

St. GASPAR BERTONI



MEDITATIONS 8 - 12

THE EXPOSITION ON FIRST KINGS

[I K [S] 1:28 -2:25]

[MssB 5042-5295]

by

St. GREGORY THE GREAT

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Translator:

Rev. Joseph Charles Henchey, CSS

5042 - MEDITATION 8

FIRST BOOK OF KINGS ¹

Meditation 8

[Dec. 25, 1810 -??]

[1 K 1:28-2:2]

[## 5042-5098]

5042: Preparatory Prayer

Prelude 1: 1 K 1:28: *And Anna prayed and said: 2:1: My heart rejoiced in the Lord, and my horn is exalted in my God:* [Fortitude. In other words, *Arab*: Your fame is magnified: through Samuel, which means strength, victory, my glory and that of Israel. *My horn* is the symbol of victory and fame, through which I can freely speak. *In my God: my mouth is enlarged over my enemies*: [I have the wherewithal that I might respond abundantly to the ridicule of my sterility]: because I have rejoiced in what You have made salutary. [The LXX renders this: *in Your salvation*]. This indicates that benefit by which she was saved from the shame of her sterility. I have rejoiced in Your salvation, because through You I am saved from the shame of my sterility. [For ‘*salutary*’, i.e., Savior, according to Augustine. And this frequently occurs in Scripture.

v. 2: *There is none holy* [so the text reads] on account of the excellence of this attribute, [and] because God has declared His holiness in the bringing to birth by Anna; He has defended her innocence against Phenenna, because Anna had tacitly given her faith to Him, as He is the Lord: *for there is no other beside You, and there is none strong like our God.*

5043: Now finding in this reading what the Spirit tells us according to the faithful tradition of the Fathers, let us say having contemplated the remote and proximate preparations in which God has been pleased to bestow in the person of His Elect the first disposition for an ecclesiastical vocation, by cooperating both with the pious care of the Holy Church, and the good will of the chosen person himself, now Divine Providence proceeds to bestow the second disposition in some trials of various spirits, and the first, that of the good spirit, according to this saying: *For the Spirit himself gives testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God.* Rm 8:16.

5044: Now here the good Spirit begins to testify that we have been disposed to be called to the Ecclesiastical state. This proof and testimony is given by the good Spirit to our spirit by means of consolation, the effects of which we now begin with the divine help to explain. These are: First, to recognize, to love, to

¹ Translator’s Note: for the Latin of St. Gregory [or, of Cornelius a Lapide], the Computer Font will be presented here in Regular Print - for the Biblical quotes – from the Douay English translation of the Vulgate, the same, but in Italics. For the Italian reflections of Fr. Bertoni himself, introducing texts, and interspersed through them, the same font, but Bold Print will be used. Stigmatine themes will be noted in bold print, underlined, and in footnotes. Fr. Bertoni’s Latin Prayers will be in *bold print, italicized*.

appreciate God and those matters which pertain to God. Secondly, to know and to disdain vanity, the pride of the world, and of all that pertains to it, and from being its followers. Thirdly, the readiness to praise and to serve, and to glorify God and in all that pertains His [obsequious²] service.

Today we will treat of the first effect, which we will explain according to its parts, or its modes.

5045: Consolation is not a habit; but it is almost a spiritual passion supernaturally bestowed; the nature of it is that when it is present, with ease are the acts of virtue exercised, and indeed with delight and savor, and these are enflamed with affection; and at every encounter, it brings it about the works of the flesh are rendered insipid and brings about love.

The various parts of this, or its modes, are various: such as peace, interior quiet, spiritual joy, light and the clear recognition of divine matters, the elevation of the mind to God, hope being riveted on God. There is also given the proper sense of earthly realities, a warmth for divine love, and similar effects or affections of the good Spirit.

5046: Just imagine Anna, all joy and fervor, and in her face she shows that she has been taken up in God, to pray and render prophecy before Heli, with her little son Samuel in her arms, and very near to her husband, Elcana.

*Prelude 3. O Lord, Jesus Christ, open the ears and the eyes of my heart, to listen to, and to understand your words, and to do your will. I am a sojourner on the earth: hide not Your commandments from me – but open You my eyes and I will consider the wondrous things of Your Law. Ps 118:18, 17. In You, is my Hope, my God, that You might illumine my heart. [St. Ephraem, the Syrian, *Concerning the Second Advent*, p. 365. t. I.].*

5047: Let us prostrate ourselves devoutly, o my Brothers, with the vivid faith of the Shepherds before our Infant King. *Let us go over to Bethlehem Lk 2:15*, to adore Him and let us pray that He might welcome our prayer, and having united it to His own first whimpers, He might present it in the odor of gentleness to His Eternal Father, so that as we intend with good will to glorify Him in heave, so He might deign to bestow peace on us here on earth. *Glory to God in the highest; and on earth, peace to men of good will. [cf. Lk 2:14].*

5048: The first part of consolation.

A proof of the good spirit in the candidate for the priesthood is joy in conformity with the Church, to its spirit and customs; *Joy in the Lord* not in oneself. That is, in seeing whether one rejoices hearing about conversions of souls that have been accomplished, or whether one rejoices in meditating on conversion, or whether one has already had a part in some conversions; and in brief, whether in one this world is no longer pleasing.

5049: 1 K 1:28: *And Anna prayed and said: 2:1: My heart has rejoiced in the Lord.*

² There may be noted here Fr. Bertoni's regular penchant for the word *ossequio*.

Anna is the Church.

*My heart has rejoiced in the Lord, **2:1**, and the boy had been born.*

And the Church speaks, because from Him it has drawn the gentile people to faith in the Redeemer. She was not puffed up in vain, but focused in Him the intention of her joy from Whom she has received the gifts of her fecundity. For indeed, by these words she so indicates the place of her joy, that she shows the cause of her exultation.

5050: Note 1. The sterile woman wept, whereas the parent exulted.

The Church mourns her being projected into this valley of tears, far from the joys of paradise, but patiently endures the hardships of her exile to win souls. In this only does she exult, if in her bodily hardships by which she is pressed, by the glory of her fecundity, with her chosen ones being multiplied, the injuries to the heavenly homeland are repaired.

*My heart has rejoiced in the Lord, **2:1**, because she obtained the fruit of her proposal.*

5051: Note 2. Joy in Prayer.

*And Anna prayed, and said: My heart has rejoiced. **1:28-2:1**.*

That which the one glorying speaks, it is perceived that she has prayed. Since nothing from God is known to be sought by demanding, why is it stated that she has prayed? Because this holy woman knew the future through the spirit of prophecy, and she vehemently opted for this to come about, and so in exultation she speaks also praying. Thus, the text reads: *Anna prayed and said.*

*My heart has rejoiced in the Lord **2:2**. She exulted in the certitude of what would come to pass in the future.*

5052: To speak with the spirit.

She prayed, vehemently yearning that it would come to pass, that which she had known by the revelation of the sacrament. The Holy Church, therefore, in loving and venerating the divine benefits, recalls, preaches and prays. *She prayed and she speaks **1:28**: My heart has rejoiced in the Lord, **2:1**, because by speaking externally that which she brought about, [she said] that which she wished for internally by her desire, [she prayed], and the event she venerated by her great devotion, [she rejoiced].*

My heart has rejoiced in the Lord: because the gifts which she accepted toward the fruit of eternal joy, she did not exchange for temporal joy: in the Lord ibi.

5053: This is the First Part, or that manner of the effect proposed by us of Consolation: it is a joy of the heart [my heart has rejoiced], which is all of God, in God and with God [in the Lord].

When a young man rejoices in God, or in those matters pertaining to His glory, when he rejoices hearing about conversions of souls, when his heart explains in prayer, and he prays quite warmly to His God for the extension of His

glory in the conversion of infidels and sinners ³, when in his conversations and colloquies, he meditates on these matters with spirit, and proposes them, and he recognizes within himself in this joy a great proof of the Holy Spirit, given to him to be very well disposed for the Ecclesiastical vocation.

5054: SECOND PART: Strength, power, glory.

My horn is exalted in My God. 2:1

The horn of Anna is the power of the Holy Church.

By Whom: *Her horn is exalted:* since the Son of God, through His assumed humanity, He made Himself a participant of our nature.

In Whom: *My horn is exalted: 'in my God'*, in Whom human nature already stands out elevated above the Angels.

In what mode: *In God my salvation.* Singularity speaking, she shows in a hidden manner the rejection of the Synagogue.

5055: How, by Whom or by what means: *My horn is exalted in my God.*

Because the sublimity of ecclesiastical power has been raised over us in the humanity of the Redeemer. **Lk 1:69, f.:** *And He has raised up a horn of salvation to us, in the House of David His boy, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy Prophets ...*

When: *My horn is exalted: 1 K 2:1:* In a hidden way she indicates what was had before the horn, which had not been exalted. The Holy Church before the Advent of the Redeemer has a horn, and this in the Patriarchs and the Prophets living rightly, since she had divinely received the power of correcting the delinquent.

5056: A double Power: of living well and of passing on to heaven: But nevertheless it was not exalted, because even though she could justly live, nevertheless she could not move on to the joys of Paradise without the presence of the Redeemer.

[Now, though] she now corroborates with grace and with the infused virtues, and with reinforced hope of Paradise. The power of going to heaven has exalted the power of the Church. For now the horn of the Holy Church is exalted, because we have already received the coming Redeemer of the world, by Whose grace not only can we live rightly, but also we can pass over to the joys of Paradise; because the One who has already died for us, has risen, in Whose death, death has died, and Paradise has been opened for His faithful.

5057: It is the effusion of His grace that assimilates us to Christ, in the disdain of the world, in the flight from pleasures, in leaving matter behind. The power of living well results therefore as exalted: *For my horn is exalted in my God. 2:1:* For already the grace of the Holy Spirit has been poured out, and we see the image of the Redeemer impressed on the multitude of the Elect, as those who despise all that is worldly, they flee the yearnings of the flesh, they leave behind what is their own, and

³ Fr. Bertoni notes that the 'End' of the Stigmatine Congregation is phrased this way: *...cum finis praecipuus nostrae Sodalitatis sit conversio animarum ...* [CF # 255] – *Cum sit finis Sodalitatis, animarum salutem procurare, et consequenter ministeria postuet huic fini accomodata ...* - [CF # 262].

they so radiate with a higher power, since these insignia of such virtue the Holy Church did not have in the multitude of the elders.

5058: *For the Spirit Himself gives testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God. Rm 8:16. My horn is exalted in God... my salvation. Because, Jn 2:12, for as we received Him, He gave us power to be made the sons of God.*

Our Savior wished to exalt this horn, as He said in Lk 10:19: *Behold I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and [when He had granted the power] to correct the delinquent. Mt 16:19: Whatsoever you shall bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven...*

Ibidem [Mt] 19:28: *You also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel...*

My horn is exalted in my God: That there be designated here the glory of the Holy Church: because she obtains the height of power from the presence of the Redeemer.

5059: This, then, is the Second Part, or Mode of Consolation, already proposed above. [It consists in] a certain elevation, strength, robustness of spirit in which the soul feels itself being borne almost above itself, because of the abundant infusion of the virtues, of the gifts and of grace that transforms it into Christ, bring one close to Him, and assimilating one to Him.

Who, therefore, of you feels by the gift of God so much grace, such a height of inclination, such force and power, which he first did not have, to following Christ more closely⁴, which those in the world do not do, in that disdain, that is affective, and even more, effective, of honors, of pleasures, of material goods, that he would recognize within himself a new witness which the good Spirit bestows, to be then himself well disposed for the ecclesiastical vocation.

5060: THIRD PART

Joy in the midst of tribulations.

Through consolation there are expelled all the temptations, and the soul experiences itself to be strong against its enemies, and speaks boldly against them. *He that believes [in Me] ... he shall crush serpents and dragons, and nothing will injure him... [Mk 16:18].*

My mouth is enlarged over my enemies 1 K 2:1 Because it is already spread throughout the whole world, which was once being throttled by persecutions within Judea.

*My enemies. [These are] the Jews*⁵.

⁴ This is a regular theme in Fr. Bertoni's Spiritual Diary, his MP: ... *Forte movimento a seguir da vicino N.S., a custo della vita, per la poverta' e l'ignominia...*[Sept. 25, 1808] – The Apostles followed Him [cf. Mt 4:20 – Dec. 7, 1808] - Follow Him with the Cross [cf. Mt 11:12 – Feb. 22, 1809].

⁵ Translator's Note: it would be very helpful to seek to understand some of St. Gregory's comments on the Jews – cf. Robert A. Markus, *The Jews as a Hermeneutic Device: The Inner Life of Gregorian Topos*, in: *Gregory the Great – A Symposium*, John C. Cavadini, Editor.

My mouth is enlarged. **Ibi:** Because against the perfidy of all peoples it already moves the tongues of the faithful.

My mouth is enlarged. **Ibi:** Because it has been diffused throughout the whole world, and while by the preaching of the truth it razed entire nations, and reprehended the stupidity of the Jews, as by an 'enlarged mouth'.

5061: *Because I have rejoiced in Your Salvation* **1 K 2:1:** Hence she was able to do this, because she joyfully received the Redeemer coming in the flesh.

The cause of her enlarged mouth. **The Cause [of the Consolation: the Chosen one rejoices] out of the joy in having received the vocation, and [of having] given oneself over to God with the offering.**

5062: *In my salvation.*

Is 52:10 and Lk 3:6: *And all flesh will see the salvation of God.* **Ps 97:3:** *All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.* 'Jesus' moreover is here in our praise.

The word used is *salutary*. **Hab 3:18:** But I will rejoice in the Lord: And I will joy in God my Jesus.

Behold, in the words of the ancient Jews, the Lord Jesus Christ is asserted; but now the Jews await their Savior, Whom they never believed is their Lord. But perhaps this now the Jews in their own mouth would reject, when they interpret 'Jesus the Savior', they understand 'God', as their Savior, not the Person of the Only Begotten, but the Person of the Father.

5063: **[Another cause of joy in the Elect is the] light in order to recognize the hidden temptations and the deceptions of the demons, and the trickeries.**

But yet in the same place there is substituted that by which the person of the Only Begotten more openly is demonstrated. **Hab 3:19:** *The Lord God is my strength: and He will make my feet like the feet of harts and lead me on the high places,* so that I might conquer in His clarity. And behold God is addressed in these words: *Lead me onto the high places.* But because it says: 'I will conquer in His clarity', as indeed about Whom is she speaking: if not the Only Begotten Son of God, Whom not only as true man, but she believes Him also to be God. When therefore she speaks to God saying: *I will rejoice in the Lord* and I will conquer in His clarity, **Hab 3:18**, this is not some other God, but 'God' demonstrates another Person. These are the reasons of the Holy Church, these invincible assertions have been diffused against the perfidy of the Jews throughout the universal world.

5064: *My mouth is enlarged over my enemies* **1 K 2:1:** Because already, with God Himself as the Author, the Church is known everywhere where there is conviction about the perfidy of the Jews.

Because I have rejoiced in Your salvation. **1 K 2:1.**

University of Notre Dame Press 1995, pp. 1-15. [Fr. Bertoni would not accept the son of a Jewish Father as his candidate - cf. CF # 16. [This is discussed in reflection on the *Original Constitutions*, found in the web site: www.st-bertoni.com - St. Ignatius had no difficulty as Fr. Laynez, his successor as *Prepositus General*, was of Jewish origin].

Therefore, let those hear the cause of my enlarged mouth who deny the Salvation of God, and from the joy of our Savior let them be struck by the argument of their confusion. But they can be struck: for they do not choose to cease from their blasphemies. For the world already has received the salvation of God; all flesh sees: the Jew does not believe because, as I have said, he expects a Savior who is not God.

5065: Let him hear, then, the malediction of the Prophet, **Jr 17:5:** *Cursed be the man who trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord.* The Jews trust in man, as they shrink from believing in the Redeemer, while they wait for the Antichrist at the end of the world. In their confusion the Psalmist preaches: **Ps 97:2:** All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God; as though he would confound the perfidy of the Jews, saying: for what do you put off these visions until later? The One whom you await, has already come; the One you have as Promised has already appeared to all the ends of the earth; when you shut your eyes, **He passed by**⁶; indeed you have been made so blinded, that such great light stood before you and you did not see him.

5066: Ps 97: 4, ff.: *Sing joyfully to God all the earth; make melody, rejoice and sing. Sing praise to the Lord on the harp, on the harp and with the voice of a psalm, with long trumpets and the sound of a cornet. Make a joyful noise before the Lord our King let the earth be moved and the sea and the fullness thereof: the world and they that dwell therein. The rivers shall clap their hands, the mountains shall rejoice together at the presence of the Lord because He comes to judge the earth.*

5067: With an internal ineffable joy: *Sing joyfully.* **Ps 97:4:** as though it were saying that they have been weighed down by such an immense blindness, that they have not merited to see: Those of you who do see, rejoice more abundantly.

Sing joyfully to God, all the earth; make melody, rejoice and sing. Ibi.

Because it is to be rejoiced wonderfully and ineffably, she accumulates signs of joy.

External joy: *Sing praise to the Lord on the harp, on the harp and with the voice of a psalm: with long trumpets and sound of cornet. Ps 97:5, f..*

Exulting to insinuate the celebrity of joy, she enumerates her instruments.

5068: *Make a joyful noise before the Lord, our King Ps 97:6:* [that is] in the knowledge of the Redeemer.

Let the sea be moved and the fullness thereof: the world and they that dwell therein. The rivers shall clap their hands, the mountains shall rejoice together at the presence of the Lord: because He comes to judge the earth. vv. 7, ff..

She exposes to the many how this solemnity of joys is to be celebrated.

5069: O unhappy Judea! The ends of the earth see the salvation of God, the entire earth is moved with emotion and rejoices, the entire universe, the rivers clap their

⁶ On the day Fr. Bertoni visited the Altar of St. Ignatius with his Companions, and received a mystical grace regarding his future Congregation, St. Gaspar cited St. Augustine's fear in this regard: *Timeo Iesum traseuntem!* [cf. **MP**, Sept 15, 1808].

hands, the mountains exult: but, the impious hearts of the Jews do not believe, and in the darkness of its blindness, they are struck with the penalty of their stain.

