

**C.PP.S.
HERITAGE I:
Historical Studies**

Edited by
Jerome Stack, C.PP.S.

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Foreword

Forty years ago, Pope Paul VI promulgated the Vatican Council document *Perfectae caritatis*, on the adaptation and renewal of religious life. The second article of that document noted:

The up-to-date renewal of the religious life comprises both a constant return to the sources of the whole of the Christian life and to the primitive inspiration of the institutes, and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our time.

. . . the spirit and aims of each founder should be faithfully accepted and retained, as indeed should each institute's sound traditions, for all of these constitute the patrimony of an institute.

In the ensuing decades we have seen much progress in this "return to the sources" and in a rediscovery of the patrimony of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. In our Congregation we now have a complete edition of the writings of St. Gaspar, many historical studies, as well as a renewed interest in the spirituality of the Precious Blood.

We have also become aware of our uniqueness as a society of apostolic life and have focused more and more on the so-called *three pillars* of the C.P.P.S.—mission, community, and spirituality. We have come to realize that we have a distinct place in the spectrum of religious life, with a special approach to our apostolates, common

life, and spirituality.

Our members engaged in the important ministry of formation seek to communicate our rich traditions and spirituality to our candidates, to hand on to them the patrimony of the Community. They have taken to heart these words from our *Normative Texts*:

...communitarian formation demands that the members be vitally and dynamically involved in the Society, absorbing its spirit, making its ideals their own. . . (Art. C31)

Many formators have expressed the desire for a compendium of documents that would serve as a kind of handbook for the study of the heritage of the Congregation, so that the candidates entrusted to their care might more easily absorb the spirit of the Congregation and make it their own. This book, the first of two volumes, is an attempt to provide such a compendium for formators, candidates, and indeed for all members of the C.PP.S.

In the discussions leading up to the creation of this work, the members of the C.PP.S. general curia, all of whom have had experience in the ministry of formation, thought that the course for formators held in 2003 presented a good opportunity to begin gathering resources for the work. Some of the articles contained in these two volumes were presentations at that course. Others are articles or presentations taken from other sources.

In this first volume, the first three articles deal with the general theme of formation. Fr. Barry Fischer, C.PP.S., our current moderator general, discusses the “context and challenges” of formation today, especially in the light of the “changing face” of the Congregation. The second article, a publication of the Union of Superiors General, describes the nature of the society of apostolic life and what distinguishes congregations like ours from vowed religious. Fr. Michele Colagiovanni, C.PP.S., offers an understanding of formation according

to the mind of our founder, St. Gaspar.

The rest of the articles can be classified broadly as historical. Don Romano Altobelli, C.PP.S., describes how in the early years of the C.PP.S our Congregation was not a religious congregation in the classic sense but rather was an association of secular priests who lived a common life. The history of the *Rule* of St. Gaspar, which shaped the Congregation for a hundred years, is outlined in the article by Don Evaldo Biasini, C.PP.S.

Continuing the discussion of the *Rule*, Don Emanuele Lupi, C.PP.S. recalls for us how the *Rule* approved in 1841 was interpreted and adapted in the light of the signs of the times in our history. Don Mario Brotini traces the development of the *Rule* as well as of our *Normative Texts* from canonical and historical perspectives.

The Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood, founded by Gaspar's mentor Albertini and under whose aegis our Congregation existed for a number of years, is the subject of the presentation of Fr. Francesco Bartoloni, C.PP.S. My article on the history of the general curia is an attempt to show how the general administration of the Congregation developed and raises some questions about directions for the future.

The Madonna of the Precious Blood, historically an important icon for the Congregation, is treated from a historical and artistic perspective by Don Beniamino Conti, C.PP.S. Finally, Fr. Robert Schreiter, C.PP.S., offers reflections on a contemporary understanding of the Madonna of the Precious Blood as woman of the new covenant.

The second volume will contain articles by C.PP.S. authors on the "three pillars" of the Congregation: community, mission, and spirituality. That volume is scheduled to be published in 2006.

I wish to offer a word of sincere gratitude to the authors who wrote these articles, for their love of the Congregation and for the work involved in preparing the

texts we have here. Several of the articles were translated from the Italian, and I thank our translators who are given credit at the end of each article.

Special thanks are due to Pauline Vokits who put this book into its present format and who scrutinized the text with great care and made many very helpful suggestions. Finally, I thank our moderator general, Fr. Barry Fischer, and my fellow general councilors Francesco Bartoloni, Robert Schreiter, and Luis Filipe Cardoso Fernandes, for their ideas, encouragement, and support in this project.

On behalf of the C.PP.S. general curia, I offer *C.PP.S. Heritage* to our candidates, to their formators, to our members and lay associates, and to all who wish to delve more deeply into the rich patrimony of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

Jerome Stack, C.PP.S.

Secretary General

28 October 2005

Fortieth anniversary of *Perfectae Caritatis*

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The Present Situation of the International C.PP.S. and Challenges for Formation

Barry Fischer, C.PP.S.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS: PUTTING FORMATION IN CONTEXT

As we begin this course I would like to give a sort of overview of the situation of the C.PP.S. in the world today. What I will attempt to do in this presentation will be to paint a picture of how I see the Congregation and indicate some of the main currents which run through the fabric of our society of apostolic life. As moderator general I am in a unique position to do so, as I have visited every unit of the Society and have personally spoken with nearly 100% of our membership and most of our students in formation. Such a description of the Congregation today is important since in order to speak about formation we need to put it into context. Formation is not done in a vacuum or in a hothouse, but is inserted in the heart of the realities in which we live and minister. Our formation programs must be geared to preparing our future members to live in these concrete realities in order to become active agents in their transformation. Thus I will also attempt to indicate some of the challenges which face us and issues to be dealt with in formation so as to prepare our future members for life in our Society.

OUR PRESENT STATUS: STATISTICS

Who are we? Where are we? According to the latest statistics, prepared by the general secretary and recently published on our website, as of June 2003 we were 532 members: 2 bishops, 468 priests, 43 brothers, and 19 incorporated students. To date, our mean age internationally is 58 years. And we are serving in 19 countries. There are approximately 200 candidates in the different stages of our formation programs, the largest groups being in Tanzania and India. These statistics show that our overall numbers have actually increased by about 21 members during the past year and a half.

If we were to study comparative charts of the different regions of the Society, it would be clear that: 1) we are growing older and smaller in Western Europe and in North America, while we experience growth in the newer areas as in Tanzania and India.

2) If these trends continue, the C.PP.S. will indeed have a “changing face” over the next decade or so as we experience a significant demographical shift in our membership. We will be increasingly “southern and eastern” with the younger faces of the C.PP.S. being in their majority, African and Asian. While English will continue to be the official language of the Congregation, it will not be the first language of any of the members from these younger areas. It is, however, the common language of communication of India and of Tanzania, where we are experiencing our greatest growth.

OUR IDENTITY

Newer Areas. These statistics and the gradual shift in our demographics pose unique challenges to both the newer as well as the aging units of the Congregation. In the newer areas, the main challenge is to acquire our C.PP.S. identity, rooted in our traditions, but at the same time being open to the challenges of inculturation.

Our C.PP.S. charism will take on new forms and expressions according to the cultures and historical/social situations in which the Congregation takes root. In these areas where vocations are more plentiful, the membership has the unique opportunity to discern new apostolates without the weight of needing to maintain the long-standing commitments of the past.

We need to develop local leadership and government structures that permit and invite the participation of the members. And we need to encourage and assure the participation of the newer sectors in our international gatherings, so that they become aware that they are part of a larger picture and a broader C.PP.S. family.

Older Areas. The challenge in the older and often aging units of the Society is how to care for our membership and discern what ministries to keep and how best to confirm our presence in those places which best respond to our charism, while at the same time creating spaces for our younger members so as to be able to respond to new challenges and to the cry of the blood as it is being heard today. This is quite a challenge to our membership and to our present leadership. However, if we are to survive as a vibrant presence in the Church we must remain open to the signs of the times. As we relinquish some traditional commitments and discern opening new ones, it affords our communities a special opportunity to reflect on what our identity is and what our specific contribution to the Church and to society can be.

We who are from North America and Western Europe will continue to face diminishing numbers and the need to relinquish more and more places of ministry as we adapt to our changing situation. A spirituality of John the Baptist would be helpful at this time: namely, the ability to let go when need be and to discover our place in a changing situation. It will require *flexibility* as we adapt and as we learn to work together in multicultural groups and continue to encourage growth in our newer areas.

At the General Assembly of 2001, we were still predominantly Western European and North Americans representing our membership, even though during the past decades we have grown in a sense of our internationality and cultural sensitivity. However, by the time of our next general assembly more of our major superiors will be from our indigenous vocations, and the configuration of our elected delegates will have a much less Anglo-Saxon configuration. And this particular gathering of formators now reflects this *changing face of the C.PP.S.* as the local membership have now assumed the responsibility of formation in these newer and younger units of the Congregation. This course is a real celebration of our cultural diversity!

REGIONAL MEETINGS AND EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2004)

I see the present moment as a marvelous opportunity to *focus on our identity and to restructure ourselves* (personnel and resources) so that we might better serve the Church from the strength of our charism. For this reason, and at the request of our Major Superiors gathered in Niagara Falls in September of 2002, regional meetings of our Congregation are being planned for the next year and a half. During these meetings the membership will explore together the challenges faced in each region and how best to respond to those challenges in a collaborative mode, in light of the spirituality of the Precious Blood in a truly missionary spirit. These regional meetings (a first in the history of the C.PP.S.) will culminate in an extraordinary general assembly to be held here in Rome in September of next year (2004). In view of our changing demographics we may well have to re-examine our present structures and the way we organize our life and mission so that those structures truly serve to further the mission entrusted to us by the Church. And we hope to give a courageous response to

the challenge posed to us by the Holy Father when he greeted the participants of our Seventeenth General Assembly:

[This] pope summons the sons of Saint Gaspar to be no less bold in their decisions and actions—to go where others cannot or will not go and to undertake missions which seem to hold little hope of success. (Castelgandolfo, September 14, 2001)

In fact, our Congregation has been experiencing a gradual but significant renewal over the past thirty years thanks in great part to the development of a new and dynamic understanding of our spirituality and the rediscovering of our missionary charism. The Precious Blood of Christ is calling us to an exciting adventure. Personally, I would prefer to call the present moment we are living as one of refounding rather than restructuring, reconfiguration, or simply renewal. We are being called to rediscover for our world today the missionary charism of St. Gaspar and to incarnate our spirituality of the Blood of Christ in the different cultural contexts in which we serve. As we discern together the cry of the blood and we discover therein the call of the Precious Blood we are being called to new and exciting realities and to new commitments always in *creative fidelity* to our founder and the charism entrusted to us.

We should not consider this discussion on restructuring simply as a way to solve the problem of our diminishing numbers. The dialogue on restructuring should be framed in a spirit of hope and creativity as we discern new ways of presence and action which respond to present-day sensitivities and needs, which arise from our renewed spirituality of the Blood, our rediscovered sense of being missionaries, the option for the poor, and the presence of our lay Companions and associates who share our spirituality and mission. It is for this reason that I have invited representatives of our seminarians

from the different regions as well as for the very first time, lay associates/Companions to participate with us in our reflections both on the regional levels as well as in the extraordinary general assembly.

Our challenge is to seize the moment as an *opportunity* for growth and rebirth. Above all, we need to be open to the movement of the Spirit among us, realizing that charism is a gift of God for the Church. It is our responsibility to unleash that charism on our world and on society today!

PLANTING OUR ROOTS IN NEW LANDS

We will be hearing during this course from our formators who are working in the newest areas of the Congregation where we are in the first attempts to plant our roots and to inculturate our charism. Since 1999 the Iberian Province has founded a mission *ad experimentum* in West Africa in Guinea Bissau. Also the Kansas City Province, through its two Vietnamese members, are making efforts to establish our presence in Vietnam. While we have no official mission in Mexico, we do have two Mexican seminarians studying with us in the Chilean Vicariate.

The future of these newest ventures depends on many factors, but one thing is becoming clearer: that new ventures in the future will very likely be “joint commitments,” that is, made of members from various provinces, vicariates and missions. The formation of international communities seems to be part of our future, as it already exists in the Brazilian Vicariate where the C.PP.S. presence consists of eight members, hailing from six countries.

