

St. Gaspar Bertoni



The Spiritual Journal

[Memoriale Privato]

1808-1813

With a Commentary by Fr. Joseph Stofella, CSS
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English Translation by
Rev. Giancarlo Mittempergher, CSS
[1992]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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23. 'To persons well disposed spiritually... not to desire life, etc.'

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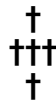
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11. 'During Mass ... sentiment of Christ's Presence and that of the Father.'

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19. 'Discretion ...

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

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15. ‘1st Day of Lent. Fr. Joseph preached...’

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16. ‘Do you follow the crowd ... Do not judge, etc.

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

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22. ‘A rod watching ... boiling cauldron

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‘...Three necessities ...1...2...3... Demosthenes...

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‘...If the matter of our salvation depended on God alone ...

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27. ‘God does not command the impossible.’

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‘Four Kings received warnings from God...’

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28. ‘To be saved, lighten the boat, one’s conscience, work, obey, etc.

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

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27. 'Temptations return.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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10. 'Fast, so that you may not sin. Fasting...'

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April

28. ‘Watch and pray. Detailed explanation.

May

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

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

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

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

‘Very few are they...

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

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

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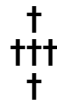
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DEDICATION

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

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

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

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

Fr. G. Mittempergher, CSS

St GASPAR BERTONI

THE SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

(*“Memoriale Privato”*)

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

INTRODUCTION

1.

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

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

2.

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

¹ Letter 24, *Epistolario*, pp. 71, ff.

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

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

3.

Here I would like to take up again that which I had noted concerning this **Memoriale Privato** some 18 years or so, ago. Naturally, I noted even then that the document was quite compact, fragmentary, laconic, and limited to a very brief time frame in the life of the Servant of God. However, I did note in my earlier reflections⁴:

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

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

Some hints indirectly inform us of events in his life. For example on 9 October 1808 he recalls the extraordinary experience of his First Holy Communion. Then he referred to adversities and real poverty experienced at home but accepted with joy and gratitude (22 October). He referred again to an unexpected visit of the bishop while he was involved in a Catechism class to adults (20 November). From his notes for 18 and 24 May 1810 one can understand his special devotion to the Blessed Mother and her Immaculate Conception. On 2 July 1808, 30 May 1812 and 26 June 1813 he speaks of his devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Two literal quotations from Lawrence

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

³ cf. Causa Beatificationis, *Summarium Additionale*. Document 26, p. 463.

⁴ Cf. *Summarium Additionale*, pp. 654-656.

Scupoli's classic, "The Spiritual Combat", invite the reader to compare the doctrine of the JOURNAL and with other writings, show that this author had influenced decisively the spiritual life of Fr Bertoni. One notices many quotes from "The Imitation of Christ"...

4.

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

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

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

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

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

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

More or less, this was the presentation of the **Memoriale Privato** that I made some 18 or so years ago, in response to the authority which had committed this study, with the rest of the documents and duties that went into the Cause of Beatification and

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

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

Canonization of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni. The reading of this Document has been most positive. I thought to myself: 'if only there were other Journals of this nature!'

5.

It might be asked what was the particular motive that convinced Fr Bertoni to record these very special graces of prayer which he received from God. No better answer could be given than that which is to be found in an introduction to the ***Spiritual Diary*** of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, who was also the teacher and model of Fr. Bertoni⁷.

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

6.

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

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

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

This has demanded much effort in consulting the sources of the contemporary ecclesiastical culture. I just hope that this effort which is borne of a long experience of familiarity with Fr Bertoni's works will be useful. I also hope that in the future, with much deeper knowledge of the Founder's writings and documents, more and better results will be achieved. In the mean time, perhaps, I will have passed away. But if the Lord will give me the grace of seeing some of

⁷ Libreria Editrice Fiorentina 1959.

these things, I hope and believe that I'll be very happy and I will be able to sing my ***Nunc dimittis***.

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

Fr Joseph Stofella

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION TO THE YEAR 1808

Father Gaspar Bertoni, during the year 1808, was living with his mother at his family home in Verona. She was in failing health. His father, Francis Louis Bertoni, was separated from his mother following an out of court agreement drawn up eight years earlier.

In February of this year Fr Bertoni lost his aunt, Paula Bertoni, who was living in his mother's house. His uncle, Anthony Bertoni, a notary, had died in November 1802.

Early in May, the new bishop, Innocent Liruti - who had only been installed as Ordinary two months earlier - entrusted Father Bertoni with the spiritual direction of the Convent where Blessed Magdalene Di Canossa's congregation was being formed. Mother di Canossa had established her community in the old convent of the Augustinian Nuns, next to the church of Saints Joseph and Fidentius, near St. Zeno Major. In that convent there were actually two separate congregations of women. In addition to that of Mother di Canossa, Leopoldina Naudet was forming her own. Both women were awaiting more favorable circumstances to establish separate communities. Meanwhile, they collaborated in educating young girls who had been invited in off the streets by Mother di Canossa. In general, they ministered to the girls and young women of that densely populated district. Leopoldina was the local superior.

In July, Father Bertoni began a personal diary, his spiritual Journal.

1808

1st JULY 1808

[1.]⁸ Some people obey, not for love of the virtue of obedience, but solely to calm their fears. As a consequence: when they want to do something to their liking, they show much resistance to the will of their superiors.

For Fr Bertoni, obedience spoiled by selfishness was seriously lacking in purity of intention and supernatural spirit, which were seen as necessary elements of true virtue. This was not how he had obeyed his own mother. Father Cajetan Giacobbe stated that Gaspar's mother used to say of her son, with so much genuine contentment, that "if children were to obey one thousandth of how her little Gaspar obeyed, all mothers would be happy and lucky"⁹. Fr Giacobbe added that "since his boyhood, Fr Bertoni let no unworthy intention motivate nor

⁸ These are marginal numbers added by the translator, perhaps for a more ready reference to the material contained in the various entries.

⁹ *Summarium Additionale*, Document 26, p. 555.

dominate his life. He was solely moved to elevate his soul towards God as the centre of his thoughts and actions.¹⁰

Fr Bertoni learned the doctrine and practice of obedience from the holy Patron of his youth, St. Aloysius Gonzaga. In the biography of this Saint, young Bertoni found two texts of Saint Paul which served him as the synthesis of Aloysius' spirit of obedience:

*Obey as you would obey Christ, as servants of Christ, doing God's will from the heart; and whatever you do, do it from your heart as if you obey the Lord and not people.*¹¹

Without prejudice to the patron Saint of his youth, Fr Bertoni, for some years had been drawing on the treasures of the life and doctrine of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, who gradually became the model for his priesthood. Here is an extract which he wrote from a book he found in his uncle Anthony Mary Bertoni's library entitled ***The life of St Ignatius***, by Anthony Francis Mariani, SJ.¹² The ideal of the obedience of Ignatius' followers is thus described:

...He had entrusted himself into the hands of God with full resignation of spirit and indifference. He strongly desired that the men of his Company should surrender themselves with similar resignation and indifference into the hands of their Superiors". He went on to say: "He, however, willingly took into consideration the desires of his subjects; because he used to say that in this way the direction of the subjects proceeds better and much easier".¹³

In the spirit of his teaching, we would add that the principle of obedience should always be upheld that he had nurtured from the very beginning of the nascent community of Canossian Sisters at Sts. Joseph and Fidentius. This was in May 1808. The entry upon which we are presently commenting seems to bear this out. We understand this from what he wrote in 1810, when he summarized the doctrine of Saint Teresa of Avila with her motto: *A life of obedience is the way of perfection*, during the Spiritual Exercises to the Clergy of Verona¹⁴. At the age of 33, he received this obedience for such a ministry from his Bishop. On 21 September 1808 he wrote in his *Journal*: **Now it is no longer time for me to read, but to act**. He was influenced by the writings of Saint John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila.

We can refer here to St. Teresa's ***Book of Foundations***, c. 10 where she wrote:

There is no quicker way to lead a person to ultimate perfection, than by the way of obedience." And she added: *"This perfection does not consist in interior inclinations,*

¹⁰ ib., p. 312.

¹¹ Cepari, *Life of St. Aloysius Gonzaga*, Chapter 14.

¹² Published in Bologna 1741. This volume may now be found in the Library at the Stimate in Verona. The printed inscription in the book is: 'From the Library of Anthony M. Bertoni. St. Paul's in Campo Marzio.'

¹³ Ibi, pp. 435, 436.

¹⁴ cf. *Collectanea Stigmatina*, I, p. 182.

nor in great ecstasies and raptures, nor in visions and revelations, nor in having the spirit of prophecy. It does consist in conforming and uniting our will with that of God, in such a way that as soon as we understand what he wants, we too want that too, with all our will. We then accept with equal joy the bitter as well as the sweet and tasty, knowing that this is what His Divine Majesty likes. It would seem most difficult not just to do it but to be happy and feel the taste of it, because it is completely disgusting and contrary to our nature. This is the power of love (perfect love!): to let go our personal pleasure for love of the other. What I want to demonstrate is the reason why obedience is the quickest way – in my judgment - to get to this happy state about which I am talking. Namely that we are in no way masters of our own will other than in using it completely and purely for God, to Whom we have to subject it to our reason. In order to do this there is no other better nor shorter way than obedience."

This last phrase became for Fr Bertoni another motto in the Introduction to his *Spiritual Exercises* of 1810: **Obedience is a sure shortcut on the way to perfection**¹⁵.

St. John of the Cross¹⁶ beats the same drum in his ***Dark Night*** stating that subjection and obedience is the penance of the reason and of discretion [i.e., one's own judgment]. As a result, this is the more pleasing and acceptable to God than is corporal penance. When this latter is not accompanied by the former, it is the most imperfect.

With this maxim Father Bertoni aimed at putting into practice the second part of the Ignatian quotation and to guide on the way to perfection those who were subject to a Superior. The teaching of the first part will one day be helpful for ***one who has no Superior, but is Superior***. In this last situation there is need of a total submission to God in everything (20 December 1808). Thus ***a more strict discipline of obedience*** (16 November 1808) will be seen as imperative in order to re-orientate an apparently fervent spiritual life which is completely off the track. Thus the threefold exhortation: ***Pray, act and obey*** (28 February 1809) will be a sure direction for the sinner reconciled with God.

†

2nd JULY 1808

[2.] Feast of the Sacred Heart. During Mass, at Consecration, at Communion and throughout the whole thanksgiving time, many tears of compunction and affection. In particular during Communion I felt for a moment as if my spirit was snatched away from all creatures, at the service¹⁷ of its Creator.

¹⁵ cf. *Collectanea Stigmatina*, I, p. 112. St. Teresa's text is from the *Foundations*. c. 10. Medina. Spiritual Works. Venice 1723. Tome 2, p. 41. [Web-site Note: It would be interesting also to note St. Ignatius' Letter on Obedience: cf. M. Espinosa Polit, SJ, *Perfect Obedience. A Commentary on the Letter of St. Ignatius of Loyola*. Westminster MD: Newman 1947.]

¹⁶ Spiritual Works, Venice 1729, p. 223. *Dark Night*, Book I, c. 6, n. 2.

¹⁷ Web-site Note: For the first time in this document, St. Gaspar uses the word *ossequio* [cf. *obsequium*, in: Rm 12:1, ff.] – one of Fr. Bertoni's favorite words. Cf. '{Published Studies' under St. Gaspar Bertoni's *Trinitarian Charism of Hope*, on this Web-site.

The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was introduced in 1765 and quickly adopted in Venice and in the Venetian Republic. In 1808 it was celebrated on the 2nd of July because on its established day, namely Friday 24th of June, the liturgical calendar required the celebration of the Feast of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist. On this July 2nd, the Church was within the Octave of the Holy Apostles Sts. Peter and Paul. On July 2nd, there was also observed the Feast of the Visitation of Mary Most Holy to St. Elizabeth.

All of this in no way lessens our interest in the fact that In his entry on this Feast of the Sacred Heart, we have the first indication of some characteristic mystical gifts which God was going to grant to Fr Bertoni¹⁸. If we may say, here one sees what theologians call **Piety as a gift of the Spirit**¹⁹. Hence, the many tears of compunction and affection. Compunction is intended here as a blend of *spiritual illumination* and a consequent feeling of one's own inadequacy in front of the divine. What stands out here is that gift of **the spirit snatched away from all creatures, at the service [*obsequium*] of its Creator**. To this experience Fr Gaspar had contributed also by his own spiritual attitude²⁰.

St. John of the Cross teaches that "the soul cannot receive the light of divine union unless it first rejects affection for creatures". He also teaches that "every soul who wishes to climb the mountain of the Lord in order to make of himself an altar for the offering of pure love, of praise and service [*ossequio*], should have already fulfilled three conditions. The first is that it rejects from itself all affections and desires which are foreign to God. The second is that it should purify itself from the consequences of those affections which still remain by continually denying them and doing penance. The third condition is that it should change *habits* : only then the Lord himself will clothe it anew. Through such divine favor the soul will finally be free from the old tastes and desires of the earthly man and will receive a new knowledge of God²¹.

Fr. Bertoni had admired the **detachment from all created things** in the patron Saint of his priesthood, namely Saint Ignatius of Loyola – and certainly for the reason of

¹⁸ Web-site Note: Fr. Stofella notes that the Sacred Heart is also near Fr. Bertoni's final entry in his Journal [cf. June 26, 1813 he also noted a mystical grace, his ecstasy regarding the Sacred Heart on May 30, 1812]. For Fr. Bertoni, his devotion to the Sacred Heart often served as his vehicle for the presentation of his integral understanding of the Paschal Mystery – both its sorrowful aspects as well as its glorious dimensions. A few days after his May 30th, 1812 ecstasy, he spoke on the Sacred Heart – emphasizing the wound in the side retained in Christ's Risen Body [cf. MssB 1755-1778] [cf. J. Henchey, 'Una Speranza Missionaria formata ed espressa nelle sue divozioni e nel suo servizio ecclesiale', in: *Symposium Bertonianum*. Verona: Edizioni Stimmgraf 1990, pp.143-160. This idea is found in his parish sermons [cf. MssB ## 464; 475; 490;494; 517; 1300; 1305; 1308; 1312; 1314; 1315; 1317; 1318; 1322; 1759; 1771, , ff. In his Letters: MssB 9510; 9689; 9707. In his preaching to priests and seminarians: MssB ## 2632; 2635; 2637; 2647. It is found often in Fr. Gaspar's Meditations on Primum Regum, based on St. Gregory the Great: MssB ## 4899; 4957; 4984; 4991; 4999; 5094 and 9707 – among other texts. The integral theme of the Paschal is found from his earliest written documents: his parish sermons up through his last letters to Fr. Bragato [cf. Web-site. *Stimmate Integre*].

¹⁹ Cf. Fr. Nello Dalle Vedove, *Un Modello di S. Abbandono*, pp. 53, 186.

²⁰ Web-site Note: there is offered a reflection on the Ignatian spirituality contained in the word *obsequium* - cf. this web-site, Studies on St. Gaspar's *Compendium Rude*.

²¹ John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*. C. 4, 1; c. 5, 7. Roma 1940: Ed. Opere, pp.17, 24, f.

imitating him. He had copied the following extract from his *Life*: "Ignatius' heart was entirely detached from all created things which he loved only in God, while loving God in them. He used to say that:

*...these are the true attitudes of those who leave the world for Christ: to forget as much as possible the things of the earth in order to better keep in mind those of heaven...*²²

Fr. Bertoni's entire *Journal* is permeated by this spirit of total detachment.

†

5th JULY 1808

[3.] During the repetition of the Meditation on Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, I observed that the disciples were asleep while Jesus was agonizing and sweating blood for them. Even John who had previously slept on His breast, and the others who had eaten the Eucharist. Watch and Pray!²³

This *repetition* of a meditation is a method recommended in the Spiritual Exercises [n. 62] of Saint Ignatius: *the third exercise is the repetition of the first and second exercise*. The first and second exercise are two meditations: the first meditation is divided into three points: on the sin of the Angels, on the sin of Adam, and on a particular sin of one, who for a single mortal sin went to hell, and of the many other sins beyond number, that led one there for fewer sins that I have committed. The second meditation is then to be made on all the sins that one has committed in his own life. Fr. Gaspar has used this format in his reflections on 'the Prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane' which he presents with one particular only, examined in the light of contemplation: this particular is necessary in order to give full importance to His warning: **watch and pray!** [cf. **Mt 26:41; Mk 14:38**]. Jesus saw His enjoinder fall unheeded on the Apostles who fell asleep.

We think that the thoughts of this meditation were the same as those contained in a reflection and prayer of the Jesuit, Fr Ludovicus Da Ponte whose celebrated book was used very much by Fr Bertoni as one of his favorites, entitled ***Meditations***. It is evident that at least from 1806 onward, this book often appears to have been and particular in his ***Journal***, was much utilized by Fr. Bertoni. Fr. Da Ponte wrote:

*... Seeing these three apostles who sleep I shall feel humiliated because I too sleep and because I am slow in my own spiritual growth. I shall imagine that Jesus Christ will reproach me with these same words: **Could you not watch with Me one hour?** O Lord, how just it is for me to be reprimanded, because I sleep while you keep vigil. I not only cannot watch for one hour but in my worthlessness even the established half an hour of prayer does not do. Since you see my weak flesh, come, please, to the help of my weakness, so that I may not get tired to watch with you...*²⁴

²² Mariani, *Life...* Book 4, c. 2, pp. 337.

²³ Cf. St. Gaspar's Good Friday Sermon [#4], 1801 & 1809, MssB 439, ff.

²⁴ DaPonte, *Meditations*. Part IV, Med. 21, mid-way through the 3rd point.

It is this same Gospel scene that Fr Bertoni will put in front of the Clergy during the Spiritual Exercises of 1810:

...Meanwhile the Apostles were asleep. To sleep while Christ suffers in his body: this is how we behave, [my brother] priests! Lack of Prayer gives the Devil the opportunity to tempt the Apostles. That is why they flee when the soldiers approach to apprehend Jesus. Hence, the necessity of divine Grace - and therefore also of Prayer - against all fears.²⁵

This warning of Jesus will be developed again in another meditation on 28 April 1811, in this *Journal*.

†

9th JULY 1808

[4.] We should never disregard nor go against any virtue so as not to cause harm to an enterprise. Many are deceived in this respect. Experience teaches that, [if we do that], the enterprise is damaged and sometimes destroyed. On the other hand, when one always takes care to safeguard virtue, God gives his protection, the enterprise is strengthened and it increases too.

This seems to be at the same time a reflection and a development of a thought which Fr Bertoni must have met in the ***Exercise of Perfection*** by Father Alphonsus Rodriguez SJ. Fr Gaspar had read and studied that work together with two other priests who were his close friends. We gather this from a number of extracts of the first five treatises of the Jesuit's famous work. The handwriting in that manuscript alternates, but Fr Bertoni's dominates. They are mostly texts from Scripture and the Fathers of the Church, together with sentences and passages which follow strictly Rodriguez' line of thought. The three priests seem to have been very much engaged in pursuing a life of perfection. When Rodriguez refers to the teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas i.e. that ***Religious are in the State of Perfection...*** and states that the Religious who ***do not strive to be perfect, nor bother about this, are false Religious***, Fr Bertoni extends this doctrine to include the Clergy. This is the only substantial change brought in the original texts. It reads : ***The diocesan priest is in the state of perfection: he who does not strive to be perfect is a false priest.*** This certainly is said without calling into question the permanence of the priestly character.

The quotation registered by the three friends reads as follows:

...We have to keep an eye above all on our own progress. Other businesses and occupations, though for the advantage of the neighbor, must be assumed without neglecting and forgetting ourselves, nor should we lose a single aspect of our perfection...²⁶

²⁵ Collectanea Stigmatina, I, p. 224.

²⁶ Cf. Rodriguez, *Exercise of Perfection*. I, c. 1.

In 1811 Fr Gaspar will teach the same doctrine to the seminarians:

...There are many who deceive themselves, because in order not to damage their works and enterprises, neglect some duty. But by this very fact they ruin them all the more. Never neglect a single point of perfection, as little as it can be, for fear of damaging our enterprises...²⁷

†

11th JULY 1808

[5.] After Mass, during Thanksgiving: a more lively feeling of faith in the presence of Our Lord and much confidence: and furthermore a desire of offering myself to suffer some harassment with Him and for Him.

We refer here to what Fr. Nello Dalle Vedove writes in his Book: ***A Model of Holy Abandonment***.²⁸ He quotes a number of mystical phenomena in the life of Fr Bertoni which he interprets as manifestations of the Gift of the **Presence of God**. He states:

...It is evident that in these cases there is no question of union with God obtained by personal effort. (We would like to add "only".) "This is the first Gift which God gives to a soul whom He leads to a very high level in one's Prayer life...

[And then he quotes a master in the Spiritual Life, i.e. Fr Louis Lallement S.J].:

*"After a long practice of purification of the heart of a person, God enters into that soul and reveals himself through the Gift of his Presence which is the beginning of the supernatural gifts (passive gifts, that is, of mystical nature). Thus the soul feels so happy in this state that it seems to it that it had never known nor loved the Lord as yet..."*²⁹

With regard to the second feeling, i.e. **to offer myself to suffer some vexation with Him and for Him**, Fr Bertoni presents it not as a move which comes from his own power, but as a God-given grace. On a different occasion, he will say of this: **This spirit is the best of gifts, of which I consider myself most unworthy.** (22 October 1808).

†

12th JULY 1808

[6.] Those who are too much inclined to action should be directed to prayer: those who are much attached to prayer should be pushed to action.

This is clearly a principle of St Ignatius. We note that in the first part of the sentence that **too much** means "disorder". In the second that **much** is similar to the first **too**

²⁷ 16th Meditation based on St. Gregory the Great's *Primum Regum*.

²⁸ Website Note: a translation of this work is found on the Web-site.

²⁹ Fr. Nello Dalle Vedove, *Model of Holy Abandonment*. [Italian edition, pp. 183, 186].

much. What should be done to restore order? By applying to the two cases above the known principle "opposites are corrected by opposites" (*contraria contrariis curantur*), as Fr Bertoni does here. This is merely the application of the principle which Jesus Christ placed as the foundation of all Christian perfection: **Let him deny himself and take up his cross.** St Ignatius accepted this demand of Jesus from the very beginning of his conversion. Fr Bertoni had noted this quote from the biography of Mariani:

*...He made this principle his unquestionable law, namely to break and tread underfoot any desire which does not come from right reason; to seek, as far as it is lawful, what nature shuns and to flee from what nature looks for...*³⁰

This practice produced in St Ignatius the fruit which Fr Bertoni admired. He wrote down from the book of Mariani:

*...Ignatius had that marvelous hold over his passions, without which human judgments gets dreadfully thwarted and even the most expert and prudent people get confused...*³¹

To illustrate further the subject permit us to take again from the same biography of St Ignatius, a book so dear to Fr. Bertoni:

*...St Ignatius was so much intent on acquiring control over his passions, that there was no other thing that he recommended to other people more than this. It was the subject which he preferred for his public exhortations. It was the topic of his private discussions: 'Conquer yourself'...*³²

...Although he prized prayer very much, he however did not measure the perfection of people from this, but rather from the capacity of their own appetites and passions. So much so that when he heard some saintly person praised as "a man of great prayer", he retorted "He is a man of great mortification". To those who, in the Company of Jesus, insisted that he should extend the allotted time for prayer, he answered: "Long time dedicated to prayer is necessary to master one's own passions; but while somebody can reach intimate union with God with a quarter of an hour of prayer, somebody else, who is not keen in mortifying himself, would not reach that same union even after two hours of prayer..."

*...Several times he said that he feared that the Company of Jesus could get deceived in the pursuit of perfection by putting more effort in prayer rather than in self-denial." .."He used to say also that one should turn inwards and give more importance to repress one's own will rather than to restore life to a dead man."..."St Ignatius, in his Spiritual Exercises, (this title is self explanatory), aimed exactly at this when he said: "These Spiritual Exercises whereby one is directed to conquer oneself..."*³³

³⁰ Mariani, SJ, *Life*, Book 1, c. 5, p.22.

³¹ *Ib.*, Book 3, c. 3, p. 205.

³² *Ib.* Book 4, c. 9, p 401.

³³ *Ib.*

A similar theme will be treated on 16 Nov 1808. Fr Bertoni will then draw also on the teaching of St John of the Cross who, together with St Teresa of Avila, seems to have conspicuous agreement with St Ignatius.³⁴

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[7.] In the Mass and during Thanksgiving: reverential fear.

This is another instance of a gift of prayer. It is characterized by the spirit of filial fear, of which the main fruit is submission to God³⁵.

We can read another extract from the biography of St Ignatius which provides a good comment of this note:

*...In dealing with God he kept great exterior composure and reverence. Of this he had utmost care. He was convinced that this was something one should seek for oneself, rather than looking for heavenly favors. He used to pray often: "Give me humility and loving reverence!..."*³⁶

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13th JULY 1808

[8.] We must never abandon our friends, no matter how far and off the path they have wandered: especially when they are abandoned by other good people. This is for them a great encouragement to conversion.

It is clear that Fr Bertoni saw always the strayed friend:

...as somebody belonging entirely to God, because created by God according to His image, redeemed by His blood and made capable like us of eternal happiness...³⁷

These are words which he preached from the pulpit of St Paul's towards the end of his first year of priesthood, on 21 June 1801.

[9.] God makes use of very gentle means and of very thin threads to hold a soul from the precipice, where it had strayed, and to win it back to His service. The ways of God are admirable. When we consider them, we are filled with most intense joy.

The background of this statement seems to come from Fr Bertoni's often quoted extracts of the biography of St Ignatius. Here is one:

³⁴ A certain balance and subordination may be found in the *Original Constitutions* [cf. CF ## 127; 284]. A central ideal remains: *Contemplata tradere...* [cf. CF # 49]. cf. Jesuit Constitutions: CSJ 340.

³⁵ Cf. Fr. Nello Dalle Vedove, *A Model ...* o.c., p. 63.

³⁶ Mariani, *Life...* o.c., Book 4, c. 1, p. 328.

³⁷ Sermon 6, on St. Aloysius Gonzaga. PVC, pp. 175, f. [MssB ## 526, ff].

*... Many troubles and mistakes happened to Ignatius while searching for meaning in his life. All this worked as a personal experience in view of the formation of his Company. When we walk in front of the Lord with honest heart, though faced with adversities which hamper our good desires, we understand that we have to rely completely on the fatherly Providence of God. We are sure that, according to the words of the Apostle Paul **for those who love God all things work for good** (Rom 8,28)...³⁸*

Fr Bertoni could also have been inspired by this other quotation:

...It is sometimes pleasing to God that the plans and good intentions of his servants do not produce the desired effects. This is meant to refine their patience, give them submission and trust in Him...³⁹

We believe that he had also in mind another extract which he took from Fr John Peter Maffei's book in which St Ignatius is said to have been on the point of carrying out a violent revenge against the argument of a Moor denying Our Lady's Virginity.

... Ignatius avoided the danger of great harm by not following his own judgment but by surrendering to the provident favor of God. Namely, he let his horse follow its own instinct. The animal did not choose to run straight against the blasphemer on the easier path but suddenly took for the steep ascent up the mountain...⁴⁰

Certainly the hand of God was there.

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[10.] When the road becomes much longer than we were prepared to walk, our longing cools off, unless we resume immediately the journey on the same road.

Such is the condition of human nature! Our longing spurs us on, drawn by the prospect of some great goal. We set out on our journey. The difficulties we meet are hardly felt. Not long after the effort makes its wear and tear felt. The original drive becomes weaker and weaker. The goal appears very distant. **How narrow the way that leads to life!** (Mt 7,13) No compromise: it is narrow, but it is the only way that leads to life.

Fr Bertoni, already in 1803 had sounded a warning for the souls which are reconciled with God and are tempted by the Devil to slack off. The Devil is envious of those souls which take to the right way and start anew with much enthusiasm. He uses all means to make them turn back. He makes them get entangled on the way so that they become bored and lose heart. He then whispers: **"How can you endure this for the remaining thirty, fifty, sixty years of your life?"**⁴¹

³⁸ Mariani, *Life...* o.c., Book I, c. 15, pp. 98, ff.

³⁹ *Ib*, p. 94.

⁴⁰ John Peter Maffei, *De Vita et moribus Divi Ignatii Lojolae*. Patavii 1727: J. Cominum. Book I, I, c. 3, pp. 18-19.

⁴¹ PVC, p. 112 – Sermon 17, April 11, 1803: MssB ## 776, f.

This is the temptation of Ignatius at Manresa, when he retorted the Devil saying: "And can you, wretched one, promise me life for even one hour?"⁴²

Fr Bertoni's answer is not different. The remedy he suggests is from the Gospel:

...do not worry for tomorrow! and he adds: **Live each day as though no more time remained for you... Who can say how far is death from you? What would then become of you if, after having done the most - which is to have set out on your journey - you would stop from running. If you do this you judge the goal too far away, and yet perhaps a few more steps are needed to reach it!... If the time is short, the labor is even shorter. If God comes to our help, let us strengthen our will and confirm our determination. Let us run without stopping until we can grasp that for which our heart has been longing all the way ...**⁴³

This principle will find its completion in the note of 30 July 1808.

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18th JULY 1808

[11.] Discretion is the queen of all virtues.

- In order to direct properly one's own subjects, we have to discern the conditions of each one.

- Some good [Religious] are rid of their temptations [against their vocation] by dissimulating or even by pretending to yield to them. On the other hand a good and fervent [Religious] who is tempted to enter into a stricter Order, is to be helped by giving him the permission to leave.

These three sentences are closely interrelated. As for the first, one thinks of St Benedict who considered **discretion** the *mother of all virtues* ; he wanted it to be the supreme norm of conduct of the Abbot. But we think that this principle, may also come from St Thomas Aquinas.

*...I answer by saying that prudence is the first among the other cardinal virtues, and that all the others are referred to it as to their cause. Hence, St Anthony of the Desert [in the Lives of the Fathers, Book 4, c. 13] says that **discretion** which belongs to prudence is the mother, the guardian and the moderator of virtues...*⁴⁴

Fr. Gaspar will refer another time to St. Benedict on 19 January 1809. This is therefore the doctrine of the Fathers of the Desert, and as such we find it in Cassian. Those Fathers used to teach the following:

...No virtue can develop perfectly and stand on its own without the grace of **discretion**. And thus, on the authority of St Anthony and in the opinion of the majority, it has been

⁴² Mariani, *Life...* o.c., Book I, c. 6, pp. 18-19.

⁴³ PVC, pp. 113, 114, 118, 119 – MssB ## 776, ff.

⁴⁴ III Sent., d. 33, q. 2, a. 5.

well demonstrated that **discretion** is that virtue which can lead the monk steadily to God while keeping all the other virtues in good condition. With it one can climb more easily the heights of perfection, while without it many who use all their efforts will not manage to reach the summit. This is because **discretion** is the mother, the guardian, the moderator of all virtues...⁴⁵

As for the other two principles noted by Fr Bertoni, they are practical examples which clearly manifest the necessity of the virtue of discretion.

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22nd JULY 1808

[12.] In both fervent and lax Religious Orders there are defects. While in the former they are corrected and are considered as abuses, in the latter they are concealed and are accepted as usages and customs.

This theory finds a concrete application and completion in another which Fr Bertoni will write on 11th October 1808 and also in a text of St Anselm (24 May 1810).

Fr Bertoni here summarizes a text of St Bonaventure found in Rodriguez⁴⁶, summarized here:

*...The difference between observant and reformed Religious Orders, and those which are lax does not consist in the fact that in the latter there are sins while in the former there are no sins. This is just impossible because **we all sin in many ways** (Jas 3,2). The difference is that in the observant and reformed Orders those who break and trespass the laws are reprimanded and punished, while this is not the case in the others...*

Here is the text of St Bonaventure⁴⁷:

... This is the difference between the Orders which deserve praise and those already decaying: not that in the former one could not find anybody making mistakes, but rather that in them it is not permitted to make mistakes and to remain unpunished. In these Orders the avenues to defects are barred by all means. Those persons who are incorrigible and corrupted are excluded. The good are encouraged and loved so that they persevere and progress from good to better. Wickedness could be found among Angels, before their confirmation in grace, and among the Apostles companions of Christ. What association of good people could ever claim for itself not to be guilty of sin? Even if the majority, by God's grace, were free from sin... not all are, as St John says [Jn 13:10]: **You are clean, but not all...**

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24th JULY 1808

⁴⁵ John Cassian, *Conferences* II, 4. [cf. Classics of Western Spirituality. Paulist Press 1985, p. 64.

⁴⁶ Rodriguez, Part II, Treatise 6, c. 9, n. 3.

⁴⁷ St. Bonaventure, *On the Six Wings of the Angels*, Wing I.

[13.] "Making the most of your time" (Ep 5,16). Time never comes back. We have therefore to use it with great diligence.

In this note there are three separate parts that seem to be closely connected to a warning of the *Imitation of Christ*.⁴⁸ This is also in three parts:

...Keep always in your mind the end. The last time never comes back. You will never acquire virtue without care and diligence...

The second and third part of this warning are openly related to each other. In the second there is an identity of concept and almost the same words are used. The third seems to be a development and a fulfillment. The Pauline *making the most of your time* finds in the quotation of the *Imitation of Christ* the stimulus to pass to action. If we understand the phrase as *remember your last end*, which is not so far from us, this is the glory of God and our own sanctification; our final end is the beginning of eternal life.

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[14.] Do not conform to this world, but be reformed in the spirit of your mind.

This is a combination of Rom 12,2 and Eph 4,23. In his great command of the Scripture, Fr Bertoni blends these texts in a kind of memory exchange, yielding a happy result. To the Romans he wrote *Do not conform to this world but reform yourselves with the renewal of your senses*. To the Ephesians who, in Christ, had already been instructed to *put off the old man*, he wrote *be renewed therefore in the spirit of your mind*. As anybody can see these two texts are similar in meaning. The *be reformed* of the first contains already the *renewal* which follows it, and the *be renewed* of the second. There is no reform which is not in the same time a renewal too.

As regards the opening vibrant warning, Fr. Bertoni was certainly familiar with the expression contained in the book of Fr. P. Segneri, *The Manna of the Soul*, as well as his *Instructed Christian*, the *Lent* of the same author. We shall find the first book mentioned here in his hands during the early months of his *Spiritual Journal*. Fr Segneri wrote:

... Do not be conformed to this world, do not conform to its teachings, do not conform to its affections, do not conform to its actions... In a word, never take as the rule of action what the world is accustomed to do: take your rule only from the law of God...⁴⁹

Fr. Bertoni had already preached from the pulpit of St Paul's on the Epiphany in 1806:

... Not the human mind, not the opinions of men, not the principles of the present world, not the dogmas of modern experience...but the WORD OF

⁴⁸ Book I, c. 25, 11.

⁴⁹ Meditation 2 of March, 5th Point.

GOD IS THE UNIQUE AND INFALLIBLE RULE OF OUR THINKING, OF OUR OPERATING, in order to reach our supernatural and divine goal to which we are called... ⁵⁰

As far as he personally was concerned, Fr. Bertoni had already for a long time practiced what he will exhort the Clergy to do after the words of Christ:

... *I have chosen you from the world* - therefore: You do not belong to the world... (Jn 15,19). It is necessary that we be separated... detached from the world... crucified... dead to the world. These are four degrees on which I must judge myself and be ashamed to have so badly corresponded to my vocation, so far...! ⁵¹

As for the reform which a new life implies, Fr Bertoni preached in 1803 saying:

... A New Year, a new life, my dear people. Let us walk in newness of life! This is nothing else but the life of grace, which is so desirable. Do you possess such a lovable beauty? If the grace of God is in you, what effort will you make today not to lose it for ever? You will do your utmost, sure, to find the most necessary and useful means to keep it. In all sincerity you will take the holy initiative of removing immediately those occasions which could damage it even slightly. How much more effort will you make, with God's help, to increase it and develop it all the more...! ⁵²

Similarly on Easter Sunday, April 5, 1807, he said:

... As Christ has risen from the dead for the glory of the Father, we too walk in newness of life. We are called to Heaven, yes, to Heaven and to eternal life. You are already on the way..., carry on until the heavenly homeland. You have been recruited by God for all eternity to become citizens of Heaven, members of his household and heirs of God... ⁵³

As director of the Seminarians, Fr Gaspar saw in this reformation and newness of life the necessary sign of a true disposition for the ecclesiastical vocation. Thus he blended again the two parts of St Paul's exhortation:

... The world loves what pleases the flesh, what makes rich and above all what gives the height of glory. But the person who is visited by the Holy Spirit is renewed in the knowledgeable manner of looking at things. Reality is seen not for its own value but just as means to the end, which is the glory of God and the salvation of souls: appreciating only what Christ appreciated. Such a person not only abhors the things which the world loves and throws them away as rancid, old and moldy... he will loath even

⁵⁰ cf. PVC, p. 252. Sermon 35, MssB ## 1213, ff.

⁵¹ *Collectanea Stigmatina*, I, p.127.

⁵² PVC, pp. 126, ff. - Sermon 15., January 1, 1803. MssB ## 714, ff.

⁵³ PVC, pp, 293, 299 - Sermon 38, The Spiritual Life, MssB ## 1297, ff.

the thought of them. Especially if it comes from those people who have been deceived in placing in them their happiness, as their status and their glory. This attitude is a good proof of genuineness. And if this is lacking, it is a bad sign which almost infallibly reveals ill disposition. This is the "old man" who loves "old things". *Let old things go away !* [1 S 2:3] The Lord loves youth: *I will go unto the altar of God, to the God who gives joy to my youth* (Ps 43,4)...⁵⁴

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[15.] During Mass I received from God the gift of a spontaneous and constant self-offering in union with the Sacrifice, with much contentment.

This grace or gift of prayer recalls that disposition to suffer pain which Fr Gaspar earlier felt infused into his heart on 11 July. Here, however, it is intimately connected with **the self-offering of Christ in the Eucharist**⁵⁵ and in union with it, as the capital "s" indicates. This is the realization of: ***Imitate what you handle*** (from the Rite of Priestly Ordination), at the altar and beyond the altar.

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[16.] ***He who contemns small things shall fall little by little.***

This half-verse from **Sirach 19,1** can be read in a transcription in the very handwriting of Fr Bertoni at the head of several texts which develop the idea until the conclusion of **Qohelet 7,19: *He who fears the Lord neglects nothing.*** These are selected extracts from the book of Fr A. Rodriguez ***Exercise of Perfection***⁵⁶, where the author develops the theme of *Taking into account the small things and not to despise them.* After the quoted verse from Sirach, the text of St Bernard follows: *Those who fall into big mistakes have started with small trespasses.* Cassian then is quoted saying: *Houses do not fall all of a sudden: they start from small drops of water which filter through their foundations.* And then St John Chrysostom:

*...I dare say something new and unheard of. Sometimes it seems to me that we should make not so much more effort in avoiding big sins rather than small ones. The former by their own nature carry with themselves certain repulsion. The latter by the reason of their pettiness make us relaxed and lazy. And while we take little notice of them we do not make any big effort to get rid of them. As a result these little sins become big because of our negligence...*⁵⁷

Also St Augustine is quoted:

⁵⁴ Meditation 9, on *Primum Regum* of St. Gregory the Great – MssB ## 5099-5141.

⁵⁵ Web-site Note this is the *obsequium* so often noted by Fr. Bertoni [cf. Rm 12:1, ff.]

⁵⁶ Part I, Tract I, cc. 9, 10.

⁵⁷ St. John Chrysostom, Homily 37 in Mt. St. Gaspar offers a number of Meditations from St. John Chrysostom *On Matthew* – cf. MssB ## 7341, ff.

...What does it matter in a shipwreck, whether the boat had been overturned by one large wave or whether the water seeping through the hold by a leakage, which had not been taken into consideration by negligence, submerged the boat? ...⁵⁸

Faithfulness in little things assures us of God's help. We have a text of St Basil to support this:

... He who desires to be helped by God, should never cease from doing what is proper to him, namely his duty. If he does this, he will never be deprived of the divine help. Therefore we have to do our utmost to see to it that we should never be accused by our conscience of anything...

And we come to the text which was so often quoted by Fr Bertoni and his two first companions at the Stimmate : ***He who fears the Lord neglects nothing!***

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30th JULY 1808

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

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

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

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

Fr Bertoni had chosen St Ignatius of Loyola as model for his priestly vocation. He will tell us expressly in this JOURNAL on 15 Sept. The first biographer, Fr Giacobbe, wrote that Fr Bertoni *admired and studied much the works and virtues of St Ignatius, and had reproduced them very faithfully.*⁵⁹ In fact Fr Gaspar studied the Life of St Ignatius directly of at least four authors, i.e. Fr John Peter Maffei, Fr Peter Ribadeneira, Fr Daniel Bartoli and Fr Francis Mariani. Of the hand written extracts from the four authors which we possess, several could be part of this *Journal*. They reveal not only admiration for the Saint, but also his endeavor to imitate him.

The original idea of modeling his life on that of a Saint could have come to Fr Bertoni (after his boyhood practice of imitating Saint Aloysius Gonzaga), from the

⁵⁸ Letter 106 to Seleuc.

⁵⁹ *Summarium Additionale*, Document 36, p. 456.

Imitation of Christ where he read: *Look at the living examples of the Holy Fathers* ⁶⁰. He found inspiration also in Fr L. Scupoli's **Spiritual Combat** :

... Compare your works with those of the Saints and other servants of God. In comparison with theirs you will know that your best and greatest works are of very low quality and worth. If you then compare them with those of Christ...(I am not talking on the side of his divinity, but purely as they have been humanly performed with sincerity and pure love)... you will see that yours are insignificant... ⁶¹

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



[18.] To seek God alone. To see God in all things. This is to make oneself superior to all human things.

This seems to be a development of the mystical gift that Fr. Gaspar received during the Mass of the Sacred Heart (on 2 July) : **I felt my spirit detached from all creatures**. This is also what he admired (with his author Fr Mariani) in Saint Ignatius in whom he mirrored himself. Describing Saint Ignatius' magnanimity he noted 4 points:

1. Tolerance in hardships 2. Confidence in God while despising human helps 3. Fortitude in embarking in hard enterprises 4. Constancy in bringing them to an end. ⁶²

The sign of signs which shines forth in the life of St Ignatius is **a total abandonment of self in God**.⁶³ Is this not **making oneself superior to all things**? And he wanted the same attitude from his sons.

Long before this date Dom Scupoli had taught Fr. Gaspar that if we truly seek God alone and do his will, and if we submit all judgment to that of our spiritual fathers, by praying the Holy Spirit, we shall always be granted the knowledge of the truth, inspired into our hearts by his light. A constant exercise of serious and honest reflection carried out in the right way, will make us understand clearly the following truths. That we retain as empty, useless and deceitful all those things that the blind and corrupted world loves and longs for, because they are induced by it. That the honors and pleasures of the world are nothing else but emptiness and moral suffering. That the insults and humiliations which the world heaps upon us brings about true glory and contentment. That to pardon our enemies and to do good to them is magnanimity. This makes us more similar to God. It is better to despise the evil world than to be its master. That to obey willingly to poor creatures for the sake of God is more generous than to rule over many princes. That to know ourselves in all humility is a more precious thing than the highest science. That to conquer our appetites and to keep them in check, even the

⁶⁰ *Imitation of Christ*, Book I, c. 18.

⁶¹ *Spiritual Combat*, c. 32.

⁶² Mariani, Book 4, c. 10, p. 403.

⁶³ *Ibid.* Book 3, p. 204.

smallest ones, is a greater achievement than to conquer many cities or to win over powerful armies by wielding weapons or to work miracles and to raise the dead ⁶⁴.

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[19.] All depends on the resolution of wanting to serve God at any cost. It is necessary to guard against velleity [wishful thinking]. We can distinguish velleity from the will by their consequences. In front of difficulties the former shrinks back and gives up, while the latter persists, gains stability and is strengthened.

It is clear that these three maxims are intimately connected to one another, and they condition the preceding note. On the part of man ***all depends on strengthening, that is to make firm and stable, the resolution of wanting to serve God at any cost***: this is an Ignatian expression ⁶⁵. Here is what Fr Bertoni proposed to the Clergy of Verona in 1810, during the Spiritual Exercises:

Whoever undertakes these Exercises will find much advantage if he comes with an open spirit and generosity towards his Creator and Lord. In all free will he should make an effort to offer himself to God so that he might decide of his person and his possessions according to His good pleasure⁶⁶.

He developed this theme more abundantly in the dialogue with the Lord which concluded the Introduction to the *Spiritual Exercises* :

... Lord, what do you want me to do? It is up to You to decide what should I work on during these days of Retreat, which are days of salvation. It depends on me, whatever the cost, to remove all obstacles which prevent me from complying with Your orders, and to carry out Your divine designs, when I come to understand them...⁶⁷

It is clear that such attitude of spirit conceived during the *Exercises* was not intended to limit this work to the retreat experience but had to continue as a steady disposition of will all during all his life.

A Genuine will: Fr. Bertoni warns that one should be on guard against ***velleity*** [wishful thinking]. As far as he himself was concerned, he had already copied from Rodriguez⁶⁸ a useful teaching: St Bonaventure says that there are some who take good resolutions, but they never do the work of controlling themselves and making the effort of putting them into practice, as the saying goes: ***For to will, is present with me; but to accomplish that which is good, I find not...***(Rom 7,18). These, often-times are not authentic resolutions, nor genuine desires. They are just some ***velleities*** according to

⁶⁴ *Spiritual Combat*, c. 7.

⁶⁵ *Spiritual Exercises*, 5th Annotation.

⁶⁶ *Collectanea Stigmatina* I, p. 110.

⁶⁷ *Collectanea Stigmatina* I, p. 114.

⁶⁸ Part I, Tract I, c. 3.

which some express their wishful thinking, but they do not genuinely will to act: **The sluggard wills and wills not..** (Prov 13,4). On this point, let the above suffice: the rest of the transcription will find its application later on.

Fr Gaspar concludes that *velleity* lacks firmness of resolution, so that ***in the face of difficulties it shrinks back and gives up***, while **the authentic will** profits from difficulties. It knows how to persevere, to acquire stability and get established. St Teresa taught him that *the Devil fears much people who are determined*⁶⁹.

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[20.] We should imagine heaven as at the end of an avenue strewn and obstructed with thorns, scrubs and thickets. We have to look steadily to the end. Not to the thorns! And to walk on while removing this and that thorn bush. We should never rest until we reach the end.

It seems a paraphrasing of the evangelical ***How narrow the way that leads to life***, already quoted. Would it be that it is only "narrow"! Here, the classic motto ***look to the end***, the goal which is Heaven, is of urgent necessity. Otherwise who would endure the journey?

It is unusual to compare this image of Fr Gaspar with a dream or vision which Don Bosco had almost 40 years later (in 1847). Guided by Our Lady, the Saint states that he saw the road of his apostolate and life in anticipation, as it were. He saw a beautiful rustic portico with roses in full bloom which covered also the ground. Don Bosco took off his shoes with the intention not to crush the roses. Soon, however, his feet started bleeding as the roses were hiding the thorns. "I need shoes", said Don Bosco to himself. "You need good shoes" added Our Lady. Don Bosco put on his shoes. As he made his way through the bower, which remained attractive, it became narrower and lower. Don Bosco was pricked repeatedly from above and from the sides. He was bleeding from his whole body. Finally an enchanting garden opened up in front of him in which a gentle breeze healed his wounds and strengthened him. And suddenly he saw an enormous building and a magnificent hall scented with the fragrance of fresh roses without thorns.

We have offered something a summary here by bringing together a few points of comparison. It was Our Lady who gave the explanation: "You must walk with the shoes of mortification" Then she addressed herself to everybody and said: "You will overcome all things with love and mortification and you will reach the thorn-less roses."

This is at least a coincidence! Fr Gaspar wrote his note when he was thirty. Don Bosco had his beautiful dream at thirty years of age.

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⁶⁹ St. Teresa of Avila, *Path of Perfection*, c.23.

9th AUGUST 1808

[21.] **He who does not follow the inspiration of God when He warns him to run away and to protect himself against some danger, deserves to fall into it.**

This is certainly so. And this is the inspired Word: **Sirach 3,27: *He that loves danger shall perish in it.*** It is a danger in the meanings which Cornelius a' Lapide described in his *Commentary on Ecclesiasticus: Danger of damnation*. This is made clear by the first part of the verse of Sirach: ***A hard heart shall fear evil at the last ... Danger of mortal sin.*** Considering that the very fact of exposing oneself to sin with full consciousness is already a sin.

Fr. Bertoni will later make reference to the *danger of damnation*. He will also give us further personal reflection on the value of the *inspirations* which the heavenly Father is kind enough to send us.

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[22.] **Self-love often disguises back-biting as zeal, charity or as a means of protecting oneself or others. Its true face is passion. One has to pay the penalty for it to God and shed many tears over it.**

Fr. Bertoni had noticed in the life of St Ignatius, whom he had chosen as his mirror, that "he was very moderate in praising people, but much more moderate in blaming others." And that "back-biting was not heard from him nor did he listen to it. He wanted his companions to do the same". "When somebody would start talking in that way, he would begin either to justify the deed or, if that was difficult, the intention behind it. When even that avenue would become evidently untenable, he would refer to Holy Scripture saying: ***It is God who sees the heart.*** When, finally, he had to disapprove something, he would simply say: Truly I would not like to do that."

Another quotation: "He would not reveal the faults of his confreres except to those who had the power to correct them. In this he was restrained and cautious in such a way that whenever it was sufficient to disclose somebody else's fault to one person for correction, he would not disclose it to a second one."

Fr Gaspar had also taken down this quotation: "These were the reasons for which his governance was appreciated: 1. The regard that the subjects had for his prudence. 2. The appreciation that each one felt he had for them... or rather: 3...the love he had for them." All of these are extracts taken from the *Life of the Saint* by Fr. Mariani, SJ⁷⁰.

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[23.] **St Teresa judged favorably somebody's objection against her methods. She changed and she found subsequently that it was the right course of action. This was because she had much diffidence regarding herself, and much confidence in God.**

⁷⁰ Mariani, Book 4, c. 19, pp. 399, f.; Book 3, c. 6, p. 227.

One understands that St Teresa saw immediately that such a person was genuinely sincere, according to the principle she described in the 13th chapter of her **Life**. We give it here in the edition which must have been familiar to Fr Gaspar: *God likes generous souls and is friendly with them, provided they live in humility and are much diffident of themselves. I never saw any of these souls remaining behind in the journey of perfection.* In her **Path of Perfection** she said: *We must not rely on ourselves. The more we take the decision of not offending God, the less we have to rely on our own strength. All our confidence has to come from God and to rest on Him.*⁷¹ Fr. Gaspar must have found this doctrine much in accordance with his Master St. Ignatius and with the Spirit of Holy Abandonment in which he saw his vocation. The **Spiritual Combat** of Fr. Scupoli is clear: *distrust in ourselves, trust in God: we combat and pray.*⁷²



[24.] If one's own faults were revealed and all people of the district were talking about them, as it happens with those of others, one could see how much more dreadful they are. Especially after so many graces and inspirations that we received. If these graces had been given to those people, they would be saints.