Such a great illustration and vividness of faith is needed, even in the midst, and should it ever be necessary before the incredulous: as St. Ignatius⁷ [of Loyola]: if the entire world should turn away from God, he through the illustrations he received at Manresa, would remain strong in faith.

5070: This is the Third Part, or Mode, of Consolation: a great illustration and vividness of faith. During this time then that this illustrious visit of the Holy Spirit lasts, one would experience the spirit of that young man chosen by God, thus strengthened and reassured not only from every internal and external temptation from his enemies, but he would be emboldened in his heart, that he would be able to stand up to these, and to confound them and even shame them. *My mouth is enlarged over my enemies* 1 K 2:1.

5071: And all this takes place because the faith, which would be therefore quite lively, making almost present those realities that are only hoped for in the future [Now faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, Heb 11:1], and by almost putting invisible realities under one's eyes [*the evidence of things that appear not*]. This brings it about that the future object of her eternal beatitude, would form an object almost present of joy, rejoicing, of ineffable joy, that cannot be explained to the heart, which overflows then, through the tongue, even in the midst of, and being faced by her enemies. *My mouth is enlarged over my enemies, because I have joyed in Your salvation.* 1 K 2:1.

5072: [THE FOURTH PART]

And here is a fourth mode of Consolation: a great awareness and knowledge of Christ, with admiration and stupor for His sovereign excellence. Hence, it follows from this that while this gift lasts in the soul of that young man who has been Chosen, he experiences a great reverence for the majesty of God Who is so holy, and a great readiness to serve such a Master. This most holy fear, this readiness of devotion is a great proof of one's disposition for an ecclesiastical vocation.

5073: *There is none holy as the Lord is,* 1 K 2:2.

In the description of the Redeemer, all aspects beyond comparison are designated. For thereby the genuine Redeemer is shown, because in everything that is said for His glory, is compared to His Name. For He redeems all, who excels over all. This is properly claimed against Judea, who all the more boldly despises the Redeemer even though the people can recall having had among its members many men who stood out with the great praise of holiness. *Thus they reviled [that illumined*

⁷ In addition to his *Original Constitutions*, which are totally Ignatian, St. Gaspar often notes the example of St. Ignatius for his own spiritual life [as in his *Spiritual Diary* (MP): Sept. 15, 1808] – the example of the Jesuit Founder was also often proposed to Mother Leopoldina Naudet in St. Gaspar's *Epistolario* ## 434 p. 29]; 551 p. 73]; 553 [p.73]; 611 [p. 100]; 667 [p. 130]; 859 [p. 222] ; 900 [p. 240]

*blind man], and said **Jn 9:28**: Be you His Disciple; but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses; but as for this Man we do not know from whence He is.*

5074: And so, in **Jn 8:33**: *We are the seed of Abraham, and we have never been slaves of any man.* But, Moses was a man, as Abraham was a man, and Christ is a man: however, the first two were assumed in conversation with God: whereas Christ was assumed into the Divinity. They were taken up into ministry: Christ was assumed into the Kingdom. **Jn 16:15**: *All things that the Father has, are mine.*

*There is none holy as the Lord is **1 K 2:2**: For in Him dwells all fullness of the divinity corporally. **Col 2:9**. And of His fullness we have all received. **Jn 1:16**.*

5075: Readiness to serve God, knowing his Lordship.

*There is none holy as the Lord is, **1 K 2:2**.*

Because in Him that which the Lord asserted, there is commended the excellence of His holiness. But the Jews who await Christ assert that he is pure man, and nonetheless they believe him to be their future Lord and singularly holy. But, the Psalmist criticizing them, encourages them to the joy of faith, **Ps 99:1, ff.**: *Sing joyfully to the Lord all the earth: serve you the Lord with gladness. Come in before His presence with exceeding great joy: and know that the Lord, He is God,*

5076: They call the Lord one who is not God. Therefore, it is up to us to rejoice, it is for us **to serve Him in joy**⁸, we who have such a Lord who is also truthfully believed in as God, Who has proven the majesty of His Divinity, which He has asserted of Himself, with incomparable miracles. Therefore, those who might deny His invisible divinity, let them believe in his most manifest works.

5077: But, how astonishing is that sanctity which sanctifies sinners! Hence, and He Himself said of the sinful woman in **Lk 7:47**: *Many sins are forgiven her, because she has loved much.* That woman suffering from the flow of blood recognizing this excellence of holiness, states: **Mt 9:21**: *If I should touch only his garment, I shall be healed.* But who could assert her faith if the effect of faith she had not already undergone? For then, as she touched his garment, the flow of blood stopped.

5078: Humility, knowledge of oneself, and one's own nothingness.⁹

*There is none holy as the Lord is **1 K 2:2**.* Because anyone who would exist as holy accepts as his task that he could indeed become holy. For this is what the Holy Church applies in her subsequent discourse to her same Redeemer is converted from His excessive charity, saying, **ibi**: *for there is none other beside You [and 'holy' is implied here].*

⁸ **Translator's Note**: this provides an apt description of Fr. Bertoni's ideal of commitment to this *arduous and difficult* vocation – for which the grace of the Holy Spirit will be provided for its implementation [CF # 185].

⁹ Fr. Bertoni noted in his Spiritual Diary: *In the depths of one's own nothingness, he finds God!* [cf. **MP**: Aug. 24,1808 – (perhaps from the German Dominican mystic, Tauler).

For outside of Him would anyone be holy, if without the gift of the sanctification of the Only Begotten could have His spirit; but, who would dare to assert this of men, which about even the Angels in no way is apparent?

5079: For indeed it is written in **Ps 32:6:** *By the word of the Lord the heavens were established; and all the power of them by the spirit of His mouth.*

*By the Word of the Lord, [which means] the Only Begotten Son of God, Whom indeed the Evangelist John insinuates when he says **Jn 1:1:** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and God was the Word.* If therefore, even the sanctified Angels believe in the Son, all the more so is He believed by men, who outside of him, cannot find the grace of sanctification.*

5080: FIFTH PART

And this is a fifth mode of Consolation: a most sublime knowledge of the Divinity in Christ and of His intrinsic perfection. Whoever receives this gift knows well practically that in Jesus Christ as God and man all justice subsists, and says with the Apostle: *And[gain] may be found in Him, not having my justice, which is of the Law, but that which is of the faith of Christ Jesus.* **Ph 3:9. Therefore there is reached a perfect diffidence in oneself and a blessed confidence in God, in the most of even the enemies of the faith.**

And it is very well proven by this testimony of the Holy Spirit [the vocation of the Elect].

5081: *For there is none other beside You.*

There can be understood without any further implication, the incommutability of the divine essence. And so to the blaspheming Jews He says, **Jn 8:58:** *Before Abraham was made, I am.* **Ex 3:14:** *I Am Who Am.* For there is no being similar to the Only-Begotten God. For indeed His state is quite far distant from all other mortals, the more clearly is this understood, because in each moment they are different under many traits.

5082: And this could pertain to the state of justice; because it pertains to the being of the Elect to remain in God through justice. And as the Only Begotten Son of God is, there is none other beside Him, because there is no one of the Elect unless in Him. For one should refer to His divinity, then no one should be bereft of an understanding of His humanity, because no one can be just who does not have the faith of His divine Incarnation. The Jews, therefore, are struck by these few words, because they reject the Redeemer while they expect the Antichrist, who is not God as is plainly proven.

5083: **Jb 18:15:** *Let the companions of him who is, not dwell in his tabernacle.*

This tabernacle of his is the love of the perfidy of the Antichrist, by which there is contradicted faith in the Redeemer.

*Let them dwell, **ibi**, in which tabernacle the Jews now remain, because while their perfidies lovingly dwell, they fight against the Redeemer.*

*The companions of him who is not, **ibi** [these are] the Hebrews, because in their resolution they help the devil, who while he overthrows them from the love of His supreme essence, he immediately ceases being true.*

Of him who is not, **ibi**: To anyone undoubtedly 'not to be' means not being able to return to that blessed essence by a participation of love.

5084: SIXTH PART

Magnanimity and confidence in God. A most sublime sentiment of the divine omnipotence, from whence springs a most profound humility before God. [*For if any man think of himself to be something... Ga 6:3], and at the same time an heroic magnanimity before God: I can do all things in Him Who strengthens me Ph 4:13. Great knowledge of self before God. This is a proof that God wishes to elevate one very high in the ecclesiastical vocation, when He deepens him very much in humility. He has exalted the humble Lk 1:52.*

5085: *There is none strong like our God* 1 K 2:2.

Because the people of the Jews not only had the hard conversation of the ancient Fathers but also the manifestation of miracles for the increase of their elation. Almost in vain this would repress the glorying Jew; as though it said: Those whom You would build up having accomplished wonders for them, were merely men. The One I preach, is not just a holy man, but also the powerful God.

5086: [*There is none*] strong, **ibi.**

Therefore, when fortitude is noted, excellence is indicated, because, of course, all fortitude of man is totally infirm in comparison with that of the divinity.

[*Like*] our God, **ibi**.

In this place, the assertion of the divinity does not prove the excellence of the undertaking: but the incomparability of fortitude shows the truth which He asserts in Himself, He has proven by incomparable works. **Jn 15:24**: *If I had not done among them the works that no other man has done, they would not have sin.*

5087: And it is now these are very works that are to be discussed.

Moses divided the Sea, see **Ex 13:12**, Elijah divided the River **4 K (2 K) 2:8**. Our Lord Jesus Christ walked on the sea, **Mt 24:24**. What is, therefore, the more elegant, to show to the people passing across the path of the deep in a dry boat, or making the face of the sea into a pathway? These people, of course, as they were burdened with the dead-weight of humanity, required a path-way as something solid in order to make their journey over the depths; but because He experienced the weaknesses of humanity nature that He had assumed into the sublimity of divinity, by His own power He was borne across the waters.

5088: Moses from his sharing in the Word of the Lord obtained his facial splendor Ex 34:29; Joshua through his prayers fixed the sun, Jos 10:12, ff. But because Jesus is God, He shone before His disciples in the power of the sun, Mt 17:2. The children of Israel were not able to look into Moses' face 2 Co 3:7; those who did merit to perceive His glory, fell down before Him Mt 17:6: so that you might come to understand that He exists as divine, and has assumed what is human. To Him, on the mountain, with those assisting Him, there was said by the Eternal Father, Mt 18¹⁰:5: *This is My*

¹⁰ This should be: Mt 17:5

beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased: hear Him. And therefore, also Elijah , who closed up the heavens so that it would not rain, and he re-opened them again so that it would rain **3 K (1 K) 17:1** and **18:45** , what is this in comparison to Him, Who having opened the heavens, manifested the Father as a Witness to His Divinity?

5089: *There is none strong like our God* **1 K 2:2.**

Because whatever virtue Moses was able to show, it was the Lord, and not he who accomplished it. Jesus, moreover, all that He marvelously achieved, He exhibited by His own virtue; because He was also the Lord of Moses. For indeed it was not Moses, but it was the Lord, who rained down the manna for the people trudging across the desert wastes **Ex 16:13.** It was not Moses, but it was the Lord Who went ahead of the people in a column of fire by night **Ex 14:19, f.** , and a column of cloud by day. It was not Moses but the Word that was pronounced for him that produced water from the rock, **Ex 17:6.** It was not Moses, but the Lord Who manifested the fowls to those complaining, **Ex 17:17, f..**

5090: And so it was the Lord Who restrained the Jews from glorying in the fortitude of their Fathers **Jn 6:32:** *Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.* Thus, the Psalmist does not in vain bring Moses forward, but laudably extols the Lord, as he says in **Ps 77:12, ff.:** *Wonderful things did He do in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Tanis. v. 13: He divided the sea, and brought them through: and He made the waters to stand as in a vessel. v. 14: And He conducted them with a cloud by day: and all the night with the light of fire. v. 15: He struck the Rock in the wilderness: and gave them to drink as out of the great deep. v. 16: He brought forth water out of the Rock, and made streams run down as rivers ... v. 23: And He had commanded the clouds from above, and had opened the doors of heaven, v. 24: And He had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them the Bread of Heaven ... v. 27: And He rained upon them flesh as dust: and feathered fowls as the sand of the sea.*

5091: Indeed, the Lord Jesus is incomparably strong, He did not appear in the strength of someone else, but in His own. And so, being powerful of Himself, commanding the paralytic, He said **Mt 9:6; cf. Lk 5:24:** *I say to you, Get up!* Therefore, it is also written, **Mk 6:56:** *And as many as touched Him were made whole from whatever malady defined them. Mk 6:56. – Lk 6:19: For virtue went out from Him, and healed all.* For indeed this outstanding level of strength, neither Moses, nor Elijah could have; and as, therefore, they would come to recognize such incomparable signs, would most openly designate the Advent of the Only Begotten Son.

5092: **[COLLOQUY] – Mt 6:9, ff.¹¹:** *Our Father, Who are in heaven, hallowed be Your Name. [We feel] the joy of Your glory and fame.*
Your Kingdom come! Elevate our spirit, reigning in us.

¹¹ Translator's Note: Fr. Bertoni offered 16 Instructions on the Lord's Prayer in 1807 [cf. MssB 276, ff. – an English translation of this appears on the web site: www.st-bertoni.com

Your Will be done, as in heaven, and on earth. Grant that the Faith may show You to be so present on earth, as it believes You to be invisible in heaven; thus, we are so ready to believe that which You will, as to confess that which we believe, as You will it to be.

5093: *Give us this day our daily bread: Our Bread is Christ. Give us a great knowledge of His excellence, so that we might ever more yearn to serve Him, in order to be able to know him the better.*¹²

And forgive us our debts. Give us such a great knowledge of His Divinity, that we might know to subsist in Him every justice, that outside of Him there does not remain anything for us other than lies and sin.

And lead us not into temptation. [Save us] from the temptation of pride, that despoils us from every acquired good, and has us fall into every evil.

5094: *But deliver us from evil: And thus again You will deliver us from damnation if, when these tests of our vocation arise in us, You will not allow us to take steps that are too bold.*

Amen! And so be it in us as a testimony, or proof of the good spirit, that visits us in the consolation of Your grace, in order to make in us our disposition for this vocation.

5095: Lord, Jesus Christ, **My Lord Jesus Christ, You Who have come to birth this day**¹³, have opened Your bodily ears to hear our tears, coming forth in this valley of tears – and Your eyes to weep over our sins, the sad occasion for our laments: *Open the ears and eyes of my heart*, and so on. Your being born on earth, You have come as the King and Master in Your Own dominion: *He came into His own, Jn 1:11. I am a sojourner on earth: hide not Your commandments from me. Ps 118:19.*

5096: You have come as that light which enlightens every man that comes into this world, **Jn 1:9**, and the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend Him **Rm 1:5**. Open my eyes, **Ps 118:18**. O Lord, whoever knows Your law, Your Scripture, knows You, so that Your Scripture might say marvelous things about You. But, we do not despair of understanding them, if You will only illumine us. *In You is my hope Ps 21:9; 61:8*, and so on.

5097:¹⁴ O Lord Jesus Christ, in Your being born in this valley of tears You have opened **today**¹⁵ the ears of Your humanity to listen to our tears, and also

¹² With Fr. Bertoni's constant emphasis on service of the Lord, and the Church [cf. *obsequium*], here the implication is that such total service leads to a kind of experience of the Lord [*epignosis?*]

¹³ Translator's Note: there is ever indication that this Meditation 8 was delivered in late Advent, or at Christmas time in 1810.

¹⁴ Fr. L. Benaglia, in transcribing these many pages, has entitled this marginal number: *The Re-working of these numbers* i.e. ## 5095 & 5096.

the eyes of Your body to weep over our sins, the sad reason for our mourning. Open the ears and the eyes of my heart to hearing, to understanding Your words, and of doing Your will. **In Your being born You have come not as a stranger, but as the legitimate Master: He came unto His own, Jn 1:11, with full rights of commanding them.** *I am a sojourner on the earth: hide not Your commandments from me. Ps 118:19.*

5098: And to understand the admirable spirit of Your Laws, much light is needed. You are *the true light which enlightens every man coming into this world.* **And if we are indeed darkness, Your light shines in the darkness. Jn 1:9.**¹⁶

But so that it might not happen to us as it did to the Hebrews, who did not comprehend it, Jn 1:5. *Open my eyes, and I will consider the wondrous things of Your Law Ps 118:18.* **All this is Your gift, totally gratuitous, and therefore, we ask for it from you.** *For in You is our hope Ps 21:10; 61:8, etc., that You might enlighten my heart [cf. Ep 1:18].*

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¹⁵ Translator's Note: there is the high possibility that Fr. Bertoni delivered this at Christmas time in 1810, at the Seminary of Verona.

¹⁶ This is Jn 1:5.

5099 - MEDITATION 9

Meditation 9
[1 K 2:3 – 2:6]
[Dec. 26, 1811 - ??]
[MssB ## 5099-5141]

5099: PREPARATORY PRAYER

Prelude 1.1 K 2:3: *Do not multiply to speak lofty things [i.e.], proud: to speak in an over-bearing way] boasting. Let old matters depart from your mouth [let those old proverbs cease, and those bitter contumelies,* with which the human intelligence as it were, childishly plays, **but apply from here on from your lips to my sterility] for the God is a God of all knowledge [Chaldean: God knows everything]: and to Him are thoughts prepared [the Septuagint, LXX: God prepares His inventions. – Hebrew].** To Him are directed all works. This is as though the text were saying: He prepares and directs in a most wise manner all His thoughts and works. [The sense of the Vulgate is]: Not even thoughts are hidden from Him, efforts, all endeavors.

v. 4: *The bow of the mighty [the arms: that in which one might establish his strength, his protection] is overcome and the weak are girt with strength. v. 5:* *They that were filled before, have hired themselves out for bread: and the hungry are filled [The well-off rich strike an accord for the expenses. Phenenna had many children and was proud: I am the sterile wife and therefore disdained. And look, I have attained fecundity, and my off-spring will be the heir in my husband's House. And those who first enjoyed the right to the inheritance, they were filled before, but now that the son of the primary wife has been born, they will have no more than the gifts from the father and his legates; they are as children of the concubine, or the wife of the second order, they have hired themselves out for bread].* And therefore, *so that the barren has borne many, and she that had many children is weakened [has succumbed].*

5100: Now in this reading, referring as usual the spiritual sense with the holy Fathers, we will attend to the second effect of Consolation, which is that of recognizing and disdaining the vanity of the world, and its followers, and all that pertains to it, as proof that the good Spirit gives to the genuine dispositions for the ecclesiastical vocation.