PARTICULAR TRENDS IN C.PP.S. TODAY

Collaboration is one of the signs of the times in which we live. Collaboration must be lived on different

levels: among provinces, vicariates and missions, as well as with other religious women and men, and with the laity who wish to share our spirituality and many times our mission. To live in collaboration is a call to live a *spirituality of communion and solidarity as Blood sisters and brothers*.

Already a certain “restructuring” has been taking place, especially on the level of formation in some of our regions: in the North American provinces on the level of Special Formation and in Advanced Formation. Our Latin American confreres make a year of Special Formation together in Lima, Peru. The younger members who grow up thinking across borders, will probably find restructuring more of a natural thing as they are not usually locked into a strictly “provincial” mentality. This coming September, our seminarians from the Iberian, Teutonic and Italian Provinces and our Polish Vicariate will meet for sharing and fellowship in Schellenberg, Liechtenstein. The theme they will treat is: what are the cries of the blood in Europe today? And how can we respond to those cries as Missionaries of the Precious Blood? These different experiences on the level of formation are opening up new and creative ways of being in relationship and adapting our structures to fit our current needs. It is an expression of our Gospel interdependence and sharing of human and material resources congregationally.

Our Internationality. Another sign of the times is that of a growing awareness of our internationality, that is, of belonging to an international congregation. This awareness has been developing over the past three decades and accelerated in recent years. Important in forming this new consciousness have been the different workshops held over the past thirty years: for formation ministers, spirituality workshops and symposiums, gatherings of our recently incorporated members, and our meetings of Major Superiors held now on different continents and cultural settings are among the principal

factors in this growth of consciousness. Added to this, of course, is the immensely improved means of communication, first by telephone and fax and now with e-mail and Internet. And we must mention our C.PP.S. communications widely shared across the borders of our regions, and, in recent years the generalate publication, *The Cup of the New Covenant*, published in five languages and received by every member of the Community. Our membership is beginning to think internationally. Frontiers are being crossed, the walls of provincial lines are coming down, and we are more conscious of being an *international family*.

This development while positive, is not without its challenges. It calls all of us to stretch our mentalities, to broaden our horizons, to think beyond territorial boundaries, and to be open to communication and collaboration, as we experience our “connectedness” in the bond of charity.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES FOR FORMATION?

Conversion to Jesus Christ and Gospel Values

Given the particular situation of vocations in many parts of the world today, in which our candidates come from ever changing and varied educational and religious backgrounds, it is important that special care be given during the years of formation to knowing the person of Jesus Christ and having a personal experience of him. Special time for prayer and reflecting on the Scriptures together must be central to any formation program. Experience shows that sometimes we receive candidates into our programs who have a very minimal knowledge of Christ and the Gospels and little or no previous experience of Church.

And I have found that in formation communities, as well as in our Community at large, many of the problems we face in community could be solved if we were only

rooted more deeply in Christ and in the Gospel we preach. Thus one must always strive for a continual conversion in our personal lives and to build our formation communities first of all, upon Christ, the only true rock and foundation of our lives.

Collaboration

Experience has shown that collaboration is not always an easy task. Even among ourselves we need to learn to open up to each other in trust, to respect our different cultures, and to work together. In a collaborative effort, each party must be willing to “die a little” in order to “give birth” to a new reality. But the difficulties should not discourage us. We need to see them as an opportunity to live our charism and to love one another in the bond of charity, living the reconciliation which we preach to others. In doing so, we will offer a positive model for our membership and candidates of how to live in covenant relationship in the Blood of Christ. This involves helping our candidates to learn to work together, “teamwork,” and to discover the richness of working in collaborative efforts with religious women and to appreciate the lay vocation. The formator should be sensitive to detecting attitudes of “clericalism” in himself and in the candidates and work to overcome them. Only thus can we truly assume the mission of the Church in a collaborative model in which the uniqueness of each vocation is recognized and appreciated.

Cultural Diversity

The more fluid communication on the world-wide level of the C.P.P.S. has also made us aware of our cultural diversity. Our diversity is certainly an enrichment. The Blood of the Covenant calls us to form communion with one another in our diversity, while respecting our differences. To live in an international, multicultural congregation is, on the one hand, a marvelous opportunity to witness to God's plan for all humanity, but it also

is a constant call to conversion. We need to develop our understanding of culture and the dynamics involved in it. We need to recognize our prejudices and sometimes masked racisms, a sense of cultural superiority and excessive nationalism, which can cause hurts and can build walls between us. In order to grow in cultural sensitivity and appreciation, it is recommended that the candidates have an experience of a culture other than their own before definitive incorporation.

Language Skills

As a key to understanding another's culture, *language is essential*. Echoing a concern of my predecessor, Fr. Anton Loipfinger, I also want to stress the importance that our candidates learn at least one other language spoken in our Congregation. This will become increasingly important as we are more and more interconnected and work in collaboration with one another.

Community Life

People today are searching for community. They look for it as a place of hospitality and dialogue. And it becomes a very important aspect of our mission as we witness to communion and interdependence as an antidote to the individualism and loneliness of today's society. The spirituality of the Blood of Christ summons us to be covenant communities, united in brotherly love, anchored in God, and living simple lifestyles.

How can we make our communities more simple, closer to the people, more in solidarity with the poor? How can we create communities which are "safe spaces" in which the candidates can learn to share their dreams and their sufferings and where they can learn the value of respect for the sacred ground which is the life of the other? How can we be communities in which forgiveness is experienced and wounds are healed? We need to open our doors to the world, to mission, to the laity, to the great needs of today's society, with creativity and courage.

Models of Leadership

We also need to promote and to model new forms of leadership, based not so much on a hierarchical model but one in which dialogue and participation are essential. Our formation communities should be communities in which our candidates learn the value of dialogue and where they learn to grow in respect and trust and learn to assume responsibility for their decisions.

Our C.PP.S. Identity

During these years we have been engaged as a Congregation in *an ongoing deepening of our C.PP.S. identity*. We are beginning to speak a “common language,” while at the same time recognizing the need to incarnate our charism in the diversity of cultures. A rather new development during these years has been a better understanding of our canonical identity as a society of apostolic life. An ongoing task is to explore forms of prayer and community life which are an expression of our reality as communities in and for mission.

We are in the process of rediscovering the missionary dimension of all of our ministries and need to deepen our reflection on central themes such as “the ministry of the Word,” and “mission house.” From generalized notions of Precious Blood spirituality we now reflect upon it within the specific ministries in which we are involved (parish ministry, education, hospital chaplaincies, work with the poor and marginalized, etc.) in order to make the connections between the theory and the practical implications for our ministry. We need to discern on the local level how we can contribute from the richness of our charism to the pastoral plan of the dioceses in which we serve.

For the greatest challenge we face in the area of our “identity” is that of *making the connections* between our Precious Blood spirituality and our everyday lives and ministries. This is an ongoing challenge and I believe, the greatest one we face. That our charism is needed in

today's world, I have no doubt. That we are called to share it with the Church, is a fact by the very nature of charism, which is entrusted to us by the Spirit, not just for ourselves, but for the enrichment of all. We must not hoard it. But before we can share it, we have to appropriate it ourselves. We have to breathe it until it becomes, as it was for St. Gaspar, the driving force of our lives.

How to incarnate it into our lives? Community life, our personal and Community prayer, and reflections are major supports for discovering the cry of the blood today and in discerning our response to that cry.

I have attempted to point out some of the challenges we as a Congregation need to face at the beginning of this new millennium. What particular challenges does this general context present to us in the realm of the formation of our candidates as well as in the ongoing formation of our membership? I have named but a few. It is our hope that during the next weeks of reflection you will contribute to this list and together we can search for ways to respond to the many challenges in creative ways.

The above presentation was given at the workshop for C.P.P.S. formators, July 2003.

Societies of Apostolic Life

Report from the Union of Superiors General

INTRODUCTION

Superiors general and representatives from societies of apostolic life (SALs) met in Ariccia from November 23 to 25, 1997, for the purpose of creating as much of a common understanding as possible among the various forms of SALs, in order that we might reach a greater mutual comprehension and more effective communication.

To that end, three papers were presented: on the history of SALs by Bishop Jean Bonfils, S.M.A.; on the canonical aspects of SALs, by Fr. Hubert Socha, S.A.C.; and on spirituality within the SALs, by Fr. Robert Maloney, C.M. A panel presented testimony to the experience of living in different kinds of SALs, and small group discussions (in language groups) were held with results reported in the plenary sessions. Our focus was on male SALs of pontifical right; we were enriched, however, with insights from Anne Marguerite Fromaget, FdC, on female SALs.

This report is not intended to be an exhaustive account of the rich interaction of these days together in Ariccia. Rather, it tries to indicate those areas in which we did come to a common understanding, as well as those areas where we came to see our differences more clearly. As a report, it is directed to the superiors

general of SALs and their councils, as a means to pursue further areas of common understanding and interest among ourselves. It does not attempt to offer a comprehensive definition or classification of SALs for others who may have an interest in SALs, nor does it solve conundrums surrounding them or resolve tensions between differing conceptions of issues and problems. It represents rather a kind of progress report on what we have been able to achieve in three days of prayer, listening, and discussion. It also suggests where we might want to go in the future.

This report is in four parts. The *first part* looks at ways of defining SALs, and some of the issues that have been clarified, and other issues that will need further reflection. Accounting for the different types of societies grouped under the heading of SALs, especially missionary societies directed *ad gentes* and societies engaged principally in other apostolic endeavors, has been a problem since the category of SAL was first put forward. We propose some fresh ways of looking at the classifications, and point to a clarification of some aspects of the questions surrounding them.

The *second part* takes up the question of designations of SALs in the 1983 Code of Canon Law, and SALs' relationship to institutes of consecrated life and to the diocesan structure of the Church. Within that discussion it looks at the definition of a SAL proposed in Canon Law, and to the discussion of "consecration" that has been taking place in recent years.

A *third part* takes the Code of Canon Law's definition of SALs' having a common apostolic aim or goal (*finem apostolicum*), the shape of its life in community, and the pursuit of perfection of charity (i.e., what spirituality sustains the SAL in its apostolic work and community life), and identifies issues that need further exploration.

The *final part* makes some suggestions about where future discussions of SALs might go. There was a strong

consensus that this meeting had been a very fruitful one, and we gather here some of the suggestions made that might be pursued in future such meetings.

DEFINING SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE

As the paper of Msgr. Bonfils pointed out to us clearly, there have been a variety of attempts to name and classify movements since the sixteenth century of societies dedicated to specific apostolic aims. These apostolic aims or impulses were such that all else—their organization and way of life—were subordinated to them. These societies were given recognition for the first time in the 1917 Code of Canon Law as a category under “religious,” albeit as “not properly speaking religious” (because they took no vows). In the subsequent decades after 1917, attempts were made to define these societies further, always as a (albeit incomplete or imperfect) form of the vowed religious life. This led to a petition in 1975 of fifteen societies, whose apostolic aim was mission *ad gentes*, to petition to be designated as lay associations under the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, so as to avoid being considered vowed religious.

These efforts at classification culminated in the 1983 Code of Canon Law’s defining us as “societies of apostolic life,” characterized by (1) a common apostolic goal, (2) some form of common life, and (3) the pursuit of perfection in charity, both according to the constitutions of the respective society. Subsequent Church pronouncements and documents, through the apostolic constitution *Vita Consecrata* in 1996, have added alternatively light and confusion to what an SAL is.

What was clear both from history and from our discussions is that SALs are more properly defined in terms of their apostolic goal, and how they order their life together and the spirituality to sustain both their work and that life, rather than their degree of approximation to vowed religious life. There are clear analogies to

religious life which have long been recognized. But to take religious life as the criterion does not shed adequate light on the varieties of SALs, nor does it provide a helpful classification.

