

Mundelein Seminary
1000 East Maple Avenue
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September 5, 2018

Anniversary of the Death of the 11th Superior General,
Fr. John Lenotti [July 4, 1871-September 5, 1875]

Dear Stigmatine Laity,

The month of September has marked many important happenings for our Stigmatine History: often there were General Chapters – including the very challenging 12th General Chapter of 1890.

September also offers us the significant date of both the birth of John Baptist Lenotti [on September 5th 1817] and his death on the same date, his 58th birthday.

He served as Father General for only 4 years and a couple of months – but throughout he manifested a very prophetic glance toward a universal Apostolic Mission, both regarding to its content [quodcumque –any ministry whatsoever of the Word of God] - and regarding its locale [quocumque – anywhere in the diocese or the world]. In his 4 year plus service as Father General, he was preparing a mission band among the younger Stigmatines at the time, equipping them with language skills and further preparation for the foreign mission. It would be 30 full years after his death, that the Stigmatines actually established a series of communities outside of Italy. It was not until 1905 the Stigmatines came to live in what would be a future province – and to Brazil in 1910.

In his few years as Fr. General, he tried to solidify the apostolates –Fr. Bertoni left this aspect of the Apostolic Mission opened by simply stating that the Purpose [the “End”] of the Stigmatines was to serve in the Apostolic Mission under the direction of Bishops.

His predecessor, Fr. John Mary Marani [1st Superior General, as successor to the Founder - 1853-1871] understood the term “Mission” much like St. Alphonsus Liguori for the Redemptorists did, or like St. Paul of the Cross for the Passionists. Their prime service was to provide parishes with the inspiring experience of the “Parish Missions”.

Fr. Lenotti came to the Congregation as a young man, still as a seminarian – most of the other early companions came already as ordained priests. Fr. Bertoni personally trained Fr. Lenotti for his formation years in the Stigmatine life and spirit. Fr. Lenotti also served as one of the early Novice Masters and his Conferences on the Founder’s Constitutions have come down to us – some of them will be offered again

this month for our refection. Comparing the first two Fathers General – Frs. Marani and Lenotti - there is an evident discrepancy in their positions, has been noted by the very learned recent biography of St. Gaspar, published by the author, Prof. Ruggero Simonato – I offer here the original footnote from the manuscript copy of his book¹: “My own impression is that Fr. Lenotti’s is the correct interpretation, more in accord with St. Gaspar’s own priestly life, his words and our early history”.

God love you all – let us continue to pray for each other. And let us pray for the stormy times that the Community is enduring here in the USA at the moment. God love you all!

Respectfully yours in our Founder, St. Gaspar Bertoni!

Fr. Joseph Henchey, CSS

Acting Spiritual Director

Appendix:

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

Enclosed documents:

- Fr. John Baptist Lenotti, Master of Novices; 11nd Superior General [1871 – 1875]. Conferences on the Founder’s Original Constitutions. English translation by Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS [2004].
- Minutes of the 12th General Chapter [Sep. 24 – Oct. 3, 1890].
- Roster of the Deceased Stigmatines in September.

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¹ ¹CF 7, 75, 76, 85, 162, riferiti a CF 1 e 2: si tratta di cenni espliciti. Ma è altrettanto eloquente il silenzio sulle forme delle missioni al popolo – cfr. le postille di CGB, pp. 199-207 – al pari della reticenza in merito nelle regole dei gesuiti. Il nesso tra il mandato di missionari apostolici centralità delle missioni al popolo è un locus vexatus, sul quale si sono avute interpretazioni e la discordanti tra gli stigmatini fino a tempi recenti, che non si possono dirimere in sede storica. Dalle Vedove, sulla scorta del Marani, sottolineava la centralità della missione apostolica e del connesso ministero delle missioni popolari (cfr. anche Controne, *Le missioni popolari*, pp. 103-131), mentre Henchey – in base a Lenotti (CS IV/3, p. 410) – ampliava il raggio operativo della missione ad ogni ministero della Parola, legato all’obsequium Episcoporum (cfr. CF 163-165). I termini del confronto sono ripresi in più punti di De Paoli – Mariani – Henchey, *Studi sulle Costituzioni Originali*, pp. 64, 85-86, 135-140, 336-344, e CGB, pp. 101-103.

SEPTEMBER**1**

- 1816:** Mother Naudet wrote to Fr. Galvani that she could not keep her Monday appointment at 9:00 a.m. She asked if she could meet with him at 3:30 p.m., to talk over the use of St. Teresa's. She told him that Fr. Trevisani was very happy over the proposed solution for the Convent.
- 1858:** The Mission at Holy Cross Parish in Padua ended – the Bishop asked Fr. Lenotti to preach in the Cathedral for the Jubilee services being conducted there.
- 1867:** A lawyer from Florence, Alexander Malenchini, was very impressed with Fr. Benciolini's arguments: that the Congregation was not at that time a religious congregation, and so the 'Law of Suppression' could not be legally applied; and that the property was in his name, and not that of the Congregation. Malenchini expressed the opinion that the government could never legally seize the Stimate.
- 1875:** Dr. Corradi went out to Sezano to see Fr. Lenotti – they both returned to Verona. He told Fr. Lenotti to go to bed – Fr. Lenotti would never get up again. The Students visited him that night and they knelt for his blessing.