5101: Prelude 2. Imagine Anna, enraptured in prayer and so on [as above in 5046].

Prelude 3. Give me, O Lord, your good Spirit. *He will give the good Spirit to them that ask Him. Lk 11:13. Turn away my eyes that they may not behold vanity: quicken me in Your way. Ps 118:37. You have promised that Your Father will bestow this on anyone who asks for it: He will give the good Spirit to them that ask Him. Lk 11:13. Grant to us, then, as you have deigned to be born for us, so to present our supplication: and we are sure of the effect of this.*

5102: We do not ask you for a private spirit, but for Your Spirit, Who is communicated to the whole Church, and to her Doctors, in order to agree with them, in order that we may never be discordant from You. *Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God. 1 Co 2:12. Our purpose is to recognize Your gifts in order to know how to appreciate them and to make use of them: that we may know the things that are given us from God ibi. O Lord, no one can understand the spirit of Your Scriptures without Your Spirit. 1 Co 2:10, f.: For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him? So, the things that are of God no man knows, but the Spirit of God.*

5103: And this is the first mode of this effect of divine consolation, established in the disdaining the world in its loves.

The world loves the pleasure of the flesh, the commodity of wealth, and above all, the superiority of glory. But, a soul that has been visited by the Holy Spirit and renewed in the knowledge and in the manner of considering reality, i.e., holds all this indifferently in themselves, and no more than means to an end, which is the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and in not esteeming anything more than Christ, and that which Christ has appreciated. And when confronted also with both glory and what is for one's own comfort, and the sweetness of the present consolation, not only does the soul visited by the Holy Spirit abhor the realities that this world loves, and of itself casts them away as rancid, old and moldy. Furthermore, such a soul can no longer even suffer these matters to be spoken about, and especially by so many deceived, who in these realities they set their happiness, their excellence and glory.

5104: *Do not multiply to speak lofty things, boasting: let old matters depart from your mouth 1 K 2:3. Oh, what a beautiful proof it is of one being disposed for the ecclesiastical vocation! If this is lacking it is a very bad sign, and one that is almost infallible of the total lack of the proper disposition. This is the old man who loves old things: let old matters depart from your mouth. The Lord loves the youth: And I will go to the altar of God: to God Who gives joy to my youth. Ps 42:4.¹⁷*

5105: The disdain of all worldly loves.

The disdain of the world in its pretensions and glory; not being able to suffer its pomp, knowing all too well its vanity, in comparison with the glory and peace, the abundance of the present consolation.

¹⁷ Translator's Note: This Psalm 42 was used prior to Vatican II in the Eucharistic Liturgy for 'the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar.' It is also interesting to note in St. Gaspar an avowed belief that 'the Lord loves the youth!' In his *Original Constitutions*, Part IX CF ## 158-186 deals with the *Grade of the Professed* - the heart of the Apostolic Mission. Of the 7 chapters in this central Part IX, chapters 3-5, ## 165-181 [17 Constitutions of the 28 in this Part] deal with the Youth and their Christian Formation. Further, CF # 164 deals with the Priestly Formation of young Seminarians, a prime apostolate in many Stigmatines, especially over the early years of the Congregation's history.

*Do not multiply to speak of lofty things, boasting: let old matters depart from your mouth. **1 K 2:3.***

5106: Rightly the Synagogue is damned with perpetual silence, **since all the glories and the works of the ancient heroes have already been surpassed by Christ: And there is none strong as our God, v. 2.**

[The disdain regarding the world] and of the worldly heroes, in comparison with the Saints and Christ, and the comparison of philosophers in confrontation with the Apostles.

5107: *Let old matters depart from your mouth, **2:3.***

It is though to say: When you discern incomparable new realities, you render the actions of the ancients reprehensibly surpassed. These have preceded as a shadow of what was coming: but now the genuine faithful openly adore these works of our Redeemer, because that which was shadowed in the hidden nature of a sacrament, in the Advent of the Redeemer it endured the body of the truth to be revealed.

5108: **[The disdain of the world in the Elect] through the renewal of his spirit.**

*Let old matters depart, **2:3.***

Therefore, if there are references to what is new, the old no longer are, because they are understood in the Holy Spirit, and they do not receive any duration. Indeed concerning this innovating Spirit, He says all. **Ps 103:30:** *You shall send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created: and You shall renew the face of the earth.* The old still are if they are brought to bear in the works of the Redeemer. But when these are brought forth to be confirmed, in that spirit in which we understand these matters, they are renewed.

5109: *Let old matters depart from your mouth, **2:3.***

The Holy Church when she censures the Jews regarding the statements of the elders, states that the Jews understand the spiritual acts of the Fathers in a carnal manner. For indeed the Synagogue raised itself up in a very temerarious manner against the holy Church, when it very proudly extolled the knowledge of the Law and the Prophets, which had been inspired to its Patriarchs, and learned it as materially exhibited to itself. Hence, it follows:

The renewal of knowledge, and the mode of looking at realities as a means in order to the end.

5110: *Do not multiply to speak of lofty things, boasting **2:3.***

And that they might desist from being puffed up, the text adds: *let old matters depart from your mouth:* For indeed these 'old' matters are those which are not understood by the renewing spirit. This is as though it said: It is fitting that you be silent from the narration of these matters when you are ignorant of their new and splendid meanings. And of course, even though you do understand them in some subtle manner, they ought not puff you up with arrogance.

5111: And this is the second mode of consolation, established in the disdain of the world as well as of its errors: errors both in the speculative level as well as practical, because of the depravity of the mind and heart. Thus the world errs where it believes that it knows more, i.e., in the physical and human sciences. It errs due to the depravity of the mind, ignoring from Whom the sciences come, even indeed affecting not to know Him, and [thus ignoring] from Whom the sciences are, by not regarding their relationship to their end - through the depravity of the heart which does not employ them with a view to their end [which is God: and the salvation of one's soul], or abuses them against their ultimate purpose. However, anyone who is visited by the Holy Spirit through the renewal of His lights, eliminating the brutal errors that saw one from his end, he abhors them and detests them and says with Paul: *Furthermore, I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ. Ph 3:8.*

This, too, is a great proof of the proper disposition for the vocation.

5112: The lack of esteem for the worldly sciences. The disdain for speculative errors. The disdain of the worldly sciences due to the depravity of the mind and heart. That of the mind occurs in one who is ignorant of what they are, and from Whom they are, closing oneself in the knowledge of them, which are only means, and by not coming to the end. The depravity of the heart, in anyone who abuses them, or who does not use them for virtue. [The lack of esteem] for philosophers, when compared to theology, and even of that sterile theological knowledge, when compared to wisdom¹⁸.

5113: *For the Lord is a God of all knowledge 1 K 2:3.*

Indeed, the Redeemer of the human race, because He is the Word of the Supreme Father, is truly the Lord of all knowledge. Certainly Isaiah has spoken of sublime matters; Jerome has spoken of great truths; but truly they would have said nothing if this Word, the Lord of knowledge, would not have spoken to them previously, and indicated their knowledge. And as a result it is frequently read in the Books¹⁹ of **Isaiah 2:1, 38:4, etc.**, *And the Word of the Lord came to Isaiah the Prophet;* and frequently it is found in the Book of **Jeremiah 2:1; 7:1, etc.** : *The Word that came to Jeremias the Prophet from the Lord.*

¹⁸ Translator's Note: both St. Gregory the Great [cf. Jean Leclercq, OSB, *The Love of Learning and the the Desire for God. A Study of Monastic Culture.* Fordham Univ. Press 1994, 3rd ed., re-printed], and St. Gaspar Bertoni have a great esteem for the sublime missionary value of genuine knowledge. In Part IV, of the *Original Constitutions* [CF ## 47-68] St. Gaspar speaks of the subordination of intellectual perfection to spiritual perfection. He also hoped for perfection of knowledge of all those matters that pertain to faith and morals [CF # 49] – and in teaching the youth, the most important aspect is their learning, but most especially in their “honesty of morals” [cf. CF # 167].

¹⁹ It is interesting to note that the text speaks of the Book[s] of Isaiah [modern scholarship holds that there are 3: First Isaiah [1-39]; Second Isaiah [the ‘Book of Consolation’ - 40- 55] and Third Isaiah [56-66] – whereas the word is in the singular, speaking of the Book Jeremiah.

5114: This Word, the Lord of knowledge, John, contemplating in the most sublime bosom of the Supreme Father, said Jn 1:1: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and God was the Word.* Hence, Paul insinuated that our Redeemer is this Lord of knowledge, Col 2:9: *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead corporeally.*

5115: *Let old matters depart from your mouth: for the Lord is a God of all knowledge, 1 K 2:3*. This is to demonstrate by open reason to the Synagogue that it should so solicitously be silent not only about all that these are, but also from Whom they derive, and that it is ignorant of those matters about which it does speak. This is to say: That you construe that knowledge which had been of your Fathers, and that it should not so provide you with such arrogance, going even beyond all that they have said, but which was of the Only Begotten Son of God, but that you do not understand this same knowledge.

5116: The Renewal of knowledge and the lights in the sciences.

Therefore, the text states: *Let old matters depart from your mouth:* That the Jews might never become depraved over what they have never managed to understand.

For the Lord is a God of all knowledge 2:3: So that that which they truthfully established to be genuinely of God, they ought not to ascribe fallaciously to men.

5117: The evil affections and designs with which the worldly study: in order to bring harm to religion, or to honor themselves, and not God. While the mind is embellished, the heart is stained, and the mind and the tongue know aspects of the virtues, and their heart is buried in vices.

And to Him are thoughts prepared, 2:3. Therefore, Judea is reprehended for its words of boasting, since it is not smitten with any fear, and even torments are announced for the hidden movements of perfidious hearts.

5118: Against the abuse of knowledge in the heart, because of its evil designs, or because of the vices that lie beneath beautiful words and knowledge.

And thoughts are prepared for him: as though it were saying: For you who have no hesitation in blaspheming, you will have as your judge not only the tongue, but also your heart. Therefore, and through Isaiah a threat is leveled, Is 66:18: *But I know their works, and their thoughts: I come that I may gather them together.* Dt 32:34: *Are not these things stored up with me, and sealed up in my treasures?*

5119: And this is the third mode: The disdain of the world in its terrors.

[The world] is terrible for its power, for its deceptions, for its insidiousness. It employs much force, but in a hidden way: but with supreme astuteness. The soul visited by the Holy Spirit through the increase of faith [This is the victory ... 1 Jn 5:4], for the hope of the resurrection, disdains its terrors. In the midst of tribulations, heresies, terrors that are brought against the Church, these are the most outstanding signs of one's disposition for the vocation in which one stands strong and disdains everything else.

5120: Disdain of the terrors and worldly deceptions.

1 K 2:4: *The bow of the mighty is overcome, and the weak are girt with strength.*

Because in the preceding words the silence of the Synagogue is perceived, let us see now [in what manner] the Holy Church glories in the voice of Anna in the praises of her fecundity.

The bow of the mighty: this is the fraudulent cruelty of the Jews. For indeed, from hiding, as though from the bow, they inflicted a **wound** on the Redeemer, Whom they killed by the hands of the gentiles.

5121: [The disdain of the terrors] through the hope of grace. 1 Co 15:57: *But thanks be to God Who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Jn 5:4:* *For whatsoever is born of God, overcomes the world. And this is the victory which overcomes the world, our faith. Rv 6:2:* *And he went forth conquering that he might conquer.*

The bow of the mighty is overcome. Because the One Who has died from a **wound** of theirs, has risen from the dead, **He has ascended into heaven**²⁰, and He has sent the promised Holy Spirit to His disciples. Then there is added:

5122: *And the weak are girt with strength **ibi**.*

With strength: [there is indicated] the virtue of the Holy Spirit; hence, at the same Holy Spirit being promised anew to the disciples, **Lk 24:49** states: *But stay you in the city, till you be endowed with power from on high.* 'With Strength' moreover, the grace of the Holy Spirit is rightly described. As the Elect receive this, they are strong against all the adversities of this world.

5123: *And the weak 1 K 2:4:* these are the Apostles, since the bow of the mighty is drawn, as these latter are not vested with virtue from on high. For in the hour of the Lord's arrest it is written of them, **Mt 26:56:** *Then the disciples, all leaving Him, fled.* They were weak, since Peter feared the voice of the young serving girl questioning him, and he denied the Redeemer. For already the bow of the mighty is overcome, the cruelty of the Jews was annihilated, because our Redeemer, having overcome death, has risen; and yet, the Apostles who were still weak, with the doors closed, feared the mighty who had already been overcome, **Jn 20:19.**

5124: But where strength wrapped around them, willingly those whom He had made strong, would understand, **Ac 1:22.**

Suddenly the sound of the Holy Spirit came upon them, and changed their infirmity into the virtue of outstanding charity. They began to preach Christ, having been enveloped in strength, the very ones who had not been ashamed to flee hiding themselves from the threats of the persecutors; and the one who feared the voice of women, in freedom came to break the authority of princes.

²⁰ Translator's Note: So often Fr. Bertoni manifests the prophetic pairing of the one mystery, the theological balance between the Sorrowful Wounds, which brought death – and the Glorious Wounds manifested in the resurrection.

5125: This strength won out over dread, it overcame terrors, threats and slaughter; and by suddenly coming on the scene, it vested them, it illustrated them in the heavenly militia with the insignia of the marvelous boldness, so that even in the scourging, the slaughter and the shame, they were not afraid, but they were exalted. Scripture speaks of these already dressed in this strength, **Ac 5:41:** *And the Apostles went from the presence of the council; rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.* Thus, already preaching, they said, **Jas 1:2:** *My brothers, count in joy when you shall fall into divers temptations. Therefore, it is very well put:*

5126: [Disdain for terrors] through hope and trust in Christ, and in the future resurrection and glory. Disdain for the power of the sophisms of the incredulous.

*The bow of the mighty is overcome, and the weak are girt with strength, **1 K 2:4.***

Because, first He had **resurrected**²¹ from the dead; and so the Redeemer went to heaven, and sent the Holy Spirit on His disciples. For first the vow of the mighty is to be conquered, and afterwards, the weak are to be girded with strength. Hence it is written, **Jn 7:33:** *For as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

5127: [The Elect disdains those who wish to inculcate terror into him] and he insults them.

It is to be noted that this is said against Judea, who very proudly so despises the miracles of the Redeemer as he recognizes the dead among his punishments. The text states therefore:

*The bow of the mighty is overcome, and the weak are girt with strength **1 K 2:4:***
As though it would respond to the dead the Synagogues calumniate the death of the Redeemer: Do not despise the One Who could die, because the dead resurrected, and has overcome the cruelty of your people by coming to life again. And because the text showed this concerning the past, Judea spoke not only by denouncing Him, but by insulting. For almost in vain he found fault with the one insulting: What benefit was there for you to put Him to death, Whom the bonds of death could not restrain? You have killed Him, as the whole world would not go to Him; but for that very reason the whole world did go after Him, because He proved Himself to be the true Son of God, while dying He would redeem the human race, and by resurrecting He showed Himself to be living, and to the heavens con-ascended, and would destine the promised Holy Spirit to the disciples.

5218: *They that were full before have hired themselves out for bread and the hungry are fed. **1 K 2:5.***

Because due to the merit of her incredulity, the Synagogue was rejected from sharing in the promised grace, as the Holy Church reproached her for this.

²¹ Translator's Note: the Resurrection is the inspiring hope of the Apostolic Mission.

They that were full : Because they were the ones who had the knowledge of God before the rest of peoples; [likewise] the Jews, who in their faith of the Creator were almost instructed by Him from the very beginning of the world.

5129: *They have hired themselves out for bread:* These breads are the mysteries of the divine Incarnation.

They have hired themselves out: For the place of finding the breads is Sacred Scripture.. Therefore, *This is the bread which comes down from heaven, **Jn 6:51***, thus **Jn 5:39** addresses those ignorant of how to find it, saying: *Search the Scriptures ... and the same are they that give testimony of Me.*

5130: *They have hired themselves out for bread. **1 K 2:5**.* Because they have accepted all the Scriptures, so that they should have found in them the sacraments of the divine Incarnation; but when the bread came, the Synagogue, which had hired itself out for bread, gave up the place in which the one who was seeking for bread ought to have found it. Indeed, the Synagogue did have the Scriptures for coming to know the Redeemer; but rejected the One coming, Who had come in accord with the Scriptures.

5131: **The philosophers had the book of these visible realities in which the power of God manifested itself. They denied God in order to sustain themselves in their errors, and they ought to have had recourse to the gentiles and to the demons and they lost their soul and eternal salvation.**

Therefore: *And the hungry are filled* : Those who believed from among the people, while venerating the accepted the mysteries of the Divine Incarnation, had the heavenly food for the use of their interior delectation.

The Barbarians, the Chinese, the Tartars were civilized and accepted the faith.

5132: *And the hungry, **ibi***, because before the Advent of the Redeemer, they were cast out by their famine of infidelity and they did not have any food of the spiritual nourishment; or, because they accepted the sweetness of the spiritual food with great avidity.

*They that were full have hired themselves out for bread, **ibi***, let them hear what they awaited, **Jn 6:33-41, etc.:** *I am the Bread of Life ... Who has come down from heaven,* But because they did not merit to recognize Him, they responded, **Lk 4:22:** *Is not this the son of Joseph? **Jn 6:42:** How then does he say: I came down from heaven?*

5133: However, He knew all things and prophesied that those hungry in the future would recline at the table of His delectation, saying **Mt²² 8:11, f.:** *And I say to you that many shall come from the East and from the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness.*

The children of the Church are damned with heretics.

²² The text reads 'Mark 8:11' – a mis-print?

5134: *They that were full before have hired themselves out for bread: and the hungry are filled* **1 K 2:5.**

Because the children of the Synagogue had in the Sacred Scriptures the meal of faith in the future Incarnation of the Redeemer, but now since these have been expelled, while the gentiles believe in it truthfully and they receive the sacraments of His divinity and humanity in their sharing at table in his intimate delight.