We suggest that SALs are best understood by looking at the narratives of their own history, rather than seeking some outside organizing principle. That is, only by hearing the story of an SAL can we come to understand how apostolic goal, life in common, and spirituality have come together to create the present reality. Beginning by trying to fit a SAL into categories often created by a concern of how to relate them to institutes of consecrated life will only skew their reality. We suggest that, when two SALs want better to understand each other, they ask questions that will bring out the story of those SALs: when were you founded? How did your apostolic aim come to be defined in light of the circumstances in which it arose? Who founded you? Were there other persons/movements or religious orders who influenced those who founded you? Have there been significant challenges or crises that changed the direction or focus of your society?

These and similar questions give a better appreciation of any SAL than seeing how well it might fit in a variety of classificatory schemes. Each of the stories we heard was quite different, and even though they bore sometimes shared genealogies and exhibited commonalities, each story had to be told in its own right for all the characteristics to come to light. We recommend, therefore, such a narrative approach be used to get to know any SAL. Thus, nearly all SALs descend in some way from movements beginning in the sixteenth century, with St. Philip Neri's Oratory in Italy, and similar movements in France. In France, two strands can be discerned: those who focused on specific apostolic needs in France (Bérulle's Oratorians, the Sulpicians, Eudists, Vincentians), and the Seminary of the Foreign Missions. Their progeny have gone in a wide variety of directions.

There are a number of insights that we gained from looking at these histories. We share some of them here (they are not given in any order):

- Among those societies that focused upon apostolic needs in their home countries (such as the formation of priests or re-evangelization of local churches), did their apostolic aims change when they moved beyond their original national boundaries?
- It is helpful to distinguish between those missionary societies *ad gentes* between those that were formed along national lines, and those that were consciously international in their recruiting of membership from the very beginning. Likewise, distinguishing between those who organized their life in common along national lines and those who mixed national groups in their apostolic sites bring to light different issues and characteristics.
- It is also helpful to ask how SALs have related to the diocesan structure of the Church. Inevitably there have been tensions. Did the SALs do the same work as the diocesan priests, or did they restrict themselves to a special work in the diocese not otherwise undertaken by the diocesan clergy? How did this affect SALs' self-understanding in each case?
- For missionary societies inaugurated during the colonial experience of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, how did that experience shape their apostolic goal, as well as their life together and their spirituality? What does that mean in a postimperial, postcolonial period? How do they compare with missionary societies formed after the colonial experience?

These are examples of questions which, to our minds, give more insight into SALs than definitional schemes.

CANONICAL DESIGNATIONS

The designation of SALs as having a distinctive apostolic goal, a life in common as defined by its constitutions, and a pursuit of the perfection of charity also according to those constitutions was a framework in which the SALs present could all find themselves. Nearly all gave precedence to the apostolic goal as shaping the other two aspects, although at least two SALs present noted that their community life was itself such a powerful witness of the meaning of their apostolate that it could not be so subordinated. Giving priority to the apostolate again overcame the problems found in many constitutions that were revised after the promulgation of the 1917 code, which made the “sanctification of its members” as the goal of these societies. The 1983 code helped correct those distortions.

Distinctions are frequently made between the missionary societies *ad gentes* who are under the jurisdiction of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, those SALs falling under canon 731 §1 (who do not commit themselves by vows or any other type of bond to the practice of the evangelical counsels), and those who fall under canon 731 §2 (those who make a commitment to—but do not profess—the evangelical counsels in some private manner). These distinctions did not prove to be a divisive or ultimately troubling issue in our discussions. Upon examination, even the missionary societies could find themselves in this classification in the canon 731.1 or 731.2 if they needed to do so. Nor was the matter of whether association with an SAL happened through oath, promise, vow, or through no agency at all—as well as the meaning or extent of such bonds—a matter of division. There was a widespread sense that this all focused on SALs in an inadequate way, since it seemed to privilege a religious-life understanding of SALs, rather than maintaining focus on the apostolate. There was a general consensus that concentrating on

these matters did not foster greater self- or mutual-understanding.

A similar matter was the variety of relationships to the local church. Some of the SALs have the possibility of incardinating into a diocese while being aggregated to a SAL; in some instances, all the members of a SAL are all incardinated. Again, this was not a divisive issue for SALs relating to one another, because it focuses on issues of canonical relationship rather than focus on apostolate, and how that in turn gives shape to life in common and spirituality.

“Consecration” is a concept that has been much discussed since the promulgation of the 1983 Code of Canon Law. It received careful treatment in Fr. Socha’s paper and extensive discussion during the meeting. The upshot of the discussion was that there was a general reluctance to embark further on speaking of consecration as a helpful way of talking about SALs. Some SALs make use of the term, usually based on a long history of using this term prior to the recent general discussions. All of us have language whereby we express the total gift of self and complete commitment to the apostolate. If consecration refers to this kind of commitment, it presents no problem. But the way the term is explored in some of the contemporary literature seemed for many of us to be another way to invite unfavorable comparisons between SALs and institutes of consecrated life. It seemed also to conflate or create hierarchies among different forms of consecration, such as baptism, consecration in a religious institute, and ordained priesthood. There was a general feeling that pursuing the language of consecration, itself ambiguous in current theological literature, again deflects from a proper focus on the apostolic goal as the organizing principle of an SAL.

Consequently, a clear focus on the priority of the apostolate proved to be a better way for understanding SALs. Dwelling on canonical and other ecclesiastical distinctions did not prove as useful.

APOSTOLIC GOAL, LIFE IN COMMON, AND SPIRITUALITY

The second day of our discussions allowed us to open up, but not fully explore, a number of issues surrounding the priority of the apostolic goal, the meaning of life in common, and dimensions of spirituality in an SAL. We note some of them here:

Apostolic Goal

- An issue especially for the SAL societies *ad gentes* was the meaning of their apostolic goal in light of what appear to be profound changes which mission itself is now undergoing (in terms of the agents of mission, the appropriate forms of evangelization, and what constitutes the field of mission). What do these changes mean for SAL societies *ad gentes* (and all SALs, for that matter) as to their apostolic goal?
- Availability and flexibility are watchwords for many SALs in their apostolic goals. But by what criteria is a SAL available and flexible? Are decisions to take on new projects purely pragmatic, or can other theological and historical reasons be given that in turn contribute to the identity of the SAL? In this same light, what might freedom or liberty mean? What does the proper unfolding of an apostolic project look like and how is it judged?

Life in Common

- SALs have developed a wide variety of understandings of life in common, as it pertains to and supports their apostolic goal. SALs that historically have had little emphasis on a form of common life (as was often the case of a missionary apostolate where members were widely dispersed) now find their newer members seeking more communal forms of living. This prompts reflection on how the apostolate has been interpreted and how it may have to be

revisited. More importantly, it raises important questions about what forms of life in common best support our apostolates today.

Spirituality

- Finding spiritualities that will sustain SALs in their apostolates today was a matter of intense interest, given the wider interest in spirituality in so many parts of the world today. Important in this was understanding the relationship of spirituality to apostolic mission. To help develop this, a reprise of the five common traits in a spirituality for SALs, proposed by Fr. Maloney in his paper for the meeting, is helpful:
 1. The holiness of members is intrinsically bound up with their apostolic mission.
 2. Growth in holiness flows from the bonds of charity forged in community.
 3. Prayer in SALs flows from and leads to action.
 4. One of the characteristics of SAL spirituality is liberty.
 5. SAL spirituality is deeply incarnational, rooted in the enfleshed humanity of Jesus.
- It was noted in the papers prepared for the meeting that the spirituality of SALs finds its special inspiration in the relation between Jesus and his disciples in the mission to announce the Reign of God. Institutes of consecrated life, on the other hand, sometimes focus their spirituality in their common life, mirroring the relation of Christ and his Church. These two approaches are not opposed to one another, but they do represent different emphases. Looking to Jesus and his disciples as a model for spirituality and action has a long history in SALs, and needs to continue to be developed.
- The link between the spirituality proper to a SAL

and its community life is a topic meriting further reflection.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

There was a strong consensus that this meeting had been very successful in bringing about a greater common understanding among SALs. This understanding could in turn serve as the platform for further discussion, deepened understanding, and greater collaboration among SALs. Among the suggestions made for the future:

- Continue to hold meetings such as these at regular intervals, perhaps every two years. They should not replace or conflict with other meetings that groups of SALs may have also at regular intervals (e.g., meetings of missionary societies and institutes).
- Seek out a time for the meeting of SAL superiors general before or after one of the semiannual meetings of the Union of Superiors General.
- Set up a small commission of theologians and canonists to study further the documents prepared for this meeting by Msgr. Bonfils and Fr. Socha. This commission could then prepare topics for further discussion by the Superiors General of the SALs. They contain much that we did not have time to study and discuss.
- Consider meetings on specific themes, such as: the future of mission and its implications for SALs, forms of community life, spirituality in and for SALs.
- Examine ways of developing associations of SALs with priests, religious, and lay persons in the carrying out of their apostolate.
- Explore the gift of the SAL charisms to the local church and to the whole Church.

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The Formation of the Missionary According to the *Rule of Our Founder*

Michele Colagiovanni, C.P.P.S.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

The term “education” comes from the Latin *educare*—to lead, to accompany, to guide. It suggests the image of an adult leading a child by the hand. Of course, an old person can also be led. The term is applied to leading anyone who is not yet (or no longer) aware of, or not yet (or no longer) able to fulfill those duties which designate one as self-sufficient. The process of guiding ends (or no longer has any meaning) at that moment in which the one who is led acquires or re-acquires his own physical or psychological sufficiency.

Two persons, self-sufficient in the full sense of the term, can also continue to be led or begin such a mutual relationship. In this case it is not a matter of one leading and the other following, but rather of both individuals mutually leading each other. Without exaggeration let us draw a comparison with two engaged lovers who, in an active-passive relationship, walk hand in hand toward their future. As we shall see, this favorable atmosphere must be kept in mind for a correct understanding of the relationship between educator and educated.

This concept of “educating” can also be expressed by the term “formation,” derived from the philosophical concept of “form.” The term is applied to matter which does not yet have form, but can have it, having it in potency. There comes to mind the image of the artist who with slow and methodical work gives completed form to rough matter.^a

In this context the child who comes into the world can be considered as matter unformed but gifted with great potentiality, upon which education with its many and forever changing operations leaves its mark. The result, of course, depends upon the quality and quantity of the interventions upon that matter.

The “educator” therefore, is not just a person but rather a context. The “educated” also, in the case of man, is not merely a passive subject. He, in fact, soon acquires the ability to select and organize to a certain degree the perceptions received. Indeed, with man there is no question of coercive formation. A man trained to do certain things mechanically cannot be considered formed or educated.

As the title of this paper suggests, I shall treat formation as it is conceived in the *Rule* of St. Gaspar. These regulations, composed in the early 1800s, may seem like some prehistoric reality when compared with the modern mentality. But a closer examination can help us recover certain transcendental values we find therein.

I will not enter into the vast and complex problems which formation today evokes, especially when there is the attempt to form men—today—according to a largely preconceived notion. Such, as a matter of fact, is the fundamental intention of every *Rule*.

In St. Gaspar’s time the fact that the educator had

^aAn extreme case in this sense exists in the well-known cases of children abandoned in the forest and living with animals, who brought about a change of lifestyle in them.

in mind a precise stereotype to which he wished to mold his subject presented no problem. This was not due to a lack of regard for individual liberty, but rather to the lofty concept of the values inherent in the stereotype itself, which gave rise to an irrefutable conviction of the righteousness of the actions which accomplished this end. This was even truer in that the formation process was directed, not toward persons selected at random, but rather toward persons who, presuming to have a call from God, requested to be part of the Society, that is, persons who freely chose to conform to that stereotype which the Society proposed.

There were two aspects to formation: the one, truly and properly formative, i.e., guiding the educated to a satisfactory similarity to the model; and the other, a selective aspect, i.e., rejecting those individuals who, because of lack of will or for any other motive, did not wish to conform to the model. The motive in both cases was to render a service to the one being formed, directing him in the plan of Providence. The legislator was fully convinced that a man attains his purpose in life only if he responds to his God-given vocation: everyone being a microcosm created by God and at the same time part of that plan which God reveals to the whole of humanity.

METHOD OF THIS ARTICLE

In this article I will maintain a format which hinges upon the following classical questions: Who? Where? How? When? Why? The object of these questions, of course, will be the thinking of St. Gaspar in reference to formation.