2

- 1812:** Fr. Galvani purchased the old Vallambrosian Convent next to the *Trinità*.
- 1875:** The Students went for an outing to Sezano – when they returned in the evening, Fr. Lenotti's condition had become grave. Dr. Corradi brought in a specialist, Dr. Morganti. He suggested that Fr. Lenotti should be anointed. Right after Night Prayers, about 9:15 p.m., Fr. Peter Vignola, Director, brought Holy Viaticum. In a clear voice, Fr. Lenotti asked pardon of God and his Confreres, and then received Holy Communion.

3

- 1816:** In the morning, Fr. Bertoni talked with Teresa and Benvenuta Bellotti, sisters of the deceased Joseph – that afternoon at 2:00 p.m., he spoke with Fr. Galvani – all of these conversations were concerned with the 'pious places' left by Bellotti to Fr. Galvani.
- 1867:** Fr. Marani wrote to Fr. Rigoni in Florence and said that he was sorry that Fr. Rigoni had to carry out such exhausting labor for the Congregation.

1871: The three members of the Capitular Commission: Frs. Rigoni, Lenotti and Peter Vignola – went out to Villazzano for their last meeting before the 2nd General Chapter was to convene.

1875: There was no change in Fr. Lenotti's condition – about 9:00 p.m., his Confessor, Fr. Beltrami, went to his room and suggested that he be anointed again for this new crisis. Fr. Lenotti asked for Fr. Peter Vignola, Director, and then Fr. Beltrami anointed him. His breathing was quite heavy.

4

1872: Fr. Lenotti, Superior General, wrote to Fr. Vincent Vignola, Superior at the Student House at Sale di Povo, that it would be more in accord with the traditions of the Congregation that if the Fathers who were sent to the Parish Church at Povo, not to stay for dinner – he also asked the Fathers to recite Vespers and Compline in common in the afternoon. Fr. Vignola wrote back and said the latter would not be possible, as they all had different schedules and it would be difficult to assemble them for that in the afternoon.

1875: After midnight, Fr. Lenotti took a decided turn for the worse - he raved about the Aspirants in Trent passing by his bed. About 2:00 a.m. he asked for Fr. Peter Vignola – he then expressed the hope that he might be called to heaven on the day dedicated to Mary. He spoke with Fr. Sembianti and told him to exhort his students to be most observant of their vows and to be devoted to Mary and Joseph. Fr. Pizzini and Fr. Tabarelli came and he blessed them – to the latter, he said that his blessing was for always and repeated that several times. Bishop di Canossa came about 6:00 p.m., and blessed the dying Superior General. He was visited by his brother, Francis Lenotti.

5

1817: John Baptist Mary Lenotti was born about 2:30 p.m., the son of Anthony. He was baptized this same day in St. Luke's Parish.

1820: Louis Ferrari, a future Cleric in the Congregation, was born, the son of Louis.

1833: Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Naudet and told her that these were busy days for him. He said he was happy to hear Pope Gregory's encouraging words to new Congregations, and that next to the words of the Holy Father, his own observations were not very significant.

- 1857:** Fr. Marani left the Imperial Villa at Stra.
- 1862:** The Fathers finished preaching the two courses of Retreats at Udine. A Monsignor Frangipani wrote to Fr. Marani to tell him the wonderful work the Fathers had done at Udine.
- 1868:** Fr. Marani visited Villazzano for the first time since the previous April. A Passport was issued to Fr. Marani that bore this date – it was good for travel in France, Austria, Germany and the Papal States, with one ‘Louis Ferrari, age 44’. It described Fr. Marani as ‘tall, dark brown hair sprinkled with grey, dark brown eyes, and a grey beard.’
- 1869:** The Bishop of Trent ordained four young men of the Congregation as Sub-Deacons: Morando, Vicentini, Sterza and Lanaro.
- 1875:** Sunday – Fr. John Baptist Lenotti, Superior General, died on his 58th birthday. His most productive, but too abruptly ended, administration of four years comes to an end. He had opened the first House of the Congregation outside of Verona, in Trent - he was negotiating for a House in Parma – he was carrying on negotiations with the Holy See for Papal Approbation of the Community, and was seeking a Foreign Mission field for the Congregation. Many of his efforts, then, would not reach fruition for many years to come. He died about the same hour he was born.
- 1876:** Paul Gradinati, a Student, eulogized Fr. Lenotti on his first anniversary, in the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*.
- 1895:** Fr. Pizzighella and Fr. Gasperotti took possession of the Church of St. Francis’ Stigmata in Rome [Largo Argentina], also known as the *Stimmate*. Fr. Gasperotti also accepted a teaching post at the Vatican Minor Seminary.

