

Mundelein Seminary  
1000 East Maple Avenue  
Mundelein IL 60060

May 1, 2018  
Memorial of St. Joseph the Worker

Dear Stigmatine Lay Member,

With this letter, of a “New Spring time”, it is good for us to be together, as we pray over the original inspiration of our Founder, St. Gaspar Bertoni, to establish the Congregation of Stigmatine Priests and Brothers. These “May dates” remind us of one of the central ministries St. Gaspar believed Stigmatines should fulfill in accord with his ideal to carry out “Any Ministry of the Word of God whatsoever”... [cf. CF # 163].

#### **MAY 4**

**1816:** Fr. Bertoni assisted Canon Louis Pacetti at the historic Parish Mission preached at Sts. Firmus and Rusticus, Verona. During this Mission, Fr. Bertoni received from God the idea of establishing a Congregation – for his work during this Mission, Fr. Bertoni would receive a Papal Honor, that of *Apostolic Missionary*.

#### **MAY 9**

**1865:** Papal Bull of Beatification of the young Jesuit Scholastic, John Berchmans, always a favorite among the students of the Congregation.

#### **MAY 11**

**1841:** On this date, Fr. Bertoni wrote a letter to Fr. Bragato and asked him to pray for a work that he was writing so slowly and carefully [*a piccole goccioline*]. This was the booklet of his *Original Constitutions*.<sup>1</sup>

#### **MAY 26**

**1816:** Canon Louis Pacetti and Fr. Bertoni concluded the historic Mission at Sts. Firmus and Rusticus that began on May 4<sup>th</sup>. During this Mission, Fr. Bertoni received the idea of establishing a Congregation.

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<sup>1</sup> Fr. Joseph Fiorio, in his *Breve Cronaca*, I, p. 64 – gives Nov. 5, 1841 as the date of this letter - but, the booklet of the *Original Constitutions*, p. 16, gives this date]

**MAY 31**

**1854:** Fr. Marani went to Bolzano to see Bishop-Elect Benedict Riccabona before his departure for Rome. He left with the Bishop-Elect a copy of Fr. Bertoni's ***Original Constitutions***.<sup>2</sup>

As these various commemorations come and go over the years, with the rapid passing time, we can be invited from the God of Mercy to do all that we can in these challenging times to live this charism more deeply.

For these occurrences from our history, we offer the actual Minutes of the 11<sup>th</sup> General Chapter that prepared the way for the challenging 12<sup>th</sup> General Chapter in 1890 [this was discussed in an earlier Stigmatine Laity letter]. This 11<sup>th</sup> Chapter provided as a "proposal" of the next chapter, a suggested "up-dating" of the Founder's Constitutions – to bring them more in harmony with the General legislation of the Church of that time.

As we share this "walk down Memory Lane", let us renew our efforts to live the spirit of St. Gaspar Bertoni, by serving Jesus Christ in and through the Church in any way that our present circumstances permit.

Respectfully yours in the spirit of St. Gaspar Bertoni,

*Fr. Joseph Henchey, CSS*

Acting Spiritual Director

Appendix:

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

Enclosed documents:

- The 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Stigmatine General Chapters [1881 – 1889]. English translation by Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS.
- Roster of the Deceased Stigmatines in May.

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<sup>2</sup> The *Breve Cronaca*, I, p. 88 places this as 'the last day of March 1854.' However, the CS II, p. 30, lists May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1854 the date of this important meeting.

**MAY****1**

- 1824:** Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Naudet concerning her hope one day to purchase St. Dominic's Convent. It could not be done then, but he told her in time it could happen.
- 1828:** Mother Naudet mentioned for the first time the name she would call her Congregation: ***The [Devout] Sisters of the Holy Family.***
- 1868:** Fr. Marani, Superior General, wrote to the Holy See explaining that the Congregation could no longer ordain its members with the title *Mensa Communis*, since the confiscation of the property – but, asked if he could still ordain them, if he would make sure that they could be provided for in some decency.