In this text Fr Gaspar seems to apply to himself what Fr Rodriguez reported as having been said by St Francis Xavier:

*...Whoever considers his own sins and defects and what he really is in the sight of God, when hearing others praising him, he would think that they were pulling his leg. He would even take those praises as insult and shame...*⁷³

It seems also that Fr Gaspar could apply to himself the answer St. Francis of Assisi gave to the one who asked him how could he say that he was the greatest sinner in the world:

*...If God had bestowed on a thief and on the greatest of all sinners the mercies and the blessings which he has bestowed on me, that man would have been better than I am. He would also have been much more grateful than what I have been to Him. And if God would withdraw His hand from me and no longer protect me, I would commit greater evils than all other men and I would be worse than they are...*⁷⁴



17th AUGUST 1808

[25.] When charity enters into a soul, lust flees from it.

⁷¹ St. Teresa of Avila, *Path of Perfection*. c. 41.

⁷² From the Letter of Dedication of the Book: *To the Supreme Captain and Most Glorious Victor, Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary.*

⁷³ Rodriguez, Part I, Tract 6, c. 3.

⁷⁴ Rodriguez, Part II, Tract 3, c.34.

This is the specific case of Mary Magdalene at the feet of Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee (**Lk 7: 36-50**). Fr Bertoni's statement is perhaps a specification of the more general expression of St Augustine⁷⁵ which Cornelius a' Lapse quotes in the commentary to that evangelical passage: *charity gives death to sins and life to virtues* .

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[26.] When we want to pray we ought to begin with Christ and his Passion. Then we have to leave the spirit free to be attracted by God.

This is precisely the suggestion which St Teresa received from St Francis Borgia during one of the most crucial moments of her life, when her very friends judged her mystical phenomena as diabolical. She called a Jesuit Father to whom she made her general confession. That priest told her that "it was evident that that was the spirit of God". He cautioned her that in the meantime she should refrain from yielding to those interior calls which took away the use of her senses. When she met providentially with St Francis Borgia she received a new direction. *After listening to me - she wrote - St. Borgia confirmed that it was God's spirit and said that I should no longer resist Him and that what I had done before was good. He asked me that I should start my Prayer with a verse from the Passion of Christ*. He added that if the Lord should uplift my spirit (without my own procuring this), I should not put any resistance. I should let God operate. To do otherwise would be surely a mistake.⁷⁶ Hence the Saint herself teaches:

...This thinking and discussing about the events of the Passion, is the manner of Prayer in which all people have to begin, to continue and to complete. This is a most excellent and sure journey until God might uplift the soul and lead it into more supernatural experiences...⁷⁷

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[27.] In matter of Vocations, rather than urging people, it is good to leave the care to God.

Is Fr. Bertoni talking about vocations to the priesthood? To the Religious life? We believe he means both. He had wide opportunity to be faithful to this principle both as Clerical Vocation Examiner by mandate of the bishops, and as **Counselor of the Clergy** and *other people of all classes and status who referred themselves to him for light and direction in their search for religious vocation. He would examine them, comfort them and give them direction. How many did he send to almost all Religious Orders and to the foreign Missions!*⁷⁸ From this principle Fr Marani, his "first-born" and successor, drew his own formula: *Do not give anybody a Vocation!*⁷⁹

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⁷⁵ St. Augustine, *In Praise of Charity*.

⁷⁶ *Life*, cc. 23, 24. Ed. Cit. 1723. Tome I, pp. 88. 89.

⁷⁷ *Opere Spirituali*, o.c. Tome 2: *Counsels St. Teresa gave for Prayer*, n. 7, p.235.

⁷⁸ *Summarium Addtionale*, Document 20, p. 156.

⁷⁹ *Collectanea Stigmatina*, Vol. 2, p. 246.

[28.] Once we confess our sin and we feel sorry for it, God is so good that He forgets completely about it. He treats us with the same kind considerations as before.

A priest who had given scandal presented himself to his bishop, St Francis de Sales, who had summoned him. He protested his own innocence: *They are all calumnies!* His bishop blushed on account of him. That blushing disarmed the priest. He gave in and said: *Your Excellency, please hear my confession!*

After confession a dialogue ensued:

- *Your Excellency, what do you think of the greatest sinner in the world?*
- *I think that God has showered on you his most generous mercy. In my eyes you are just a shining grace.*
- *But you too know what I am...*
- *You are just what I said. - I mean "what I had been. - That is exactly what I do no longer recollect. Why should I keep in my memory what God has already forgotten? Would you perhaps take me as that Pharisee who treated Mary Magdalene for what she had been, and not for what she was when she washed the feet of the Saviour with her tears?* ⁸⁰

†

19th AUGUST 1808

[29.] ‘Let him who stands see to it that he should not fall’. Humility, but not without great confidence.

We think we can interpret Fr Bertoni's thought by referring to his Master Fr. Da Ponte on the threefold denial of Peter. "I should draw a lesson, (from this denial), for my own spiritual progress: i.e. not to be vain or presumptuous, nor to trust in myself, calling to mind what St Paul said : ***You stand by Faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. Let him who thinks himself to stand, let him take heed lest he falls.*** Fr. Bertoni seems to have quoted the text from memory The phrase he added to the biblical quotation, seems to be the practical result of the reflection on it and, perhaps, also the result of a special gift of Prayer. (Rom 11:20; I Co 10:12)⁸¹.

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20th AUGUST 1808

[30.] We have to enter into someone else's house in his own way, to be able to come out in our own way.

This is an Ignatian motto, recorded also by Rodriguez. We should like to present it in the context in which it is found in Fr. Bartoli's biography of Ignatius⁸²:

⁸⁰ Monsignor G. P. Camus, *The Spirit of St. Francis de Sales*. Part 14, c. 13. [We believe that this is the source of the above note of Fr Gaspar].

⁸¹ Fr. DaPonte, *Life...*, o.c. Part 4, Meditation 28, Point 1, n. 2.

⁸² Bartoli, Book 4, n. 20.

... One of Ignatius' successful skills by which he used to attract his fellow-people to God was to talk about spiritual matters in his home conversation. He used to call this the manner most proper to his Company. It should however be used with caution. If not so, we would have the result that the Religious will be influenced by the Profane rather than the Profane be influenced by the Religious. The Religious should not start off immediately to talk with worldly people about spiritual matters. This would be like showing the bare hook, without the bait, nor any interesting attraction. With wisdom he should rather let himself be accompanied by the people to talk initially about what is of interest to them, i.e. about business with merchants, about war with soldiers, about leadership with people of government and so on. Then, once well established, he would give the conversation an upturn. He would talk about goods and wars and kingdoms: i.e. to conquer heaven, to conquer their vices, to control their passions. Ignatius used to call such manner entering by their way and getting out by our way... or enter by the way of God".⁸³

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24th AUGUST 1808

[31.] At St Joseph's. At the bottom of one's own nothingness God is found. On hearing very sublime things about God: a profound awareness of myself.

St Joseph's was the Convent of Saints Joseph and Fidentius, which was also called "The Canossa Retreat". Fr Bertoni used to visit this "Retreat" as Spiritual Director of the women and girls who lived there, under the leadership of the Foundress Magdalene di Canossa.

The first sentence seems to be the leading thought of a mystical experience which followed: unless it is itself the content of that experience. In the original manuscript there is no separation. As a principle it sounds Carmelite. It makes one thing of the *nothingness [nada]* of St John of the Cross. Here one would say that it is the result of the Ignatian *detachment from all creatures* (cf. above 2 July) and the ***seek God alone and see God in all creatures*** (cf. 30 July) which is also suggested by Ignatius. With regard to the sources of *humility* Fr Gaspar saw here a confirmation of Da Ponte's doctrine: *Humility springs from the knowledge of one's own nothingness... and from the knowledge of the infinite majesty of God and of our dependence on Him.*⁸⁴

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[32.] In the evening, while looking at the image of the Blessed Trinity: much reverence and love for the three Persons. The Eternal Father who had his arms open was displaying to me His mercy and communicating with easiness his gifts etc...

⁸³ Web site Note : cf. *Conversational Word of God*. Institute of Jesuit Sources

⁸⁴ DaPonte, *Meditations*. Index: Third point, *Humility*.

This is another mystical experience. The **etc..** which ends the note implies that what is said of the Father may also be said of the other two Persons. Fr Dalle Vedove accompanies this text with a quotation from the *Summa* of St Thomas: *To render worship to God as Father is still more excellent than to render worship to God as Creator and Master*. Then he states that it would be *a distortion of the character of Fr Bertoni if he were to be judged only as an respectful keeper of the Lord's precepts*⁸⁵.

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[33.] The Divine Office was recited with much devotion and for the glory of God.

Evidently, this too was an extraordinary grace. It should be pointed out that Fr Bertoni - as his first biographer stated- was habitually very highly prepared for the recitation of his Breviary, by observing these eight norms:

1. Look at the *Ordo*.⁸⁶
2. Place all the book marks in order also for the Psalms.
3. Recollect your person with all your feelings and gestures.
4. Recite it standing or kneeling or, when necessary, sitting, but without any leaning or twisting of the body.
5. Recite it with the proper pauses.
6. Pronounce distinctly the words, making a note when this was not done.
7. Read with such attention that there will be no need of repetition.
8. Do not stop to grasp the meaning: this could be done afterwards.⁸⁷

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31st AUGUST 1808

[34.] In the matter of mortification, "I CANNOT", said by religious persons, sounds very bad: because we can do anything in God. Some do not want to mortify themselves with the excuse that certain difficulties are "crosses" sent by Heaven. So, under a false pretext, they are complacent with their defects as if they were Heaven's will.

I cannot, an inability which is hemmed in by the word ***cross***, indeed ***a cross from Heaven***. A person, then, without attempting any further step, accommodates himself to that situation with all those defects which will never disappear without the exercise of mortification. He will eventually become comfortable with the Cross as *the will of Heaven*. ***I cannot*** ?... But: ***I can do all things in Him who strengthens me !***

⁸⁵ Fr. Nello Dalle Vedove, *Un modello di santo abbandono*. Part I, c. 5, [English translation may be found on the Web-site]. . St. Thomas teaches that the supernatural virtue of *Religion* reaches its perfection in the Gift of *Piety*, by which the Holy Spirit reveals the *Father* in God. In his *Journal*, Fr. Bertoni shows that together with the deep reverence and adoration towards God as infinite Majesty he was given the gift of experiencing tender affection and confidence in God the Father. [This is the foundation of his spirituality of Total Abandonment.

⁸⁶ Translator's Note: (the Liturgical Calendar)

⁸⁷ *Summarium Additionale*, Document 26, p.332.

(Phil 4,13), says Fr Bertoni. He then added with Saint Paul ***Not I, though, but God's grace with me!*** (I Cor 15,10).

In the matter of mortification. By the standard of St Ignatius and Fr Bertoni⁸⁸ holiness itself is measured by the degree of mortification. It is the standard of the Gospel: ***If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself*** : this is *active* mortification. ***And take up his cross...***(Mt 16:24). This is *passive* mortification. An authentic cross, not some naive deception fabricated by lack of mortification.

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[35.] Great temptations are matter and means of great holiness: provided one has courage and fortitude.

This is a lesson which Fr Bertoni had read and learned from St Ignatius himself. At the beginning of his conversion "Ignatius", as Fr Mariani, SJ, wrote:

*... for the space of four months enjoyed a sweet tranquility of conscience together with that peace of God, which, according to St Paul, by far surpasses any sensual delight. When the Lord (who uses to test his chosen ones as the gold is tested in the furnace) intended to make of Ignatius an excellent Master experienced in things spiritual, allowed that the Devil engaged him in fierce battles...*⁸⁹

Fr Bertoni had taken the initiative of recording from a letter of St Francis Xavier, "what are the weapons to be used to blunt the attacks of the Enemy":

*... The greatest of all remedies, and the most certain, is to have great constancy of soul against the Devil" (the courage and fortitude of Fr Gaspar's note), with diffidence toward oneself and confidence in God alone, entrusting all your powers and hopes in Him. Be sure that under such a "defender" you should not appear fearful and doubtful about victory. The Devil can only bring harm in so far as God allows him to. Therefore in such situations one has to fear more the lack of trust in the Lord than the efforts of the Devil...*⁹⁰

Fr Bertoni will use these teachings for the formation of the young clergy to which his bishop will call him:

... What does one know, who has not been tempted? – [he will respond to his own question]: ... Now, such knowledge is utterly necessary as a preparation for Vocation ...Ah, Lord! since the life of man on earth is a warfare, please protect us with Your armor. Put into our minds the ability to wield them, and our victory will redound to Your glory. For us it will be a crown, the assurance and sign of Your approval...⁹¹

⁸⁸ cf. Fr. Bertoni's entry above for July 12th.

⁸⁹ Mariani, *Life...* o.c., Book I, c. 6, p. 25.

⁹⁰ Mss. n. 34.

⁹¹ Fr. Bertoni's transcription of St. Gregory the Great's work on *Primum Regum*. Meditation 12. [Fr. Gaspar also used the military imagery in his letters to Mother Naudet: studies as a weapon for the spiritual combat [*Epistolario*, p. 91] - *to find oneself well-armed...* [l.c. p. 179].

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5th SEPTEMBER 1808

[36.] Humble yourself in all things.

This is so because the ideal flows from another principle: ***at the bottom of one's own nothingness God is found***. This is what he had repeatedly learned from Scupoli's thoughts:

*... a true, deep knowledge that you are nothing, you know nothing, you can nothing and you have nothing else except defects and poverty, and that you are only worthy of eternal damnation... Oh! would it be that we come to understand this **nothingness** which makes us masters of everything! Humble yourself in front of everybody and beneath everybody, if you want to exalt God in you and you in Him. If you long to find Him, do not exalt yourself, because He will run away. Lower yourself, and lower yourself as much as you can, because He will come to find you out and he will embrace you! He will all the more dearly welcome you and hug you in love, the more you lower yourself in your own eyes...*⁹²

There is no characteristic trait in the life of Fr Bertoni, than what is surely a fidelity to the motto of the Franciscan Brother Giles, as St. Gaspar preached it from the pulpit of St Paul's: **I have seen many people who because they wanted to climb too high, have fallen. For my part I cling well close to the ground, not to fall!**⁹³

The following is the full text from Scripture: ***The greater you are, the more you humble yourself in all things, and you shall find grace before God. For great is the power of God alone and He is honored by the humble.*** (Sir 3,20-21).

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11th SEPTEMBER 1808

[37.] At the end of the Mass: much recollection and modesty. It lasted a short while, though, because I got distracted in exercising external charity.

This was a precious grace of Prayer. Recollection and modesty which Fr Gaspar did not attribute to himself but to God's graciousness. It seems that he blamed himself for having so quickly got distracted. We would have told him, today, that it was nothing other than *leaving God for God*.

†

13th SEPTEMBER 1808

[38.] God calls us to imitate the purity of angels.

⁹² Scupoli, *Spiritual Combat*, c. 32.

⁹³ Cf. St. Gaspar's Sermon 7, On Pride, July 26, 1801, in: PVC, pp. 144, ff. [MssB ## 572, ff.].

Rodriguez ⁹⁴states that "Our Holy Father, Ignatius, in his Constitutions⁹⁵ puts in front of us as a mark to be targeted *to struggle to imitate the purity of angels*. We must note that Latin verb **enitendo**, which does not simply mean *to make an effort* but rather *to do violence to oneself* while making an effort.

Fr Bertoni took the following notes from Da Ponte's **Meditation on the Annunciation**⁹⁶:

... The Angel Gabriel entered the place where the Virgin Mary was, with rare modesty, reverence, seriousness and a look of holiness which was proper for the message he was going to bring. This was to teach us how apostolic people should behave externally when they are sent as ambassadors of Christ. This is how Religious people should be who profess angelical life. Their external appearances have to breathe out holiness and lead everybody to holiness...

We are not surprised that when Fr Bertoni compiled the Constitutions for his Religious, demanded:

... that perfection of Chastity - to be acquired with all effort - which befits persons whose office is similar to angels'. They are to be the *paranymphs* of Our Lord Jesus Christ... by which they have to present to Him their souls as a chaste virgin, holy in mind and body...⁹⁷

†

[39.] We have to prepare ourselves for greater temptations. We have to prepare ourselves to make reparation for defects we committed: so as to reach there, where God wants us to be.

This reflection is connected with the note of 31 August, **Great temptations...** It seems that here too Fr Bertoni thought of the teaching of Da Ponte⁹⁸:

...Without the permission of God, the Devil cannot tempt us. Through temptation God intends to do good to us. He does not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength. [Da Ponte offers two suggestions]: The first is not to look to the Devil who vexes me, but to God who allows him to. The second is not to concentrate on the evils which the Devil threatens me with, but on the goods which God promises. I shall therefore fix my eyes on God all-powerful and in the power of His grace with trust and hope. I shall entreat Him to grant me, in His omnipotence, to use the proper means to meet his right goals.

In the Instructions he will give the Students of the Seminary from Nov 1810 onwards he will develop his thought on I Cor 10,13:

⁹⁴ Rodriguez, Part III, Trace 4, c. 1

⁹⁵ CSJ, n. 547

⁹⁶ DaPonte, *Meditations*, Part II, Meditation 6, Point 2, n. 92.

⁹⁷ CF # 109. Translator's Note: (The "*paranymph*" was the "*procurator of the wedding* [the Best Man??]". This biblical image was very dear to Fr Bertoni. He saw his Apostolic Missionaries as "*mediators*" between God and men in the mystical Wedding of the Kingdom of God.)

⁹⁸ DaPonte, o.c., Part VI, Meditation 32, Point 2.

... Temptation does not take hold of you except as much as human nature can bear. God is faithful: he cannot tempt you beyond your strength...⁹⁹

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[40.] We must not let ourselves be overburdened by penances and activities.

Dom Scupoli wrote:

*...Exercise prudence and discretion in those good activities which can cause harm to the body - like using self-scourging, hair-shirts, fasting and similar things. What is questioned is not the use but the abuse. He warned the soul against the Devil who urges to chastise severely the body with scourging, abstinence, hair-shirt and similar cruelties with the aim that we should become proud of the good we do... or so that the consequent infirmities make us unable to do good works... or even so that, under excessive labor and pain, we begin to loathe the spiritual exercises.*¹⁰⁰

In Bartoli's *Life of Ignatius*, Fr Bertoni could find the complete text:

... Chastisement of the body should not be exaggerated, nor inconvenient, with wakes, abstinences and other external penances which normally cause harm and hamper greater good ...¹⁰¹ He must have been happy to hear this from "his" Ignatius!

†

15th SEPTEMBER 1808

[41.] Introduction to the Spiritual Exercises. While visiting the altar of St Ignatius with my companions I felt much devotion and recollection with great inner cheerfulness and some tears - even though the visit was short. I had the feeling that the Saint was welcoming us and inviting us to work for the greater glory of God as he did. To work in the same ways: though not using all those means that he was able to use. He seemed to tell us: "Onward, soldiers of Christ! Gird yourselves with fortitude! Pick up the shield of faith, the helmet of Salvation, the sword of the divine Word and fight against the "ancient serpent". Make my spirit alive again in you and in others through you".

It was at the time of the annual Spiritual Exercises of the Clergy and the Candidates for Ordination, on the autumn Ember Saturday, which that year fell on 24 September. The *Exercises* began on Thursday evening, the 15th. The collegial visit to the altar of St Ignatius in the church of the Jesuits (whose Order was still suppressed), showed that for those ecclesiastics Saint Ignatius remained always the "Master".

⁹⁹ Cf. St. Gaspar's Meditation 12, transcribed from St. Gregory the Great, on *Primum Regum* [cf. MssB ## 5240-5295, Epiphany 1811 (??)]

¹⁰⁰ Scupoli, *Spiritual Combat*, 33 & 42.

¹⁰¹ St. Ignatius did not prescribe any particular penances [cf. CSJ nn. 8; 296; 580. [Fr. Bertoni followed suit: cf. CF ## 43; 44; 112].

We do not know what the others had experienced during that "short visit". Surely, in the life of Fr Bertoni that was a land mark! If it is true that *the creature is called to pursue the glory of God* and that *the zeal for the glory of God must follow the plans which Divine Providence established for the destinies of the Elect* ¹⁰², that day must have appeared to Fr Bertoni as the day of his effective insertion into those divine plans. As a matter of fact the Lord eased the experience by such a gift of Prayer, accompanied by **some tears** and with **much cheerfulness**, that to the humble priest it should have felt as really extraordinary. The fact also that he wrote this accurate note shows that he intended to remain grateful for it. He wanted to stimulate himself to correspond to it adequately. We should read again this note, therefore, with the same respectful devotion with which it was written.

The words attributed to St Ignatius reflect the text of **Eph 6,13-17** with a reference to **Rev 12,9** with that **ancient Serpent** which was cast down from heaven and **leads the whole world astray**. **My spirit** is the Ignatian "zeal for the greater glory of God".

†

[42.] I fear Jesus passing by.

It sounds like the motto of the Introduction to the Annual Retreat. Its meaning is obvious. In a sermon at the beginning of his apostolic ministry, Fr J.B. Lenotti, forty years later but still under the direct guidance of Fr Bertoni, will express the same thought. He started off by saying that *God gives us his help today, and we do not know whether tomorrow it will be the same... Those effective inspirations which He bestows unto the souls are like sudden lightning or fleeting lights, which made St Augustine say **timeo Jesum transeuntem** (I fear Jesus passing by). Woe to us if we do not correspond quickly to the grace which he offers us while walking by. Perhaps we shall never have it again!* ¹⁰³

More than the meaning which St Augustine ¹⁰⁴ offers, this is the obvious meaning from the Gospel incident which the Saint commented upon, i.e. **Mt 20,30-34: And behold two blind men sitting by the way-side heard that Jesus passed by, and they cried out saying: O Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us! And the multitude rebuked that they should keep their peace. But they cried the more, saying: O Lord, son of David, have pity on us! And Jesus stood having compassion on them, touched their eyes. And immediately they saw, and followed Him...**

For St. Augustine this "passing by" of Jesus is his very state of "wayfarer" among men. The two blind men are the two people - Jews and Gentiles - which Jesus, who remains "for everlasting", lowered Himself to heal by "passing by" them.

†

[43.] When we cooperate with God's grace, we become worthy to receive a second grace.

¹⁰² Fr. Dalle Vedove, CSS, *Modello ...* o.c., pp.22 & 27.

¹⁰³ Fr. J.B. Lenotti, Sermon 'On the Mercy of God', for the Holy Year of 1852 – extended from 1850.

¹⁰⁴ Sermon 88, on the Words of the Gospel of Mt 20 [Maurina edition]

This is a maxim from the same homily quoted above or the continuation of the reflection on the **timeo Jesum transeuntem** of St Augustine. We should be convinced that it will never be Jesus who will interrupt the competition of love between Himself and the soul which has begun to follow Him.

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[44.] **God is kind enough to talk as a *Father* before talking as a *Judge*.**

This sentence is a deeper reflection on the text of St Augustine¹⁰⁵, already quoted:

*...What does it mean **Jesus is passing by** ? Jesus acts in time. Jesus makes passing actions. Look carefully and see how many actions of Jesus are "passed". He was born of the Virgin Mary. He was buried. He rose. He ascended into heaven. And now he no longer dies, nor has death any power over Him. His divinity remains for ever and the immortality of His Body will no longer pass away." **God is kind enough to talk as a Father, for as long as Jesus is passing by.** He will talk one day as judge: on that day Jesus will be remaining, no longer passing...*

St Augustine, in his commentary, seems to support the longing of the two blind men who shouted louder and louder to Jesus. And he gives the reason:

*...I say this, and I say it openly: **I fear Jesus passing** (here on earth) and **remaining** (there in heaven). I fear Him both as Man and as God. That is why I cannot keep silent...!*

†

[45.] **Let us draw up the accounts of our service before the Master calls for them.**

This is a reflection strictly connected with the preceding note and perhaps written on 16 Sept during the Retreat. It is inspired by Lk 16,2: **Give an account of your stewardship!**

†

[46.] **Give yourself back to yourself. St. Bernard to Pope Eugene.**

This, too, is a Retreat text. It might have been quoted by the Retreat Master. Or it could come from Fr. Bertoni's personal reading of St Bernard's **Considerations for Pope Eugene**. It was an exhortation to St Bernard's former disciple who became Pope¹⁰⁶. Here is the text:

*...Eugene, should I praise you if you give all your life and knowledge to external action and no time to reflecting ? No, I do not praise you, certainly! Action must be prepared by reflection. Therefore, remember: **give yourself back to yourself!** ...I don't mean always, nor often but at least some time. Is this too much of a favor? I ask for this as a favor not as pretending to judge...*

Fr. Gaspar will use this text in his *Instructions* to the Clergy.

¹⁰⁵ St. Augustine, 'Discourse on the Two Blind Men'. Translation of G. Sandri. Brescia: Morcelliana, p. 27.

¹⁰⁶ Letter to Pope Eugene, c. 5, 14.

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[47.] We often have God on our lips - to give Him to others - and we care little about having Him in our hearts.

This sentence refers perhaps to the saying of St Bernard *give back yourself to yourself* ...and see to it that you do not get scattered. Let it not happen that you, priest, have the Lord on your lips, to give Him to others, which is a duty of your office, while you do not have Him in your heart for yourself. If that is the situation: what will happen of yourself and your very Ministry?

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[48.] The dignity of a priest makes one tremble.

This is the feeling which accompanied Fr. Bertoni since the beginning of his vocation. It lasted until his death. On 26 September 1802 when he entered the third year of his priesthood, he confided from the pulpit that:

... If we priests are superior to you, on account of our dignity, we remain in the condition of human beings like you. We are pressed by the same tribulations from every side. We are assaulted by the same enemies. We are threatened by the same dangers if not even greater... As far as I am concerned, at least, I do not hesitate to declare that I fear much, under such overwhelming burden, that my negligence and luke-warmness could ruin me in front of God as judge. He declared that he will be very harsh in judging those same people whom He had chosen to be above others in dignity. I hope that the prayers of many people will make Him more favorable and appeased with me...¹⁰⁷

He will preach to the young Seminarians of Verona:

... God presents to his chosen one the Ministry to which He called him as very formidable (*fearfully heavy even for the angels' shoulders*). He has to give an account to such a strict Judge also of the souls of others. Not only of his own faults but of his omissions too. This is so, even if the priest is a man of great prayer and knowledgeable and virtuous: *elevated above others in contemplation and outstanding in action...*¹⁰⁸

Fr. Bertoni told this same audience that:

... the just idea of how lofty and all-embracing the priestly power is, together with great respect for the Sacrament of Holy Orders, is a very good sign of priestly vocation. But he added that He who understands on one hand the loftiness of the priestly status and on the other the abuse

¹⁰⁷ PVC, p. 189. Sermon 13 *On respect for Priests*, September 26, 1802 [The week of his 2nd Anniversary of his own Ordination as a Priest. [MssB ## 67694].

¹⁰⁸ Meditation 16-b, on St. Gregory the Great's *Primum Regum*.

that many make of it, will develop a great trepidation. He will understand the gravity of the fall when he sees a priest sin. *Great is the dignity of priests, but great also is their ruin!* ¹⁰⁹

He personally witnessed this among all classes of Clergy, since the day when Napoleon laid his hands on Pope Pius VII:

...Such are the times we live in exclaimed Fr Gaspar, **such are the times! Pray, please pray for many Prelates!** In their deformity from the **unfailing righteousness of the First Rock** (Pius VII), he saw the impending **judgment of condemnation**. This was **justified by the repeated admonitions** (by the same Pope), **and by the continuous rebellion** of those Prelates. **It is so terrible the manner in which they will be punished by the dispossession of the ill-used gifts.** He who is aware of both the justice and awfulness of this sentence, develops an intense fear for himself. *Howl, cypress, for the cedar has fallen! (Zech 11,2)* This is a fear which prevents us from approaching such difficult Ministry with presumption...

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17th SEPTEMBER 1808

[49.] **Meditation. Death. The past is no more. The future has not yet arrived. Only the present is here. And it is in my hands. Let me live day after day, or rather from morning to midday and from midday to evening. Let me do every single thing with all possible perfection. Perhaps I will have no more time in which to glorify God.**

This is a reflection on the Meditation of the day during this course of Retreat which lasted 8 days. The previous day he had meditated on the **Foundation** (the Purpose of Human Life) and on Sin. On the 17th he meditated on the **Last Things** and first: on Death. After the text which he heard from the Retreat Master and ended with: *only the present is here - it is in my hands!* He then added his personal resolution. This resolution has its source in a reading of Rodriguez':

... Do not take into account anything except TODAY. It is the usual temptation of the Devil to frighten us with the prospect of having to persevere for the whole stretch of a long life. This happened to St. Ignatius at Manresa. But who is not able to make an effort only for one day? To this he adds a charming text from Genesis, about Jacob trying to win Rachel to himself. This could become a norm of life and it is chosen as a conclusion of the whole chapter. This is the text [**These seven years were**] **seemed to him but a few days, because of the greatness of his love!** (Gen 29,20)... ¹¹⁰

To come to practical conclusions, Fr Gaspar restricted his terms to half a day ...which is also a suggestion of St. Ignatius for the practice of the **Particular Examen**. As far as the original text to which Fr Gaspar referred, it is from St Augustine's **Confessions**:

¹⁰⁹ Ib., Meditation 13 – MssB ## 5296, ff.

¹¹⁰ Rodriguez, Part I, Tract 2, c. 6.

*... This is what is called time. The past is not ours, nor can it be recalled. The future is not yet and will perhaps never be. Only the present belongs to us. But, alas! We scarcely have it, because it runs away even though we can keep it for ourselves. In fact in the same time that it starts to be it passes or rather it has passed away...*¹¹¹

The good use of time! Fr Gaspar makes a practical resolution for holiness in the spirit of the most pure love. What matters for him is only the **greater glory of God**.

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21st SEPTEMBER 1808

[50.] Now it is no longer time for reading but for acting.

This seems to have been another inspiration from his Retreat. Fr. Bertoni feels himself pushed to action. Certainly it is the Pauline: ***The love of Christ urges us*** ! But it could be also St Bernard's *Reflections* with that *Give yourself back to yourself* we saw above. Following that text he must have read also these exhortations:

... Your reflecting should begin from yourself as not to waste time in other things while neglecting yourself. You have to uproot, to destroy, to build and to plant. Your reflecting must be something already established before anything else. The time to act is now in your hands...

Meditatio is the Latin word used in these texts, which - as in the classic Rhetoric - means ***study*** and ***preliminary exercise***. Fr Bertoni was never at all idle. On that day, however, he found his ***time to act*** in his hands. To the task, then!

With regard to that expression about *giving up reading* one has to take it with much discretion in a man who did always read or made others read for himself, until the end of his life.

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25th SEPTEMBER 1808

[51.] Meditation. The Kingdom of Christ. Strong [inner] motion to follow Our Lord closely, at the cost of [my] life, through Poverty and Humiliation.

The Retreat is finished. It seems that Fr. Bertoni wanted to fill in the gaps of an incomplete course of *Spiritual Exercises*, picking up and considering more deeply some Ignatian themes which had been neglected. Fr. Da Ponte is his teacher. In the Manuscripts of Fr Bertoni, at [MssB] [Fascile, n. 92] we have the organized points of more than 50 Meditations of Da Ponte. Titles and sub-titles in such a way that each point could make for a complete Meditation. The first carries this title: *The Kingdom of*

¹¹¹ Fr. Stofella found this text of Augustine's *Confessions* 11, in: Fr. Vincent Houdry, SJ, *Preacher's Library*. Remondini: Venice - a book much used by our early Confreres.

Christ, which in Da Ponte's is just a page heading but Fr. Bertoni put it as the title to the whole collection. The Journal too carries here ***The Kingdom of Christ***. Fr. Gaspar says that he felt a **strong inner motion**, which indicates a supernatural experience, towards what is the utmost *fruit*, as Ignatius calls it, of this Meditation. Fr. Gaspar feels like one of those generous souls which give away all for all:

...Those Religious who imitate the Apostles have as their aim to get concerned not only about their own salvation and perfection, but also about the salvation and perfection of their neighbor...and...profess to be companions of Jesus in this enterprise. They offer themselves with enthusiasm for any labor whatsoever...until the shedding of blood...for the glory of God and the salvation of souls...¹¹²

This sentiment was already in Fr Gaspar on **11 and 24 July** when he offered himself **for sacrifice**. It will come strongly again on **27,28,29 September**, coupled with a **humble petition of martyrdom**... too.

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[52.] The Mass was very recollected with sentiment of reverence. During the Catechism lesson, much zeal and persuasion and some eloquence. Before entering the Lord made me recollect that His Divine Son was preaching in Jerusalem while fasting all day. He used to go back to Bethany in the evening. This moved me very intensely to love and to work. Then when I explained this very insight as introduction [to my Catechesis], my talk became easy and most convincing.

That Sunday 25th September was a full day of grace. Intense inner motions during Meditation. recollection and reverence in the Mass. Great zeal and even eloquence in the ministry of the Christian Doctrine. Fr Gaspar understood that all these things came from *above*, **where every good endowment and every good gift come (Jas 1,17)**. Even that sudden reference to the habitual fasting of Jesus, helped him to make the introduction and present it as a good model for a loving imitation. He will note the *profit* he will draw from this, on 16 November.

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27th SEPTEMBER 1808

[53.] Meditation: The Incarnation. Sentiment of gratitude to the Most Blessed Trinity and of cooperation with Jesus Christ. I was bound to love God even before His becoming man. All the more now!

After the Meditation on the Kingdom of Christ, in both Da Ponte's and Fr Bertoni's, we have the *Decree of Incarnation*. We report here the concluding prayer in Da Ponte's as it seems to reflect very much the sentiments of Fr Bertoni:

¹¹² DaPonte, Part II, 'Fundamental Meditation', Point 3, n. 4. [This ideal of the imitation of the Apostles in the service of Jesus Christ under-lies St. Gaspar's central dream: *Apostolic Missionaries for the Service of Bishops*. [CF ## 1; 259; 272; 273].

*...O most blessed Trinity, how could I ever thank You for having disclosed Your hidden infinite greatness, with the Incarnation? Whatever I'll give You for such a gift will always be too small. Should I not love You and serve You because of that? Here I am, Lord, completely dedicated to Your service. I desire to love You as You loved me and to imitate Your same virtues which You have disclosed to me. Having given me what is more, please give me what is less. Grant me to love You because of this infinite gift You have given me. Amen...*¹¹³

The last lines of Fr Bertoni's note reflect what Da Ponte said in introducing that prayer:

... If God, before becoming man, wanted to be loved with all our heart and mind and spirit and strength... how much more reason do I have now to love and serve him with greater zeal...!

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[54.] Evening. Pardon. Sentiment of the great love to the Blessed Trinity for having given us His Son. Great tenderness towards the same Son. Much lively faith and great desire of union and association with His pains and humiliations. Petition of grace of suffering and of being despised for His sake.

It seems that Fr Gaspar spent this whole day in reflecting upon the Incarnation, as if he was still on Retreat. The content of his second note refers clearly to a second meditation on this subject as in Da Ponte's and his own manuscript: *The charity of God in the Incarnation : **God so love the world** (Jo 3,16)*. That meditation had a most proper conclusion during the evening visit in the Church Blessed Sacrament. This service was known in Verona as *perdonanza* (a spiritual exercise of reconciliation), which we have transliterated as the word appears.

Certainly, with DaPonte, Fr Bertoni applied the whole message of Jesus to himself in the words: ***God loved the world so much ... So much did God love me, that He gave me His only-begotten Son, so that by believing in Him with true faith, I may not perish but I could gain eternal life.***

And he prayed:

*... Oh only-begotten Son of the Father, how much could I thank You for having come to the world to free us from so many evils and to fill us with so many gifts?*¹¹⁴

As far as he was concerned he gave this answer: total dedication of self and full association and union with Christ: *to suffer and being despised for Your sake*, according to St John of the Cross, imploring Heaven's grace and strength.

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¹¹³ DaPonte, Part II, Mweditation I, Point 2., n. 8.

¹¹⁴ ib., Meditation 2, Point 3, nn. 2, 3.

28th SEPTEMBER 1808

[55.] During Meditation and afterwards: desire and humble petition of martyrdom with great inner exhortation.

The experience of these days was a crescendo of spiritual experiences of an extraordinary nature. Fr Bertoni did not have the intention of writing for readers. He wrote briefly and concisely for his own use: ***Desire and humble petition of martyrdom***. This sounds like a deepening of his ***follow Christ more closely at the cost of life*** of the previous Sunday, the 25th. The content of the interior exhortation is *"the secret of the King"*.

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[56.] Those who lack internal mortification and yet like to do external mortification, should be told to refrain from the latter. In this way they will become eager to develop the former, also as a compensation for not being allowed to exercise the external one.

This is a norm of spiritual Direction very much in conformity with the Ignatian teaching and with the practice of the Company of Jesus. We read in Rodriguez:

*...What is of utmost importance is the mortification of passions and the exercise of true and strong virtues"... What we have to exercise ourselves in, mostly, is this interior mortification: while the exterior mortification, which is also necessary, should be used as a means to reach the interior one.*¹¹⁵

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29th SEPTEMBER 1808

[57.] The recognition of what great good it is to suffer something for the sake of God. *Blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice. Blessed are you when they will curse you and insult you and reject your name as bad and they will say any evil against you, falsely, for my name. Be glad on that day because your reward is great in heaven.*

This text does not allow us to interpret the nature of that **understanding**. We think that after the intense experiences of the previous days, it should have been of the same nature as those graces. It was also a tasty penetration of the spirit of the Beatitudes. In this case too we leave it as *"the secret of the King"* [**Mt 5:10; Lk 6:23**].

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During the last days of September and the very first ones of October Fr Gaspar had to keep himself busy in preparing the *panegyric* (a special homily for the annual

¹¹⁵ Rodriguez, Part 2, Tract I, c. 7, 4. [The author presents this as a peculiar teaching of St Francis Xavier.]

solemn liturgical feast of a saint) of St Francis of Assisi in the church of St Firmus Major, which was served by the Friars Minor Conventuals. Fr Gaspar must have worked very hard for that *panegyric* day and night. We have two different drafts of that labour for the homily. Both carry the title by the hand of Fr Gaspar: *Panegyric of St Francis of Assisi, preached in St Firmus Major on 4th Oct 1808, Verona*. While one of them looks almost complete and ready to be written for the finished copy, the second one has a different format but still incomplete. We think that during the actual sermon Fr Gaspar must have included in the first structure some elements of the second draft.

What strikes us here is the connection between these drafts and the *spirit and letter* of this Journal. It is the spontaneous exaltation, with open heart, of that spirit of detachment and self-abnegation which, in his Journal, is the constant leading motive and pattern. Is that not the pattern which St Francis of Assisi lived in a more perfect way?

Here are some extracts from that *panegyric*.

... To talk about this most holy Hero is to talk about the most perfect spirit of Penance, and the most sublime spirit of the Cross and the most fervent spirit of love towards Christ crucified. Hence we can easily apply to him those words of Christ: "If one wants to come after me, let him deny himself!" This is the spirit of penitence. "Let him take his cross". This is the spirit of the cross. "Let him follow after me" (Mt 16,24). This is the spirit of love. These are the principles, these are the steps and this is the perfection of his holiness.

Here is the way traced for those who want to follow it. "If one wants". For those who want to run this course, not relying on one's own strength but on the divine mercy: "let him come after me". All this fits Francis very well. I am sure that while hearing these things, though said in my poor way, you will be inflamed by the desire to imitate him who imitated Christ. If one wants... !

Not to digress further, we want to give the last statement of the other draft of this panegyric which makes a commentary of the Pauline sentence: ***Be my imitators of me as I am of Christ (1 Cor 4,16 and 11,1)***. We read something which Fr Bertoni will apply more clearly to himself in the next entry, for the 8th October:

... This is, therefore, the way along which Francis walked and reached heaven. Let us follow him courageously by living the evangelical perfection through the commandments, or through the evangelical counsels, if God has called us to that. We too shall manage to imitate Christ on earth and to possess Him for all eternity. Let us set out

immediately on this path, because the journey is long. The time allotted to us is perhaps very short. Eternity that awaits us is without end...!¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ St. Gaspar Bertoni emphasized the integral aspects of the Paschal Mystery in his 'Franciscan Panegyrics' – this one of 1808 – as well as the other one honoring St. Veronica Giuliani, the Capuchin mystic remembered in 1839. Here are some excerpts:

The formula is simply this: to imitate Christ on earth in order to possess Him for all eternity: 'For I bear the Stigmata of the Lord Jesus in my body...' [cf. Ga 6:17, Vulgate]. St. Francis was inserted, planted in the Tree of Life to draw from it its sap, life from the tree. The four effects of this con-crucifixion are: union, mutual inherence, assiduous and loving contemplation, ecstasy. Having become almost a single person with Christ "I live, no longer my own life..." [cf. Ga 2:20], St. Francis is assimilated to his crucified love. In com-passion, in the Stigmata, there he found his every joy...

[Fr. Bertoni may have developed his 'Espousals Principle', a graduated approach to the following of Christ – based on St. Gregory the Great and his Reflections on *Primum Regum* used by Fr. Bertoni:

5004: Prelude 3. *Draw me after You [Ct 1:3]* You draw, O Lord, Your Spouse by Your right hand, and *we will run after You to the odor of Your ointments: ibi*, and the teachings of the Church in words and deeds and disciplines: in *the odor of Your ointments*" this is the fruit of Your grace. *To the odor of Your ointments Ct 1:3*. And if we cannot follow you with a strong love of a Spouse already adult in the school of holy love: *draw me ibi*. *We will follow you with the first-fruits of the most tender, nascent and youthful fervor.*]

There follows here Fr. Bertoni's *Espousals Principle* from his panegyric on St. Francis of Assisi [MssB ## 1868, ff.]:

...There are very many who follow Christ for the temporal reward: but the mercenary, when he reaches the door, is paid, and remains excluded from the house: 'You have received your reward:' [cf. Mt 6:2].

Many follow Christ as slaves, out of fear: they do follow, but at a distance, and remaining distant, they do not share in their master's secrets. 'The servant does not know his master's business.' [cf. Jn 15:15].

Some follow Christ as children, from a somewhat selfish love for their inheritance: but such children are more loved than loving: they even come to the point of disdaining their father, should he command something that goes against their grain, even though he makes reasonable requests, and imposes demands on them for their own good, but they may be difficult. 'I reared sons, I brought them up, but they have rebelled against me.' [cf. Is 1:2].

Few follow Christ as friends, in that they base their love on the sharing of His goods; but should these cease for reasons hidden to them, but always under the direction of a just Providence, and their sweet influence is lost, and there is substituted a rather harsh sharing in the difficulties of the friend: 'Then all the disciples deserted Him and ran away' [cf. Mt 26:56]: these were the very ones who had been declared 'friends' by Christ. 'All the rest seem more interested in themselves than in Jesus Christ.' [cf. Ph 2:21].

But, only very few follow Christ as lovers, who in the youthful ardor of their love follow Christ wherever He may go, whether to Tabor, or even to Calvary. Drawn by the sweet odor of His perfume, by the internal consolations and inspirations, they even run after Him. However, they are not able to keep up to His pace, nor can they maintain His speed. He proceeds not by steps, but by giant-steps, in running along His way. 'walking deliberately in your footsteps...' [cf. Ps 18:6, Vulg.]

Let it be clear that among those called to *follow Christ*, beside the sons of St. Francis and his hearers, St. Gaspar certainly included himself and his closest companions of study and the apostolic mission. The joint study of Rodriguez on the part of the early Stigmatines was not without purpose.

Before concluding here, it is interesting to note that in the first draft mentioned above Fr Bertoni referred to ***The Manna of the Soul*** by Fr. P. Segneri. St. Gaspar expressly quotes it when that author comments the Pauline texts. Fr. Bertoni seems to rely much on the interpretation of Fr. Segneri, his own noble and peculiar way... Expressions of St Paul are put directly on the lips of St. Francis. Especially verses like: ***The things which were gain for me, I have counted a loss (Phil 3,7)***. Together with the following verse, which will become a text for the Meditation of 4 October, feast of St. Francis. There, Paul will have the first three points and Francis will be the application of the fourth.

Of course the Franciscan sources abound in both drafts of the panegyric: especially the ***Life*** of the St, Francis written by St. Bonaventure.

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However, only the spouse, the adult in the school of love, is not attracted by the sweet-smelling perfume, but the strong right hand of the Spouse: 'Draw me!' [cf. Ct 1:3]: firmly holding on and finding support in His strength, she proceeds apace, and with Him she not only runs, but flees. 'His left arm is under my head and his right embraces me.' [cf. Ct 8:5, Vulg.].

The whole purpose of this *sequela* as lived by St. Francis, is to become one with Christ, almost a single spirit with Him - so that one might indeed come to the point of being able to say: 'I live, now not with my own life, but with the life of Christ who lives in me' [cf. Ga 2:20] - not 'with' Christ, but rather "in' Christ: disdained, poor, wounded as Christ: DRAW ME! [cf. Ct 1:3].

8th OCTOBER 1808

[58.] Inner movement to fight against small defects as I did, on other occasions, against big ones. [Determination] to rise towards virtue with all diligence. The time in which I can serve God and promote His glory and sanctify myself is running short more and more.

Time is running short more and more. Fr Bertoni told himself this, after having preached it from the pulpit. **Let us set out on the path, because the journey is long, and the time very short.** (One does not preach to others without prodding himself too!) This very thought was worrying him particularly since 17 Sept. Spiritual Exercises. Meditation on Death: **Only the present is here and it is in my hands. Let me live day after day...perhaps I will have no more time to glorify God.**

Therefore one has to quicken the tempo, not to slow down the fight. On the opposite: **fight against small defects, as I did against big ones.** Are the latter ones no longer on the schedule?...**Oh, not because of my own power but by the mercy of God...**

To rise towards virtue with all diligence: this is today's inspiration ...**one of the many-** he said with Da Ponte's- **which God sends me every day as many envoys and invisible messengers. Through those inspirations He talks to me and discloses His will and He urges me to let Him enter into my soul..** These are extracts from a Meditation on *The Annunciation of Gabriel to Mary*. The subtitle reads: "The inspirations are like messages of God to the soul". Da Ponte presented this as a teaching of St Bonaventure. He quoted from the treatise ***The Seven Gifts of the Spirit***. [c. 6]:

*... Inspirations are like many invisible envoys and messengers of God. Through them God talks to me, discloses His will to me or urges me to let him enter into my soul and to occupy myself in things which regard His service. So, when I hear within myself these inspirations I have to receive them as ambassadors of God. I must thank Him very much because He is kind enough to talk to me through them. I must accept immediately what He asks me to do and beg Him to talk often to me like this...*¹¹⁷

Fr. Bertoni often made use of this figure of speech. On 28 February 1813 he wrote to Mother Leopoldina Naudet:

... You did well to follow the inspiration, but we have to follow it through to its fulfillment. These inspirations are like messengers which walk before the great lords of this world. Therefore the messengers of His Divine Majesty want to be welcome and listened to. We have to do what they order us to. Because after they have made their preparation and we, following their counseling, ours, the Lord of heaven and earth Himself will come to visit us. Prepare, Reverend Mother, prepare the lodging for such a Guest! (84). Just before this he had written]: ***It is the task of man to***

¹¹⁷ Cf. DaPonte, o.c., Point 1, n. 5.

prepare his soul (Prov.16,1). I will not just say "be diligent" in preparing your soul for the visits of His Divine Majesty but rather "have, with the help of God, the utmost and most exquisite and finest diligence in keeping your soul prepared for those visits. *Do not hinder yourself from praying always (Sir.18: 22).* Being cautious to keep silent, keeping conversations short and avoiding funny behavior is helpful in letting the ears open to the gentle whispering of our Creator...¹¹⁸

Now - that the time is short- let us resume the planned struggle and the urgent exercise of virtue **with all diligence**. We cannot spend a single minute except in **serving God and promoting His glory and sanctifying ourselves.**

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9th OCTOBER 1808

[59.] **Feast of St Denis and the Maternity of the Virgin Mary.**

During the Eucharistic prayer of the Mass near the time of the *memento*, it seemed that my mind opened up to know with Whom was I speaking. I felt great affection and an enthusiasm of love in prayer. Then some outbursts of my heart for God and some impulses of my spirit towards God. I seemed to be like a person overwhelmed by the appearance of a great friend who had not been seen for a long time and on seeing him suddenly, he wants to throw himself at him and embrace him. Then I felt a desire that the vision could increase and an impulse to be able to reach the Supreme Good. Since I was in public I feared [the feeling of] some vanity and I [made an effort to] think of my most serious sins. As a consequence [I felt] an increase of knowledge of goodness and love which dissolved in most soothing tears which lasted until after Holy Communion. In the meantime faith and confidence increased very much together with humility and loving reverence. Lastly, at Communion, a very intense devotion and sentiment similar to that of my First Holy Communion: an experience that I am not aware of having felt since. The recollection lasted for another hour and it remained for the rest of the evening.

It was the second Sunday of October, the 18th after Pentecost, and Fr. Bertoni's birthday. He was 31 year old. It was also his name-day because Denis was the third name given him on his Baptism day. That day the commemoration of St. Denis had to give liturgical precedence to the celebration of the feast of the Maternity of the Virgin Mary. That feast was commemorated in the regions under the Venetian Dominions on the second Sunday of October. Could not all this have had some bearing in preparing the soul of Fr Bertoni **for the visits of His Divine Majesty?**

It seems that one should read this day's entry on one's knees! What can we say? Fr. Gaspar found himself taken over by a very special state of grace. Let us note first that **opening** of his mind and heart. This prompted these **outbursts** of his spirit toward God. Such a desire and impulse reached Him. Then, on the apparent threshold of

¹¹⁸ *Epistolario*, p. 68 – Letter 22.

ecstasy, in order not to fall into vanity in front of the public, he made an effort to **think of his very serious sins**. This reminds us of what St Teresa of Avila used to say to her nuns :

... Let us be on guard when we are taken by these great impulses of such desires, not to add anything nor to increase them. We have to cut the thread gently with some other consideration... ¹¹⁹

However, it seems as though Grace took firm hold of Fr Gaspar even after the ecstasy. He was given a certain consciousness of the Divine Goodness. He experienced gentle tears, and an increase in virtues. He was being granted literally what he prayed for in that familiar Ignatian prayer written for his own private use: **Give me humility and loving reverence** (cf. 12 July). What can be said about his remembrance of his First Holy Communion day? ... The sway of grace in his soul seems to go back a long time in his life.

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10th OCTOBER 1808

[60.] Tears during Mass, followed by recollection. And silence.