First we will ask ourselves: Who, according to St. Gaspar, is to form? Secondly, where, according to St. Gaspar, is formation to lead? Next: how, according to St. Gaspar, is formation to lead toward the desired end? Next we will answer the question: How long, according

to the founder, is the formative process to continue? And lastly: Why, according to the saint, is formation necessary?

In this series of questions the *what* is missing, but this is answered partly in the questions of who is to form and how long the formative process will continue. By way of conclusion, I shall briefly sum up what has been said, rather than pretend to enumerate the transcendental elements proposed.

I believe this plan, giving the various ramifications of the problem, will facilitate calling to mind certain key concepts which can then be more deeply considered in personal reflection and in the formal discussions. As I have said, the fundamental text of this work will be the *Rule*, and especially Title V from Articles 43 to 52, with the corresponding *Praxis*. This represents ten pages of the 1923 Carthage edition, which have been well “plundered” by the speakers who have preceded me. My paper will not be much longer than the ten pages of the source material.

Who is to Form?

The answer concerns the two subjects of formation: a) the formator and b) the formed.

The first formator, according to our saint, is God who “has gathered us in his holy calling.”¹ This idea is certainly in line with the great biblical tradition. Abraham, in answer to the divine call, leaves his homeland and sets out with complete confidence in God. The Chosen People, called by God, leave Egypt to be led to the Promised Land. The apostles are called by Christ, and in utter abandon follow him.

Fundamental to this concept, of course, is faith. Only in the context of faith can fortuitous events become a “system of signs” through which God speaks to man.

Likewise does membership in the Society of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, according to the mind of St. Gaspar, flow from a call by God. Even more

fundamental, the very founding of the Society is in answer to the call of God. The content of this latter call is in the *Rule*. It is the *Rule* which forms, which leads us little by little. It can be said that in the life of the Missionary, nothing is left to whim, nothing to chance. The *Rule* constitutes a moral person that is over and above all the members and shows them the path they are to follow.

Everything in the life of the Missionary is a summons on the part of

. . .the most Holy God, who calls us to the mystical mountain, and as Moses heard the commands of God from the burning bush and then went on to fulfill them exactly, so also should we, on our way to perfection, willingly listen to the voice of the most kind of Fathers that we might communicate to others what we have learned. The most sublime vocation to the sacred ministry and the responsibility we have of our sacred obligations, of the talents given us by our common Father, and finally the heavenly treasures placed in our hands. . .²

The relationship between the member and the *Rule* is mediated by physical persons. First among these is the moderator general. It is he who receives the candidate into the Society³ and who dismisses him if he should prove unfit. If the moderator general himself cannot fulfill this he does so through a delegate.

The figure of the moderator general is then extended and made real in every community in the person of the president: a kind of person above the others, an incarnation of the *Rule*.

The superior who had the task of forming the young was, in the mind of St. Gaspar, a prophet; one, that is, who spoke in the name of God. As a matter of fact, he writes to the young regarding this point:

As formerly the prophets announced future events, so those whom God has appointed to guide you in your vocation, to build upon that mystical foundation of the Apostles with the support of that mystical rock which is Christ, will announce to you with love and zeal how you must learn that which pertains to the sacred ministry of God; they will inform you of the dangers that await you; they will tell you that which Jesus himself has announced to us: 'You will be hated by all on account of me'; and at the same time they will spur you on to fight valiantly; and, in the name of Jesus himself, they will acquaint you with what is written in the Sacred Books.⁴

After all, that is what is contained in the *Rule*, which "gives no more than a summary, so to speak, of that which" we should preach "to others,"⁵ and is therefore a true and proper guide to heaven.⁶

Yet those responsible for formation were, in the mind of St. Gaspar, no more than the foundation structure of a co-responsibility which extended to all the members of the Society. This is clear in the solemn and impersonal admonition given in Article 43:

In considering whether to admit those who wish to be numbered among us, serious examination must be made of those qualities of soul and body with which they are endowed, especially virtue and learning; for the future of the whole Society proceeds from the choosing of its members.

Having said this about the formator, let us now turn our attention to the one receiving formation. To whom was the formation mechanism of the *Rule* directed?

To those who, called by God, "wish to be numbered among us."⁷ But since the call of God is not ordinarily manifested like a bolt from heaven, it was necessary to

ascertain the genuineness of that vocation.

The manner of this examination hinged upon the ascertaining of certain requisites; some of these could be verified upon entrance, and others during the course of the preparation for the missionary life. When, in fact, God “chooses someone who is to serve him in the work of his glory, he prepares the way and gives him gifts of nature and grace which are necessary to accomplish the end.”⁸

Rejected, therefore, were those who were involved in any kind of canonical impediment, or who were sickly or aged, lest the work at hand be hindered rather than helped by such.⁹

From the beginning St. Gaspar thought of increasing the numbers of the Society by enlisting diocesan priests (excluding those who came from other institutes).¹⁰ Later he decided to open houses of study in which young men with a vocation might be prepared for the priesthood. From that time on both of these methods of recruitment existed together.

The priest candidates were admitted directly to the probandate under the direction of the president of that house. The students entered the house of formation where they remained under the direction of the president of that community until ordination. After becoming priests they entered the probandate.

But, since for a man of faith the creature is not a puppet at the mercy of God, it was necessary to ascertain in the candidate not only the genuineness of his vocation, but also his keen desire to form part of the Society. This free desire is expressed very forcefully in the Latin verb, *cupere*—to desire strongly. Candidates to the Society, therefore, were to be only those who strongly desired to be its members.

Where Does Formation Lead?

Formation, according to St. Gaspar, should lead the candidate to “flesh out” those models which had

captured his imagination and which represent those prototypes of missionaries in the full sense of the term. The models are to be in this order: Christ himself, the Apostles, St. Francis Xavier.

Most necessary was it for the Missionary to be irreplaceable in life and gifted in wisdom; the possessor, in a word, of the message of salvation. St. Gaspar's concept of the missionary ministry was most elevated, and he passed up no opportunity of inculcating this in the minds of those under him, especially in his circular letter for retreats,

Who is the missionary according to St. Gaspar?

He is a man sent by God: 'to give his people knowledge of salvation.' He is a visible angel sent to carry the divine message to the people of God: 'saw an angel of God.' He is the mystical trumpet through whom God calls the fallen to reconciliation, strengthens those already converted, and raises the just to a special sanctity: 'Lift up your voice like a trumpet blast.' What is a missionary? He is a man spiritually dead to everything that might distract him from his holy vocation and the object of his ministry, and who lives solely for God and his glory: 'To me "life" means Christ.' He is a man who nourishes himself on nothing other than that divine food alluded to in the sacred text: 'Doing the will of my Father is my food.' He thirsts for justice and holiness: 'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for holiness' and his heart, filled with the heavenly fire of divine love, is pierced and moved in seeing that God is not loved by men: 'Who is weak that I am not affected by it? Who is scandalized that I am not aflame with indignation?'¹¹

How Does Formation Lead?

If the candidate was already a priest, it was

necessary to investigate “whether he be endowed with prudence, charity, modesty and meekness” and whether he have clerical seriousness, which edifies not a little. Moreover, whether he be sufficiently versed in theological matters, or can be easily taught. “If one lacked these gifts” he is not to be accepted and if already accepted “he is to be dismissed.” Similarly to be dismissed (according to the general *Praxis*, i.e., by the president, “after having heard the moderator general”) were those who although possessing these requisites, did not adapt to “our manner of life.”¹²

In the case of a young man, there was required blameless conduct, good talent, and aptitude for the theological sciences!¹³

These talents of the candidate had to be developed and matured during the period of formation, not by the candidate on his own, but under the direction of the president. The latter had the utmost authority in so far as he represented the moderator general, who in turn represented the Society.

The fact that the house of formation was separated from the mission house demanded even more the presence of the president in the heart of the formation community and the dependence upon him of all those in formation.¹⁴ Every interference, therefore, was to be limited as far as possible.

This isolation, however, did not mean a separation from the life of the Society, but an idealized awareness of it over and above the inevitable petty difficulties and lacunae of the reality. Introduction to the reality was gradually carried out in the probandate to avoid contrasts that were too violent.

For a critical evaluation, an attempt was made to see if there was real harmony between the conduct of the candidate and the principles enunciated in the *Rule*, or rather, between the conduct of the candidate and that of the president-incarnation-of-the-*Rule*.

All of this was carried out in a climate of great

kindness and without violence, neither moral nor physical.^b He who did not care for that style of life was invited to leave “in the name of the Lord.”¹⁵

Care was taken that those virtues were inculcated and outwardly manifested by an expression of interior conviction, and not just a conditioned reflex.^c In a word, the product of the whole formation process was to be a gentleman in the full sense of that word. And since this was the prototype projected and required by the *Rule*, the most important requisite—in practical life—was docility of spirit: all the more important since the Society had no vows.^d Docility, born of love and not from a weakness of character, was the best guarantee for the future.

^bThe advice of Don Giovanni Merlini to Maria De Mattias on maintaining discipline in school: “Forbid any striking; do away with the switch or similar means your fellow sisters might have for punishing the girls. . .” Giovanni Merlini, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 85. Regarding the manner of conducting oneself with the youth, Merlini was in the habit of saying, “Make yourself loved in order to make yourself obeyed.”

^cOne curious institution was the “Chapel of Reflection,” quite distinct from the common chapel. Here the student or *probandus* would retire to meditate after a reprimand or after a success, in order to delve into the profound reasons for the one or the other.

^d“Fond of our own opinion, scorning the advice of others, someone could believe himself in the Society for a purpose entirely different from that intended by the Society itself. That, however, is the miserable condition of man, and quite true is the saying of the saints, that we are all patients in the vast hospital of the world. However, this sickness is cured with the oil of meekness, of docility, with the divesting ourselves of ourselves, and with victorious obedience to him who is our superior, loving each other with charity, cautioning

How Long Does Formation Last?

Considered as a means towards identification with prototypes so exalted, formation is never finished. St. Gaspar was convinced that formation must be ongoing. In this perspective must be seen the foundation of the mission house, the community life of diocesan priests, important moments scattered throughout the year and the course of a single day, the atmosphere of prayer, of study, and of work which should be present in every house. The very life of a Missionary should be a full-time school.

“Our holy Institute,” writes St. Gaspar, “gives us those means which render virtue ever more vigorous. The retreat, recollection, silence, examen of conscience, and all the other things so well known in our daily life, oh, how they help to strengthen the spirit and to make progress in ecclesiastical perfection!”¹⁶

Nor can we think that for the Missionary, immersed in his very busy schedule, this might appear as an occasion of relaxation or diversion from his apostolic duties. On the contrary. The missions also had their method, tending to strengthen the efficacy of the apostolate and to keep the missionary in a necessary climate of formation on a personal level.

Very seriously does Article 52 admonish that this effort be continuous: “Let no one further deceive himself that if he obeys the laws badly and relaxes the care of his perfection in any way, he can still continue in the Society.” The force of this admonition for all is indicated in the word, “continue,” which clearly includes those who

each other patience, submitting finally with constancy. Nor are there walls or a combination of confreres that render us better, but the victory over self-love even in things spiritual, mystical infancy... This is the entire model, I say, of the holiness that we lack and that we must absolutely procure...” (Gaspar del Bufalo, *op. cit.*, p. 11).

already form part of the Society.

Furthermore the *Rule* which we are considering was not directed only to the candidates, nor even essentially to them, but to the members of the Society. For the students and those in the probandate there were specific rules and regulations.

Moreover, it is clear that for St. Gaspar the intense and preferred period of formation was that time during which the candidate prepared himself to enter the Society, and the Society prepared to receive him.

This meeting of two free wills who seek unity in the will of God should also be a meeting of two hearts which mutually give themselves to serve the love of a God who became man for the love of mankind. The Society was to place at the service of the candidate all the necessary means of sanctification and the candidate was to place himself completely at the disposition of the Society.

Why is Formation Necessary?

Here one must call to mind the historical conditions which occasioned the foundation of the Society: new ideologies that warred against religion, the inadequacy of the clergy—especially diocesan—to cope with the needs of the Church, widespread corruption. This has already been touched upon by previous speakers and there is no need for me to repeat it now.