**2**

- 1836:** Marietta Lenotti, sister of John Baptist, died today.
- 1858:** Fr. Anthony Graziani, rector of the Seminary of Vicenza, wrote to Fr. Marani, Superior General, to thank him for the fine Retreat that Frs. Benciolini and Lenotti had just preached at the Seminary.
- 1870:** Fr. Marani, seriously ill in Verona, set to Villazzano for Fr. DaPrato, Novice Master, to come to see him.

**3**

- 1828:** Fr. Bertoni was confined to bed again, but he wrote to Mother Naudet and told her that he liked very much her observations on the Holy Family. He also treated of some renovations at St. Teresa's in this letter.
- 1843:** Fr. Cainer started to offer Mass again this day, for the first time in many months.

**4**

- 1815:** Innocent Venturini joined the Oratory at St. Sebastian's, Verona.
- 1816:** Fr. Bertoni assisted Canon Louis Pacetti at **the historic Parish Mission preached at Sts. Firmus and Rusticus, Verona.** During this Mission, Fr. Bertoni received from God the idea of establishing a Congregation – for his work during this Mission, Fr. Bertoni would receive a Papal Honor, that of ***Apostolic Missionary.***

- 1835:** The works of the great Jesuit theologian, Fr. Francis Suarez, arrived today at the Stimate. It was the Balleoniana Edition, 23 volumes. Fr. Suarez influenced Fr. Bertoni a great deal in the compiling of his rule, begun a few years after this date.
- 1858:** On this date, Fr. Marani, Superior General, wrote to Pope Pius IX, and he sent to the Holy Father a copy of the "Life of Fr. Bertoni", written by Fr. Cajetan Giacobbe.
- 1868:** This was the date of Fr. Benciolini's appeal before the Civil Tribunal of Florence - he made it clear that he did not want both lawyers [Malenchini and Galeotti], and suggested to Fr. Rigoni that Lawyer Galeotti only be retained for consultation.
- 1871:** Fr. Bragato wrote to Fr. Lenotti, as Fr. Marani was near death. Fr. Bragato said that he would do his best to send some money, but that it would no longer come 'in streams', as it did before for the Students at Villazzano.

## 5

- 1790:** Wednesday – John Mary Marani, son of Celestine, born at 10:00 a.m., in the Parish of St. Stephen's, Verona.
- 1833:** Mother Naudet's Congregation received approval from the government – this was a condition that Fr. Bertoni had placed in granting perpetual use of St. Teresa's namely, that the Congregation be approved in 1833.
- 1873:** Great joy among the Students of the Congregation on hearing that the long legal battle to regain from the government had been won by the Congregation.
- 1877:** Fr. Vignola, Superior General, wrote to a Clara Perenzoni that the members of the Congregation were very much opposed to the sale of the House of the *Trinità*, that had belonged to its original patrimony and that there were plans for its future use.

## 6

- 1856:** Frs. Marani and Lenotti left to preach the annual retreat to the Seminary of Treviso. They preached four sermons a day to the Seminarians and two others daily to the young Students. The Seminarians were very attentive, and one expressed the desire to enter the Congregation.
- 1864:** Fr. Benciolini, 'always obedient to Fr. Marani', wrote to Bishop di Canossa to see if it would be all right if he appealed his case with the Sisters to the Holy See.

**1872:** Fr. Lenotti, Superior General, wrote to Pius IX to see if the Congregation could ordain some young men to Sacred Orders even though the Congregation still could not provide the canonical title, *Mensa Communis*.

**1898:** A second meeting between the Viscounts of S. Jose' de Pasqueira and Frs. Lenotti and Tabarelli took place at the home of one Anthony Bras, to iron out the difficulties so that the Congregation could assume the direction of the Portuguese College in Rome.

## 7

**1797:** First Tree of Liberty was planted in Piazza Brà, in Verona.

**1835:** Fr. Santi, Vice Director of Studies at the Diocesan Seminary of Verona, gave a report on Fr. Fedelini's two years of Philosophy and 4 years of Theology there. Fr. Bertoni asked Fr. Raimondi to teach Gregorian Chant to the Students on Thursdays and Sundays.

**1870:** Fr. DaPrato, after spending several days with Fr. Marani in Verona, left to return to the Novices at Villazzano.