A very short note. It is however sufficient to make us aware that Fr Gaspar was still enveloped in the same atmosphere of the day before. He experienced those same sweet tears during Mass. The same recollection after Mass. And then: **silence!** Is this not his **keeping an ear open to the most gentle whispering of our Creator**¹²⁰. Or is this not a certain **whispering** that is already in progress? On this day, this, too, is *the secret of the King*.

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11th OCTOBER 1808

[61.] Clarity of mind during study. Affection in praying the Rosary.

Here he mentions what seems to be the usual study required of a priest and the daily recitation of the third part of the Holy Rosary. These activities, however, must have been made so precious by God with some spiritual gifts that Fr Gaspar wanted to record them with a special remembrance in his Journal as a sign of gratefulness. These too could be presumed to be gifts of extraordinary nature.

Our hope is that God would grant us such dispositions of spirit to be worthy of receiving similar enlightenment in our studies and similar increase in affection towards the Mother of God during our daily Rosary! And surely Fr. Gaspar would share with us some of his deeply humble spirit of gratitude!

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[62.] When in a Religious Community each member does not apply himself deliberately to his specific perfection, that Community cannot

¹¹⁹ St. Teresa of Avila, *The Way of Perfection*, c. 19.

¹²⁰ *Epistolario*, I.c., p. 68.

make progress. And even if it does go on, it will be without spirit and only as languishing.

A Community is nothing more than the sum total of all its members. If the members lack **zeal and are languishing** and if *operari sequitur esse* (action follows from being), what other result could a Community expect? And how can this Community progress if not **languishing**?

This thought seems to have been derived from St Teresa of Avila:

...Believe me: the point is not to wear the religious habit or not, but rather in seeing to it that we exercise ourselves in virtues and in subjecting all our will to the will of God. The harmony and order of our lives should be that which His Divine Majesty will order and decide upon. We do not want that our will be done, but his... ¹²¹

Whether he was aware of it or not, this principle in Fr. Bertoni was a decisive step towards his role as **Founder**. This entry can be connected with the visit to the altar of St Ignatius, together with earlier reflections and some which will follow.

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12th OCTOBER 1808

[63.] Whoever is drawn by the Spirit to a way of greater perfection - as it is that of being totally abandoned to God, - should not resent others who are of lower virtue and use lesser means [for their perfection], which are also good.

For Fr. Bertoni **abandonment in God** could have been a loving exercise of virtue, even before it appeared to him as **a peculiar method of life** initiated by a particular vocation. It seems that such *calling* dawned on him gradually during the first years of his Priesthood. Together with Fr Matthew Farinati, he read the life of St Cajetan Thiene¹²², the saint of Divine Providence. It became confirmed more and more decisively as St. Gaspar studied personally St. Ignatius of Loyola in the often quoted book of Fr. Anton Francis Mariani.

Fr. Bertoni was deeply impressed when he read that Ignatius, after getting rid of everything, "found that he still had 5 or 6 coins. He then left them on the shore, before boarding the ship to Jerusalem. Ignatius' only provision for the journey was his confidence in God ¹²³.

As the biography goes on, Ignatius found himself in prison. But *because the saints find their God everywhere, they accept any place where He puts them. There were people who offered their powerful influence to free Ignatius from prison. But he neither*

¹²¹ St. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, Third Mansion.

¹²² Fr. Stofella notes here that there remains a manuscript with comments on the Saint Cajetan, almost all in the hand-writing of Fr. Farinati.

¹²³ Fr. A.F. Mariani, SJ, *Life of St. Ignatius*, Book I, c. 9, p. 51

*accepted their service nor the work of Procurator. It was God's cause, and he left it to God to defend it...*¹²⁴

Later Fr. Bertoni accepted, on the authority of Ignatius, the following teaching:

*... While we are walking before the Lord with loyal heart, we can happen to experience something opposite to what we have desired with all our good intention. It is in situations like these that we must understand to rely on the fatherly Providence of God. We are sure that, as St Paul said, **for those who love God all things work for good...***¹²⁵

He found also in this same source that

*...Ignatius could admirably harmonise the finest prudence and accurate diligence with a total abandonment of himself to God. After having organized everything accurately, he considered himself as a useless servant. In his total abandonment to God he expected the happy outcome of the endeavor from Him alone... In all that he did, he never lost sight of God...*¹²⁶

In our commentary above, regarding St. Gaspar's first entry in his diary, dated 1 July, we saw a confession of Ignatius. He deeply hoped that *the men of the Company (of Jesus) entrust themselves to their Superiors,...as he himself relied on the hands of God with full **resignation** of heart and **indifference**.*¹²⁷ In the text **resignation** means **entire abandonment**. We see a similar expression in **Imitation of Christ**: *... about pure and entire resignation of self... Son, let yourself go, and you will find Myself...*¹²⁸

We have not yet quoted the Ignatian text from which flows easily all the logic of **Holy Abandonment**. Fr Bertoni transcribed it *verbatim* from the 4th book of Mariani, not in this body of extracts which we have been presenting here, but in many other circumstances. It flowed from his pen naturally, as it were! In this *Journal* he first noted it on 18 May 1811. He must have had it on his lips, since the beginning of his work as a counselor of souls. This is the cornerstone of his own Spirituality (if we may use this term). Here it is:

Very few are those persons who understand what God would like to do of them, if He were not hindered by them in His designs.¹²⁹

The only modification introduced by Fr Bertoni was a plural instead of a singular, i.e. **His designs** instead of **His design**. We shall examine this later on, in comparison with the entire text from Bartoli.

¹²⁴ ib, c. 13, p. 83.

¹²⁵ ib., c. 15, p. 99.

¹²⁶ ib., Book 3, c. 3, p. 204.

¹²⁷ ib, Book 6, c. 12, p. 435

¹²⁸ *Imitation of Christ*, Book 3, c. 37.

¹²⁹ Mariani, o.c., c.11, p. 417.

As regards that ***should not resent...if others use lesser means, which are also good***, this thought comes from the spirit which filtered through the meditation on the *Kingdom of Christ*. The point is that there is a wide variety of Vocations of the many called to militate under His Banner. Hence the conclusion: *Each one is striving to imitate Our Lord Jesus Christ most perfectly, according to the state chosen by each one*.¹³⁰

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13th OCTOBER 1808

[64.] I read about the inner presence of God. It is not necessary for us to go and look for Him outside because He is within us. This is what St Thomas Aquinas said, i.e. that having food at home, one makes a mistake if he goes outside to search for it. He will constantly have to fast. I was deeply touched by this and I felt much recollection which lasted for some time, even though I got distracted as usual. A great desire to please His Divine Majesty in everything.

This thought came to Fr Bertoni not from a meditation but from a book of spiritual reading. The book he read was not St Thomas', but was the work of an author who, talking about the interior presence of God, liked to base his points on the authority of St Thomas.

We believe we have found the book. It is the ***Life of Fr Baldasar Alvarez of the Company of Jesus*** written by his famous disciple Fr. L. Da Ponte, the author of the frequently quoted *Meditations* and a favorite of Fr Gaspar. Fr Bertoni - an enthusiastic student of St Teresa of Avila - was surely interested in that book because Fr Alvarez was the confessor of St Teresa. Indeed, St Teresa herself said of him that *he helped (me) more than others... he was very holy...a great servant of God, who, for love of Him, would have faced anything...*¹³¹

The author of that *Life* reported faithfully N accurate account which Fr Alvarez had to give to his Superior General about his progress in his prayer life and the experiences therein. Fr Alvarez noted certain extraordinary favors which he received.

Among many other insights, there is recorded the capacity of entering into the innermost part of his soul over these years. He said that since then his prayer consisted in just placing himself there, in the presence of Our Lord. It was the Lord himself who was disclosing His Humanity to him, in *permanently, in the manner of habit*, as it were. At this point Fr Alvarez explains this inner prayer firstly with a good text of St Thomas' *Summa* and subsequently with a second text from a treatise ***On Beatitude*** which was also attributed to St Thomas.

The author then explains:

... Knowing that in Heaven we shall enjoy Our Lord, we should begin in this life to enjoy God without interruption. The reason is that He is our personal Good more than any other good and that He is supremely worthy of our enjoyment through the gifts of

¹³⁰ DaPonte, Paart 2, Fundamental Meditation. Following Point 11.

¹³¹ *Life of the Saint*, in her Works, Vol II. Rome, re-printed in 1949. c. 36, 3; c. 38, 14, 15.

His Grace. This shows why some people are greatly blinded and maddened in searching for God anxiously sighing to reach Him. In their Prayer they cry towards Him to come and give them a hearing. These people do not pay attention to the fact that -as St Paul said- they themselves are His living temples. That the Supreme Good does dwell in us. That the God of Majesty finds His rest in us. This is the reason why they never think of enjoying Him (in themselves). What would we say of a person who goes outside in search of something that he possesses inside himself? ...Or of a person who pretends to nourish himself with food that he looks for or that he sees,...but does not eat it? This is precisely the (manner of) life of those who are always in search of God, and yet they never enjoy God...

Fr. Da Ponte knew well the doctrine of his Teacher, and as Alvarez he too quoted from ch 3 of the treatise **On Beatitude**. In the note with which he introduced the Meditation he wrote:

... This is a very important Meditation because it is the foundation of Prayer and Contemplation. It is moreover the foundation of the Union with God, which is the purpose of these meditations on the Unitive Way... [He added]: ...I have also to see to it that I should look for God within myself. If He is within myself, to what purpose will I tire myself to search for Him anxiously outside of myself?" [Subsequently he quoted St Thomas]: ...I will strive to take delight in this presence of God... as a friend enjoys his friend's presence...and like a craftsman uses the instrument which he has at home, without going outside to look for it...and like the hungry man, the food he has in his own store-room...¹³²

Fr Bertoni was certainly impressed and taken up by these readings, and perhaps even granted through them an extraordinary mystical insight. When we compare this with some other more explicit texts in his *Journal* and with the practical impacts noted therein (cf. **9 and 10 October**), we are encouraged to think so.

We should finally note also the confession and regret of Fr Gaspar for having got **distracted as usual**. Similar regret was noted on **11 September: I got distracted in external exercises of charity**. On the manuscript of the *Journal*, in the margin of both these places and in a third one, we see a small cross marked after the original writing of the document in ink. They are the crosses written by the first biographer of Fr Bertoni, i.e. Fr Cajetan Giacobbe. Fr Giacobbe, apropos of this *Journal*, wrote in his **Life** :

*... As for [Fr Bertoni's] defects -if that is what they can be called- I cannot find but these ones only, which I include in this number" ...They are the two already quoted and a third one which is faintly surmised from his expression: **Tomorrow I will be more diligent...**¹³³*

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16th OCTOBER 1808

[65.] **Catechism with much zeal and eloquence.**

¹³² DaPonte, *Meditations*, Point 3, n. 4.

¹³³ *Summarium Additionale*, Document 26, p. 478.

This very brief note contains reference to Sunday Catechetical Instruction. But Fr. Bertoni wanted to remind himself of the grace received, because ***Yet, not I, but the grace of God with me! (I Cor 15,10)***. There was a similar experience on Sunday 25 September.

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21st OCTOBER 1808

[66.] God has deigned to reveal to a person that the soul of a young and very good clergyman, who died some years ago and who was retained as a person of great virtue, remained in Purgatory for the space of three Masses only. This was: 1. because he did some penances without the permission of his Confessor and 2. because he did not take Indulgences into much account. He used to say - while he was alive - that it takes more than that to acquire an Indulgence.

To a person! There is no adjective provided. Was this some *good* person? *Very good?* *A holy person?* Normally revelations of this kind are given to special persons. Could it not be Fr Gaspar himself? The fact that this happened **some years ago** could militate against this last possibility.

However, some contemporaries of Fr. Gaspar attributed to him, too, some connection with the *life hereafter*. We report the note contained in the ***Miscellanea Lenotti***¹³⁴:

... The wife of Mr. Zamboni told me, Fr. Lenotti, and also Fr. Benciolini, that after the sudden death of her mother, due to sickness, she felt much distressed and anxious because her mother had died without the comfort of the Last Sacraments. Fr. Gaspar told her that she should be consoled because her mother was in Purgatory and that she would stay there for a specific number of months and days - which he told her. Nevertheless the memory of her mother and the sorrow because of her death remained in her heart. One day, while praying in a church, she felt as though the heavy burden was lifted from her heart which was suddenly filled with contentment. She was not thinking at all of the words of Fr Bertoni. Only some time afterwards it dawned on her that that was the very day in which Fr Bertoni had predicted that her mother would be freed from Purgatory...

This, however, is the only such testimony...

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[67.] ***Desires kill the slothful (Prov 21,25)***. Because he does not put them into practice, and therefore they tear his soul with remorse and condemnation.

This text of **Proverbs** should be introduced with some texts which Fr Bertoni used both in his writings and in his sermons since his first apostolic service to the young clergy. To the Acolytes in Nov 1810 he said: **We are not to rely on good intentions!**

¹³⁴ ib. Document 20, pp.134, ff., note n. 31.

Works, works! Labor the more that by good works you may make sure your calling and election. (2 Pet 1,10).

As for the text in the entry of this day, Fr Bertoni had already copied it from Rodriguez¹³⁵ together with his two friends in his first official apostolate with the young Clergy. In November 1810, he spoke to the young Acolytes. But his diary entry is provides him with central message for his own reflection, i.e. **...for his hands have refused to work at all; he longed and desired all the day long. (Pr 21:25b-26)**. Hence: **remorse and condemnation.**

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22nd OCTOBER 1808

[68.] Cheerfulness in adversities, and the consequences of real poverty, with thanksgiving to the Lord. Self-offering for the greater experience of humiliations and suffering if He chooses to grant these to me. This attitude is the best gift I received. I consider myself utterly unworthy of it. May God be praised always!

In the Bertoni home there was real poverty, effective poverty, that is! What were its causes? No profits from the family farm! Several set-backs during that year and the previous years had taken place. Since the first French invasion of 1796 the Bertoni farm was subjected to raids, taxation and harassments as it was in a war zone. The other permanent cause, unfortunately, was Mr, Francis Louis Bertoni, Fr Gaspar's father. After a voluntary separation from his wife, he kept for himself alone the administration of the common goods. He lived in the country family estate, while the wife with their son lived in the city, thus nullifying even the appearance of peace.

In July of 1808 he received an injunction from the State Property Office to pay a debt of a taxation on some personal properties. He was threatened to have his property sold by auction in case of inability to pay. He could not meet that levy. It was then that his son Fr Gaspar intervened and paid the debt, together with the extra tax to remove the real threat of an auction of the family properties. In doing so Fr Gaspar had to cut very deeply into the funds of the city property.

The text, therefore, is quite clear: **real poverty** in the Bertoni home. Well then, "Welcome, Lady Poverty!" Furthermore, the adversities which accompany *Lady Poverty* and the consequences, Fr. Bertoni accepted all with cheerfulness and thanksgiving to the Lord. He saw it all as a real gift of God! **What shall I return to the Lord? ...self-offering for the greater experience of humiliation and suffering, if the Lord chooses to grant these to me.** This is the *third degree of humility* in the Ignatian ideal of perfection. But this, too, is from God. Then, with a disarming simplicity and cheerfulness, the conclusion: **This attitude is the best gift, which I consider myself utterly unworthy of.** Fr Bertoni finds himself overwhelmed from all sides and explodes: **May God be praised always!**

¹³⁵ Rodriguez, Tract I, c. 3.

We cannot help; but think of his aged mother Brunora too, as a soul worthy of the *fruit of her womb*.

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[69.] I experienced a desire of imitating Christ in poverty and in the distresses of poverty.

This note, though separated from the previous one, seems to have been written on the same day. It is both the fruit and the practical resolution of the latter, even if expressed with that term of **desire**. Resulting, as it did, from an actual experience and one that was blessed by God, this is surely not the **desires of the lazy man** considered above, against which Fr Gaspar had long since trained himself.

It is perhaps a reflection of the characteristic perfection of the humble Patriarch of the poor, Francis, the most perfect imitator and lover of Christ, who cries to us: "**Be my imitators as I am of Christ**".¹³⁶

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23rd OCTOBER 1808

[70.] During Mass: much recollection and reverence. The recollection lasted also afterwards, even while hearing Confessions.

This recollection was once again of a supernatural order and a gift of God. It was noted as a debt of grateful memory - **Be grateful!** (Col 3,15) -and so that its influence should last. It seems that this month of October was particularly outstanding for such experiences. **And reverence**: this too was a gift from above. We should pay attention to the fact that even if the human expressions of the vocabulary do not vary much, the divine gift can have infinite variations every time. God does not like to repeat himself!

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24th OCTOBER 1808

[71.] While making the "Way of the Cross" I heard during the first Station: "If I let Myself be condemned, innocent as I am, ...why not you, guilty of a thousand faults, wish so quickly to be justified in everything by men?"

[We know that Fr Gaspar used to make the *Way of the Cross* with a group of youth of the Oratory, on Sunday, in the afternoon, before the Catechetical Instruction. He used to do this spiritual exercise, privately, also during the week. This exercise was opposed very much by the Jansenists. The Parish Priest of St Paul's, Fr. Francis Girardi, just that year had furnished his parishioners with a very practical booklet which was surely used by Fr. Bertoni. As a commentary to the first Station he read: *Consider here, my soul, the admirable submission and the remarkable humility of the Divine Redeemer in*

¹³⁶ This seems to be a thought noted in St. Gaspar's notes for a second Panegyric honoring St. Francis of Assisi: MssB ## 1844-1874.

accepting willingly, though innocent and betrayed, the most unjust sentence of a thoughtless and unfaithful judge...] ¹³⁷

Fr. Gaspar too was the target of malicious gossiping. He found refuge in the Lord by the pious practice of *The Way of the Cross*. Perhaps he felt he had to confess himself **guilty of a thousand faults!** This note seems to show that the Lord took him at his own word. Certainly, at the first Station, the Lord spoke to his heart in a clear and distinctive voice: **If I let Myself be condemned, innocent as I am, ...why not you, guilty of a thousand faults..?** On the afternoon of each Good Friday, he used to sing with the people a hymn at the end of a prayer to the First of the Seven Words of Jesus on the Cross, which stated **Guilty of a thousand faults - I know, o Lord, that I am. - I do not merit pardon - nor could I hope for it!...** He could rely on Jesus' own words: **Father, forgive them...**

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25th OCTOBER 1808

[72.] **During Mass: short but vivid enlightenments. Intense feeling of the presence of God. Trust, love, desire to transform myself into Him. That Jesus may live in me, no longer myself. After Mass this grace of Union would pass, but it came back while [walking] along the street, on family business, just as when I was in Church.**

Fr. Bertoni himself had synthesized the experience of this day as a **grace of Union**. This is a grace which can come from above and solely from on high. The grace was withdrawn after Mass in Church, but it took hold of him again **along the street** when he was **on family business**. How this can happen, even St Teresa does not know. ¹³⁸She knows, however, that it does happen. It is an action of God. Who can fathom God's action? This is among the most sublime notes. The sigh of Fr Bertoni: ***I live, though not I: but Christ lives in me!*** (Gal 2:20).

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26th OCTOBER 1808

[73.] ***For he that will save his own life, shall lose it ... [Mt 16:25]. And when they shall persecute you in this city, flee to another... [Mt 10:23]***

For these two texts we can give only the quotations: **Mt 16,25** and **10,23**. We are not sure what the texts told the heart of Fr Gaspar on this day: it remains his secret.

... This could refer to some consequences of that police harassment which he suffered on account of the Marian Oratories: suspicious persecutions against him as organizer of the city youth. Or perhaps his concern for the discomfort of those Religious compelled, by the repressive laws, to leave the town and look for some

¹³⁷ Web Site Note: Fr. Mittempergher, the translator, added this parenthetical note from: DalleVedove, Vol. II, p. 667.

¹³⁸ St. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*. Fourth Mansions, 2, 3.

*accommodation in other regions. It happened to the monks of the Order of St Jerome, who fled to Venice....*¹³⁹

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27th OCTOBER 1808

[74.] In the first point of the Mid-day Examen, that is during the thanksgiving, prostrate on the ground in the sight of Heaven: great sense of the presence of God, and love and self-offering.

The graces of the consciousness of the Presence of God are given at any time! These came to Fr. Bertoni not only during Mass. He was graced with these special gifts both on Sundays and during the week... During Meditation... During the Spiritual Reading... At the penance service ... In the evening...(it will come also during the Eucharistic Benediction...)... They would occur outside the Church or along the street. And now during the mid-day Ignatian practice of the Examination of Conscience. It consisted in *Thanksgiving, Prayer and Examen*. This is an authentic picture of Fr Gaspar: **Prostrate on the ground, in the sight of Heaven. Great sense of the Presence of God, and love and self-offering.**

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¹³⁹ Web-Site Note: Fr. Mittempergher added this note from; Fr. Dalle Vedove, Vol. 2, 668.

16th NOVEMBER 1808

[75.] Progress in early rising, in fasting and in more time left for Prayer.

We remember that on 25 Sept Fr Gaspar was much impressed by the thought that Jesus **preached in Jerusalem the entire day fasting and only in the evening did He retire to Bethany**. He said: **this moved me intensely to love and to work**.

He then had the example of St. Francis of Assisi. In his second draft¹⁴⁰ of the *panegyric* he had said **Perfection has its root and fulfillment in Charity - *Charity is the bond of perfection* (Col 3,14) - consists in shaping our life on that of our Lord ... Because this Divine Master began by *doing and teaching* [Ac 1:1], his actions - though peculiar and of incomparable excellence- are nonetheless possible to be imitated on the guide of his teaching**.

On this 16th day of November Fr Gaspar experienced the grace of ascertaining that that interior movement **to love and work** had borne its fruit. St Gregory the Great would say: "the proof of love is in showing the work."¹⁴¹

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[76.] Certain people begin to build their spirituality upside down. They start the external works of charity with enthusiasm. Rather than charity, this is more a work of nature. They do show some signs of extraordinary prayer: but this is only apparent. In fact this prayer is marked by inconsistency and it is short lived. It lacks those solid effects which accompany genuine prayer. Therefore if these people are left in such situation they remain truly idle, without any activity. They ought to change [manner of] prayer. They ought to go back to the basics, which is the Interior Spirit. This will produce fully matured fruits of charity, in its own time. It is supported, in the meantime, by a stricter discipline of obedience and by a more practical prayer which may arouse enthusiasm in the will.

Let us immediately quote St Ignatius: *The gifts of nature, in order to be of some advantage to our fellow-men, ought to be animated by the interior spirit*.¹⁴² Otherwise - he seems to say - that *advantage* is only an illusion.

People without this interior spirit appear to force themselves to enter into the *Unitive Way* artificially. St Ignatius comes again to our rescue: *The Unitive Way which is taken hastily (and by short-cuts), opens the way to illusions*.¹⁴³ It seems that this is also the opinion of St John of the Cross. He says that even *when one has reached the time to leave the dialogic Meditation, for the Prayer of Union, it is necessary not to leave*

¹⁴⁰ MssB ## 1844-1874.

¹⁴¹ St. Gregory the Great. Hom 30 in Ezechiel, in Gospel 1 – In the Divine Office of Pentecost, 2nd Lesson.

¹⁴² Mariani, o.c., Book IV, c. 11, p. 422.

¹⁴³ St. Ignatius, *Institutum S.I.*, Prague 1757, Vol. 3. A synthesis of n. 7, c. 39 of the *Directorium Exercitiorum S. Ignatii*.

it before time. Why? In order not to have to go back... ¹⁴⁴ This has therefore justified the decision of Fr. Gaspar to **change prayer, and to go back to the beginning** namely to **a more practical prayer which may arouse enthusiasm in the will.**

St. John of the Cross supported also the appeal of Fr Gaspar for a **stricter discipline of obedience** when he proposed the same for persons afflicted with *spiritual gluttony* and who are not humble enough. He said: "Obedience is the penitence of reason and of one's own judgment. It is therefore, before God, more pleasant and acceptable a sacrifice than anything else." ¹⁴⁵

[Commenting on this note Fr Dalle Vedove writes:

*... From Naturalism to Quietism: this could be called the wrong step which, according to Fr Bertoni, some people like to take. It is truly like building **upside down**. To start from the external activity which pleases one's inclinations. Then to exchange certain fleeting feelings and spiritual tastes for authentic supernatural prayer. The illusion is that these personal experiences are taken as mystical prayer or contemplation of Quiet. Dialogic Prayer is therefore abandoned together with applying responsibility, exercising free will and taking practical resolutions. All these are indispensable things for any spiritual progress...* ¹⁴⁶

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17th NOVEMBER 1808

[77.] The just understand very well the vice of pride and boastfulness. They sense its most horrible and sad effects when they are tempted by it. Hence when they are slightly affected, their sensitive spirit gets frightened in proportion to the strength in which they have been built up, either by acquired virtues or by special gifts. They have the same preoccupation as the rich and opulent people of the world, who fear to be robbed [of their possessions] by ravenous thieves, and be left suddenly with an empty house.

Fr Bertoni had preached about this vice in St Paul's since his first year of priesthood. He said that

... it is a vice extremely difficult to recognize. This is because it is a moral sin and because it disguises all its deformity with an appearance of virtue. I will say more: it likes to hide itself among the most perfect virtues, as a poisonous snake does among the flowers. This is why the saints fear this vice more than any other. They engage themselves to detect its traces in the depth of their hearts with more diligence than for other vices. The fear of falling into pride grew in them in proportion to their growth in the knowledge (of God). When they felt they had to confess some pride, they

¹⁴⁴ St. John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*. Book 2, c. 13, p. 87; c. 11, 9.

¹⁴⁵ St. John of the Cross, *Dark Night*, Book 1, c. 6, 1.

¹⁴⁶ Web-Site Note: Fr. Mitterpergher, the translator, added this note from Fr. Dalle Vedove, *Bertoni*, Vol. II, p670 – not found here in Fr. Stofella' comments.

would say that they were "rebels" and "thieves" of the honor which only belongs to God. My God! The very fact that one does not recognize one's own pride is perhaps the most serious sign of pride...¹⁴⁷!

In this entry, Fr. Bertoni presented the problem of *pride* by explaining its operational pattern with the guidance of Rodriguez, as it appears from Fr. Gaspar's hand-written extracts.¹⁴⁸ He quoted St Augustine's *On Holy Virginity*,¹⁴⁹ who author taught him that *in matter of humility each person is assigned a measure which is sufficiently proportioned to one's own spiritual growth. So much so that the higher one is, the more one needs humility.* Why? Because of the danger of pride. This normally threatens more those who are more greatly endowed. Fr. Bertoni will drive this point home very insistently in his instructions to the Clergy¹⁵⁰.

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20th NOVEMBER 1808

[78.] The bishop came to pay me a visit to the Class of Christian Doctrine, while I was teaching Catechesis to the adults. He wanted me to carry on. My mind became completely confused. All my ideas disappeared. I decided then to summarize, as the last resort. I did that without almost knowing what I was saying. In the mean time I was reflecting within myself, wondering how would my spirit have found itself if it had to give an account of my priestly ministry in front of the tribunal of Christ. Even if I had lived in the utmost innocence, and if I had accomplished all my duties...how much would I have felt discouraged and fearful in that moment! We have therefore to get ready to stand with confidence before Christ, no longer as a "Father" but as a "Judge".

As a commentary to this interesting episode let us hear what Fr Giacobbe had to say:

... The reader will be very amazed in that Fr Bertoni, as discouraged and confused as he found himself, was able to find immediately a sentiment of great humility and to draw much profit from his sense of the "fear of God..."¹⁵¹

[The Translator notes: We have also to add that Bishop Innocence Liruti had an extremely good impression of that young priest. Fr Gaspar, in fact, managed to make a very clear summary of his Christian Doctrine lesson, thanks to his excellent preparation - as we can ascertain from his manuscripts. Some months after that incident, on 27 Feb 1809, the Bishop showed much reliance on Fr. Gaspar's capacities by choosing him as Moderator of the "Moral Cases" discussed by the Clergy in the College at St Nicholas'. He called on him also for several other charges of more responsibility...¹⁵².

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¹⁴⁷ PVC, pp. 140, 141. Sermon 7, July 26, 1801 – MssB ## 547, ff.

¹⁴⁸ Rodriguez, Part I, Tract 3, cc. 3-5.

¹⁴⁹ c. 31.

¹⁵⁰ CS Vol. II, p. 485.

¹⁵¹ *Summarium Additionale*, Document 26, p. 469.

¹⁵² Fr. Mittempergher offers his commentary based on Fr. Dalle Vedove, *Bertoni* 2, p. 272.

2nd DECEMBER 1808

[79.] We have above all to take care that, as far as we are concerned, we do not fail the Lord. We are sure that as far as He is concerned He will surely not fail us. Since this is so, when we have a good relationship with God, who can harm us? Who can interfere with our undertakings?

What undertakings? The personal interior enterprise of one's own Vocation? Or the external apostolic enterprise recently inspired by the recent visit to the altar of St Ignatius? ¹⁵³The two, i.e. his progress in spirituality and the plan for a new Congregation, were inseparable in his mind.

The source of this note is a letter of St Ignatius ***To the Fathers and Brothers of the Society of Jesus who are in Spain, on Religious Perfection.*** This letter is an example of those *Letters filled with his spirit of inflaming charity with which he used to enkindle fire wherever he sent them.* Fr. Daniel Bartoli ¹⁵⁴ gives this entire letter in his ***Life of St. Ignatius.*** We will provide here a few lines in order to supply the background for St. Gaspar's thought here:

*"May the grace and the eternal love of Jesus Christ Our Lord be always to your help and favor. ...It gives me joy to see that His Divine Majesty gives you stamina and vigor to increase ever more in knowledge and virtue. The good news of this has reached us, so that many are inspired. All should rejoice because of the glory and honor given to God the Creator by your work, but I rejoice even more, because I keep you in my heart with a particular affection. May God always be blessed and praised, our Creator and Redeemer from Whose generosity all good, all graces derive. I pray Him to open every day more abundantly the sources of His mercy so that you further and increase all the more what He has begun. **I am most sure that He will do this: because His infinite goodness is extremely generous in communicating his gifts. In His eternal love he is more ready to give us holiness than we are desirous of having it.** If it were not so, His Divine Son would not encourage us to holiness. He knows that we cannot reach it except by His help. He said: **Be perfect, as your father in heaven is perfect. (Mt 5:48).** Therefore we do not doubt that **on His part he does not fail us at all, as long as we keep ourselves humble and that He makes us able to receive His gifts, and give us the desire to get them as well as the readiness to cooperate, with hard work, through the help of His grace...**" ¹⁵⁵*

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[80.] It is most unfortunate and a shame to see so much holiness in the Laity and so much imperfection and vices in a priest.

This is a stimulating reflection for the work of personal progress in holiness. It reflects at the same time a grace and a disgrace most evident in the times of Fr Bertoni. Bishop Innocent Liruti, at the end of his first year as bishop of Verona, had to write the

¹⁵³ cf. above, September 15th.

¹⁵⁴ Book 4, marginal note 17.

¹⁵⁵ This passage is taken from the initial part of the Letter. The two priests worthy of their Founder's praise are Fr. Simon Rodriguez, one of St. Ignatius' first companions, and the Provincial of Portugal – and Fr. Santacroce, Rector of the College.

following decree: *If anyone who officially militates as an ecclesiastic, both Secular and Regular, in the city or in the Diocese, will in any time walk around disguised with masks or will frequent theatres, comedies, balls or will give his cooperation to such things, he is by that very fact (ipso facto) suspended from exercising his sacred Office (a Divinis...).* As for the clerics in Minor Orders who will be guilty of the same things, they will lose their hope of further Ordination. However, he went on to say that *The deplorable life of some who depart from the good example of others, cannot take away the honorable reputation that our Clergy justly possesses.*¹⁵⁶

When Fr. Bertoni would be 33 years old, he was called by his Bishop to an official **apostolate among the Clergy**¹⁵⁷, in 1810, he will present the same stimulating thought during the Introductory Meditation of the Spiritual Exercises on ***The End of Man***:

... Many secular people fulfill this End better than the Clergy. Their lives are full of good works while ours are full of hot air. Their lives are immaculate, while the lives of many clergy are unfortunately very filthy.... The Church, in these times, cries bitterly over this disorder which brings down scourges and gives scandal to the people more than ever. If your lives are of this sort, seminarians, withdraw yourselves! Wait before ascending to the sub-Diaconate: "*It is better to marry than to burn*" (1 Co 7,9). If you are already deacons or priests, then weep, weep! With penance wash away these stains. Begin with your own before those of others. As far as we are concerned, we have to correct that in which, perhaps, "we have sinned without knowing"... Let us put our lives in order. Let us learn from many secular people how to live properly. "The unlearned come to the fore and snatch the Kingdom of God for themselves" [Lk 16,16]. And we ourselves with all our learning, where shall we go?...¹⁵⁸

He gave a similar teaching to the Seminarians in Jan 1811:

... There, in the good example of secular people: in the faithful observance of religion and the perfect charity of many secular people, Divine Providence supplies His chosen ones with a powerful stronghold against the scandal of sensual and worldly priests... Therefore, whoever clings to this help, will not only overcome the scandals of priests, but will make an effort not to be overcome by secular people in progressing towards perfection. Such a person has sure signs of a genuine ecclesiastical Vocation...¹⁵⁹

It goes without saying that Fr Bertoni preached these things to himself before preaching them to others.

¹⁵⁶ Bishop's Letter, Septuagesima 1809, in: *Raccolta di Lettere Pastorali*. Verona 1817.

¹⁵⁷ Web-site Note: With this apostolate, Fr. Bertoni indeed merits the title: *Apostolic Missionary to the Clergy*.

¹⁵⁸ *Collectanea Stigmatina*, Vol. I, pp. 119, 120.

¹⁵⁹ Meditation 11 on *Primum Regum*, January 1, 1811 – MssB ## 5182-5939.

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3rd DECEMBER 1808

[81.] The Lord just shows us the Cross so that in accepting it for His sake, we could have the merit of the good will. But in the end it is He Himself who will carry it.

Fr. Bertoni knew very well that there is no holiness without the Cross, nor apostolate, nor Christian life. Was it the liturgical feast of St Francis Xavier which inspired in him the subject of this reflection?

The following extract has been taken from a letter of St Francis Xavier Fr. Gaspar had taken the following extract:

... it is proper for a Christian to rejoice more in the Cross rather than in relaxing". This was the conclusion of a sentence which is shocking for our nature: "Nothing in life could give me more pleasure than to experience the most terrible dangers, as long as they are undertaken for love of Jesus Christ and of the Christian Religion!"¹⁶⁰ [Fr. Bertoni wrote down another quotation from St Ignatius which reveals the secret of that attitude]: ... All the honey that one can draw from the delights of the world does not give as much sweetness as do the vinegar and gall of Christ...¹⁶¹

The Cross and the Passion of the *Apostle* re-enact the Cross and Passion of Christ. Together with the ***Imitation of Christ***, Fr. Bertoni thinks that: *This is not within the power of man but it comes from Christ's grace, which is able to do so much in a frail body.*¹⁶²

Two months earlier, he had admired in the Saint from Assisi St. Paul's statement:

... For Christ I am nailed to the cross...and it is the same cross of Jesus Christ. In Greek it is more clear: *Christò synestàuromai* i.e. *together with Christ I am nailed to the cross*. It is as if I am grafted and planted together with the tree of the Cross of Christ. I possess in communion with the same tree its sap and its life: namely Grace and Charity...¹⁶³

So, in inviting both to self-denial and to the cross, Fr Bertoni was sure **that as far as the Lord is concerned, He will never fail**. On the other hand, he also saw the cooperation of God with so great an amount of Grace that human cooperation - as spontaneous as it can be - did not seem to him much more than a simple acceptance of an *invitation*. Furthermore, the cross was consequently so much lightened, to be able to say **It is not us, but Jesus who, out of love for us, carries it in the end.**

¹⁶⁰ Letters of St. Francis Xavier, II, Letter 12.

¹⁶¹ Mariani, *Life*, o.c., c. 10, p. 404.

¹⁶² *Imitation of Christ*, Book 2, c. 12: 'The Royal way of the Cross', 7.

¹⁶³ Panegyric I, Point 2: MssB ## 1795-1842.

In the Spiritual Exercises to the Clergy, Sept 1810, Fr Bertoni will say with some regret in his heart:

... Jesus tells us: *Whoever wants to come after me let him deny himself and pick up his cross.* But the priests reject all mortification. They never fast. They never use hair-shirts, while many laity walk in front of us with their example. Priests never give a try in mastering themselves. While they expect the laity they guide to do just that. They flee from crosses and suffering... The cross which is peculiar to the priest is: the Breviary, chastity, study, hearing of Confessions etc. But the point is *Let him take up the cross not let him drag the cross...*¹⁶⁴

We find Fr Bertoni more cheered up when talking to the Seminarians. He talked of the **wondrous ways in which Christ operates and governs the Church** and among them he chose the **tribulations** as his theme for his reflections on December 2, 8 and 9 of December 1810. This was the time of the war with Napoleon.

Here is the concluding prayer, which referred to **Gal 6,14** and **Mt 16,24**:

... Lord, we have experienced the tribulations of Your Church, in which we see the enhancement of both Your wonderful providence as her Spouse and the prudent and virtuous behavior of Your Bride. We highly respect Your most wise governance. We pray that You may make Your Spouse to imitate You in following and carrying out what You said: *He who wants to follow me let him carry his cross*. Grant that we may carry the cross, not to drag it. That we may carry it so willingly that we boast of it. That we may carry it with so much love that we end up in boasting in nothing else but in it. This cannot happen unless first the world should be crucified to me and myself to the world. This will never happen until the world becomes a cross to me, as I am to the world, because of the irreconcilable opposition of feelings...¹⁶⁵

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4th DECEMBER 1808

**[82.] While going to bed: compunction and fear of God.
During Mass: a lively sense of the presence of Jesus Christ which roused much confidence, though for a short while. The recollection, however, lasted also afterwards and the devotion for the whole day.**

This date was the second Sunday of Advent. Fr Bertoni registered two distinct graces. The first caught him, suddenly, while getting ready for bed. This must have happened the evening before Saturday 4 Dec. The note which interests us is to be referred to the dawning of the new day, i.e. Sunday, giving further proof of the biblical

¹⁶⁴ *Collectanea Stigmatina*, Volume I, p. 227.

¹⁶⁵ 5th Meditation on *Primum Regum*. December 9, 1810. MssB ## 4963. [All students of St. Gaspar remember his beautiful insight in considering the Church as 'a Model of Holy Abandonment' [cf. *Epistolario*, Letter 38, October 26, 1813. p. 99.]

saying: ***the Spirit blows where He will...*** Fr. Bertoni prepared himself for this kind of supernatural gift by his daily usage of the book of the ***Imitation of Christ***:

... If you want to make any progress, keep yourself in the fear of God. Exercise yourself in the compunction of the heart and you will find devotion. Compunction opens the way to much good which is quickly lost by distraction. Happy the one who can cast away all the impediments of distractions and recollect himself in the unifying action of holy *compunction*. It is our fault if we lack God's consolations because we do not look for the *compunction* the heart. When a person has perfect *compunction*, then the whole world will appear burdensome and distasteful. Pray therefore humbly to God that He may give you the spirit of *compunction*... ¹⁶⁶ Fr. Bertoni was persuaded that no one is worthy of heavenly consolation unless he was diligently exercised in holy compunction ¹⁶⁷. He was more concerned in experiencing compunction than in knowing how to define it. He prayed humbly to the extent that he was able – and finally, this gift from heaven was graciously bestowed.

The second grace he received during Mass of this 11nd Sunday of Advent. It is described in terms which are now easy for us to understand: one might reflect on his entry, ***after Mass*** of 11th July and the Mass of 23rd October. But with regard to the realities of the Spirit, we lack an adequate vocabulary. As we have said earlier, God does not like to repeat Himself. Also regarding the gift which followed his experience during Mass and which filled his whole day, the terms are not that different. Though Fr. Bertoni distinguished them, they are in fact very similar. ***Recollection, Devotion, Compunction***...they are all terms which we would like to experience rather than struggling in trying to explain them!

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7th DECEMBER 1808

[83.] When God calls people to some projects of spiritual life, one has to seize the opportunity of the moment. *And at once they left the nets and followed Him.*

We can trace the thought of Fr Bertoni in a Meditation from DaPonte which is entitled *The Calling and Vocation of the Apostles*. The text is from St. **Matthew 4,20**. Fr Bertoni summarized the 4th point as follows: **The obedience of the Apostles to God's vocation was most perfect with regard to:**
1. the intellect 2. the will 3. the execution.

Da Ponte wrote ¹⁶⁸:

... Consider the excellent obedience with which the Apostles answered their calling. In fact...while Peter and Andrew were casting their nets into the sea and Zebedee's sons were mending their nets in the boats with their father, when Christ called them

¹⁶⁶ *Imitation of Christ*, Book 1, c. 21, *passim*.

¹⁶⁷ *ib.*, c. 20.

¹⁶⁸ Meditation 6.

***immediately and at once**, they left their nets and their father and everything and followed Him.*

... With this kind of obedience the apostles showed the three excellent properties of this virtue. The submission of intellect and judgment: making them obey Christ and subjecting them to His orders without making any excuse¹⁶⁹. The submission of will¹⁷⁰: subjecting it completely to that of Christ, dispossessing themselves of the love they had for their wives, children, fathers, relatives and their own properties. The perfect execution: which was - as Saint Chrysostom says - prompt, punctual and cheerful, without delay not even for a moment and without contradiction. Oh, the miracles of God's power! Oh, what changes can God do!

Fr. Bertoni spoke of **Divine Vocation**. His teacher here, Fr. DaPonte, has stated that it comes "through the grace of the Holy Spirit, not depending on our merits, and that with it all other necessary goods are given for our salvation...then it was really the case to exclaim: **I fear Jesus passing by!** This is seen in the traditional sense, i.e. "Woe to those who let Him pass without following after Him! Woe to those who do not seize the opportunity of the moment!

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11th DECEMBER 1808

[84.] During the Canon of the Mass, at the *Te igitur*, a very lively, reverential and loving sense of the presence of the Father. A vivid confidence and love towards the Son. Again a sense of the priestly dignity during Consecration as I was acting in the person of Christ before His Father. Even more tenderness and deep humility immediately after Consecration when I was holding Christ tightly in my hands. There it was: the utmost Goodness joined to the utmost wickedness. The most pure to the most impure. The most holy to the most sinful. That sentiment lasted until after communion. The compunction until evening.

It was the Third Sunday of Advent. Judging from the notes of this *Journal*, it seems that God had favored Fr. Bertoni with his gifts often during Sunday Masses. What shall we say now? Perhaps what we said on the feast of the Maternity of Mary (which was his birthday). We need to fall on our knees and read the note again and again.

This was another experience of the Presence of God, pondering anew the mystery of the Trinity (cf. above, the 24 Aug), reviewing the Persons of the Father and the Son. Therefore at the words of the Canon of the Mass, Fr. Bertoni felt **vivid confidence**. At the Consecration he felt the loftiness of his priestly dignity: **reverence, love, confidence, tenderness and deep humility**, and each of these sentiments immerse Fr. Bertoni into the abyss of **compunction**. His innate feeling of wretchedness and culpability in any contact of his joined to God's supreme goodness, Infinite Purity and Infinite Holiness! Those expressions can be judged by us, who are far from those lofty

¹⁶⁹ St. Gaspar puts this among his Grades of Obedience in his *Original Constitutions* - CF # 144.

¹⁷⁰ Noted in St. Gaspar's *Original Constitutions* - CF # 141. The qualities Fr. Bertoni notes here, based on St. Ignatius, are: *integra, prompta, fortis, humilis*.

experiences, as excessive. St. Teresa of Avila had similar compunction for her faults, and ingratitude, due to those special *caresses* and favors which God so often poured out on her. She said that *When I see that I receive daily more and more graces, while I correspond so badly to the past ones, I feel a sort of terrible torture*.¹⁷¹ This Sunday in the life of St. Gaspar with all of its ministries, rendered him full until evening. Would that the Lord might grant also to us a similar gift of light!

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17th DECEMBER 1808

[85.] While browsing again over Scupoli's and reading the *Imitation of Christ* I felt a desire to acquire perfection and to wage war upon any negligence.

St. Francis de Sales used to refer to Scupoli's *Spiritual Combat*, "my dear book". That book was followed by two shorter works, *Addition to the Spiritual Combat* and *Path to Paradise*, added as an Appendix to the work itself. The expression: **browsing again over...**, would indicate that Fr. Bertoni was therefore going through once more a book which he had already read and studied. We can be sure that he was re-reading chapter 20, *How to combat negligence*. Here are a few extracts:

... In order, for you, not to fall into the miserable slavery of *negligence* -(which would not only hinder your journey to perfection but would also give you over into the hands of your enemies) - you must shun all curiosity and worldly attachment and any occupation which is not proper to your condition. Then you have to make all effort to heed every good inspiration. Do not delay even for the shortest hesitation. The first little delay leads to a second. This to a third and to others with which our senses comply and to which they yield more easily than to the first ones because they are already allured and taken up by the pleasure they have felt.... It is not sufficient to do the work you have to do. You must do it in the time which its quality and nature expect. You must do it with all proper *diligence* so that it might be as perfect as possible. To do a work before time and hurry through it without doing it well, is no diligence but utter *negligence*...

Reading the *Imitation of Christ* : from this expression, it seems that this was therefore an ordinary reading, perhaps even a daily reading, which Fr. Bertoni had noted as a habit in the life of St Ignatius: *...every day he used to read a chapter of the Imitation of Christ in the form of meditation...*¹⁷². It is not easy to individuate a precise passage, as he could have been struck by the following words¹⁷³:

... 'Of the Examples of the Holy Fathers of the Church': Alas, what is our life when we compare it with theirs? ...What lukewarmness and negligence of our condition, that we so soon fall away from our initial fervor!... We have to renew every day our resolutions and to stimulate ourselves to fervor as if we had reached conversion just on this today. We have to say: Help me, Lord God, in my good resolution and in Your service. Grant that I may begin perfectly today because there is nothing that I have done so far. ... There is a need of much diligence for those who want to progress well. ... Through negligence we can quickly lose what we have acquired by grace

¹⁷¹ Teresa of Avila, *Life*, c. 7. in: *Opere*. Ed. Roma 1949, n. 19.

¹⁷² Mariani, *Life*, op.c., Book 4, c. 9, p. 400.

¹⁷³ *Imitation of Christ*, Book 1, c. 18, n. 1, n. 6. c. 19, n. 1, n.2; c. 22, n. 6; c. 23, n. 3, n. 11...

after much pain and effort. ... Your grief will be great for having been neglectful and slothful.... Be watchful and diligent in the service of God.... No matter what others do, you must not neglect yourself. You will progress in the measure in which you will control yourself vigorously.... Keep ever in mind your own end, and remember that the lost time never comes back. You will acquire no virtues without care and diligence...

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[86.] When looking for counseling one should bear in mind that also holy persons can sometime have wrong opinions. It was said that Palafox had misunderstanding with almost all Religious Orders except the Carmelites. In fact he has the title of "Venerable" but his Canonization process has been interrupted for ever.

Fr. Bertoni found this caution quite pertinent and necessary. There was confusion of opinions even among the Clergy about this matter. As regards the Venerable Bishop John Palafox (1600-1659), we know that he was a very zealous and virtuous Carmelite. He was bishop of Los Angeles in Cuba and of Osma in Spain. He had conflicts of jurisdiction with Franciscans, Augustinians, Dominicans and especially with the Jesuits. The Cause of his Beatification and Canonization was favored and supported by the governments hostile to Jesuits. It was stopped four years after the suppression of the Company of Jesus (1777) because of a letter against the Jesuits which bears his signature. That writing - which is perhaps humanly explainable in the turmoil of the controversies of the time - did not seem worthy of a candidate for Canonization¹⁷⁴.

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20th DECEMBER 1808

[87.] In the spiritual enterprises it is of great advantage when two people find that they can share the same perception.

Fr. Gaspar found this advantage from the outset with Fr Matthew Farinati (ordained in 1802) and afterwards also with Fr Cajetan Allegri (ordained in 1805). Fr. Giacobbe¹⁷⁵ wrote that ... *these priests, animated by the zeal and spirit of Fr Bertoni, formed, as they put it, a threefold cord of admirable harmony among themselves...* This principle held not only collaborating in the youth apostolate (to which Fr Giacobbe seems to refer) but also in **common study** for their mutual spiritual growth. In addition to many other indications, we have a witness of this in the various extracts of quotations which the three priests drew together from the Life of St Cajetan of Thiene and above all from Rodriguez' ***Exercise of Perfection***. Very revealing are the words which Fr. Farinati wrote on the inside page of the hard cover of that book: *There are excellent ideals contained in this booklet!* These words are followed by a quotation from the prophet Ezekiel: ***I sought among them for a man that might set up a hedge and stand in the gap before me I favor of the land so that I should not destroy it: but I found none. (Ezk 22:30).*** It seems that Fr, Farinati recognized in that prophetic text a common vocation of the *three* friends to be just that man. This was what stimulated them – as priests belonging to no Order - applying to themselves the whole exercise of perfection which was reserved for

¹⁷⁴ cf. L. Pastor, *Story of the Popes*, Vol. 15, Part 1, pp. 156-162; Vol. 16, Part I, pp. 239, f.; Part 3, p. 266.

¹⁷⁵ *Summarium Additionale*, Document 26, p. 342.

the Religious. It was also in the strength of the principle which Fr. Bertoni will support strongly, i.e. that what in the Religious is a *tension* towards Perfection, in the Priest should be *acquired* perfection.¹⁷⁶

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[88.] While we feel called to some high degree of Perfection, we should pay attention not to underestimate those who do not want to follow us. They might perhaps be of equal and greater merit in front of God. We all have the same purpose. Not all use the same means.

This maxim is a development on that of 12 Oct: **He who is drawn by the Spirit to a way of greater perfection...should not resent others who are of lower virtue and use lesser means as long as these are good.** We were saying, there, that such is the spirit that filtered through the meditation of *The Kingdom of Christ*, according to St Ignatius and Da Ponte. Different people are freely called to militate under the banner of Christ. It is clear that each person must imitate Him in the condition to which each has been called, for himself following those different invitations.

Fr. Bertoni intended to keep the commandment which regards our neighbor: **Do not judge...** and to preserve one's own meekness and humility of heart. We can see an encouragement in reminding ourselves that merit does not depend on the greater or lesser excellence of a vocation. This is God's gift. It depends rather on the greater or lesser correspondence to such a gift. It could therefore happen that somebody with a lesser gift of God would correspond to it with greater perfection than others with a greater gift.

As for the variety of ways and means to reach the same Ultimate End, this is but a logical consequence of the variety of the same vocations.

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[89.] - It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you (John 15,16). We have to pay much attention not to set ourselves against the Lord with our sins and lack of mortification.