6

- 1791:** Gaspar Bertoni was confirmed by Bishop Avogadro.
- 1818:** From this date onward, Mass could be celebrated in the little Oratory at the Stimmate, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.
- 1828:** Mother Naudet sent a letter to Fr. Rozaven – a Jesuit in Russia. He was Vicar Provincial in France, and then a General Councilor under the Father General, Fr. Louis Fortis – Fr. Bertoni’s spiritual director as a young man. Fr. Bertoni reviewed Mother Naudet’s letter before she sent it.

- 1853:** Brother John Bandoria died – it was said of him: ‘he worked well, but lived little!’ The entire Congregation at this juncture numbered 6 Priests, and three Brothers.
- 1862:** Anthony Caucigh entered the Stimate, returning from Udine with Frs. Benciolini and Lenotti who had preached to the **Diocesan Clergy**.
- 1867:** Fr. Marani wrote to the Prior of the House in Florence that had extended hospitality to Fr. Rigoni during his stay there, to offer thanks.
- 1870:** Fr. Lenotti returned to Villazzano with the news that the Superior General, Fr. Marani, was out of danger, but that the doctor was concerned with his loss of weight and, of course, his age.
- 1871:** The Capitular Commission [Frs. Rigoni, Lenotti, and Peter Vignola], preparing the **Appendix to Part XII** of Fr. Bertoni’s **Original Constitutions**, left Villazzano for Verona, after three days of meetings.
- 1875:** Fr. Lenotti was waked in the little Oratory of the Immaculate Conception at the Stimate. It was noted that his face was yellowish, but he seemed to be at peace. Fr. Peter Vignola was chosen Vicar until the Congregation could elect a new Superior General.

7

- 1820:** Louis Ferrari, born two day before, was baptized - he would enter the Congregation and die before Ordination. [There was also a Brother Louis Ferrari – and their deaths are a day a part in the Necrology].
- 1855:** The official document of the civil approval of the Congregation was received today at the Stimate – it was signed by the delegates: “Ferrari, Podestà, Castelli and Jordis”.
- 1875:** Fr. Lenotti’s funeral was held celebrated this morning at the Stimate – 23 Masses were celebrated; Fr. Peter Vignola was celebrant of a High Mass of Requiem – Fr. Giacobbe led the procession from the Stimate to the *Trinità* – the Capuchin Fathers sang the burial service.

8

- 1856:** Frs. Benciolini and Lenotti concluded the Mission at Stelle – Fr. Marani returned for the closing.
- 1862:** The Feast of the *Madonna del Popolo* celebrated in Verona with solemnity on the day of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

- 1867:** Fr. Rigoni wrote from Florence to Verona – his efforts there seemed fruitless in all the legal intricacies he was trying to unravel.
- 1871:** Fr. Lenotti sent out word that the 2nd General Chapter would convene in three days – every Priest of the Congregation would attend it, even Fr. Dominic Vicentini, ordained but a month.
- 1875:** The newspaper *Riposo Domenicale* contained an article that mourned the three-fold loss to the Church in Verona that year: Fr. Maestrelli [Co-Founder of the Sons of Mary] – Fr. Brazzeli [once a student at the Stimate, became Rector of the Diocesan Seminary] – and Fr. Lenotti – he was described as a Priest who had led ‘an immaculate life.’
- 1885:** Fr. Paul Gradinati was appointed Novice Master to succeed Fr. Alexis Magagna - Fr. Gradinati wrote in his Spiritual Diary that day: ‘May God grant that the Superiors have made a good choice – may Our Lady help me to carry out this task without harm to myself, or others.’

9

- 1867:** Fr. Rigoni’s letter, dated the previous day, arrived from Florence.

10

- 1833:** Fr. Bertoni and Fr. Bragato were scheduled to give the **Retreat at the Seminary**. Fr. Bertoni, however, was very uncomfortable with a fever, teeth infection and general discomfort – Fr. Bragato went alone. He was assisted there by two other priests – Fr. Joseph Gilardoni and Fr. Joseph Venturi.
- 1843:** This was the last recorded Mass of Fr. Cainer at the Stimate.
- 1857:** Frs. Marani and Lenotti went to Avesa to preach a Mission. The Novice, Fr. Rigoni, also came. After the opening, Fr. Marani left.
- 1867:** Fr. Marani dictated a letter to Fr. Rigoni that was written by Fr. Benciolini. He told of the search of the Stimate by the Agent Vanzetti – this Agent told them that the head of his department, a man by the name of Canton, was proceeding with great caution until the papers of confiscation were ready. Fr. Marani told Fr. Rigoni to celebrate the Feast of St. Francis’ Stigmata with the Community in Florence just as it was always celebrated at the Stimate.

11

- 1857:** Fr. Benciolini was summoned to help the Fathers at the Mission of Avesa. Fr. Rigoni preached the morning sermon – Fr. Lenotti preached an examen of conscience at about 5:30 p.m., and Fr. Benciolini delivered the evening reflection.
- 1858:** Bishop Manfredi of Padua wrote to Fr. Marani to tell him that the work of his Diocese accomplished the previous months in two separate Missions by Frs. Lenotti, Benciolini and Rigoni was much appreciated. He asked Fr. Marani to tell the preachers of his [the Bishop's] undying gratitude.
- 1871:** The 2nd General Chapter convened at the Stimate – 16 Capitulars were present [the only Priest absent was Fr. Bragato] to pass judgment on the *Appendix to Part XII of the Original Constitutions*, prepared by the Capitular Commission [Frs. Rigoni, Lenotti, Peter Vignola], chosen by the 1st General Chapter [July 1871]. It was decided at this Chapter that only ***Apostolic Missionaries*** could wield any authority in the Congregation – during Fr. Marani's administration, none were appointed.