## 8

**1790:** John Marani was baptized in St. Stephen's Parish, Verona, three days after his birth.

**1806:** Francis Benciolini, son of Peter, was born at 7:00 a.m.

**1808:** Mother di Canossa opened a Convent for her Congregation at the Convent of Sts Joseph and Fidentius, Verona. Fr. Bertoni, 30 years of age, was appointed by the Bishop as their Confessor. Bishop Liruti seemed to have a great deal of confidence in Fr. Bertoni from the start.

**1814:** Final settlement reached between Fr. Bertoni and Catherine Slavier, concerning the Bertoni family money that Fr. Bertoni's father, Louis, had left her.

**1826:** Death of Francis Bongiovanni, a layman, Doctor of Canon and Civil Law. Fr. Bertoni had recommended his services to Mother Naudet in her letters to the Bishop.

## 9

**1808:** Mother Naudet gave her first Conference to her Sisters. Mother di Canossa had appointed her Superior at Sts. Joseph and Fidentius before they parted company.

- 1865:** Papal Bull of Beatification of the Jesuit Scholastic, John Berchmans, always a favorite among the students of the Congregation.
- 1867:** Fr. Marani, Superior General, came to Villazzano for the Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph. There was a Triduum preceding the Feast preached by the Novices.
- 1887:** The new House Chapel in Parma, constructed under Fr. Dominic Vicentini's direction, was inaugurated this day.

### 10

- 1806:** This day was the Baptism of Francis Joseph Michaelangelo Benciolini in the Cathedral of Verona. Monsignor Maffei, Canon of the Cathedral, performed the ceremony, by permission of Monsignor Ridolfi, Vicar General.
- 1877:** A Royal Decree of this date required that teachers in the secondary schools be at least 25 years of age, have had four years of experience [six years, if the school was private], and pass a special exam. Bishop di Canossa wrote a letter to the authorities at the University of Padua, stating that at the Stimate, all civil requirements had been fulfilled. His letter was needed for the approbation of the Schools at the Stimate by the government.
- 1900:** There began in Verona the Process to prove that no external cult had ever been given Fr. Bertoni since his death.

### 11

- 1827:** Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Naudet this day and spoke of his illness and operations that he was undergoing at this time.
- 1841:** **On this date, Fr. Bertoni wrote a letter to Fr. Bragato and asked him to pray for a work that he was writing so slowly and carefully [a piccole goccioline]. This was the booklet of his *Original Constitutions*].**<sup>3</sup>
- 1856:** Fr. Marani preached at the Cathedral of Treviso for the Feast of Pentecost.

### 12

- 1856:** Fr. Marani again preached in the Cathedral of Treviso. The Novice, Fr. DaPrato arrived to help with Confessions.

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<sup>3</sup> Fr. Joseph Fiorio, in his *Breve Cronaca*, I, p. 64 – gives Nov. 5, 1841 as the date of this letter - but, the booklet of the *Original Constitutions*, p. 16, gives this date]

- 1864:** Fr. Benciolini had second thoughts about writing to the Holy See and going over the head of the local Bishop. He wrote to Bishop di Canossa before receiving an answer from his previous letter, to see if a Diocesan Tribunal could be set up to handle the dispute.
- 1867:** Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph – Fr. Marani, Superior General, at Villazzano, received the First Vows of Richard Tabarelli and Bellino Carrara. The Students presented Fr. Marani with a cricket that he had lost on his return trip to 'Italy', i.e. Verona.
- 1873:** Attorney Brasca wrote to Fr. Rigoni and told him that their opponent in the case, Attorney Righi, acting for the government, was unwittingly their ally in the case before the court.

### 13

- 1773:** Leopoldina Naudet was born at Florence.
- 1845:** The nine Priests of the Stimate unanimously agreed to reject the substantial sum left to them by Teresa Cartolari.
- 1863:** The second centenary of the 'Madonna of the Novitiate' at the *Trinità* – Fr. Vincent Vignola preached; the Fathers came up for dinner from the Stimate, but Fr. Marani did not attend, as he was ill.
- 1864:** Fr. Lenotti preached on this commemoration of the 'Madonna of the Novitiate', and said it was a memorable day for them, as the Novitiate was under the protection of the Mother of God.
- 1867:** Monday – Fr. Marani left Villazzano for Verona, refreshed, as always – after his stay with the students.