5135: And so it is said by the outstanding doctor, **1 Co 10:3, f.:** *And did all eat the same spiritual food, And all drank the same spiritual drink; [and they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ],* and from this it can be reasonably deduced because they had eaten and they were not satisfied: whereas the others ate and they were satisfied. And therefore it is said of the Holy Church against the Synagogue that the former are under the sway of grace, and are designated by having been placed to stand above the others in a marvelous elevation.

5136: *They have hired themselves out for bread.* **1 K 2:5.**

[This means] that the sacraments of the coming Redeemer are required in Sacred Scripture. Truly, each one of them ate and was not satisfied, because each believed in the future incarnation of the supreme Only Begotten Son, but did not see the present. To eat is to retain sweetly in the desire of one's mind the divine Incarnation; not to be satisfied means that one does not see His desired presence.

5137: *And the hungry are filled.* **2:5.**

The weak who were to be girded with strength, have heard the proclamations of his satiety by which they were satisfied by His bread, **Mt 13:16, ff.:** *But blessed are your eyes, because they see... For amen, I say to you, many kings and many prophets have wished to see the things you see, and have not been able to, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard them.* [When] they wanted to see, they were already eating by desire the bread of their intimate delectation; and when they could not see, they had the joy of desire, but they did not have it through the fruition of satiety.

5138: For although Scripture says, **Ws 16:20:** *You have given the Bread of the Fathers from heaven prepared without labor; having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste* ²³, so it is said that it was received by them, as to have been known by them. **ibi v. 21:** *For your sustenance showed our sweetness to Your children, and serving ever man's will, it was turned to what every man liked.* Thus, known by them through faith, each could yearn for this through the desire of charity.

Therefore, the Synagogues glorying in the first Fathers, they were girded with strength and preferred that while the new outstanding summit of the elect is seen, never did it glory further in vain.

²³ Translator's Note: it is from this verse of Ws 16:20, f. that the celebration of Eucharistic Benediction took its traditional verse and response. *Panem de caelis praestitutis eis...*

5139: And because never would the food of life be removed from the reclining at table of the Holy Church, insinuating both the future as well as the present, the text goes on:

*So that the barren has borne many children, and she that had many children is weakened. **1 K 2:5.***

Barren: this was the situation of the Holy Church.

And the hungry were filled, so that the barren hath borne many: [Which means] that even to the end of the world it possesses the Bread of Life. **Mt 28:20:** *And behold I am with you... even to the consummation of the world... And the gates of hell shall not prevail **Mt 16:18.*** For it is only the hungry to whom the Holy Church gives birth. And therefore, when she does give birth, the hungry are satisfied, because until the end of the world she generates the children of God. Those who believe that the redeemer has come in the flesh, desire the Bread of Life which they eat and are filled to plenitude.

5140: *So that the barren has borne many, and she that had many children is weakened. **1 K 2:5.***

The weakened one: this is the Synagogue [This is because] by the institution of the old law, it cannot bring to term. For she lost the faith of the first man, and brings forth progeny to the devil, and not to God.

She that had many children: Because while she was in the truth of the Scriptures, she brought up the people of old subject to her to yearn for the Advent of the coming Redeemer, and **she brought forth children from her embrace of her Heavenly Spouse²⁴.**

5141: *An she that had many children is weakened:* The [Synagogue] does not have children. She indeed does exhibit the Scriptures to her listeners, but because she denies the Redeemer, she never generates the children of God.

She is weakened: To her spiritual fecundity is denied.

Both ancient and modern philosophy had many adherents; now it does not hold any more of them, while the Church has many of them.

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²⁴ Translator's Note: the Espousals theme was dear to Fr. Bertoni.

5142 - MEDITATION 10

Meditation 10**1 K 2:6-10****[Dec. 30, 1810 - ??]****[MssB ## 5142-5181]****5142: Preparatory Prayer**

Prelude 1. 1 K 2:6: *The Lord kills and makes alive* [He mortifies by hardships, and vivifies by prosperity and consolation] *He brings down to hell and brings back again. v. 7:* *The Lord makes poor and He makes rich: He humbles and He exalts. v. 8:* *He raises up the needy from the dust, and lifts up the poor from the dunghill: that he may sit with princes, and hold the throne of Glory. For the poles of the earth are the Lord's, and upon them He has set the world. v. 9:* *He will keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness, because no man shall prevail by his own strength. v. 10:* *The adversaries of the Lord shall fear Him,; and upon them, shall He thunder from the heavens. The lord shall judge the ends of the earth, and He shall give the empire to His king, and shall exalt the horn [the glory and power] of His Christ. [This indicates the change of the present status of the Hebrews from the aristocratic to the monarchical, under David, and to the reign of grace and glory under Jesus Christ.]*

5143: Now in this reading building on the spiritual sense, following the Holy Fathers there is made known the second effect of consolation, or the proof of the good spirit, which testifies to our preparation for the ecclesiastical vocation. This effect meanwhile indeed is the desire to praise God, to serve Him, and to see him glorified.

5144: Prelude 2. The similar imagination [to that of # 5046].

Prelude 3. *Hallowed be Your Name, Your Kingdom come. Mt 6: 9, ff..*

You have taught us to ask first: *Your will be done;* **because our desire cannot be sincere in servicing You, if first there has not grown in us the desire for Your glory, an that there be deep in our hearts the interests of Your House and Your Reign. *Hallowed be Your Name: Your Kingdom come;* **testifying thus to You with this gift, the other being that with which we prepare ourselves for our vocation.****

5145: Inebriate, o Lord, all the potencies of our spirit: *Fill up plentifully the streams thereof Ps 64:11, hence, they cause drops of consolation to fall into our hearts, which on being opened up, He brings it about that they produce the most tender affections of devotion and love. It shall spring up and rejoice in its showers, ibi. That I may hear what the Lord God speaks in me. For He will speaking peace in His people [consolation: testimony of our disposition for this vocation], and unto His Saints, and unto them that are converted to the heart. Ps 84:9.*

5146: But why can we hear Your voice, make silence, O Lord, in our spirit from all the impertinent phantasms and thoughts. *There was silence in heaven: Rv 8:1. And so You will speak to Your servants, i.e., in the superior part of them: And unto His Saints Ps 84:9. Make silence also in our hearts, from all those earthly affections and yearnings. For while all these things were in quiet silence,...* Your almighty Word leapt down from heaven from Your Royal Throne. **Ws 18:14, f. For the Sunday within the Octave of Christmas, First Vespers for the Magnificat**²⁵. **And thus you speak to those who are converted with their hearts to listen to Your words:** *And He will speak unto them that are converted to the heart Ps 84:9. You enjoin silence still on the earth: For while all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Your almighty Word leapt down from heaven from Your royal throne: Ws 18:14, f. – Sunday within the Octave of Christmas. First Vespers for the Magnificat, And so You speak to them that are converted to the heart in order to hear Your words: unto them that are converted to the heart. Ps 84:9.*

5147: Let there descend as a willing rain Your Word on our souls: *You shall set aside for Your inheritance a free rain, O God. Ps 67:10. - I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me: for He will speak peace unto His people, And unto His saints and unto them that are converted unto the heart. Ps 84:9. – But so that Your Voice might be heard, O Lord, enjoin silence on all other things. Enjoin silence in heaven: There was silence in heaven Rv 8:1, when You speak with your saints: And unto His Saints, Ps 84:9. Enjoin silence also on the earth: For when all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Your mighty Word leapt down from Your royal Throne: Ws 18:14, ff. – Sunday within the Octave of Christmas. First Vespers for the Magnificat, when You wish to speak with us poor sinners: And unto them that are converted unto the heart. Ps 84:9.*

5148: O Lord, the operations of our mind, which we are now to exercise in this meditation for Your glory, come to us with Your inspirations, and refresh them with the helps of Your cooperating grace. 'O Lord, we beseech You, to precede our actions and by assisting us may they proceed'; so that the prayer of our spirit and the exercise of our potencies, from You may they have their beginning, as from the font and principle of grace and justice, and come to an end in You alone, as in the ultimate end and scope of our intentions and of our affections. We beseech this through Your beloved Son, Whom You have given to us on this day, and that therefore we offer to you prostrate before His crib.

5149: This is the first mode of this consolation: To praise God for His incomprehensible judgments, and the secret orders of Providence and on both the good and the evil, and for the gifts that He has granted, of grace, and the hopes of glory. That child, therefore, who was illumined by the visit of His Lord, adores these marvelous ways of His Providence. He does not discuss them, but praises God in his heart, keeps silence with his tongue out of reverence, for fear

²⁵ Translator's Note: it should be noted that Fr. L. Benaglia had suggested December 30, 1810 as the possible date for this Meditation 10 to the Students of the Seminary of Verona.

of blaspheming that which he does not understand. He has an admirable testimony and proof of the Holy Spirit of being disposed for the ecclesiastical vocation in which God can entrust to him His hidden mysteries, which require so much respect both in order to keep them secret for a time, as well as out of prudence to know the right moment to communicate them.

5150: On the other hand, those who are too bold or curious in their reasoning, and too easy in discussing these hidden matters, should know that they are indeed lacking in dispositions to be called to be a minister, that requires more adoration and prayer than words and reasoning.

1 K 2:6: *The Lord kills and makes alive: He brings down to hell and brings back again. v. 7: The Lord makes poor and makes rich, He humbles and exalts. V. 8: He raises up the needy from the dust, and lifts up the poor from the dunghill: that he may sit with princes and hold the throne of glory.*

5151: Both the rejection of the Synagogue as well as the election of the gentiles, has been accomplished by the incomprehensible judgment of God. To those who are practically overwhelmed both with the rejection of the Chosen People, it might be responded: why do you seek an explanation in these matters, which Supreme Reason has done in an incomprehensible manner? The outstanding Doctor censures those who would initiate this type of questioning, **Rm 8:20, ff.:** *O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it: why have You made me thus? Or, has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?* This is as though to say: Because for the God of all to be rightly known, His work, both in the rejection of Judea, as well as in the election of the gentiles, we are to feel that this is to be venerated, not to be discussed.

5152: *The Lord kills. 1 K 2:6.*

Because by an incomprehensible judgment the once Chosen People of the Jews is separated from the knowledge of the truth, and perpetually damned.

He leaves the most learned people in their errors and schisms, and calls the barbarian Asians.

He makes alive. Because He receives the Gentiles through faith in a temporary manner for the recognition of His Only Begotten Son, and leads them to contemplate eternally His glory.

5153: *He brings down to hell, ibi,* because by His engaged judgment, the avenging Gehenna receives perpetually those who divide themselves from the veneration of the Redeemer through the fault of their perfidy.

He brings back again, ibi, because He receives the gentile people devoutly acceding to the faith of His Son, for whom the immense obscurity of error served as a sublime prison of the abyss.

5154: *The Lord makes poor, 2:7,* because He despoiled the rejected Judea from its spiritual virtues.

*And He makes rich, **2:7**, because He embellished the chosen gentiles both with the price of faith, as well as with the splendor of good works.*

*He humbles, **ibi**, the Synagogue, by receding from the Redeemer, put down the heights of its sublimity.*

*He exalts, **ibi**, the Holy Church, by venerating the Redeemer where it had laid in the depths of infidelity, He raised up into the height of right faith and unto the lofty position of Christian power.*

5155: Because therefore Judea despised the Son of God, the gentiles were found deserving – so rightly the former was humiliated and the latter in believing were exalted.

*He raised up the needy from the dust, and lifted up the poor from the dunghill; that he may sit with princes, and hold the throne of glory. **1 K 2:8**.*

The needy and the poor: [By this is indicated] the gentile people.

*He raised up the needy from the dust, and lifted up the poor, **2:8**, because they were received in the faith of the Redeemer, then both their minimal and grave sins were remitted.*

5156: *From the dust, **ibi**, which easily is shaken out, [this indicates] the lighter sins.*

*From the dunghill, **ibi**, [because] whoever this pollutes, it horribly befouls them, [and this indicates] the more serious sins.*

*He raised up the needy from the dust: **ibi**: In these light sins he slept, from which he could be aroused by the slight touch of grace.*

*He lifted up the poor from the dunghill: **ibi**: In these, however, he languished because he had lapsed into the more grave sins, and needed the hand of a powerful help.*

5157: *That he may sit with princes, and hold the throne of glory. **2:8**.*

As for the needy who was raised up from the dust, and the poor man lifted up from the dunghill, let us listen to what height he is raised up.

*With princes, **ibi**, these are the Apostles. **Ps 44:17, f.**: ... You shall make them princes over all the earth. They shall remember Your name throughout all generations, O Lord.*

*That the poor man might sit with princes, **ibi**. An order of Preachers ²⁶, chosen from among the people, this obtains in the Holy Church the culmination of apostolic authority.*

5158: *That he might sit, **ibi**, because from the Throne of the heavenly magisterium this exhibits the doctrine for salvation.*

*That he may hold the throne of glory, **ibi**, because this spreads abroad the odor of a good reputation, by which the order stands above in dignity. Or, surely:*

*That he may sit with princes, and hold the throne of glory, **ibi**, both because the order radiates with the honor of sublimity and shines with miracles.*

²⁶ Translator's Note: this is not a reference to any particular religious order – but implies the clergy well prepared, both spiritually and intellectually, necessary for the renewal of the Church.

5159: This is the second mode of this effect of consolation: A desire of serv²⁷ God, not for its honors, but to sustain its burdens; not seeking what is one's own, but the interests of Christ; not by force, but out of devotion, at the same time with fortitude and humility, with faith and love.

This is a most pronounced proof.

5160: 1 K 2:8: *For the poles of the earth are the Lord's, and upon them, He has set the world.*

The one who is raised up to such sublime dignity, there is indicated just how this is to be used.

The poles of the earth, ibi, these are the extremities of the earth. The preachers are chosen from among the peoples, and these are from the far ends of the earth, because they are produced at times from the very base and abject levels of the gentiles.

The poles of the earth are the Lord's, ibi, for the mortification of one's own will, because they are not to seek their own, but that which is of Jesus Christ²⁸. *They are of the Lord, ibi*, [by which words] the certain singular holiness that is in them is designated.

5161: *For the poles of the earth are the Lord's, and upon them He has set the world.*
2:9.

And not under these.

The earth, ibi, [which is] the plenitude of the faithful subjected to the Holy Church.

And upon them, He has set the world, ibi, because the preachers are placed over the Church for this, that the might make clear their infirmity, and so that they might bear the weak also to the heavenly homeland, as a superimposed task. Therefore they should not always look toward the prelates, but sometimes toward the subjects, that they might go before them in the discipline for restraining their vices, and in the obedience of the minister they might often submit to those who are preeminent in their care of prelacy.

5162: With joy and devotion.

1 K 2:9: *He will keep the feet of His saints*, because the burdens which preachers sustain are great ones. This is though to say: Among such immense duties they would collapse, if the Lord did not sustain their feet.

The feet of His saints, ibi, are the affections of the mind.

He will keep, ibi, because there is infused to them the grace of a marvelous devotion, by which they pleasingly bear so great a burden.

²⁷ Translator's Note: In the Ignatian tradition [followed by St. Gaspar Bertoni], the original Spanish words for *obsequi/ obsequium* are: *servir/ servicio* - to seek what is Christ's, and not one's own.

²⁸ Translator's Note: An Ignatian maxim. [cf. ahead in these Meditations, # 5219 – Ph 2:21].

*He will keep the feet of His saints, **ibi**, because they might flee the sheer weight of so great a burden, if infused charity had not lightened this intolerably heavy burden for them.*

5163: *Feet, **ibi**, [there is indicated by this word] the state of fortitude*

*He will keep the feet of His Saints, **ibi**, [because] He strengthens them with wonderful fortitude, so that they might never fail under such immense burdens.*

With fortitude and with humility.

Feet, not 'foot.' It speaks of both feet: i.e., fortitude and humility. So that we might not trip up, we stand on both feet. Those who are placed over the faithful flocks, tend along the way to the supreme homeland, and sometimes they encounter prosperous events, and at other times, those that are adverse.

5164: For indeed some of the events are prosperous, because they excite the elation of the mind, greatly attack those things that happen by chance. However, so that the mind of the elected one might not fall, at times one leans on the foot of fortitude, and at other times he stands on the foot of humility. He remains tenacious in a firm state between both trials, if he would stand on such solid humility, so that prosperity might not raise him above trials, nor would any adversity lead him to dejection.

5165: *He will keep the feet of His saints, **2:9**, because every virtue of man is weak without the help of the Creator. Surely our infirm humility when it is charmed by the favor of prosperity, is overthrown by the impulse of an inept joy.*

Our weak fortitude, when it is attacked by adversity, is easily overcome. But we are cast down by sad events, we are weakened by happy events, whenever our omnipotent God takes leave of us, when He does not lay out the assistance of His protection.

5166: *He will keep the feet of His Saints, **ibi**, because the omnipotent God helps our infirmity in bearing the burdens of our subjects, so that we might not be weakened by adverse situations, nor seduced by joyful ones. He will keep the feet of His saints, **ibi**, strengthened by the divine assistance, we contemn the diverting joys of this world, and we dread no adversities; we bear evils willingly with stable patience, and we refrain with unshaken humility the sublime mind from all vain delectation.*

5167: By faith and charity.

*The feet of His saints, **ibi**, [these are] the faith and love of the Redeemer, by which they walk along Whom they believe in, they achieve by love when they are faithful.*

*He will keep the feet of His Saints, **ibi** – **Habac3:19** : The Lord God is my strength: and He will make my feet like the feet of harts: and He the Conqueror will lead me upon my high places signing psalms. Or [according to the **other**]²⁹*

²⁹ Translator's Note: St. Gregory the Great manifests an unusual style – his first section of his Commentary covers 1 S 1:1-28. He treats this thoroughly from two different perspectives: first from the typical sense – and then goes over the same material from the moral point of view. cf.

exposition of St. Gregory the Great] establish me on the high places, so that I might conquer in His clarity.