12

- 1841:** Sunday dedicated to the Most Holy Name of Mary – the new Bishop [Mutti] conferred Tonsure and the Four Minor Orders on Louis Ferrari [in six short months, he would be dead!]
- 1854:** The High Altar at the Stimate became 'Privileged.'
- 1855:** Fr. Venturini wrote in his Spiritual Diary that this day for him was one of consolation – he wrote on his gratitude to Fr. Bertoni.
- 1889:** The 11th General Chapter convened at the Stimate – its purpose was to carry out the directives of the Holy See regarding the Constitutions in the Congregation's efforts to have the Congregation received Papal Approbation.²

13

- 1809:** Fr. Bertoni wrote in his Spiritual Diary that anyone who does not want to consider God as just, only knows God by half, or partially.

² In the Introduction to the booklet [cf. p. 32] of the ***Original Constitutions*** that appeared in 1950, Fr. Martinis gives September 12, 1889, as the date of the 11th General Congregation - the **BV I**, p. 192, gives September 25th, 1889 as the date.

1871: Fr. Lenotti was confirmed as temporary Superior General until the subsequent Feast of the Espousals. The 2nd General Chapter adjourned on this date.

1875: A Memorial Service for Fr. Lenotti was held at St. Lawrence's Church that was conducted by Monsignor Sorego.

14

1799: Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross – a Mission was preached in St. Stephen's Parish, Verona, by Canon Louis Pacetti, where he launched the idea of the Marian Oratories – which would take up so much of Fr. Bertoni's time in his early years as a Priest.

[In the early days of the Congregation, this Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross would close the summer Catechism teaching of the so-called *Fourth Class* – which ran from the feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross in May, until this Feast in September. In the annals of the Stigmatines, Fr. Innocent Venturini was most outstanding in this summer catechism].

15

1805: Fr. Bertoni preached on the Holy Name of Mary – she is the Mistress of the world, with dominion over the devil.

1808: Fr. Bertoni visited an altar dedicated to St. Ignatius at the beginning of his Annual Retreat – the Saint seemed to be telling him that he [Fr. Bertoni] must use the same means that he [St. Ignatius] used during his life-time to inspire the soldiers of Christ onward. This was a mystical experience, which does not, however, seem to have been a vision.

16

1804: Vincent Raimondi was born, the son of Charles.

1855: Fr. Fedelini returned to the Congregation, 'his nest', on this Feast of the Sorrowful Mother. He took up again the work of the Oratory.

1866: Italian troops entered Verona – flags were hung from the Stimate, the *Dereletti*, and St. Teresa's.

1867: Fr. Marani argued at some length with a Finance Official, by the name of Canon, concerning the imminent confiscation of the Stimate.

17

- 1820:** Fr. Matthew Farinati died today at 3:00 p.m., shortly after having been visited by Fr. Bertoni – whose place he had taken as Prison Chaplain, where he attracted a fatal illness. Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Naudet and asked for prayers for him.
- 1826:** Sunday – Bishop Liruti conferred Tonsure and the four Minor Orders on Francis Benciolini in the Bishop's residence Chapel. Young Benciolini composed a prayer on this date that he wrote in his Spiritual Diary – he also wrote that melancholy was his predominant passion.
- 1855:** Titular Feast of the Church of the Stimate, the Stigmata of St. Francis – 78 Priests came to celebrate Mass – Fr. Raimondi preached.
- 1841:** Fr. Anthony Rosmini preached the Annual Retreat at the Diocesan Seminary of Verona – John Lenotti made this Retreat in preparation for his Ordination to the Sub-Diaconate. He left a number of resolutions in his Spiritual Diary that have come down to us – he resolved to ask permission to help the Brothers once a week as a Priest in the kitchen. [During his administration as Superior General, he did this himself occasionally and also recommended all Priests to do the same]. He also resolved to be devoted to Joseph and Mary, under the title of the Sorrowful Mother.
- 1855:** Fr. Fedelini received the habit of the Congregation and began his Novitiate – Louis Falzi entered as a Brother.
- 1856:** Fr. Charles Fedelini pronounced his First Vows – he was dispensed from the 2nd year of Novitiate, as he had been a member before.
- 1868:** Fr. Marani returned from Villazzano after 12 days there.
- 1873:** Some agreement was made with the Sisters of the Holy Family concerning St. Teresa's – the Sisters would leave it entirely, and one day it would serve to house the Professed Students of the Congregation.
- 1882:** It had rained heavily for several days and on this day, the Adige river overflowed its banks – a new bridge collapsed – many took refuge in the Stimate, about 300. Verona was described as 'all Adige.'
- 1883:** The first Vestition ceremony for the 3rd Order of St. Francis was held at the Stimate. In the beginning, the members of the Congregation had been enrolled in this 3rd Order, but a later ruling forbade religious from joining.

