

Mundelein Seminary
1000 East Maple Avenue
Mundelein IL 60060

APRIL 1, 2018
Easter Sunday

Dear Stigmatine Lay Member,

Now that the General Chapter has been celebrated, the Stigmatines are presently in the process of organizing the administrations of the various Provinces. It seems useful for us, in this context, to ponder in depth and gratitude the wonderful men who preceded us in this Community. There are several important “April” dates of happy memories of our Community, and a few of them may be these:

6

1839: The House Chronicle noted Fr. Bertoni’s **offer of the property of Sezano to Pope Gregory XVI** the previous December. It also noted the Pope’s blessing on the Congregation.

16

1855: **The Decree of Praise** granted to the Congregation by Pope Pius IX bears this date.

23

1844: Pope Gregory XVI granted an increase of Indulgences for the **Devotion to the Five Wounds**, that could be gained on six First Fridays of the year to be determined by the Local Ordinary.

1855: Monday – it was learned at the Stimate that Bishop Riccabona had mailed the **Decree of Praise**, recently granted, from Rome to the Stimate. Fr. Marani wrote to his friend in Rome, Canon Bertinelli, to tell him of the happiness at the Stimate at the reception of this news.

First of all (related to 4/6/1839), let us remember the conviction of our Founder that he was merely an **“administrator” of the goods of God**. The goods of the Church in his mind belonged to God and thus must be administered with high purpose.

Then there is also noted (related to 4/23/1844) the long tradition of the **Devotion to the Five Wounds** during the life of our Founder’s conducting the Friday Night Devotions at the Church of the “Stimate” over many years. And then, on this same date in 1855, the Congregation received news that the **Decree of Praise** was

being sent to Bishop Riccabona, who would then inform the men at the “Stimate” in Verona.

The Stigmatine Founder was indeed a saint – our best thanks to God would be to try to live his charism.

A blessed Easter Season for all!

Respectfully submitted,

Fr. Joseph Henchey, CSS

Acting Spiritual Director

Appendix:

The Stigmatine Calendar for the month of April. Compiled by Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS [1967].

Enclosed documents:

- The 8th and 9th Stigmatine General Chapters [1876 - 1880]. English translation by Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS.
- Roster of the Deceased Stigmatines in April.
- A Prophetic Balance between Cross and Resurrection – by Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS [2009].
- A Few Reflections of the Feast of the Sacred Stigmata - by Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS. [2000].
- Easter Reflections: The Sacred Stigmata – by Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS [2009].

APRIL**1**

- 1797:** Saturday – Gaspar Bertoni receives the *Ostiariate* and *Lectorate* from Bishop Avogadro.
- 1836:** Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Bussetti, Mother General of the Sisters of the Holy Family, and offered her some suggestions in her renovations to protect the Cloister at St. Teresa's. He also wished her a happy Easter.
- 1856:** Fr. Marani was ill, so Fr. Lenotti went to Cremona to preach the Retreat to the Camillians.
- 1867:** Monday – Fr. Lenotti preached two sermons to the high school students on Retreat at the *Trinità*.
- 1868:** Frs. Lenotti and Vincent Vignola preached a three day Retreat to the Students under Fr. Fusari's care – he was in charge of the Diocesan Boarding School in Trent.
- 1869:** Frs. Marani, Benciolini and Bassi sent a letter to Pius IX and gave a description of their life at the time. They were getting along financially by means of their ministry and everything was held in common.
- 1906:** Arch-Bishop Morando, newly consecrated, entered Ostuni – he had been named Apostolic Administrator here.

2

- 1804:** Fr. Bertoni preached on freedom from sin and the devil – he stated that man is made to God's image, and the devil will try to destroy this image. The devil becomes the tyrant of the human heart and degrades the soul.
- 1856:** John B. Marchesini entered the Congregation – he later left, married and had a son, Louis, who would one day contest his uncle's will – this was the Stigmatine, Fr. Joseph Marchesini, brother of John B., who had made Fr. Stephen Rosa his heir. The Marchesini family was very well to do.
- 1867:** Fr. Lenotti preached only one sermon today for the young students on Retreat, so that the rest of the day could be left free for Confessions.