5168: [The one who said]: *On the high places establish me, Habac. 3:19*, truly asked from the Lord to secure these feet, i.e., for the one to whom the divinity of the Redeemer is revealed. So that I might conquer in His clarity; because while he is illustrated with the rays of His clarity, the remaining attempts of the malign spirit are destroyed. The one who is bold in the contemplation of the truth indeed keeps his feet established on the mountain, and is enkindled with love, and it is of him who believes in the Only Begotten Son of the supreme Father. Peter was established on the heights, who confessed being with the Lord, saying, Mt 16:16: *You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, v. 17*: Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jona, because flesh and blood have not revealed it to you, but My Father, who is in heaven. For he was founded in faith, enkindled in charity Him Whom he loved, he also preached.

5169: **Zeal for the divine glory, and that Christ be magnified, with the destruction of His enemies, first by restricting them to silence; [that is, that they might be] reduced to silence in the present and dismayed in the future judgment' and [then], with the glorification of His servants and friends. This, as it is the most generous fruit of charity, [so, too] it is a most evident testimony [of one's disposition for the vocation], and so on.**

5170: 1 K 2:9: *And the wicked shall be silent in darkness, because no man shall prevail by his own strength. v. 10*: *The adversaries of the Lord shall fear Him; and upon them He shall thunder in the heavens. The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth, and He shall give empire to His king and shall exalt the horn of Christ.*

And the wicked shall be silenced in the darkness: The impious here are the Jews, extraneous from the piety of the true faith, and to the cruel death of the Redeemer.

5171: *And they shall be silent in the darkness, ibi*, because the Saints are constituted on high, they shall look upon the Redeemer of the world in the clarity of His divine majesty, whom they confess with eternal praises.

And the wicked shall be silent in the darkness, ibi, because therefore the Jews do not preach the Redeemer of the world, because that ineffable clarity does not illustrate them. Is 26:10: Let the wicked be taken away so that he may not see the glory of the Lord. And indeed peering into this darkness, seeing the damned therein, Jn 1:5 says: *And the light shines in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.* Therefore, David prophesying rather than desiring it to be so, Ps 68:24: *Let their eyes be darkened that they see not; and their back bend down always.*

And the wicked shall be silent in darkness. 1 K 2:9.

Because even though the Jews pronounce the words of the divine Scripture in their praises of God, while they deny the Son to God the Father, they do not

consecrate any **obsequies**. Whoever remains silent regarding the praise of the Only Begotten is muted in praising the Father.

5172: For their consternation in judgment.

v. 9: *Because no man shall prevail by his own strength.* **v. 10:** *The adversaries of the Lord shall fear Him.*

They look down upon Him Who was crucified, and when the judge comes, they will tremble.

Because no man shall prevail by his own strength. **v. 9.** For now he is hard in his infidelity, [and] strong in his error; and the one who thinks meanly of believing in God, boldly does not fear blaspheming.

*No man, **ibi**.* Indeed as a man right now he cannot be conquered.

5173: *No man shall prevail by his own strength, **v. 9**, [that is], as a man, since He is the one who was crucified by their insidious deeds will be seen in His majesty.*

*The adversaries of the Lord shall fear Him, **v. 10**.*

When in the virtue of the Crucified they perceived to move all things, and to submit everything with His judgment, when they would hear the high heavens the thundering judgments of their eternal damnation.

5174: *And upon them shall He thunder in the heavens, **v. 10**.*

*In the heavens, **ibi**.* These are the holy Apostles. To whom He, promising the glory of His sublimity, said **Mt 19:28:** *You shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

*Shall He thunder in the heavens, **ibi**.* He insinuates the thundering of these heavens upon the Jews, **Lk 11:19:** *Therefore, they shall be your judges.*

And upon these [impious Jews] He will thunder in the heavens, because from the Holy Apostles then they will hear the terrible judgments of their damnation, so that they might accept in their examen the sentence of eternal death, as they afflicted them humbly preaching the goods of eternal life, by persecutions.

5175: *The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth. **v. 10**.*

*The ends of the earth, **ibi**,* [these are] the extremes of this world.

*The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth, **ibi**,* that He would leave nothing unpunished, or rewarded by His sentence; because while he concluded the extremes in His judgment, He would not abandon any matters to be discussed.

And in the glorification of the just.

5176: *And He shall give empire to His king, and shall exalt the horn of His Christ, **v. 10**.*

Since He will receive all the elect in the eternal contemplation of His Only Begotten, that He might preside over them in that eternal and ineffable majesty, who as long as they are living in this pilgrimage of the present life, they were not with Him.

*And He will exalt the horn of His Christ, **ibi**,* when in His exaltation, the sublimity of the Redeemer will be respected. **1 Jn 3:2:** *We shall see Him as He is.* For the power, or the Reign of our Lord Jesus Christ is always equal; but then when He will raise up so that we might be able to have in place His sublimity.

5177: For now the human mind cannot depict anything at all of that sublimity. As there is absolutely nothing in comparison of that glory. **Is 64:4** and **1 Co 2:9**: *That eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man what things God has prepared for them that love Him.* First, therefore

*He shall give empire to His King, **1 K 2:10** [that is] To Christ; therefore*

*And He shall exalt the horn of His Christ., **ibi**, because then this sublime nature of His sublimity is noted, when our nature is indeed raised up from the depths of its corruption, when it will receive the integrity of its renewal by resurrecting, by which it will be able to contemplate this most lofty light of the Redeemer.*

5178: *The horn, **ibi**.* If someone wants the reign to be understood, [the horn] is the Holy Church.

*And He shall exalt the horn, **v. 10**, because our lowliness will be brought up to the equality of the Angels. So, concerning His Elect, the Lord speaks in the Gospel, **Mt 22:30**: They shall be as the Angels of God in heaven. Concerning the sublimity of this horn he speaks again, in **13:43**: Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*

*And He shall exalt the horn of His Christ, **v. 10**.*

Because the Holy Church is to be extolled, and which now in this valley of misery she is weighed down by the penalty of her burial. Once she has been absorbed by death, she will be raised up renewed into the heights of eternal joy.

5179: **[COLLOQUY]** *Our Father, Who art in heaven...* [Mt 6:9, ff.].

This is how you have taught how us to pray, and when we pray this we have confidence, certitude of being heard.

*Hallowed ... give us a true desire of **servng** You; that there be destroyed in us the reign of sin, and that only Your grace will reign there.*

5180: **Give us a true zeal, of Your grace in the extension and manifestation and revelation of Your Reign, that Your enemies will be confused and damned, and that Your glory alone reign in Your Elect. Thus there will be for these, not equivocal signs and so manifest to us here on earth Your will concerning our Election³⁰, which is contemplated as having been written in heaven for all eternity: Your Will be done ...**

5181: **And so that there might be realized one day how from then on it is known, give us now Your grace, Your Spirit: Give this day our daily bread. Remove from us all impediments to the undertaking. And deliver us ... Assure us from the dangers in its execution: And lead us not into ... Protect us from eternal evils on how this will all come to an end. Amen.**

And so, Lord, to You be glory, the Kingdom, obedience; to us, the grace, remission, assurance in the present and in the future.

Glory to God in the highest; and on earth, peace to men of good will. [Lk 2:14].

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³⁰ In his diary, Fr. Bertoni noted: *In the matter of vocations, rather than urge them, it is good to leave their care to God. [MP, Aug. 17, 1808].*

5182 - MEDITATION 11

Meditation 11

1 K 2:11-17

[New Year's Day 1811 - ??]

[MssB ## 5182-5239]

5182: Preparatory Prayer

First Prelude. 1 K 2:11 *And Elcana went to Ramatha, to his house: but the child ministered in the sight of the Lord before the face of Heli, the priest.* [He learned the rudiments of the Law, and how to sing, which was the office of the Levites; indeed the sons of Samuel were the Cantors, in fact, the prefects. **1 Ch 6:28 & 31; 25:1, ff.**; they learned how to take care of the Tabernacle, to light the candles, and the rest of the duties of the Levites]. **v. 12:** *Now the sons of Heli were children of Belial* [they were very perverse, and atheists in their morals], *not knowing the Lord* [practically, this was their office, which they knew neither practically nor speculatively]. **v. 13:** *Nor the office of priests to the people; but whosoever had offered a sacrifice, the boy* [servant, or son: i.e., Ophni or Phinees, the sons of Heli, the Priest] *of the priest came, while the flesh was in boiling, with a fleshhook of three teeth* [a small fork with three prongs] *in his hand.* **v. 14:** *And thrust it into the kettle, or into the caldron, or into the pot, or into the pan; and all that the fleshhook brought up, the priest took to himself.* [To the priest there was due only the breast and the shoulder of the peace offering]. *Thus did they to all Israel that came to Silo.* **v. 15:** *Also before they burnt the fat the servant of the priest came and said to the man that sacrificed: Give me flesh to boil [cook] for the priest; for I will not take from you of the sodden flesh* [**here they were trespassing a precept, but a custom: in order to cook in a more gluttonous manner**].

5183: v. 16: *And he that sacrificed said to him: Let the fat first be burned today according to the custom* [according to the customs of the times, which are still in vogue today, let the fat first be burned today. - The custom was in the skinning of the animals to prepare the fat, which first was enkindled for the Lord before the altar. Then afterwards those preparing the sacrifice offered the raw meats, and cooked the oblations together, both for themselves as well as for the priest. – **Once the hide was removed from the animal, the fat was separated, and this was offered to God by burning it. Then there was cooked by the offerer the breast and the shoulder: all the rest belonged to the offerer**], *and then take as much as your soul desires.* *But he answered and said to him: Not so: but you shall give it to me now, or else I will take it by force.* **v. 17:** *Wherefore the sin of the young man was exceedingly great before the Lord: because they withdrew men from the sacrifice of the Lord.*

5184: Now in this reading, on developing the spiritual sense according to the tradition, let us say that we have already brought into consideration concerning the disposition for the ecclesiastical vocation the first type of proofs, established in the visit and the consolation of the good Spirit. The remains now to see the second type of these proofs, established in the subtraction of this

visit, or the consolation of the good Spirit, and in the temptation of the wicked spirit, according to the teaching of **Job 7:18**: *You visit him early in the morning [these are the first proofs], and You prove him suddenly: and this is the second proof.*

5185: In the divine subtraction there is to be considered the double purpose of this trial of the loving Providence of God. And this we will do in the first part of this Meditation, seeing it expressed in the retirement of Elcana and in the ministry of Samuel. Then, permitting this same loving Providence to offer an even better trial of His Elect, in the time of the subtraction there usually comes also the temptation of the wicked spirit. For this may even be either the spirit of the devil, or the human spirit according to this: *... And it is night: in it ... Ps 103:20*: and so it is here to be considered [as this is expressed by the evil conduct of Heli's sons]. See the second part, the proofs of the good Spirit, remain to be seen immediately with good order, the trials of the wicked spirit. **Job 7:18**: *You visit him early in the morning and you prove Him suddenly.*

5186: These are said to be trials of the wicked spirit, which is our self and worldly love, or carnal love, and it is love attributed to the demon. This is not because God, too, is not experienced by means of the subtraction of His consolation, but because as God withdraws His grace, commonly there rises up the evil spirit. Thus God proves both by subtraction and by permission. In subtraction, He is only as though one Who proves; in His permission of temptation, He may make use of the wicked Spirit as an instrument, but not always for good.

Reassuring: Visits by consolation: trials by subtraction and by temptation.

5187: Prelude 2. Imagine that you see the parents of Samuel departing, and he in the act of his ministry, and the sons of Heli in the action of their sacrileges and scandalous thefts.

Prelude 3. **2 Co 2:11**: *For we are not ignorant of his devices. You have revealed the deceptions of our enemy so that we might know how to elude them, and the impediments. The end purpose of these trials in you is your perfection. You have tried me by fire, and iniquity has not been found in me. Ps 16:3. The end purpose of the enemy is our perversion. Being pushed I was overturned that I might fall, Ps 117:13.* See to it that we now his artifices and the means to avoid them, as we have to be approved by you by means of these trials, and not reproved in the matter of our vocation.

[A Re-working of this]

5188: O Lord, in these trials, You have a set purpose for us: the devil also has another of his own. Your purpose is to purge us from our defects, and to dispose us for our vocation: *You have tried me by fire, and iniquity has not been found in me Ps 16:3.* The design of the devil is to lead us to fall, and to render us indisposed for our vocation. *Being pushed I was overturned that I might fall. Ps 117:13.* Grant, o Lord, that we might know well the designs of your loving

Providence: *Show, o Lord, Your ways to me, and teach me Your paths* **Ps 24:4**.
Grant that we might explore the plots of our adversary: *For we are not ignorant of his devices* **2 Co 2:11**; **grant that from now on, put to these trials, we may come out of them all approved by You, but never reprovved regarding our vocation.**

5189: This is the first loving purpose of the subtraction, that is to lead a person to recognize the gifts of God, and not to make them his own. *And if you will separate the precious from the vile, you shall be as My mouth,* **Jr 15:19**. And note how when for a trial, and not because of any fault of his, there is withdrawn from that young man this heavenly consolation. While there are lacking to him for this reason sublime consolations, and lights, whether in his prayer, or in the study of the Sacred Scriptures, there grow in him humility, self-knowledge, the recognition and the esteem of the gifts of God. He comes to know that the Lord thus better disposes him and makes him worthy to be called to a ministry. In this, He entrusts into the hands of His servants the most rich treasures of His grace so that they can dispense these to others. So, it is all the more necessary that they be faithful, in order not to steal these from Him, by attributing to themselves the glory that results. *Here now it is required among the dispensers, that a man be found faithful.* **1 Co 4:2**. *Who do you think is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord has appointed over His family, to give them meat in season.* **Mt 24:45**.

5190: First Part. This is a trial by the subtraction of consolation. Its purpose: That the Elect might now without its presence, what it is [**and that he draw from it**] **an increased humility, knowledge of himself, Fear of God, knowledge of God and of His gifts; and the esteem of all these.**

1 K 2:11: *And Elcana went to Ramatha, to his house.*

Elcana is the Redeemer of the human race.

Ramatha is the heavenly homeland.

And he went to Ramatha, to his house, i.e., into his own town, after the Canticle of his wife. **2:11**.

5191: Why [was this written] only after the boy was born, and Anna sang her Canticle to God, and before the Redeemer had ascended into heaven, as the Holy Church in faith generated the gentile people? Because He is only sought by those who know how to recognize the 'corporal' presence of our Lord. Is it not so that then Paul did not have with Him Who had ascended to the Father, [he said]: *Do you seek a proof of Christ that speaks in me, Who towards you is not weak, but mighty in you?* **2 Co 13:3**: And **2 Co 2:17**: *But as from God, before God, in Christ, we speak.*

5192: What is this, then, that has happened to the Church, that He was present by the grace of duty, when He is withdrawn from her through the dispensation of probation? He was present so that in the acquisition of the gentiles she might abundantly pour forth the words of life; but sometimes He was as absent to her as He hid Himself, so that the duty of the word was removed, and she would come to know what she was without His presence.

*And Elcana went to Ramatha, to his house, **ibi**:* after the end of the Canticle; because the Holy Church from His presence preached sublime truths, He who with the mortals he withdrew Himself by dispensation, He presented Himself to the eternal citizens.

5193: *To his house, **ibi**,*; [The House of Elcana] is that eternal society of the citizens above, whom by their loving, satisfying and associating with, the Lord indwells.

*And he went... to his house, **ibi**,* After the end of the canticle when he left Anna; because He withdraws Himself from us still advantageously making progress, He joins and manifests Himself incessantly to these perfect and consummate citizens, where it is not necessary to prove those already proven by His absence.

5194: **The effect [of this trial is that] they are lacking in sublime knowledge and lights in their prayer and in the study of the Scriptures.**

*And Elcana went ... to his house, **ibi**,* after the Canticle of Anna, because the Holy Church which teaches her Elect in such sublime truths, as she is always deserted by the pious dispensation of the Lord, so that she does not always have those same sublime truths which she teaches.

5195: **The manner of proceeding in the subtraction of grace and of corresponding to this trial. To stand solid in order to work according to what was heard above and internally on the inspirations and externally, on the sermons.**

But the child ministered in the sight of the Lord before the face of Heli the priest
1 K 2:11.

The child: Samuel [is] the people of believers coming from the gentiles, called to ministry to the Lord. Many heard the words, detested the past malice, and propose works of correction of life; but when they ceased listening, as though they had never heard the same words of life, they returned to iniquity. The listener is the gentile people of the Holy Church, which was devout to listen, and ready for corresponding.

5196: **The effort to please God, even when our operations, prayers and the like are not pleasing to us [conducting oneself] with placidity, without making oneself noticeable with sulking.**

*The boy Samuel ministered in the sight of the Lord, before the face of Heli, the priest. **2:11.*** From that which he heard from Him, he strived to lease the omnipotent God.

*The boy, **ibi**:* even though he took on grandiose works for the defense of our faith, nonetheless he was still new in the same generation of the faith.

He ministered in the sight of the Lord: because he offered a placid ministry to the omnipotent God.

5197: [Thus the Elect] pleases God, having in his sights God alone³¹, and no other spiritual good [*For what have I in heaven? And besides thee, what ... Ps 72:25*]; [experiencing] fear in offending God [and persevering in] prayer.

*In the sight of the Lord, 1 K 2:11, [that is], he whom the divine esteem he willingly accepted in the oblation of the services³²; greatly fearing being expelled from the sight of the Lord, [he prays], Ps 50:13: *Cast me not away from Your face; in Whom vehemently desiring to be received, thinking of the dwelling of his stay with Him. Ps 41:3: *When shall I come and appear before the Lord?* Thus Heli gloried: 3 K 7:1³³ *And the Lord lives in Whose sight I stand.***

5198: And this is the second loving end of Divine Providence, in the subtraction of His visits, that is, to abandon the man almost to his own forces, while ministering to him in a hidden manner, through His grace: *for with out Me you can do nothing, Jn 15:5: so that the man, with divine help which will never be lacking to him, making use of all his forces, easily balances all this. Cooperating then toward this end, by withdrawing from him the consolation, that young man insists on working according to what he has heard internally. And with great effort he strives to please God, in accord with the present consolation that he had deliberated. Even though this is not pleasing to himself, being deprived of his spiritual tastes, despoiled of his goods, and not having any other in view than God, he shows himself to be quite disposed for that vocation. This demands a practical knowledge of knowing how to conduct oneself both in the time of abundance, as well as in the time of need. In which St. Paul said in practice: *I know both how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. Ph 4:12.**

5199: This is how God acts with those most dear to Him, by leaving them alone.