- 1885:** Bishop Francis Sogaro [a former member of the Congregation], recently consecrated in St. Agatha of the Goths Church in Rome [at the time, the Irish College], came to the Stimate and celebrated Mass. He stayed for dinner and said he still retained a strong desire of re-entering it, but had to fulfill his Foreign Mission calling to Africa.
- 1894:** Fr. Pizzihella, Rector of the Stimate, had the Feast celebrated this year with more than usual solemnity – a painting of St. Francis by Joseph Zannoni was placed over one of the Altars. Fr. Pizzighella had gathered the Relics from the House and placed them in an urn in the Church. The 3rd Order of St. Francis provided the painting.
- 1896:** The Congregation purchased the Church of St. James and the adjoining property in Parma – the Church had been closed many years.

18

- 1813:** Ember Saturday³ – Cajetan Brugnoli was ordained a Sub-Deacon.
- 1841:** John Lenotti was ordained a Sub Deacon.
- 1857:** Fr. Marani returned to Avesa to help Frs. Lenotti and Rigoni the last two days with the Mission there.
- 1865:** Fr. Lenotti went to Udine to preach the Annual Retreat to a group of Sisters called the *Converted*. While he was there, Fr. Fecchia, Spiritual Director of the Handmaids of Charity, wrote to Fr. Marani to see if Fr. Lenotti would also give a Retreat to the Handmaids - Fr. Marani so arranged.
- 1881:** The serious flooding of Verona continued – many homes were destroyed.
- 1896:** Fr. Mark Bassi died – he was eulogized by the paper *Verona Fedele*, as a true Priest of God.
- 1906:** The 17th General Chapter convened at the Stimate – Fr. Gurisatti, already General for 15 years, withdrew his resignation, and so automatically continued the last half of his second ten year term. The Councilors elected were: Frs. Tabarelli, John Tomasi, Julius Zambiasi and Alfred Balestrazzi. The Chapter decided that, at the end of Fr. Gurisatti's term, Superiors General would have six year terms.

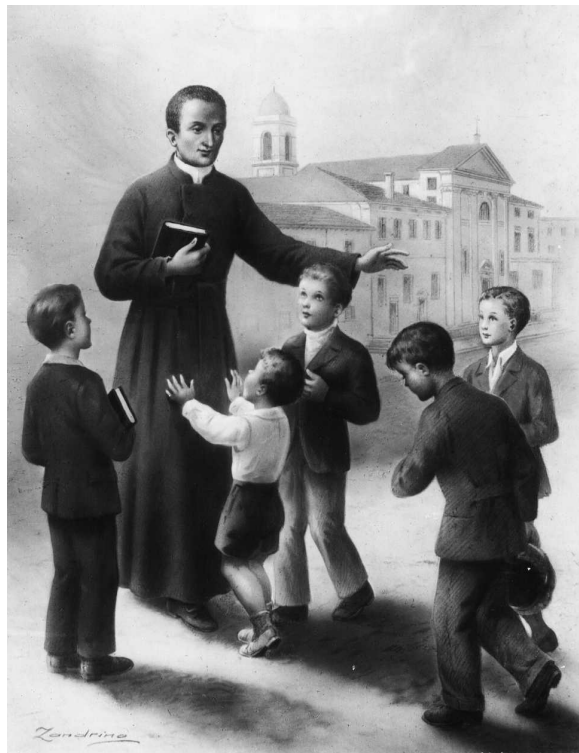
³ i.b.: footnote 15, p. 75.

19

- 1812:** Ember Friday⁴ – Bishop Liruti conferred the Sub-Diaconate on John Marani, and Tonsure and the four Minor Orders on Francis Cartolari.
- 1856:** Charles Bissoli was ordained - he had once been with Fr. Mazza.
- 1866:** Fr. Marani visited Villazzano again, but returned within the week to Verona on pressing business – there was a revolt going on in Palermo.
- 1879:** Fr. Benciolini's Golden Jubilee was celebrated – Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, ordered that a copy of the day's program be sent to every House so that there would always be a record of it in the Archives. Fr. Benciolini was celebrant; Fr. Peter Vignola was Deacon, and Fr. Charles Zara, Director of the Stimate, was Sub Deacon. At 3:00 p.m., there was an *Accademia*.
- 1899:** Fr. Benciolini's 60th anniversary was celebrated – he was much praised in speeches, music and poems. At the end of the meal, he knelt in the Refectory and asked pardon if he had ever given back example.

20

- 1800:** Ember Saturday⁵ – Bishop John Andrew Avogadro ordained Gaspar Bertoni a Priest of God!



The young Fr. Bertoni with
the boys in Verona.

At the background, the
Stimate.

⁴ i.b.: footnote 15, p. 75.

⁵ i.b.: footnote 15, p. 75.

