed.'**

Precious gifts of grace. An Ignatian extract.

### August

**24. Many, especially the young lose patience. Etc.'**

From an Instruction of Fr. Gaspar on *Patience*. 7 Points. From *The Imitation of Christ*. Fr. Gaspar to the Seminarians.

### September

**23. 'Humility, compunction and Confidence in God.'**

**'It is not enough to be simple in order to make others saints.'**

St. Teresa and humble letters.

**28. 'Knowledge of the immense debt that binds us to god...'**

From the *Contemplation toward Love*. A sentence of Fr. Gaspar.

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**Premise for the Year 1810 [Fr. Stofella]****March****10. 'Fast, so that you may not sin. Fasting...'**

Quote from Segneri's *Instructed Christian*. Homilies in Genesis of St. John Chrysostom. Hom. I. Proposal, or sermon outline? Fr. Gaspar to the people in 1803. Again from *Homily I*.

**12. 'In a hundred years, Noah did not convert anyone...'**

From the 25<sup>th</sup> Homily *In Genesis*, of Chrysostom.

**May****18. 'What does it cost Mary to intercede? What does it cost Jesus...?'**

From two early sermons of Fr. Gaspar.

**'We have to purify in all our minds...'**

**24. 'In a Monastery...St. Anselm.'**

From Cornelius a Lapide *In Ecclesiasticus*. Comparison.

**'Let us pray for our Princes. St. Thomas Villanova.'**

Fr. Gaspar to the Seminarians: 'We are in our own times.' Neopolitan suppression of ecclesiastical and religious entities St. Gaspar's considerations. Pius VII and the superior and lower ministers of the Church.

**'...today if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts...'**

**The facts...the language of God.**

**'A hardened heart will have trouble at the end...'**

**'I greet you, o my Mother...'**

Certain coincidences of this prayer with the Treatise of *True Devotion* of de Montfort. A brief Latin invocation for the *Morning Prayers* of Ecclesiastics [1753].

**'See if your will is sufficient...'**

From a reading of St. Augustine.

**'Whoever has good will, has everything...'**

St. Augustine again.

**'Will power is needed...'**

Prologue, or Homily I of St. John Chrysostom on the Gospel of St. John. Another text from St. Augustine.

**'To live in a Christian way among Christians ...'**

Against human respect.

**'People believe in the world, the devils, the flesh...'**

**'How long will you judge iniquity...?'**

Mons. Martini.

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**January**

**12. ‘ You should not study for the direction of ...’**

A comparison between the *Spiritual Diary* of Leopoldina Naudet. A dialogue between God and Mother Naudet. A progressive Particular Examen from his *Commentary on First Kings*: from the 14<sup>th</sup> Meditation of Fr. Gaspar to the Seminarians. Again from the *Diary* of Leopoldina Naudet. The best formula of a characteristic principle of St. Gaspar. Fr. Marani’s formula.

**April**

**28. ‘Watch and pray. Detailed explanation.**

**May**

**18. ‘Take up the spiritual life but by the narrow path of Penance.**

A slip of paper. *The gate is narrow...*

**‘I will not call your sins to mind, etc.**

*Depart from me.... O Lord!* Biblical reminiscences. The Lord and Saul. Fr. Gaspar to Mother Naudet.

**‘Very few are they...**

The entire text from the *Life of St. Ignatius*, by Bartoli. Another formula original with St. Gaspar.

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**Premise for the year 1812 [Fr. Stofella]  
Premise to the Annotation of Fr. Gaspar  
From the *Spiritual Diary* of Leopoldina Naudet.**

**May**

**30 . ‘While praying before Mass...**

An ecstasy. ‘Look at this My heart...!’

**September**

**30. ‘Tomorrow I will be more diligent ...**

Part of his particular examen?

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**Premise for the year 1813 [Fr. Stofella]**

**June**

**21. ‘At. St. Sebastian’s. the Lord encouraged me...**

A gift of Prayer. Recollections.

**22. 'He made me worthy of sustaining...'**

A clash with a Jansenist.

**23. 'Utmost, humble and active love for our Lord Jesus Christ**

A mystical experience.