*Samuel ministered in the sight of the Lord, 1 K 2:11, because in the services³⁴ of the new religion, the gentile people were quite acceptable to the omnipotent God. In this word the rejection of the Jew is hinted at in a hidden manner, while only Samuel, in whom there is expressed the gentile people, is maintained to minister before the Lord. And he alone was in the sight of the Lord, because the Jewish people ceased to be pleasing unto Him. For both of these matters are spoken of by Malachi; for he refers to the rejection of Judea, teaching, MI 1:10: *I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts: and I will not receive a gift of your hand.* The one who rejected Judea is freely considered, as the same author stays, v. 11: *For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles: and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation.**

5200: The One [i.e., God] Who with the internal subtraction tries this individual, so that His Elect might come to know his own strength and might believe that

³¹ Fr. Bertoni's goal was always to seek God alone : MP: July 30, 1808; Oct. 13, 1808; Dec. 25, 1808.

³² In Oblatione Obsequiorum: phraseology much in the spirit of St. Gaspar!

³³ Biblical text not clear.

³⁴ Obsequiis – a favorite word with Fr. Gaspar.

he has from God the assistance and the grace of the vocation with the external temptation, almost already fortified. This exposes him and renders him approved before others; that all might see that this one is called, who remains to serve God, even while evil priests seize hold of the worship and lead the people to ruin.

5201: Samuel was the minister in the sight of the Lord, and *'before the face of Heli the priest.* **1 K 2:11**, Because the order of the old doctors knew from a very great distance, and by prophesying preached the ministry of the preachers of the Holy Church, the conversion of the gentile people, the love and reverence toward the **service**³⁵ of the Redeemer. For therefore, he was well disposed for this ministry of the Lord: **Ps 7:11**³⁶: *All the kings of the earth shall adore Him: all nations shall serve Him.* **Hag 2:8:** *And the Desired of the Nations shall come and the House of the Lord will be filled.* **Is 11:10:** *The Root of Jesse, who stands for an ensign of the people, him the gentiles shall beseech.* **cf. Rm 15:12 - Ps 116:1:** *O praise the Lord, all you nations, praise Him, all you people.* **Gn 49:10:** *He shall be the Expectation of the Nations.*

5202: *And the child ministered in the sight of the Lord, before the face of Heli the priest.* **1 K 2:11.**

So, what the Gentile People had afterwards in their being worthy to God, the order of the ancient doctors foresaw through the spirit of prophecy.

A Director helps very much; the Scriptures are very helpful. *That through the consolation of the scriptures, we might have hope.* **Rm 15:4.**

5203: SECOND PART. Trials through temptation, from the bad example of evil priests.

But, let us come now to the second part of the Meditation. Since also during the subtraction of the consolation, there ordinarily occurs temptation; God permits this for the better proof of His Elect, that they be tempted in various manners by the wicked spirit. *It is night: in it shall all the beasts of the woods go out.* **Ps 103:20.**

5204: And here there is also to be considered how, in order to have greater force, the spirit of the malign demon tempts by joining himself to the human, or carnal spirit, which is the love of self, or of pleasures, or of this world, which is the concupiscence of possessions, honors and pride. And there is found the point of entry of this spirit of his into the soul of the one who is willing to be tempted, and a rather dangerous war ensues. But, if he does not discover this entry, as the man who has already been well purged by cooperating valiantly in the first trials for the good spirit, in the consolation and in the subtraction for this end that the loving providence of God has made precede, then the malign spirit seeks a like spirit outside of this human spirit, or that spirit of flesh and this earth, or that it be of this world and one of pride; in a singular manner it seeks it in those persons who in the soul that he wishes to tempt who are

³⁵ The Latin text reads here: *circa Redemptoris obsequium* - a word often used by Fr. Gaspar.

³⁶ **Translator's Note:** this is probably a mis-print for **Ps 71:11** in the Latin Vulgate.

closer by confidence or by authority. And as he reinforces it and by directing it, he maneuvers it in various guises, and assembles it against that soul.

5205: Therefore it is for this purpose of disturbing the vocation of an Elect young man, and that he makes use very quickly of these same priests, either carnal, or worldly, the likes of which it is not difficult to find, and for this purpose he sees more the simplicity of a young man moved more to draw near by the inclination of the ecclesiastical vocation, or through the need of counsels, or by his respect and his free service³⁷ of authority.

5206: Divine Providence, however, which orders this trial for the good of His Elect, permits the devil to tempt, and limits also its signs; and in addition to the internal helps, He supplies also for the external the shelters, where His Elect, cooperating well with these, might indeed triumph. And in singular fashion he applies a maternal and vigilant care of His Spouse, which therefore fills with zeal, to protect His little ones, and gives them light to guide them well in this struggle.

5207: In this point of view, and with all these relationships, we will begin to encounter temptation in the second Part of this Meditation, in the act and in the circumstances of sacrilege, or the scandalous thievery of the sons of Heli.

Wicked priests³⁸, of whom the devil makes use in order to tempt that good young man on their way from God to the Sanctuary, who have material knowledge, but who do not know the Spirit, and indeed glory in these, that they are not spiritual.

5208: 1 K 2:12: *Now the sons of Heli were children of Belial, not knowing the Lord. v. 13: Nor the office of the priests.*

*The sons of Heli, ivi, [these are] the Israelites according to the Flesh, who knew Sacred Scripture edited by their Fathers, and nevertheless they did not know what the Scriptures promised. These Truths provided self-criticism, Jn 8:56: *Abraham, your Father, rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it, and was glad. Ibidem, 5:46: For if you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe me also, for he wrote of Me.**

5209: [Evil priests] are without ecclesiastical discipline; they even speak against it.

Children of Belial: these are without any yoke, without God. [By these are indicated the sons of the Judaic priesthood. Blind sons of light, or without any yoke; Belial, Beliar amount to the same. [They are] all those who do not know the doctrine of Christ; they do not know the commands of the divine law, but follow the statutes of its traditions. Ven. Bede. They do not wish to take up the sweet yoke of Christ on

³⁷ Translataor's Note: Again Fr. Bertoni's oft-used word: *ossequio*.

³⁸ cf. St. Augustine's Sermon on Shepherds, where he treats of the wicked shepherds: *do what they say, but not what they do!* [cf. Liturgy of the Hours, 25th Week, Wednesday, 2nd Reading].

themselves, and they were without the Lord, because they cast Him out and crucified Him.

5210: [Bad priests live badly], by never praying, and rejecting the Lord, while they sacrifice in an injurious manner.

*Not knowing the Lord, **2:12**, [they are] those who disdained our Redeemer coming in our flesh. **Is 1:3**: *The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib, and Israel has not known me.* It is as though the text were to say: I opened long before through the prophets the paths of my incarnation; and nevertheless, that which I had promised it did not accept. Why, and so on.*

5211: They do not preach, or they do not confess, or they do so without zeal, and they scandalize the people.

*Nor the office of the priests to the people, **1 K 2:13**.*

One would know the priestly office if he would preach that the One Who had been promised by the Law and the Prophets had already come for the redemption of the human race. In Him indeed, this one not only did not believe in Him, but went into a rage persecuting, and knows neither the Lord nor the duty of priests toward the people. Yet, the malice of this person would be less if at least he had not willed to be beneficial by preaching to minors the advent of the Redeemer, and had feared in bringing harm to them.

5212: *But whosoever had offered a sacrifice, the servant [boy] of the priest came while the flesh was in boiling, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand. And thrust it into the kettle, or into the caldron, or into the pot, or into the pan: and all that the fleshhook brought up, the priest took to himself. **1 K 2:13, f.***

*But whosoever had offered a sacrifice, **v. 13**, [which is] **to offer confession of the true faith to the omnipotent God.***³⁹

5213: *The servant of the priest came, **ibi**.* The servant [boy] of the Priest is the people subjected to the perfidious shepherds of the Synagogue for their **services**⁴⁰.

The boy [servant]: Aptly the word *puer* is used because while he was unwilling to keep the weaknesses of the law in a literal manner, he protested to grow up into a perfect man through the Gospel.

*While the flesh was in boiling **v. 13**:* that is, the food.

The food of the Elect soul is the Person of the Redeemer.

While it was cooking: For indeed he was cooking the food in sacred vessels, while the Holy Spirit was preparing for the sweetness of this refection in the elect minds.

³⁹ Translator's note: A Pauline ideal: the 'immolation of a victim' is extended to include the confession of the true faith [*obsequium intellectus et voluntatis* – [cf. DV 5] – [cf. Raymond Corriveau, CSSR, *The Liturgy of Life*]. Paris: Desclée 1970. Similarly, the Stigmatine Apostolic Mission is an *obsequium* to the Lord through the Church.

⁴⁰ Translator's Note: again the favored word of St. Gaspar: *per obsequium populus subjectus*.

5214: *While the flesh was in boiling. v. 13.* The flesh is boiling while through the grace of the Holy Spirit, we firmly believe and efficaciously confess the Lord's humanity in the assumed nature of the divinity. Hence, and through Moses, he refers to flesh of the Paschal Lamb to be eaten, **Ex 12:9:** *You shall not eat thereof anything raw, nor boiled in water. To eat, this is to believe beyond the grace of the Holy Spirit that our Redeemer is mere man. Nor boiled in water, ibi, [which happens] when the essence of the Redeemer is brandished about through human wisdom. – You shall not eat thereof any thing raw: As the Jews deny His Divinity; Nor boiled in water, [as] the heretics, empty of meaning through human wisdom and the sacraments of His humanity and divinity.*

5215: *While the food was boiling: 1 K 2:13.*

Not the perfection of cooking, but the apparatus is hinted at, because the imperfect are scandalized. . For it is said of the perfect: *Much peace have they that love Your Law, O Lord, and to them there is no stumbling-block. Ps 118:165.*

And he had a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand, and thrust it into the kettle, or into the caldron, or into the pot, or into the pan: and all that the fleshhook brought up, the priest took to himself 1 K 2:13, f.

And he, the boy, had a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand. v. 13. [Because the fleshhook is destined to taking hold of the food.

The *Fleshhook* [is] the wide-spread persecution of the Holy Church of the Jewish People.

The *three-teeth*, because attempted to bring harm to the faithful by blandishments, by penalties and by terrors.

And he trust it into the kettle v. 14. The 'kettle' in this case would indicate the vessels in which there is cooked the flesh by immolating it; [i.e.], the minds of the faithful; which while they believe that the Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, is the true Only Begotten Son of the Supreme Father, for in these vessels the flesh is cooked, which is immolated to God through the service⁴¹ of intimate devotion.

5217: *Into the kettle, or into the caldron, or into the pot, or into the pan. v.14.* [This is] in the heart of each and every listener; i.e., whether he is teachable, or of lesser or narrower intelligence, whether he is infirm or fragile; or patient in adversity, or efficacious in speaking, or one of more or less rustic sounds; because by the variety of greater and lesser, whether the vessel is distinguished as being of iron and bronze, or, of earthen-ware.

5218: *He thrust it into the kettle, and so on. V. 14:* The boy [servant] whom lately considered the warmth of divine love, being defiled by evil contact.

And all that the fleshhook brought up. V. 14. [That he might] prohibit that part of the flesh which he might grasp from being cooked.

⁴¹ Translator's Note: By now, a familiar turn of phrase in the spirit of Fr. Bertoni: *per intimae devotionis obsequium immolemur* - our Apostolic Mission, service, is an immolation, joined to the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ [cf. 1 P 2:3, ff.].

Brought up. ibi. Because the people of the Jews expelled from the faith of the Redeemer, vehemently strove to take this love of the faith in Him from the hearts of the faithful.

5219: *The priest took to himself, ibi,* i.e. the boy took it for the priests: Because there was a great festival of wicked Prelates, if the crowd could subvert him with blandishments or the furious guards, whom they would know that he was still standing in the sublimity of our faith by confession.

The priest took to himself. ibi. Not that which the law of preaching stated they expected as a reward, but against that which the duty of obedience owed to God, forcing that it be done for themselves. Indeed by this most deprived fleshook, also now in the Church there are those who dishonor the sacred hosts in the Church, having accepted the mystery of faith, or even those ministers of the word, who seek the things that are their own. And not the things of Jesus Christ. **Ph 2:21**.⁴²

5220: *Thus did they to all Israel that came to Silo. v. 14:* Israel, [or] 'prevailing over God', [or] 'being strong in prayer', as though 'wrestling with God'. – Silo, [or] mission [to the place] where Christ would be adored, and they would immolate, so that they might follow Christ most perfectly, adoring Him in spirit, and immolating the living host.

That came [the text does not say] living there: [signifying the spirit] of beginners, not the perfect.

5221: *Thus did they all, v. 14,* that is, they defiled, they stole the food.

O senseless Galatians, who has bewitched you? Ga 3:1. You did run well. Ga 5:7.

O senseless Galatians, who 'bewitched' you not to obey the truth? [they polluted - Thus did they all.

Before the eyes of whom was the prescribed Jesus Christ crucified among you? [In Silo].

Ga 3:2: *This only would I learn of you: did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing of faith? [they adored].*

v. 3: *Are you so foolish that that whereas you began with the spirit, you would now be made perfect in the flesh. [They came].*

v. 4: *Have you suffered so great things in vain? If it be yet in vain! [they immolated].*

5222: ibidem, 4:9: *But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known by God: how turn you again to the weak and needy elements? [To Israel].*

ibidem, 5:9: *A little leaven corrupts the whole lump.*

Also before they burnt the fat, the servant of the priest came, and said to the man that sacrificed: Give me flesh to boil for the priest, 1 K 2:15. Thus did they to all Israel 2:14.

5223: Deception for whoever aspires for perfection.

⁴² cf. above, # 5160.

*Also before they burned the fat. **2:15.***

The fat: by this is signified that internal fat, the devotion of the mind, by which the minds of the Elect are coupled in more perfect charity to its Creator.

*Also before they burned the fat, **ibi**,* because these functionaries of the Synagogue thought that they could turn aside the new Confessors of Christ, before perfect charity associated them to the omnipotent God.

5224: The order of the wicked expulsion [is described].

*The boy of the priest came, and said to the man that sacrificed: Give me flesh to boil for the priest; for I will not take of you sodden flesh, but raw. **2:15.***

The boy of the priest came: the Jewish people, serving the letter of the law.

And said to the man that sacrificed: the faithful.

Give me flesh to boil for the priest: for I will not take of you sodden flesh, but raw.

5225: One would give the raw food who would assert before persecutors the mere humanity of Christ.

*Give me flesh. **ibi.*** The Jewish people, putting into service the letter of the law, suggested denying the divinity of the Redeemer to the faithful.

*Give me flesh to boil for the priest. **ibi.*** Because through the fire of malice the Jewish people thought what its prelates willingly welcome in the nourishment of their mind.

*For I will not take of you sodden flesh, **ibi.*** Because the One Whom the faithful were compelled to confess as mere man, nor did it even want to hear that He is God.

*Not sodden flesh, but raw. **ibi.*** The importunity of that people is shown since these sacrilegious words are joined together in wicked precision. Because the people greatly desired to hear that Jesus, our Lord and Redeemer, is not God and man, but only a mere man.

5226: And behold, there is indicated in this second trial of temptation against the vocation of the young Elect, and the undertaking that the human spirit of evil, carnal and worldly priests have provided for the malign spirit of the demon, along with their indirect scandals.

*These are the children of Belial, **2:12:** Without the yoke of discipline, and even that they think contrary to it.*

*Not knowing the Lord, **2:12,** by performing in a disheveled manner in choir and on the altar.*

*Nor the office of the priests to the people, **2:13:** by not preaching, nor hearing confessions, other than due to their own self-interest or vanity. And with direct scandals.*

*They have a fleshhook with three teeth, **2:13,** their concupiscence for material things, for honors and pride.*

5227: *And thrust it into the kettle, **2:14,** they waste the first boiling of devotion.*

*Also before they burnt the fat, **v/ 15,** They rob the desires of perfection from the proficient.*

The one who knows how to protect his flame in the midst of all these, his kettle, so that he might not lose the boil of his fervor, and that these burn also the fat, has a great testimony of being disposed for that vocation that is full of so many scandals, and so close at hand, and therefore this demands a very strong love for discipline. *Much peace have they that love Your law, and to them there is no stumbling block.* **Ps 118:165.**

5228: Success with temptation: **The good example of many lay people.**⁴³

And here in this second point the Divine Providence at work against the temptations that arise from the scandals of priests, supplies His Elect with a powerful shelter in the good example of seculars; that is, in the constant religion and perfect charity of many seculars. Whoever attaches himself to this help not only overcomes the scandals of priests, but forces himself not to allow being surpassed in perfection by seculars, has a powerful testimony at his disposition for the ecclesiastical vocation.

5229: **1 K 2:16:** *And he that sacrificed said to him: Let the fat first be burnt today according to the custom, and then take as much as your soul desires.*

*And he that sacrificed said to him, **ibi.***

What tempts in the flesh those who are imperfect, discovers them to be perfect. For those who have been forced to deny the divinity of the Redeemer, not only did not want to deny the Redeemer, but they urged their enforcers to draw them toward life.

5230: *Let the fat first be burned today according to the custom, **ibi.***

The fat: i.e., the internal part of devotion.

*Let the fat first be burned, **ibi.** [Which is] to rise up to the sublimity of charity, loving the mysteries of the incarnate divinity, which are believed.*

*Today according to the custom. **2:16.***

Let it all be believed and loved according to the custom, as the new Catholic Church of Christ believes and loves, which is the rule of our faith, and the teacher of our love.

5231: **1 Co 16:22:** *If any man not love our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema. Maran Atha.*

*The Law is the custom, For the charity of Christ presses us. **2 Co 5:14.***

*And take as much as your souls desires. **1 K 2:16.***

*Your soul: But the sensual man perceives not those things that are of the Spirit of God. **1 Co 2:14.** . Hence, like animals, the Hebrews ask for the raw flesh, i.e., the simple humanity, without the divinity.*

*And take as much as your soul desires, **2:16.***

⁴³ **Translator's Note:** a relatively frequent refrain with Fr. Bertoni: *...It is a great misery to discover such holiness among seculars, and such imperfection and vices in a priest.* [**MP**, Dec. 2, 1808]. About six weeks later in this same source – Jan. 23, 1809 [the Feast of the Holy Spouses] – St. Gaspar quoted St. John Chrysostom's strong comment in this context: *Arbitror paucos esse Sacerdotes qui salvi fiant, sed multo plures qui pereunt!* Fr. Stofella offers his masterful commentary here [cf. CS IV, pp. 97, ff.].

