

Mundelein Seminary
1000 East Maple Avenue
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Corpus Domini 2016

Dear Stigmatine Laity,

With the wonderful celebrations of Easter, Pentecost and Trinity Sunday behind us now for another year, this day's Feast summarizes and perpetuates – represents - all our celebrations – making the Paschal Mystery of Christ sacramentally renewed every day. In so many ways, our lives, too, are meant to be Liturgical or “Eucharistic”:

- Life is an Offertory made to the Mercy of God [Rm12:1]
- Christ Consecrated Himself - and us - to come into this world [Jn 10:36; 17:19];
- Christ is a Holy Communion with His Father and Us [cf. Jn 14:10].

When the Stigmatine historians write about St. Gaspar Bertoni and his spirituality, they note his very strong Christological dimension – as well as his Trinitarian perspective. This then seems to be unified under his Eucharistic devotion. It would suffice to read St. Gaspar's own spiritual diary¹ to bear this out.

The late Fr. Cornelio Fabro, CSS [†May 4, 1995] clarified another dimension, that is the educative reality of years of suffering in his life that brought him closer to God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This seems to have been for him a lived fulfillment of the Merciful High Priest in service of His Father: ... *Son though he was, Jesus learned obedience from what he suffered*... [Heb 5:8].

St. Gaspar seemed to live this *dictum* quite well in his own decades-long experience with atrocious pain. Much of his priestly life [53 years] was offered in suffering. Confined for the most part “between his bed and arm chair”, he accepted his discomfort as the “School of God”.

When dark times come to us and our loved ones, we can find much comfort in the example of St. Gaspar and ask for his help in humble prayer. The late Stigmatine, Fr. Ignazio Bonetti [†March 10, 1998] wrote a very fine synopsis of the

¹ *Memoriale Privato di Don Gaspare Bertoni* [Spiritual Journal of St. Gaspar Bertoni].

Founder's spirituality², based perhaps on the idea of Cardinal Newman's *Grammar of Assent*. We offer this fundamental picture of our Founder's spirit for our approaching Solemnity of St. Gaspar, this June 12, 2016. The best devotion is "imitation."

God bless you all – let us continue to pray for each other.

Respectfully yours in St. Gaspar,

Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS
Acting Spiritual Director

Appendix I:

St. Gaspar Bertoni: Some Rudiments of His Spiritual Writings – edited by Rev. Ignazio Bonetti, CSS - 1993. Original title: *La Grammatica di Don Gaspare Bertoni*. English translation by Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS – 2005 [with latter revision in 2014].

Appendix II:

The Spiritual Journal of St. Gaspar Bertoni – with a commentary by Fr. Giuseppe Stofella, CSS – 1962. Original title: *Memoriale Privato di Don Gaspare Bertoni*. English translation by Rev. Giancarlo Mittempergher – 1992.

Appendix III:

The Spiritual Journal [*Memoriale Privato*] of St. Gaspar Bertoni: A Reflection on the 200th Anniversary of Its Inception – Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS – 2008.

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² *La Grammatica di Don Gaspare Bertoni* [St. Gaspar Bertoni: Some Rudiments of his Spiritual Writings].