### 14

- 1801:** Fr. Bertoni preached on Detachment from this World – he stated that a mortified life is not a sad one; this world is not proportionate to the human heart.
- 1814:** Pope Pius VII visited Loreto; Canon Louis Pacetti spoke with him concerning Mother di Canossa; her work pleased the Holy Father very much.

### 15

- 1828:** Ascension Thursday – Fr. Bertoni was able to offer Mass on this Feast.

**1835:** Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Busetti, the Superior of the Sisters of the Holy Family, and he approved her design for the Main Altar at St. Teresa's.

**1864:** Pentecost Sunday – just before Pentecost, Frs. Benciolini and Bassi preached a Retreat at the Seminary of Padua.

**1871:** Fr. Lenotti left Villazzano to visit Fr. Marani in Verona to speak about a young Novice who seemed to have nerve troubles. Fr. Marani, although dying, is still governing the Congregation.

The Bishop of Parma offered the Congregation St. Mary's Church for their Marian Oratories.

**1899:** Fr. Bertoni's body was viewed a fourth time by the Diocesan Officials in the Diocesan Process for his Canonization.

### 16

**1839:** Fr. Gramego celebrated Mass for the last time for 10 months; he was suffering from a mouth fistula.

**1856:** Frs. Marani and Lenotti concluded the retreat at Treviso for the Seminarians. This was a Friday, and Fr. Marani left for Verona alone – Fr. Lenotti stayed behind to terminate the Retreat for the young Students who had had their own Retreat.

**1859:** The Sisters were given a 48 hour notice to vacate St. Teresa's: the Municipal Government was going to take over the Convent.

**1871:** Fr. Lenotti returned to Villazzano after speaking with Fr. Marani about one of the Novices.

### 17

**1856:** Frs. Marani and Benciolini started an eight day retreat for the Sisters of St. Clare in Verona; Fr. Lenotti finished his Retreat for the young Students at the Diocesan Seminary of Treviso

**1863:** Frs. Benciolini and Rigoni left for Rovereto to preach a Retreat to the Madames of the Sacred Heart there.

### 18

**1810:** Fr. Bertoni wrote in his Spiritual Diary that it really costs nothing to be devoted to Mary. It is up to us to purify ourselves so that her mediation in our behalf will meet no obstacle.



**1835:** Fr. Bertoni wrote to Bishop Grasser to tell him that the Capuchin on penance had made his 30 day Retreat very well.

**1846:** the Will of the Benciolini family is settled – Fr. Francis received 12,600 Lira as his share; his sister Teresa had already died.

**1899:** Fr. Bertoni's body was sealed in the Epistle side<sup>4</sup> of the old Oratory in the Stimate with this inscription:

**The Remains of the Servant of God, Gaspar Bertoni, Priest,  
Founder, Legislator of the Congregation of the Priests of the  
Sacred Stigmata.**



The body of Fr. Bertoni at the  
Church of the Stimate in  
Verona.

<sup>4</sup> Translator's note: In the pre-Vatican II years, the Epistle of each Mass was read on **the Epistle Side of the Gospel** -looking at the altar from the pews, **this would mean the right hand side of the altar.**

At a certain point, the altar boy after the Epistle would **change the Missal to the left side of the altar, called the 'Gospel' side from where the Gospel was read** - and the homily would follow from the top of the altar steps by the celebrant. That all changed with Vatican II and the addition of the pulpit, or stand, where the readings are now delivered.



The Church of the Stimate in Verona. Fr. Bertoni's body is at the Epistle (right) side, at the back.