5232: *Let the fat first be burnt today according to the custom. v. 16.* First there is to be believed and loved the mystery of the divine incarnation, as the New Church of Christ believes and loves.

And take as much as your heart desires, v. 16. And then I will not deny to you investigating whatever weakness of His humanity, which He wished to suffer for our salvation. But first, I say, believe that this same weak man is also the strong God, and love the Man-God, by the charity of God, which *is poured forth in our hearts by the Spirit indwelling in us. Rm 5:5*. Take up the spirit of the Catholic Church, without which *the sensual man perceives not those things that are of the Spirit of God: for it is foolishness to him and he cannot understand. 1 Co 2:14*.

5233: Whether or not, then, did the boy [servant] of the priest ask for the raw meat, when, he who was born blind, having been illumined by God, they said to him, **Jn 9:24**: *Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner?*

Give glory to God: Nor should you attribute the praise of your providential care to anyone who is not God.

We know that this man is a sinner: Jn 9:24. Not only is God denied but also the just man. *For it is foolishness to him. 1 Co 2:14*.

5234: To the one who indeed was denied that raw meat which he sought, even before the fat was burned, he obtained it after the fat was burned; because he has asserted urgently with grateful soul the Author of his salvation, with the fatty and choice parts of his devotion, from the manifest sign of such admiration, has shown Him to be not only a holy man, but also the true God.

5235: Third Point. Progress of the temptation of the evil priests, even to force.

And this is the third point, which I leave up to you to develop: the progress of temptation from evil priests, even to its terrors, threats, force. And after they have employed all that they can muster, they put into motion in their turn also the most powerful laity, whom they burden with their blessings, as they are loyal to them. And they bring this force to bear not only on their bodies, but also on their judgment, with all the greater injury, the more free this is. They call evil good. Is 5:20. As do the blind⁴⁴.

5236: *But he answered and said to him: Not so: but you shall give it to me now, or else I will take it by force. 1 K 2:16.*

This people, having lost its reason, began to follow beasts, and importunately asked for raw flesh to be shown to it.

Or else I will take it by force, ibi: even by violent persecution.

History and eye-witness mount up the facts in confirmation of this violent trial. The one who is able to dispatch of this and is already well proven.

⁴⁴ Perhaps a reference to Jn 9:24 – above in # 5233.

5237: The Fourth Point: Success with temptation. **The divine authority of the Scriptures, against those who would say that *good is evil, and evil is good.* Is 5:20.**

And behold Divine Providence, against the violent temptation of wicked priests, who say that *good is evil, and evil is good,* supplies His Elect with a strong armor, in the infallible authority of the Scriptures: *The shield of faith, ... the sword of the Spirit.* **Ep 6:16.** Whoever takes hold of this shield has already overcome the trial, and heaven and death proclaim him with great glory, in the conformity of his will with that of God, already worthy of the crown of his vocation. ... *You have crowned us, as with a shield of Your good will.* **Ps 5:13.**

5238: *Wherefore, the sin of the young men was exceeding great before the Lord: because they withdrew men from the sacrifice of the Lord.* **1 K 2:17.**

Wherefore, the sin of the young men was exceeding great. **ibi.**

Of the young men: Of the Scribes and the Pharisees and the Jewish people.

Before the Lord: Even though it was also before men through the hypocrisy of those justifying themselves.

Was exceeding great: Which by the tears of repentance was not deleted.

Jr 17:1: *The sin of Juda is written with a pen of iron, with the point of a diamond, because it drew others to sin.*

5239: *Because they withdrew men from the sacrifice of the Lord* **1 K 2:17:** because they kept the hearts of the weak from making progress in the confession of the right faith.

Men. **ibi.** Because indeed if they had persisted in the true confession of our faith, the divine word would signify them with the title of 'the Sons of God.' **Ps 8:6:** *You are gods and all of you sons of the most High.*⁴⁵

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⁴⁵ Translator's note: this should be Psalm 82:6

5240 - MEDITATION 12

Meditation 12
1 K 2:18-25
[Epiphany 1811 - ??]
MssB ## 5240-5295

5240: Preparatory Prayer.

Prelude 1. 1 K 2:18: *But Samuel ministered before the face of the Lord [he was accustomed to the ministries, to the extent that his youthful age would allow]: being a child girded with a linen ephod [the area from the shoulders down, binding the linen tunic. The ephod was made of linen chiefly; and it was the linen of the priests, and the vestment of the High Priest was of a richer warp. The ephod and the tunic were the vestments both sacred in nature, as well as political: as the super-humeral].*

v. 19: *And his mother made him a little coat [this was the outer vestment, as it seems], which she brought to him on the appointed days [annually], when she went up with her husband, to offer the solemn sacrifice [the host of the days].* **v. 20:** *And Heli blessed Elcana and his wife and he said to him: The Lord gives you seed of this woman, [You have prepared your son for the Lord: in turn, the Lord will multiply for you your offspring with interest] for the loan [LXX': for equal return] you have lent to the Lord. And they went to their own house.*

v. 21: *And the lord visited Anna, and she conceived, and bore three sons and two daughters: and the child Samuel became great before the Lord. [He presented himself as great and commendable for that service which he offered to the Lord: growing in age and merit].* **v. 22:** *Now Heli was very old, and he heard all that his sons did to all Israel: and how they lay with the women that waited at the door of the tabernacle: [LXX: they were there. Hebrew, in Calmet: with those women at work at the door of the tabernacle. Women assigned to the services of the tabernacle, came for the chorus. Some of them watched as guardians of the door of the tabernacle, or served there as sentinels].*

v. 23: *And he said to them: Why do you these things of things which I hear, very wicked things, from all the people?* **v. 24:** *Do not so, my sons: for it is no good report that I hear, that you make the people of the Lord to transgress.*

5241: *If one man shall sin against another, God may be appeased in his behalf [LXX: they will pray for him to the Lord; and He could be appeased, after the injury has been repaired]: but, if a man shall sin against the Lord, [directly, especially by trampling sacrifices under foot, and by profaning the temple, and by turning men from sacrifices, having brought all to ruin, by having removed all the guardians, from whom, by divine institution, pardon might be sought: who will pray for him? Who will conduct the sacrifices and lead the solemn prayers by which God might be placated?], who shall pray for him? And they hearkened not to the voice of their father because the Lord would slay them. [He withdrew from them, as unworthy, the extraordinary spoils, the undue helps from which they would avoid the sin that He willed to chastise, and the decreed punishment due to sin].*

5242: [Prelude 2]. Now in this reading, etc., we say that after we have seen the temptation of the evil spirit having been permitted, directed and moderated by Divine Providence, for the proving of His Elect, and by It not merely faithfully measured in accord with human powers, but also balanced with powerful helps and admonishments [according to that which the Apostle states, 1 Co 10:13: *Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is human: And God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able*], there remains today to see the happy outcome of this trial, composed both partly of the free cooperation of the Elect, as well as of the provident maternal care of the Church, and of the very loving Providence of God; according to what the Apostle goes on to say, 1 Co 10:13: *but He will make also with temptation issue.* And all this in the first part.

5243: But since, as the Apostle himself points out, this result or happy exit from a temptation, is only addressed to give courage and to reinforce the spirit to another trial [*but He will also make with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it, ibi*]. So, in this other part we will consider the second temptation, which derives from the evil spirit of the devil, joined with that human spirit in the worst priests, after having been defeated in the first bond with worldly priests, close to the Elect by the confidence of conversation, is renewed in a more powerful way, which comes through those priests close to the Elect through their authority of Prelacy. This is a much stronger temptation, because it is directed by Divine Providence as the ultimate trial of His Elect, and is commensurate with his developed forces, just as it is balanced with even more powerful helps and admonitions.

5244: Prelude 3. O Lord! Since *The life of man upon earth is a warfare, Jb 7:1, arm yourselves with your weaponry: Put on the armor of God. Ep 6:11. Teach us this now in our minds the science of these arms, that You might teach our hearts the practice on how to manage them. He will teach my hands to fight. Ps 141:1.* Our victory will redound totally to Your glory, and will serve us as the crown of the assurance and the sign of Your approval.

5245: The cooperation of the Elect in the plans of Providence in his temptation. And this is the first results of the temptation, as the effect of human cooperation in Divine Providence, and it is firmness, establishment in virtue, real efforts in the most sublime kind of life, and indeed pure, sustained by the solid exercise of mortification, undertaken for some time as young men. All this supplies a great proof of disposition in the ecclesiastical vocation. *By his works a child is known, if his works be clean and right. Pro 20:11.*

5246: 1 K 2:18: *But Samuel ministered before the face of the Lord: being a child girded with a linen ephod.*

Firmness.

Samuel ministered, ibi.

Samuel: is the gentile people, or the preacher taken from among the gentiles.

5247: Ministered: This is though to say: With your priests taken from Judea, rendering a contemptible sacrifice to God, and hence already bearing notice of its rejection, the remnant was this one gentile people, and the order of preachers converted from among them, who would **offer to the Lord the acceptable service**⁴⁶ of praise.

Above it was noted. **2:11:** *but the child [Samuel] was the minister...* Here, though, the text reads: *But Samuel ministered*, that there might be indicated that even in the time of persecution, nothing of his fervor was eased; and because he was deeply fervent in his love of the law of the Lord, there was not scandal for him.

5248: Increase in virtue.

Before the face of the Lord, 2:18.

Above [it was stated:] *before the face of Heli. 2:11*, because he did not then persevere, but he advanced, exceeding the precepts of the law, and he did walk in the counsels of perfection and grace, seeking the face of the Lord in spirit. *Seek the Lord...seek His face every more. Ps 104:4.*

5249: The boy [child]: [this is said] because from the beginning of his conversation, [he served his Lord]. **Having diminished, and almost eliminated the divine cult, the mass of the faithful people was wasted and corrupted,** he took his stand as a young boy, in this the entire hope of its restitution depended on a small peg, in whom the Lord suffering injuries, would hang the remnants of His honor.

5250: Desires of Perfection.

But Samuel ministered before the face of the Lord: being a child girded with a linen ephod, 2:18. *With a linen ephod*, [which is] more subtle than wool. By a linen ephod there is signified the order of priests⁴⁷ chosen from among the gentiles; for in comparison with a legal life, the new conversation of the gospel is the subtlety of linen.

For wherever there is something of the animal precept, this is altogether cursed by whom no off-spring is left on Sion; for, in the New Testament, since everything is more subtle, whoever makes use of its precepts, is to be embellished as in the more delicate vesture of linen. For earlier, indeed abstinence of nuptials is damned: while here it is cultivated with marvelous praise. In earlier times, the priests generated in a carnal manner: while here they bear much more copious fruit of their spiritual progeny in so far as they cannot experience any detriments to modesty through the conjugal good.

5251: Desires of continence, virginity.

He was girded with a linen ephod, 2:18, so that he might openly manifest the glory of the new priesthood which would be resplendent with the splendors of the new modesty.

⁴⁶ Familiar expression in Fr. Bertoni's charism: *...offerre Domino acceptabile obsequium laudis* - all of life is a Liturgy, an *obsequium*. [cf. Rm 12:1, ff.; 1 P 2:3, ff.]

⁴⁷ Translator's Note: this constitutes the new 'order of preachers' hoped for by both St. Gregory the Great, and St. Gaspar Bertoni, for the renewal of the Church. All Priests are to proclaim God's Word, the 'new conversation of the Gospel'.

But Samuel ministered before the face of the lord...girded with a linen ephod, **2:18**, because **then the divine services**⁴⁸ would be well exhibited, since the person would not be soiled with the stains of pleasures; and then would have accepted the office of minister to the Lord, since through the cleanliness of holy conversation the person of the minister is pleasing to God.

Linen, which is procured from the earth, only after a long process does it reach its proper décor, and it designates the most lucid mortification of chaste flesh.

5252: Mortification from the time of one's youth.

But Samuel ministered before the fact of the Lord ... girded with a linen ephod. **2:18.**

The Christian people ministers are *Christ's and they have crucified their flesh with its vices and concupiscences*, **Ga 5:24**, *chastise their body, and bring it to subjection.* **1 Co 9:27**.

*The boy [servant], **ibi**.*

He that nourishes his servant delicately from his childhood, afterwards shall find him stubborn. **Pr 29:21**. - **Pr 23:13**: *Withhold not correction from a child.* - **Pr 20:11**: *By his inclination a child is known, if his works be clean and bright.*

5253: And this is the second benefit of temptation, the effect of the provident care of the Church, cooperating in the designs of the Spouse⁴⁹ **concerning the care of the Elect put to the test, and it is the science of discretion. The soul, by submitting itself to the Magisterium of the Church**⁵⁰ **acquires this science in the temptation itself, which reforms the indiscretion of desires, while it makes us know our own strengths and determines the levels of the virtues that we have acquired, after having examined them as with a touch-stone. What does he know that has not been tried?** **Ecclus 34:9**

5254: Now this knowledge is an indeed necessary disposition for vocation.

1 K 2:19: *And his mother made him a little coat, which she brought to him on the appointed days, when she went up with her husband to offer the solemn sacrifice.*

*And his mother made him a little coat. **ibi**.* The Church, because [the boy] brought the first-fruits of his newness, adapted the manner of justice to the age of a proficient.

*Which she brought to him on the appointed days, **ibi**.* i.e., by the increases of the individual virtues.

5255: She brought the tunic with her when she went up with her husband, with the grace of Christ tending toward the higher realms she disposed for these ascensions in his heart. For the lawgiver shall give a blessing, they shall go from virtue to virtue: the God of gods shall be seen in Sion **Ps 83: 6 & 8**.

⁴⁸ And again! - *divina obsequia tuc bene exhibentur...*

⁴⁹ Fr. Bertoni considered the Church, as the Spouse of Christ, to be the *Model of Holy Abandonment* - cf. Letter 38, Oct. 26, 1813, in: *Epistolario*, p. 99 – and under-lying theme in his spirituality.

⁵⁰ Cf. DV 5; LG 25 – a key ideal of St. Gaspar!

She went up with her husband to offer the solemn sacrifice. **1 K 2:19.**

To offer the solemn sacrifice, **ibi**. This is what the Church does through the eloquence of her preaching, she works to enkindle the hearts of her listeners into the love of her Maker.

5256: *The solemn sacrifice, **ibi**. Either with a great solemnity of joy in them; For the fruit of love, or charity ... is joy. Ga 5:22.*

*She went up with her husband. **ibi**. With her husband:* Because the Church has never deserted Christ, Whom she has with her hidden. *Behold, I am with you* **Mt 28:20.**

*She went up, **ibi**,* because she preaches the more sublime matters to her proficient listeners.

*Which she brought ... going up with her husband to offer the solemn sacrifice. **1 K 2:19.*** Because while she was developing through increases of her newness, from the Church she received apt admonitions of her justice for her smallness, in whose splendor she radiated.

5257: 1 K 2:20: *And Heli blessed Elcana and his wife, and he said to him: The Lord give you seed of this woman, for the loan you have lent to the Lord. And they went to their own home.*

*Heli. **ibi**.* There were good doctors of the old people.

*And Heli blessed Elcana and his wife, **ibi**,* because the old order of doctors⁵¹ foresaw the pairing of Christ and the Holy Church, and they preached to their future off-spring of the Elect to be worthy of heaven.

5258: *The Lord give you seed of this woman, for the loan you have lent to the Lord.*

You have lent [the boy] for his every use on earth: he will restore your crown to his glory in heaven. You have lent one: he will return manifold seeking not only posterity in heaven, but one worthy of heaven while still on earth. *And everyone of you that has left house ... children.. for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting* **Mt 19:29.** You have prepared for me a preacher and a ministry according to my own heart and good pleasure, integrally and perfectly bound to me: And I, through his mouth, will multiply your sons and subjects, who will be your slightest will, and he will be accustomed to your afflictions.

5259: Through the example of the virtues exercised in temptation: fortitude, patience, humility, detachment from everything, many souls are drawn to serve God, and God renders him proven for all the most wise.

*And [Heli] blessed them. **2:20.*** Although this was done long before the act, nevertheless he then made himself known as having blessed them, already with the revealed grace of our redemption, each one of the faithful could believe; because so many of our ancient fathers predicted good news about this renewal.

⁵¹ Translator's Note: the 'old order of doctors' is improved upon by the 'new order of priests, preachers' called by God to proclaim 'the new conversation of the Gospel'.

5260: The Church and the perfect experience themselves being borne toward prayer and to be united with God, with a view to the advantage of the students⁵² and the youth.

And so that the order that was established might be recognized, there is added: *And they went to their own home* **1 K 2:20**.

And they went: the Holy Church with her Man.

They went to their own home, ibi, [which is] to flee from the disturbances of the active life, and to be free for the joys of the higher life, through contemplation⁵³.

5261: That mother indeed left the boy for a time, as the text notes: **Ph 1:23:** *I am straitened having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.* If she was with the boy, when would the force of that love extol the outstanding doctor even to the third heaven? [Truly this was not to be]. If then she was with the boy, when he was welcomed in paradise, did she not hear those words which is it not right for man to hear, and she would be taken up into his place, because this is shown in the text: **Heb 13:14:** *For we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come?* But since she dwelt with her husband in their own home, her maternal love brought her to return to her son. **Ph 1:24:** *But to abide still in the flesh is needful for you.*

5262: *And the Lord visited Anna and she conceived, and bore three sons and two daughters.*

And the Lord visited Anna, ibi, by flooding her with consolation, the love of charity, and the word of preaching.

And she conceived, ibi, by the beginnings of conversion, or justice.

And she bore, ibi, by perfecting in her justice and charity.

Three sons, ibi, [or] the more perfect sons of the holy Church. Three, who are always known by faith in the Trinity to have performed the stronger deeds.

5263: But if the holy Church should bring forth only the perfect, then our weakness would not be able to achieve the rewards of the eternal life. Therefore, the strength of the sons, and the fragility of the two daughters.