In the mind of St. Gaspar the Missionary is a man of the times, called upon to answer a dramatic need of the moment. He must fight against battle hardened forces and dare not attempt his work unprepared.

But this is an accidental reason, even if always actual. The true motivation for the obligation of personal formation is the call of God, personal and communitarian, to sanctification.

Why are we in our Community? To cooperate with the grand designs of God's providence in the sanctification of ourselves and of others, to

be united by the bond of charity, to stem the impiety of our age and to quench the thirst of Jesus for souls; to imitate more closely the life of Jesus Christ by detachment from our own homes, our relatives, from comforts and above all from ourselves. . . . I am not in the Community, therefore, in order to follow my own opinion, to satisfy my own love even in things spiritual, to cultivate obstinacy, to act according to my likes and dislikes. Rather I am in the Community to serve the life of the Spirit, to work for the glory of God with a holy abandon to God himself, to practice humility and obedience in order to know the divine will by means of a real dependence on him. [All this is impossible without a] religious and pious love, which we owe to our communities and the members.¹⁷

The carrying out of God's plan will depend, therefore, upon man's response; and this response will consist in permitting oneself to be led and in being led to that end which is not only personal sanctification, but also the sanctification of others.

This answer to the call of God not only does not lessen the need for formation, as though our relationship with God attains its final end in a "yes" given once, but rather increases that need. For this answer establishes between God and man a sort of alliance in which God, the partner of man, is very understanding but also very exacting, and has given in Christ the full measure of his own efforts on behalf of mankind.

The reason why man must continue his own formation is to be found, therefore, in the Blood of Christ, shed to open for man the way to salvation.

CONCLUSION

From what has been said we can draw certain fundamental ideas which I will briefly sum up.

St. Gaspar elicited from his faith a nucleus of very precise values, and he did not fear to demand from the candidates who wished to enter the Society a total adherence to these values. This was possible because he was firmly convinced that he was proposing values and not mere opinions.

Precisely to attain and to make obtainable those values (which were well pointed out by the previous speakers and expressed in the titles: Spirituality, Apostolate, Community Life), he established rules which he wished carried out with exactness.

These rules were supposed to direct the work of formation, even to the point of identifying themselves with that work. Therefore, the period of formation (i.e., one's whole life) came to assume two functions: one of growth, in the sense that it favored the human development of the one in formation; the other selective, in the sense that it distinguished those called to the Society from those not called. Those, that is, capable of attaining the goal toward which they were striving.

In each case the role of formation rendered a service to the candidate, who, in view of this, could not expect to receive any compensation from the Society if for any motive whatever he decided to leave or was dismissed. St. Gaspar often helped persons who had been dismissed, but he did this with other motives. He wished that the *Rule* state very clearly that in no way could one suffer loss who was always and solely submissive to the call of God.¹⁸

This article was originally a retreat conference given in August 1975 in Italian. The English translation is by Emil Schuwey, C.PP.S., and William Volk, C.PP.S.

Secular Priests in Common Life

Romano Altobelli, C.P.P.S.

INTRODUCTION

In this presentation I intend to return to the origins of our Congregation: an institution of secular priests joined in community.

I am dividing the work into two parts and I will let the documents lead us by the hand. One goes back to the beginnings in order to know them. This knowledge should help us discern what ought to be done today and what style of life to adopt on the personal and community levels.

In the first part I will treat the need that St. Gaspar felt to unite priests in community. The reform was urgent because the historical situations of the clergy and of the people called for it.

In the second part I will focus on the community life of these priests who were united without the bond of vows. In particular, I will discuss how community life is conceived and organized in the *Rule* of 1841 and how it is understood and lived concretely in light of other documents dealing with the history of the Congregation.

Our general archives are a source where one can find many documents on our topic. We will be using only some, enough to affirm with precision that St. Gaspar intended to found a Congregation of “secular priests in common life.”

THE NEED TO GATHER THE SECULAR CLERGY IN COMMUNITY

The Secular Clergy from the Second Half of the 1700s to the Foundation of the Congregation

The general situation of this historical period is not one of the most consoling: general decadence, enormous difficulties, and unbelievable moral, social, and religious conditions.

In spite of everything the Church in this period has a multitude of saints: among others, our founder with his first companions, Vincenzo Pallotti and Vincenzo Strambi.

Writing about our saints, Giuseppe De Luca, a Roman priest who died in 1962, describes this period well:

[Our saints] had gone through infancy and adolescence—to one degree or another—amid invasions, deportations, revolutions, agitation in the city and the country, hurricanes of blasphemy and dishonor of every sort, storms of immorality and derision, of disgusting cynicism and noisy fanaticism. God alone knows if and how they were able to study as boys and then as young men. Around their defenseless purity, the bad examples closed in like legion, to use the terms with which the Gospel defines the filthy herd.¹

The situation of the clergy obviously left much to be desired.

I will stop briefly here to show how opportune was St. Gaspar's idea to unite secular priests in community and to show that the plans of men of God are always anchored in reality, motivated by needs emerging from concrete situations.

We can say that the conditions of the clergy at this time were quite bad, perhaps even disastrous from a

vocational, spiritual, moral, cultural and apostolic point of view.

In general, all of religious life is in decline, even though the number of clergy is abundant. Many, however, have entered the clerical state for reasons not consonant with priestly ideals.

In the second half of the 18th century we find ourselves before a profound decline of the Spirit and of religious life. There was no lack of clerics and religious: there was even an excess. Many, however, having entered the clerical state without a vocation, only to keep the income from some benefice for the family, were leading a worldly life. We have at that time the figure of the “gallant abbot”: lazy, obsequious, talkative, intriguing, defamer of his confreres and of the institutions themselves.²

The Conditions of the Clergy in the 19th Century

The 19th century is the heir of the altogether dissolute work of more than four centuries of history and is above all the ‘executor of the will’ of the Enlightenment and of the French Revolution.³

The clergy were also influenced by these ideas with negative moral and spiritual repercussions. A culture without faith led it to unsustainable situations, contrary to priestly life and mission.

The moral level was very low in every class of persons, including the clergy. On August 27, 1815, the papal delegate of Benevento censures the moral and social situation in a letter:

I was sent into a forest more of untamed beasts than of reasonable men. . . The sixth commandment is not very well known here; and here, to my displeasure one has to say, that

unfortunately the ecclesiastical ranks are tinged with this sin, with public scandal both in the city and in the duchy. Here there is public concubinage, here endless blasphemy. . . What hurts me worst is to see that fanatic priests and many secular ones. . . are those who continue to offend here, who unfortunately for weakness or for need have abandoned themselves to usurpation. . .⁴

Gaspar del Bufalo was aware of the situation in general and of the clergy in particular. During his years in prison at Imola he wrote a sad letter in 1813 to Msgr. Ginnasi, in which he makes the Church speak as a mother to the clergy:

My son. . . I ask you to have mercy on me so that the spiritual weapons with which I have armed you for your own good and your own use, as well as for your neighbor's, be not turned against me by you, nor against yourself, comporting yourself in such a way that what should serve as an occasion or means of being more grateful, more humble and more mortified, be for you, by your own guilt, an occasion of being less mortified, more liberal, more proud.⁵

Gaspar was aware of this miserable situation of the clergy: "The clergy, alas, what great need there is among them for both learning and holiness!"⁶

Even the prelates were involved, and their behavior was pointed out by the seculars, who even printed sheets in which certain entertainments are described in detail, with the names of prelates.⁷

"The Lord is not happy with his sacred ministers. Ordinations are accelerating too much: the clergy, in general, is not formed in the life of the Spirit."⁸

Uniting the Clergy in Community

St. Gaspar addresses this situation. He founds the Congregation.

Here is the work of the clergy which will remove laziness, promote the mind and learning, and revive the idea of the early times of the Church, in which we find the clergy united only to communicate the spirit of fervor and zeal for the greater glory of God.⁹

How important to support our mission houses, in order to shake out of inertia, to accredit the ecclesiastics with the people, to detach them from the love of relatives and of things, and from laziness.¹⁰

Gaspar describes clearly the negative situation existing among the clergy in the "Petition and Rescript" addressed to Pius VII, for opening the house of San Felice. In it we see also the enthusiasm of the people in requesting the holy missions. This apostolate "animates many secular priests." "It is good to cultivate their zeal" because the restoration of the religious orders, and especially the Jesuits, "is coming to mean a lack of many occasions, of many means of exercising the apostolate and they would easily fall back into inertia and ignorance."¹¹

We want to emphasize the last words, *inertia and ignorance*, because it is evident that the clergy are inert and ignorant. They do not devote themselves to the ministry; therefore they are not stimulated and motivated to become educated, to be formed spiritually. *Inertia and ignorance* sufficiently and realistically describe the character of the clergy in this period.

With the Institute, Gaspar resolves the problem.

The Congregation Really Unites Secular Priests into Community under the Same Rule

From 1815 to 1820 the members at San Felice lived

with the *Rule* of the “Gospel Workers” (*Operai Evangelici*)¹² founded by Don Gaetano Bonnani in 1813. He was open to community life. Fr. Giovanni Merlini, in his history of the Congregation and the house of San Felice, writes:¹³

Until 1820 we did not live with a special rule in form, like that of today, but we continued to have discussions about rules, our experience, and the spirit of the Institute as the opportunity presented, and we were writing some rules that could be adapted to an Institute of secular priests.¹⁴

The Congregation therefore is for secular priests.

The history of the origins notes clearly the movement of the Gospel Workers¹⁵ composed of priests of the secular clergy: Bonanni, Santelli, Gonnelli, Giampedi, Locatelli, Odescalchi, and in 1814, also Canon del Bufalo. The purpose of this “Holy League” was the popular missions.

When Gaspar opens the first house of the Congregation at San Felice di Giano he uses some of these Gospel Workers, Fr. Gaetano Bonanni and Fr. Adriano Giampedi.^a

Later it is always secular priests who join the Congregation. Many of these do not wish to be subjected to the rules of Canon del Bufalo and say: “But what rule? . . . I want to do what I wish.”¹⁶

Merlini responds:

But one who did not like that method could say: this life is not suitable for me and could leave

^aThe third companion is Fr. Vincenzo Tani, who had been among the “Signori della Missione,” but had to leave them for health reasons. Of the three, he is the only one who remained in the Institute. Bonanni was consecrated Bishop of Norcia; Giampedi returned to Rome.

with more dignity; so much more so since neither vow nor obedience held him. . . . If all who entered had persevered, we would have in the Institute, today in 1832, more than 300 individuals. We are happy to have only a few, but they have a single heart, a single will.¹⁷

That is how these priests united in a Congregation have to live: one heart and one will, also at the cost of being reduced to few members. “Whoever enters in community is placed under one administration, which is precisely the *Rule* and the general and local superior.”¹⁸

In 1820 Gaspar del Bufalo dictates “some rules” to Don Francesco Pierantoni¹⁹ which were then printed in the same year with the title, *Regolamento per erigere le Case di Missione ed Esercizi spirituali e Avvisi spirituali per i missionari dell'Arciconfraternita del Preziosissimo Sangue di N.S.G.C* ‘Rule for Erecting Mission and Retreat Houses and Spiritual Counsels for the Missionaries of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.’²⁰ In these rules he begins to delineate a clear identity for our Congregation, spiritual, apostolic, and communitarian.

At the beginning of the Congregation, the missionaries were secular clergy who lived a common life. The *Regolamento* affirms: “Mission and retreat houses are erected in the various provinces or dioceses for the *secular clergy*,”²¹ in the *Avvisi spirituali* it is said that the Missionaries will gather together, at a time to be established, for mental prayer, for spiritual conferences, for the examination of conscience, for the monthly retreat, for the spiritual exercises; “the order of the community” is not to be disturbed and “*Omnia honeste et secundum ordinem fiant*”^b as Paul says in 1 Cor 14, 40.

Because everything is to be carried out in an

^bEmphasis is mine.

orderly way in community, the *Regolamenti* contain the list of offices of the community: the superior, the director of missions, the director of the exercises, the secretary, the archivist, the vice-superior, and the treasurer. All of these offices are necessary or useful for the good of the community and of the individual members. In fact, regarding the superior one reads:

There is to be a local superior in each house, to whom all must lend their obedience and who will have responsibility for the progress of the work and of each individual entrusted to his prudent care.