**24. 'Emotional affection for Christ...and sorrowful humiliation.**

**25. 'Consolation for a brother, who ...**

Angelo Allegri? The chronology coincides. Msgr. Vicar Dionisi and Fr. Cajetan Borsatti: textual witness.

**26. 'Discourse on the Sacred Heart heard with affection ...**

Infused affection? The sacred Heart in the *Memoriale Privato*.

## CONCLUSION

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End. Precious Elements [from the *Spiritual Journal*] in the Collection of Letters of St. Gaspar. Elements from his *Spiritual Autobiography* in the meditations to the Seminarians.

Teaching from the *Spiritual Journal* for St. Gaspar's sons: A true cultivation of the interior life.

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## DEDICATION

*The English translation of the MEMORIALE PRIVATO with Fr. Joseph Stofella's great commentary, is the pleasant labor of my 1992 sabbatical in Italy. After 25 years of missionary apostolate in South Africa, of which almost ten being spent in Formation, I developed a deeper appreciation of my Founder's charism, both for my own spiritual life and for the growth of the Stigmatine Candidates.*

*It is to these that I dedicate this translation:  
to the African of South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Malawi I live with –  
to the Filipino and the Thai - that I had the blessing to visit last year. English is  
their second language, a medium for their studies and a way to communicate with  
the rest of the Stigmatine world.*

*It is amazing and encouraging to hear how much inspiration they draw  
from the charism and teaching and example of St. GASPAR BERTONI: a man  
apparently belonging to an outmoded spirituality. Yet, they are attracted by his  
radical love of Christ, his high learning motivated solely by the service to the  
Church, his foresight in founding a Congregation characterized by availability of  
service to the bishops in their local churches and by apostolic mobility. They  
find him a giant of Christ-like abandonment to the Father in his long sufferings.*

*They hail him as a gentle mystic who sang the selfless love of the Christian  
soul for its heavenly Spouse.*

Fr. G. Mittempergher, CSS

# St GASPAR BERTONI

## THE SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

(“*Memoriale Privato*”)

The Transcription of the Hand-written Copy.  
An Introduction and the attempt at its Documentation  
under the care of  
**Fr Giuseppe Stofella CSS)**

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.

From the outset we should point out that the title *Memoriale Privato* was not given to this notebook by Fr Bertoni himself. It was the idea of the person who wanted this precious manuscript added to the documents for the first Diocesan Informative Process of his Beatification, in the diocese of Verona. It had been submitted then to the Vatican for the Cause of Beatification. And once there, under something of a ‘papal cloister’, no effort on the part of the Congregation could retrieve it. And up until recent times that is the way it was. Finally, the much longed-for permission was granted, and this most precious hand-written document came to us and came to be printed and promulgated to the Congregation at large.

It looks like a small Mass Register, or a booklet for household expenses. The neat and compact handwriting covers only 20 pages (11cm x 28cm) out of 120. They are annotations of his private spiritual experiences over the space of 5 years. Fr. Gaspar made good use of the booklet and noted his most personal spiritual thoughts. Yet, more than 100 pages remain untouched. Could it be that with the last entry he wanted to close the series of his most intimate writings? Perhaps.

#### 2.

However, Fr Bertoni showed that he highly valued the keeping of such spiritual diaries or memoirs or - as more frequently referred to in those days - Journals. In 1813, for example, he suggested to his directee, Leopoldina Naudet (Foundress of the Congregation of the *Sisters of the Holy Family*) that it would be “**useful to note, very briefly, the inspiration God had granted her...and to compile a JOURNAL, as it were, but very concise**”<sup>1</sup>. Previously, in 1810, during his preaching to the seminarians he told them:

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<sup>1</sup> Letter 24, *Epistolario*, pp. 71, ff.

***...It will be of benefit to you if, after meditation, you could jot down some points, very briefly. Not for knowledge's sake but rather for growing in wisdom. Not for the advantage of others but for your own...<sup>2</sup>***

Fr Bertoni began his own *Journal*, somewhat abruptly, without any title. The month was **July**. This word was written on top of an abbreviated **Ju(ne)** which indicated that the note was a continuation of a previous one, [begun the preceding month] and that this one merely took up where the earlier note had been left incomplete. In any case, Fr Gaetano Giacobbe (the first biographer of Saint Gaspar) made reference to this *Journal* as "the only writing which by mere chance was not burned as every other paper, of similar nature, was condemned to, because of his humility"<sup>3</sup>. This provides an insight into what could have happened had there been other like documents of the Saint.