3

- 1801:** Fr. Bertoni preached on the Passion of Christ – he would use this same sermon again on April 4th, five years later. He stated that Christ suffered in

His entire humanity, body and soul. He suffered more than any man could.

1813: *Sitientes*¹ *Saturday* – Cajetan Brugnoli was tonsured and received the four Minor Orders.

1825: During these days, the Emperor visited the Stimate under construction and also St. Teresa's. This day was Easter Sunday.

1835: Bro. Angelo Casella died today – he was the first member of the Congregation to die. He was buried in the city cemetery at the *Villa Pellegrini*. It was the 19th year of the Congregation's establishment.

1838: Bishop Grasser made a Pastoral Visitation at the Stimate this day.

1867: The students' retreat ended at the *Trinità* today. Fr. Lenotti complimented the young boys on their attention and recollection.

1873: Lawyer Brasca wrote this day to Fr. Rigonio, Procurator General of the Congregation, and told him that the government side in the long case seemed to be preparing for a settlement outside of Court. The lawyer suggested that the Congregation accept any offer, as the government might use again Fr. Marani's ***Cenni*** [**'Indications of our Early History'**] – this was a Report on the Congregation that he had written, in which he considered the Decree of Praise tantamount to Papal Approval [which the Congregation at that time had not received] – and also the fact that the Congregation had acquired property, as at Sale di Povo, which gave every appearance of a legal act, performed by a legal body.

1892: A Memorial Service was held for the recently deceased Fr. Benciolini. The Pastor of St. Stephen's Church presided the Mass - Fr. Zocchi delivered the sermon and told the hearers that, in the place of sorrow, there should only be admiration for the holy old man who had just died.

4

1806: Fr. Bertoni used the same Sermon on the Passion this day that he had preached on April 3, 1801. John Marani was tonsured this day by Bishop Molin. [This Bishop seemed favorable to the French faction in Verona. He was Administrator of the Abbatial Church in Asola]

1824: Fr. Bertoni obtains a Decree of Enrollment for the new Oratory at the *Trinità* for the Pastor of that Church, Fr. Peter Palamidese.

¹ i.b.: Editor's note: the Saturday in the 4th week of Lent.

- 1828:** Bishop Grasser ordained Francis Benciolini a Sub-Deacon, with the Canonical title of Patrimony being supplied by his Uncle, Fr. Cajetan Benciolini.
- 1855:** John Lenotti received the last two Minor Orders, Exorcist and Acolyte, on this *Sitientes*² Saturday.
- 1843:** Francis Solari left the Congregation after 13 years of service – the House Chronicle noted: ‘May God bless him.’
- 1851:** Fr. Lenotti gave the last of his 200 or more sermons at the Friday devotions at the Stimate. [There are copies of many of these sermons still retained in the Archives at the Stimate].
- 1867:** Fr. Marani left the Student House for troubled Verona.

5

- 1806:** Michael Angelo Gramego was ordained a Deacon by Bishop Molin, Administrator of Asola, at St. George’s Church, Verona – John Marani received the four Minor Orders at the same ceremony.
- 1807:** Fr. Bertoni preached on the theme: ‘Holy Easter and the Spiritual Life’. Our life of glory is hidden with Christ in God.
- 1812:** Francis Cartolari was vested at St. Firmus Major by the noble Penitentiary, Christopher Cartolari, with Bishop Liruti’s permission.
- 1813:** In his letter to Mother Naudet of this date, Fr. Bertoni praised the work of Fr. John Louis Fusari, long time Superior of the Oratory of St. Philip.
- 1838:** Fr. Biadego, a Priest of six years, received his first faculties for Confessions, good for six months, with the customary proviso of making the Retreat in September.
- 1868:** Palm Sunday – Holy week services began at Villazzano. Frs. Lenotti and Vincent Vignola preached a retreat to the community there; Fr. Marani was sick in bed.
- 1869:** Fr. Marani, Superior General, came to Villazzano to stay with the students for a while.

² i.b.: Editor’s note: the Saturday in the 4th week of Lent.

6

1815: The date of a letter from Mother Naudet to Pius VII – it is in her handwriting, but it does not seem to be her style of writing. It seems to have been dictated by Fr. Bertoni.