The treasurer (*economista*) is to render an account to the community meeting (*congressus*): “There is to be a treasurer who will have temporal governance of the house and each month he will give a financial report in the meeting.”²²

The First Meeting (*Congressus*) of the House in Pievetorina

These rules, then, are elucidated in the first meeting held on June 7, 1820, at the house in Pievetorina with the first seven Missionaries. The minutes state the names of those present and their respective offices: D. Gaspar del Bufalo, director general; D. Biagio Valentini, superior; D. Luigi Moscatelli, secretary; D. Luigi Gonnelli, *economista*; D. Antonio Caccia, Missionary; D. Francesco Maria Pierantoni, Missionary; D. Innocenzo Betti, Missionary.²³

We have reported the names of the Missionaries present at the first meeting of the Congregation to emphasize that already in that year there was a clear identity. In this meeting were given “clarifications of the counsels and printed rules”²⁴ to make clear the life of the Community.

The *Transunto*

In 1821 each community had the *Transunto* (literally, “Summary”), composed by Don Biagio Valentini and Don Giovanni Merlini at Gaspar’s direction. He himself examined the document. The *Transunto* is the first organic rule of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. It remained valid until the *Rule* was approved by Pope Gregory XVI in 1841. This document is important because it traces clearly the identity of the Congregation, which from this point is distinguished from the Gospel Workers of Bonnani.²⁵

The *Transunto* details the organization of the community. Each missionary had to participate in the common prayers, in meals and recreation taken together, and in spiritual conferences.

Beyond the offices of superior and the others, necessary for the smooth functioning of the community as in the printed rules, which we have discussed above, there is also the figure of the president (*presidente*). This person “will be in charge, as one more experienced, of the exact observance of the rules and of good order, admonishing when there are recurring problems.” When there are vacant offices, he himself will undertake them until they are filled, “in order that the observance not suffer.”²⁶ In a community there should be no fewer than three members.

A key feature of the community is the meeting, the soul of the community and the source of decisions. No. 34 states:

In order that everything proceed in good harmony, there is to be a meeting of the Missionaries each month, and more often, if it is deemed opportune, where they will discuss the good progress of the pious works and whatever else is necessary, *in order that no individual can make a decision in a matter.*

This last phrase was added in St. Gaspar’s

handwriting; he makes it understood how important it is that living in community not depend on individual judgment but on making decisions together.

Living in community is not just any kind of living together: one must take into account the individual members with the meeting, the *Rule*, but above all with what no. 44 says: "One is, in the end, to exercise charity with all; and this is to be considered as the true bond of perfection."

Living in the Congregation obliges each individual to these rules. Each will have a copy of them and they will be read each month in the meeting. "The one who will not accommodate himself to the rules has the liberty of living in his own house, being able in the meanwhile, if he so wishes, to assist the holy missions." (n. 45)

In 1824 the boarding school (*convitto*) is established at San Felice, with 12 young men,²⁷ in order to prepare stable priests in the Congregation. Young men were accepted in the clerical boarding school. Some persevere in the Institute and others return to their homes, after having been "trained in the ministry" as an

instrument of the glory of God. Since [continues Merlini] experience showed that those not called to community life have difficulty adapting to it, and more often turn out to be trouble rather than relief. . . it was decided that only those would be accepted who had intentions to persevere in the Institute.²⁸

According to Merlini's testimony, both written and in actual practice, it turns out that the Congregation is for secular priests, but united in community, with a single heart, a single will, and with the intention of remaining and persevering in it.

In a petition to Leo XII on "The Work"^c (July 1835) Gaspar states that the Lord, in order

. . . to check the torrent of iniquity and to

straighten the heart of man [raises up an efficacious means] in the foundation of more houses of mission and spiritual exercises for the secular clergy, so as to revive in them decorum, for example, study, and holiness, similar to the spirit of the ancient discipline in which living together was inculcated in the clergy.²⁹

In the petition to Pius VIII (1829) Gaspar, recalling that Pius VII wanted the ecclesiastics to dedicate themselves to the ministry of the holy missions and spiritual exercises, and that, in fact, residences had already been opened for this purpose, states that Pius VII “did not wish to have an Institute with vows since the Society would be directed to the clergy and for the clergy.”³⁰

The proofs of what we have been stating as fundamental in the Congregation are innumerable. In our general archives there are manuscripts of Missionaries presented to clarify some points relative to the *Rule* on the occasion of its approval.³¹

Three of these attest clearly that the Missionaries had no doubts about the purpose of the founder and the method of life in the Congregation.

. . . the members composing the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood are secular ecclesiastics, that their purpose is directed to the observance of the canonical laws and the care of souls and that, finally, *they are united to a life of community without any bond of vow* and they come to know immediately, that *it was never in the mind of the Pious Institute to form an order of clerks regular*, but that it proposes to promote the discipline and decorum of secular priests,

²⁹St. Gaspar often referred to the Congregation as simply “The Work.”

who are not called to vows, to animate zeal in the works of sacred ministry, and in particular the holy missions and spiritual exercises. . . And this is the first, only and simple design that the immortal Pius VII wanted carried out.³²

The emphases are ours, because we want to highlight the community life without vows, the intention of St. Gaspar not to found a religious order in the strict sense, the design described with the characteristics of being the “first” and the “only,” and the “simple” one. These three adjectives are unambiguous and dissipate the slightest doubt.

The founder of this Congregation, not considering the special form of regular orders. . . and *other congregations obligated to vows*, intended to join the secular clergy together according to canonical institutions, and to *life in community*, so that, *renouncing their own comforts* and useless relationships, they would devote themselves to *withdrawal, recollection, prayer, study*; and that they could then develop with maturity for the apostolic ministry. . .

Therefore. . . he did not want to add other bonds and special precepts other than those uniquely tending toward forming a single heart and a single soul (Acts 4) in the association of simple ecclesiastics. . .³³

Also in these “reflections” we stress the negative dimension, that Gaspar was departing from secular orders, and he was also not considering “other congregations obligated by vows.” This specification is important so as not to be confused with apostolic congregations of active life which have vows. The positive aspect is the purpose of community life: through the renunciation of one’s own comfort and useless relationships, that one devote himself to withdrawal, recollection, prayer, and

study so that one might dedicate himself to the ministry with “maturity” and to forming only “one heart” and “one soul.” The fundamental purpose of the community and its founding cause is communion. We could state that here we find what St. Gaspar himself said: “The friars make the vows and my Missionaries observe them.” It is the spirit of the Gospel counsels that interests the founder: a spirit felt and lived. It is communion created in community that Gaspar has in mind, and he wants the secular clergy to reach it: for this “he intended to gather them together.”

Gathering together the secular clergy in the form of the canonical institutions and to community life, so that they can more freely dedicate themselves to retirement/withdrawal, recollection, prayer, study and therefore to be prepared with maturity for the preaching of the Word of God and the administration of the sacraments; this is the purpose of the Congregation and among the works of ministry he proposes giving the missions according to the requests of bishops and also the spiritual exercises, not less to the people than to the clergy and different classes and communities; and finally internally in the mission houses, where, in a place set aside, they receive any man of any class who wishes for a given space (of time to dedicate himself to it).³⁴

Like the preceding text, this one emphasizes the life of community: retirement, recollection, prayer, and study, but with an important nuance: in order to dedicate oneself more freely and therefore with maturity give oneself to the preaching of the Word of God. Here is the ministry of the Word which springs from a community life lived together, which matures through retirement, recollection, prayer, and study. The ministry of the Word exercised especially with missions and

spiritual exercises to all classes of persons in the same mission house in the place designated for that, so that the retreatants can devote themselves to it with greater fruit.

Concluding, we must affirm that the center of the Congregation is found in the secular priests gathered in community; who form one heart and one soul; who dedicate themselves to retirement, recollection, oration and study; who exercise the ministry of the Word with missions to the people and with spiritual exercises to the clergy, community, and every class of persons inside the same mission houses.

THE COMMON LIFE IN THE CONGREGATION ACCORDING TO THE *RULE* AND OTHER DOCUMENTS OF THE INSTITUTE. IDEAL AND *PRAXIS*.

In this part we intend to present^d first, life in community as it is presented in the *Regula cum Praxi* of 1841 and then touch some important points of community life, as we find them in some documents of practical life of the Congregation: from the circular letters for the spiritual exercises of St. Gaspar and those of the late Fr. G. Quattrino, who led the Italian Province for 24 years.^d

The Community in the *Rule* Approved in 1841.³⁵

After the *Transunto*, the first Rule of the Institute, was printed. The *clarifications* to the articles of that document made by St. Gaspar followed in the Circular

^d It seems good for us to insert also the thinking of Fr. G. Quattrino on this topic of community, because he was a Missionary who faithfully lived and interpreted the life and idea of the founder and of Merlini. He spent his entire life for

Letters of 1825, 1826, and 1827.³⁶ Other clarifications of the *Rule*, related to spiritual and temporal matters were written between February 1829 and the first half of 1830.³⁷ There are also clarifications and practical reminders (*ricordi*) regarding the *Rule* written before December 3, 1830.³⁸

We recall these clarifications, because they contain elements about community life, which then became part of the definitive *Rule* of 1841.

In this regard the “Notices” (*Avvertimenti*) sent in the Circular Letter of 1835 are interesting. There it is said that regarding life in common, “in encounters, charity triumphs,” that there needs to be mutual edification through example.³⁹

The Institute of the Mission under the title of the Most Precious Blood. . . implores formal approval. . . , submits to the supreme judgment and oracle of Your Holiness the *Rule* which it has inherited from its founder, first director general, Gaspar del Bufalo of happy memory, and practiced constantly during the course of 25 years. . .^e

With these words the request for the approval of the *Rule* was made. Clearly we notice that the *Rule* presents

the Congregation. Every word and action of his revealed his deep love for the Institute. In his 24 years in government of the Italian Province, each year he wrote to the Missionaries, students and brothers a circular letter on the occasion of the spiritual exercises and appeals for vocations. These writings reveal the passionate heart of a missionary in love with the Congregation, who has only one desire: the good of the individual missionaries and of the Institute.

^e C.PP.S. gen. arch. G II, 1, n. 8. The decision to advance the question for the approval of the *Rule* was made

not only an ideal to be realized, but also the practical life experience of the foundation up to the time of the request, that is for 25 years. Therefore the *Rule* is the synthesis of the ideal and the *Praxis*. In fact, every article is followed by the *Praxis*, which was printed, however, only in the 1881 edition.^f

The Concept of Communion in the Rule

In presenting communion in the *Rule* one immediately thinks of what John Paul II has written in the apostolic letter *Novo millennio ineunte* concerning the spirituality of communion, essential for creating in us a communion-community mentality, which is natural to our Congregation. I refer to that text for a deeper treatment of the personal and communitarian. (Rome, 2001, nn. 43–45). The argumentation was taken up recently by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and

by the general administration in its meeting on November 28, 1838. The approval of the *Rule* carries the date of December 17, 1841. Note that the *Rule* had the following printings as found from the copies preserved in the general archives:

- Rome 1850, which contains only the *Rule* without the *Praxis*;
- Rome 1869, which also does not have the *Praxis*;
- Alae 1881, which prints “*Regula cum Praxi*”;
- Carthagena, O. 1894, which prints “*Regula cum Praxi*” general and American;
- Carthagena, O. 1923, . . . “*Regula cum Praxi*” general and American.

^fOne wonders why Merlini did not have the *Praxis* printed in 1850? Fr. Nicola Pagliuca gives the answer, writing in his own hand at the end of a copy of the 1881: “Because having been turned in with the other writings of Gaspar to the S. Congregation of Rites, this was not given back, until after Merlini had already died in 1873.” Document kept in the C.PP.S. gen. arch., G II, 1.

Societies of Apostolic Life with the instruction *Ripartire da Cristo*. (Rome, 2002, nn. 28–32)

We find the essence of community life in three points of the *Rule* which allows us to grasp the mystery. They are the general *Praxes* of article 1, article 4, and article 9.