The text from St. John's Gospel could have been applied also to the preceding entry. But Fr. Bertoni wrote it with a dash separating it from the previous note. He admonishes the *chosen one* - i.e. no one other than himself - not to put obstacles against the action of God with sins and the lack of mortification. He saw also here the connection between two undertakings: that of his personal sanctification (cf. **12 Oct**) and that of the promotion of the greater glory of God through a life dedicated to the Apostolate (cf. **15 Sept**). We could have expected a hint at the Ignatian principle which is at the base of everything, as we have said in the note of **12 Oct**: **very few are those who...** And also the encouraging sentences of **2 and 3 Dec.**: **Take care that we do not fail the Lord, because He will surely not fail us. The Lord, just shows us the cross...**

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¹⁷⁶ cf. his Retreat to the Clergy, in 1810, in: *Collectaea Stigmatina*, Vol. 3, p. 129, 'The Purpose [End] of the Priest'.

23rd DECEMBER 1808

[90.] When people are at the threshold of death and are well prepared to die, it is not to appeal that the Lord should lengthen their lives. Death is like a bridge between two eternities: the one before and the one afterwards... It is just a step. When a person can be assured to take this step well, he should not be encouraged not to seize this opportune moment. It is too difficult to keep the faith in this present life. We do not wish any good person to live [longer] in this life.

The first sentence is simply a maxim of good Christian wisdom. The sentences which follow clearly justify it. The passage across the bridge which divides a previous eternity from the subsequent eternity is reminiscent of scholastic discussions. Passing from time to eternity is a sure passage, which nobody can avoid. It is most unsure, though, as far as the precise moment of it. When therefore the opportunity of knowing this presents itself clearly, it is a great risk to let it escape. Will it come back again? Therefore...

Fr. Gaspar was of this opinion also during his last years of life. One day, Fr. Marani (spiritual director of the Sisters of the Holy Family) went to consult with Fr. Bertoni. He told him how saddened he was by the death of some young Sisters. He got the following comforting words: **These young Sisters came to the convent to make a good death. They have had the great blessing to make it.**¹⁷⁷ So: ***Sursum corda!*** (Lift up your hearts!).

Some could find some fault with Fr. Bertoni's statement: **It is too difficult to keep the faith in this present life.** It sounds something like a conclusion against the discernment and justice of God. To us, though, it seems that he intended only to recognize a fact. He was not concerned about the justice of God, but rather about the slothful irresponsibility of man. We should also consider that what we translate with *too* (the Italian ***troppo***), in the archaic language can mean just ***much***.¹⁷⁸ In his youth, Fr. Bertoni had been taught by the language expert Cesari.

With regard to the last sentence: **We do not wish...**, we see a reference to **Wisdom 4,10,11**: ***He pleased God and was beloved, and living among sinners he was translated. He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul...***

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[91.] We have to seek God alone and nothing else: no consolations, no gratifications.

This is a Carmelite principle. St Teresa wrote:

¹⁷⁷ *Collectanea Stigmatina*, Vol. 3, p. 385.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. F. Palazzi, *Italian Dictionary – troppo* is an archaic word, meaning *much*.

*... Lord, do not allow that a thing of such great price, as Your Love, be given to people who serve You only in view of the gratification they get out of it... The love of God does not consist in having tears (of consolation), nor in the delight and tenderness of devotion... but rather in serving with justice, fortitude and humility. By getting (spiritual) gratifications, we only receive from the Lord, rather than giving anything to Him...*¹⁷⁹

As for St John of the Cross, we know that he is the **Doctor of Nada** (nothing). No quotation is needed.

This principle is also of a decisively Ignatian spirit. St Ignatius wrote in his Constitutions:

... All should strive to have the right intention, not only as regards the [choice of one's own] status in life, but also in all particular situations. They should see to it that they serve and please God for his own sake: for his love and those very special favors with which He has protected us, rather than for the fear of punishments or for the hope of rewards. These last attitudes are only useful as encouragements. [Then the Saint becomes more incisive]: Let them seek God in everything, stripping themselves as much as possible of the love towards all creatures in order to direct all their affection towards their Creator. Let them love Him in all creatures and all creatures in Him. This is His most holy will...!

This is how St Ignatius wanted all his sons. This is the principle which reflects the spirit of the entire *Journal* of St. Gaspar (cf. **2** and **30 July**).

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[92.] The vow of Obedience for a person who is not under a Superior - because he is a Superior - binds his spirit to a total dependence on God in everything.

We have already said, in the commentary to the first note of this *Journal* (**1st July**), that the source of this principle is the resolution and example of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Fr. Gaspar said of him that **He dwelt in the hands of God with full submission of mind and indifference**. This because he had no Superior, and yet he was a Superior. *... He therefore strongly wished that the men of his Company should be in the hands of their Superiors with similar submission and indifference...*¹⁸⁰

To illustrate this point further, we give here a reasoned resolution of a Jesuit Superior, who actually lived after the time of Fr Bertoni, but who nonetheless expressed his thought better than we could. It was Fr Peter Olivaint who was a martyred of the time *Comune* in 1871. The text is from his Spiritual Exercises of 1860:

... I have been reflecting on St Joseph's obedience. It is a danger for Superiors to think of themselves as above obedience. In this way they fall again under the sway of pride and sensuality. The Superior is bound more than others to obey the Rule of which he is the guardian and of which he is therefore to be the example. He is bound more than others to obey the Spirit of God which guides him, like St Joseph. He is unfortunate not to have, as others do, a Superior who sees him, who understands

¹⁷⁹ St. Teresa of Avila, *Life*, c. 11. *Opere*, Ed. Roma 1949, c. 11, nn. 12, 13.

¹⁸⁰ Maariani, *Life*, o.c., Book 4, p. 435.

him, keeping the place of God. He has, therefore, to be more faithful in consulting with the Holy Spirit... ¹⁸¹

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25th DECEMBER 1808

[93.] During the three [Christmas] Masses: recollection and an experience of the great benefit of [my] vocation. What a great blessing it is to become oblivious and stripped of all created things. To seek only God. How much did God honor and love His humiliated Son. Oh, what a responsibility do we have to do for Him, partly at least, what He firstly did for us.

Christmas fell on Sunday that year. Fr. Bertoni was overwhelmed by the blessings he had received, which he shares through brief hints and interjections.

The benefit of his Vocation is to be understood as total Vocation: a vocation to the priesthood and a vocation to holiness. When he contemplated mystically the stripping and humiliation of God he felt he could justify his own ascetic work of self-denial which appeared no longer as a sacrifice but rather as a grace and a privilege. One feels that God was showing, there, much gratification.

What is left for us is perhaps to pick up quietly that spiritual surprise with which Fr Bertoni could contemplate: **how much did God honor and love His humiliated Son.** He made comparisons and concluded for himself and for us: **What a responsibility do we have to do for Him, partly at least, what He firstly did for us.** May Fr, Gaspar obtain for us the grace to be struck by awe at God's action.

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¹⁸¹ *Retraits Annuelles*. Paris 1963. Tome I, pp. 14, 15.

AN INTRODUCTION FOR THE YEAR 1809

Some important events which touched the life of Fr Bertoni during this year 1809 have to be kept in mind. He continued to be in charge of the Convent of Madalene di Canossa. This implied, among other things, entire nights spent at the bedside of the girls in danger of death. Those were girls who had been taken off the street by the charity of Mother diCanossa. During the four years of this apostolate, at least six of these girls died.

In February bishop Innocent Liruti re-organized the so called "Congregations" or "Colleges" of moral and liturgical problems and named Fr. Bertoni "Theological Definitor" of the "College of St. Nicholas".

The health of his mother had, in the meantime, visibly worsened. Mother Brunora was diagnosed as suffering from dropsy, which would lead to her death on 6th February 1810.

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4th JANUARY 1809

[94.] One's bearing ought to be mature and serious: it should not be impatient and anxious.

We believe that this instruction - as well as the following one - is taken from St. Thomas' **Summa**.¹⁸² We know that when Fr. Gaspar was ordained priest he was busy reading the **Summa** for the third time and that afterwards he often consulted it. He saw to it, also, that his fellow priests should read it.¹⁸³ This instruction was either a personal resolution or a practical norm in the Spiritual Direction of other people. It is the summary of a text of St Ambrose from his book **De Officiis** ¹⁸⁴, which St Thomas reported as follows:

... We approve that kind of bearing which shows some authority, carries seriousness and reveals tranquility. This is good provided that there is no artificiality and affectation. One should walk about with spontaneity and simplicity ...

Fr. Bertoni chose this quotation from St. Ambrose for his Constitutions, omitting only that "showing authority".¹⁸⁵

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[95. Whoever wants interior recollection should get it through exterior modesty. He should not let his eyes wander about nor move his body in an unbecoming manner.

We find the premise to this statement in the same article of St Thomas, quoted above:

¹⁸² St. Thomas Aquinas, II-II, q. 168, a. 1. [It is interesting to note that Fr. Gaspar cited this same question, a. 2, in his *Original Constitutions* - CF # 256. In this same number, St. Gaspar cites St Ambrose, *De Officiis*, Book 1, c. 20].

¹⁸³ St. Gaspar required the study of St. Thomas for his followers: CF # 53.

¹⁸⁴ Here the quote from St. Ambrose as noted by Fr. Stofella is: Book I, c. 18.

¹⁸⁵ CF # 129. [These ideas are noted in the Ignatian Rules for Modesty]. [cf. M.I., *Regulae*, 157-203]

... The way we behave externally is somehow a sign of our internal attitudes according to what we read in **Sir.19:27: *The attire of the body, the laughter of the teeth and the gait of the man, show what he is.*** According to St Ambrose, *the attitude of the mind is perceived from the behavior of the body. The movement of the body is somehow the voice of the soul.* Fr. Bertonni read from Rodriguez:

*...This modesty and good exterior behavior is of great help for our own spiritual progress. The relationship and the interaction between body and spirit is a great reality. Between the interior and exterior person, what one has inside is immediately communicated outside and vice-versa. Thus, if the spirit is recollected the body will recollect itself too. If, on the other hand, the body is restless and distracted, the spirit gets immediately distracted and restless too. Modesty, therefore, and exterior recollection is a great value and a sign of interior recollection, virtue and spiritual progress of the soul. This is like the movement of the hands of a clock which are the sign of the harmony of the internal mechanism...*¹⁸⁶

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11th JANUARY 1809

[96.] During Mass, at the Consecration: a very lively sense of the presence of Christ as a friend who talks with another friend. I also felt the presence of the Father, while perceiving also, in some way, the distinction of these Divine Persons in only one nature. Great reverence and love! This recollection continued for half an hour afterwards, not the experience, though, which....

The note remains interrupted – the word **which...** indicates incompleteness. And yet here we have, laconically expressed, one of the most noteworthy graces recorded in the *Journal*. Christ as *friend*, reminds us of those outbursts and impulses of the heart towards God, like a person overwhelmed by the appearance of a great friend, as in the entry of 9 Oct. 1808.

With regard to the presence of the Father and the experience of, in some way, the distinction of these Divine Persons, let us hear what St Teresa of Avila said out of her personal experience:

*... As regards the Three Divine Persons, I clearly perceive that they are distinct among themselves... it is, though, a strange certainty. As a matter of fact I do not hear and I do not see anything. Neither with the eyes of the body nor with the eyes of the soul. Yet it is felt when the Three Divine Persons disappear. However I do not know how does this happens. What I do know is that this is not my imagination. Sometimes, in fact, after receiving this grace, I made an effort to bring [the Three Persons] back again, by myself. But I never succeeded. I therefore do know this by experience...*¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ cf. Rodriguez, Part 2, Tract 2, c. 1, 3.

Web-site Note: under the heading of The Founder's *Original Constitutions*, 4. General Plan [cf. CF ## 133-137] there may be found an English translation of the Ignatian *Rules for Modesty*.

¹⁸⁷ St. Teresa of Avila, *Spiritual Testimonies*, 5, 21. Works translated in Italian. Rome 1949, p. 440.



19th JANUARY 1809

[97.] Discretion is mother and ruler of all other virtues.

St. Benedict called Discretion the *mother of all virtues*, when in his **Rule** he treats of the *Ordination of the Abbot*.¹⁸⁸ He made *Discretion* play an outstanding role in the Spiritual Direction of souls, in correction, in the distribution of the necessities of life, in dispensing from fasting during the summer season, in allotting tasks, in the necessary surveillance etc.¹⁸⁹ All these activities belong especially to the Abbot who is expected to exercise that supernatural sensitivity which makes him able to adjust himself to the different personalities, in order to lead all souls to God¹⁹⁰.

We have come across this virtue as 'the queen of all virtues', in the entry of **18 July 1808**. It was St Thomas Aquinas who presented it as "generator, custodian and moderator of virtues", since the tradition of the ancient Fathers of the desert. Here we preferred to quote St. Benedict's Rule, also on account of a subsequent note which we think comes from the same source. Our reason for doing so is based on short but close connected references.



23rd JANUARY 1809

[98.] "I believe that few are the priests who could be saved, but much more those who perish" (St Chrysostom).

St Augustine feels the same. When his clergy was disturbed by this opinion he told them that he said so not out of exaggeration but because that was his true feeling.

This quotation is not from the **Opera Omnia** of St. John Chrysostom edited in Latin from 1753 to 1764 in Rovereto. Fr. Bertoni had often it used from the library of his great-uncle, Fr. James Bertoni. He should have read in that book the following expression in a slightly different form: ... *I only express my opinion when I say that I do not think that many priests are going to be saved. Rather, much more are going to perish. The reason is nothing else but the fact that this vocation demands great spirit...* Fr. Bertoni could have contextualized better the whole sentence. We must keep in mind that he quoted by heart, though with so much approximation that we can detect the source, i.e. Cornelius a' Lapide's Commentary on James 3,1: ***Be not many masters, my brothers, knowing that you receive the greater judgment.*** Cornelius a' Lapide, under the heading *Few priests will be saved*, quotes St John Chrysostom in this form: ... *It is formidable what St. John Chrysostom writes, commenting on Acts in Homily 3: I do not speak foolishly, I rather talk*

¹⁸⁸ St. Benedict, *Rule*, c. 64.

¹⁸⁹ cf. *La Regle de Saint Benoit*. Paris, Mardesous 1933. Analytical Index, p. 166.

¹⁹⁰ cf. Dom Columba Marmion, OSB, *Christ, the Ideal of the Monk*. Paris/Mardesous. Index p. 598.

[Web-Site Note: Dom Marmion was ordained a priest for the Church of Dublin in 1881, at St. Agatha of the Goths, Rome, at the time (from 1837-1927) home of the Irish College].

from experience and conviction. I do not think that there are many among the priests who can be saved, but many more those who may perish.... We have to correct the last verb which is a subjunctive (**pereant** = *may perish*) in the original text, while Fr Bertoni reported the subjunctive only for the previous verb (**fiant salvi** = *may be saved*). Cornelius a' Lapide continues quoting St. John Chrysostom in the translation of Erasmus of Rotterdam, as it is found in ancient editions opposite to the original Greek text: ... *The reason is that this vocation requires an extraordinary spirit...*

St. John Chrysostom spoke of the Episcopate as the fullness of priesthood. He tried to rectify the ideas of those who were aspiring to it as a principedom or as a status of relaxation, while ignoring its very nature, its demands, its difficulties, its contradictions, its dangers and above all its responsibilities. All those people lacked that *extraordinary spirit* which such office required. St. John Chrysostom cannot refrain, as delicate a soul as he was, from stating that: ... *I would not say it, if it were not my inner conviction. I do not believe that among the priests there are many who end up being saved; but that the greater part of them end up in perdition...* He talked openly about *the fullness of Priesthood*. As far as the simple priests were concerned, it seems that he saw a fairly good proportion of *success*. As regards the text of St. James which we referred to above, it could have been taken as a basic text for this part of his third Homily in this context. As a matter of fact, I have been unable to find this citation in the biblical categories noted in the scientific apparatus of the work.

St. John Chrysostom follows a Commentary here of St. Augustine on **James 3**. He wrote: See how much we are expected to be careful, when they exhort us with those words **Be not many masters**. And even more with the words **In fact we all fail in many things**. He is therefore compelled to ask for the compassion and prayers of everybody.¹⁹¹ The dialogue referred to between St. Augustine and his Clergy could have been hinted at in this quotation as well as many other places in the works and in the life of the Saint! As a young priest of 37 years of age, St. Augustine had written to his bishop: ... *in this life, and especially nowadays, nothing is more difficult, more fatiguing and more risky than the offices of bishop, priest and deacon...* In this statement St. Augustine came very close to St Chrysostom's expressions, even without drawing the formidable consequences. We think that what has been said may be sufficient to clarify Fr. Bertoni's entry here.

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[99.] St Andrew Corsini had a vision of two of his Holy Patrons. He asked them about his own salvation. They answered that he would be granted four more years in which he could make his election and salvation certain. He had already lived 60 or 70 years in a most holy manner.

¹⁹¹ St. Augustine, Saermon 122, *On Diverse Matters*.

Both this and the preceding note show that Fr. Bertoni was influenced by the rigorist trends that were prevalent among the Clergy of his time¹⁹². One senses that he had not yet begun to correct certain aspects of his intellectual formation, through the influence of the spirit and doctrine of St Alphonsus de Liguori. He will soon be 'among the first to follow St. Alphonsus' Moral Theology: to make it appreciated and to apply it in practice.'¹⁹³ He saw to it that one of his sons and disciples, Fr. Charles Fedelini, would one day introduce its text in the Seminary.

We think that in this note, Fr Bertoni presents the incident in the life of St Andrew Corsini with excessive concern. It is obvious to all that the crucial and decisive years in which to reach the degree God calls somebody to holiness - and therefore to make certain one's election and salvation - should be the last ones. ***He who perseveres until the end will be saved.*** Blessed are therefore those 60 or 70 years lived by the Saint. If God grants the Saint four more years to reach the crown of perfection, let him ask of God the grace not to lose heart and to live these four last years in a manner as holy as the other 60 or 70. Let him not fail the Lord. It will certainly not be the Lord who will fail him. By ***persevering until the end*** there is no doubt that ***each will be saved.***

Is then all concern taken away? Of course not! Each person carries always one's own human weakness within. Some concern becomes therefore providential and it is implied in the two Scripture texts which are blended into one by Fr Bertoni. ***So, labor the more, brothers, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election.... (2 Pet 1,10). With fear and trembling work out your salvation ... (Ph 2,12).***



[99a] *We have lost the art of speaking because ...*

For the sake of completeness, we offer this entry. Fr. Gaspar left the entry suspended precisely in this manner.¹⁹⁴

[100.] *[If] one is enchanted by what he sees, the remedy is in the mind. For example, when you see a person alive, think of him as dying.*

For once we can give the original Latin note as Fr. Bertoni wrote it in his *Journal*. Here it is: ***Fascinatio est in visu, remedium in intellectu e.g.: vides viventem cogita morientem.*** First of all it seems that this is a quotation from St Augustine. Surely the second part is, from "***For example...***" The first part of the note is not to be found in his writings, though it can easily be from Augustine¹⁹⁵ and it makes sense in conjunction with the second part of the quotation. The phrase could have reached Fr Bertoni by second hand.

¹⁹² Fr. Stofella notes here that in the Seminary of Verona in Fr. Bertoni's seminary days the text used was that of Fr. Gabriel Antoine, an author with a rigorist tendency, despite once belonging to the Society of Jesus.

¹⁹³ *Summarium Additionale*, Document 28, p. 594.

¹⁹⁴ Web-Site note: the translator simply omitted this entry.

¹⁹⁵ St. Augustine, *Enarrationes* in Ps 48, Sermon 2, 7.

Let us now try to interpret the note. We have a person who is astounded because he sees the wicked filled with evil doings and yet flourishing in their iniquities and apparently happy. St Augustine comes into the picture and shakes up the "enchanted and fascinated" person and tells him (in the same quotation as above): You wonder at what this man has in this life, but wait a while and consider what this same man will be able to take with himself beyond his death! In the reflection of Fr Gaspar that *fascination* could have been applied to problems of faith or of chastity.



[101.] Every day meditate on Psalm 15(14)

This resolution, added to the note on **Discretion** as the **mother of all virtues**, would confirm the probability that St Gaspar was, at that time, examining the Rule of St Benedict. Several verses of **Psalm 15 (14)** are reported in the prologue of the Rule:

*... If we want to fix our dwelling in the tent of the Kingdom of God, we will not make it unless we set out for it along the path of good works... Let us ask the Lord, with the Psalmist, saying: **Lord, who will dwell in your tent? Who will rest on your holy mountain?** After this question, brothers, let us listen to the answer of the Lord who indicates the way to His tent: **He who walks without blame. He who speaks the truth in his heart. He who does not deceive with his tongue. He who does no evil to his neighbor. He who does not take up insult against his neighbor. He who, facing the Evil One and his allurements, knows how to destroy him and to repel far away from the heart his attractions...***

St. Benedict enlarged the Psalm with paraphrases, leaving out part of the next to the last verse and the whole last verse. We think that Fr. Bertoni picked up the last verse too and wrote:

*... **But he glorifies those who fear the Lord! And concluded: He who binds himself under oath not to deceive his neighbor. He who did not put out his money to usury and did not accept bribes against innocent people. He who does these things will not fall for ever...***

We want to take this opportunity to point out that Fr Gaspar found in the book of Psalms a continuous reference for the over-flowing of the feelings of his heart. Three Psalms in particular will be very dear to him:

Psalm 91(90) *He who dwells under the protection of the Most High, a Psalm of Hope*¹⁹⁶.

Psalm 116,10-19 (115) *I believed, as a Psalm of thanksgiving for the grace of Vocation.*¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ *Epistolario* p. 323 – Letter 8 to Fr. Bragato September 26, 1840.

¹⁹⁷ *ib.*, pp. 43, 44 – Letter 10 to Mother L. Naudet, December 21, 1821.

Psalm 123(122) *I have lifted up my eyes to you*, a Psalm which inspires the necessary attitudes of the heart for Prayer.¹⁹⁸

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¹⁹⁸ *Ib.*, pp. 45, 46 – Letter 11, to Mother L. Naudet, undated.

1st FEBRUARY 1809

[102.] **Frequent memory of the life of Christ: with a response of tender love.**

This *frequent memory of the life of Christ* is not presented as a result of human effort. In that case it would not have been recorded in this *Journal*. It was a precious gift of Heaven. We can connect it with a statement expressed at the beginning of both outlines of the *panegyric* of St Francis:

... Perfection, which has its source and fulfillment in Charity... consists in harmonizing our life with that of our Lord Jesus Christ. Since this divine Master began to do and to teach, His actions, though personal and of a perfection which is above our understanding, were intended generally to be imitated...¹⁹⁹

And since this Divine Master began to *do and to teach*, His actions, as His own personal and individual activities, are of and incomprehensible excellence. Yet, they can be imitated. This is nothing other than the imitation of Christ to which that *frequent memory of His life... tends.*

This ardor of imitation is that *tender love of correspondence* which accompanies him. This comes from that charity poured into hearts by the Holy Spirit.. This is indeed that perfection proper to the Saints, those Heroes, **Apostolic Men**²⁰⁰.

The gift of this day is the development of that sentiment already received and recorded after St. Gaspar's three Masses of Christmas: *Oh, what a responsibility do we have to do for Him, partly at least, what He firstly did for us.*

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[103.] **During the Consecration of the Mass: very lively and affectionate sense of Christ's presence.**

The Mass of this day is presented as the most proper mounting for the *jewel* of its mystical gift. In its most solemn moment, something happened to Fr Bertoni's spirit. It was similar to what happened during the Mass of the previous **11 January**: *a very lively sense of the presence of Christ as a friend...* We treat here of things which, by their nature, defy any definition. It still remains true that God does not repeat Himself. This brief and incomplete text offers us some indication that Fr. Bertoni was, at times, gratified by God with a spiritual knowledge, of an experiential order, about the presence of God. He was therefore granted a certain *mystical union* with Him.²⁰¹

[104.] **Readiness to accept ignominies for Christ's sake.**

¹⁹⁹ Introduction to the Panegyric honoring St. Francis – MssB ## 1795, ff.

²⁰⁰ ib. – Fr. Bertoni was much inspired by the Early Church, and the Apostles following Jesus – cf. CF ## 189; 226; 232 [Acts of the Apostles] 252; 259; 261; 272; 273;

²⁰¹ Fr. Nello Dalle Vedove, *Un Modello di S. Abbandono*, o.c., p. 185.

This too is a gift from God: the logical fruit of the other gifts of this day. We think of the self-offering of Fr. Gaspar for suffering, humiliations, martyrdom and ignominies of **9 and 24 July, 25.27.28.29 Sept**; and also **22 Oct** when Fr Gaspar recorded: ***This attitude is the best gift, of which I feel utterly unworthy.***

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4th FEBRUARY 1809

[105.] Those who do not begin by praying well, cannot talk well about God either.

This statement can come either from personal experience or it is a good thought taken from some living authority or book. Fr Bertoni treasured it with a slight tone of personal resolution.

For him, Prayer remains ***the life of our life and the soul of our soul***. Something like ***the breathing: ... I opened my mouth and I drew in the Spirit***. This is what he will tell the Priests when he will instruct them about the ***Union with God***.²⁰² If we are not provided with this *vital energy*, how can we talk well of God?

This is all the more true in the priestly ministry where it is always Christ who ***works in the first person***. That union is vitally realized with Him as ***the Primary Actor to whom man, as a chosen and living instrument, clings and is led as by the hand***. When Prayer is not done well, it loosens rather than tightens the union with Christ. Then how can one talk well of God?

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14th FEBRUARY 1809

[106.] She coupled such spiritual strength and energy that made her unshakable against all obstacles which could interfere with her plans. This came from the interior security she had to be following God's will. She strongly believed that there is nothing that could hamper God from realizing what He has established. Her only fear was that she would not correspond duly to the graces of God.

This is a threefold principle that aims at its being able to be reproduced in one's life. But who is this personality about whom Fr. Bertoni writes? We believe it is a person of the calibre of St Teresa of Avila. The traits are very probably hers. Here are some texts from her *Life* :

... I happened sometimes to feel tormented by most serious tribulations, having become the object of detraction on the part of this city and of my own Order. Many more afflictions of a different nature gave me further cause for anxiety. In those

²⁰² A Conference presented by St. Gaspar to Priests, entitled *Union with God*.

circumstances I could hear the Lord telling me: "What do you fear? Don't you know that I can do anything? What I have promised, I'll accomplish? (it had always been so, in fact!)" I then would muster up courage and become ready to embark upon any new work whatsoever. I would face, for the service of God, even greater torments and suffering, though it was very heavy for me. This experience happened so many times that I can not remember." ²⁰³

"Oh, what a joy to have to suffer in doing God's will!" ²⁰⁴

"The only ambition we can have (and God does not allow any other), must be that we serve His Divine Majesty at any cost. In my Foundations I never did anything, as little as it could be, which would have seemed to disagree with God's will." ²⁰⁵

Whatever we do for Him, is always too little." ²⁰⁶

"Blessed be God, because if we do not fail Him he will never fail us first." ²⁰⁷

"Oh, what a misfortune to live in this life! It is like having always our enemies at the door. We cannot leave our arms even for eating and sleeping. We are continuously fearing that somebody, somewhere should attack and storm our stronghold!... Pray, my dear daughters, that his Majesty should always live in me. Otherwise, after having spent my life in such a miserable way, I would not know how to give myself comfort." ²⁰⁸

"It is clear that a person must never rely on oneself. One should never expose oneself to temptation. Even if one had received many graces of Prayer. We can always fall. Be very careful! I beseech you for God's sake." ²⁰⁹



15th FEBRUARY 1809

[107.] First day of Lent: sermon by Fr Joseph.

For a good death one should shun idleness, sin and the occasion of sin.

Those who have done good things will go to eternal life, those who have done bad things will go into eternal fire.

This is the Catholic belief: anyone who does not believe this faithfully and firmly, cannot be saved.

You will be converted by [the exercise of] the mind. It is however not so easy by [the exercise of] the will.

If you come to listen humbly to a simple and frank Preacher, God will make up for [his] lack of eloquence.

We think that this was a sermon outline. There will be a dozen more notes of this kind until **22 March**, Wednesday of the Passion Week. These entries will reduce very much the customary personal annotations Fr. Bertoni used to jot down. There will be only one sample of his precious *gifts of prayer*.

²⁰³ St. Teresa of Avila, *Life...* o.c., Ed. Rome 1949, c. 26, n. 2.

²⁰⁴ Id. *Interior Castle*, Fifth Mansions, c. 2, n. 14.

²⁰⁵ Id., *Foundations*, c. 27, nn. 14, 15.

²⁰⁶ Id., *Path of Perfection*, c. 12, n. 1.

²⁰⁷ Id., *Letters*, Venice 1739. Letter 38, to Alfonzo Ramirez.

²⁰⁸ Id., *Interior Castle*, Third Mansions, nn. 2-3.

²⁰⁹ Id., *Life...* o.c., c. 19, n. 13.

If we could read *Saint Joseph* instead of *Father Joseph*, we might be able to refer to the little church next to the *Canossian Retreat*. In these entries we would see some notes for the outlines of sermons he preached from **15 Feb** to **22 March** to the people of the parish for Lent. But this interpretation does not seem possible. We have here a sermon outline for **Ash Wednesday: *You are dust and unto dust you will return...*** which Fr Bertoni must have heard from the lips of that unidentified Fr. Joseph. We can ask ourselves: For what purpose? We answer: Probably with the view of making use of it himself, for his own sermon that same day to an audience of the same level as Fr Zeno's.

We cannot understand the use of his *Spiritual Journal* for these sermon outlines, without the urgency of collecting texts for some sermons which he must have suddenly been charged to preach. All these outlines are of a very practical nature and of such low quality that it does not seem worthwhile to have been taken note of in this *Journal* - except, as we said, because of some sudden practical necessity. Let us leave aside these problems and take this as a sample of popular preaching. We can take the place in the pews of the church and listen.

We notice also that the entry of **15 Feb** comes from this unknown Fr. Joseph's sermon, because it is stated so. But we are not sure whether the following notes for the **16th, 19th, 22nd, 23rd**, and so on, refer to the same source. There are, in fact, some texts which do evidence a clear Bertonian character... Whatever their origin, let us then take the texts as they come! They have been compiled by Fr Gaspar. They must reveal something of his own mind. This is the minimum we should be convinced of, in the circumstances.

As regards that Fr Joseph: who was he? It is simply impossible to ascertain. About the first statement of the sermon we have nothing to add. The text which follows the biblical quotation is from St Athanasius' Symbol of Faith. The last paragraph presents a thought the expression of which appears often in Fr Bertoni's preaching as a summary of a statement from Fr P. Segneri's writings:

*... Very many Christians even though they believe that Hell exists and that a single sin can condemn them to it, continue to live in sin... Bad habits harden further the will to sin, in such a way that they do recognize sin but they do not attempt to avoid it...*²¹⁰.

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16th FEBRUARY 1809

[108.] Do not follow the crowd in doing evil.(Ex 23,2)

Do not judge by appearances but judge justly.(Jn 7:24)

Do not be conformed to this world. (Rom 12:2)

The just lives by faith. (Rom 1:17)

The Word that I have spoken to you: that will judge you! (Jn 12:48) God will not judge us according to the principles of this world, nor following

²¹⁰ Fr. Paul Segneri, SJ, *Instructed Christian*, Part I, Reason I, nn. 6, 7.

the opinions of some more lenient theologians, but according to the Gospel.

The first text is from **Ex 23:2**. The Latin Vulgate²¹¹ reads: *You shall not follow the multitude to do evil...* Fr. Gaspar, in his Conference to the Seminarians from **Primum Regum**²¹², **will compare such sheep as *stupid*** - the text from exodus goes on: *... neither shall you yield in judgment to the opinion of the most part to stray from the truth...*

The second text is from **Jn 7:24**: *... Judge not according to the appearance, but judge just judgment.* This is immediately preceded by these words: *....If a man receive circumcision on the Sabbath day, that the Law of Moses may not be broken; are you angry with Me because I have healed the whole man on the Sabbath day...?* The Lord is alluding to His healing the paralytic on the Sabbath.

The third text is from **Rm 12:2**: *... and be not conformed to this world...* this has received a relatively abundant testimony in Fr. Bertoni's entry for **July 22, 1808**, above.

The next text is from **Rm 17:2**: *... the just man lives by faith...!*

The final text is from **Jn 12:48**, but Fr. Gaspar has accommodated it somewhat: *... he that despises Me, and receives not My words, has One that judges him; the word that I have spoken shall judge him on the last day...* Fr. Bertoni's comment here is a development of this: the sermon of God is not the word of men. The former is what will judge.

These are as flashes of *Doom's Day* during and after the sermon on Death!

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19th FEBRUARY 1809

[109.] If we would consider what great evil is sin, we would not commit even one.

It is not sufficient to listen to the divine Word and enjoy it, while practicing only a few things.

Herod too enjoyed listening to John the Baptist's [preaching] and practiced some of his teaching but he did not do anything about his ruling passion.

This seems also to be a sermon outline, or notes intended for some homily to be preached shortly.

The first note is a theme which was very dear to Fr Bertoni all his life. We might recall here the witness of Fr Charles Fedelini, his pupil and *dear son* :

*...(Fr Gaspar) was one day speaking to his disciples on religious matters, when he suddenly exclaimed: **I can't continue! What great evil is Sin!** and he burst into tears...*²¹³

²¹¹ Italian translation is Martini.

²¹² Meditation 19 [MssB ## 5649-5700] - 1 Reg 4:16-23.

²¹³ Summarium Additionale, Document 20, p.124.

It seems very probable that this happened in a class room, before his *Disciples* [meaning *pupils*]. Fr Fedelini was at that time doing his two years' course of *Humanity and Rhetoric* at the *Stimmate*, under the personal guidance of Fr Gaspar.

The second part of the note refers to **Mark 6,20**: ***For Herod feared John knowing him to be a just and holy man; and kept him, and when he heard him, did many things; and he heard him willingly***. Herod, however did not want to hear what is said in verse 18, i.e. ***It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife!*** This was his ruling passion.

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22nd FEBRUARY 1809

[110.] ***I see a rod watching = that is the loving scourge.
If this does not work...I see a boiling cauldron = that's Hell.***

This is the beginning of a rather lengthy sermon outline. The text is from **Jeremiah 1:11, 13** and it is interpreted allegorically following Cornelius a' Lapide. Here is the quotation: *In its tropological sense God shows to the watchers (those who want to repent) the rod of correction as a beginning. If they do not accept it and remain impenitent he reserves the cauldron of the Gehenna for them.* ²¹⁴ The aim of correction is that the sinner should be converted and live.

The rod is therefore a sign of love: *loving rod*. This *watching rod* will appear again in Fr Bertoni's preaching - he will say in the sermon ***The Consequences of Sin*** ²¹⁵:

... Divine Justice - is like a rod covered with eyes to watch over sinners. To number one by one all their evil deeds. To consider precisely the way, the time and the amount of their punishment.

This also is a reflection of what Fr. Segneri wrote in ***The Instructed Christian***. ²¹⁶

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[111.] **Three are the things needed for salvation:**

1. Avoid small sins. *He who contemns little things shall fall little by little. They are like little thieves who enter by the window in order to open to door to the big thieves.*

2. Convince ourselves that we shall not go to Heaven without the cost of much labor and effort. *The Kingdom of God suffers violence. Make an*

²¹⁴ Cornelius a' Lapide, *Commentary in Jeremiah*.

²¹⁵ St. Gaspar Bertoni, 'Consequences of Sin.'

²¹⁶ Fr. Paul Segneri, SJ, *The Instructed Christian*. Part 2, Reason 12, n. 6.

effort to go in. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.*

3. Have the good will to go [to Heaven]. *He who has good will, has everything.* Demosthenes managed to overcome four natural defects in order to become an orator. a) Longing for [irresponsible] freedom through solitude, by shaving half of his beard. b) A weak voice. c) A poor pronunciation, by keeping a stone in his mouth. d) Raising his shoulder by using a sword.

It is a continuation of the outline for a sermon, begun under the same date, **February 22nd**: even though this is not the theme for a completed discourse, which would be followed here as the outline for another sermon – as though he would have forgotten to include the possible dates, as **February 23rd**, or **24th**. Whatever, these hypotheses make little difference. The brief tract that we have here is not complete. The passage was a bit long – so, it seemed best to divide it as we have here.

The first requirement for Salvation is based upon a hemistich from **Sirach 19:1**, which has already been well commented upon in the note of **24 July 1808**. We add here some statements by St. Teresa of Avila which Fr. Bertoni must have surely read. At the conclusion of the Foundation of Palenza, she admonished the Discalced Nuns and Monks with these words:

... By means of little things the Devil goes about boring and drilling holes, through which bigger things can enter later on. Never let yourselves say 'there is no harm in this...this is of little importance... In this way much damage are in fact done...' ²¹⁷
In her autobiography she wrote: "I was preoccupied not to commit any moral sin, but I used to care little about venial sins. This was in fact what ruined me!" ²¹⁸

In her *Life*²¹⁹, we read that she had noted she had not committed any mortal sin – but, that she paid little heed to her venial sins, and it was these which ruined her. To make little account of venial sins ruins the soul.

As regards the second requirement for salvation, i.e. the practical conviction of the necessity of laboring for salvation, the biblical support is taken from **Mt 11:12** where Jesus praised John the Baptist: ***The Kingdom of God is conquered by force and is the reward of those who take it by violence.***

The second biblical support is **Luke 13:24**: ***Make an effort to enter by the narrow door*** - that of virtue - ***because, I tell you, many will seek to enter and will not manage*** because they do not use the narrow door but the wide and broad entrance.

The third biblical support is again **Mt 14:24** or **Luke 9:23**. it is always Jesus' word. In both quotations the beginning is the same: ***If one wants to come after me*** - and in

²¹⁷ *Foundations*, c. 29, n. 32. In: *Opere*, Ed. Venice 1723., Rome edition 1949.

²¹⁸ *Foundations*, nn. 193, 194. Ed. 1723. Tome 2. Sentences.

²¹⁹ St. Teresa of Avila, *Life*, o.c., c. 4, n. 7 – Rome Edition 1949.

the second one we have also the **pick up his cross every day**. We have already seen at the end of September and in the beginning of October, that Fr. Bertoni used this text to organize his points for the Panegyric of St. Francis. This text, however, is not only for heroic saints, but is rather a matter of everyday spiritual living. Fr Bertoni will write to Leopoldina Naudet in 1828:

...It's up and down... sometimes straight, sometimes crooked. We follow Him Who walks in front of us with the Cross on His shoulders and keeps on crying: "He who wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, let him take up his cross and follow behind me..." ²²⁰

With regard to the third necessity for salvation, this would be *good will*. It is quite correct to say that he who has it, has all, provided he does whatever he is able to. In some other writing Fr Bertoni completed the Latin quotation as follows **but the will is not good, if it does not do what he can**. A man of good will has everything, because God, on His part, will never fail him. In the *Imitation of Christ* we read about the anxieties about Salvation: *...Oh, if I only knew that I shall (be able to) persevere!... And he suddenly heard God's voice: "If you knew this, what would you do now?... Do now what you would then like to do, and you will be quite sure..."* ²²¹

There follows the example of the classical pagan, "to show how a strong will can overcome the obstacles which to ordinary people seem insurmountable, and how to reach the height of artistic excellence through labor and study."²²² If Demosthenes was able to exercise such violence on himself for his purposes, what should a Christian do to conquer the Kingdom of Heaven?

With reference to n. 1: "It is related that Demosthenes lived for months on end in an underground room with his head half shaved in order not to be tempted to go out. There [cf. n. 4 above] he would declaim aloud, in front of a mirror as tall as his body. A sword was suspended just above one of his shoulders which he had the habit of raising too high. In this manner he succeeded in controlling his rude bearing and his clumsy mannerisms."

With reference to the 2nd and 3rd points above: "He had a thin and weak voice, a faulty pronunciation of the "r", a short and a belabored breath. In order to strengthen his voice, it is said that he used to run up a slope while proclaiming poems, speeches and conversation in a loud voice. To correct the defects of pronunciation he used to recite rapidly, while keeping little stones in his mouth. To accustom his eyes and ears to the noisy excitement of the crowd, he used to discourse along the shores of a stormy sea."²²³ And this rather extended outline is not yet finished.



²²⁰ *Epistolario*, p. 242. Letter 144, late spring or summer of 1828.

²²¹ *Imitation of Christ*, Book 1, c. 25, n. 2.

²²² Joseph Arcangeli, Commentary on *Cicero's Orator*. Prato 1885.

²²³ Jerome Bartolotti-Dominic Bassi, Introduction to *The Three Orations of Demosthenes* [against Philip] n. 8

[112.] If the matter of our Salvation would depend on God alone, no one would ever be damned: *I do not want the death of a sinner...*

But since it depends also on our cooperation, and this is lacking, and so, many are damned.

It is a great danger to hear God's Word without drawing fruit from it.

The first and the second sentence go together with what was said about the third requirement for Salvation. They confirm that *whoever who has good will has everything*. The scriptural text that is inserted between the first and second statement is from **Ezekiel 33:11**. This is accepted in the liturgical form of the Divine Office for Prime during the ferial days of Lent:

... As I live, says the Lord, I do not wish the death of the sinner, but rather that he be converted and live. The original text sounds as follows: *As I live, says the Lord God, I do not wish the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn back from his way and live...*

The last sentence repeats for everybody the moral of the predicament of Herod with John the Baptist: "he likes to listen to him...but does not obey his essential message **it is not lawful!**... nor does he send Herodias back to her husband".

[In a sermon on *The means of salvation* Fr Bertoni will say that Salvation:

...must be sought after with our cooperation. It is not sufficient to ask help from God. We ought to help ourselves with those powers which God gives us. It is like people besieged in a square, who both act and wait to be rescued... Paradise is not a hereditary Kingdom, but a Kingdom to be conquered... Saints were of the conviction that it is not by a light effort that we are saved but that all powers of man are necessary. It is worth while to believe the Saints, because "he who has crossed the river knows how deep the water is...]²²⁴

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26th FEBRUARY 1809

[113.] **We must make in ourselves a portrait of Jesus Christ.**

From a little blot of ink on the original notebook, this date could be either the 25th, or the 26th. The entry seems to have been made in some haste – and the precise date would not make a great deal of difference.

This entry could very well have been inspired by a text of Fr Da Ponte in a Meditation on the Incarnation²²⁵.

²²⁴ The Translator has added this paragraph, not found in Fr. Stofella's Notes for the *Memoriale Privato*. Cf. perhaps MssB ## 4092-4094.

²²⁵ Fr. DaPonte, I, of Part 2, n. 3.

...God showed, in the last days, His Holiness and all His Virtues by impressing them on the God-made-man. He wanted Him to be a visible portrait of them all, so that we may be stimulated by His example to imitate them while he helps us by His grace to acquire them. In this way nobody can excuse himself from doing it...

We want to report here a quotation from Fr Surin's Spiritual Letters. Fr. Bertoni read with great interest his *Life* which he will quote also in his writings. That great Jesuit said:

*...What is needed is the image of Jesus Christ. It is this divine portrait which we have to draw in our hearts...*²²⁶

In the index of the more *notable matters* the word which refers to this quotation has the French **portrait**.

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27th FEBRUARY 1809

[114.] God does not command the impossible. In commanding he reminds us to do what you can and to ask for what you can not.

This is a text from St. Augustine²²⁷ The **Council of Trent** used them in its Session 6 on Justification:

...God does not command impossible things. By commanding he admonishes to do what you can and to ask for what you can not, and he helps you so that you can...²²⁸

The precise connection between this text and the one that follows on the same day, February 27th, it is indicated to us. And so we will proceed to what follows.²²⁹

²²⁶ Fr. Surin, *Lettres Spirituelles*. Tome I, Letter 24. Lyon 1843.

²²⁷ St. Augustine, *De natura et Gratia*, c. 43

²²⁸ Council of Trent, Sessopm VI. *De Justificatione*, c. 11: *De Observantia mandatorum deque illius necessitate et possibilitate*.

²²⁹ The Translator, however, may have found the link unnoticed by Fr. Stofella: [cf. Bertoni, Vol. 3, pp.20-22]:

Fr N. Dalle Vedove has discovered the connection between this text of St Augustine and the following lines about the four kings and indeed the note of 28 Feb. On the 27 Feb the Bishop of Verona, Innocence Liruti, had sent a letter to Fr Bertoni by which he informed him that he was chosen as a Definitor to help in the Collegiate of St Nicholas. Such office consisted in having the responsibility of giving the last word in the solution of theological and moral cases debated by the Clergy. This was a great honor for Fr Bertoni, which showed the special trust the bishop had in him as a theologian, though not teaching as a professor in the Seminary. It meant also that the humble priest was considered to have much influence and respect on the part of the Clergy. The only one who did not take pride in this promotion was surely Fr Bertoni himself. As the note of his JOURNAL reveals, he took it as an occasion for obedience and an extra work to be carried out with humility and much confidence in God who helps us so that we do what we must do.

Four Kings received warnings from God through His Prophets that they would lose their Kingdoms, i.e. the King of Nineveh, Saul, Balthazar and Hezekiah.

We must not be consumed by melancholy like Saul. We must get down to work.

The King of Nineveh received the unhappy message through Nahum, the Prophet who had *the burden of Nineveh* = i.e., the grave announcement against Nineveh, in which the description of the destruction of the city was prophetically described. Regarding the king, there are the two final verses: *O king of Assur, your shepherds sleep: your princes are buried: your people is trying to hide in the mountains, and there is no one to gather them. Our wound is not secret, your wound is most serious: all those who have heard the news concerning you, have applauded in great joy: for indeed, to whom has not your malice done evil in every time ?* ²³⁰

Two separate times Saul received the message from Samuel: the first was for having offered to God the holocaust without awaiting the arrival of the prophet [cf. **1 K 13:9-14**]. The second time, for having allowed the King Agag and a great part of the booty to escape the absolute extermination Amalecites [cf. **1 K 15:20-30**].

To Baltasar, the warning came through the prophet Daniel, the night of the festive sacrilege:

...This is the interpretation of the word. MANE: God has numbered your kingdom and has finished it. THECEL: you are weighed in the balance and found wanting. PHARES: your kingdom is divided and is given to the Medes and Persians...That same night Baltasar the Chaldean was slain... And Darius the Mede succeeded to the kingdom, being threescore and two years old... [cf. Dn 5:26-28, 30-31].

Hezekias, the King of Judah, through the Prophet Isaiah had already received from God previously a threat of death: *you will die and you will not live!* Therefore, following prayers and tears, he was granted another 15 years of life with the promise of divine protection and the liberation of the city from the Assyrians. Later on, *Hezekias had shown his treasures to the ambassadors of the King of Babylon, and heard it said by Isaiah that all of this would one day be transported into Babylon.*

*And then Hezekias said to Isaiah: Just is the word uttered by the Lord. And he added: There would only be peace if the promises are kept in my days. Hezekias asked and obtained of not seeing with his own eyes the desolations and the collapse that the Lord wanted to wreak upon the land of Judah [cf. **Is 28:1-6; 39: 5-8. 4 K 19**].*

²³⁰ Cf. Martini, c. 3, 18, 19.

The melancholy of Saul came as a result of his being reproved [cf. **1 K 16:14**]. *The spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him*. Then, *whenever the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, David took up his harp, and played with his hand and Saul was refreshed and was better, for the evil spirit departed from him*. Saul would have needed much more than the harp! What he needed was a sentence of repentance, and twice he admitted he had sinned, and he did this with that good spirit with which the Lord animated David: but, the prophet was able to say to him: *The Lord has indeed taken your sin away: you will not die!* And his conduct corresponded.

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28th FEBRUARY 1809

115. To be saved, one has to do as in a sea storm:

1. [to jettison ballast by] unburdening one's conscience

2. to pray, to act and to obey

It is sufficient to reflect and bring into harmony the heart and the hands with the tongue which says *Our Father*....

When on a boat and overtaken by a sea storm, people would throw everything into the sea to lighten it and have more chance for the persons to float and be saved. One day, during a sermon in the cathedral, reminding the people of the incident of Jonah, Fr. Bertoni will cry to an imaginary stubborn sinner present in the audience:

...Oh obstinate sinner, my brother, this [sea] turmoil has happened because of you. Do you wish to sleep in the bosom of sin? Why do you not rise up to appease the Lord? Throw into the sea not yourself but your sins!...or even yourself, yes: into the sea of God's mercy. Come to the Heart of Jesus Christ. He will put you back again on the shore of His Grace... ²³¹

This is what unburdening one's conscience is. Then the three verbs which, in the infinitive, are like three imperatives, for those who want to be saved:

PRAY: because ***You cannot do anything without Me.*** (**Jo 15:5**) says the Lord; but ***Ask, and it will be granted to you; search and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you...*** (Mt 7,7)

ACT and OBEY: because ***Not everyone who says to me Lord! Lord!... shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven but he who does the will of My Father...*** (**Mt 7:7,21**). ²³²

With reference to the last brief sentence, Fr. Bertoni seems to suggest the simplest means to make the three verbs work together, i.e. ***Pray, Act, Obey*** :

²³¹ Sermon 5, May 14, 1801 – *The Ascension*. MssB ## 499-521.

²³² *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, pp. 117-120. Sermon 29, *On Perseverance*. April 11, 1803. MssB ## 773-793.

... It is sufficient to reflect he says and bring into harmony the heart -by an interior and loving will - **and the hands** - by deeds - **with the tongue which says *Our Father***...

To pray and to live as God's children! Here we can find the secret of Fr. Gaspar: faithfulness to the commandment which he found in three most cherished texts:

***Let nothing hinder you from praying.* (Sir 18:22)**

***It is necessary to pray always and never give up* (Lk 18:1).**

***Pray without ceasing* (1 Th 5:17).**

In a letter to Naudet he wrote:

... It is clear that the Lord wants us to be mindful of Him and that our thought and affection should dwell continuously in Him with recollection... Blessed is the person who gets lost in this abyss... who throws himself wholeheartedly into this Ocean as in a shipwreck! A little child is never more secure than when it abandons all its thoughts and anxieties, and sleeps with its arms around the neck of its mother. It does not see, it does not hear, it does not talk. It is the mother who sees and hears and talks and acts on its behalf... ²³³

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29th FEBRUARY 1809

[116.] **Ask for the Grace to follow Him and to have zeal for His glory and the salvation of [my] soul.**

"Let him who serves me follow me".

1809 was not a leap year. The date of 29th February was certainly a human error...to which the holiest of souls are always subject as long as they live on this earth! He simply had overlooked the fact that with the previous entry, the month had come to an end. There is also a bit of a mix up in the original manuscript. The pen is different for this note, as is the ink.