1821: Fr. Gramego took an exam to be approved as a teacher of Grammar.

1839: The House Chronicle noted Fr. Bertoni's offer of the property of Sezano to Pope Gregory XVI the previous December. It also noted the Pope's blessing on the Congregation.

7

1821: Fr. Gramego was approved by the State to teach on this date.

1854: The mitred Provost of Bolzano, Benedict Riccabona, was named Bishop of Verona.

1858: Fr. Marani, Superior General, went to Rovereto to see about accepting a House in Sacco, just outside of Rovereto. After some deliberation, Fr. Marani refused both Sacco and Caravaggio, that had been offered.

8

1813: Fr. Bertoni had hoped to be at St. Joseph's this day, but was unable to make it.

1821: Fr. Bertoni took his state examinations to be approved as a teacher for all grades of high school.

1828: Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Naudet, and praised three authors in the letter: DeMaistre, Laménais and Bonald. [Joseph DeMaistre had written a book on the Papacy, which, at that time, was very well received; Laménais, too, though, would one day be condemned by the Church. Fr. Lenotti, in an Exhortation, cited the example of Laménais, who died on Feb. 27, 1854, and asked who ever would have thought that so ardent and gifted apologist would ever come to such an end – such is the way of pride, he remarked.

9

1813: Fr. Bertoni spoke with Monsignor Dionisi concerning the differences between Mother Naudet and Mother di Canossa.

1867: Holy Week – Fr. Vincent Vignola preached the Instruction, and Fr. Lenotti preached the Meditations to the Community at Villazzano.

10

1813: Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Naudet to explain the reasons why Mother di Canossa would not allow Sister Christine Scalfo change to Mother Naudet's Congregation. Fr. Bertoni wrote that Mother di Canossa felt that all Religious Congregations were basically the same, and, if Sister Scalfo changed, maybe many others would, too.

1833: Mother Madeline [now Saint] di Canossa, sister of Boniface, and Aunt of the future Cardinal Louis di Canossa of Verona, died this day.

1867: The Royal Office of Finance decreed that St. Teresa's Convent was the rightful property of the Fathers of the Stimmate – this was a decision in the case with the Sisters of the Holy Family who had been renting the Convent to the government.

11

1803: Fr. Bertoni preached on 'Perseverance' – he said that we should be ready for temptation, but we should not worry about tomorrow. The life of virtue is the only happy one.

1829: This was the date of a Papal Rescript that raised the Feast of St. Francis to a 'Double of the 2nd Class' – mention of this was one day made in Fr. Zara's House Chronicle.

1839: Fr. Charles Fedelini received Faculties for hearing Confessions.

1848: Fr. Bertoni wrote to Fr. Bragato to congratulate him for turning down the 'miter'. This does not seem to have meant the episcopacy, but rather the Abbatial miter.

1883: Anthony Conte, from Bassano, entered the Congregation. He proved to be the only vocation received from Fr. Morando's afternoon tutoring at Bassano.

1896: Fr. Gurisatti, Superior General, wrote to the Bishop of Civitavecchia to see if some solution could be reached in the difficulties the Congregation met there. No solution was forthcoming, so Fr. Gurisatti withdrew the community at the end of the School Year – two priests had been sent there in 1895, and left less than one year later, due to some difficulties with a Canon Caraciale.

12

- 1800:** Gaspar Bertoni was ordained a Deacon by Bishop Avogadro, in the Chapel at the Bishop's Residence.
- 1834:** All six bells of the Stimate rang out in honor of St. Zeno, Patron of Verona.
- 1868:** Easter Sunday – Fr. Marani spent the whole week in bed at Villazzano. Frs. Lenotti and Vincent Vignola concluded the Retreat to the Community.
- 1892:** Fr. Richard Tabarelli was named a Consultor of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars - the first member of the Congregation to be so chosen.