The first six articles with their related *Praxis* give the purpose of the Congregation. (*Titulus primus, De fine Congregationi proposito*): to live one's life according to what is prescribed by the sacred canons, which regard the "society of those living in common without vows" (cf. Can. 673)⁴⁰ in order to reach not only personal perfection but also to care for the salvation of others. (cf. art.1)

But these three points in particular state that the personal and apostolic life of the missionaries is fashioned in communion and is realized in the community.

The general *Praxis* of article 1 states that the members forming the Congregation (priests, clerics and lay members form "*unum corpus*," are supported by "*uno spirito*" and dedicate themselves to the ministry and the other offices of the Community.

Article 4 has a second fundamental statement that is the fulcrum of the Congregation: the members are bound to the Congregation not by the bond of vows but by "*vinculis liberae charitatis*," 'by the bonds of free charity.' It is risky to abandon it without just cause; they must have the will to remain forever in the life they have undertaken.

Article 9 adds the element "will": "United by the consent of the will" they will study to seek the will of God.

Since communion finds its authentic explanation within the intimate Trinitarian life, where the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are "one," "one spirit, love," "one sole will," Christian communion also finds its foundation and its truth in unity, in "one sole spirit," in the "bonds of love" which is the perfection of the law, even, rather the perfect law, in the "one will" which brings all together in the one will in the mystery of God.

These are the elements that St. Gaspar placed as foundation of the Congregation to make of it one communion, a true community of persons.

Communion Translates into Community

Koinonia ‘fellowship’ is not an abstraction, but an ecclesial reality. It is life of communion, which must become real in every ecclesial community. Every community must express the style of “family united in the name of the Lord,”⁴¹ with these characteristics: unity of spirit, mutual respect, convergence of will, of intentions, carrying each other’s burdens, helping each other willingly and a superior who guides the family (cf. article 1 and *Praxis* 9 and *Praxis* 54).

A community life is not an end in itself, but a basis to promote personal sanctification, a basis for missionary life in the missions and the spiritual exercises to all classes of persons (cf. art. 2 and *Praxis*). Therefore it is an open community that goes beyond the individuals, who are urged to be for others.

Communion of Hearts

Among the clarifications presented for approval of the *Rule* we already reported that the founder did not want other bonds and precepts “than those designed to form a single heart and a single soul (Acts 4).”⁴² This quotation, made in the document, authorizes us to talk about “communion of hearts” to express the concreteness of what is written in Title 2 of the *Rule*: “*De interiore ac domestica disciplina.*”

Community Relationships

“Let harmony shine between superiors and their subjects (*inferiori*).” (art. 8 and *Praxis*) This is a basic statement for every authentic relationship within the community. Healthy relationships spring from the spiritual physiognomy of the individual missionaries in relationship with one another.

Article 9 with the *Praxis* give us the true measure of how our founder envisioned community life in our Congregation. This art. 9, with its related *Praxis* is a jewel: “It is the gem of the entire *Praxis*.”⁴³

In article 9 the principles of community are stated: union of will, the search for God’s will (the mystery of God as salvation plan), the promotion of mutual personal progress, the exchange of honor with each other (respect, esteem), affability in attitudes and action.

The *Praxis* of this article translates what is stated in the article into a personal and community level, so that this is clearer and can be put into practice fully. Moreover, this is the purpose and nature of the whole *Praxis*. (cf. *Regula, Titulus primus*, beginning)

This *Praxis* can be divided into four connected parts. It contains: a restatement of principles of community spiritual life in the Congregation; the interior spiritual attitudes necessary for community life; the practical behaviors necessary in community life; the profile of the missionary who lives in the Congregation—community.

- *Restatement of principles*: The Lord has gathered us (*congregati*) calling us by his initiative to live together (*collegialiter*), therefore it is necessary to help each other (*invicem*) and to encourage each other mutually (*mutuo*) to serve God faithfully and to become holy;
- *Interior attitudes*: Harmony, peace, quiet, (*hesuchia* of the desert fathers) reverence, tolerance, love (*dilectio*);
- *Practical behaviors*: give help willingly (*bono animo*) to each other (*alter alteri*); excuse the faults of the companions in charity, do not carry unpleasant things from one house to another; get rid of likes and dislikes, familiarity (in a negative sense), playful touching (in a negative sense), ambition and a presumptuous spirit (pride);

- *Profile of the missionary*: he must live as an angel in flesh, exemplary in good works; be cheerful, serious, modest, a friend, polite; have a simple heart; humility and prudence.

The wholeness of life, expressed with these four groups of elements gives, not only the image of the Missionary in the Congregation according to St. Gaspar's desire, but also the concrete way with which he must realize his presence in the community and how this becomes an existential reality and does not remain on the level of principle.

The relationship between the Missionary and the Congregation is highlighted in Articles 19, 20, and 21 (with the references in the *Praxis*), which affirm that the Congregation is "our family"; therefore the relationship is to bear the stamp of love: to care for its good name, to work for its good and to speak of it with veneration.

Everyone is to take up the tasks assigned in a spirit of readiness. In case of difficulty in accepting these, one should submit to the judgement of the director with "docility and trust in God."

The Lord has called men into the Congregation to serve and not to be served; therefore one should resist one's own will.

Prayer, Source of Common Life

So that common life will be true, full, genuine, it must be nourished by prayer, the Gospel, liturgy, and Eucharist.⁴⁴

Article 10 and its related *Praxis* speak about prayer, which spiritually occupies the entire course of the day. Materially, times, places and exercises of piety are determined: all gathered in one place, if possible "*Ante Aram augusti Sacramenti*" 'before the altar of the august sacrament' they dedicate themselves to "mental prayer": examination of conscience twice a day; prayer before going to dinner and to bed in the evening.

Every month it is necessary to dedicate an entire day to a spiritual retreat in order to recreate the forces of the soul exhausted in work. Each year, one should also dedicate ten days to spiritual exercises. (cf. art. 16 and *Praxis*)

Articles 12, 14 and their *Praxes* add two important elements of common life: silence and love of solitude.

Common Life in its Physical Demands

The care of the body and its needs is fundamental for physical and psychic health. Article 11 and the *Praxis* treat in particular, food, recreation and hospitality.

Food: be attentive to variety, quality, quantity.

Recreation: after meals “relax the soul,” be “cheerful,” and “joyful in a holy way.”

Hospitality: give the guest a good welcome; give him a place of honor at the table; have special food prepared for him, if needed.

Culture in Community

This important aspect of community is emphasized in articles 17 and 18 with their respective *Praxes*.

The individual and the community are involved.

Every missionary must excel in human and divine sciences, through private study and daily cultural meetings held in community with the other brothers.

The subjects to be treated: Monday, sacred Scripture; Tuesday, dogmatic theology; Wednesday and Thursday, moral theology; Saturday, liturgy or ascetics or sacred eloquence.

The dynamics of these meetings are to have as norm that “*in dubiis libertas*,” so that each one freely express his opinion, avoiding too much fervor and persistence in defending his own idea.

Communion of hearts thus becomes a reality through genuine relationships with the brothers and the Congregation; it is fed by the springs of prayer, which recreates the supernatural spirit.

Physical, psychological, and intellectual needs are to be satisfied in a thorough and balanced manner. The importance to excel in the human and divine sciences is to be emphasized.

Communion of Goods and Community of Goods

The fourth Title, which has the heading “*De re familiari administranda*” can be summarized with the other fundamental element of the early Christian community: “they held all things in common.” (Acts 2:44, 4, 38 ff)

The inspiring principle of this title is still and always the bond of charity and freedom from any bond of vow.

The articles that seem important to us, regarding community goods and their sound administration are: 34, 36, 42, with their related *Praxes*.

The Missionary must devote himself freely to “holy obedience” and to the “ministry,” because our houses must possess a “suitable income.” A new foundation must be sufficiently furnished to support general expenses and for the maintenance of the Missionaries and lay brothers.

In the same mission house, for every apostolic activity an independent accounting must be kept. When it is *just*, and it can be done without *recriminations*, with the consent of the “meeting”; one account is to help meet the needs of another.

The treasurer should provide for what is necessary for each Missionary in a just manner. The “equal distribution” refers to maintenance, furnishings and whatever might be necessary. The treasurer must let himself be guided by charity; he must satisfy the community and not himself.

The house that accommodates the community must be dignified, but not luxurious. Every Missionary is to have his room conveniently furnished. The characteristics of the house: decency, cleanliness, ecclesiastic

seriousness, idea of common life.

The suitable instrument for regulating the administration of community goods of the Congregation is the "Community meeting." For this material, the meeting is requested seven times in the *Praxis* of Art. 42 alone.

Personal Possessions

The Missionary is not to attach his heart to riches and is to flee the terrible desire to accumulate riches. (cf. *Praxis* of Art. 23)

Given this principle of poverty in articles 37, 38, 39, with their relative *Praxes*, there is a confirmation of the freedom to possess and administer one's personal goods, Mass stipends, to get whatever he needs for his clothing and whatever the *Rule* does not assign. In the use of these goods, one should be guided by "justice" and "charity." One should also keep in mind the needs of the Congregation, the mission houses and the obligations contracted by culpable negligence toward the Congregation itself.

Those who desire a more perfect common life also give up their Mass stipends to the Congregation. In this case, the Congregation takes care of their clothing and other necessities as for the lay brothers.

Whatever the missionary receives in ministry cannot be kept for private use. Expenses are reimbursed, therefore, being the expense of the Congregation.

Union of Will

With this expression, inspired by the first words of Article 9, "*Voluntatis consentione devincti*" 'Bound by consent of the will,' we pick up the 6th and 7th titles which treat the offices to be distributed in the houses and the government of the Congregation.

Title 6 starts thus: "*Nunc sequitur, ut de distribuendis officiis disseramus, quibus tam multa rerum varietas in unitatem coalescat.*" 'Now we must treat the offices to be assigned, through which the many details

are kept in order.' The objective, as we can see, is always unity. Obedience and authority are two elements of extreme importance for an authentic community life.

Harmony between Superiors and Subjects

The *Praxis* of Article 8 begins as follows: "Let harmony shine between superiors and subjects." It is a statement that implies a lifestyle of communion both in the director and in the individual missionaries. Articles 7 and 8 with their *Praxes* describe the necessary attitudes for creating harmony.

The Missionary must try to obey "*cum perfectione.*" The people consider the missionaries saintly men and this is the expectation of the Church.

The superior is "*totius ordinis firmamentum.*" He must act "*discrete et in charitate.*" The subject is to be humble and respond with docility and sacrifice his own will.

The Distribution of Offices

A harmonious distribution of tasks guarantees peace in the Community. Therefore the *Rule* provides for seven offices, treating them in Articles 53, 54, 55 and the related *Praxes*. This number is not unchangeable; some may be omitted and the same person may also assume two of them. For example: vice-superior and treasurer. These are: president, superior, vice-superior, secretary, director of missions, director of spiritual exercises, church prefect, treasurer.

All these offices are important because they contribute, each with its competencies, to living an ordered and peaceful community life. However, we wish to describe the specific competencies of the president, superior and treasurer.

The president is a spiritual figure but with concrete competencies: he must be responsible for an untainted observance of the laws; watch that no abuses enter in; fill vacant offices. He takes care of the sick and

administers the sacraments to them. He directs the seminary boarding school and tirocinium. He is a missionary ready for everything; he is the security (*tutamentum*) of the Community.

The superior governs the family: takes care of observance of the schedule, the common acts, discipline and silence; he must promote peace, agreement, and charity among the missionaries; he admonishes those negligent in their office; watches that no one omits the monthly retreat; attends to the spiritual formation of the lay brothers; and assigns the various ministries to the missionaries at the house meeting.

The treasurer is the one who takes care of the affairs of the house. He is to give willingly to the Community what is established by the *Rule*; he is not to seek what he likes, but what satisfies the Community; he is to be solicitous especially toward the sick.

The Community Meeting

Articles 57, 58, and 59, and the respective *Praxes* treat the meeting.

The companions will be called together very often “*in communionem consilii*,” ‘in communion of counsel’ because a stability (*firmitas*) of an active life is had when all the parties “*inter se consentiant*” ‘agree among themselves.’ There are two elements highlighted here: the consensus of all the parties and communion.