And two daughters, ibi, because the holy Church, even though against the proud enemy brought forth the strong, nevertheless, also her weak members would be led to the joys of the eternal home-land through the two precepts of charity.

5264: Perfection and humility.

⁵² In Fr. Bertoni's central Part IX of his *Original Constitutions*, Concerning the 'Grade' of the *Professed*, the Stigmatine Founder emphasizes very much the apostolate to the youth, especially Seminarians [CF # 164], the *institutio* of the young [cf. CF # 165], both spiritual and intellectual [Chapters 3-4, CF ## 165-1, the very core of this important Part IX on the principal tasks of the Stigmatine Professed.

⁵³ Fr. Bertoni emphasizes the priority of the Stigmatine life, in his description taken almost *verbatim* from Suarez, of the purpose of the Congregation he founded: *In hac religiosa Clericali Sodalitate, cuius finis est non solum contemplari, sed etiam contempalta aliis tradere...* [CF # 49].

And this is the third benefit of the temptation, the effect of that most liberal Providence of God, who in the person of His Elect and rewards in like manner and the kind concerns of the Church, by infusing great consolation on the advancement of His Elect, and bringing it about that in the odor of the virtues of this student others would become involved in serving God; and some even to following Him to the most arduous perfection, some of these from afar, and others from below, but along the same pathway that leads to Heaven ⁵⁴.

5265: He further rewards also the struggle of His Elect with a most precious gift that He communicates to him, which is a profound humility together with a most sublime life.

These are the signs which clarify the most beautiful dispositions for the ecclesiastical vocation. *And he that hears let him say; Come. Rv 22:17 The greater you are, the more humble yourself in all things. Si 3:20.*

5266: *And the child Samuel became great before the Lord 1 K 2:21.*

Because he did not always remain in the beginnings of his initiation, as each began to be trained in the priestly ministry.

The child: became great before the Lord: and not in the sight of men.

The child became great: because he had been sublimated to the height of perfection.

The child became great before the Lord: Because the new order of preachers, even though it had reached to the heights of great conversation, it did not lose the virtue of its humility.

5267: To be magnified before God would not be of benefit, if the child ceased to be; because once humility has been lost, one would not be on the level to placate the omnipotent God from the height of his conversation.

Those had already been magnified who in the name of Jesus expelled demons from the possessed; but, because they did not lose the good of his childhood, Truth convinced them saying: Lk 10:18: *I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven. Mt 18:3: Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.*

And the child Samuel became great before the Lord, 1 K 2:21; because the life and of the new preachers is both sublime by merit, and lowly through humility. And because from both aspects they are very much accepted to God, [it is said in the text]: And the child Samuel became great before the Lord. ibi.

5268: SECOND PART

The temptation of the malign spirit, that is, of the demon, joined with the human spirit of priests close to the Elect through their authority, that is, of Prelates which is a spirit of weakness.

⁵⁴ Fr. Bertoni often noted both aspects of the Paschal Mystery in his writings – on *Domenica in Albis*, April 5, 1807, in the new spring-time, he challenges his listeners in S. Paolo de Campo Marzo, to strive toward heaven in the light of the Resurrection [cf. MssB ## 1316, ff.].

And this is the second temptation, a terrible temptation, moved by the malign spirit, through the work of the weak spirit of evil priests, close to the young Elect by their authority, and they might even be confessors, pastors, directors, and so on, weak in themselves and failing in sustaining the genuine faith, even more weak in sustaining others, and most weak especially to correct defects.

5269: By this means it is a simple matter for the devil to insinuate tepidity, the usual weapon of the Demon against anyone who advances in the spirit, therefore that overly relaxed effort, and finally boredom in the vocation itself. For this reason, the Holy Spirit says, Pr 23:23: *Withhold not correction from a child.*

One who would know how to find his strength in God where he finds for himself the weak support in one to whom he is duty-bound to address himself, and then to continue on remaining strong, I will say frankly he has undergone a great trial ⁵⁵.

5270: 1 K 2:22: *Now Heli was very old, and he heard all that his sons did to all Israel: and how they lay with the women that waited at the door of the tabernacle.*

Heli figures not only the old priesthood, but also the doctrine of the ancient Patriarchs, because from the fact that by his spiritual dignity he stood above them, he was this by his office, so that he might instruct by salutary preaching for whom he offered acceptable hosts to the Lord.

5271 *He was very old, 2:2, because in the hearts of the reprobate Jews, the strength of the celestial mandates is weakened.*

Heli was a young man for as long as through sacred Scripture he obtained the power of great authority over the Elect of the Synagogue; this was because he had accepted the promises of the future Redeemer, and awaited Him with great desire. Then, therefore, Heli got old, when Judea lost the devotion of observing the promise so that it might discern from his Patriarchs the Redeemer proving Himself with miracles before him, and he doubted being totally blind in His light and presence of the Truth.

5272: **The weakness of the Prelates [has for its effect] that of inspiring a weak sense of virtue, to the subjects and to the students, and of faith, when their subjects vacillate on account of human fear.**

Heli was very old, 2:2, [which is noted] that indeed every strength of faith in the Synagogue is taught to have withered away. Truly we say that as Heli was quite old, he lived totally weakened. What does it mean, then, to live as old in the Scripture other than to minister the quite weak aspiration of the faith of the Synagogue?

⁵⁵ Translator's Note: Some Thomists might distinguish Perseverance, the off-shoot of the Gift of Fortitude which takes care of the difficulty of time; and Constancy which handles the challenge of bad example, the lack of inspiring witness [cf. Antonio Royo Marin, OP, *Teologia del la Perfeccion Cristiana*. Madrid: BAC 2001, # 440]. Fr. John Ceresatto, CSS, in his biography of the Stigmatine Founder, maintained that the second reason why Fr. Bertoni founded the Stigmatines was to renew the priesthood of his time.

5273: Indeed he could both be and live as quite old since then the hearts of the Jews wavered in that they would believe neither that the Lord Jesus was the true Redeemer, nor would they openly condemn blasphemy. The text **Jn 7:12** shows the weakness of this old age: *For some said: He is a good man. And others said: No, but he seduces the people.* Thus the Jews themselves professed the wiles of their expertise, as further **10:24** states: *How long do you hold our souls in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.* **Mt 12:32:** *Master we would like a sign from You.*

5274: *And he heard all that his sons did to all Israel. 2:22.*

He certainly heard these things, because he knew them; for it is indeed that which we know we hold closed up in the classrooms of memory. The sacred sayings consulted within were published as all the written perfidy of the Jews, and manifest these as retained in memory. Heli ascribed as the knowledge of all this, as **Amos 3:7** teaches: *For the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.* **Hab 3:1:** *O Lord, I have heard Your hearing and was afraid. O Lord, Your work, in the midst of the years, bring it to life. In the midst of the years you shall make it known.*

5275: *And Heli heard all that his sons did, 2:22:*

To hear of the crimes of their sons is to have learned before-hand the old doctors of the Synagogue. But what they would have known, the text teaches;

And he heard all that his sons did to all Israel: and how they lay with the women that waited at the door of the tabernacle. 2:22.

*All that his sons did to all Israel, **ibi**, by ruining and stealing from the heart of the faithful love for the true faith of the Redeemer,* by their threats, penalties, terrors.

5276: *And how they lay with the women that waited at the door of the tabernacle, **ibi**.*

And how they lay with the women: Which means to be polluted with various heresies, **Rv 2:14, ff.**

That waited at the door of the tabernacle.

At the door of the tabernacle, which is the spiritual letter of the law.

*That waited at the door of the tabernacle, **ibi**.* This means the Jews, as they understand sacred Scripture only according to the letter alone, and there stated the heresies where they would have been able to enter into the secret of the true faith. For just as it is through the door of the tabernacle one enters into its interior, so through the letter of sacred Scripture one enters into the spiritual knowledge of the Redeemer. And so, Judea is deceived through the observance of the letter, as women are said to observe only at the door and not within the tabernacle.

5277: *With the women, **ibi**.* Because in all the Scriptures the Jews contradict our Redeemer, as the text speaks of not one woman, but many.

All that the sons of Heli did. 2:22.

The sons of Heli did these things to themselves, as it is pointed out according to the voice of the Prophet, in **Ezk 18:4 & 20:** *The soul that sins, the same shall die!* And nonetheless it is said:

*What they did to all Israel, **1 K 2:22**; because while the Prelates were lost in the night of their error, they involved the minors in the blindness of their darkness.*

*They lay with women, **ibi**, because these reprobate Jews polluted even to the end of the world with the admixture of their heresies. *They lay*, because although they were overwhelmed in the very deep night of their error, nonetheless, through Heli there will be raised up to the end of the world in the faith of the Redeemer.*

5278: 2:23: *And he said to them: Why do you these kinds of things, which I hear, very wicked things, from all the people?*

*And he said to them, **ibi**. For behold Heli was an old man and he said sharp things, because even though the virtue of the sacred discourse was lacking in the heart of the reprobates, nevertheless, before those who rightly understood, he subtly inquired of the faults of the Jews. *Why do you these kinds of things*, etc. **ibi**. He discussed these matters divided within; but the one conducting the examination, asked: *Why do you these kinds of things?* He clearly showed that they dashed into the night of heresy without the discretion of prayer.*

5279: *You do these kinds of things, which I hear, very wicked things. **ibi**. He said that they had done what he had heard.*

*Very wicked things from all the people. **ibi**. And he asserted that these very wicked things were from all the people, [because] the universality of the Jewish people had fallen into the depths of heresies. But, the reprobate priests were the cause of this ruin. **Ho 5:1**: The causes of the ruin of the people, were the bad priests; for therefore, the subjected people fell, because it strove to imitate the falling prelates.*

5280: *Very wicked things which I hear from all the people, **ibi**. These things ought to be understood by the people, and not related. It is as though the text were saying: These terrible things which I hear being done by all the people, why do you do them? Hence, and immediately openly insinuating to what he has said openly:*

5281: 2. 24: *Do not so, my sons: for it is no good a report that I hear, that you make the people of the Lord to transgress.*

*That you make the people of the Lord to transgress, **ibi**. In what way would the people transgress the mandates of the Lord? But because this in figure touched them, in that it signified beforehand that indeed which in the time of the Lord's Incarnation was to take place. For when the priests laid with the women, the subjects transgressed the mandates of the Lord; because when the prelates were stained with the admixture of the heresies, the reprobate multitude of the subjected Synagogue is merged in the same filth. The text states therefore:*

5282: *Why do you these kinds of things, which I hear, very wicked things, from all the people? **2:23**. It is as though it were saying: The more gravely you are delinquent, with so much the more filth do you stain the whole people with your crime. **Jr 8:16**: *The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan*. Indeed in this place there is not to be understood that from Dan there is referred the sound that was heard, but that this snorting by the chariots and the horses is what made the sound that was heard. In*

this place there is also to be noted because the one who has related that these terrible things had been heard by all the people, he added the words of his gentle affection:

5283: *Do not so, my sons: for it is no good report that I hear, that you make the people of the Lord to transgress. 1 K 2:24.*

And indeed Heli sharply reprimanded, and gently admonished them, because Scripture reproaches denouncing the error both of the old patriarchs and the Jewish people, and with benign affection he calls them from the night of their error into the day-light of the true faith.

My sons, ibi the text states, that they might recognize that they should be heirs of the paternal promise, and that they might the more devoutly receive the Savior of the world, in so far as they should not ignore the promise that had been made to the Patriarchs.

5284: He sharply corrected them, and gently admonished them. On account of such disgraceful conduct, he had repeatedly and sharply to rebuke them. Theodoretus. If they would not emend themselves, they would have to be removed from offering sacrifices and be deprived of the priesthood, and to lead them to abdicate themselves [be disinherited], and be punished with whips. Chrysostom, **Against those opposed to the monastic life. Book 3, 3 tome 1, 48/1 E ff.** He should have greatly changed the direction of these boys, castigate and correct them.

'When fathers correct blandly and sluggishly, this brings indulgence to their sons'. [This is a good proverb] **for Confessors, pastors, etc.**

5285:1 K 2:25: *If one man shall sin against another God may be appeased in his behalf: but, if a man shall sin against the Lord, who shall pray for him?*

If one man shall sin against another, ibi; when one man goes perverse things toward another.

God may be appeased, ibi; for such sins were light in comparison with those which the Jews thought up of committing against the Son of God.

*For if a man shall sin against the Lord, ibi. They sinned against God because they contrived to kill Him, the God Who showed Himself to be in the most open light of His miracles. **Mt⁵⁶ 15:24:** *If I had not done among them the works that no other man has done, they would not have sin.* And so that he might show the implacability of God the Father, **ibidem**: *But now they do not have any excuse for their sin, because they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.**

5286: *Who shall pray for him? 1 K 2:25.* It is as though the text were saying: By whose prayer could that sin be indulged which is committed against the One showing indulgence? Who could intercede for him before the Omnipotent God, for the one who damned to death His co-eternal Only-Begotten Son? For he would say nothing more openly, were he to confess saying: This One Whom you persecute as mere man, is also God. Therefore, the law of reason demands that whoever would persecute the Creator, pardon would be taken from him. But, divine Pity leads [perhaps: conquers]

⁵⁶ This should be Jn 15:24.

the engagement of reason. For He shows the equity of law, but has not held to the rigor of the proclaimed assertion in the execution of the promulgated law.

5287: For it had been decreed by the rigor of equity that no prayer would extend to the point of obtaining indulgence; but for all that no prayer of man could achieve, the Mercy of the Redeemer was not lacking. Every man who would pray for his transgressors, sin would be taken away; but for all that man is insufficient, the God-Man Himself has been made the pious intercessor. For on the Cross suspended He prayed, **Lk 22⁵⁷:34**: *Father, forgive them for know not what they do.* God is therefore pacified toward those who have sinned against God, but not with the prayer of someone else, but with His own; but God is pacified toward some, but not all. For certain persecutors of the Lord, after the preaching of the Apostles, were converted, while the rest perished. It is spoken about these converted in **Ac 4:4**: *And the number of the men was made five thousand.* Concerning the reprobate there is added:

5288: *And they hearkened not to the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them. 1 K 2:25.*

Because the Lord would slay them, ibi. Ezk 18:23 and 33:11: I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live.

I do not want the death of the sinner, ibi. How is it, then, that on the one hand it is His to want to kill sinners, and yet not to want the death of the sinner? So, there is added: *that he be converted and live.* Thus, the truth is recognized. For the One Who wishes the sinner to live, is 'so that he might be converted', if the divine fore-knowledge would know that he unconvertible, He would kill him.

5289: *The Lord would slay them,* those whom He knew would be converted, He did not want to slay. For He is shown to be both merciful and just, when He is beseeched by the Prophet, **Ps 114: 4 and 5**: *O Lord, deliver my soul. The Lord is merciful and just.* Through His mercy, He expects the conversion of the sinner; through His justice He damns the non converted. Through His mercy He wishes sinners to be converted and to live, but through His justice He would punish those who do not choose to convert; mercifully He saves only those who will to be converted, by His justice He damns those who do not.

5290: *He would slay them. 1 K 2:25.*

The supreme and incorrigible impiety of sinners is shown which would be punished willingly by the execution of divine justice. And thus indeed we also see acting even the most pious judges of secular matters, who do not wish that no one would be delinquent so that they would not have to punish anyone; but, when crimes are boldly committed, they willingly punish them, that they might wish more freely not to commit punishable actions.

5291: What is contrary to this can be discerned in this place, because the text does not say: 'Because they did not wish to hear the voice of their father', but: *they hearkened not to the voice of their father because the Lord would slay them.* But,

⁵⁷ This should be Lk 23:34.

whoever considers rightly the equity of the divine judgment, thinks it is of no interest whether someone is killed, or be dispatched in that crime, in which one would be annihilated by an eternal reprobation. It is as though the text were to say: So great was the magnitude of the fault, that both the warnings of conversion were received, that they might never be able to rise up from the pit of his death. And whoever would drink the dregs of the wrath of God, would have the culmination of his damnation, not only the penalty of the crime committed, but also the added punishment of the preaching held in contempt.

5292: The Providence of God supplies a shelter against the temptation of the weakness of Prelates, in the severe revenge against the delinquent priest subjects.

But why do we look toward the past, which we discern happening even now: i.e. seeing Heli giving his warning, his sons rejecting this, wishing to kill the Lord? For what does sacred Scripture daily accuse the Jews of if not the darkness of their error? For indeed it preaches redemption for hidden and spiritual understandings so that it might not openly show His Incarnation and Ascension to heaven.

5293: Nor are they so irrational that they do not even see the very excellent benefits of the Redeemer; but, nonetheless, they are blind, in that they would hear the signs promised to their Patriarchs that would shine forth in the Redeemer and still they do not believe. Therefore, they are blind not only [perhaps simply: not] in seeing the promises, but not believing their fulfillment. Why do they not hear the voice of Scripture warning them, unless because the Lord would slay them? Nonetheless, there is no wonder if they perish in His judgment Whose Only-begotten they kill. It is a matter here of meting out a punishment of intimate equity with the people of the Jews that they might hear each day the warnings in the proclaiming Scriptures, and they never come to believe the Scriptures giving warning.

5294: [COLLOQUY]: O Lord, to the Holy Magi ⁵⁸ You have manifested Yourself as their Savior; and to us, as our Merciful savior, but also as a severe Judge. O, Lord, You make us tremble before this Crib: what will it be when You are on Your Throne? Your silence frightens us in the horrible uncertainty, whether *we be worthy of hatred or love* Qo 9:1: what would be the formidable thunder of Your sentences? O, my beloved Ecclesiastics, may your little members not provide you with such boldness to handle what lies before, because he is a ferocious lion, who will roar against you in judgment.

5295: *Or Father, who art in heaven, by Your Mercy, and by the blood of Your Only Begotten son and our brother, by the Spirit of adoption which You have placed in us, according to Your Will. Give us this day our bread: give us grace; Deliver us: do not let our sins impede all this; and lead us not into temptation, so that we might not fall into temptation... deliver us from evil: deliver us from the human and diabolical spirit. Amen. And so let us respond to You also today.*

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⁵⁸ It is possible that St. Gaspar delivered this Meditation on the Feast of the Epiphany 1811.