### 3.

Here I would like to take up again that which I had noted concerning this **Memoriale Privato** some 18 years or so, ago. Naturally, I noted even then that the document was quite compact, fragmentary, laconic, and limited to a very brief time frame in the life of the Servant of God. However, I did note in my earlier reflections<sup>4</sup>:

*...This document is very brief, concise and fragmentary. It is limited to a very short period in the life of Fr Bertoni. It nonetheless offers a good insight into his spirituality. It was for himself alone, composed under the eyes of God. Fr Gaspar was at the time between 31 and 36 years of age when this was written. It gives clear indications concerning the quality of his early spiritual life, and t the same time it offers a base for the progress he would make in the future.*

*It consists of short notes, random reflections, points and summaries from readings, meditations as well as scriptural references, quotations from the Fathers of the Church and the like. These were all important. He saw them as practical messages from God for his daily life. There are also indications of special graces he received during his prayer, which, for the careful reader, appear to have been of extraordinary nature. It seems revealing, in this connection, the note about "how to pray", of 17 August 1808. The annotations for October 9 and 25 of that year as well as for 11 January 1809 and 30 May 1812, exclude all doubts concerning the extraordinary graces that he received. There are also some useful norms for the spiritual direction of others. There are a dozen brief passages for Lenten sermons prepared for the ordinary people of an area not indicated.*

*Some hints indirectly inform us of events in his life. For example on 9 October 1808 he recalls the extraordinary experience of his First Holy Communion. Then he referred to adversities and real poverty experienced at home but accepted with joy and gratitude (22 October). He referred again to an unexpected visit of the bishop while he was involved in a Catechism class to adults (20 November). From his notes for 18 and 24 May 1810 one can understand his special devotion to the Blessed Mother and her*

<sup>2</sup> St. Gaspar Bertoni, *Meditations on Primum Regum* [1<sup>st</sup> Samuel] of St. Gregory the Great [cf. Web Site]

<sup>3</sup> cf. *Causa Beatificationis, Summarium Addtionale*. Document 26, p. 463.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Summariium Addtionale*, pp. 654-656.

*Immaculate Conception. On 2 July 1808, 30 May 1812 and 26 June 1813 he speaks of his devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Two literal quotations from Lawrence Scupoli's classic, "The Spiritual Combat", invite the reader to compare the doctrine of the JOURNAL and with other writings, show that this author had influenced decisively the spiritual life of Fr Bertoni. One notices many quotes from "The Imitation of Christ"...*

#### 4.

*...The greatest interest, however, lies in the fact that this JOURNAL reveals the true nature of Fr Bertoni's interior labor for his own spiritual growth. He seems to be resolutely committed to the practice of **Holy Abandonment**, to which he felt called by a particular vocation (see note on 12 October 1808).*

*This **Abandonment** is understood not only in its passive sense, but also in its decisively active meaning (15 Sept, 8 Oct). It requires the quest of God alone (30 Jul; 20.25 Dec 1808; 14 Jul 1809), detachment from oneself (16 Jul 1809), detachment from creatures (24 Jul 1809), through the exercise of the virtues: of poverty (25 Sep, 22 Oct 1809); chastity (13 Sept 1808); obedience (1 Jul, 9 Aug, 23 Dec 1808); and an all embracing mortification (May 1809; 18 May 1811) founded on humility (9.19.24 Nov; 11.25 Dec 1808; 24 Jul 1809); "the challenge of following our Lord even at the cost of life itself...with a great desire for union and association with His sufferings and humiliations" (25.27 Sept 1808)<sup>5</sup>.*

*His efforts in imitating Christ would lead him to become "a portrait" of Him, "an image which we must make of Christ and show it to the divine Father" (26 Feb; 30 Jul 1809). This is a longing for a full transformation into Christ through love, until **it is no longer I, but Christ who lives in me** (25 Act 1808). Such **Abandonment** developed into an interior life that was remarkably supernatural (see 13 Oct, 16 Nov 1808; 22 March and especially 15.16.17 July 1809). The sanctifying will of God the Father was its foundation (24 Aug 1808, 11.27.28 Feb; 16 Jul 1809; 18 May 1811). This was seen as most pleasing to God through the lively exercise of the three theological virtues (15 Jul 1809).*