### 19

- 1836:** Fr. Cainer was able to offer Mass again today – he and Fr. Bertoni had long sieges of illnesses at the same time.
- 1873:** Fr. Lenotti, Superior General, wrote a letter to Fr. Vincent Vignola, Director of the Student House at Villazzano, and urged all there to have the apostolic spirit of Frs. Bertoni, Marani, Gramego, Cartolari and DaPrato – now all deceased.
- 1891:** A special *Accademia* was held at the Stimate in honor of Cardinal di Canossa for his 90th birthday, but the old Cardinal was unable to come.
- 1903:** Louis Marchesini, nephew of the deceased Fr. Joseph Marchesini, went to Tregnago with a sealed box which he opened in the presence of the Notary Ghirardini. This held the papers of his uncle that the young Marchesini claimed would prove that his uncle had made him the heir and not Fr. Stephen Rosa.

20

- 1871:** Fr. DaPrato at Fr. Marani's bed-side wrote to the Community at Villazzano, asking for prayers to the Holy Spouses that Fr. Marani might be spared from so much suffering.
- 1872:** Attorney Brasca wrote to Fr. Rigoni and stated that he hoped Fr. Marani was praying for them in heaven as his *Cenni* ['Remarks on the early History of the Congregation'] in the hands of the government lawyers would prove, at least in his mind, that the Congregation was indeed a duly constituted religious body - and hence, the Law of Suppression was rightly applied by the government in the confiscation of the community's property.
- 1873:** Attorney Brasca, now that the case had been decided in favor of the Congregation, wrote to Fr. Rigoni to say good-by. He mentioned that he hoped that Fr. DaPrato was in heaven as this long case had so saddened him, and that he did not live to see its happy conclusion.
- 1903:** The Notary Burzie in Verona published Fr. Marchesini's will that made Fr. Rosa the legal heir. A long court case developed from this will.
- 1905:** The newly constructed theater in Trent was inaugurated this day. Frequently plays would be put on in this theater as part of the activity of the Oratory.

21

- 1830:** The Oratory at the Stimmate became an aggregate of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart in Rome, with all its indulgences.
- 1858:** Frs. Marani, Vignola and Rigoni returned to Fossolovara where they had preached a Mission, to establish a Pious Union to combat Blasphemy.
- 1860:** Fr. Venturini received permission on this date to celebrate the same Votive Mass daily in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, due to his failing eye-sight.
- 1864:** Bishop di Canossa answered Fr. Benciolini's many letters and told him that there would be no Diocesan tribunal to settle his dispute with the Sisters over their use of the Convent of St. Teresa's, and that he would have to send his plea to the Holy See.

22

- 1827:** Fr. Bertoni filled in the government questionnaire on the School at the Stimmate – the statistics were: 33 in elementary school; 78 in high school – there were four classes of Grammar, and two of the Humanities.

**1829:** Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Naudet and told her that Bishop Grasser's visit was delayed; Fr. Bertoni recommended to her the book by the Dominican, Fr. Anfessi, in defense of Pius VI's Bull.

**1898:** The newly constructed Church at San Bernardino Vecchio in Trent was opened to the public and dedicated to the Holy Espousals.

### 23

**1863:** The Sisters of the Holy Family, with their lawyer, Canon Cedegnola, drew up a new agreement with the government concerning the rent to be paid to them for the use of St. Teresa's. Fr. Benciolini thought this contract very illegal, as they were not the legal owners of this Convent – he was!!!

**1903:** Louis Marchesini filed papers to contest the will of his Uncle, Fr. Joseph Marchesini, who had made Fr. Stephen Rosa his heir.

### 24

**1814:** Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Naudet stating that his illnesses had him back in bed again. On this same day, Pius VII entered Rome in triumph – he had endured a harsh and humiliating imprisonment by Napoleon.

**1819:** Fr. Fusari of the Oratory of St. Philip wrote to Mother Naudet and he told her that he was doing his best to persuade his friend, Fr. Bertoni, to continue as her Confessor.

### 25

**1833:** Fr. Venturini received Faculties to hear the Confessions of both men and women.

**1856:** Frs. Marani and Benciolini concluded the Retreat for the Clarissan Nuns in Verona on this Sunday. After the Retreat, Fr. Marani went to Vicenza to the DeLorenzi Organ Company to purchase an organ for the Stimmate.