13

- 1805:** Michael Gramego was ordained a Sub-Deacon by Bishop Avogadro. It was Holy Saturday.
- 1815:** Teodora Campostrini, a Penitent of Fr. Bertoni, entered the Salesian Sisters at Malo.
- 1856:** Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph – the Sub-Deacon Charles Bissoli was vested with the habit of the Congregation.
- 1876:** The mitred Arch Priest of Bassano, Monsignor John Gobbi, requested Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, to send two Priests and a Brother to Bassano to establish a House for youth work. They would teach Catechism on days free from school and evening to adults. Fr. Vignola took the request under advisement.

14

- 1814:** Catherine Slavier renounced legally what Francis Bertoni [Fr. Bertoni's Father] had left her. Final settlement in this dispute was not made for more than a month.
- 1830:** On this date, in legal form, Fr. Bertoni ceded the use [not the ownership] of St. Teresa's Convent to the Sisters of the Holy Family.
- 1856:** Fr. Mark Bassi entered the Congregation – Fr. Lenotti noted in the House Chronicle that his name reminded the older Fathers of Fr. Bertoni's frequent saying in the Veronese dialect: ***Bassi, bassi...!***

1883: Fr. Zara transcribed some old paper he found in the House Archives, concerning the early History of the Congregation.

1904: Fr. Joseph Chesani had worked very hard preparing a study of Dante's *Inferno* - he died this day, in Verona.

15

1813: Holy Thursday – Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Naudet and told her of some consolation that he had had in life.

1827: Mother Naudet was on retreat – she wrote that she had prayed for Fr. Bertoni during her Retreat.

1851: Anthony Caucigh was vaccinated!

1873: On this date, a lawyer, Francis Gemma, representing Attorney Alexander Brasca, who was representing the Congregation, met with the government lawyers outside of Court to work out a settlement for the restoration of the Congregation's rightful property.

16

1855: The **Decree of Praise** granted to the Congregation by Pope Pius IX bears this date.

1874: Fr. Lenotti, Superior General, sent Fr. Peter Vignola and Fr. Francis Sogaro to meet with the authorities at the Shrine of Caravaggio, that had been offered to the Congregation during Fr. Marani's administration. The Administrators of the shrine opposed the Congregation coming to Caravaggio, so negotiations were called to a halt. Bishop Bonomelli had made the offer.

17

1802: Holy Saturday – Michael Gramego received tonsure and the first two Minor Orders [Porter and Lector] from Bishop Avogadro.

1845: The will of Teresa Borghetti Cartolari was made public - she left a large share of her goods to the Stimate and to the Institute of San Silvestro. The Fathers of the Stimate refused their share. She was the Mother of Fr. Fancis Cartolari.

1855: Frs. Marani and Lenotti preached a three day retreat for young boys at Lugagnano, in preparation for the Formal erection of an Oratory there.

1873: In the Court of Verona, the government agreed to restore the confiscated property to the Congregation, and also pay one third of the damages incurred, if Fr. Benciolini would agree to halt the already dragging court case. Payment would be made within 60 days.

18

1867: Holy Thursday - Fr. Lenotti was preaching to the Community at Villazzano during their annual retreat – and stated that the ***Apostolic Missionaries*** are soldiers who are to follow Christ until death. In Battle, we need resolutions and sustenance – for us, this means Holy Communion.

19

1829: Fr. Bertoni wrote on this date that he was able to speak more freely to Bishop Grasser [the first Bishop of Verona younger than St. Gaspar] than he was to his predecessor, Bishop Liruti. This was Easter Sunday.

1830: The Document ceding St. Teresa's to the Sisters of the Holy Family was registered today. It stressed that the Sisters had the use of the Convent, but not its ownership.

1867: Fr. Vincent Vignola wrote in the *Nuovo Messaggero Tirolese* [the forerunner of the *Bertoniano*] that Fr. Lenotti had purchased the Jesuit Tangiorgia's work on Philosophy. Fr. Tabarelli had studied this author in his student days at Villazzano.

1868: Low Sunday³ - Fr. Marani was still sick at Villazzano.

1889: Fr. Vincent Vignola was preaching the Seven Last Words of Christ in the Church of the Stimate this Holy Thursday, when he collapsed.

20

1801: Fr. Bertoni preached on Devotion – he said that it was an error to believe that Devotion can only be achieved by a few.

1826: Laménais, once admired by Fr. Bertoni, was condemned by the Church.