This is a very personal note of Fr. Gaspar. The scriptural quotation is from **Jo 12:26**. It belongs to the texts of the solemn day of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. It follows the short parable of the grain of wheat which unless it falls into the ground and dies, it remains unproductive. If it dies, it brings forth abundant fruit. Martini translates and comments as follows: ***He who serves me, let him follow me; where I am, there, will also be the one who serves me.*** My ministers are more especially called to fall in behind me, along the way of the cross. He who will follow me along such way, will follow me into blessedness too." Yes, because the complete text has the following words: ***And he who will serve me, will be honored by my Father.***

²³³ *Epistolario*, p. 33. Letter 5, December 11, 1812; cf. also ib., p. 44, Letter 10, December 21, 1812;p. 96, Letter 36, August 31, 1813.

Let him follow is therefore a command, as Fr Bertoni reflects. It implies what is intended by the parable of the grain of wheat: the imitation of Christ crucified. Namely: *to bear the cross and to love the cross. To chastise the body and bring it into subjection. To shun honors. To bear willingly with insults. To despise oneself and wish to be despised. To suffer adversities and losses. Not to desire prosperities in this world...*

All these thing principles we read in **The Imitation of Christ**, and they are not in accord to man's natural inclination". Fr. Gaspar, then, affirms together with the **Imitation of Christ**: *If you rely on yourself, you will not be able to do anything like this, but if you rely on the Lord... God does not command the impossible.*²³⁴ He would, however, add: *Ask for what you cannot do*, because he was sure that *God will help us to do it*. And his exhortation is *to ask for the grace to follow Him and to have true zeal for His glory and the salvation of the soul* for which He shed His most precious Blood.

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²³⁴ *Imitation of Christ*, Book 2, c. 12: 'The Royal Way of the Cross, n. 9.

2nd MARCH 1809

[117.] Joy according to the World is impure, unstable, unworthy, harmful. Joy according to God is pure, stable, worthy, wholesome. It is wholesome because it overcomes the Flesh, the World and the Devil.

This is a thought for a sermon with two parts clearly opposing each other: 1. **Joy according to the World** 2. **Joy according to God**. The eight adjectives in direct opposition, propose four points for each of the two parts. And yet, it does not seem that in the actual delivery the preacher would prefer to contrast point by point the two parts, and thus divide the treatment of his theme.

We believe that both the statement and the method come from Fr Gaspar's daily reading of the *Imitation of Christ*. We give some quotations:

Nobody can fully rejoice unless he can testify to his own good conscience... Oh, if one could never seek transient joy what a good conscience he would keep!.. ²³⁵

Have a good conscience and you will always have joy... Bad conscience is always fearful and restless... Do not rejoice unless you have done something good... The wicked never have true joy... ²³⁶

The Master says to his disciple: Do you think that the persons of this time have nothing or very little to suffer? But they have many pleasures - you would say... Oh, how short, how deceitful, how disorderly and shameful are all these!... These people do not understand because they are drunk and blind. They are similar to dumb animals which rush towards the death of their souls for the sake of this mortal life's little pleasure... ²³⁷

True Joy is a theme which Fr Gaspar treated already in a sermon on ***Laetare Sunday***, 11 March 1804²³⁸:

... The true and only joy of the heart is the purpose and intention dear and sweet to all people. Both to those who serve Christ and live a way of perfection and to those who love the World and are still slaves of vanity. There is a difference, though. While the former are sure of making a proper choice of means the latter make a shameful mistake with serious harm for themselves. Fr. Bertoni wanted to rescue the latter from such dangerous deception by demonstrating to them the true road to true joy. Let us first see - he said - the way followed by the worldly people who seek that aim with such eagerness...

He quickly noted that any worldly joy comes from **those worldly goods already listed by the Psalmist (Ps 144:11-15)**. Namely: **quickness of tongue and swiftness of hand. Large number of sons and beautiful and elegant daughters. Full and overflowing barns. Fat and fruitful herds. Farms and palaces supplied to the hilt. Freedom from any slavery! ...**"People thought: how happy are those who have

²³⁵ *Imitation of Christ*, Book 1, c. 20, n. 3, 4.

²³⁶ *ib.*, Book 2, c. 6, n. 1.

²³⁷ *ib.*, Book 3, c. 12.

²³⁸ *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, pp. 16, f. – MssB ## 874-895.

these things!" But the spirit of the Prophet added, against all disenchantment: **"Happy the people whose God is the Lord!"** The preacher continued: **Here is where true joy and true happiness are found: in recognizing God as Master, in serving Him with faithfulness. In a word: by living according to God.**" ²³⁹

It is very clear that in this concept we have the merging of both the qualities of the four adjectives of true joy, and the total victory over **"Flesh, World and Devil"**.

Here now is the last appeal of the preacher:

... Let us therefore follow after virtue if we long for true joy. Let us arrange our lives properly, and we shall never lack a true and stable cheerfulness, which the world's adversities will never be able to remove nor diminish. Let us cleanse our conscience well. Our conscience is a good witness for living quiet, peaceful and happy days. When that terrible step, called death, will come -where the empty happiness of the World is changed into dreadful mourning -our security will be confirmed, our delight will be doubled. We shall have nothing to fear. To the short happy years spent in the fear of God on this earth, endless ages of full happiness will be added when we shall be introduced into the very joy of God... ²⁴⁰

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5th MARCH 1809

[118.] The Devil wants to ruin people by giving them the sense of security.(St John Chrysostom)

Do not put things off from day to day.

As for the first text, it is most characteristic of St. John Chrysostom. However it is quite difficult to find the precise quotation in the enormous literary works of the Saint. However, St. Teresa of Avila did state: that no one, as long as he lives and is engulfed in the dangers of this stormy sea, can ever be secure. ²⁴¹

This thought can be found in the spirituality of Fr. Gaspar through the ***Imitation of Christ*** :

...Never promise yourself security, however good a religious or devout a hermit you may seem to be..."The security of the saints was always filled with the Fear of God. Though they were shining with great virtues and grace they were no less careful and humble... ²⁴²

He could also have read in the preceding lines which would have revealed to him that which he could qualify for the proper dispositions:

²³⁹ ib., p. 17.

²⁴⁰ ib., p. 24

²⁴¹ St. Teresa of Avila, *Path of Perfection*, c. 40. Rome edition, c. 11, n. 7.

²⁴² *Imitation of Christ*, Book 1, c. 20, n. 3.

...No one can show external security, unless he who loves to hide himself. No one can talk with self assurance, unless he who willingly keeps silent. No one can confidently be a superior, unless he who loves to live as a subordinate. No one commands with confidence, unless he who has learned to obey. No one can fully rejoice, unless he can testify to his own good conscience...

We have seen the last line under the note of 2 March. This same doctrine came to Fr Bertoni from Fr Scupoli's ***Spiritual Combat*** as a genuine doctrine of Jesus Christ. *...since You have taught us to mistrust in ourselves and to trust in You and so we fight and pray...*²⁴³

Writing to Mother Naudet concerning a person under his guidance, he said:

... I have thought the matter over. Everything will be resolved in this way i.e. that you should begin to distrust in yourself and to trust in God. Act and pray, fear and love ...²⁴⁴

The second text is from Scripture. The complete verse is as follows:

Delay not to be converted to the Lord and defer it not from day to day. For His wrath will come of a sudden and in the time of vengeance He will destroy you (Si 5:8-9).

Fr. Bertoni will make use of this text during the Instructions to the Acolytes for the monthly Retreats of 1811 [Instruction 10]. He will use it to combat...

... a kind of sloth which is among the worst ones. He will explain: Although to defer and to put off to a later time is always dangerous, there are two areas in which this attitude is most dangerous i.e. when we defer our conversion from sin to Christ, and when we delay our Confession....

He will use the motto of from Cornelius a' Lapide: "Do not delay...do not put off... or you will mimic the crow which caws **cras** (= tomorrow)!... *Cras* I will get converted. *Cras* I shall change my life!"

He would also quote the Augustinian text used by offered by Cornelius a' Lapide: " Oh man, why do you put it off from day to day? Perhaps this very day will be your last day!"

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6th MARCH 1809

²⁴³ Scupoli, *Spiritual Combat*, Dedication Letter to Jesus Christ.

²⁴⁴ *Epistolario*, p. 42. Letter 9 – Early in 1813.

[119.] This world of ours is like a large Hospital of sick people. All are moaning. No one is cured yet the medicine is available. The medicine is prayer. But this is either not done or it is poorly done. "Either the one who prays is wicked... or one prays for wicked things... or one prays in a wicked way. Sometimes one does not pray for one's own needs... or one does not pray first for the Kingdom of God... Perhaps prayer is not devout and not persevering.

A knight used to go very often to St Ignatius to ask for prayers, while he continued in his wicked life. One day the Saint asked the gentleman if he would like to help him in carrying a table out of his room. So the gentleman stood on one side of the table and the Saint on the other. The gentleman started pulling the table out, while St Ignatius held fast the table on his own side. The gentleman insisted in pulling the table and the Saint continued to hold it. At last the gentleman said: "If Your Reverence wishes to take out the table he should follow after me". To which the Saint retorted: "You too, Sir, should follow after me when I pray for you, to take you out of your sins."

The image of the world as a hospital was not new to Fr. Bertoni. He read in Fr. Segneri's work²⁴⁵ that *Grace has given to the sounds of our Prayer a power which can heal every evil* and that nonetheless *there is a multitude of people who shun or neglect such a remedy which Divine Providence has established for their salvation...* With the same author Fr. Gaspar meditated that *Man, because of sin, has contracted four most serious illnesses: namely ignorance, malice, concupiscence and weakness. Every time one falls again into sin these illnesses get horribly worse. He is unable ever to get completely healed, even when he is free from sin. And yet this is not the worst of evils. The worst is not to be able to cooperate with the doctor. Only God can cure him. But this man does not know how to revert to God. He is unable to commend himself to God. In short, he is unable to pray...*²⁴⁶

So, in this big hospital it happens, as Fr. Gaspar notes, **In this large hospital, all are moaning**, languishing, and no one gets any better, even though the medicine, which is prayer, is readily available. However, if our prayers, as Fr. Segneri points out²⁴⁷, are not heard, this can never be God's fault: it happens necessarily that this occurs either because of the fault of the suppliant, or because of his defective petition, or by the fault of the manner of praying.

And St. Gaspar goes on: **Prayer is either not done or it is poorly done**. And here with his use of the Italian adverb *male* [poorly, or done in an evil manner], he sounds almost Augustinian. **Either the one who prays is wicked...or he asks wicked things or he asks in a wicked way...** And he continues: **He perhaps does not ask for his own needs or he does not ask - above all things - for the Kingdom of God. Either his prayer is not devout, or it is not persevering...** These are the conditions

²⁴⁵ Fr. Paul Segneri, SJ, *The Instructed Christian*. Part 3, Rule 2.

²⁴⁶ Fr. Paul Segneri, SJ, *Manna for the Soul*, Meditation for May 10th.

²⁴⁷ Id., *The Instructed Christian*, c. 1, Part 3, Rule 3.

expressed by St Thomas Aquinas for a prayer worthy to be heeded: *One who asks something for himself should ask for what is necessary for his own Salvation, devoutly and perseveringly...*²⁴⁸

The story which is reported by Fr Gaspar can explain a remark which St Thomas²⁴⁹ made in the same text: *It happens sometimes that the prayer which is done for the advantage of another person is not granted. This is because of an obstacle on the part of the one for whom we pray. It remains however meritorious for the person who prays out of charity...*

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10th MARCH 1809

[120.] There are several kinds of fear:

1. natural 2. human 3. worldly 4. servile.

These are all bad, and the world is full of them.

5. initial 6. filial: [only these last two bring to Salvation].

Your words have I hidden in my heart, that I may not sin against You.

...not in my imagination nor in my intellect.

Fr. Bertoni had dealt with the theme of *The Fear of the Lord* in the second of his early sermons. It was precisely the first one, as a priest, on **23 November 1800**. He had referred to St Thomas' *Summa*²⁵⁰ and the Council of Trent's Canons on *Justification*. He had taken only two of the qualifications which St Thomas applied to *The Fear of the Lord* and Canon 8 from the Council's statement:

... I speak of that Fear by which a person is converted to God, or through which one is joined more closely to God. So there are two manners in which one fears God. Firstly one fears the temporal or eternal punishment by which God can punish our faults in a most just way. Secondly one fears the very fault by which he can get separated from God. If we have recourse to (God's) mercy for fear of *the punishment* or of Hell and we are sorry for our sin or we refrain from sin: this is *servile Fear*. This fear is good, according to Trent's Canon No 8 and it comes from the Holy Spirit. (It is clear that Fr Gaspar is not dealing here with the *purely servile* fear, but of that which is open towards *filial* fear). **If we have recourse to God for fear of *the fault*, and we draw closer to God: this is *filial fear*, and this is properly the gift of the Holy Spirit...**²⁵¹

Some years later, in this hurried note of his *Spiritual Journal*, Fr. Bertoni collected and numbered all the qualifications which distinguish the *Fear of the Lord*, in the

²⁴⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, II-II, q. 83, a. 15, ad 2 um.

²⁴⁹ ib. q. 83, a. 7.

²⁵⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas, II-II, q. 19.

²⁵¹ *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, p. 154. Sermon 2, October 23, 1800. MssB ## 399-405 – the first recorded sermon of St. Gaspar as a priest, about a month after his ordination, September 20, 1800.

quotation of St Thomas' we gave above²⁵². He included also that *natural fear* which is mentioned in the second preliminary objection, but it is not treated in the answer because it excludes all moral evaluation. It does not deserve, therefore, any mention in a question which regards the moral good or evil.

St. Thomas' question reads as follows: *Whether Fear is properly to be divided into Filial, Initial, Servile and Worldly*. Fr. Bertoni added the adjective **Human**. St. Thomas did not think it necessary to distinguish *Human* from *Worldly*. He explained this by writing: *We deal here with the fear by which we somehow respectively either **become converted** to God or **a-verted** from God. Because the object of fear is an evil, sometimes man draws back from God because of the evils which he fears. This is called Human or Worldly Fear...* St Thomas' text continues: *Sometimes man, because of the evil which he hears, turns towards God and draws closer to Him. He is converted to God and clings to Him. The evil we are talking about is of double nature. It is an evil of punishment and an evil of fault. If therefore someone is converted to God and clings to Him for fear of the punishment, this would be Servile Fear. If all this is fear of the fault, it would be Filial Fear because it is proper of children to fear hurting their father. If it is because of both kinds of fear i.e. of punishment and fault together, that would be called Initial Fear because it lies in between the two.*

A question arises as to why Fr. Bertoni made those clarifications, evaluating the first three as **bad** and the following two in **leading to Salvation**.

Let us leave aside the *Natural Fear* which, as has already been seen, does not enter into the discussion. We said also that *Human* and *Worldly* fears are one and the same. The rest is clear enough. The question arises about the *Servile Fear*. Does he intend to correct the definition which he preached in that earlier sermon, basing himself on a Tridentine canon? No! It seems rather that he is considering here the *servile fear* as absolutely and purely servile (= **serviliter servilis**, according to St. Thomas²⁵³). St. Gaspar clarifies his own position in accord with this teaching: the characteristics of the fear which is not *purely servile*(= **non serviliter servilis**) are included in the *initial fear*.

As for the verse taken from **Psalm 119:11**, could express a longing of love after having meditated upon the *Fear of God* : *...Your teaching (= words), oh Lord is not in my imagination nor in my intellect. I want to keep it in my heart. So that love rather than fear may preserve me from sin.*

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13th MARCH 1809

[121.] When the Devil tempts us, he makes use of these two passions: Love and Terror. St Augustine said that these are the two roots of every sin.

If there were true goods in this world Our Lord Jesus Christ would have given us some examples. The goods of this world are like medicines. Jesus Christ, since the day of his birth, has shown us utmost

²⁵² St. Thomas, II-II, q. 19, a. 2., ad 2um.

²⁵³ id., q. 19, aa. 4, 5, 6.

poverty, utmost suffering, utmost contempt. These are therefore the only true goods.

In St Augustine's original text we read **error** (= **erroribus**) instead of Fr Bertoni's **terror** (= **terroribus**). We ask ourselves whether this entry of Fr Bertoni was a textual quotation. It seems that it may be. In the Index of the *Thoughts and Words* of St Augustine's works compiled by Maurus, we do not find this word. The doctrine, though, is surely Augustinian.

Here is a quotation from St Augustine's ***Enarrations on Psalm 42:7: Why, or for what do I go about sorrowful while the enemy afflicts me? I walk in sorrow. But why? The enemy afflicts me with temptations every day. But how? By instigating us either to love badly or to fear badly.*** By putting into our souls things which we cannot but love badly or which we cannot but fear badly.

Sometimes the ***bad love*** is substituted with ***error*** which is ultimately the same thing. Hence we are told to slam the door in the face of the enemy, that we should not feel desire towards him. The snare of the enemy is laid and ready. The bait which he has put into it is ***Error*** and ***Terror***. The first (= ***error***) tends to allure and the second (= ***terror***) strives to break into pieces and to steal away. How will we avoid the snare? "Shut the door of desire against Error. Shut the door of fear against Terror".²⁵⁴

We present here still one more text in St Augustine's ***Catechesis to Simple People***, towards the end. Instead of *bad loves* he deals with the similar *bad desires*. "The Devil, he writes, *does not tempt us only through desires but also through the terrors of insults and sufferings and the very death.*"

No wonder that these *loves* and these *terrors* are at the root of every sin because both in the former and in the latter there lies that greed which, according to St Paul is the **root of all evils (I Tim 6:10)**.

To attract this desire and covetousness (without necessarily taking it always in the most malicious sense) the goods of this world are the first to present themselves. Are they true goods? Do they satisfy the just desires of man? Do they cooperate in helping him to reach eternal Salvation?

The words of Fr Bertoni are an echo of what the ***Imitation of Christ*** says in the last number of the second Book:

*... If indeed there had been anything better and more useful to man's Salvation than suffering, Christ would have surely shown it to us by word and example. He has rather shown us the contrary. He exhorted both his disciples and those who want to follow after Him by saying: **If anyone wants to follow after me, let him renounce himself, pick up his cross and follow me...***

²⁵⁴ St. Augustine, *Ennarationes in Ps 30:10*.

Fr. Da Ponte writes: The spiritual cross of Christ is made up, so to say, of three pieces: Poverty, Contempt, Suffering.²⁵⁵

Therefore Fr Gaspar concluded: **The only true goods are those which Jesus Christ has shown us since the day of his birth: utmost poverty, utmost suffering, utmost contempt.**

As for the goods of this world, one has to go back to use the creatures according to the doctrine of St Ignatius of Loyola: *Only in so far as they are useful to attain the end, which should be the Glory of God and the eternal Salvation of each person.* Or, in the very word of Fr Gaspar: with the goods of this world, we have to use the same caution that we have with regard to **medicines**.

It is clear that he kept for himself the *three pieces* of the spiritual cross of Jesus. Which is because of what he read on St Teresa's *Life*.²⁵⁶ *How rich will he find himself who has left all riches for Christ! How honored will he be who refused honors for His sake and even enjoyed to be humiliated and scorned! How wise will he be who rejoiced at being considered mad, because Wisdom Himself received the same treatment.*

The text which immediately precedes this one just quoted, was not only read by Fr. Gaspar but also copied down. He would preach this to the Seminarians and Priests, as well as to the People. We take it from his own script which he prefaces with the following words: **God shed all his blood for this soul (of mine): I didn't even shed a drop of sweat. It is impossible to be saved in this way!** And he continues with Saint Teresa: Why do we like to have so many goods and joys and much glory all the time...and all this at Jesus' expense? Why do we not cry with the women of Jerusalem, at least, if we do not (want to) help Him carry the cross with the man from Cyrene? Do we think to enjoy with pleasure and hobbies what he conquered for us at the cost of His blood? It is impossible? Do we want to reward with empty honors the humiliations which (Jesus) suffered to make us reign for all eternity? It is not even probable! It is a false road. This is not the right direction. We shall never reach the goal!" Fr Gaspar copied also the final cry which Teresa addressed to her Confessor: "Cry out, Reverend Father, this truth - because God has not granted me the liberty to do it."

Except for two or three variants of form that are indeed insignificant, this is the precise text from the ancient edition of her ***Life*** at our disposal. We3 can take it from the sermon that Fr. Gaspar preached on the ***Benefit of the Missions***. But Fr. Gaspar also preached it to the Seminarians and Priests in the First Meditation of the 9th day of the Spiritual Exercises, in this form:

... Christ entered Heaven with the scars of his wounds. [He said:] This is the price by which I have bought this Kingdom. It cannot be bought by less than this. "To have it at a lower price is impossible!" – as St Teresa has put it...²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ Fr. DaPonte, o.c., Part 3, Meditation 7, second point.

²⁵⁶ St. Teresa of Avila, *Life*, o.c., c. 27:14.

²⁵⁷ *Collectanea Stigmatina*, Vol. I, p. 234 - 'The Way of Heaven.'

Fr. Bertoni makes a similar appeal from the very first day of this Retreat:

"My Priests, why don't you love Poverty and humiliations, things which you admire in the Gospel? One has the impression that it is shameful to imitate Christ, in our time St. Teresa cries out that it is impossible to pretend to want to enjoy Heaven's pleasure together with Christ without sharing in His humiliations here on earth."²⁵⁸

This is what St. Teresa herself had state: *to wish to have part in His Kingdom, that of Jesus Christ, and not to wish to share in His dishonors and travails, makes no sense.*²⁵⁹

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[122.] One well meditated maxim is sufficient for my salvation: many truths, as convincing as they might sound, astonish our mind, but they do not persuade us in a practical manner.

It seems that Fr Bertoni was speaking of himself here, but not exclusively. The observation which concludes the sentence is easily applicable to everybody. This was inspired by the Latin saying: ***Pluribus intentus minor est ad singula sensus*** (***if one is occupied in many different things, one gives little attention to particulars***). This takes its inspiration from the teaching of St Ignatius in his Spiritual Exercises. He wrote:

... What gratifies the soul is not so much to have a lot of knowledge, as rather to hear and taste the things internally. All the rest fosters only curiosity and at times vanity."
*"When in my meditation I reach a point where I found what I aimed at, I must dwell on this, without being preoccupied of going further [to other things], until my soul is fully satisfied..."*²⁶⁰

Fr. Gaspar will present the same principle to the Acolytes in the monthly retreat of 1811: **One can find salvation by pondering well over only one truth.** However, the development of this truth has not been entrusted to writing.

We believe that Fr Bertoni considered the experience of St Francis Xavier which he had written down from his **Life**. "He was converted by St Ignatius with that powerful sentence of the Gospel: ***What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and yet loses his own soul?***... The good Saint used that sentence to convert other people too." This is a passage found in a letter of the Saint, *written from India to Fr. Simon Rodriguez. It can be found in the Life of the Saint, and in a chapter we know that Fr. Bertoni had pondered. The Saint manifested a vivid desire to engrave this great saying of Christ into the heart of Don Juan III, King of Portugal.*

²⁵⁸ Ib., p. 123.

²⁵⁹ As for St. Teresa of Avila, cf. *Path of Perfection*, c. 13.

²⁶⁰ St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*. Annotations 2 and 76. cf. also DeFranciosi, *L'esprit de S. Ignace*. III edition, Spes-Paris 1948. c. 14. 'Sur Oraison,' nn. 16, 17.

...If I was sure that the King [John III] takes into consideration my suggestions, I would beg of him to meditate every day for one quarter of an hour that divine sentence ***What profits a man if he gains.....*** and to ask of God true understanding together with an interior sentiment of the heart. I should also like that he would conclude all his prayers with these same words: ***What does it profit a man...*** ²⁶¹

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[123.] O just Father, the world has not known You. (Jn 17:25). They do not want to know God as just. They would like to have a God half-way.

The comment on this verse by Martini²⁶² is: You Who render to each according to his works, prepare a fitting reward for those who having left the world in its incredulity, have believed in Me, and have followed Me.' Fr. Gaspar seems to make use of John's quotation against those people who would like God to refrain from condemning the wicked with that ***Go away from me you cursed, into the eternal fire! (Mt 25:41)***. There are people who want to think of God only as *merciful* and not as *just*.

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14th MARCH 1809

[124.] If we do not take heed of the loving appeals of [God's] Mercy, what else is left for us except to fall into the terrible hands of [God's] Justice?

On 28 November 1802 Fr. Gaspar preached about the Last Judgment and cried from the pulpit ²⁶³:

... O sinners, sinners all! The judge has already sounded against you His immutable sentence: Desist from your sins, desist from them. Depart from Me, go away from Me, you accursed...: ... depart from Me, you accursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels... [Mt 25:41]...

Why would you delay any longer? Why do you hesitate from throwing yourselves into the arms of this Mercy while there is still time? Act now before this Mercy gives way to all our offenses, to an enraged Justice - why not? Now is the acceptable time for our repentance: for then, it will be absolutely vain and useless. These are the days to insure our salvation. On that day, all hope will be lost: ... for it shall surely come, it shall not be slack... [Hab 2:3]. When we are least thinking about it, it will come.

To neglect a matter of such importance, is the same as declaring to wish one's own damnation. To put off deliberation, means to expose

²⁶¹ Fr. G. Massei, SJ, *Life of St. Francis Xavier*. S. 1, c. 1 [1st ed. of 1682.

²⁶² A classical Italian biblical commentator.

²⁶³ *Pagine d Vita Cristiana*, pp. 92, f. - Sermon 10, On the Universal Judgment. November 28, 1802. MssB ## 710, ff.

oneself to the supreme danger. It is the matter of a soul: once it is lost, it is lost forever. This is a matter of a state that will be perpetually unchangeable. This is a concern of an eternity, either of glory, or of pain. Why, then, do you delay?

This Man-God, our Judge, no matter how tenderly He loves us as a loving Father, acts in a given way so that He will not lose us eternally, His Children, under the scourge of His most just vengeance. He threatens us, He warns us, and cries out strongly so that we do not fall under the bitter fatal blow. He commits all His Blood in order to wash our sins. He shows us His merits, because we are invested with the just rights of His Kingdom. He makes us participants in His satisfactions, to lighten for us the weight of our penance: ... *Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you...* [Mt 11:28].

O merciful, infinitely kind Lord! Indeed anyone would be most worthy to share with the demons should he refuse now to participate with such a good Lord. It is only right that such a person should experience all the fury of Your inflexible justice. This is fitting for whoever would disdain Your most excessive Mercy. Anyone rejecting You, merits to be struck down on that day,, with that very bitter condemnation: "Depart from Me!" this will be the lot of anyone who still remains deaf to the gentle invitation: "Come to Me!"

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15th MARCH 1809

[125.] *Jesus hid his face from them.* He hides Himself with his Grace: leaving them stubborn in their sins. He hides Himself with his Glory: depriving them of it for all eternity.

The quotation is John 7:59. Fr. Gaspar quoted from memory and thus he exchanged a similar expression in Micah with that of John. John has **He hid himself** while Micah talks of God as **hiding his face** in the text: ***Then, they shall cry to the Lord and He will not hear them; and He will hide His face from them at that time, as they behaved wickedly in their devices...*** (Mic 3:4).

Fr. Gaspar recalled the commentary of Cornelius a' Lapide on Micah: "He will hide His face, that is His favor, care, providence, help. His presence and His support. All these is what *face* means".²⁶⁴

The commentary of Fr. Gaspar on John's text could be seen also as a development of that Woe of St Augustine in the commentary to the same text: "Jesus as a man runs away from the stones... but woe to those from whose stony hearts God runs away!" And Fr. Gaspar seems to add: "Woe!.. for this time and for eternity!"

²⁶⁴ Cornelius a' Lapide, Commentary on Jn 7: 59.



[126.] Here [on earth] penance is short, light and useful. In Hell it will be very long, immense and useless.

He who does not want to repent in this life will go to repent uselessly in the next.

Here we are referred back to the principle of 14 March. These two statements repeat and develop it. We can refer also to the **Do not delay!** of 5 March, reinforced with a reflection from Fr. Segneri's thought: *On the last day Justice will leave Mercy in full possession of the elect. Mercy will leave Justice in peaceful possession of all reprobate. Now ponder which of these two will fall to you as your final lot...*²⁶⁵

During the Carnival time of 1806 Fr Bertoni preached the Spiritual Exercises to the youth of his Oratory. During the sermon on the 'Last Judgment' he made Jesus address the reprobate saying: **If my Blood did not help you towards salvation, let it be used now for your condemnation.** And to the elect: **You have suffered so little, you are now rejoicing so much!** Then addressing the youth he said: **One of these two lots are yours. How stupid if one knows these things only by Faith and yettt does not bother to make amends by living well! At that [last] time repentance will only be useful to increase desperation!**



16th MARCH 1809

[127.] Those whom He does not correct by scourging, he condemns for ever. (St Bernard)

The subject here is God. The original Latin text of Fr Bertoni, however, can have two different interpretations. The first: *Those people whom God, by His scourges, does not correct, will be condemned for ever by Him.* Namely, because they did not change their lives even under the scourges of God". This translation harmonizes well with the following note of Fr Gaspar about the three crosses. The preacher could make a good application and example in the lot of the wicked thief. But Fr. Gaspar wrote a dividing dash which separates the first line from the others, making two different texts.

A second possible translation: *Those whom God does not correct by the scourges, he will condemn for ever at the end.* Namely, because He has spared the rod with them. In this way the worst scourge here on earth, would be the exemption from the scourges of God. This is the explicit meaning of what is, according to us, the original text which Fr Bertoni intended to refer himself to, namely St Bernard's. He wrote: *God shows His wrath to (severs Himself from) that person whom He does not scourge while he is sinning. In fact [God will] damn for ever the person whom He does not correct by His scourges.*²⁶⁶ The meaning is clear: the future condemnation is one that lasts forever.

²⁶⁵ Fr. Paul Segneri, SJ., *Manna of the Soul*, Meditation for May 19th.

²⁶⁶ St. Bernard, *Most Pious Meditations*, c. 6, near the end.



[128.] Nobody can go through life without the cross. I present to you three crosses, and you choose. The first is the cross of Christ, the second is the cross of Saint Dismas, the good thief, the third is the cross of the wicked thief.

In the first one there is glorification: it belongs to innocent people because they are more similar to Christ.

In the second one there is consolation: it belongs to patient people because they do not lose resignation and peace.

He who does not pick up one of those two crosses, will naturally remain with the third one of the wicked thief, who had to suffer more and without profit. His cross helped him as a ladder to go down to the deepest part of Hell.

The premise of this sermon plan is found in the Gospel expression of ***Let each one take up his cross***. Everyone has his own cross.

The idea of the three crosses could easily have come spontaneously to Fr. Gaspar through his meditations. It must have been, however, clarified in the study of the ***Summa*** of St Thomas Aquinas. The saint - following the Holy Fathers Leo the Great, Augustine and Hilary - sees the Cross of Christ no longer as an instrument of torture but the Tribunal which becomes the symbol of the final Judgment of mankind. In the crosses of the two thieves he sees the symbols of the *right* and *left* of the Last day: i.e. the elect and the reprobate.²⁶⁷

Fr. Gaspar reviewed all this in the Meditations of Fr. Da Ponte where he pondered:

... the three crucified of Calvary as can be found among our people. Those crucified on Mount Calvary were three men. One was crucified because of his fault...and he bore impatiently his cross. The other one was also crucified because of his fault but he bore the cross with patience. The third one was crucified without having any fault and he bore his Cross with admirable patience. This is what happens also among human beings in this life.

There are some who are punished by God because of their sins but they bear with impatience their punishment. These will be condemned like the wicked thief. They will come down from the cross and go straight into Hell. There are others who are also punished because of their sins but they suffer the punishment with humility and patience, repeating those words of the prophet Micah ***I shall bear [willingly] the [punishment and] wrath of God because I have sinned against Him...*** (Mi 7:9) These people, like the good thief, will obtain pardon for their sin and will pass from the cross into Paradise.

There are others who, though not guilty, are tormented in order to be trained and to receive the prize. These bear the afflictions with great patience in imitation of

²⁶⁷ St. Thomas Aquinas, III, q. 46, a. 11, c.

Christ. These are the most fortunate because the most precious cross and torture is to suffer without guilt.²⁶⁸

Beside these references, Fr Bertoni's version has some peculiar characteristics. He changes the order of Da Ponte's Meditation: first comes the Cross of Christ. Of this he says, following St Paul²⁶⁹ and the commentary of St Augustine²⁷⁰, that it is a **glorification**. Secondly, there is presented the cross of the good thief. Of this he says²⁷¹ that it is a **consolation**. For the third cross, which is left of course for those who do not stretch their arms to catch one of the first two, the word does not pass from his lips. It would be: **damnation!**

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[129.] During Benediction: a sentiment of deep tenderness and love and self-offering. I experienced how Christ attracts our hearts, just as He said: *I shall draw everything to myself...*and how any goodness, knowledge and pleasantness which is [found] in creatures, belong to Him. He is the only one who has to be praised and loved because of them.

This was a *gift of Prayer*. Sweetness in contemplation found in the tender affection for the Lord. Lived experience of the ***I shall draw everything to myself (Jn 12:32)*** and St Ignatius' ***Contemplation toward Love*** which Fr Gaspar would soon present to the Clergy in his Spiritual Exercises of 1810.²⁷² He will develop this in the second point of the Meditation of *God in the creatures*. (The text here follows the presentation of Fr. Nepveu):

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1. *God is present and acts in all creatures.*

...Consider that God, not being satisfied with having, in some way, given himself to you with so many blessings, continues to give Himself to you in all creatures which have received from Him existence, life and all the perfections which they have. Get accustomed, then, to see God in the creatures because he is really in them. Therefore, by giving his creatures to you, He is giving Himself to you He is in the creatures:

a) *By His existence, which is closer to their being than your soul to your body.*

b) *By his power. He not only gives them power of acting, but it is He who acts more than they themselves do. He is the principle cause. In such a way that it is God Who shines in the sun more than the sun itself. It is God Who warms you in the fire, more than the fire itself. It is God Who nourishes you in the food more than the food itself.*

c) *Finally by his goodness and providence. He governs these creatures. He puts them at your service. He directs all their activities towards you and for you. If He gives light to the sun it is for nothing else than to shine upon you. If He gives heat to*

²⁶⁸ Fr. DaPonte, Part 5, Meditation 46, Point 2, n. 3.

²⁶⁹ Ga 6:14: *... But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ ...*

²⁷⁰ St. Augustine, Sermon to the People 160, 7.

²⁷¹ *Imitation of Christ*, Book 2, c. 12, *passim*.

²⁷² *Collectanea Stigmatina*, Vol. I, pp. 239, 240.

the fire it is for nothing else than to warm you. If He gives taste to the food it is for nothing else than to nourish you.

2. *How we ought to act in our use of creatures.*

From these three manners in which God dwells in His creatures it is easy to draw your conclusions:

a) If God makes Himself present for you in all creatures, you should make an effort to make yourselves present to Him in all creatures. To look for Him in all creatures.

b) You should use these creatures uniquely for the glory of God and His service. Since God does not act in them except for your advantage you should not act in them except for His sake.

c) When you experience the benefit of these creatures - i.e. the beauty of light, the comfort of warmth, the taste of food - you should refer all this to God and not to the creatures. Be convinced that it is God who gives you well-being rather than the creatures.

In this way you ought to feel grateful for the good received. Thank God often on your own account and also on the account of the many people who do not think of this at all. You ought to pay attention not to abuse the creatures by attaching yourselves to them or by using them as instrument of sin. This would be the worst ingratitude: i.e. to turn the blessings of God against God Himself. Finally, you ought sometimes to make a sacrifice of these same creatures by giving up the use of them for God's sake.

Let us therefore love God because God first has loved us (Jo 13:6 – or, 1 Jn 4:19?)²⁷³.

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17th MARCH 1809

[130.] The situation of the habitual sinner is bad for the past, worse for the present and worst for the future.

It is morally impossible for him to be converted: he needs only a miracle of Grace.

This rather severe statement – in accord with the preaching style of the time - might have been picked up from the book ***Preacher's Library*** by Fr V.Houdry S.J.²⁷⁴ in the analytical index, under the word *habit*. It was a well known book at the Stimate. There is a quotation attributed to St. Bernard²⁷⁵: *The repetition of sin causes a habit. This habit generates almost the need of sinning. This necessity generates almost the impossibility of refraining from sinning. This impossibility generates despair. Despair leads to damnation.*" This specific formula is not really found in the citation given, although the sense of it is there. This is what one might call having *a bad past, a worse present and a worst future*.

²⁷³ Web-Site Note: Fr. Stofella may be mistaken here with this referenced: cf. 1 Jn 4:19.

²⁷⁴ Editio Novissima, Venice, p. 243

²⁷⁵ St. Bernard, *De Consideratione*. Book 1.

For the second sentence we refer again to the same source : ²⁷⁶

...Two things are necessary in order to convert and change the human heart: firstly the Grace of God which prevents and urges the sinner, secondly the will of the sinner which complies with God's Grace. With this in mind: 1. It is morally impossible that Grace may change and convert a habitual sinner. 2. It is morally impossible that a sinner would like to change his will. The reasoning is obvious". Hence a miracle is needed.

Fr. Bertoni had treated this matter during a sermon in 1804, entitled ***Conversion delayed until the Last Day*** ²⁷⁷:

...I would want that you would have much time: and nonetheless, I can prove to you that you will not convert. You might even have all the opportunity of expert priests who might help you, you will not be converted. I can prove this, as well.

And firstly, you will not convert because you do not want to convert. It will perhaps seem to you that here I will slip away from that beautiful principle, since I have the opportunity to speak with such sinners who wish to be converted at death. I know very well that you would like to be converted at that hour, but I also know that you do not wish to be converted now. And so, I deduce: you do not wish to use time well, even that last period.

And who does not know the prodigious power of habits, especially those deeply rooted, nurtured for a very long time. Do they have the power to incline and invincibly drag the will to those acts pleasing to them? Right now, you resist the invitations of grace that are so frequent, even continuous. You train your hearts to a hardness, that is intensified each day, and is aggravated beyond all measure, by so many years. At death, this hardness will reach an indeed monstrous level. If your hearts are hard right now, at that moment, they will be supremely hardened... How, then, could you hope to break it down? How do you think you could bend it? How will you ever be able to soften it?

This is not simple guesswork, when the Holy Spirit has added His own sentence. It is an incontestable truth: ... *a hard heart shall fear evil at the last...* [Si 3:27]. A heart that is hardened, uses time badly now, and so it will use time badly at that hour. It will continue in its obstinacy, in its hardness: it will remain in evil to the last.

... What is this? O God! Does the soul then only despair?

No: how I would like to see take steps to avoid the danger of despairing: by not putting off to that last extreme your conversion, by not doing immediately what you will then be unable to do

²⁷⁶ Fr. Houdry, o.c., p. 240 – Point 10: Synopsis of Sermons.

²⁷⁷ *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, pp. 47-55 - Sermon 26, December 26, 1804 – MssB ## 970, ff.

[At this point of his sermon Fr Gaspar described the agonies of pain, the exhaustion of a shattered body, the disturbed imagination, the terror of the imminent Judgment and the Devil. Then he concluded with St Augustine.: **This is a just punishment: that he who did not like to do the good when he could, cannot find it possible to do it when he will like to.**²⁷⁸

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19th MARCH 1809

[131.] **It is not sufficient to correct a fault. One has to correct it as it deserves. (Heli)**

This is a reference to the incident of the priest Heli and his wicked sons Ophni and Phineas which scandalized the Israelites (**I S 2:22-25**). Heli reproached his sons only verbally without taking more serious steps. God found him co-responsible and punished him together with his children. (**3,11-18; 4,10-18; 4:10-18**).²⁷⁹

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22nd MARCH 1809

[132.] **Those who make a resolution without the determination [of taking practical steps] are similar to those soldiers or hunters who are portrayed in the pictures. They are always on the point of wounding and killing but in fact they never unleash the blow.**

"He who has good will has everything, but it is not good that will which does not want to do what it can"

One blames weakness.

What would you say of an old man who throws away his walking stick and goes skating on the ice like children?

One blames the Devil.

What would you say of a farm worker who sells the vineyard stakes of his master, puts reeds to support the vines and goes away with the money to dine in all the inns while the wind breaks down everything?

We have to re-direct our *passion*: namely towards the love of God, and be interested in the heavenly goods... and hate sin.

We offer the text as found. Those who make a resolution, but it is inefficacious for them, are like soldiers, and so on. This, too, is a sermon outline. It was Easter season and this could have been a theme for the *Eastern Duty* of making the annual Confession and Communion. This also came up in another season, as on July 30, 1808 in this *Journal*: ***One has to be on guard against wishful thinking...*** which refers to Rodriguez' ***Exercise of Perfection***²⁸⁰ These words are among the extracts taken in Fr. Bertoni's own hand-writing.

²⁷⁸ ib, pp. 50, 54.

²⁷⁹ St. Gaspar treats these passages in his work on St. Gregory the Great's Exposition on *Primum Regum* - cf. MssB ## 5240-5383; 5457-5554; 5605-5700.

²⁸⁰ Rodriguez, o.c., Oart 1, Tract 1, c. 3.

The citation continues: *Those who have good desires of conquering their defects - wrote Fr Rodriguez - but they never do it in practice, are similar to painted soldiers who are always over the enemy with their drawn sword, but they never end up in unleashing the sword.* He quoted also **Is 37:3** **... for the children are to come to the birth and there is not the strength to bring them forth** ... which is applied to the wishful thinking of those who make vain resolutions. Fr Bertoni concluded with Rodriguez: *Death will come for many who will remain hanging in the air of their resolutions, like Absalom hung up supported by his golden hair. (2 Sam 18:9).*

The second paragraph is a quotation from St. Augustine which we have already seen above on **22 Feb.** To the Latin text there, we have added the second part in Italian.

This is the moment to bring forth excuses: and the first that comes forward is the appeal to weakness. And whatever this is, when it is weakness of mind, it either removes or diminishes the strength of the Will. If not to this extent, it is only an aggravating circumstance. Why should anyone be exposed in this way?

The second excuse is as follows: *It is the Devil who tempts us!* It is not necessary to inconvenience the Devil to trip up an old senseless man who ventures onto the ice with children! Nor to break down the vines which a drunkard pretended to be supported by thin reeds. These two examples are to be added to the story of the knight and St Ignatius of **6 March**, and they give us an idea of the social level of Fr Gaspar's audience.

There still remains the maxim which must have been the conclusion of his sermon and the last entry in this *Journal* for 1809.

To make all resolutions effective he said that one should orientate the passions towards doing good. In the **Summa** of St. Thomas, Fr. Bertoni had read that: *The passions of the soul incline towards sin in so far as they are outside of the influence of the right reason. But when they are controlled by reason, they belong to virtue.*²⁸¹

Fr. Gaspar then suggested the way of giving the proper orientation to the passions. Direct love towards the Supreme Good, God. Direct hatred against sin. Direct your interests - which is the passion of desire - towards heavenly goods. It is not without purpose that - as Fr. Gaspar wrote quoting from Rodriguez: *Christ Our Lord said that the Kingdom of God is similar to a man trading in business. He commanded us to make business: Trade, until I come back!*²⁸²

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²⁸¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, I-II, q. 24, a. 2, ad 3 um.

²⁸² Rodriguez, o.c., c. 7. An extract from here is used by Fr. Bertoni. Cf. *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, pp. 168, ff.: 'Love for God [to be imitated in St. Aloysius]' - Sermon 12. MssB ## 649, ff.. cf. also *PVC*, pp. 32. ff. - Sermon 23. April 2, 1804: 'Freedom from sin and the Devil. MssB ## 896, ff.

[133.] The Lord would like to speak with certain persons and tell them to withdraw a little, because they are too much disturbed by the noise the world makes around them.

This maxim is also an entry under **22 March** but it is well separated from the others. It is very close to another statement by St Teresa of Avila: *Oh, how I should like to speak with some persons - says Jesus - but the world makes such a noise in their hearts that my voice cannot be heard. Would it be that they withdraw a little from the world!* ²⁸³. St . Augustine expressed a similar thought: *Something mysteriously harmonious and sweet from that heavenly happiness resounds in the ears of the heart: if only the world would not make such a din!..* ²⁸⁴

[It is worth noticing that during the time of this note Fr Bertoni had several painful experiences of the worldly *noise* which deeply disturbed his life. On 21 March, the Administration of Verona had issued the order of taking over from his father's goods for rent, in the country property of St. Columbanus, because of bad administration. Fr. Bertoni had to make deep sacrifices in order to scrape together sufficient money to save his father. This was not the first time that Fr Gaspar had to deal with these *worldly affairs* and experience the weakness of his father's administration and irresponsibility in managing the family. ²⁸⁵

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27th MARCH 1809

[134.] We are tempted again by the same temptations, if we have given in to them the first time. This is the way by which God gives us the opportunity to make the profit which we did not make the first time.

What Fr Bertoni wrote in his commentary on St. Gregory's Exposition of *Primum Regum* in 1810 can help explain his thought with regard to this note.

He admired **God's loving Providence** in permitting **an initial test which consists in the *Visitation and Consolation* of the Good Spirit** and of a **second manner of tests which consists in taking away this Visitation and Consolation and which is the Temptation of the Evil Spirit, the Devil**. He said that **while permitting the Evil Spirit to tempt us he uses it as an instrument but always for a good purpose**, namely, **to prove better His Elect**. He then addressed himself to God saying: **You have one purpose in testing us, Lord. The Devil has another. Yours is to purify us of our defects, the Devil's is to make us fall... You have unmasked the deceits and the obstacles of our Enemy so that we can avoid them. The aim of these tests in your mind is our perfection, and in the mind of the enemy is our perversion. Make us, Lord, understand the designs of your Providence. May we keep in check the plots and intrigues of our**

²⁸³ Cited by St. Alphonsus Liguori, *True Spouse of Jesus Christ*. C. 16, 2^o, 10.

²⁸⁴ St. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Ps 51*.

²⁸⁵ Web-site note: the Translator has added this thought from: Fr. Dalle Vedove, *Bertoni*, Vol 3., p. 28.

**Adversary and give us the means to avoid them. At the end of the testing
may we find ourselves approved by You and not condemned.**²⁸⁶

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²⁸⁶ Meditation 11 in *Primum Regum* - MssB ## [## 5182 – 5939] – 1 Reg. 2:11 – 2:17 [Jan. 1, 1811- ??]

2nd MAY 1809

[135.] Our mortification should be total. We should not willingly let any passionate feeling of ours remain unchecked as Saul did. He [*did not respect the 'Ban'*] destroying the Amalekites but left out the fattened herds for himself and he also spared king Agag.

Fr. Bertoni learned this strict doctrine from Scupoli's first chapter of his ***Spiritual Combat*** :

... There is no doubt that God is more pleased when you make a concentrated effort in keeping all your passions under check, rather than if you serve Him by doing something extraordinary and of much importance while consciously and willingly letting only one of your passions loose...

When he treated the last chapter in connection with the struggle of man when on the point of death he wrote: "Before the approaching of the hour of the last struggle we must arm ourselves well and fight valiantly against the most violent of our passions which disturb us most. This will make the victory easier in the moment which takes away all opportunity of doing it no more." This teaching was supported by the example of King Saul who made the mistake of not paying heed to the commandment of the Lord: ***You will fight against them until complete destruction. (I Sam 15:18)***

Rodriguez used the same incident and saw in King Agag, who subsequently was cut to pieces by Samuel, "that vice or passion which dominates within us and which makes us fall into worse faults and mistakes".²⁸⁷

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²⁸⁷ Rodriguez, Partr 2, tract 1, c. 14.

19th JUNE 1809**[136.] *Resist beginnngs...***

These two words are the beginning of a well known couplet of the pagan Latin poet Ovid, which Fr Bertoni had extensively used in his school days. Hence, only two words are enough to bring it to memory. Still we think that here it must have been introduced through meditating on the text of the ***Imitation of Christ***. The author, in ch 13 of Book One [n. 4], deals with *How to resist temptations*. It is a frequent theme and in the *Journal* it has several references. We give the full couplet in the Christian context of the ***Imitation of Christ*** :

...Fire tries iron and temptation tries the just man... However, we must be watchful, especially in the beginning of temptation because then the enemy is easier overcome, if he is not way suffered to come in at all at the door of the soul, but is kept out and resisted at his first knock. This is why somebody said:

***Resist beginnings: after remedies come too late,
When ill's have gathered strength by long delay...***

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14th JULY 1809

[137.] Do not do anything unless for the glory of God and for His Holy Love. This will make you despise the world and ban all vices.

This statement reveals the concept of Christian perfection as Fr Gaspar learned it from the first chapter of Scupoli's *Spiritual Combat*. That author wrote:

...The Spiritual Life consists simply in recognizing the goodness and greatness of God together with our nothingness and inclination towards all evils. We have, [therefore], to love Him and hate ourselves. We have to make ourselves subject to Him and, for His sake, to all creatures. We have to dispossess ourselves of our own will while totally resigning ourselves to His divine will. Above all, we ought to do all this purely for the Glory of God and for His good pleasure alone. Because this is how He likes and how fit it is that he should be loved and served.

The second sentence of this note is just the consequence of the loving execution of the principles of the first.

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15th JULY 1809

[138.] When we act under the instinct of nature, even for one single moment, we prevent God from acting and we give way to the activity of a creature. (*The Life of Fr. Surin*, 2,14).

This is a thought gathered from reading the biography of Fr Surin of the Company of Jesus. The *Catholic Encyclopaedia* ²⁸⁸ writes that "Fr Jean-Joseph Surin [1600-1665] represents a particular mystical side of the Ignatian Spirituality." Both this note and the one Fr. Gaspar would write on the following day, (which have their source in Fr Scupoli's book). These seem to add a further contribution to the particular and systematic practice of genuine sanctification pursued by Fr Bertoni. It is also some indication of how he referred to the Spirituality propounded and lived in France by the Company of Jesus. To the great names of Bourdaloue, Nepveu, Bouhours, de la Colombière and Lallement he added a great disciple of the last one, i.e. Fr Surin. And this is not a complete list.

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16th JULY 1809

[139.] Lose the habit of doing your own will. Do anything as moved by God's will with the intention of pleasing Him and giving Him honor. (Scupoli, *Addition to the Spiritual Combat*)

The context of this statement in Scupoli's book was as follows:

²⁸⁸ Article signed by Arnaldo M. Lanz. His biography in French is: *La Vie de Pere Surin de la Comagnie de Jesus, homme de Dieu*, Henri-Marie Boundon. Arch-deacon of Evreux.

... The purpose of the life of any Christian who wants to become perfect must consist in the effort of getting used to forget and as if losing the habit of doing one's own will. At the same time one should do anything as moved solely by the will of God with the intention of pleasing Him and giving Him honor...²⁸⁹

This was in fact already the program since the first chapters of the *Spiritual Combat*. We read in c. 10: *Note well that it is not just enough to intend and to strive for the things which are more pleasing to God. You have furthermore to intend and to strive for them as moved by Him and with the aim of pleasing Him solely.* He agreed with Fr. Surin's thought when he wrote: *In this we clash greatly with nature which is so much turned towards itself that in all things and particularly in the good and spiritual ones, looks for its own comfort and pleasure. It deals with these things feeding itself avidly on them as with harmless food.*

†

17th JULY 1809

[140.] Good example should not be the principle aim of our behavior. This is a common mistake which Our Lord reproved in the Founder of the Passionist, the Venerable Friar Paul. We should endeavor to act well and properly. The [good] example will be just a consequence.