**1858:** Fr. Marani and Fr. Vignola went to Padua to arrange with the Bishop for a Mission at the Cathedral. They stayed overnight and returned the next day to Verona.

**1900:** The examination of witnesses began in Verona in the Diocesan Process of Fr. Bertoni's Cause to establish the fact that no external cult had been shown to him.

**26**

- 1807:** On this date, there was a Decree from Napoleon prohibiting Marian Oratories, Confraternities, Congregations, and the building of Churches.
- 1816:** Canon Louis Pacetti and Fr. Bertoni concluded the historic Mission at Sts. Firmus and Rusticus that began on May 4<sup>th</sup>. During this Mission, Fr. Bertoni received the idea of establishing a Congregation.

**27**

- 1827:** Bishop Liruti conferred Tonsure and the four Minor Orders on Charles Fedelini. On this same day, Mark Bassi was born in Verona.
- 1844:** The Diocesan Decree granting a Plenary Indulgence for Devotions to the Five Wounds for the First Fridays of January, March, May, July, September and November [the odd numbered months]. This was the response from the Holy See of April 23, 1844, which left the six months of the year up to the Diocese to specify.
- 1873:** With the long legal battle for the restoration of the confiscated property now out of the way, Fr. Lenotti, Superior General, could now turn his attention to other matters for the Congregation. He decided to finish construction on the Church of *Santa Maria del Giglio*.

**28**

- 1840:** Fr. Odescalchi, SJ, the former Cardinal Vicar of the Holy Father, wrote to an old friend, Cardinal Patrizi, and in the course of this letter, Fr. Odescalchi refers to Fr. Bertoni as 'an excellent priest.'
- 1865:** The ceremony of Beatification of John Berchmans, Jesuit Scholastic, took place in Rome today. Anthony Caucigh began to read his biography.
- 1871:** This date marks the last entry in Fr. Lenotti's House Chronicle. He was appointed Chronicler at the death of Fr. Bertoni, and for these 18 years he gave a most exact account of the Congregation and its varied Ministries: Parish Missions, Retreats and other ministries of the Word of God, catechetics, work among seminarians and Religious and youth work. Fr. Lenotti noted the good days and the bad endured through all these years.

**29**

- 1841:** James Campedelli, third Aspirant from Lughezzano, was sent to the Stimmate by a Fr. **Zampieri**, Pastor there.

**1844:** Fr. Mark Cavanis celebrated Mass at the Stimate today – he and his brother, also a Priest, were of the nobility, and had founded Schools of Charity at Venice. They were much admired by Fr. Bertoni.

**1898:** The Diocesan Tribunal in the Process of Fr. Bertoni's Cause of Canonization began its seven month Sessions today.

### 30

**1812:** Fr. Bertoni left a rather lengthy account of an experience he had praying before Mass today. He said that the Crucifix seemed to be indicating that he should reflect on the Heart of Christ.

**1875:** Fr. Lenotti, Superior General, sent Fr. Rigoni to Rome to see Fr. Alfieri, to look into the possibility of obtaining a Foreign Mission for the Congregation.

**1885:** Fr. Octavian Piccoli was ordained a Priest today, in Verona.

### 31

**1828:** Bishop Buoizzi in the Cathedral of Mantua ordained Innocent Venturini a Deacon.

**1854:** Fr. Marani went to Bolzano to see Bishop-Elect Benedict Riccabona before his departure for Rome. He left with the Bishop-Elect a copy of Fr. Bertoni's *Original Constitutions*.<sup>5</sup>

**1872:** The government lawyers presented an array of 17 documents to 'prove' that Fr. Bertoni was never the rightful owner of the Pious Places, and therefore, he could not have left them legally to Fr. Benciolini.

**1874:** Construction was finished this day at the Church of *Santa Maria del Giglio*, begun during Fr. Marani's administration.

**1875:** Fr. Rigoni stopped off in Florence on his way to Rome to see some old friends he had made during the time he spent there in the legal battles to keep the property of the Congregation.

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<sup>5</sup> The *Breve Cronaca*, I, p. 88 places this as 'the last day of March 1854.' However, the CS II, p. 30, lists May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1854 the date of this important meeting.