1834: Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph – young John Lenotti asked his Mother's permission to enter the Congregation at the Stimate, where he had been going to school – his Father was already dead at this time.

³ Editor's note: the 2nd Sunday of Easter.

- 1838:** The urn containing the relics of St. Zeno was opened in the presence of the Diocesan Commission appointed by Bishop Grasser.
- 1840:** On this date, Fr. Bertoni sent his second letter to Pope Gregory XVI, asking permission to negotiate concerning some property and books.
- 1864:** Fr. Benciolini wrote to Bishop di Canossa telling him that he did not agree with Lawyer Brasca's opinion concerning the Sisters' use of the Convent of St. Teresa's, as they did not own it. The Bishop, however, had agreed with Lawyer Zoppi's defense of the Sisters. The ever candid Fr. Benciolini told the Bishop that he had consulted a Canonist, Bishop Zanelli of Treviso, and he wanted to know if he could take the Sisters to Court. Bishop di Canossa said 'No!'
- 1869:** Fr. Marani, Superior General, had been preaching a Triduum to the Students at Villazzano, and urgent business called him away to Verona. He told Andrew Sterza, soon to be ordained, to finish the Retreat for him.
- 1889:** Fr. Vincent Vignola never recovered from his attack of the day before in the pulpit, and he died this Holy Saturday.
- 1899:** Fr. Bertoni's body was viewed a third time by the Diocesan Officials in the Diocesan Process of his Cause.

21

- 1817:** The tiles on the roof of the Stimate were repaired at the cost of 40 *napoleons*.
- 1856:** Frs. Marani and Lenotti concluded the three day retreat at Lugagnano and the Oratory was established there.
- 1867:** Easter Sunday was celebrated with solemnity at Villazzano.
- 1868:** Tuesday – an old friend of the Congregation visited Villazzano today, Bishop Benedict Riccabona. Villazzano was his summer residence which he loaned to the Congregation for six years for a Student House.
- 1889:** It was stated that the deaths of Fr. Anthony Conte, Fr. Vincent Vignola [the Superior General's brother] and the serious illness of Fr. Morando, hindered Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, from accepting many offers to the Congregation at this time.

22

- 1797:** The People of Verona revolted against the occupying French troops in a bloody uprising. It has been since called the *Pasqua Veronese*.
- 1805:** Fr. Bertoni preached to the youth of St. Paul's Parish and urged them to be careful of their eternal salvation in those times.
- 1809:** Fr. Bertoni noted in his Spiritual Diary that he, who has good will, has everything – weak resolutions are like painted hunters, or soldiers, who appear to be in act but never kill, or even wound⁴.
- 1834:** John Lenotti entered the Congregation on this date, arriving at the Stimate at 7:30 a.m.. The House Chronicle notes that he was a *timid rabbit*! Fr. Zara noted years later in the Chronicle, on September 5, 1875 – the day of Fr. Lenotti's death as Superior General, that the *timid rabbit* had become a *giant*.
- 1867:** This was the 33rd anniversary of Fr. Lenotti's entrance. In accord with the customs of those times, Fr. Lenotti wrote a letter to the Superior General, who was then Fr. Marani. Fr. Lenotti candidly admitted to his Superior that he was having great difficulty in obeying him. Almost every year, for ten years, one of Fr. Lenotti's resolutions at the Annual Retreat was 'to obey', 'not to contradict'. And the like.
- 1868:** The Count and the Countess Fietta, old friends, came to Villazzano, to visit the ailing Fr. Marani.

23

- 1844:** Pope Gregory XVI granted an increase of Indulgences for the **Devotion to the Five Wounds**, that could be gained on six First Fridays of the year, to be determined by the Local Ordinary.
- 1855:** Monday – it was learned at the Stimate that Bishop Riccabona had mailed the **Decree of Praise**, recently granted, from Rome to the Stimate. Fr. Marani wrote to his friend in Rome, Canon Bertinelli, to tell him of the happiness at the Stimate at the reception of this news.