*God responded to this proportionately with special graces of prayer and union, whereby his soul was granted a special protection with gifts of joy and peace (2.11 Jul, 24 Aug, 27 Sept, 9,22,25 Oct, 11.25 Dec 1808; 11 Jan 1809, 30 May 1812)<sup>6</sup>.*

*Of no less interest also are some notes which refer to the intention of founding a Congregation of Priests who would live according to the spirit of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. This thought occupied the mind of Fr Bertoni at least from 15 Sept 1808 (see also 11 Oct 1808; 23.24 Jul 1809).*

This was to become **The Congregation of the Stigmatines** with the date of foundation as 4 Nov 1816. It was canonically established only after his death. One can therefore understand the importance of this text.

<sup>5</sup> cf. also July 11; September 28, 29; October 22, 24; December 25 of 1808. February 1, 1809; May 18., 1811; July 22, 1813.

<sup>6</sup> Fr. Stofella notes: in this list, above all else, we have followed the guidance of **Dom Columba MARMION, Christ, the Ideal of the Monk**. French Edition, Bruges 1929, pp. 498, ff. cf. also Rom Vitalis LEHODEY, O.C.R., *Holy Abandonment*. Re-print [from 1934] Rockford: Tan Books 2003. [Dom Marmion, a priest of the Diocese of Dublin, Ireland, was ordained at the Irish College, St. Agatha of the Goths, in 1881].

More or less, this was the presentation of the *Memoriale Privato* that I made some 18 or so years ago, in response to the authority which had committed this study, with the rest of the documents and duties that went into the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni. The reading of this Document has been most positive. I thought to myself: 'if only there were other Journals of this nature!'

## 5.

It might be asked what was the particular motive that convinced Fr Bertoni to record these very special graces of prayer which he received from God. No better answer could be given than that which is to be found in an introduction to the *Spiritual Diary* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, who was also the teacher and model of Fr. Bertoni<sup>7</sup>.

The Jesuit editor states that the Spiritual Diary of St. Ignatius was made up of two small exercise books of 13 and 12 pages, respectively. These were somehow rescued from the fire to which they were condemned together with a great many other writings of his. They are the only writings of importance of Saint Ignatius that we possess in his own handwriting. We have them because of the spirit of gratitude which the Saint felt towards God who had helped and blessed him. He made a record of these graces to keep them indelibly impressed in his memory. By reading them again from time to time, he wanted to find in them new incentive for loving God with all his heart. We believe that Fr Bertoni considered his Journal in exactly the same way.

## 6.

There remains now something to say about the work we are presenting.

This work is also the attempt to indicate the sources of Fr Bertoni's texts: those of which we are sure, or which we can presume, or think we can presume – regarding both the authors and the books with which he was familiar. This is no easy task. We have tried to compare these texts with other writings of Fr Gaspar before, during and after the years of his Journal. These writings can clarify or develop his thought. There is no complete proof of our conclusions: those who come after us might provide further light on these conclusions.

Of special interest are certain spiritual readings and lives of saints, especially of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. In the Journal they are not collected with the intention of feeding a certain ascetic culture. They rather reveal a personal thrust and quest for imitating the life of Christ and of the saints.

This has demanded much effort in consulting the sources of the contemporary ecclesiastical culture. I just hope that this effort which is borne of a long experience of familiarity with Fr Bertoni's works will be useful. I also hope that in the future, with much deeper knowledge of the Founder's writings and

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<sup>7</sup> Libreria Editrice Fiorentina 1959.

documents, more and better results will be achieved. In the mean time, perhaps, I will have passed away. But if the Lord will give me the grace of seeing some of these things, I hope and believe that I'll be very happy and I will be able to sing my ***Nunc dimittis***.

12 June 1962, San Leonardo, Verona (Italy)  
109<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Fr Gaspar Bertoni

Fr Joseph Stofella