We take from the Documentation collected for the Ordinary Process for the Cause of beatification of Paul of the Cross, in Viterbo.

The testimony is of Fr Giammaria of St. Ignatius, last confessor of Saint Paul of the Cross:

... I recollect very clearly that on the day of the Exaltation of the Cross of 1766, he (i.e. St. Paul of the Cross) was giving the last recommendation to a group of Religious on their way to other Retreat houses. He exhorted them in a very effective way to preserve modesty. Then, after recollecting himself for a while, he lifted his eyes to heaven, he burst into tears and said: A certain person - when he was still a secular - used to walk modestly with the intention of giving good example. The Lord said to him in the heart "My son, do this only to please me. Good example will come as a consequence. In a different occasion he told me that the incident happened to himself...

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23rd JULY 1809

[141.] To receive and to preserve the inspirations of God, one needs solitude, quiet, internal and external silence. Otherwise either they are not heard, or they vanish and disappear.

The Devil tries his utmost to divert the work of the Lord. For this he makes use of all our passions, particularly of the predominant one.

²⁸⁹ Scupoli, c. 1.

To begin the undertaking one ought to have acquired great and heroic virtue.

The necessary initial budget plan is Poverty. After that, all other virtues. One should not overlook the tiniest thing, and not to delay in welcoming inspirations.

There are no marks of hand-written dashes separating these sentences to show that they refer to different thoughts or arguments which Fr. Bertoni might have had in different times during that day. They seem to all refer to a particular fact. Even the first sentence which sounds so general. The particular fact is the *work* which the second sentence presents as an object against which the Devil is plotting his deception. The third sentence and the following talk of an ***undertaking some enterprise*** inspired by God and which requires great spiritual energies. The 'work and undertaking' Fr. Bertoni is referring to here is the project of founding a new Religious Congregation. He was aware that the times were difficult. The established Religious Orders were either suppressed or persecuted.

The inspirations of God... are the fruits of the attitude which in the ***Imitation of Christ*** the disciple should have:

...The devout person makes progress in quiet and silence. In this way he learns the hidden things of the Word of God ²⁹⁰. And in the third book: *Blessed those who listen to the movements of the whispering of Divine Inspirations. These do not catch anything of the chattering of the world* ²⁹¹.

This is also the teaching of Rodriguez:

*...If you like to have constantly good thoughts and to listen to the inspirations of God keep silence and recollection. Some people are deaf because of an illness in their ears. Some others cannot hear because of the loud noise with which they are surrounded. Similarly the noise and din of words, things and affairs of the world become obstacles and make us deaf to hear the inspirations of God. God needs solitude to talk to us: ***I shall lead her into the desert, and I shall talk to her heart (Ho 2:16)***...* ²⁹²

For the second sentence of the above note, *The Devil tries his utmost...*, we refer to Rodriguez ²⁹³ who quotes n. 327 of the ***Spiritual Exercises*** of St Ignatius:

... The Devil acts with us in the same way as a Captain who wants to conquer a city or a stronghold. He looks for the weakest part in our soul and there he works to attack us and to break through (n. 3). [He then goes on]: ... We all can see that each person has one defect which stands out against the others. It dominates the person. It is the driving force of the person. That is why we call that passion predominant. It is natural, then, that the Devil will stick to that in order to divert the person from God's work...

²⁹⁰ *Imitation of Christ*, Book 1, c. 20, n. 6.

²⁹¹ *Ib.*, Book 3, cc. 1-3.

²⁹² Rodriguez, Part 2, Tract 2, c. 5, n. 1.

²⁹³ *Id.*, Part 1, Tract 7, c. 2, n. 2.

We come now to the more explicit expression of Fr Gaspar with which he hinted at his project of a new Religious Congregation: ***To begin the undertaking... one ought to have acquired great and heroic virtue.*** He reminds himself of this requirement.

At this juncture we must consider a *Particular Examen* presented under 4 points which Fr Gaspar developed in 1813 and gave to his directee Mother Leopoldina Naudet, as Foundress of the Congregation of "The Sisters of the Holy Family". We present it here in its complete form because we have the conviction that - with some adaptation - it must have been the scheme of the examination of conscience which Fr Gaspar used to practice for himself, as Founder-to-be of a Congregation which we now think could have been called ***The Missionaries of the Sacred Stigmata***. The basis of this Examen is a formula from the Company of Jesus which Leopoldina Naudet had adopted into the Rules for the superiors of her Congregation. As a matter of fact, when Fr J.B.Lenotti, as Superior General of the *Stigmatines*, promulgated the Constitutions, he used part of that formula in the first of the Rules regarding the Director of a community. Among others: "Let him understand that the first care of his office consists in his supporting on his shoulders, as it were the whole Community's prayer and holy aspirations. In this outline, we can find also some principles of genuine spiritual life taken from this *Journal*."

Here is the text of the **Particular Examen** which Fr Bertoni suggests for the second Rule, after the first Part, for the Prioress of the Communities of Mother Leopoldina's Congregation²⁹⁴:

1. Have I taken care to support this house of God? Have I been negligent, neglectful or patronizing? Did I do this while observing the spiritual needs and daily defects of my sisters? At stake is the glory of God, which the Superior has to pursue even if it seems to be an impossible burden to bear. Diligence and care expect the Superior to have heroic virtues, which are reached through *prayers and holy aspirations*. Otherwise the whole undertaking will be quickly ruined and miserably fall. For a new Institute the Superiors are to be like solid columns of religious perfection, based on heroic virtues. Nothing less should be required of those who are meant to be the first in such an Institute.

2. Have I prayed with fervor? Have I prayed insistently, as the Lord expects? Have I prayed for each Sister according to her particular needs? Have I prayed for the Sisters as a community that they should have the same attitude in prayer? (Remember that - as St John of the Cross said - a soul which is growing in union with God can be heard by Him more effectively when it says one single word with tender and intimate love, rather than a din of a thousand words.)

²⁹⁴ *Epistolario*, Letter 21, pp. 64, ff.

3. Have I nurtured these holy desires with pure intentions inflamed with zeal for the Glory of God. In this manner I shall engage God to keep our house, as it were, suspended in the air until that time when we shall have developed the necessary virtues and more solid works of charity.

4. These *prayers and holy desires* will become more and more similar to the *prayers and most holy desires* of the Heart of Jesus, who experienced them during his life and suffering here on this earth and also now while living in the glory of Heaven and in the most Holy Eucharist, to the advantage of His Church.

This is approximately what I indicated to you last time, Reverend Mother. You should never listen to our timid nature. Where shall I find the strength to bear the immense burden of my defects with the addition of that of others? How will my weakness be able to support and to hold back the ruin of others? And yet for this very purpose did God share His nature with us: so that we should no longer live nor act according to ours! We therefore should not reckon with the strength of our first nature but with the strength of that second nature which we received when we have been made children of God. Do you see now that God expects of you that the timid thoughts and affections of your first nature should not prevent the strong and marvelous effect of the second...

Let us take up now with the apparent contradiction between a **necessary budgetary plan** and **poverty**. This idea is based on Luke 14:28-33 and Fr Bertoni presented it during the Spiritual Exercises to the Clergy in 1810 in the Meditation of the *Three Classes of People*. He said:

...They would like to follow Christ but at the same time they do not want to give up all things. Which is against what Jesus asked: *He who does not give up whatever he possesses cannot be my disciple*. To follow Christ is the aim. The means is to give up everything. *Who of you, if he wants to build a tower, would not first sit down at table and calculate the price involved and if he has got the money to complete that tower?* The tower to be built is the following of Christ, or as St. Thomas explains, "in the building of the tower it is described the work of perfection of the Christian life. In the giving up of one's own possessions consists the *budget plan* of the tower..."²⁹⁵

The **undertaking**, therefore, Fr Bertoni is thinking about in this *Journal's* note is the organization of a perfect following of Christ in a ***small Company [of Jesus]*** which he felt inspired to found and of which he has just presented somehow the project, after having previously made some reference to it in his visit to the altar of St. Ignatius, September 15, 1808.

²⁹⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, I-II, q. 189. a. 10, ad 3 um.

In 1811, Fr. Gaspar developed the same things using the same phrases when giving the Conferences on St. Gregory's *Primum Regum*, in the Seminary. He sounded again, as though he was thinking of his own *Little Company [of Jesus]* :

... A young man who intends to serve the Lord and to keep the Church's regulations, does this at the cost of great effort in view of the self-control expected in keeping his chastity and in bearing the burden of his ministry. Furthermore, he has to give up many things - like relatives and possessions - and be ready to lose even freedom and his very life, which - as Saint Thomas said - is a prerequisite as a proper disposition of the soul. Who does not see, then, in this young man the necessary funds for building the tower?...²⁹⁶

Therefore: **Poverty** comes before anything else. St Ignatius of Loyola defined Poverty as the *stable rampart of religious life*. He said that as such "we have to cherish it and keep it in its purity as much as possible with God's grace". He used to call it *our mother*.

And after that, all others virtues. This is a question of genuine quest for perfection. In this regard, let it suffice in what we have said in connection with the Particular Examen.

The last phrase of this 23 July entry recalls its first sentence, adding the care for a special diligence in all that regards the **undertaking**. As for the **inspirations**, we have already presented the doctrine of Fr Bertoni in the commentary to the note of 8 October 1808.

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24th JULY 1809

[142.] We must get ready for a great war with Hell.

1. We need humility to attract help from Heaven: **Put on the armor of God that you might be able to resist.**
2. We need detachment from all things; so that the Devil should not have anything to catch us by.
3. ...

This sounds like a development of the preceding entry of yesterday. Certainly **we must get ready for a great war with hell because the Devil tries his utmost to divert the work of the Lord. He makes use of all our passions especially of the predominant one.** This justifies the self-exhortations which follow and helps us to make an educated guess of even the missing third point.

Put on the armor of God that you might be able to resist. The quotation is from memory. The original text could have been even more explicit: **Put on the armor of**

²⁹⁶ Meditation 15 based on *Primum Regum*, MssB ## 5384-5456 - 1 Reg 3:1-9

God that you might be able to stand up against the deceits of the Devil (Eph 6:11). Then **you might be able to resist** came to Fr Gaspar from another text very dear to him, i.e. **God is faithful: He does not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it ... (I Cor 10:13).**²⁹⁷

1. **Do we need detachment to attract help from heaven?** Certainly. It is written: **God resists proud people, but He gives His grace to the humble. (Jas 4:6).** To withstand the inevitable attacks of the Devil we need the armor of God, which is Jesus Christ. Which is the same as saying: **Put on Jesus Christ!** Put on His virtues.²⁹⁸

2. **Detachment from all things...** Evident reference to St, Gregory the Great as reported in Rodriguez: "*We have come into this world to combat the Devil. He is naked and possesses nothing. We have also to become dispossessed of all these things to fight with him. The reason is that if one who is clothed fights with a naked person, he will soon be beaten, because he has what he can be taken hold of and be thrown to the ground. Do you like to engage in a powerful fight with the devil? Take off all your earthly things so that the Devil will not have anything on which to grasp you and make you fall.*"²⁹⁹

After this, we can guess the message of the suspended No 3. In the same Homily of St Gregory where he comments on the **Unless one gives up everything which he possesses and Let him renounce himself.** He wrote: *...In the first sentence it is said that we should give up our things, and in the second that we should give up ourselves. Perhaps a person can more easily give up one's own things... but much and much more difficult it is to give up oneself. For us, in fact, it is of less effort to give up what we have rather than what we are.*³⁰⁰

Therefore, we think that the third point should read as follows: **3. We need detachment from ourselves...** In one of his Homilies on the Gospel, St Gregory went on to say:

...Yes, let Jesus Christ say it! ...let him renounce himself... because if one does not manage definitely to get detached from himself, neither will he be able to approach Him who is above. Nor will he be able to reach and grasp what lies beyond himself, without having first made a complete sacrifice of what he is." The aim is directed towards what St Paul had already reached: I live, yet not I: it is rather Christ who lives in me. (Gal 2:20)...

The whole *Journal* seems to resound with this: especially the "universal mortification" of 8 May and the radical resolutions of 14,15 and 16 July with what will follow.



²⁹⁷ St. Gaspar's reflections on St. Gregory's Exposition on *Primum Regum* - Meditation 12 [## 5240-5295] - 1 Reg 2:18-25

²⁹⁸ Rodriguez, Part 2, Tract 7, c. 1, 9.

²⁹⁹ Rodriguez, Part 3, c. 1, 4. cf. Roman Breviary. Common of One Martyr. Illrd Nocturn.

³⁰⁰ St. Gregory the Great, *Forty Gospel Homilies*, Kalamazoo: Cistercian 1990, p. 259 Homily 32.

[143.] **Mass: union with Jesus Christ. The recollection lasted until lunch.**

Short words but full of meaning. At the same time they both reveal and hide the *secret of the King*. It was a cherished *gift of Prayer* and *union* with Jesus Christ, right within His Sacrifice.

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29th JULY 1809

[144.] **God does not turn down any of those who want to militate under the banners of His Son, and who avail themselves of the means He has prescribed: namely prayer and mortification. Indeed, this person will have a glorious triumph.**

It is a point from the *Spiritual Exercises*. The Meditations of *The Kingdom of Christ* and *The Two Standards* have the same conclusion, i.e. the voluntary enrolment in the army of the Lord. However it is necessary to accept the conditions, i.e. to follow Christ in poverty, in self - abnegation, in humility and to take up His weapons which are prayer and mortification. Victory and triumph will follow. We take some passages from the Meditations which Fr Gaspar gave the Seminarians in 1811:

...We know where God called us from, but we do not know where will He lead us to. We cannot imagine what would God do of us, who are the apple of His eye, if we did not raise obstacles to His grace, but would instead surrender ourselves always and totally to His hands! ... When we abandon ourselves to Him and follow Him faithfully and steadily and, in all humility, do not take the lead before Him...the Lord adds His share... ³⁰¹

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[145.] ***Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent. (Sir 21:2)***
If you had been courageous enough to resist, at this time your temptations would be over.

The scriptural text continues as follows: ***because if you come near them, they will take hold of you...*** Following Martini's Italian exegesis, the comparison is between the teeth of the serpents are like that of lions and Fr. Gaspar explained that Sirach hinted at Eve's serpent, in the singular. The following warning is not necessarily in harmony with the text from Scripture.

It seems to recall the note of 27 March about the recurrence of temptations. More consoling is the note of 31 August and of 13 September 1808. But, as we read in the ***Imitation of Christ***: As long as we live in the world, we cannot remain without

301 St. Gaspar Bertoni's Conferences on St. Gregory Exposition on *Primum Regum* - Meditation 16 a [## 5457-5508] - 1 Reg3:9-14; Meditation 16 b [## 5509-5554] - 1 Reg 3:15-21.

temptations. We read in the book of Job ***The life of man on earth is a warfare...*** No one is so perfect and holy who would not sometimes be subject to temptation.

†

30th JULY 1809

[146.] During the Meditation on the journey of Jesus to the Jordan: I experienced great inner sentiment. [I understood] that we have to show, in ourselves, to the Divine Father, a portrait of His Divine Son.

This note is very similar to the one on 26 February.

Fr. Gaspar is referring, here, to that Meditation from Fr. DaPonte, from which he took extensive notes. Fr. Bertoni was much moved by the prayer found there, addressed to both the Father and to the Son. This prayer has as its basis the well known saying of the heavenly voice: ***This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased...!*** This prayer goes as follows:

... Eternal Father, I thank You for the honor You gave Your Son when He humiliated himself so much for our sake. I rejoice because of the love and great pleasure You find in Him. I beseech You to help me, that I may imitate Him in doing always what You like, so that You may find pleasure in me.

My dear Savior, I congratulate You on the honor that Your Divine Father and the holy Spirit give You today. In doing this they give You authority to become our Teacher and our Redeemer. O Lord, make me pleasing to Your heavenly Father that I may be worthy to be adopted as His son... ³⁰²

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[147.] During the High Mass, in which I was celebrating as Deacon: sentiment of reverence. At the Creed: love for the Incarnation. Much faith and spirit of prayer. The recollection continued also afterwards.

Indeed, here we have to accept what Fr. Gaspar confided to himself alone, in his own terms: God's secret. That sentiment of reverence, however, which ran through that experience as it permeated through his liturgical service as Deacon on that Sunday, makes us recollect one extract taken by Fr. Gaspar from the ***Life of St Ignatius*** (by Fr. Mariani, SJ). It talks of the behavior of the Saint in relation to God: "

...In dealing with God he used to maintain a sense of the greatest external dignity and reverence. He was convinced that he had to seek after this much more than the heavenly consolations. In his prayer he often asked God: 'Lord, grant me humility and loving reverence'...

His sense of recollection here, as well as that noted elsewhere, is itself a recommendation of the gift received from God.

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³⁰² Fr.DaPonte, Points of Meditation from the 2nd and 3rd Parts of his Book. The 3rd Meditation on the Baptism of Christ the lord, divided into five points.

24th AUGUST 1809

[148.] Many people, especially the young, lose patience without which it is impossible to reach total victory over ourselves. Consequently they let themselves be overcome after having experienced a few trials, as their strength was too fickle.

In an *Instruction* about Patience - which is taken from St Thomas' *Summa*³⁰³ - and was written during the first years of his priesthood, he said: The truth of what we find in **Heb 10:36**: *For patience is necessary for you; that by doing the will of God, you may receive the promise* - can be seen in the following considerations:

1. Our life is surrounded by innumerable and continuous evils. They have entered the world, together with death, after original sin.
2. Many passions militate against the good of our reason with great rage.
3. A host of visible and invisible enemies is intent in causing harm to our body and our soul with many temptations, oppositions, snares and persecutions. There is no time for peace nor truce.
4. God has devised just and loving plans by which to cleanse us and to foster our spiritual welfare.
5. Very good people are not at all exempt from this law of suffering. On the contrary, God provides even heavier sufferings for His holiest and dearest friends. He offers them by His own hand, as it were, the most bitter chalice to drink.
6. The Mother of God's Son was made Queen of Martyrs and mother of sorrows.
7. The Son of God Himself was made to return to His Kingdom through this very way of suffering. *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?* (Lk 24:26)

This maxim of Fr. Gaspar seems to be inspired by the *Imitation of Christ*: *The beginning of all evil temptations is fickleness of mind and too little confidence in God ... No one is exempt from temptation in this life...*³⁰⁴

To the Seminarians he was instructing in 1810 and 1811, Fr. Gaspar expressed the wish that the Elect might be **faithful and constant in cooperating with Divine Providence**. In that way they would be able to see the consequence of such cooperation i.e. **strong, developing and establishment in virtue. Efforts for a higher and more pure kind of life, supported by a longing for perfect continence and virginity, and by a serious exercise of self-control from the very beginning...** He exclaimed: **This is also a great proof of and inclination to Priestly Vocation!**³⁰⁵

³⁰³ II-II, q. 136.

³⁰⁴ *Imitation of Christ*, Book 1, c. 13, n. 5. cf. also the entire c. 35 of Book 3: 'There is no security from Temptation in this Life.'

³⁰⁵ St. Gaspar's Conferences on St. Gregory's Exposition on *Primum Regum* - Meditation 12 [## 5240-5295] - 1 Reg 2:18-25.

As a conclusion we can say that without Patience - which is intended by Fr Gaspar as perseverance, courage and complete trust in God- **it is impossible to reach total victory over ourselves.**

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23rd SEPTEMBER 1809

[149.] Humility, compunction and trust in God.

We can just say again that this was a precious *gift of Prayer*. We can only praise the Lord for it and take it as an example and instruction. This is how we have to present ourselves to God.

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[150.] Simplicity is not enough in helping others to become saints. Prudence is also necessary.

Yes! We are asked to ***Be therefore wise as serpents, and simple as doves...*** (**Mt 10:16**). Probably an analogy may be drawn here between what Fr Bertoni said and what St Teresa wrote:

*... It is most important that the Guide be a wise person, of good intelligence and of experience. If on top of this he is a man of learning, this is most helpful ... Though at the beginning [of the way to perfection] it seems that there is no need of much learning, I have always been and always will be of the opinion that any Christian should choose a person with a good learning [to be directed by], if he can. And if he finds a more learned person, all the better. Those who journey on the way of Prayer have more need of this. The more spiritual a person is, the more he needs this... A person dedicated to Prayer who can deal with learned people...will not be deceived by the illusions of the Devil. I believe that the Demons are in real fear of humble and virtuous learned people because they know that learning will detect them and make them perish...*³⁰⁶

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28th SEPTEMBER 1809

[151.] During prayer and also after it: very clear understanding of the immeasurable debt which binds us to God by reason of Creation and of Redemption.

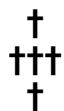
We must underline that **very clear understanding** which lasted **also after prayer**. It is a *gift of Prayer* which goes beyond the time of Prayer. This precious gift seems to be the effect of the ***Contemplation to attain Divine Love*** which we have to stir up within ourselves, which concludes the ***Spiritual Exercises*** of St Ignatius. In 1810 Fr. Gaspar presented and explained it to the clergy in the Retreat³⁰⁷, following the outline of Fr. Nepveu. We give here only a paragraph, in which we see the personal reflection of Fr. Bertoni:

...As Augustine said "God became for you, at the same time, Creator and Redeemer so that you should not divide love". The Father wants the whole of our heart by right of Creation. The Son wants the whole of our

³⁰⁶ St. Teresa of Avila, *Life*, c. 13. This teaching much influenced the life and spirit of St. Gaspar, as may be seen from his Letter 34, in *Epistolario*, p. 91. Feast of St. Ignatius 1813.

³⁰⁷ *Collectanea Stigmatina*, Vol. I, pp. 236-241.

heart on account of Redemption. The Holy Spirit wants the whole of our heart in the name of Sanctification...



AN INTRODUCTION FOR THE YEAR 1810

On the 6th of February 1810 Brunora Ravelli, Fr Gaspar's mother, died, at the age of 64. She was the last true vital connection with his family and a spiritual support for his priestly and apostolic life. On the 20th of the previous month his uncle James Ravelli had also died. He was 56 and had been afflicted by a mental illness, caused probably by psychological tensions as a consequence of his imprisonment for political reasons. Fr. Gaspar had long before given up hope of contact with his father, Francis, who was living an irresponsible life he could not share. Apart from a disastrous administration, his father was cohabiting with his former housemaid, Catherine Slavier.

In March he decided to move out of his family home. He found a shelter with his uncle, the Scudellini family. Fr M. Marchi (a priest who was very close to Fr Bertoni) will later comment on the event by saying: "After the burial of his mother he abandoned his father's house and he did as St Francis, saying to God "Now I can say: Our Father, who art in heaven..."
³⁰⁸

The changing of residence must have been motivated by a strong spiritual experience and a step forward in that "detachment" which Fr. Bertoni saw as necessary for following Christ more radically. What he wrote in the note for a Course of Spiritual Exercises to the Clergy, just after his transfer, sounds autobiographic. In commenting on the incident of the Child Jesus lost in the Temple and found among the Doctors of the Law, he said:

...without the knowledge of his parents means that He did not want them to become an obstacle and prevent Him from freely doing His Father's will. Some priests let themselves be determined by the worldly ambitions of their relatives in accepting Offices and Benefices. He remained : this means that we have to detach ourselves from the worldly love of our relatives. We must not hesitate to even leave our relatives in pain and suffering, when it is necessary, for the sake of making ourselves available with more diligence for the things of our Father in Heaven. We should not remain with them for a longer time than it is God's will. The moment I suspect that my relatives, or any other person in the world, become a hindrance and prevent me, willingly or unwillingly or with good intention, from doing God's will... I do better if I leave them without telling them anything. If they feel offended and react by reproaching me, I should disregard all this and be content in doing God's will.
³⁰⁹

He had also to change his parish. The Bishop made him assistant priest of the parish of St Firmus Major. This was, providentially, the beginning of a very important apostolic activity of Fr Gaspar among the Clergy. In that church he would have, within a couple of years, the inspiration of founding a new Religious Congregation.
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10th MARCH 1810

³⁰⁸ *Summarium Additionale*, p. 363.

³⁰⁹ MssB 2485.

³¹⁰ Web-site Note: Fr.Stofella had provided a very brief Introduction for the year 1810 - the translator compiled this more extended presentation of the year from Stigmatine sources.

**[152.] Fast, so that you may not sin! Fast, because you have sinned!
Fast, that you may receive! Fast, that you may keep what you received!
Fasting is a characteristic of the Christian Religion.**

This 10th of March was Saturday after Ash Wednesday. The first sentence of this note could be both a plan for a sermon on Fasting in four parts, as well as a personal resolution. This is an insight into the young preacher's spirit: he lived what he preached. Fr. Bertoni could have taken these statements from St. John Chrysostom, in one of his sermons as commentaries on the book of Genesis. We prefer to think that this note was written as a personal resolution at the beginning of Lent. The formula could have come to him from Fr. Segneri³¹¹. The entry of this day, as well as that of the following March 12th seem to come from these Homilies. These Latin translations of the St. John Chrysostom's Homilies in Fr. Bertoni's Library came to him from his Grand-Uncle, Fr. James.

In February 1803³¹² Fr. Gaspar had given a homily which was inspired by St. Chrysostom's sermon ***The Lenten Fast to be undertaken with joy***. The cry was: Ifast, because you have sinned! In that homily Fr. Gaspar stated that the Lenten Fast, together with all the other exercises of Christian Penitence, was the most sure remedy. This is able of recovering and preserving the lost health of the soul. Fasting would remove evil at its very root. The Lenten Fast as well as all the other exercises of Christian penance which accompany it, offer a most sure remedy. To support his idea, he quoted the words of Jesus: ***this kind of demons are chased away only by Prayer and Fasting (Mt 17:21)***.

Then he said ***Prayer with Fasting is a good thing. When we fast we make our minds agile, swift and free. We give them wings to fly to God.*** Towards the end of the sermon he exhorted the people saying: ***Let us take care of our souls. We have to cleanse them and heal them when ailing and keep them sound and healthy for the future.*** What is the secret?...: ***Let us look at the Saints... We are Christians! Christ gave us the example and encouraged us to take this medicine, while He too, for forty days observed such a strict Fast.***

For the last line of the note of 1810, about Fasting being a peculiarity of the Christian Religion, we take again from the same homily quoted above, delivered in 1803. He continued:

... The common Lord of us all, God as a Father who loves all his children, longs to remove all the wrongs we committed. Thus He invented for our advantage this healing method which is the Holy Fast. (Incidentally: could we not refer at this

³¹¹ Fr. Paul Segneri, SJ, *The Instructed Christian*, Part 3, Reason 20. This is found wholly near the end of sentences 4-7. It is attributed in this source to St. John Chrysostom: his Homily 1 on Fasting. However, all research in the alphabetical Index of his *Opera Omnia*, has remained in vain, among those Homilies of his *On Genesis* [some of these included in this Web-Site, under St. John Chrysostom.

³¹² *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, pp. 262-270, *passim* – Sermon 16: 'The Lenten Fast to be observed with Joy', February 23, 1806. MssB ## 738 -755. Fr. Bertoni also has commented on St. John Chrysostom's 13 Homilies *On Genesis* – MssB ## 4615-4852: Gn 1:1-2:17.

juncture to his exhortation **Fast because you have sinned ?**). The pagans are confused, the Jews are scandalized when they see us joyfully and lovingly accept, as a community, the holy season of Fasting. Let them name *feasts* their revelries and drunkenness and all other uncontrolled and depraved behavior. But the Church of God calls *feasts* the Fast, the contempt of gluttony and it praises all other virtues which go with Fasting. (Incidentally, still: could we not say again, here, with him, **Fast so that you may not sin?**) These are the *true feasts* : Wherever there is welfare of souls, where there is harmony and peace, where one gives up all external [empty] appearances! ³¹³

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12th MARCH 1810

[153.] Noah did not convert a single person in one hundred years of preaching against Incontinence.

This sentence too was inspired by a reading from St John Chrysostom's 25th Homily *In Genesis* :

... We have learned that when God showed His wrath and promised disaster, Noah was five hundred years old. When the Flood came he was six hundred years old. There are therefore one hundred years between the warning of God and the Flood. During those one hundred years human-kind did not take heed of the warning in the least. Noah, on his part, kept on exhorting them while building the ark...

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³¹³ Fr. Stofella's Note: '*Fast so that you may receive...*' might come from the example, soon cited in this source, of Moses who with fasting received the tables of the Law *So that what you receive might remain* - this also comes from this source – when, after having broken the Tables, he received them anew in definitive fashion, but only after a second period of fasting.

18th MAY 1810

[154.] Is it difficult for Mary to intercede? Is it difficult for Jesus to grant us any grace?

[This May pf 1810 was the first *Month of Mary* for the *orphaned* Fr. Gaspar. We can imagine him even more intensely committed to making the Mother of God his own *mother*. We have two important Marian thoughts in this month. The first entry of this date shows how he put Mary in an outstanding place in his ministry. The second, on the 24th, gives us a prayer which will accompany him all throughout his life.^{314]}

The words **any grace** is the object of both sentences under this date.. We take some lines from a sermon of Fr Gaspar on *The Name of Mary*³¹⁵ :

... Is it difficult for Mary to plead for any grace, on our behalf? Not at all! She is the Virgin Mother of God. She can influence with easiness and security the heart of the King, her Sovereign and yet her own Son. Is she not then the owner of all the treasures... of that limitless sea of graces and mercies? She is sung by the Church as *Queen of the Angels* . Do you wish to frighten all of Hell? Just proclaim the name of Mary with trust...

In his sermon on *The Law of the Gospel* ,³¹⁶ he stated:

...Is it difficult for Jesus to grant us any grace? Not at all! He invites us with His own words saying *Come to me all you who labor and are heavily burdened, I will refresh you...*

In an earlier sermon on *Perseverance* ³¹⁷ he quoted the very words of Jesus Himself:

... If you, who are wicked though, know how to give your own children those gifts which they ask of you and which yourselves were given by God, all the more so your Father in Heaven will give the Good Spirit to those who ask for it? Ask and you will receive. Believe that you will receive it and it will be done for you.

To conclude here, there is a challenge found in a still earlier Sermon: ³¹⁸

³¹⁴ Web-Site Note: this note is added by the Translator to provide the historical setting for this entry.

³¹⁵ *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, pp. 311-320, *passim* - 'The Holy Name of Mary', September 15, 1805 – MssB ## 1069-1093.

³¹⁶ *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, pp. 23- 32: 'The Law of the Gospel', June 5, 1803, the 12th Sunday ater Pentecost – MssB ## 813-840.

³¹⁷ *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, pp. 111- 120, Sermon 17, 'On Perseverance', April 11, 1803, Easter Monday – MssB ##773-793.

³¹⁸ *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, pp. 301-311. Sermon 8, December 13, 1801, 'Feast of the Translaiton of the Holy House of Loreto' – MssB ## 572-592.

... Jesus Christ awaits you, Mary calls you...!

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[154a.] We have to purify our minds thoroughly.

The last line of this *Journal* entry under this date sounds as the condition for obtaining the graces from Jesus through Mary. A **thorough purification of the mind** is indispensable in order not to put any obstacle to God's generous giving. It is an expression on the same radical level as the entry of May 1809 about **universal mortification**. The ideal is noted as well on the 14.15.16.23.24 July 1809 about the absolute requirements for Perfection.

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24th MAY 1810

155. In a Monastery, where even the smallest rules are observed, there the vigor of the Monks remains unchanged and there is peace among brothers. Where, on the contrary, the Religious do not take any account of the little transgressions, there the whole community is little by little dissipated and is destroyed. (St Anselm of Canterbury, in his Letter on Ep 6).

With all due regard to Fr. Bertoni, this citation is not found in Anselm's Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, c. 6. It is found rather that this is a citation of a second, or even third hand. It is found instead in Cornelius a Lapide's commentary on **Sirach 19:1** *He that contemns small things, shall fall little by little...* There follows then the comment from Cornelius: *This golden sentence of St. Anselm, Letter 6, to the Cistercian Monks. This is a most certain sign, he says, that we have learned in many churches. This is the counter-sign of that full certitude that we have learned from experience.* Here is the original text: *It is the surest pattern which we have been confirming from experience in the life of many communities. The fact, namely, that in a monastery where the tiniest rules are very strictly kept, there the austerity of the monastic life remains unchanged...*

We should note that Fr Gaspar did not use the Latin adverb **districte** (= very strictly) and he chose *strength* (**vigor**) instead of *austerity* (**rigor**). In the text of Cornelius a Lapide, after the **peace among brothers**, we read: *And in the Chapter - room the animated discussions are quieted down.* Then he wrote *Community* with a capital **O(Ordo)**, meaning the entire Order: which makes the consequence of the laxity of monastic life that endangers the whole Cistercian Order of monks, not only their small community. [It should be noted lastly, that in Cornelius a Lapide's text, there is a corollary in good Latin: **ubi rigor ibi vigor** (where there is austerity there is strength)³¹⁹.

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[156.] Let us pray for our Princes: may the Lord *speak to them words of peace in favor of His people* (**Ps 85:9**); may He give them desire for

³¹⁹ Translator's Note.

harmony. Let us pray also for our Pastors that they might dedicate themselves to the reformation of the Church. As you can see, everything is getting ruined. If the Church does not find the way for some reformation, there is no hope for a better situation. (St Thomas of Villanova, p 65,D).

This comment seems to have been noted first hand by St. Gaspar, from the Sermons of St. Thomas of Villanova. The antiquated citation system has been used by Fr. Bertoni.

St. Anselm of Aosta [1033-1109] and St. Thomas of Villanova [1488-1555] - As for the previous note which carried the quotation of St Anselm, we seem to hear Fr Bertoni remarking: "You see, the problems of those times are repeating themselves in our own times!"... In that month of May 1810, the worries were quite similar.

On 11 May a Decree was signed by Napoleon at Compiègne, and on 25 April, had been proclaimed in Verona. It abolished "all the ecclesiastical establishments, corporations, congregations, communities and associations of any nature and denomination." It made "exception of bishoprics and archbishoprics, seminaries, cathedral chapters and of the larger parishes, hospital care-givers, sisters of charity and other houses for the education of girls which We shall decide to be retained with special Decrees." The Royal Decree secularized convents and monasteries. It abolished the religious habits and the monastic life. It sent nuns, monks and religious back to their families, granting them a pension for life, for each one according to the hierarchical status they had in their respective Orders. The cloisters were to be evacuated and the Friars had to vacate the premises before the last day of May. The Nuns were given more time for the evacuation: until the end of July."³²⁰ This is only one aspect of the historical tragedy of those times. Pope Pius VII and many other eminent ecclesiastics had been arrested and imprisoned. Within the Church the *new ideas* of the French Revolution had caused divisions among Bishops and Cardinals. Many of the Clergy and the people of God became confused and polarized.

Fr. Bertoni, as far as he was concerned, and with the wisdom of saints, saw in Napoleon's wicked dealings a superior plan of God. In his instructions to the Seminarians he tried **to read Napoleon's Decree in the light of the events, which are the language of God**. Thus, in the very suppression of Religious Houses and Monasteries, perpetrated in those months he saw also the judgment of God against the widespread decadence of the Monastic discipline and of the Religious spirit. Similar causes and effects had been described by the above quoted St Anselm.

As Saint Thomas of Villanova said before the Council of Trent, Fr Bertoni saw no other hope except a **general reformation** which the Clergy should have performed among themselves. He was happy to be able to present the courageous behavior of the Holy Father Pope Pius VII: **This corner - stone is upright and firm. In the**

³²⁰ Perini, *History of Verona*, Vol. III, pp. 214, ff.

unfailing uprightness of the First Stone there is displayed and disowned the crookedness of the Worldly Spirit in both subordinate and superior Ministries of the Church.³²¹

It was in this context that the idea of collecting around himself some zealous priests for a new Congregation began to take real shape, through the *reading of the signs of the times*³²². The spirit of the many entries in the *Journal* on this day is clearly revealing the desire to *reform* himself and others. The request from the Bishop to become the Spiritual guide of the Seminary and to preach a month of Ignatian ***Spiritual Exercises***, in September, will find him humbly surprised and obedient, but will encourage him to embark in his long apostolate among the Clergy.

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[157.] ***Today, therefore, if you shall hear His voice... harden not your hearts as those ones did, to whom He swore in His wrath... if they will enter into His rest.***

The Latin text of **Ps 94:8,11** is put together rather at random. Just where Fr. Berotni found the text this way, is not known. In the original it sounds as follows: ***Oh that today you would hear His voice: harden not your hearts as (the Israelites did) at Meribah and in the day of Massah in the desert... Therefore I swore in my anger: they shall not enter into my rest.***

It appears clearly that this note is very closely connected to the previous two. That ***therefore***, which is not in the biblical text, is the word which gives the tone to the sentence. It seems to say: "Look at **the events**: let them talk! They are the **language of God**. Woe to those who harden the ear and the heart in front of these such solemn lessons... The Lord says: **They will not enter into His rest!**

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[158.] **A hardened heart will be in great trouble at the end.**

The correct and complete text, as we have seen on 9 Aug 1808, is in **Si 3:27**. ***A hard heart shall fear evil at the last: and he that loves danger shall perish in it...*** This sounds like a marginal note to the previous entry: ***Do not harden your hearts...*** "because a hardened heart will end up in trouble." It will be damnation... cf. 9 Aug 1808 and 17 March 1809.

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[159.] **I greet you, O my Mother: give me your blessing; bless me and all who are dear to me. Vouchsafe to offer to God all I have to do and suffer today, in union with your merits, as well as those of your Blessed Son. I**

³²¹ St. Gaspar's Conferences based on St. Gregory's Exposition on *Primum Regum* - Meditations 13 and 20 January 1811 – Meditation 13 [## 5296 – 5336] - 1 Reg. 2:26- 29;

Meditation 14 [## 5337 – 5383] – 1 Reg. 2:30-36 [?Jan 20, 1811: Most Holy Name]

³²² Translator's thought.

offer you and consecrate to your service all my being and whatever belongs to me placing everything under your protection. Obtain for me, my dear Lady, purity of soul and body, and grant that I may not do anything today displeasing to God; I entreat you through your Immaculate Conception and your perfect Virginity [before the birth, in the birth and after the birth].

(A *Hail Mary* for the person who wrote this prayer.)

Following the four texts that are so closely linked, that we may call belonging to the reform of the Church, here – without any change in the date – we find a beautiful prayer. This is a real treasure for the understanding of Fr Bertoni's spirit. We think that this text became part of his daily morning prayers. This will then be followed by a series of Patristic texts with varied thoughts. And then lastly, two short lines from a Psalm. We have the suspicion that all these entries were placed on different days – but the Servant of God who had written this notebook for his own eyes only, does not indicate any change of date. These entries from May 24th-31st, just as they are, will round out the entries for this year 1810.

We have already noted ³²³ that this prayer is a real gem, and it does not seem easy every to exaggerate its value. The last line **A *Hail Mary*...** seems to exclude the possibility that it was a personal composition. He took it from some source and, finding it very proper for himself, he added also the spiritual token for the demands of honesty, with regard for the unknown author. The Founder has handed this on to us through its inclusion in his *Journal*.

If we examine this prayer, we can easily see it as an expression of the ***Treatise of the True Devotion to the Virgin*** by St Grignon Marie de Montfort (+ 1716). In Fr. Bertoni's time this Treatise was already written for a while, but it remained hidden until 1842. Since that year it began to be spread very widely in the Church. The wording of Fr Bertoni's prayer is very close to the expressions of *Spiritual Slavery* of St de Montfort's doctrine.

This prayer is already in the spirit of a total dedication to Mary as the Mother and *Lady of the House*. We should greet her every day as such. Our offerings and prayers pass to God through her hands, and similarly all our daily activities and suffering, in union with her merits and those of her Divine Son. The whole of ourselves and our world, every day, are placed at her service: all under her mantle... St Grignon de Montfort could not agree more!

In return for this service, we expect every day *purity of mind and body* and that *we should not do anything which can displease God*.

³²³ *Collectanea Stigmatina*, Vol. 1, p. 341.

A strong foundation for our petition to Mary is her great privilege as the **Immaculate Conception**. Fr Bertoni supported the doctrine of Mary's *Immaculate Conception* long before the dogmatic definition of 1854.

In all the research, this text of this prayer has not yet been uncovered. This is so despite having pondered the prayer manuals of many Marian Congregations. A partial text, though, perhaps even the substance of the second part of the text. Might be found in an invocation that was in use of the old ***Preces Matutinae*** [Latin for **Morning Prayers**] often used by Priests and Seminarians. The title of one of these prayers was dedicating to that of commending the living of chastity, The text reads: *By your Immaculate Conception, and most pure Virginity, cleanse my heart and my body, a Mother and Virgin before the Birth, in the Birth and after the Birth.*³²⁴

With this in mind, does not the deMontfort devotion pertain quite closely to Stigmatine Spirituality?

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[160.] To be sure that your will is sufficient, see whether it is accompanied by your effort. (St Augustine)

The text is from a Letter 127 addressed by St. Augustine to the saintly couple Armentarius and Pauline. He wrote:

... It is necessary to put effort into action in order to obtain things which are wanted and loved. The will is not sufficient when the power is lacking. Righteous living -if we want it- is already a fact. When we really want it, it is already justice. To practice it, is sufficient that we want it fully and completely...

St Augustine intended to encourage that couple not to draw back from the vow of conjugal celibacy. The expression "Righteousness is reached by nothing other than perfect will"... is summarized and expressed by the following note of Fr Gaspar on the same day:

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[161.] One who has good will has everything, but the will is not good if it does not do what it can. (St Augustine)

We already know this text from the entries of 22 Feb and 22 March. However, we have failed to find the precise words in the works of St Augustine. The second part is evidently an extension and explanation of the first. At any rate we should like to complete the text with an authentic Augustinian quotation: "Without the grace of God, man cannot have even good will".³²⁵

†

[162.] We need will: not just any one, not the ordinary one, but consistent and genuine. (St John Chrysostom)

³²⁴ *Veni mecum piorum Sacerdotum. Patavii 1753, p. 14.*

³²⁵ Letter 188, 7 to Juliana, widow, the mother of Demetriadis.

The text is from the Introduction to the Saint's Homilies on St. John's Gospel. We can summarize the thought of St John Chrysostom as follows:

... One cannot possibly understand St John, the Evangelist, unless he purifies his soul as if he had to enter into Heaven. Do not tell me that 5 days are not sufficient. This is the time namely which it takes to follow [my talk] from the introductory Homily until the beginning of the treatise. The Good Thief, who was a rascal and a murderer, reached the height of virtue and of Paradise in an instant. The mud that we are can be changed immediately into pure gold. Don't you see that one needs only to want it? I don't mean any will or ordinary will, but consistent and genuine...

The expression of St John Chrysostom agrees easily with St Augustine's texts. The point is always the same: the service of God and the spiritual life require the engagement of the whole human will, but always with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. St Augustine said again: "Good will without the help of the Holy Spirit cannot work."³²⁶

†

[163.] To live in a Christian way among Christians is [looked upon] as shameful. (St Bernard).

This sentence reflects the difficult times of St Bernard's. We cannot however find a proper source for this quotation in the works of the Saint. Fr. Bertoni found that this text - as well as the ones which follow on this day - reflected the appalling situation of his times, too. He will use these texts in his daily ministry, when he had to denounce the spiritual disaster that *human respect* was causing among people.

†

[164.] People believe in the world. They believe in the Devil. They believe in the body. But in the only God of truth they do not put their security.

The text (which is not given the source) will be used by Fr Bertoni again in the 17th Meditation on the first Book of Samuel. There, he will use **faith** instead of **security**. He criticized the unbelief, the naturalism and the licentiousness of his times.

†

[165.] How long will you judge unjustly: and accept the persons of the wicked? ...They have not known nor understood: they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth shall be moved ... (Ps 81:2,5)

Fr. Bertoni seems to condemn the injustices perpetrated in his time using the authority of the Word of God. The Latin word should be in the plural: **peccatorum**. This is a text that condemns contemporary injustices. One comment holds that they are in ignorance, deprived of the good of their intellect; they walk in darkness – and the foundations of this world are shaken...

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³²⁶ St. Augustine, *Concerning Patience*, c. 24.

AN INTRODUCTION FOR THE YEAR 1811

In 1811 Fr. Bertoni was very much engaged in the Diocesan Seminary of Verona. He had to hear confessions and do Spiritual Direction with preached Meditations on Sundays and Feast Days. He gave Spiritual Exercises to the Candidates for Ordination. At the same time he was asked to give monthly Recollections and spiritual assistance to the College of the Acolytes together with some other ministries for the Clergy and the people as a whole. He continued to give Spiritual Direction and personal assistance to the girls and consecrated women of the Canossian "Retreat". Of great importance was the beginning of the systematic Spiritual Direction of the Superior of the "Retreat" i.e. Mother Leopoldina Naudet who was busy forming the new Religious Congregation called "Sisters of the Sacred Family". The first of the very few entries of the Journal in 1811 was in connection with this Direction.

†††

12th JANUARY 1811

**[166.] You should not study for the direction of N.N.
You should rather appeal to the Source of Light.
In this way you will have an advantage for yourself too.
You should not walk before the Lord but follow Him, Who will enlighten you. Provided you ask Him, He will suggest to you the way to make her progress and respond.**

Only in 1930 were we able to detect the name hidden under the **N.N.** We were given the hand-written ***Spiritual Diary*** of Leopoldina Naudet and were able to compare it with Fr. Bertoni's entry in his own *Journal*. This was on the occasion of a particular study which appeared as a Supplement to the **Bertoniano** of 1930, for the 77th anniversary of the death of Fr. Gaspar. This study covered about 80 pages, and bears the title: ***The Spiritual Diary of Leopoldina Naudet and the Venerable Fr. Gaspar Bertoni.***

Leopoldina's *Diary* began on 9 Jan 1811 with an abrupt note which reported that she expressed the desire *of having an external help...* in being directed in her spiritual journey, beside the Lord. She did not mention the name nor did she describe the encounter. She stated: *I exposed the spiritual desires that I had...* but she does not say to whom.

From what we know of the life of Leopoldina Naudet, she was comfortable to be guided by God alone. Suddenly she felt as if having a dialogue with the Lord in the following way: "- Entrust yourself to my Minister! - 'My Lord, I am so comfortable with You! - 'I tell you to entrust yourself to him: you will feel even more comfortable with Me!'" The encounter with Fr Bertoni took place during the weekly Confessions on Wednesday 9 Jan.

In her evening private prayer Leopoldina heard again the Lord as if giving further assurance of the goodness of that decision. She wrote He told me that He asked me to do that because He was sure that that *person* was going to continue what He wanted of me."³²⁷

"Some days after that" - she wrote again - "he (i.e. Fr Bertoni) gave me as Particular Examen **to imagine myself always in the presence of God, and to do what we understand is of His pleasing**".

This went on until 2 March. On that day she wrote: "I was told to begin the Particular Examen on the following words of St Gregory, *In anything that you do look always to Jesus. Direct your life towards Him. Recognize Him as the one who came to us to give us His grace and to number us among the Elect, through our humanity which he has put on.* This very text was commented by Fr. Bertoni to the Seminarians on 20 Jan, the second Sunday of the Epiphany. On this day, there was celebrated the Most Holy Name of Jesus. The Biblical text was 1 K, c. 2: *He will walk always before my Christ.* Each of the Elect is to walk in the presence of Christ. In all that one does, he should always look toward Him, and to Him direct the rectitude of one's life, as He has come on earth to recompose, through the Humanity that He has assumed, the number and the Grace of the Elect. We have also reason to believe that the same text was used by Fr. Bertoni for his own Particular Examen. St. Gaspar had preached on these texts to the Seminarians of Verona.³²⁸

There is a very important remark to make here. The probable reason for the progressive reduction of entries in his *Journal* until it reached a complete stand still, is to be found in the fact that every thing which he wrote in connection with Spiritual Direction and Spiritual Formation was all ***Spiritual Journal***. He felt involved at a deep personal level every day of his life.

It is interesting to compare Leopoldina's first entry in her DIARY with the spirit of Fr Gaspar's note on 12 Jan. Mother Naudet wrote:

... The Lord made me understand that to be assisted I had to ask for counsel from Him alone, and trust that He will give me His light. It seemed that He said that to direct me there was no need of learning, because what operates in me was only one thing, namely Love. This is the main activity. I therefore need only help towards this. And this can be drawn only from the same Source and not from learning...

The last sentence of Fr Gaspar's note (which shows some similarities in Leopoldina's *Diary*) completes the resolutions of the new Spiritual Director. It is a practical application of the principle of action which will appear as a characteristic of his whole life. **You will not precede, go on ahead of God, but will follow Him!** With regard to this we should like to pick up again what Fr Marani wrote in *Notes about the Congregation*, two years after Fr Bertoni's death:

³²⁷ Mother Naudet's Diary appears in this Web-site.

³²⁸ St. Gaspar Conferences on St. Gregory's Exposition in *Primum Regum* - Meditation 14 [## 5337 – 5383] – 1 Reg. 2:30-36 [?Jan 20, 1811: Most Holy Name]

... I want to explain what happened as we followed the plans of God. Indeed we have to follow after God and not walk in front of Him. This is what my beloved Father used to say frequently and what he used to practice all the time...

In the particular case of January 1811 that principle found its clearest, most effective and beautiful expression.

This entire entry is highly recommendable for the reflection and practice of Spiritual Directors of people who intend to grow sincerely in their spiritual life. The spirit of it, however, is to be cherished by all of us.

†††

28th APRIL 1811

[167.] **Watch and pray:** This summarizes all the advices of Scripture and of the Gospel.

WATCH: This means we have to be fully awake and strong: but without weapons. One could not resist if attacked: we shall be conquered.

PRAY: This means to be well armed, but asleep. If we are to be attacked we shall be stripped of our arms and killed by treachery.

Watch and pray! This is a man who is strong, awake and well armed. He won't be conquered.

There is not much to say. This text of St. **Matthew 26:41** was already considered in the context of Contemplative Prayer, on 5 July 1808. The short comments to the text sound here decisively as imperatives for the will. They worthily correlate all the texts which deal with temptation and struggle. Didn't he say on 24 July 1809 that **we must get ready for a great war with Hell?**

†††

18th MAY 1811

[168.] Undertake the spiritual journey by the narrow way and by Penance.

The text is inspired by the verse in **Matthew 7:14: *Narrow is the road that leads to life***. It could have been an *inner voice*, or taken for such by Fr. Bertoni who wanted to register it on paper and make it into a personal resolution. It could otherwise have been a generous resolution developed by himself which became a decision of his conscience in imitation of the Saints. What we are sure of is that he took it very seriously. So seriously that his biographers gave the blame to the severe *miliary* fever, which flattened him in 1812 and put his life in jeopardy, due also to his excessive work. He had not spared himself in the ministry and in the acts of penance: fasting and mortification to gain self control. Furthermore, he was convinced that in order to correspond to the graces God gave him and to follow the mission he felt he was invested with, he could do nothing less than that.