- 1802:** Fr. Bertoni preached on the 2nd anniversary of his Ordination on the dignity of the Priesthood. He said that in this dignity God is honored – the Priest is the Minister and Ambassador of Christ. Priests need prayer – this Sermon may have been given at the First Mass of Fr. Farinati.
- 1806:** Fr. Michaelangelo Gramego was ordained a Priest by Bishop Scipione in St. Stephen's Padua. His Ordination was advanced due to the threat of Napoleon – he still had one more year of theology.
- 1828:** Ember Saturday⁶ – Innocent Venturini was ordained a Priest in the Cathedral of Mantua by Bishop Bozzi. Louis Biadego was tonsured and received all four Minor Orders at the same ceremony.
- 1834:** Charles Fedelini was ordained this Ember Saturday⁷ by Bishop Grasser. John Lenotti was tonsured and received the first two Minor Orders.
- 1841:** Bishop Mutti had given permission for another House Chapel at the Stimate which was frequently used by Fr. Bertoni during his long, last years of confinement. He celebrated Mass here on this day, his 41st anniversary.
- 1850:** Golden Jubilee of Fr. Bertoni - characteristic of the man, there was no external commemoration.
- 1854:** Bishop Riccabona, newly consecrated, visited the Stimate for the first time – he noted the small number of members, but compared them to Napoleon's 'Noble Guard', that would inflict the decisive blow for God in battle.
- 1856:** Charles Bissoli celebrated his First Mass at the Stimate – he had entered the Congregation as a Sub-Deacon.
- 1857:** The Mission at Avesa ended – as Frs. Marani, Rigoni and Lenotti left, they were accompanied by a military band, the ringing of Church bells – and fire crackers!
- 1870:** By this date, the temporal power of the Pope had been completely overthrown.
- 1875:** Fr. Nichola Negrelli, Librarian of Ferdinand of Augsburg, learned of Fr. Lenotti's death from Monsignor Gaspardis, and an article in the *Riposo Domenicale*. He wrote of his sorrow to the Stimate.

⁶ i.b.: footnote 15, p. 75.

⁷ i.b.: footnote 15, p. 75.

21

- 1811:** John Marani was ordained a Sub-Deacon in the Basilica of St. Anthony in Padua, by Bishop Scipione de Desendis.
- 1828:** Fr. Venturini celebrated his First Mass at the *Trinità*.
- 1833:** The Marchesini brothers took the bells from the Stimate for repairs on their cart.
- 1834:** Fr. Fedelini celebrated his First Mass at the Stimate this day – as did another young Priest, Fr. Louis Angeli.
- 1864:** Fr. Benciolini preached a Retreat to the “English Madames” at Rovereto.
- 1866:** The revolt in Palermo ended.
- 1869:** The Feast of St. Matthew – Bishop Riccabona in Trent ordained Louis Morando.

22

- 1834:** Another newly ordained Priest, Fr. Francis Girardelli, celebrated his First Mass at the Stimate on this day.
- 1836:** The work of the Abbé di Condillac was put on the Index this day. [Surprisingly, Fr. Bertoni had recommended another work of his to Mother Naudet in a Letter dated July 25, 1813].
- 1843:** Fr. Bragato was called back by the Empress, due to some difficulty she was experiencing.
- 1853:** Fr. Marani made a second appeal to have Fr. Bertoni’s body returned to the Stimate, after his previous petition of August 4th of this year was refused.
- 1854:** Pius IX made it known that he wanted to be informed personally about any new and every religious order seeking approval – at the Stimate, this was received as welcome and encouraging news.
- 1856:** Fr. Marani went to the Imperial Villa at Strà, so that Fr. Bragato could spend his annual vacation with his Confreres. The Novices went out to Sezano, where they spent six weeks of their Novitiate year.
- 1859:** Fr. Marani appealed to Bishop Riccabona, at this time Bishop of Verona, to declare null and void Fr. Bertoni’s contract with the Sisters of the Holy Family for the perpetual use of St. Teresa’s. As he said it was against Canon

Law to have a female religious community so close to a male community – the Bishop, however, did not act.

1869: Frs. Lenotti and Vincent Vignola left for a Mission in Bacolga di Calavine.

1887: The Capitular Commission appointed by the 9th General Chapter [February of 1880] to review the *Appendix to Part XII of the Original Constitutions*, that had been prepared by a Capitular Commission appointed by the 1st General Chapter [July 3, 1871] on today's date finished its work.

1894: Joseph Chesani and John B. Castellani were ordained Priests on this date – on the same day, Fr. John Rigoni celebrated his Golden Jubilee with the Students at Sezano.

23

1802: Ember Saturday⁸ – Michaelangelo Gramego received the last two Minor Orders in St. Michael's from Bishop Avogadro.

1803: Fr. Bertoni noted in his Spiritual Diary that simplicity is not enough to lead others to holiness – prudence is also required.

1820: Innocent Venturini received Tonsure and the first Minor Order of Porter from Bishop Liruti.

1823: Bishop Liruti wanted the Blessed Sacrament reserved at the Stimate – this, in addition to the government requirements for schools, necessitated special construction. Fr. Bertoni asked his architect, Fr. Brugnoli, to study St. Teresa's.