⁴ Fr. Ceresatto, in his 'Life of the Founder', gives April 22, 1809 – cf. p. 135 for this idea – whereas CS II, p. 411,# 4, gives March 22, 1809

24

- 1824:** This is the date of an official establishment of an Oratory at the Parish of the *Trinità*, which Fr. Bertoni had obtained for the Pastor, Fr. Peter Palamidese.
- 1856:** Fr. Marani went to Desenzano to preach to the young men of the Oratory.
- 1858:** Frs. Benciolini and Marani preached the annual retreat to the Seminarians at Vicenza.
- 1873:** On this date, Fr. Lenotti, Superior General, noted in his Spiritual Diary that he had been called to perfection but that so far he felt that he had done very little. He resolved to boast little about the Congregation and the work it was doing, unless this could serve to promote God's glory.

25

- 1856:** Fr. Ruzzenenti, who had entered the Congregation with the former Canon, Fr. Richard DaPrato, left the Congregation due to ill health.

26

- 1789:** Young Gaspar Bertoni received First Holy Communion in St. Sebastian's Church. A Marian Oratory for the public schools of Verona was established this day and went under the Patronage of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- 1907:** Fr. Melchiade Vivari died this day at the Stimate. He was eulogized in the Parma Press as: *...a holy and learned Priest ... a valiant soldier of Jesus Christ ... one of the most illustrious members of the Congregation...* During his lifetime, he had translated two books from German: the Jesuit, Fr. Biederlak, SJ, *Social Questions*; and the other Jesuit, Fr. Von Dess; *Counsels for the Young*. He also translated a book on Lourdes from the French.

27

- 1835:** Angelo Papa left the Congregation today, 'to become a Monk.'
- 1844:** Fr. Francis Ravelli, SJ, wrote from Rome to his Cousin, Fr. Bertoni, with high words of praise for Fr. Cainer, recently deceased.
- 1850:** Melchiade Vivari was born at Fai, Trent.

1856: Fr. Marani and some of the Novices went to Lugagnano to erect a Pious Union to combat Blasphemy – the usual conclusion of a Mission preached by the Congregation in those years.

1872: Due to his repeated attacks of apoplexy, Bishop Riccabona made it known that, for the coming summer, on doctor's orders, he would have to use his summer residence at Villazzano. Fr. Lenotti, Superior General, immersed in numerous projects at the time, had the added item of trying to find a new Student House before summer.

28

1811: Fr. Bertoni noted in his Spiritual Diary that the expression: ***watch and pray*** was in capsule form in all the Scriptural admonitions on the spiritual life. ***Watch*** meant to be on the alert – which was useless without weapons, and ***Prayer*** supplied these.

1870: Fr. Peter Vignola had been ordered by the Superior General, Fr. Marani, to preach a Triduum for the Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, the 5th Sunday after Easter this year. At the last moment, Fr. Marani cancelled the Triduum – Fr. Vignola humbly obliged, but he found it difficult.

1873: There was a meeting between the government side, represented by the Finance Official, a man by the name of Calligari, and his lawyer, Righi – and Fr. Benciolini, Fr. Rigoni, and their lawyer, Gemma, serving for Brasca. The government agreed to restore the property and also pay 5,000 Lira if Fr. Benciolini would not push for full satisfaction. Agreement was reached.



Fr. Pio Gurisatti,
the 4th Superior General
[1891 – 1911]

1898: Fr. P. Gurisatti, Superior General, Fr. Tabarelli and the Viscount of S. José de Pasqueira, met at the Hotel of Rome to discuss the Congregation taking over the direction of the Portuguese College in Rome, and agreement was reached.

29

1824: The Emperor Francis I, of Augsburg, had just about concluded his two week stay in Verona. He would leave the next day.

30

1828: Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Naudet to tell her that he did not think that the plan of one Charles Pozzi for the area close to the Stimate and St. Teresa's was very practical, being so close to two Religious Houses.

1834: A Dr. Biseti came to the Stimate to bleed Fr. Bertoni. Fr. Bertoni was in some pain and this was the remedy of those times.

1841: Fr. Bragato was in the entourage of the Empress who was passing through Verona – and he spent two nights at the Stimate.

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Fr. Bertoni in different aspects of his ministry: writing his Original Constitutions, teaching the Youth, in the Marian Oratories, preaching to the people and the clergy.