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[169.] I shall forget your sins, and I shall show you how many things you have to bear for my name.

It sounds like part of a dialogue between the Lord and his Servant. God calls Fr. Bertoni to the undertakings of His glory. Fr Bertoni, (we suppose), objected like St. Peter after the first miraculous catch of fish: ***Depart from me, Lord, because I am a sinner*** (**Luke 5:8**). The Lord replied: ***I shall forget your sins...*** (**Is 43:25**) or ***I shall never again recall their transgressions*** (**Heb 10:17**). He repeats what he had said to St Paul: ***I shall show him how many things it is necessary that he should bear for my name.*** (**Ac 10:16**). Similar words have been directed to several Founders of Religious Orders. Fr Bertoni will address these - and in Latin! - to Leopoldina Naudet on 14 Dec 1812. He will even add, jokingly as Saints can do: **Take courage! This is the best share which God keeps in store for His beloved ones: ...it is not a mouth-full for all!**

†

[170.] Very few are the people who have the perception of what God would do of them if He was not hindered by them in His plans.

It is the great Ignatian principle which became one of the corner-stones of Fr. Bertoni's spirituality. Here it is presented in the form in which Fr. Mariani, S.J. reported it. It is worthwhile to quote here the original form as we have it in Bartoli's book:

... Very few are those who have the perception of what would God do with them, if they would put themselves totally into His hands and let His grace work in them. One would never believe that a rough and shapeless trunk of a tree could become a statue which will be admired as a miracle of wood-carving. That trunk, if it depended on itself, would never let itself be cut by the chisels of a wood cutter. Only the wood cutter, as St. Augustine said, can foresee with his artistic eye what could come out of the trunk. Similarly there are many people who think they can just live as ordinary Christians. They have no perception that they could become saints if they just let themselves be

fashioned by the grace of God and, by making resistance to God's work, would not spoil the design that God should like to realize in them... ³²⁹

It is clear that the principle written by Fr. Bertoni is a summary of all this. In a Meditation in ***Primum Regum*** to the Seminarians he used it several times and made a moving application of it. We have noticed it already on 29 July 1809 but did not explain it:

...We cannot imagine what would God do of us, who are the apple of His eye, if we could not raise obstacles to His Grace, but would instead surrender ourselves always and totally to His hands...

For that expression: **apple of His eye** Fr. Bertoni quoted **Zc 2:8: *For he that touches you*** (i.e. my priests) ***touches the apple of My eye ...***

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†††
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³²⁹ Bartoli, o.c., Book 4, n. 36 margin.

AN INTRODUCTION FOR THE YEAR 1812

Fr. Bertoni continued with great determination his apostolate and his penances until October, the month during which a very severe illness struck him. He was hardly recovering from that illness, when Bishop Innocence Liruti gave him more ministries to accomplish in the Seminary. He had to suspend the assistance to the Canossa "Retreat", except for the Direction of its Superior, Mother Leopoldina Naudet.

†

*Before presenting an outstanding "gift of Prayer" which Fr Bertoni received on 30 May 1812 (during the Octave of Corpus Christi), we should like to give an extract from Leopoldina's **Diary**. It deals with an experience of ecstasy which she tried to resist, during the Mass of Holy Thursday which on that year fell on 26 March:*

... While thinking of the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament I was taken in spirit to the place of the Last Supper. In the contemplation of what was going on there I felt being very pleasantly but strongly drawn out of myself. I abandoned myself and surrendered to the power and pleasantness of that pulling force. When I realized that my body was also going to be involved and it started to lose its sensitivity, my natural reaction forced me to become distracted. I did that, however, with some hesitation. I knew that I was told not to do like that and to trust in God. Notwithstanding that I gave myself an excuse thinking that what I was experiencing could be a physical weakness. I continued to distract myself in order to have control over my feelings and to remain self conscious..

*Fr Bertoni had previously advised her with a statement so characteristic of him: **Do not resist God. Trust in God!** What would have happened on that Maundy Thursday if Leopoldina would not have resisted the attractions of God, seems that her Spiritual Director experienced himself a couple of months later on 30 May 1812.*

†††

30th MAY 1812

[171.] While in prayer before Mass I was taken over by some drowsiness and I heard from the Crucifix these words addressed to my heart: *Look at this Heart of mine !* Those words immediately brightened my mind with light and my heart felt suddenly a great fervor. Then it was as if my spirit rose up to see the lovable object which was indicated. I felt a shivering throughout my whole body. I found I had my eyes and mouth closed but my soul was wide awake and full of delight.

It seemed that my soul wished to separate itself from my body. It seemed to be dying and yet to enjoy this. When it turned again back with desire towards the one who was talking to it, I had another shivering and the feeling of a sweet painful death. My soul was then confused about what to do. If the experience had continued it was going to die or at least to be separated from the body. In such inability to act, it rested with delight in

the hands of the Lord and finding great peacefulness it was ready to die in that very moment. Then, in an instant, it regained contact with the senses.

The effect of this was a very tender devotion to the Sacred Heart. During Mass I was full of sentiment. My soul was moved to tears at Holy Communion. After Mass I kept much recollection and gladness for the whole day with an increase of Faith, Hope and Charity.³³⁰

The text is worth reading and meditating with devotion. This would be sufficient to understand it and to savor it without pretending to penetrate the deep phenomena which it narrates. However some remarks are helpful. We take from what Fr. Dalle Vedove wrote with regard to that mystical experience of Fr Bertoni:

... It is probable that he was preparing in those days the homily for the Feast of the Sacred Heart, the following Friday. Spending nights in work, study and prayer makes one somehow drowsy early in the morning. But Fr Bertoni's drowsiness was not just natural: it was that *turgidity* and tying up of the human faculties which is characteristic of mystical experiences. The words **Look at this Heart of mine !** were heard distinctly. What followed was like a flash of lightning: an irresistible desire to **see the lovable object which was indicated.**

... The sudden and almost violent way in which Fr. Gaspar was taken by this mystic gift showed that it was not a simple ecstasy, which should have developed slowly and pleasantly, but rather a real *rapture* or *flight* of the spirit. The effects of this extraordinary experience invaded not only the spiritual faculties of mind and will but also the physical ones with characteristic phenomena like shivering of the body and shutting off of sight and voice. He even reached, twice, the state of *alienation* close to death. Yet the whole experience was described as **delightful** and in great **quiet**. The *rapture* in front of the Crucifix marks the height of Fr. Gaspar's extraordinary spiritual gifts. After this mystical experience he was no longer sure what he should write down on paper. He will record only seven more short notes and will leave blank the remaining 90 pages of his JOURNAL. The reason could be that a new phase of his life was opening up.

... Within few months he will be struck by a sickness which will accompany him for the remaining forty years of his life, marked by intense suffering. From the ecstasy in front of the Crucifix which showed him the Sacred Heart, a new journey began. It will lead him to the total sacrifice of self. Just like Jesus who, after his Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, took decisively the road to Jerusalem for his sacrifice on Mount Calvary...³³¹

³³⁰ Web-Site Note: it is interesting to note that in these days [less than a week later] Fr. Bertoni was thinking integrally also of the Glorious Wounds retained in Christ's Risen Body. In St. Gaspar's sermon on the Sacred Heart [June 5, 1812], he stated: His side, opened after His death, is used to show us that Heart, that same Heart wounded by the lance, that WOUND RETAINED IN HIS GLORIOUS BODY, render the Heart so sweet, evident, divine, so much so that it is impossible to venerate the Wounded Heart without remembering and venerating His immense love [cf. MssB # 1771]. This integral theme is much in evidence in Fr. Bertoni's spirit - cf. J. Henchey, CSS, 'S. Gaspare Bertoni: una speranza missionaria...', in: *Symposium...*, pp. 143-160.

³³¹ Fr. Nello Dalle Vedove, *Un modello...*, o.c., pp. 191, ff.

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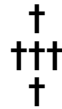
30th SEPTEMBER 1812

[172.] Tomorrow I will be more diligent in doing everything out of pure love for God and to give Him pleasure.

It sounds like a resolution for a Particular Examen.

The emphasis is on **out of pure love...** which recalls the principles of perfection written on 14, 15, 16 July 1809 and on some other dates. He had learned from Scupoli's ***Spiritual Combat*** that the habitual background of Spiritual Life is ... *the dispossession of all our will and the total surrender to God's pleasure* (which is **Holy Abandonment**). Furthermore, the rule of our activity is that absolutely every thing "should be wanted and done purely for the glory of God and only for His pleasure."³³²

... *This extreme tension of all his psycho-physical powers* - wrote Fr Dalle Vedove - *will soon result in a health disaster. The methodical exercise of the pure love and the continuous effort in doing what pleases God without paying heed to any request of the weakness of nature, will make him live at a heroic level. He was aware of the answer which his directee Leopoldina Naudet had received from the Lord: "I want you to be slave of love and not of health..."*³³³



³³² Scupoli, *The Spiritual Combat*, cc. 1; 10. Addition, *The Path of Paradise*.

³³³ Translator's Note: Fr. Mittempergher adds this idea from Fr. Dalle Vedove: *Life*, Vol. 3, p. 402.

AN INTRODUCTION FOR THE YEAR 1813

After the serious illness of October 1812, Fr. Bertoni resumed with more enthusiasm the spiritual care of the Seminary of Verona. There he had also the responsibility to direct some priests who had been "enclosed" by order of the Bishop with the view of being "reformed" from their irregular way of life. Unfortunately his recovered health did not last much longer. He had to be substituted by his former Teacher Fr Louis Fortis (who would one day become the Superior General of the re-established Order of the Company of Jesus). He made himself available, as much as he could, for several Ministries. In August he relapsed. When he recovered he was no longer able to assume the care of the Seminary. Towards the end of the year (27 Dec 1812) his father Francis Louis Bertoni died.

†††

21st JUNE 1813

[173.] At St Sebastian's the Lord gave me encouragement. He made me call to memory the graces of the past. He made me consider His power which will overcome my sins.

This also seems to us to be a *gift of Prayer*. It had to do with Fr Gaspar's vocation to found an Institute of Religious Life. He was shown his providential *history*. He might have had some hesitation about that. The Lord manifested Himself in that same church where he firstly had the inspiration and He confirmed his mission.³³⁴

†

22nd JUNE 1813

[174.] He made me worthy to sustain a.... for the sake of His truth.

The subject is evidently *the Lord*. What shall we put on the dotted line? We think either *trial* or *tribulation*. Fr. Giacobbe reported, around that time, that Fr Bertoni was confronted in a public place, near the Church of St Firmus (not far from his uncle Scudellini's house, where he was residing), "by a rabid follower of Jansenist heresy. That man could not bear the battery of reasons with which Fr. Gaspar weakened and destroyed the position of the Jansenists. It was then that *the heretic* resorted to the most base and offensive words against the priest".³³⁵

†

23rd JUNE 1813

[175.] Utmost, humble and active love to our Lord Jesus Christ

Was it a mystical experience? Was it an inspiration which Fr. Gaspar had during prayer and which he saw as a confirmation of his resolution?

³³⁴ cf. *Journal* entries for May 10, 1811 – as well as for July 23, 24, 1809.

³³⁵ *Summarium Additionale*, Document 26, p. 532.

†

24th JUNE 1813**[176.] Emotional affection to Christ with desire... and a painful humiliation which I experienced.**

It could have been an intense desire to become so much assimilated to the humanity of Christ that he longed for his Master's self-sacrifice. On some other occasions he had expressed the desire for martyrdom. The second part of the note gives the impression that his Master gave him an opportunity of tasting what he longed for, on that same day.

†

25th JUNE 1813**[177.] Consolation for a brother, who...**

The *Journal's* last written page is partly torn. The Italian text after **che** (*who*) has either *car...* or *cam...* Our assumption is for the second syllable, which could be completed in **cambiò** (*changed*). This would make sense if we refer this note to a documented experience which Fr. Bertoni had at the time, in helping a certain priest to *convert* from an unfortunate moral situation. **Sinner, my brother!** Fr. Bertoni used to say. In that particular case the priest was Angelo Allegretti, previously a friar of the suppressed Monastery of *La Vittoria*, who was condemned to death on 27 March 1813. The sentence was executed on 8 July 1813. The crime: culpable homicide of his own mother by poisoning. He had intended to kill his brother but there was a mistaken swapping of the soup bowl.

It is worth while to report the narration of the fact as testified by Fr Cajetan Borsatti:

... In 1816 I was passing by the House of *the Stimmate* with the Vicar, Msgr. Dionisi. Monsignor said to me: "Do you see that house? A saint lives there!" "Oh, I know him" - I said. Then he continued: "Listen, I want to tell you something which that holy soul did..."

"An unfortunate man had been condemned to death. He refused to go to confession. He stated that he wanted to die without repentance. Several priests tried their utmost but all in vain. He even used to insult the image of the crucifix and utter heretical blasphemies. One day the Prefect Smancini called me and told me about that. He said he did not like that such scandal should happen in his department. He pleaded with me to find a way of convincing that wretched man to repent. I promised him to try my best and I went to see Fr Bertoni. When I entered I told him: "I should like to have a favour from you." Fr Bertoni answered immediately "What are you saying, Monsignor? You put me to shame. Just command me what you want me to do. Your commands are like favors to me!"

"Then I told him the story and the situation."

"Monsignor"- he answered - here I am at your disposal. When do you want me to go? Now or tomorrow?" (it was already evening!)

"You can go tomorrow" - I replied. He was ready to go on the spot trusting in the voice of the Superior in which he used to see the voice of God.

"Very early in the morning, after having celebrated the Holy Mass (and, I think, after having spent some of the night in prayer for that poor priest) he went to prison. The criminal was surrounded by priests who were trying to help him. As he saw Fr Bertoni approaching from far he raised his hands and full of joy he shouted: "Here is the one who will put me in the grace of God!" Then Fr Bertoni "comforted him, heard his confession and consoled him..."(238)

Fr N. Dalle Vedove suggests another way of reconstructing the incomplete note of Fr Gaspar. The *car...* can be the first syllable of the Italian *carcerato...*(= *incarcerated*). Thus the text sounded as follows: **Consolation for a brother, who, imprisoned for a serious crime, repented and returned into the hands of the Divine Mercy.**³³⁶

†

26th JUNE 1813

[178.] I heard a sermon on the Sacred Heart with affection....

This note too is not complete. One might ask whether this affection is one of those strong spiritual experiences of gifts of Prayer filled with love, gratitude, zeal and humble *confusion...* or just an ordinary enthusiasm. If he wrote it in his *Journal* it is more probable that it was an extraordinary affection. It is, as we like to say, *the secret of the King!* However we like to remark that as this ***Spiritual Journal*** opened, practically, with the Sacred Heart and reached its climax with the Sacred Heart. It is fitting that it should end with the Sacred Heart. That is something which is worth noticing.

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³³⁶ *Summarium Additionale*, Document 20, pp. 119, ff.

CONCLUSION

We just said that the *Spiritual Journal* has finally ended. We add, though, *unfortunately* ! The last series of notes give us some indication that it was winding down. The time of **doing** had limited and almost taken away the time of **reading** as Fr. Gaspar himself had indicated on 22 Sept 1808. Similarly, now, it has taken away the time of *writing*, with the exception of the urgent needs of the glory of God and the salvation of souls. It is true that the two services - which are blended into only one - implied also for himself a challenging commitment not to neglect any interest with regard to his own soul. Yet, those interests did not allow him to keep them jealously in a notebook for his own use.

We do, though, have therefore other writings. The first among these is surely the **CORRESPONDENCE** with Mother Leopoldina Naudet (1812-1834). And what a source for a *Spiritual Journal*! We wrote in another book that:

*...this Correspondence, though dealing with different subjects, appears completely filled with the spirit of the **Spiritual Journal**. So much so that the Naudet-Correspondence contributes to the content of the **Spiritual Journal** as an unexpected proof and confirmation. Furthermore, whatever in the JOURNAL is jotted down by hints and sketches, in the Correspondence is developed in much detail. And if in the JOURNAL one reads generally about doctrine and commitment of the will, in the Correspondence one has the feeling of how all that has been put into practical living...*

³³⁷

What about the **Correspondence** between Fr Bertoni and Fr Louis Bragato... or rather of what remains of it? ³³⁸ Certainly we have in this the spontaneous expression of Fr. Bertoni within the period 1835-1848, which was of his best maturity. They were writings where Fr Bertoni unwillingly manifested the traits of his moral picture. ³³⁹

One can finally move and try to find his own way among **the forest of the Meditations** St. Gaspar offered to the Seminarians on St. Gregory the Great's Commentary on *Primum Regum* [the **1st Book of Samuel**]. That forest was getting thicker and thicker while the *Spiritual Journal* was thinning out. An attentive reader can understand how often those expressions in these Conferences are somewhat autobiographical.

We should like to conclude by summarizing the message of this *Spiritual Journal* which Fr Bertoni left - though unintentionally - for his sons in his Congregation and for the readers in general. We believe that there is only one clear lesson: **The**

³³⁷ *Summariium Additionale*, Document 35, III, p. 674.

³³⁸ *Translator's Note*: Fr. Louis Bragato [1790-1874] was one of the first Companions of Fr. Bertoni. After a few years of community life at the *Stimate*, the Bishop of Verona asked for a priest to serve as the personal and Court Chaplain of the Austrian Emperor's Italian wife, Maria Anna of Savoy. Fr. Bertoni gave him the best man at his disposal in the person of Fr. Bragato. The Correspondence between Fr. Bertoni and Msgr. Bragato was intense and deeply spiritual. Unfortunately, most of it had to be destroyed.

³³⁹ *Summariium Additionale*, Document 35, IV, pp. 735, 736.

Careful Development of the Interior Life. And with this, a loving quest and exercise of virtues. This is the nature and necessary condition for any genuine fruitful apostolic activity.

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(9 JULY 1808

We should never disregard nor go against any virtue so as not to cause harm to any other virtue. Many are deceived in this respect. Experience teaches that [if we do that] the undertaking is damaged and sometimes destroyed. On the other hand, when one takes always care to safeguard virtue, God gives His protection, the enterprise is strengthened and it increase too.

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11 OCTOBER 1808

When in a Religious Community each member does not apply himself deliberately to his specific perfection, the Community cannot progress. And even if it does go on, it will be without spirit and as if languishing.

May God bless us all!

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ALPHABETICAL INDEX
of
St. Gaspar Bertoni's
Memoriale Privato
[July 1, 1808 – June 26, 1813]

§

[1. Compiled by Fr. L. Benaglia]

Presentation

The following pages contain an Alphabetical Index of the Spiritual Diary of St. Gaspar Bertoni [1777-1853]. This work in Italian is known as his Memoriale Privato, and covers a five year period, from July 1808 until near the end of June 1813.

This alphabetical index was compiled by the late Fr. Luigi Bengalia, CSS, around the year 1965. At that time, Fr. 'Gino' [as he was called] was working at the Stigmatine Novitiate, Grottaferrata, outside of Rome, Italy, transcribing many pages of the Stigmatine Founder's spiritual writings. These hand-written material of St. Gaspar was typed by Fr. Gino and came to comprise five substantial typewritten volumes. This work was then xeroxed by the Secretary General of the Congregation, Fr. John Zampieri, CSS, some years later. These five substantial volumes have been distributed to the various Provinces, and are known as the Manoscritti Bertoni [MssB] – and under the direction of Fr. Pasquale Cavallo, CSS and his team, the volumes were later computerized.

The pages offered here contain an English adaptation of the Alphabetical Index – along with an introductory chronology, and a look at the biblical sources St. Gaspar Bertoni called to mind as he jotted his thoughts down in his personal spiritual diary.

†††

[A] CHRONOLOGY**1808****[53 Entries]****July**

1. Friday
2. Saturday – Visitation of Mary
3. Tuesday
9. Saturday
11. Monday
12. Tuesday
13. Wednesday – St. Anicletus, Pope & Martyr
18. Monday – St. Camillus
22. Friday – St. Mary Magdalen
24. Sunday – 8th after Pentecost
30. Saturday – Sts. Abdon and Sennon

August

9. Tuesday – Sts. Cyriacus, Largus and Smaragdus
17. Wednesday – St. Lawrence
19. Friday
20. Saturday – St. Bernard, Abbot.
23. Wednesday - St. Bartholomew, Apostle.
31. Wednesday – St. Raymond Nonnatus

September

4. Monday – St. Lawrence Justinian
11. Sunday – 14th after Pentecost
14. Tuesday
15. Thursday – Octave of the Nativity of Mary
17. Saturday – Stigmata of St. Francis
21. Wednesday – St. Matthew, Apostle
25. Sunday – 16th after Pentecost
27. Tuesday – Sts. Cosmas and Damian, Martyrs
28. Wednesday – St. Wenceslaus, Martyr
29. Thursday – Dedication of St. Michael, Archcangel.

October

8. Saturday – St. Brigid
9. Sunday – 2nd of October – Maternity of Mary
10. Monday – St. Francis Borgia
11. Tuesday
12. Wednesday
13. Thursday – St. Edward, King
16. Sunday – 19th after Pentecost
21. St. Ilarion
22. Saturday
23. Sunday – 20th after Pentecost
24. Monday

- 25. Tuesday – Sts. Chrysantius & Darius
- 26. Wednesday – St. Evarist, Pope and Martyr
- 27. Thursday – Vigil of Sts. Simeon and Jude, Apostles

November

- 16. Wednesday
- 17. Thursday – St. Gregory, Thaumaturgus
- 20. Sunday – last after Pentecost

December

- 2. Friday – St. Bibiana
- 3. Saturday – St. Francis Xavier
- 4. Sunday 2nd of Advent
- 7. Wednesday – St. Ambrose
- 10. Sunday – 3rd of Advent
- 17. Saturday
- 20. Tuesday – Vigil of St. Thomas Apostle
- 23. Thursday
- 25. Christmas

1809[39 Entries]**January**

- 4. Wednesday – Holy Innocents
- 18. Thursday – St. Canute, King
- 23. Monday – Espousals

February

- 1. Wednesday – St. Ignatius, Martyr
- 5. Saturday – St. Andrew Corsini
- 15. Ash Wednesday
- 16. Thursday – St. Juliana, Virgin & Martyr
- 19. Sunday – 1st of Lent
- 20. Monday – St. Raymond Penafort
- 22. Wednesday – Chair of St. Peter
- 26. Sunday – 2nd of Lent
- 27. Monday – St. Julian, Martyr
- 28. Tuesday – Seven Holy Founders

March

- 2. Thursday - St. John of Matha
- 5. Sunday
- 6. Monday
- 10. Friday
- 13. Monday
- 14. Tuesday
- 15. Wednesday
- 16. Thursday
- 17. Friday – St. Patrick
- 19. Passion Sunday

- 22. Wednesday
- 27. Monday – Easter Week
- May**
- 8. Monday
- June**
- 19. Monday – St. Nazarius, Bishop
- July**
- 14. Friday – St. Bonaventure
- 15. Saturday – St. Henry
- 16. Sunday – 8th after Pentecost
- 17. Monday – St. Alexis
- 23. Sunday – 9th after Pentecost
- 24. Monday – Vigil of St. James
- 29. Saturday – St. Martha, Virgin
- 30. 10th after Pentecost
- August**
- 24. Thursday – St. Bartholomew
- September**
- 23. Saturday – Ember Day – St. Linus, Pope, Martyr
- 28. Thursday – St. Venceslaus

1810[4 Entries]

- March**
- 10. Saturday - 40 Holy Martyrs
- 12. St. Gregory – Pope, Doctor
- May**
- 18. Friday – St. Venazius
- 24. Thursday

1811[3 Entries]

- January**
- 12. Saturday – after Epiphany
- April**
- 28. Sunday – 2nd after Easter
- May**
- 10. Friday – St. Anthony

1812[2 Entries]

- May**
- 30. Saturday – Octave of Corpus Christi
- September**
- 30. Thursday – St. Jerome

1813[6 Entries]**June**

- 21. Monday – St. Aloysius Gonzaga
- 22. St. Paulinus
- 23. Wednesday – Octave of Corpus Christi
- 24. Thursday – St. John the Baptist
- 25. Friday – Sacred Heart
- 26. Saturday – Sts. John & Paul

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[B] BIBLICAL QUOTATIONS**§****[I] OLD TESTAMENT****Exodus**

23:2

Feb 15 09

Psalms

81:2-5

May 24 10

84:9

May 24 10

94:9-11

May 24 10

118:10

Mar 10 09

Sirach [Ecclesiasticus]

3:20

Sep 05 08

19:1

Jul 24 08 Feb 22 09

Jeremiah

1:11-13

Feb 22 09

Ezekiel

33:11

Feb 22 09

§**[II] NEW TESTAMENT****Matthew**

4:20

Dec 07 08

5:10-12

Sep 29 08

6:9

Feb 28 09

10:23

Oct 26 08

11:12

Feb 22 09

25:46

Feb 15 09

26:41

Jul 05 08 Apr 28 11

Mark

8:35

Oct 26 08

Luke

13:24

Feb 22 09

John

7:25

Feb 15 09

12:26

Feb 20 09

12:48

Feb 15 09

15:16

Dec 20 08

17:25

Mar 13 09

Acts

9:16

Feb 15 09

Romans

1:17

Feb 15 09

12:2

Jul 24 08 Feb 15 09

1 Corinthians

10:12

Aug 19 08

Ephesians

6:16, ff.
Colossians
4:5
1 Peter
1:10

Sep 15 08

Jul 24 08

Jan 23 09

†††

[C] THEMES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER**ABANDONMENT**

- of sinners Jul 13 08

HOLY

- expressed Dec 10 08
 - Holy Spirit & A. Dec 10 08
 - perfection, humility Dec 12 08 Aug 19 08
 - obedience toward Superior Dec 23 08
 - Total Dec 10 08
 - vigilance Dec 02 08
 - vocation Aug 17 08
 - with God, all ... Aug 31 08

ABASEMENT [cf. FEAR]**ABBREVIATE**

- time Aug 10 08

ABSOLUTE

- unworthiness Oct 22 08

ABUSE

- defects Jul 22 08

ACCEPTANCE [cf. CROSS; INVITATION]**ACCOMPANIMENT**

- effects of prayer Nov 16 08

ACCOUNT

- render to God Sep 15 08 Nov 20 08

ACQUIRE [cf. INDULGENCES; VIRTUES]

- direction for life Mar 22 09

ACTION

- apparent Mar 22 09
 - devil Jul 23 09
 - good will May 24 10
 - harm good example Jul 09 08
 - in excess Sep 13 08
 - nature & God Jul 15 09 Jul 16 09
 - occasion Dec 07 08
 - offered Jul 24 08 May 24 10
 - perfection Sep 17 08 Oct 11 08 Jul 17 09
 - purpose Sep 30 12 Jul 16 09 Jul 17 09
 - recollection & prayer Sep 11 08 Dec 12 08
 - recommended Feb 28 09
 - union with God Dec 02 08
 - usefulness Dec 20 08
 - virtue Jul 23 09
 - vocation Dec 07 08

ADMIRATION

- for the ways of God Jul 13 08

ADMONITION

- divine	Feb 27 09	
- Scripture	Apr 28 11	
ADULT		
- catechized	Nov 20 08	
ADVERSITY		
- & joy	Oct 22 08	
ADVOCATE		
- offered to St. Andrew	Jan 23, 09	
AFFAIR [cf. SALVATION]		
- in a., union	Oct 25 08	
AFFECTION		
- for Christ	Jun 24 13	
- Eucharist	Oct 09 08	Feb 01 09 May 03 12
- Rosary	Oct 11 08	
- sermon	Jun 16 13	
- tears	Jul 02 08	
AFTER		
- before and a.	Dec 23 08	
AGONY		
- of Christ	Jul 05 08	
ALL [cf. TOTAL]		
- is from God	Mar 16 09	
- God's will in a.	Dec 23 08	Jul 16 09
- please God in a.	Oct 13 08	
- a. is done in God	Aug 31 08	
ALTAR		
- of St. Ignatius	Sep 15 08	
AMELECITES		
- Saul	May 08 09	
AMIABILITY		
- heart of Jesus	May 30 09	
AMPLIFICATION		
- St. Augustine	Jan 23 09	
ANGEL		
- purity	Sep 13 08	
ANGER		
- of God	May 24 10	
ANGUISH		
- and poverty	Oct 22 08	
ANSELM, St.		
- Sermon Ep <i>Ad Ap</i>	May 24 10	
ANTITHESIS		
- Creator/creature	Jul 02 08	
- goodness/evil	Dec 11 08	
- heaven/earth	Oct 27 08	
- holiness/sin	Dec 11 08	
- purity/uncleanness	Dec 11 08	

APPEARANCE

- of two saints Jan 23 09

APPREHENSION

- of pride Nov 17 08

ARDOR

- great and sudden May 30 12

ARMAMENT

- of God Jul 24 09

- power disarmed Aug 24 11

ARMS

- open a. of God [mercy] Aug 24 08

ARRIVAL

- as God wills Sep 13 08

ASCETICISM

- diligent Oct 08 08

ASSAULT

-resistance Apr 28 11

ATHANASIAS, St. [cf. SYMBOL]**ATTRACTION**

- by Christ Mar 16 09

- by God Aug 17 09

- humility & grace Jul 24 09

AUGUSTINE, St.

- good will May 24 10

- salvation of priests Jan 23 09

- temptations Mar 13 09

AWAKEN

- from ecstasy May 30 12

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BALDESSAR

- warned by prophet Feb 17 09

BEARD

- of Demosthenes Feb 22 09

BEATITUDE

- evangelical Sep 29 08

BED-TIME

- compunction Dec 04 08

BEFORE

- and after Dec 23 08

BEGIN

- the building from reverse Nov 16 08

- undertaking Jul 23 09

- prayer with Passion Aug 17 08

- fear saves Mar 10 09

- start over again Nov 16 08

- resist beginnings! Jan 19 09

BELIEF [cf. **FAITH**]

- extended to all but God May 24 10

BENEDICTION

- daily asked of BVM May 24 10
- Eucharistic Mar 16 09

BENIGNITY

- suspect Feb 16 09

BERNARD, St.

- and Pope Eugene Sep 15 08
- scourging May 16 09
- shame May 24 10

BETHANY

- Jesus returns Sep 25 08

BETRAY

- death Apr 28 11

BIRTH [cf. **BVM**]

- lowly b. of Christ Mar 13 09
- virginal May 24 10

BISHOP

- hears catechism Jan 20 08

BODY

- BVM May 24 10
- division May 30 12

BOOTY

- saved by God May 08 09

BOTTOM [cf. **DEPTHS**]

- at the b., d., of one's nothingness Aug 24 08

BOY

- & old man on ice! Mar 22 09

BRAMBLES – BRUSH

- heaven's path encumbered Jul 30 08

BREAST

- Christ's Jul 05 08

BREVIARY

- of the Apostles Sep 15 08
- devotion Aug 24 08

BREVITY [cf. **CONFIDENCE – ILLUSTRATIONS – TIME – VISIT**]

- penance Mar 15 09
- prayer Nov 16 08

BRIDGE

- death Dec 23 08

BROTHER

- consolation Jun 23 13
- peace Mar 24 10

BUILDING

- by reverse Nov 16 08

BVM [cf. **BIRTH; CONCEPTION; HAIL; MANTLE ; MATERNITY; PURITY;**

SERVICE; UNION; VIRGINITY]

- for the author of the prayer in her honor May 24 10
- daily blessing May 24 10
- dedication to May 24 10
- house May 24 10
- impetration May 18 10

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CALL [cf. ELECTION; VOCATION]

- to account Sep 15 08
- to perfection Dec 20 08
- to purity Sep 13 08

CALUMNY

- and beatitude Sep 29 08

CANE

- of the elderly Mar 22 09

CANONIZATION

- and Palofax Dec 17 08

CARMELITE

- order of Palofax Dec 17 08

CATECHISM

- of adults Nov 20 08

CAUTION

- pretended Aug 09 08

CAVALIER - KNIGHT

- and St. Ignatius Mar 06 09

CEDING

- to temptation, remedy Mar 27 09

CERTITUDE

- salvation Feb 11 09
- will of God Dec 23 08 Jan 23 09

CHANGE [CONVERSION]

- type of prayer Nov 16 08

CHANT

- sung Mass Jul 30 09

CHARITY [cf. LOVE; REVERENCE]In General:

- divine Sep 27 08
- mature fruit Nov 16 08
- redemption Dec 30 08
- sexuality Aug 17 08
- Trinitarian Dec 25 08

Toward God:

- all for love Jul 14 09 Sep 30 12
- conscience Oct 17 08
- cross Sep 29 08 Dec 03 08
- Eucharist Oct 09 08 Oct 25 08 Jan 04 09

- required	Sep 27 08	Mar 16 09
- tears	Oct 29 08	
- Trinity	Aug 24 08	
- world	Jul 14 09	
<u>Toward Christ</u>		
- and correspondence	Feb 01 09	
<u>Toward one's Neighbor</u>		
- and recollection	Sep 11 08	
- masked	Sep 09 08	
- works lacking	Nov 16 08	
CHRIST	[cf. also: BREAST; CROSS; CRUCIFIX; DENIAL; DISDAIN; DISPOSITION; FATHER; FEAR; FOLLOW; GARDEN; HEAR; HONOR; IGNOMINIES; LIFE; MAN; MEMORY; OFFERTORY; PART; PASSION; POVERTY; PRAYER; REDEMPTION; RETURN; SALVATION; SNETIMENTS; SHAME; SIMILARITY; SWEAT; TEACHINGS; TENDERNESS; THREE; TRINITY; UNION; VICTORY	
- agony	Jul 05 08	
- attracts hearts	Mar 16 09	
- correspond to the Incarnation	Sep 27 08	
- fast	Sep 25 08	
- Father, Judge [!]	Nov 20 08	
- fear	Sep 15 08	
- Friend	Jan 04 09	
- good	Mar 13 09	
- grace	May 18 09	
- hands	Dec 11 08	
- hidden	Mar 15 09	
- innocent	Oct 24 08	
- like C.	Mar 10 09	
- Lord	Sep 25 08	
- man	Sep 27 08	
- memories	Feb 01 09	
- portrait	Feb 26 09	
- poverty	Oct 22 08	
- prayer	Aug 17 08	
- priest	Dec 11 08	
- remember	Dec 25 08	
- Son of God	Sep 25 08	Sep 27 08 Dec 25 08
- suffering	Sep 27 08	
- teaching	Jul 29 09	
- tenderness	Sep 27 08	
- union at Mass	Jul 24 09	
CHURCH		
- recollection after C.	Oct 11 08	
CITY		
- one's faults known	Aug 09 08	
CLARITY		

- of mind	Oct 11 08
CLERGY	
- salvation	Jan 23 09
CLOSE	
- [verb] eyes in ecstasy	May 30 12
- [adv.] follow Christ	Sep 25 08
COMBAT	
- against defects	Dec 17 08
- Christ	Jul 29 09
- Christian	Sep 15 08
- victory	Apr 28 11
COMMANDMENT	
- of God & Weakness	Feb 27 09
COMMITMENT	
- laziness	Nov 16 08
COMMUNICATION	
- of soul with body	May 30 12
- of divine gifts	Aug 24 08
COMPANION	
- praying together	Sep 15 08
COMPENSATION	
- lack of mortification	Sep 28 08
COMPUNCTION	
- until bed-time	Dec 04 08
- until evening	Dec 11 08
- sentiments	Sep 23 09
- tears	Jul 02 08
CONCEPTION [IMMACULATE – BVM]	
- of Mary	May 24 10
CONCORD	
- recommended	Feb 28 09
CONDEMN	
- Jesus, innocent	Oct 24 08
CONFESSION/CONFESSOR	
- to God	Aug 17 08
- matter every day	Jul 30 08
- penances	Oct 21 08
- recollection	Oct 23 08
CONFIDENCE [cf. EUCHARIST]	
- and humility	Aug 19 08 Sep 23 09
- increases	Oct 09 08
- in God	Aug 09 08
- in Christ, after Mass	July 11 08 Dec 04 08 Dec 11 08
- before divine tribunal	Nov 20 08
CONFIRM	
- actions develop	Jul 09 08

CONFORMITY

- not to this world

Jul 24 08 Feb 16 09

CONFUSION

- during catechism

Nov 20 08

CONGREGATION – [hints at Founding Stigmatines]

Jul 22 08 Sep 15 08 Oct 11 08

Dec 20 08 Dec 23 08

Jan 04 09 Feb 04 09 Feb 11 09

Jul 23 09

May 24 10

COMMUNION [cf. CONSECRATION – EUCHARIST – MASS]

- the Apostles slept

Jul 05 08

- first holy

Oct 09 08

- sentiments

Jul 02 08 Dec 11 08

- tears

Oct 09 08 May 30 12

COMPREHENSION [cf. KNOWLEDGE]

- deformity of pride

Nov 17 08

- of our debt to God

Sep 28 09

- of God

Oct 09 08 Mar 13 09

- what God would do

May 10 11

- of oneself before God

Aug 24 08

- value of suffering

Sep 29 08

- not know what to say

Nov 20 08

CONQUER

- conditions for not being c.

Apr 28 11

- youth

Aug 24 09

CONSECRATION [cf. EUCHARIST; MASS]

- sentiments during

Jul 02 08 Dec 11 08

Jan 04 09 Feb 01 09 Jul 30 09

CONSENT [cf. CEDING]

- to temptation

Jul 18 08

CONSECUTION

- grace

Dec 23 08

- divine lights

Jul 23 09

CONSIDERATION

- of defects

Jul 22 08

- of sins

Oct 09 08 Feb 19 09

CONSOLATION

- of a brother

Jun 25 13

- with Cross

Mar 16 09

- not to be sought

Dec 23 08

CONTEMPLATION

- of God's ways

Jul 13 08

CONTRARY

- of Palafox

Dec 17 09

CONVERSION [cf. CHANGE]

- difficult for the impure

Mar 12 10

- of intellect & will	Feb 15 09
- morally impossible	Mar 17 09
- St. Teresa	Aug 09 08
- good will	Mar 06 09
CONVICTION	
- overwhelming	Mar 13 09
COOLING	
- of desires	Jul 13 08
COOPERATION	
- in salvation	Feb 22 09 Mar 6 09
CORRECTION	
- defects	Jul 22 08
- common error	Jul 17 09
- proportionate	Mar 19 09
CORRESPOND [cf. IMITATION]	
- with Christ incarnate	Sep 27 09 Feb 01 09
- with grace: devotion	Jan 12 11
- unmerited	Sep 15 08
- sole concern	Feb 11 09
CORSINI, St. Andrew	
- his vision	Jan 23 09
COST	
- at any c., services	Jul 30 08
- to Mary & Jesus	May 18 10
- follow the Lord at the c. of life	Sep 25 08
COUNSEL	
- necessary reserve	Dec 17 08
COURAGE	
- in temptation	Aug 31 08 Jul 29 09
COVER	
- lack of mortification	Aug 31 08
CREATOR/CREATURE	
- indebted to God	Jul 02 08 Sep 28 08
- impedes God	Jul 15 09
- all from God	Mar 16 09
CREED [cf. EUCHARIST]	
- special sentiments	Jul 30 09
CRITERION	
- for supernatural prayer	Nov 16 08
CROSS/CRUCIFIX	
- acceptance	Feb 02 09 Dec 03 08
- carry	Dec 03 08
- lack of mortification	Aug 31 08
- speaks	May 30 12
- 3 Crosses	May 16 09
- unavoidable	Mar 16 09
CULPABLE	

- of a thousand faults	Oct 24 08
CUSTOM	
- defects	Jul 22 08
†††	
DAMNATION	
- not wanted	Feb 22 09
- of those not emending	Mar 16 09
- priests	Jan 23 09
- why...?	Feb 22 09
DANGER	
- of death	Dec 23 08
- of not taking fruit from preaching	Feb 22 09
- of falling not following inspiration	Aug 09 08
DAY	
- good day, BVM!	May 24 10
- devotion all day	Dec 04 08 May 30 12
- fasting	Sep 25 08
- confessional material	Jul 30 08
- do not put off...	Mar 05 09
- 1 st in Lent	Feb 15, 09
- lived d. by d.	Sep 17 08
DEACON	
- at Mass	Jul 30 09
DEATH	
- good d.	Feb 15 09
- in ecstasy	May 30 12
- a young ecclesiastic	Oct 21 08
- think of it	Jan 23 09
- bridge	Dec 23 08
DEBT	
- toward Christ	Sep 28 09
- toward God	Dec 25 08
DECEIT/ DECEPTION	
- in virtue	Jul 09 08
DEDICATION	
- to the BVM	May 24 10
DEFECT [cf. FAULT]	
- to be corrected	Jul 22 08
- how to know them	Jul 30 08
- hidden acceptance	Aug 31 08
- and prayer	Nov 16 08
- mortification	Sep 28 08
- great and small	Oct 28 08
- reparation, temptation	Sep 13 10

- overlooked	May 24 10
- conquered by Demosthenes	Feb 22 09
DEFER	
- do not!	Mar 05 09
DEFORMITY	
- of pride	Nov 17 08
DEIGN	
- God deigns as Father	Sep 15 08
- private revelations	Oct 11 08
- Mary	May 24 08
De IMITATIONE CHRISTI	
- a classic	Dec 17 08
DELAY	
- in accepting inspirations	Jul 23 09
DELICT	
- requires punishment	Mar 19 09
DEMOSTHENES	
- 4 defects	Feb 22 09
DENIAL	
- of self to follow J.C.	Feb 22 09
DENIS, St.	
- feast	Oct 09 08
DEPENDENCE	
- our salvation	Feb 22 09
- on God	Dec 23 08
DEPTHS [cf. BOTTOM]	
- at the b. of one's self	Aug 24 08
DESIGN [cf. PROJECT]	
- of God impeded	May 10 11
DESIRE	
- to imitate Jesus Christ	Oct 22 08 May 30 12
- of martyrdom	Sep 28 08
- of mortification	Sep 28 08
- to be pleasing	Oct 13 08
- to reach God	Sep 27 08 Oct 09 08 Oct 25 09
- defective, for life	Dec 23 08
- without specifics	Jun 24 13
- long path	Jul 13 08
DESPOIL	
- of creates for Creator	Dec 25 08
- soldier d. of arms	Apr 28 11
DESTRUCTION	
- of monastic order	May 24 10
- of works	Jul 09 08
DETACHMENT	
- from creatures	Jul 02 08 Jul 24 09

DEVELOPMENT [CF. GROWTH; INCREASE]

- actions confirmed Jul 09 08
- of knowledge Oct 09 08
- in confidence, faith Oct 09 08
- in theological virtues May30 12

DEVIATION

- from ways of God Jul 23 09

DEVIL/ DEMON

- believed May 24 10
- conquered Mar 02 09
- creatures Jul 24 09
- predominant passion Jul 23 09
- security Mar 05 09
- sins Mar 22 09
- tempts Mar 13 09

DEVOTION [cf. BVM; EUCHARIST]

- to Sacred Heart May30 12
- to St. Ignatius Sep 15 08
- Eucharist Oct 09 08
- breviary Aug 24 08
- all day Dec 04 08
- *Via Crucis* Oct 24 08
- spiritual reading Oct13 08 Dec 17 08

DIFFICULTY

- and grace Dec 23 08
- and the will Jul 30 08

DIFFIDENCE

- and conversion Aug 09 08

DIGNITY

- of the priesthood Sep 15 08
- of the celebrant Dec 11 08
- of joy Mar 02 09

DILIGENCE

- necessary May 24 10
- and time Jul 24 08
- and virtue Oct 08 08
- promised Sep 30 12

DIMINISH

- divine light Jul 18 08

DIRECTION

- discretion Jul18 08
- spiritual [of M.Naudet] Jan 12 11

DISCIPLE

- sleep Jul 05 08

DISCIPLINE

- severe Nov 16 08

DISCRETION [cf. PRUDENCE]

- needed	Jul 30 08
DISDAIN	
- embraced by Christ	Mar 13 09
- of the world & charity	Jul 14 09
- of little things	Jul 24 08 Feb 22 09
DISMAS, St.	
- Good Thief	Mar 16 09
DISPOSITION	
- good death	Dec 23 08
- for the ignominies of Christ	Feb 01 09
DISSIMULATION	
- of religious defects	Jul 22 08
- of temptation	Jul 18 08
DISSOLVE	
- into tears	Oct 09 08
DISTINCTION	
- in the Trinity	Jan 04 09
DIVISION	
- body and soul	May 30 12
DOCTRINE [cf. CATETHISM; KNOWLEDGE]	
- beautiful	Sep 25 08 Oct 16 08
- in practice	Feb 19 09
- and Bishop's visit	Nov 20 08
DOLOR	
- of Christ	Mar 13,09
- clergy	Jan 23 09
- of sin	Aug 17 08
- and disdain	Sep 27 08 Oct 22 08
- and death	May 30 12
- offered to God	Sep 29 08 May 24 10 May 10 11
- and peace	Mar 16 09
- and humiliation	Jun 24 13
DOOR	
- open to thieves	Feb 22 09
DRAW	
- Holy Spirit	Oct 12 08
DURATION	
- brief, good sentiments	Sep 22 08
- of will	Jul 30 08
DUTY	
- fulfilled at tribunal of God	Nov 20 08
- to love God	Sep 27 08
	†††
EAT	
- money consumed	Mar 22 09
ECCLESIASTIC	

- deceased	Oct 21 08
ECSTASY	
- and joy	May 30 12
EFFECT	
- of death, ecstasy	May 30 12
- of prayer	Nov 16 08
- of discernment of will	Jul 30 08
- of pride	Nov 17 08
EFFORT	
- to enter the kingdom	Feb 22 09
ELEVATION	
- of the spirit to God	May 30 12
ELECTION [cf. CALL; VOCATION]	
- eternal salvation	Jan 23 09
ELI	
- Hebrew priest in <i>Primum Regum</i>	Mar 19 09
ELOQUENCE	
- defect of	Feb 15 09
- in doctrine	Sep 25 08 Oct 16 08
EMBRACE	
- friendship with God	Oct 09 08
EMENDATION	
- and scourging	Mar 10 09
EMPLOYMENT	
- of time	Jul 24 08
EMULATION [cf. IMITATION]	
- angelic purity	Sep 13 08
ENCOURAGEMENT	
- divine	Jun 21 13
END	
- to look toward it	Jul 30 08
- unique, sole	Dec 20 08
- heaven at e. of the path	Aug 24 08
ENORMITY	
- of hell	Mar 15 09
ENTRANCE	
- of others' houses	Aug 20 08
- kingdom of heaven	Feb 22 09
ERROR	
- common	Jul 17 09
ESPOUSAL PRINCIPLE	
- weak instruments in union	Jul 13 08
ETERNITY [cf. DAMNATION; FIRE; GLORY; LIFE]	
- between two	Dec 23 08
EUCCHARIST [cf. also:	
BENEDICTION; CHRIST; COMMUNION; CONSECRATION;	

**CONFIDENCE; CREED; DEACON; DEVOTION; DIGNITY;
 FAITH; FEAR [*reverential*]; FIND; MASS; *MEMENTO*;
 MODESTY; PRAYER; PRESENCE; PREIST;
 RECOLLECTION; REVERENCE; SECRET; SENTIMENT;
 SERVICE; SILENCE; SWEETNESS; TEARS; *Te Igitur*;
 TENDERNESS; THANKSGIVING; THREE; UNION.]**

- between two	Oct 09 08
EVENING	
- morning, noon & e.	Sep 17 08
- e.	Aug 24 08 Sep 27 08 Oct 08
- Jesus returns	Sep 25 08
EVIL [cf. MALICE]	
- of sin	Feb 19 09 Mar 17 09
- merits eternal fire	Feb 15 09
- do not follow the crowd	Feb 16 09
- prayer poorly done	May 06 09
EXAMEN	
- of conscience	Jul 30 08
- mid-day	Oct 27 08
EXAMPLE	
- good	Jul 17 09
- of a Knight [St. Ignatius]	Mar 06 09
- temptations	Jul 18 08
EXECRABLE	
- sins	Aug 09 08
EXECUTION	
- of God's Plan	Feb 11 09
EXERCISE	
- of charity	Sep 11 08
- spiritual	Sep 15 08
EXHORTATION	
- to internal mortification	Sep 28 08
EXIT	
- and entrance	Aug 20 08
- to find God	Oct 13 08
EXPANSION	
- of charity during Mass	Oct 09 08
EXPERIENCE	
- teaches	Jul 09 08
EXPLANATION	
- of catechism	Sep 25 08
EYE	
- closed in ecstasy	May 30 12
- custody	Jan 04 09
EZECHIEL	

- warning	Feb 27 09
†††	
FAITH [DEVELOPS]	
- Catholic	Feb 15 09
- growth	Oct 09 08
- firm	Feb 15 09
- in Jesus	Sep 27 08
- in all but God	May 24 08
- in the power of God	Feb 11 09
- shield of F.	Sep 15 08
- during Mass	Jul 30 09
- life of the just	Feb 16 09
FALL	
- from small to great Faith	Jul 24 09 Feb 22 09
- merited	Aug 09 08
- vigilance	Aug 19 08
FASCINATION	
- remedied	Jan 23 09
FASTING	
- with food in the house	Oct 13 08
- reasons	Mar 10 10
- advantages	Nov 16 08
FATHER [cf. CHRIST; TRINITY]	
- Christ as 'Father'	Nov 20 08
- God speaks as F.	Sep 15 08
- Eternal: just	Mar 13 09
shows Christ	Jul 30 09
open arms	Aug 24 08
loving reverence	Dec 11 08
FATIGUE	
- and good will	May 24 10
- and heaven	Feb 22 09
FAULT [cf. DEFECT]	
- weakness, devil	Mar 22 09
FEAR	
- good & evil	Mar 10 09
- of God at bed-time	Dec 04 08
- of Jesus passing by	Sep 15 08
- not corresponding	Feb 11 09
- vanity in public	Oct 09 08
- in perfect obedience	Jul 01 08
- for divine judgment	Nov 20 08
- pride	Nov 17 08
- reverential at Mass	Jul 12 08
FERVOR	
- external works of charity	Nov 16 08