1828: Fr. Venturini, ordained 3 days earlier, celebrated Mass for the first time at the Stimate.

1833: The Marchesini brothers returned the bells to the Stimate on their cart – the Brothers at the Stimate assisted the Marchesini's in unloading their cart and in re-installing the bells.

1855: Sunday – at 3:00 p.m., 5 Priests [Frs. Marani, Benciolini, Brugnoli, Venturini and Lenotti] elected Fr. Marani Superior *Prepositus*, or General. After the election, the entire Community was assembled and told of the proceedings.

1859: Louis Salvi became ill.

⁸ i.b.: footnote 15, p. 75.

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- 1800:** Feast of Our Lady of Ransom – Fr. Gaspar Bertoni celebrated his First Mass at Caldiero, at Conti Cipolla. Joseph Scudellini, married to his Mother's sister, Rosa [Ravelli], gave the discourse.
- 1814:** Cajetan Brugnoli was ordained a Priest – he went from Vestition to the Priesthood in two years – receiving all orders from Bishop Liruti.
- 1833:** Work went on from midnight until 7:00 a.m. on the installation of the bells at the Stimate – Bishop Grasser came for Mass at 10:00 a.m. for their blessing. Following Mass, on this Feast of our Lady of Ransom.
- 1835:** Fr. Cajetan Benciolini – Uncle of Fr. Francis – signed his will.
- 1858:** Fr. Finazzi, Pastor of Holy Cross Parish in Padua, wrote to Fr. Marani to thank him for the fine work of Frs. Lenotti, Benciolini and Rigoni, who had preached a Mission in his parish the previous month.
- 1871:** Fr. Lenotti, Superior General, sent out a notice that the 3rd General Chapter would convene at the Stimate on October 4, 1871.
- 1886:** Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, celebrated his Golden Jubilee as a Priest⁹ – almost all the members of the Congregation were present for the occasion. He was assisted at the Solemn Mass by his brother, Monsignor Paul Vignola. Fr. Paul Zemari, Pastor of Caldiero, gave an outstanding speech. That evening at St. Teresa's, there was an *Accademia* in honor of the jubilarian, in which Fr. Vignola was praised as the 'heir of the spirit, prudence and authority' of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni.
- 1890:** On this date, the stormy 12th General Chapter convened. There was a heated discussion on the 'End' of the Congregation, its purpose and Apostolic Means – among the some, there was the feeling that that there was an over-stress of schools and education, and the neglect of other aspects of the Apostolic Mission. This Chapter also officially changed the name of the Congregation – acting on Monsignor Battandier's suggestion. He was a Consultor to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. From this time onward, the title ***Apostolic Missionaries*** would no longer be used, as it is the prerogative of the Holy See to confer this title. It would

⁹ For this occasion, a Fr. Ferdinand Colombari edited a book - entitled ***Reminiscences concerning the Fathers and Brothers of the Congregation of the Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops [1835-1883]*** - published by the Prem. Tipografia Vescovile P. Colombari. An English Translation of these colorful biographies of the Early Stigmatines may be found on the St. Gaspar's web-site, www.st-bertoni.com, under **History – Early Biographies**].

now be called '**The Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Stigmata of our Lord Jesus Christ.**' [Long years earlier, Fr. Marani had opted for the title: 'Order of the Sacred Stigmata.']

1891: Fr. Louis Morando convoked the 14th General Chapter, to elect a successor to Fr. Peter Vignola, recently deceased. The Chapter chose Fr. Pio Gurisatti for a ten year term. The Councilors elected were: Frs. Morando, Tabarelli, Marini and Zandonai. This Chapter decided that, once the General Chapter was announced, local Chapters should assemble, choose delegates for the General Chapter – those under 35 years of age should have Active but not Passive voice.

25

1803: Fr. Bertoni noted in his Spiritual Diary that on this day he experienced a strong desire to follow our Lord more closely in his poverty.

1890: Fr. Sembianti renewed his request to be released from the Congregation – which he had previously made in 1879 – so that he could follow his Foreign Missionary Vocation: permission was granted to him and to Fr. Dominic Vicentini. This latter later became Superior General of the Scalabrini Fathers – and Fr. Sembianti became Vicar General – and it is through Fr. Dominic that ***Tibagy è nostro!*** - the first foundation in Brazil.

26

1813: Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Naudet on Abandonment to God – he was glad that she had taken advice from Fr. John Fusari - the Oratorian Superior at St. Philip's.

1838: The Emperor Ferdinand was crowned at Milan, as King of Lombard-Veneto.

1840: Fr. Bertoni wrote to Fr. Bragato and told him that he preached daily – perhaps a Domestic Exhortation each day to the Community, in the Oratory of the Transfiguration near his room at the Stimate. He also spoke about the two Feasts of St. Francis at the Stimate – September 17th and October 4th.

1853: Fr. Marani purchased a lot in the local cemetery for the deceased of the Congregation.

1856: Fr. Bragato arrived at the Stimate, from Strà, for his annual vacation.