- perfect obedience	Mar 24 10
- of will	Nov 16 08
- and temptation	Jul 18 08
FEW	
- very f.	May 10 11
FILIAL	
- fear	Mar 10 09
FIND	
- God in one's depths	Aug 24 08
- tears at Communion	May 30 12
FIRE	
- eternal	Feb 15 09
FIRST	
- day of Lent	Feb 15 09
- point of Exam	Oct 27 08
- Stations of the Cross	Oct 24 08
FIX	
- one's look on the goal	Jul 30 08
FLAGGELATION	
- of God's love	Feb 22 09 Mar 16 09
FLESH	
- faith	May 24 10
- joy of the Lord	Mar 02 09
FLIGHT/ FLEE	
- from dangers, divine inspirations	Aug 09 08
- from sin	Feb 22 09 Jul 29 09
- persecutions	Oct 26 08
FOLLOW [cf. CHRIST; IMITATION; INSPIRATIONS; WILL]	
- the Apostles f. Jesus	Dec 07 08
- our Lord	Jan 12 11
- more closely	Sep 25 08
- Cross	Feb 22 09
- with zeal	Feb 20 09
- do not f. world	Feb 16 09
- do not esteem less	Dec 20 08
FONT/ FOUNT	
- of light for spirituality	Jan 12 11
FOOD	
- not sought outside	Oct 13 08
FORCE [CF. UNION]	
- to succeed	Nov 17 08 Feb 11 09
- disarmed	Apr 28 11
- inconstant	Aug 24 09
- necessary for soldiers	Sep 15 08
- united stronger	Dec 20 08
FORGET	
- creatures for Creator	Dec 25 08

- God and sin	Aug 17 08 May 10 11
FOUNDATION	
- solid	Nov 16 08
FOUNDER	
- of Passionists	Jul 17 09
FOUR	
- years to St. Andrew	Jan 23 09
- defects of Demosthenes	Feb 22 09
- kings	Feb 27 09
FRANTIC	
- not for spiritual life	Jan 04 09
FREQUENT	
- memory	Feb 01 09
FRIEND	
- and Eucharist	Oct 09 08
- and Christ	Jan 04 09
FRUIT	
- mature of charity	Nov 16 08
- word of God	Feb 22 09
- lost & found	Mar 27 09
FURNACE	
- and Jeremiah	Feb 22 09
†††	
GARDEN	
- Christ's Prayer	Jul 05 08
GENEROSITY	
- of the just	Nov 17 08
GLANCE	
- fixed on the goal	Jul 30 08
GLORY	
- eternal	Mar 15 09
- on the Cross	Mar 16 09
- to be promoted	Sep 15 08 Jul 16 09
- and Breviary	Aug 24 08
- time	Sep 17 08 Oct 08 08
- zeal	Feb 20 09
GOD	
- to be sought in all	Jul 30 08
GOOD/ GOODNESS	
- arguments	Dec 23 08
- authentic	Mar 13 09
- directly sought	Jul 17 09
- eternity	Feb 15 09
- Father	Aug 24 08
- of, from God – alone	Aug 17 08 Oct 09 08 Dec 11 08
	Dec 25 08 Mar 16 09

- heavenly	Mar 22 09
- sin	Jul 13 08
- suffering	Sep 29 08
- temptation	Jul 18 08
GOSPEL	
- warnings	Aug 28 11
- basis of judgment	Feb 16 09
GRACE [cf. CORRESPOND ; MIRACLE ; UNION	
<u>In General:</u>	
- drawn from humility	Jul 24 09
- from Christ	May 18 10
- fasting	
- hidden from obstinate	Mar 15 10
- and sin	Aug 09 08
- and eloquence	Feb 15 09
<u>Actual:</u>	
- and holiness	Aug 09 08
- to keep the law	Feb 27 09
<u>Sanctifying:</u>	
- difficulty	Dec 23 08
GRADE	
- of perfection	Dec 20 08
GRATITUDE	
- to God for Incarnation	Sep 27 08
GRAVITY	
- of sins	Oct 09 08
- in one's gait	Jan 24 09
GROWTH	
- spiritual	Jan 12 11
†††	
HABIT [cf. SINNER]	
- of doing one's own will	Jul 16 09
HAGAG	
- spared	May 08 09
HALF	
- the world wants God	Mar 13 09
HAND	
- to work	Feb 27 09
- of God	May 30 12
- harmony with tongue	Feb 28 09
- hold on to Christ	Dec 11 08
- of justice	Mar 14 09
HARM	
- worldly joy	Mar 02 09
- to be avoided	Dec 02 08
HATRED	

- for sin	Mar 22 09
HEAL	
- not achieved	Mar 06 09
HEAR	
- divine lights [?]	Jul 23 09
- sublime realities	Aug 24 08
- a panegyric	Jun 26 08
- from the Crucifix	May 30 12
- voice of God	May 30 12
HEART [cf. COURAGE]	
- concord	Feb 28 09
- decisions	Mar 10 09
- of Jesus: compunction	Jul 02 08
ecstasy	May 30 12
panegyric	Jun 26 13
- hard	May 24 10
- have God	Sep 15 08
- word of God	Mar 10 09
HEAVEN [cf. KINGDOM]	
- Cross	Aug 31 08
- only with effort	Feb 22 09
- at the end of the path	Jul 30 08
HEIGHT	
- sublime realities	Aug 24 08
HELL	
- in Jr 1:13	Feb 22 09
- useless penance	Mar 15 09
- profound	Mar 16 09
HELMET	
- of salvation	Sep 15 08
HEROD	
- Antipas	Feb 19 09
HIDDEN	
- Jesus' Face	Mar 15 09
HOLINESS	
- requires prudence	Sep 23 09
- of God	Dec 11 08
- of St. Andrew Corsini	Jan 23 09
- of the laity	Dec 02 08
- needs good use of time	Oct 08 08
HONOR	
- Father through Christ	Dec 25 08
HORROR	
- for pride	Nov 17 08
HOSPITAL	
- the world	Mar 06 09
HOUR	

- at this h.	Jul 29 09	
- recollection for an h.	Oct 09 08	
HOUSE		
- BVM	May 24 10	
- others'	Aug 20 08	
- thieves	Nov 17 08	
HUMAN		
- fear	Mar 10 09	
HUMANITY		
- desires	Jul 13 08	
- do not seek justification	Oct 24 08	
- all things	Jul 30 08	
HUMILIATION		
- sad	Jun 24 13	
- in all	Sep 05 08	
HUMILITY		
- draws help	Jul 24 09	
- in hearing sermons	Feb 15 09	
- increase	Oct 09 08	
- sentiments	Dec 11 08	Sep 23 09
- and God's gifts	Oct 22 08	
- the most unclean	Dec 11 08	
- a thousand faults	Oct 24 08	
HUNDRED		
- years of preaching	Mar 12 09	
HUNTER		
- painting	Mar 22 09	
	†††	
ICE		
- and the old man	Mar 27 09	
IDEA		
- confused at bishop's visit	Nov 20 08	
IGNATIUS LOYOLA, St.		
- inspiration of	Sep 15 08	
IGNOMINY [cf. CHRIST; IMITATION; POVERTY; SHAME]		
- follow Christ	Sep 25 08	Sep 27 08 Oct 22 08
	Feb 01 09	
IMAGE [cf. PAINTING]		
- of the Son in us	Jul 30 09	
- of the Trinity [painting]	Aug 24 08	
<u>Images used:</u>		
- hunter, soldier	Mar 22 09	
- house	Aug 29 98	
- good; God	Oct 13 08	
- building	Nov 16 08	

- serpent	Jul 23 09
IMAGINATION	
- not to sin	Mar 10 09
IMITATION [cf. CONFORMITY]	
- of Christ [classic]	Dec 17 08
- in poverty	Oct 22 08
IMMOBILITY	
- and obstacles	Feb 11 09
IMPEDIMENT [cf. OBSTACLE]	
- of God's action	Feb 11 09 Jul 15 09 May 10 11
- ecstasy	May 30 12
IMPERFECTION	
- in a priest	Dec 02 08
IMPETRATION	
- does not cost BVM	May 18 10
IMPETUS	
- toward God	Oct 09 08
IMPOSSIBILITY	
- God does not ask	Feb 27 09
- moral	Mar 17 09
IMPURITY	
- conquered by charity	Aug 17 08
- worldly joy	Mar 02 09
- useless preaching	Mar 12 10
INCARNATION [cf. CHRIST]	
- and love	Sep 27 08 Jul 30 09
INCLINATION	
- natural	Jul 12 08
INCONSTANCY	
- in prayer	Nov 16 08
- in struggle	Aug 24 09
INDICATION	
- of Christ's Heart	May 30 12
INDISPENSABLE	
- patience	Aug 24 09
INDULGENCE	
- neglect	Oct 21 08
INNOCENCE	
- Cross of Christ	Mar 16 09
- Jesus Condemned	Oct 24 08
- divine judgment	Nov 20 08
INSPIRATION	
- to combat defects	Oct 08 08
- danger in not following	Aug 09 08
- do not delay	Jul 23 09
- for spiritual direction	Jan 12 11
INSTABILITY	

- of worldly joy	Mar 02 09
INSTINCT	
- of nature impedes	Jul 15 09
<u>INSTITUTE</u> [religious - cf. CONGREGATION]	
- conditions for vitality	Oct 11 08
- fervent, relaxed	Jul 22 08
- temptations	Jul 18 08
INSULT	
- evangelical beatitude	Sep 29 08
INTELLECT	
- opened during Mass	Oct 09 08
- conversion	Feb 15 09
- light	May 30 09
- proposals	Mar 10 09
- remedies	Jan 23 09
INTRODUCTION	
- to retreat [1808]	Sep 15 08
INVITATION	
- of divine mercy	Mar 14 09
- of St. Ignatius	Sep 15 09
†††	
JERUSALEM	
- and Jesus' preaching	Sep 25 08
JOHN	
- apostles slept	Jul 05 08
<u>BAPTIST</u> preaching	Feb 19 09
<u>CHRYSTOM</u>	
- need for good will	May 24 10
- priests' salvation	Jan 23 09
- dangerous security	Mar 05 09
JORDAN	
- and Jesus	Jul 30 09
JOY	
- in ecstasy	May 30 12
- beatitudes	Sep 29 08
- worldly & divine	Mar 22 09
- in adversity, poverty	Oct 22 08
JUDGMENT	
- based on God's Word	Feb 16 09
- of God	Sep 15 08 Nov 20 08
JUSTICE/ JUSTIFICATION	
- not from men	Oct 24 08
- deformed	Mar 13 09
- power and fear	Nov 17 08
- in judging	Feb 16 09

- and divine mercy	Mar 14 09
- life of faith	Feb 16 09
	†††
KILL	
- of non-violent	Apr 28 11
- painted soldier	Mar 22 09
KING [cf. QUEEN ; REIGN]	
- 4 warned	Feb 27 09
KNOWLEDGE	
- of God	Mar 16 09
	†††
LACKING	
- solid formation	Nov 16 08
- internal mortification	Sep 28 08
- perfection	Jul 30 08
- God never	Dec 02 08
LAMENT	
- of those not cured	Mar 06 09
LANGUAGE [cf. TONGUE]	
- in harmony	Feb 28 09
LANGUOR	
- in the apostolate	Oct 11 08
LAZINESS	
- in prayer	Nov 16 08
- to be fled	Feb 15 09
LEAST	
- observance of the L.	May 24 10
LENGTH [cf. DURATION]	
- of suffering	Mar 15 09
LENT	
- 1 st day	Feb 15 09
- points	Feb 15 09 Mar 27 09
LIBERTY	
- of spirit	Aug 17 08
- and solitude	Feb 22 09
LIFE	
- and crosses	Mar 15 09
- of Christ	Oct 25 08 Feb 01 09
- eternal	Feb 15 09
- faith	Feb 16 09
- innocent	Nov 20 08
- not desire longer L.	Dec 23 08
- and passions	May 08 09
- penance	Mar 15 09
- and death	Jan 23 09
- day by day	Sep 17 08
LIGHT [cf. INSPIRATION]	

- from the Word of God	May 30 12
- from Spiritual Direction	Jan 12 11
- brief, during Mass	Oct 25 08
- shows evil of sin	Aug 09 08
LIGHTNESS	
- of conscience	Feb 28 09
- of earthly penance	Mar 15 09
LISTEN	
- to God's Word	Feb 19 09
LIVE-STOCK	
- of the Amelicitas	May 08 09
LOCUTION	
- during the Way of the Cross	Oct 24 08
LOSS	
- of soul	Oct 26 08
- of the art of speaking	Jan 23 09
- of fruit; remedy	Mar 27 09
LOVE [cf. CHARITY; INCARNATION; TRUTH]	
- and Fr. Bertoni	Sep 25 08
- for God	Mar 22 09
- masked	Sep 09 08
- solitude	Feb 22 08
- supreme	Jun 23 13
- temptations	Mar 13 09
- trials	Feb 22 09
†††	
MAJESTY	
- S.D.M.	Oct 13 08
MALEDICTION	
- and beatitudes	Sep 29 08
MALICE [cf. EVIL]	
- of humanity	Dec 11 08
MALINCHOLY	
- of Saul	Feb 27 09
MAN [cf. CHRIST; HUMANITY]	
- desires	Jul 13 08
- do not seek justification	Oct 24 08
- all things	Jul 30 08
MANTLE	
- of BVM	May 24 10
MANY	
- lose patience	Aug 24 09
MARTYRDOM	
- desired	Sep 28 08
MARVELOUS	
- light	May 30 12

MARY [cf. **BVM**]

- Immaculate Conception May 24 10
- impetration May 18 10
- maternity Oct 09 08
- virginity May 24 10

MASK

- self-love Aug 09 08

MASS [cf. **EUCCHARIST**]

Jul 02 08 Jul 12 08 Jul 24 08
 Jul 25 08 Oct 23 08 Oct 25 08
 Dec 04 08 Dec 11 08 Dec 25 08
 Jan 04 09 Feb 01 09 Jul 24 09
 Jul 30 09

MASTER

- call to accounting Sep 15 08
- and the virtues Mar 22 09

MATTER

- of holiness, temptation Aug 31 08

MATURITY

- of fruit of charity Nov 16 08
- in one's gait Jan 04 09

MAXIM

- one suffices Mar 13 09
- of this world Feb 16 09

MEANS

- lowly, but good Oct 12 09
- unequal Dec 20 08
- necessary Aug 09 08
- Ignatian Sep 15 08
- prescribed by God Jul 29 09
- thorns & briars Jul 30 08
- efficacious Jul 13 08

MEDICINE

- and goods of this world Mar 13 09
- and prayer Mar 06 09

MEDITATION

- on the Reign Sep 25 08
- of this day Sep 28 08
- on the Incarnation Sep 27 08
- on death Sep 17 08
- of Jesus in the Garden Jul 30 09
- of a single maxim Mar 13 09
- repeated Jul 05 08

MEMENTO

- of Mass Oct 09 08

MEMORY

- of Christ's life Feb 01 09

<u>Recollection:</u>	
- during Doctrine	Sep 25 08
MERCY	
- of justice	Mar 14 09
- open arms of God	Aug 24 08
MERIT	
- before God	Dec 20 08
- of good will	Dec 03 08
- of Jesus and Mary	May 24 10
- of grace	Sep 15 08
MID-DAY – NOON	
- examen	Oct 27 09
- from morning 'til m.	Sep 17 09
MIND	
- clarity for study	Oct 11 09
- not persuaded	Mar 13 09
MINISTER	
- an account to render	May 24 10
MIRACLE	
- of grace	Mar 17 09
MIRROR [cf. MODEL]	
- a saint chosen	Jul 30 08
MISERY	
- comparison with laity	Dec 02 08
MODEL [cf. MIRROR]	
- a saint	Jul 30 08
MODESTY	
- at the end of Mass	Sep 11 08
- external	Jan 04 09
MOMENT	
- of ecstasy	May 30 12
- not for a single m.	May 15 09
- sentiments lasting	Jul 02 08
MONK/ MONASTERY	
- fervent	May 24 10
MONTFORT de, St. Louis Grignon	
- consecration to Mary	May 24 10
MORALE	
- and conversion	May 17 09
MORNING	
- until noon	Sep 17 08
MORTIFICATION	
- lack of, opposes vocation	Dec 20 08
- cross exchanged	Aug 31 08
- interior is superior	Sep 28 08
- and victory	Jul 29 09
- rejected	Aug 31 08

- universal	May 08 09
MOTIVE	
- of complaint	Aug 09 08
MOUTH	
- closed in ecstasy	May 30 12
- our faults	Aug 09 08
- God on our lips	Sep 15 08
- stone	Feb 22 09
MOVEMENT	
- to follow the road	Sep 25 08
- in accord with God	Jul 16 09
- improper	Jan 04 09
- toward desires	Jul 13 08
MURMURING	
- vain justification	Aug 09 08
†††	
N.N. ... [abbreviation]	
- [L.Naudet]	Jan 12 11
NAME	
- God's	May 10 11
- used badly	Aug 31 08
NARROW	
- way of penance	May 10 11
NATURE [cf. TRINITY]	
- much, little charity	Nov 16 08
- impedes God	Jul 15 09
- natural fear	Mar 10 09
NEAR [cf. CLOSE]	
- follow Christ	Sep 25 08
NECESSITY	
- of combating negligence	Dec 18 08
- masks murmuring	Aug 09 08
- choice of crosses	Mar 16 09
- 3 objects of salvation	Feb 22 09
NECK	
- embraced in friendship	Oct 09 08
NEGLIGENCE	
- to be combated	Dec 17 08
- in defects	May 24 10
- little things	Jul 23 09
- virtue for works	Jul 09 08
NEIGHBORHOOD	
- faults known	Aug 09 08
NETS	
- left by Apostles	Dec 07 08
NINEVEH	

- king warned	Feb 27 09
NOAH	
- converted no one	Mar 12 10
NOISE	
- of this world	Mar 22 09
NOTHING[NESS]	
- at the base of one's n.	Aug 24 08
- impediment	Feb 11 09
- divine glory	Jul14 09
†††	
OBEDIENCE	
- limited, self-interest	Jul 01 08
- recommended	Feb 28 09
- severe	Nov 16 08
- vow for superiors	Dec 23 08
OBJECT	
- Sacred Heart	May 30 12
OBLATION [OBSEQUIUM]	
- to God	Jul 02 08
OBSTACLE [cf. IMPEDIMENTS]	
- strength of soul	Feb 11 09
OBSTINACY	
- in sin	Mar 15 09
OCCASION	
- seize	Dec 07 08
- of sin	Feb 15 09
- regaining lost fruit	Mar 27 09
OFFERTORY	
- to suffer for Christ	Jul 11 08 Oct 22 08
- of one's own words	Jul 24 09
- of oneself to God	Mar 16 09 Oct 27 08
OLD	
- sliding with the young	Mar 22 09
OPENNESS [cf. ARMS; DOOR]	
- intellect in Eucharist	Oct 09 08
- way	Sep 25 08
OPINION	
- of theologians	Feb 16 09
- reputation	Oct 21 08
- not right	Dec 17 08
OPPOSITION	
- at the beginning	Jun 19 09
ORDER	
- in the monastery	May 24 10
OUTSIDE	
- quest for God	Oct 13 08

OVER-WHELMED

- by many things

†††

Mar 13 09

PAIN [cf. **DOLOR**]

- due to complaining

Aug 09 08

PAINTING [cf. **SIMILITUDE**; **VELLEITY**]

- hunter & soldier
- portrait of Christ
- Trinity

Mar 22 09

Feb 26 09

Aug 24 08

PALAFX

- in error

Dec 17 08

PARADISE

- denied to the obstinate
- promised to the troubled

Mar 15 09

Sep 29 08

PART

- to exchange with J. C.

Dec 25 08

PASSING BY [cf. **CHRIST**]

- I fear ...

Sep 15 08

PASSION cf. **CHRIST**

- prayer begins with P.
- for murmuring
- alive
- remaining

Aug 17 08

Aug 09 08

Mar 08 09

Feb 19 09 Jul 23 09

PASSIONIST

- Founder

Jul 17 09

PATER NOSTER

- prayed

Feb 28 09

PATIENCE

- indispensable

Aug 24 09

PAUL of the CROSS

- Passionist Founder

Jul 17 09

PEACE

- in regular observance
- resignation in pain

May 24 10

Mar 16 09

PENANCE

- here & hereafter
- not excessive
- & Confessor
- strict life

Mar 15 09

Sep 13 08

Oct 21 08

May 10 11

PERFECTION

- seize the occasion
- call of God
- greater in abandonment
- defective, lack
- need to strive
- personal & community

Dec 07 08

Dec 20 08

Oct 12 08

Jul 30 08

Dec 17 08

Oct 11 08

PERMISSION

- of Confessor Oct 21 08
- to change Jul 18 08

PERSECUTION

- and beatitude Sep 29 08
- flee from 1 city Oct 26 08
- & Fr. Bertoni Jul 11 08

PERSEVERANCE

- in prayer Mar 06 09

PERSON [cf. **TRINITY**]

- a dear friend Oct 09 08
- spiritual, begins by reverse Nov 16 08
- and justification Aug 31 08

PERSUASION

- p. catechist Oct 09 08
- practical Feb 22 09
- over-coming Mar 13 09

PICTURE [cf. **IMAGE**; **PAINTING**]

- hunter, soldier Mar 27 09

PLEASURE

- heaven, vices Aug 31 08
- hearing God's word Feb 19 09
- God's sought Jul 16 09 Sep 30 12

POLES

- for vines Mar 27 09

PORTRAIT [cf. **PAINTING**; **IMAGE**]

- of J.C. in us Feb 26 09

POSSIBILITY

- of God's Will Mar 22 09
- God's commands Feb 27 09

POVERTY [cf. **CHRIST**]

- 'real' p. experienced Oct 22 08
- Christ's Sep 25 08 Oct 22 08 Mar 13 09
- necessary Jul 23 09

POWER

- with all Jul 23 09
- *cannot* is bad! Aug 31 09
- only the present Sep 17 08

PRACTICE

- of prayer Nov 16 08
- practical p. of divine Word Feb 19 09

PRAISE

- of God Oct 22 09 Mar 16 09

PRAYER [cf. **EUCCHARIST**]

- vivid cognition Sep 28 09
- begin with the Passion Aug 17 08

- necessary condition	Feb 04 09
- duty	July 05 08
- vigilance	Apr 28 11
- medicine	Jul 29 09
- mystical	May 30 12
- undone, poor	Mar 06 09
- prolonged, advantages	Nov 16 08
- tempers activity	Jul 12 08
- practical	Nov 16 08
- to BVM	May 24 10
- development of charity	Oct 09 08
- for spiritual direction	Jan 12 11
- for princes, rulers	May 24 10
- qualities, defects	Mar 06 09
- recommended in tempest	Feb 28 09
- at Mass	Jul 30 09
PREACHING	
- catechetical	Sep 25 08
- conditions for success	Feb 04 09
- of Noah	Mar 12 10
- for St. Joseph	Feb 15 09
- Sacred Heart	Jun 26 13
PREAMBLE	
- to catechism	Sep 25 08
PRECEDE	
- always follow!	Jan 12 11
PRECIPICE	
- held back	Jul 13 08
PREDESTINATION	
- in Ps 14	Jan 23 09
PREPARATION	
- for a great war	Jul 24 09
- for temptations	Sep 13 08
- for divine judgment	Nov 20 08
PRESCRIPTION	
-of means offered	Jul 29 09
PRESENCE [CF. EUCHARIST; FATHER; GOD]	
- of the Father	Jan 04 09
- of God:	Oct 25 08 Dec 11 08
in the soul	Oct 13 08
- Eucharist	Jul 11 08 Dec 04 08 Jan 04 09
	Feb 01 09
PRIDE	
- a thief who steals	Nov 17 08
PRIEST	
- takes Christ's place	Dec 11 08
- and salvation	Jan 23 09

- defective, holy laity	Dec 02 08
PRIVATION	
- of eternal glory	Mar 15 09
PROCEDURE	
- qualities	Jan 04 09
PROCLAMATION [Bann]	
- of vices	Jul 14 09
PROCURE	
- internal recollection	Jan 04 09
PROGRESS [cf. GROWTH]	
- spiritual	Jan 12 11
PROHIBITION	
- of external mortification	Sep 28 08
PROJECT/ PLAN	
- and obstacles	Feb 11 09
PROMISE	
- proven	Aug 09 08
PRONUNCIATION	
- of Demosthenes	Feb 22 09
PROPERTY	
- fasting to Christian	Mar 10 10
PROPHET	
- sent to 4 kings	Feb 27 09
PROPOSAL	
- inefficacious	Mar 22 09
PROSTRATION	
- in thanksgiving	Oct 27 08
PROTECTION	
- from dangers	Aug 09 08
- God protects	Jul 09 08
PRUDENCE	
- prayer & vigilance	Apr 28 11
- Mother & Queen	Jan 19 09
- necessary in apostolate	Sep 23 09
- Queen	Jul 18 08
PSALM	
- 14 - prayed daily [Vullgate]	Jan 23 09
PUBLIC	
- vanity	Oct 09 08
PURGATORY	
- young ecclesiastic	Oct 21 08
PURIFICATION	
- of spirit	May 18 10
PURITY	
- angelic	Sep 13 08
- asked of BVM	May 24 10
- of God	Dec 11 08

PUSH

- don't p. vocations!

†††

Aug 17 08

QUEEN

- discretion in q.

Jul 18 08

QLUIET

- in ecstasy
- necessary for divine light
- obedience needed

May 30 08

Jul 23 09

Jul 01 08

†††

RAPACIOUS

- thieves

Nov 17 08

REACHING [achievement]

- God, supreme good

Oct 09 08

READING

- *Imitation of Christ*
- *Spiritual Combat* [Dom Scupoli]

Oct 13 08

Dec 17 08

RECEPTION

- of divine lights

Jul 23, 09

RECOLLECTION [cf. **EUCCHARIST**]

- at the altar of St. Ignatius
- at the end of Mass
- after Mass

Jul 15 08

Sep 11 08

Oct 10 08 Oct 23 08 Dec 04 08

Jul 24 08 Jul 30 09

- during Mass

Sep 25 08 Oct 23 08

- lasted some time
 all day

Oct 13 08

Oct 09 08 May 30 12

- internal

Jan 04 09

RECOVERY

- of lost fruit

Mar 27 09

REDEMPTION [cf. **CHRIST**]

- makes us indebted
- of time

Sep 28 09

Jul 24 08

REFLECTION

- recommended

Feb 28 09

REFORM [cf. **RENEWAL**]

- urgent, of the Church

May 24 10

REFUSAL

- of no one struggling

Jul 29 09

REIGN/ KINGDOM

- loss predicted
- prayer for the R. of God

Feb 27 09

Mar 06 09

RELIGION

- and fasting

Mar 10 10

REMEDY

- against attraction	Jan 23 09
RENEWAL [cf. REFORM]	
- of Heart	May 24 10
- spiritual	Jul 24 08
REPLY	
- during ecstasy	May 30 12
REPOSE	
- in the Kingdom	May 24 10
REQUEST [cf. DESIRE ; PRAYER]	
- of suffering	Sep 27 08
- of martyrdom	Sep 28 08
- of keeping divine law	Oct 22 08
- to follow God zealously	Nov 17 08
RESENTMENT	
- toward the non-follower	Oct 12 08
RESERVE	
- of booty by Saul	May 08 09
RESIGNATION	
- in suffering	Mar 16 09
RESISTENCE	
- condition for victory	Apr 28 11
- in temptation	Jul 29 09
RESOLUTION	
- to serve God	Jul 30 08
RESPONSE	
- St. Augustine's	Jan 23 09
RESUME'	
- of Founder	Nov 20 08
RETREAT	
- of St. Joseph's Convent	Aug 24 08
- necessary for Divine Word	Mar 22 09
RETURN	
- of a friend	Oct 09 08
- to one's senses	May 30 12
- of Jesus to Beathany	Sep 25 09
- of Temptation	Mar 27 09
- time does not r.	Jul 24 08
REVELATION	
- of sin	Aug 09 08
- private of purgatory	Oct 21 08
REVERENCE	
- for the Trinity	Aug 24 08
- loving for God	Oct 09 08 Dec 11 08
- during Mass	Sep 25 08 Oct 23 08 Jan 04 09
	Jul 30 09
REWARD	
- of heaven	Sep 29 08

RICH

- fears Nov 17 08

RISING

- advantages of early Nov 16 08

ROD

- of Jeremiah Feb 22 09

ROOT

- of all sin Mar 13 09

ROSARY

- special affections Oct 11 08

RUDE

- at the tavern Mar 22 09

RUIN

- severity

†††

SACRIFICE

- work offered Jul 24 08

SAINT

- incorrect views Dec 17 08

- and grace Sep 09 08

- models Jul 30 08

SALUBRIOUS

- joy Mar 02 05

SALVATION

- costs effort Feb 22 09

- difficult for priests Jan 23 09

- helmet of s. Sep 15 08

- through1 maxim Mar 13 09

- in storms Feb 28 09

- lost Oct 26 08

- requires faith Feb 15 09

- zeal Feb 20 09

SAUL

- warned by Samuel Feb 27 09

- saves the booty May 08 09

SAYING

- of young ecclesiastic Oct 21 08

SCRIPTURE

- synthesized Apr 28 11

SCUPOLI

- *Spiritual Combat* Jul 06 09

- read Nov 11 08

SEBASTIAN's, St

- Church in Verona Jun 21 13

SECRET [cf. EUCHARIST]

- prayer of the Mass	Oct 09 08
SECULARS [cf. LAITY]	
- holiness	Dec 02 08
SECURITY	
- leading to ruin	Mar 05 09
SEEK [cf. QUEST]	
- only God	Jul 30 08 Oct 13 08 Dec 25 08
- food outside	Oct 13 08
- consolations	Dec 23 08
SELF-SATISFACTION	
- not to be sought	Dec 23 08
SENSE	
- return to the use of	May 30 12
SENTENCE	
- displeasing to St. Augustine	Jan 23 09
SENTIMENTS [cf. EUCCHARIST ; FAITH ; OFFERTORY ; REVERENCE TENDERNESS]	
- of benefits of vocation	Dec 25 08
- of divine presence	Oct 07 08 Oct 25 08 Dec 04 08 Dec 11 08 Jan 04 09 Feb 01 09
- of Christ	Mar 16 09
- desire for perfection	Dec 17 08
- during reading	Oct 13 08
- during meditation	Jul 30 09
- First Communion	Oct 09 08
- of St. Augustine	Jan 23 09
SERPENT	
- combat with	Sep 15 08
- resist	Jul 29 09
SERVICE [cf. BVM]	
- fear does no s.	Mar 10 09
- on the altar	Jul 30 09
- of God	Jul 13 08
- prepare accounts	Sep 15 08
- scope of time	Oct 08 08
- decision	Sep 30 08
- of Mary	May 24 10
SHAME [cf. CHRIST ; IGNOMINY]	
- prayer for	Oct 22 08
- Christian	May 24 10
SHIELD	
- of faith	Sep 15 08
SHIVER	
- mystical experience [?]	May 30 12
SHOULDER	
- of Demosthenes	Feb 22 09
SHOW	

- God & suffering	May 10 11
SICK	
- complaints	Mar 06 09
SIDE-TRACKED	
- into action	Sep 11 08 Oct 13 08
SIGHT	
- remedied	Jan 23 09
- of God	Jul 30 08 Oct 09 08 May 30 12
- image of the Trinity	Aug 24 18
- rod in the pot	Feb 22 09
- of heaven	Oct 27 08
SILENCE [cf. EUCCHARIST]	
- after Mass	Oct 10 08
- interior and exterior	Jul 23 09
SIMILITUDE	
- hospital	Mar 06 09
- storm	Feb 28 09
- a man arrived	Apr 28 11
- old man who slips	Mar 22 09
- a path with brambles	Jul 30 08
- at the tavern	Mar 22 09
- Christ & innocent	Mar 16 09
- of wishful thinking & a painting	Mar 22 09
SIMPLICITY	
- in preaching	Feb 15 09
- & prudence	Sep 23 09
SIN/ SINNER	
- on the lips of all	Aug 09 08
- humble considered	Oct 10 08
- forgotten by God	Aug 17 08 May 10 11
- 2 roots	Mar 13 09
- fasting	Mar 10 10
- flee occasions	Feb 15 09 Jul 29 09
- evil	Feb 19 09
- & vocation	Dec 20 09
- little – thieves	Feb 22 09
- prayer	May 24 10
- resolution	Mar 10 09
- guilt	Oct 24 08
- conquered	June 21 13
SINNER	
- sad condition	Mar 17 09
- Fr. Bertoni	Dec 11 08
- from beginning	Jul 13 08
SINCERITY	
- in preaching	Feb 15 09
SINGLE	

- maxim	Mar 13 09
SLEEP	
- apostolic	Jul 05 08
- mystical	May 30 12
- dangerous	Apr 28 11
SLIPPING	
- an old person	Mar 22 09
SOLDIER	
- the weapons of Christ	Sep 15 08
- painting	Mar 22 09
SOLICITUDE	
- for self-justification	Oct 24 08
- in one's gait	Jan 04 09
SOLIDITY	
- of effects in prayer	Nov 16 08
SOLITUDE	
- necessary for divine light	Jul 23 09
- victorious	Feb 22 09
SON [cf. CHRIST]	
- of God – love for Him	Jul 23 09
- His image in us	Feb 26 09 Jul 30 09
SOUL [cf. POWER]	
- actions	Oct 11 08
- & Bishop	Nov 20 08
- charity	Aug 17 08
- deceased priest	Oct 21 08
- dispositions for death	Dec 23 08
- ecstasy	May 30 12
- free	Aug 17 08
- generous	Nov 17 08
- God's treatment	Jul 13 08
- impetus	Oct 09 08
- pure	May 24 10
SOUND	
- words that s. badly	Aug 31 08
SPIRIT	
<u>Moral Sense</u> [cf. DETACHMENT]	
- of St. Ignatius	Sep 15 08
- of prayer	Jul 30 09
- interior	Nov 18 08
<u>of Soul</u> [cf. RENEWAL]	
- elevated	May 30 12
- reflection	Nov 20 08
- purified	May 18 10
<u>Holy Spirit</u> [cf. TRINITY]	
- draws the soul	Dec 12 08

SPRINKLE

- with thorns Jul 30 08

STABILITY

- of joy Mar 02 09
- of will Jul 30 08

STAIR

- to hell for bad thief Mar 16 09

STATE

- evil, worse Mar 17 09

STATION

- of the Cross Oct 24 08

STEP

- at the opportune moment Dec 23 08

STONE

- in Demosthenes' mouth Feb 22 08

STOP

- not until the end Jul 30 08

STRENGTH

- of will Jul 30 08
- united force, stronger Dec 20 08

STUDY

- clarity of mind Oct 11 08
- excluded Jan 12 11

STYLE

- of proclamation Dec 02 08
- of mirror Jul 30 08

STABILITY

- of supreme origin Nov 16 08

SUBTLETY

- of threats in God's hands Jul 13 08

SUDDEN

- ardor May 30 12

SUPERIOR

- seeking God alone Jul 30 08
- obedience for a s. Dec 23 08
- repugnance Jul 01 08

SWEAT

- of Jesus' Blood Jul 05 08

SWEETNESS [cf. EUCHARIST]

- contemplation Jul 13 08
- ecstasy May 30 12
- tears Oct 29 08
- and sacrifice Jul 24 08
- at the altar of St. Ignatius Sep 15 08
- of creatures to God Mar 16 09

SWORD

- of God's Word Sep 15 08

- Demosthenes' s.	Feb 22 09
SYMBOL	
- Demonsthenes [?]	
†††	
TABLE	
- of St. Ignatius and the Knight	Mar 06 09
TALENT	
- disobedience	Jul 01 08
TAVERN	
- money wasted	Mar 22 09
TEACHINGS	
- of Christ	Jul 29 09
TEARS	
- at the altar of St. Ignatius	Sep 15 08
- at Mass	Oct 10 08
- of compunction	Jul 02 08
- prolonged, sweet	Oct 09 08
<i>Te Igitur</i> [cf. EUCCHARIST]	
- presence of the Father	Dec 11 08
TEMERITY [cf. Jul 13 08]	
TEMPEST	
- behave in a t.	Feb 28 09
TEMPTATION	
- obstinately opposed	Jul 18 08
- courageously fought	Aug 31 08 Jul 29 09
- of love, terror	Mar 13 09
- great, and holiness	Aug 31 08 Sep 13 08
- advantage	Mar 27 09
TENDERNESS [cf. DEVOTION]	
- for Jesus	Sep 27 08 Dec 11 08 Feb 01 09
-sentiments at Benediction	Mar 16 09
TERESA of AVILA, St.	
- and a promise	Aug 09 08
TERM [cf. END]	
- of hard of heart	May 24 10
- of catechism	Sep 25 08
- of temptation	Jul 29 09
TERROR [cf. FEAR; JUSTICE]	
- temptation	Mar 13 09
THANKSGIVING	
- to God for poverty	Oct 22 08
- for 1 st point of examen	Oct 27 08
- after Mass	Jul 02 08 Jul 11 08 Jul 12 08
THEOLOGIANS	
- too benevolent	Feb 16 09
THIEF [cf. DISMAS]	

- good and his cross	Mar 16 09
- through the window	Feb 22 09
- feared by the rich	Nov 17 08
THORN	
- to be removed	Jul 30 08
THOUSAND	
- faults	Oct 24 08
THREAD	
- thin, in God's hand	Jul 13 08
THREE	
- necessary things	Feb 22 09
- crosses on Calvary	Mar 16 09
- Masses of Christmas	Dec. 25 08
THRUST	
- of one's heart	Oct 09 08
THOMAS	
AQUINAS food in the house	Oct 13 08
VILLANOVA	May 24 10
TIME	
- abbreviated always	Oct 08 08
- a friend after a long t.	Oct 09 08
- for action, not reading	Sep 21 08
- perhaps no more t.	Sep 17 08
- good fruit in t.	Nov 16 08
- use it diligently	Jul 24 08
- opportune	Dec 07 08
- past, present, future	Apr 17 08 Mar 17 09
- sentiments lasting	Oct 13 08
- the first t.	Mar 27 09
- a little at a t.	Jul 24 08
TODAY	
- <i>if you hear His voice ...</i>	May 24 10
TOO MUCH	
- difficulty	Dec 23 08
- meditation [?!]	Mar 13 09
TOTAL	
- abandonment	Oct 12 08
- all is from God	Mar 16 09
- justification	Oct 24 08
- humility	Sep 05 08
TOUCH	
- of pride	Nov 17 08
TRANSFORMATION	
- into God	Oct 25 08
TREATMENT	
- the soul on a precipice	Jul 13 08
TREMOR [cf. FEAR ; TERROR]	

- of priestly dignity	Sep 15 08
TRIBUNAL	
- of God	Nov 20 08
TRINITY [cf. IMAGE; PAINTING; PORTRAIT]	
- love for humanity	Sep 27 08
- distinction of persons	Nov 04 09
- Image	Aug 24 08
TRIUMPH	
- glorious of a soldier	Jul 29 09
TRUTH [cf. MAXIM; MOTIVE]	
- love for	Jun 22 13
- of God	May 24 10
TWO	
- roots of sin	Mar 13 09
- saints	Jan 23 09
- to be in two's	Dec 20 08
+++	
UNCERTAINTY	
- in ecstasy	May 30 12
UNCLEANNES	
- & divine purity	Dec 11 08
UNION [cf. FORCE; SENTIMENT]	
- with Christ	Jul 24 09
- with merits of J. & M.	May 24 10
- with God	Dec 02 08
- during Mass	Dec 25 08
- force stronger	Dec 20 08
UNWORTHINESS	
- of worldly joy	Mar 02 09
USE [cf. MEANS; UTILITY]	
- various images	Sep 15 08
- defects	Jul 22 08
- return to senses	May 30 12
USELESS	
- penance in hell	Mar 15 09
UTILITY	
- of fast	Nov 16 08
- of prayer	Jan 12 11
- of two together [UNION; FORCE; STRENGTH]	Dec 20 08
- of penance	Mar 15 09
+++	
VANITY	
- fear in public	Oct 09 08
VEIL	
- false covering defect	Aug 31 08

VELLEITY

- like a painted soldier Mar 22 09

VENERABLE

- and not canonized Dec 17 08
- Paul of the Cross Jul 17 09

VICED [cf. **PRIDE**]

- in priests Dec 02 08
- defeated in charity Jul 14 09

VICTORY

- with patience Aug 24 09
- joyful Mar 02 09
- of God
- at the cost of life Sep 25 08

VIEW

- good example in v. Jul 17 09

VIGILANCE

- & prayer Apr 28 11
- not to fail the Lord Dec 02 08
- whoever stands ... Jul 05 08 Aug 19 08
- Rod Feb 22 09

VINE

- poles Mar 22 09

VIOLENCE

- the kingdom of heaven Feb 22 09

VIRGINITY

- of BVM May 24 10

VIRTUE

- acquired & gratuitous Nov 17 08
- with diligence Oct 08 08
- of a young ecclesiastic Oct 21 08
- discretion is queen Jul 18 08
- heroic Jul 23 09
- generated, principled Jan 19 09
- inferior Oct 12 08
- not to be offended Jul 09 08
- theological, increased May 30 12

VISIT

- to St. Ignatius' altar Sep 15 08
- of bishop Nov 20 08

VOCATION [cf. **CALL**]

- great benefit Dec 25 08
- of God Dec 20 08
- leave up to God Aug 17 08
- necessary holiness Dec 07 08
- holy Jul 30 08

VOICE

- of God	May 24 10
- weak v. of Demosthenes	Feb 22 09
WAR [cf. COMBAT]	†††
- prepare for harsh w.	Jul 24 09
WARNING [cf. INSPIRATION]	
- of God	Feb 27 09
WAY	
- of the Cross	Oct 24 08
- of God	Jul 13 08
- of St. Ignatius	Sep 15 08
- of grace along the w.	Oct 25 08
- follow perseveringly	Jul 30 08
- narrow	May 10 11
WEAKNESS	
- and conversion	Mar 22 09
- of voice [Demosthenes]	Feb 22 09
WEIGHT	
- too many occupations	Sep 13 08
WELCOME	
- to the altar of St. Ignatius	Sep 15 08
WILL	
- divided from body	May 30 12
- good	Feb 22 09 Mar 22 09
- is tiring	May 24 10
- as far as possible	Mar 22 09
- merit	Dec 03 08
- conversion	Feb 15 09
- of God: not ours	Jul 16 09
not impeded	Feb 11 09
- defects	Aug 31 08
- and velleity	Jul 30 08
- fervor	Nov 16 08
- necessary	May 08 09
- resides	May 10 09
WIND	
- overturns	Mar 22 09
WINDOW	
- thieves enter	Feb 22 09
WITHDRAW	
- before temptation	Jul 30 08
WORD [of God]	
- heard and not practiced	Feb 19 09
- not bearing fruit	Feb 22 09
- & Fr. Bertoni	May 30 12
- basis of judgment	Feb 16 09
- as 'Father' not 'judge'	Sep 15 08

- hidden in one's heart	Mar 10 09
- requires quiet	Mar 22 09
WORLD	
- believed	May 24 10
- is a hospital	Mar 06 09
- not in conformity	Jul 24 08 Feb 16 09
- divine justice	Mar 13 09
- and its evil	Feb 16 09
- full of good, evil	Mar 10 09
- noisy	Mar 22 09
- divine joy	Mar 02 09
WORSE	
- state	Mar 17 09
WORTHY	
- & Fr. Bertoni	Jul 22 13
WOUND	
- of a painted soldier	Mar 22 09
†††	
YEAR	
- a few y. ago	Oct 21 08
- holiness	Jan 23 09
- hundred	Mar 12 10
YOUTH	
- deceased	Oct 21 08
- and patience	Aug 24 09
†††	
ZEAL	
- self-love masked	Aug 09 08
- for God's glory	Feb 20 09
- in doctrine	Sep 25 08 Oct 16 08

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†††
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Ad maiorem Dei Gloriam

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2. Themes from St Gaspar Bertoni's Spiritual Journal
[Compiled by the Translator,
Fr. G. Mittempergher, CSS]
(The numbers refer to the progressive numeration of entries)

ABANDONMENT: Abandonment is the greatest form of perfection (63). The spirituality of Abandonment (144, commentary).

ACTION: Proper balance between Action and Prayer (6). Not to overburden ourselves with activities (40). Time for action (50).

CATECHESIS: Much zeal and eloquence in Catechesis (52). The bishop visits Fr Bertoni during his Catechesis to Adults (78).

COMMUNITY: A Community grows in proportion to the personal effort for perfection of its members (62). The Superior's responsibility towards his community (141). Community life is dissipated when petty rules are disregarded (155).

COMPUNCTION: Tears of compunction during *gift of prayer* (2). Experience of compunction in various occasions (82) (84) (149).

CONFESSION: How to find matter for Confession (17). By confessing our sins God forgets everything (28).

CONGREGATION: First calling to found a Religious Congregation (41) (79, commentary). What is required to found a Religious Congregation (141). The *times* that decided Fr Bertoni to start the Congregation (156, commentary).

CROSS: *Crosses* sent from heaven (34). The Way of the Cross (71). Who is carrying the Cross (81). We must not *drag* the cross but *carry* it (81, commentary). *I present you three crosses...* (128).

DEATH: Meditation on Death(49). Death is to be accepted cheerfully (90). Experience of Death in ecstasy (171).

DEVOTION: Devotion as a *gift of prayer* (33) (41) (59) (82). Devotion to the Sacred Heart (171).

DISCERNMENT (DISCRETION): Discretion is the queen of all virtues (11) (97).

EXAMINATION of CONSCIENCE: For Examination of Conscience we should choose a saint as a mirror (17). During Examen great sense of God's presence (74).

FAITH: Faith as a *gift of prayer* (5) (54). People believe more easily in World and Devil than in God (164)

FEAR: Gift of *reverential fear* towards God (7) (82)(96). *I fear Jesus passing by* (42). Trembling for Priest's dignity (48). Fear not to correspond to God's grace (106). Six kinds of Fear (120).

FRIEND: Never abandon our friends, especially when in trouble (8). Friendship in spiritual enterprises (87). *Gift of Prayer* : God felt as a friend (59), Christ felt as a friend (96).

GOD: God's ways to pull us to Himself (9). To seek God alone (93) makes us superior to all things (18). Heed God's inspirations (21). Experience of Blessed Trinity (32) (53) (54) (96). God a *father* and a *judge* (44). God must not only be on our lips (47). Strong sense of God's presence (64) (72) (74). Some want a God *half-way* (123). Do everything for God's glory (137).

GRACE: Responsibility for graces received (24) (106). A grace well corresponded to, invokes a second one (43). Following of Christ is a grace to be asked for (116). When Jesus hides himself with his grace (125). Only the miracle of grace can convert the sinner (130). How we can put obstacles to God's grace (144, commentary). Encouragement in recollecting graces of the past (173).

HEAVEN: Thorny path to heaven (20). Crosses sent by Heaven (34). We do not go to Heaven without much labour (111). Be interested in the heavenly goods (132).

HOLINESS: Temptations help holiness (53). Secular people's holiness (80).

HUMILIATIONS (Ignominies): Desire to associate with Jesus' humiliations (51) (54) (104).

HUMILITY: Sense of humbleness as *gift of prayer* (59) (84) (175). We need humility to attract God's help (142). Humble yourself in all things (36). God is found at the bottom of our *nothingness* (31).

LAY-PEOPLE: Lay People are a good example for the priests (80) (81, commentary).

MARY: Her intercession (154). Daily prayer to Mary: *Good morning my Mother* (159).

MASS: Extraordinary spiritual experiences in connection with Mass (2) (5) (7) (15) (37) (53) (59) (60) (70) (72) (82) (84) (96) (103) (143) (147) (173).

MEDITATION: Notes from personal Meditation (3) (49) (51) (55). One well meditated principle is sufficient for salvation (122). Meditation on Psalms (101).

MORTIFICATION: *I cannot...* in matter of mortification (34). Internal and external mortification (56). Lack of mortification hinders a vocation (89). Mortification should be total (135). Mortification necessary to militate under Christ (144).

OBEDIENCE: Some obey to calm their fears (1). Stricter discipline in obedience for true spirituality (76). The vow of Obedience for the Superior (92). To be saved one has to obey (115).

PENITENCE: Spiritual journey by way of Penitence (168). Not to overburden ourselves with penances (40). Penance on earth is short.. (126).

PERFECTION: Perfection of saints as mirror for us (17). Do all things with perfection (49). Religious communities depend on each member's work for one's own perfection

(62). Different means of spiritual perfection (63) (88). Laity more perfect than priests (80). Desire to acquire perfection ((85).

PORTRAIT: We must make in ourselves a *portrait of Christ* (113) (146).

POVERTY: Inspiration to follow Christ through Poverty (51) (69). Experience of real poverty (68). Utmost Poverty indicated as a value by Christ (121). Poverty is the necessary *fund* to start a Congregation (141).

PRAYER: Proper balance between Prayer and Action (6). When set on Prayer we must begin with Christ's Passion (26). Give more time to Prayer (75). Inconsistent and genuine prayers (76). We cannot talk well of God unless we pray first (105). True Prayer is a medicine (119). *Extraordinary experiences* in Prayer (2) (15) (32) (51) (54) (59) (171) (173).

PRIEST: Diocesan priest is supposed to be in a state of perfection (4, commentary). Dignity of priest makes one tremble (48) (78) (84). Great the dignity of the priest and great his ruin... (48, commentary) (98). Imperfection and vices of priests... (80). Appeal to Priests to love poverty and humiliations (121, commentary) (151, commentary).

RELIGIOUS: Discretion in guiding Religious in their crises (11). Different dealing with defects in Religious Orders (12). Religious Community and working for perfection (62). Observing little rules preserves Religious Orders (155).

SACRED HEART: Spiritual favours during Mass of Sacred Heart (2). *Look at this Heart of mine!* (171). Hearing a sermon on the Sacred Heart (178).

SAINTS: Choose a saint for your examination of conscience (17).

SALVATION: What is needed for salvation (111). Salvation depends on God and man (112). Fear which leads to salvation (120). Only one well meditated principle is sufficient for salvation (122).

SELF-OFFERING: Offering himself in union with Christ's Sacrifice (5) (15) (51) (54) (68) (74) (104) (129). Desire of Martyrdom (55).

SILENCE: Silence in connection with *gifts of Prayer* (60). Silence is necessary to receive the inspirations of God (141)

SIN: If our faults were revealed... (24). Sense of sinfulness in Fr Bertoni (59) (84). By sin we hinder God's work in us (89). If we understood what sin is... (109). Small sins lead to big ones (16) (111) (cf 136).

TEMPTATION: Temptation about changing vocation (11). Temptations are means of holiness (35). Prepare for temptations (39). God has a purpose in letting us be tempted by the same temptations (134). Courage in resisting temptation (145).

VIRTUE: Priority of virtues over our enterprises (4). Discretion is mother of all virtues (97). Acquired virtues make us sensitive against pride (77).

VOCATION: Never urge people to choose a vocation (27). Swift answer necessary when God calls (83). Respect different callings (88). Sense of gratitude for Vocation (93).

WAY OF THE CROSS: Inspiration during the exercise of the *Way of the Cross* (71)

WILL: Those who resist the will of their superiors (1). Difference between Will and Velleity (19). Good will in accepting the cross (81). *He who has good will has everything* (111) (132) (160) (161) (162). *Do everything as moved by God's will* (139)