1875: The 7th General Chapter convened and elected Fr. Peter Vignola as Superior General for five years. The Councilors were: Frs. Sembianti, Rigoni [who

was also re-confirmed as Procurator General], Vincent Vignola and Benciolini. It was proposed that the Superior General prepare some members of the Congregation for the Foreign Missions as soon as possible – and that in the near future, the School at the Stimate be re-opened.

1876: Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, convoked the 8th General Chapter, which met to discuss the House of Bassano. When Fr. Vignola was questioned about the Foreign Missions and the men being prepared for them, he stated that he had already assigned some members to study languages and that he was in contact with the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith in Rome. It was decided that the Superior General for the future would not have to convoke General Chapters in order to accept new Houses for the Congregation.

1905: Fr. Luchi and Fr. Anthony Della Porta left Trent for their journey through Switzerland to LeHavre, France, where they set sail for North America.



Frs. Anthony Dalla Porta and Ludovico Luchi,
the first Stigmatines in America

27

1808: On this date, Fr. Bertoni wrote that he had experienced a strong desire to associate with the ignominies of Our Lord.

28

1783: Michaelangelo Gramego was born on this day about 10:00 a.m., the son of Sebastian.

- 1808:** Fr. Bertoni noted in his Spiritual Diary that spiritual directors should forbid their penitents from practicing exterior penances, if they did not already make some progress in practicing interior penance. He also expressed a desire for martyrdom.
- 1823:** Cardinal Della Genga was elected to succeed Pope Pius VII – he took the name of Leo XII.
- 1824:** Fr. Cartolari received a government diploma to teach.
- 1833:** The bells at the Stimate, which had been named for St. Michael, rang out on the Vigil of the Feast.
- 1834:** Louis Ferrari made a Consecration to Mary.
- 1838:** The newly crowned Emperor and Empress visited the Jesuit Novitiate in Verona – he had asked Fr. Bragato to have Fr. Bertoni pray for them.
- 1862:** Canon Orlandi sent a letter of recommendation and stated that Anthony Caucigh's father had given his son permission to enter the Stimate.
- 1878:** The government granted permission for school to re-open for outside students at the Stimate.
- 1882:** The numerous refugees from the flood left the Stimate this day, after a stay of some 11 days – the government had provided some refuge at San Bernardino's in Verona. The Congregation was highly praised for its work during this catastrophe.

29

- 1783:** Feast of St. Michael the Archangel – Michaelangelo Gramego was baptized by Fr. P. Pompeius.
- 1804:** Fr. Bertoni preached on imminent death – it can be close even for the young – comes in every age, place and manner. Death never 'tires' – a sinner's death is unprepared and always unexpected.
- 1809:** Fr. Bertoni noted in his Spiritual Diary that it is a good thing to suffer for Jesus Christ.
- 1824:** J. B. Bongiovani left the Stimate to become a Capuchin.
- 1868:** Fr. Marani, Superior General, wrote from Verona to Villazzano to the Novice Master, Fr. DaPrato. He said that he had noted during his recent visit in Villazzano a lack of respect among the students for one another. He said that, if a student does not have respect for a fellow student, then he

can neither be charitable, nor humble. In correcting students, Fr. Marani suggested that the first correction be slight – the second, or third failure, should be met with a little strong penance – if a fault is public, so should the penance be public.

30

- 1829:** Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Naudet to tell her that he was glad that the Countess Settala had entered Mother Naudet's Congregation. He asked her to have the 'holy Prince d'Hohenloe' pray for Fr. Marani, who had been suffering for about a year now.
- 1833:** Angelo Casella became a member of the Oratory at the Stimate – he was 29.
- 1855:** This was one of the more important dates in Stigmatine History. It was the 18th Sunday after Pentecost – at 8:00 a.m., Bishop Riccabona came to the Stimate for the special ceremony called the Canonical Erection of the Congregation. He was accompanied by his Vicar, Monsignor Marchi, and his Master of Ceremonies, a Fr. Valbusa. The *Veni Creator* was sung - the Bishop then celebrated Mass – at its conclusion, he incensed the exposed Blessed Sacrament, went to the Chair that was prepared in the Sanctuary. Fr. Marani then knelt before the Blessed sacrament, and recited his Religious Profession - then sat at a chair placed before the Altar for him, and received the Religious Profession of the 5 Priests and 3 Brothers.



Fr. John Mary Marani,
the First Superior General
[1855 – 1871]

- 1856:** Fr. Bragato was on vacation from his duties at the Imperial Court, and went out to Sezano to visit the Novices and remained there four days – he enjoyed the company of the students and often took part in their recreation.

1861: The transcript of marks that Anthony Caucigh brought with him to the Congregation bore this date – in Latin he had received ***cum laude***.¹⁰ [This is somewhat surprising, as later on, his Vestition would be delayed one month by Fr. Marani, Superior General, due to a rather poor showing in Latin – he was vested on January 6, 1865.

1865: Fr. Marani, Superior General, wrote to the Provincial of the Camillian Fathers, Fr. Louis Artini, and dated his letter: ‘The 10th Anniversary of our Canonical Erection’ – he asked for Fr Artini’s prayers that he might rule the congregation according to the ideals of Fr. Bertoni.

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¹⁰ With praise.