The meeting can be formal or informal. A formal meeting can be called by the superior or also by the lowliest missionary. Minutes must be entered into the book recording the minutes of the meetings.

The jurisdiction of the meeting embraces all the dimensions of community life: that which regards the daily actions of the family and the daily schedule; the schedules and services of Church; temporal things of a more serious importance; the sacred ministries in house and outside; assistance to be given to one or another house in the ministry.

The dynamics of the meeting: all have the right to express their thought; if all come together “*in unum*” the meeting concludes. Otherwise a vote is taken and each will carry out his responsibility.

One of the important means of the general government of the Congregation is linked to the meeting. Article 64 and *Praxis* oblige the general director to visit the individual houses each year, or at least every three years. These visits begin with a retreat day and the “meeting of the visit” is held, during which there is discussion of the works, ministries, the church, the administration. The offices are distributed or reaffirmed.

It is interesting to note that the visit of the primary house is done by the general director himself with the help of others whom he finds suitable.

At the end of the meeting the minutes are signed and the *Te Deum* is sung in thanksgiving.

All the houses are united among themselves under a single government.

This is very useful and paves the way to work very widely in the Lord’s vineyard. Although the individual houses are considered as “one,” they are autonomous and it is not permitted to become involved in the affairs of another house and transfer houses on one’s own initiative. (cf. Article 62 and *Praxis*)

From all of Title 7 we learn that the central government is a source of unity not only of the Congregation in general, but of the individual communities and missionaries through *dialog* (listening to others), of *subsidiarity* and of *co-responsibility* of its closest co-workers but also of others.

Conclusion

In summary, one can say that the *Rule* gives the true dimension of community in the unity of the Spirit and of the whole body, congregated and cemented by the bond of charity.

Communion translates into community in the

following ways:

Communion of hearts realized with healthy relationships among the companions, inspired by deep human and Christian attitudes which become reality in practical behavior toward individuals and toward the Congregation itself.

Prayer is the soul of community life.

Physical, psychic and spiritual needs of every companion must be sufficiently satisfied.

Excellence in human and theological formation/education is required.

The *communion of goods* permits the missionary to be tranquil and to devote himself to the ministry freely, by placing goods in common while maintaining the freedom to administer personal goods.

Communion of the will allows everyone to strive for one objective. In community it is necessary that each one assume his own responsibilities in the role that he carries out, but always in relationship with the community. The community, for an orderly and democratic life, possesses two important means: the meeting and the superiors.

COMMUNITY LIFE IN OTHER DOCUMENTS

In this section we will examine some documents⁴⁵ in which the importance of community life is stressed, its necessary elements and practical indications.

We will try to make the documents speak. They are an eloquent and persuasive voice to convince us about the importance of the topic, if there should be a need.

From the *Directory for Seminary Boarding Schools*, Merlini's original, we will print, an introductory paragraph, the first requirement for entry into the seminary boarding school.

"Whoever desires to enter the boarding school will have to be. . . able to adapt easily to the community

system, and have a sincere disposition to devote himself to the Congregation.”⁴⁶

The Bond of Charity

This title is designed to summarize all that life in community includes, ideally and practically:

Charity, wanted by St. Gaspar as a substitute for the vows, the connective tissue of the whole Work, pledges for realizing community life and reaching the goals of the apostolate; the bond of charity is part of the *kerygma* of his *Rule*; everything must be resolved in the dimension and dynamic of love; community structure is organized in such a way as to promote not only interior life, but also intellectual formation.⁴⁷

Merlini Testifies about St. Gaspar

Merlini highlights, even though briefly, how Gaspar held to the bond of charity and paid for it personally: “I say nothing about his charity for the companions, for whom sometimes he made some not small sacrifices, also in expenses, travel, etc., in order to keep all in the bond of fraternal union.”⁴⁸

About his way of governing:

I will not speak about the charitable hard work with which he went about trying to detach the companions from everything and everyone, almost without their being aware of it, becoming master of their will in such a way that I repeatedly heard people say: ‘The Rev. Canon has so many beautiful ways to ask for a thing, that one cannot tell him no.’⁴⁹

In defense of the rules and of Canon del Bufalo with the right to require a way of life in the houses he opened, Merlini also recalls that “until 1820 we did not live with a special *Rule* in form, but we continued to discuss rules

and experience, and the spirit of the Institute according to opportuneness, some rules were sketched out, which could be adapted to an Institute of secular priests.”⁵⁰ From this it is clear that there had to be some rules, but for secular priests united in community. In fact, on June 7 of 1820, at Pievetorina some rules were written out, which were re-ordered in Albano and then “to be changed with more mature time and examination.”⁵¹

In the very defense of the *Rule* he invokes the freedom from the vow, the demands of community, the necessity of not creating schisms and not disturbing others. He says that he prefers few Missionaries, but Missionaries who are of a single heart and a single will.

I had to hear about some who came from the Work, but not led by the Spirit of God, rather by secondary ends, that these rules were insipid, not to be given any attention, etc., and from the height of their blindness, they were saying: ‘Who gave these rules? Canon del Bufalo? and who is Canon del Bufalo? some divinity? some angel come from heaven? but what *Rule*? . . . I want to do what I please.’

After having strongly defended the right of Gaspar to give rules, he adds clearly:

But one who did not like that method, could say: This is not a suitable life for me and leave with more dignity; all the more so because neither the vow nor obedience was keeping him.

And still it is true that in certain things one pays more attention to one’s own judgement, comfort, passion than anything else. But those who enter into community place themselves under direction, which, precisely is the *Rule*, and the general and local superiors. *Each one therefore must adapt himself to the Rule and to virtuous obedience*, and not obedience and the

Rule to the individual, almost as though one wants to make a habit to be adapted according to one's own idea. The *Rule* had to be given by the Rev. Canon, as founder and promoter. . . he, then, who does not want to live accord to the *Rule*, should find another career more fitting for him *without staying to disturb the others and then being tempted to create terrible divisions* in community relationships.

That the community continued is a proof of the love of Merlini for the Congregation and the strength with which he supports communion among the companions.

Let the reader not tell me that in that way I am sending the subjects away from the Work, because I have the response ready, given by St. Francis de Sales to one who advised him to ordain priests, who were needed. God's work needs learned and holy men, yes, but they must be for the Institute; but how can they be for the Institute if they do not observe the *Rule*? Are we perhaps expecting to make the mission house an inn, or a Babylon? But let us thank God, that today, when I write these things, we do not have any of those who deserve to be taken back on that point; and even if all those who entered had persevered, we would today, in 1832, have more than 300 individuals in the Institute, *we are happy, still, to have few of them*, but that they have one sole heart, one sole will.⁵²

In order to belong to the Institute one must have the vocation for community. The boarding school of San Felice opened on December 10, 1824. Here they accepted young men for the Institute and also those who returned home after being trained in the ministry.

Experience teaches that those not called to community life are unlikely to adapt to it, and end

up a burden rather than relief. It has also often been observed that those who have been called have lost their vocations on account of those who were not called to this life. At present we decided to accept only those who intended to persevere in the Institute.⁵³

The Little Things of Community Life

During the first meeting of Pievetorina, signed by St. Gaspar and his Council, some clarifications are made regarding the *Spiritual Notices for the Missionaries* (printed in 1820, before this meeting of June 7, 1820) the first written norms to be drafted. The first 24 numbers treat the spiritual life, how it must be carried out during the day, etc.

In the "Instructions on the temporal" at n.1, we should note the attention given to the person, the sense of justice which lovingly gives each one whatever is necessary, without reducing everyone to the same level:

Every individual who might receive commissions for Masses to be celebrated will refer the benefactor to the local superior, and these Mass offerings will be kept in a book with the respective headings. The superior will then be watchful to keep a methodical order to distribute to the individuals; so that if among these someone especially needy is recognized, that one will be regarded with special charity in the disposition of alms, which can be greater than the usual.⁵⁴

Gaspar indicates other small, but important attentions to observe in the relationships among missionaries in the *Circular Letter of 1825*, which he sent to all the houses with the obligation to copy it into the book of written minutes of the meetings and read it once a month for the entire year. That letter is of great value because it is one of those which was used in writing the definitive Rule.

It is divided in 22 points. At numbers 2, 3, 7 and 22, we read what interests us at this time:

2. In this circumstance (study conferences) one proposes and responds without fire, rather with using civil, prudent, humble terms.
3. Among the Missionaries there are never to be contests, jealousies, spite, jokes with sharp witticisms, and expressions that discourage the companions, and that disturb the peace and equilibrium of one of them. These should be kept far from our usual recreations according to the *Rule*, at which each one will always have to be present, except for a plausible motive to be manifested to the leader. *Vos estis sal terrae—vos estis lux mundi* 'You are the salt of the earth—you are the light of the world.' Great words especially for us! Faulty natures and difficult characters must be corrected with the continuous exercise of virtue. This must be the study of a missionary, this of a lay brother, so that it can truly be said among us—*ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres in unum* 'behold how good and how pleasant that brothers dwell in unity.'
7. Let there be a worthy respect among the Missionaries so that their behavior might conform; they will always use "*lei*" among themselves, and with the lay brothers "*voi*." That will avert any excessive familiarity and confidence; but since when meeting each other they must consider all as brothers united by vocation and spirit any partiality and distinction is forbidden, except that of positions and offices, in accord with the *Rule*, and except that mutual veneration and esteem with which we must approach each other *Honore invicem prevenientes* 'coming before one another with honor.'
22. Finally no one is to judge himself beyond that to which the responsibility assigned him authorizes,

reserving himself to expressing his feeling as needed in the meetings; and if it should be necessary to make up for an instruction of a companion, with charity and respect remind him of what might be necessary, and thus the bond of love in Jesus Christ may be preserved.⁵⁵

We highlight what establishes a healthy relationship with the others in community:

- responding calmly, using civil, prudent, humble expressions;
- there are never to be contests, jealousies, spite, jokes with sharp witticisms, and expressions that discourage the companions, and that disturb the peace and equilibrium of one of them;
- each person has his faults and one's own difficult characteristics should be corrected;
- respect among the Missionaries and the brothers; no excessive familiarity and secrecy; no partiality; veneration and esteem that allow approaching each other in goodness;
- not to assume more than what is established by those in authority; express one's own opinion as needed and in the meetings, charitably remind someone who falls short in his duty, preserving the bond of love;
- all of this permits saying truthfully: it is a good and joyful thing for brothers to live in unity!

St. Gaspar does not tire of encouraging reflection on these realities of common life for the Missionaries who devote themselves to spiritual exercises annually. He knows men and knows how many difficulties arise when more persons live together, therefore he says:

. . . infirmities are cared for with the oil of meekness. . . It is neither the walls or the combination of persons that make us better, but the victory over our self-love.⁵⁶

There is much left to do for oneself and for the Community. . . . The minister. . . tries to build up his Confreres of the Community, especially where he lives. Each is to examine his personal conduct compared to our. . . holy harmony and unity of spirit.⁵⁷

Let the Spirit be uniform in all, the will in agreement. . .⁵⁸

Therefore I am not in the Institute to operate according to my way of thinking. . .⁵⁹

The practical suggestions that Gaspar gives the superiors in the “instructions” of the first letter for keeping the Community united and advancing it with the progress of individuals, are interesting.

Let those who give orders learn how to serve. They should rule their confreres by exhortation rather than by command. In example, prayer, and charity, let them excel above all others, joyfully and promptly administering to the needs of all.

It is the profile of a superior.

He recommends to all:

Always show prudence, polite manners, and a well-ordered courtesy toward each other.⁶⁰

All the written minutes of these meetings prove that these community concerns were present in practical life, also after the death of the founder. We will report the testimony of only two meetings for the visits held at S. Maria in Trivio (Rome) on May 25, 1875 and January 30, 1882 by Fr. Enrico Rizzoli:

. . . even if the observance of our *Rule* cannot be called neglected, still it is not wholly conformed to the *Rule* so as not to have to express any desires regarding it; and it would be in a more

attentive readiness to appear for common acts, . . . in the scrupulous diligence to follow the schedule and in the study of very gentle and courteous manners. . .⁶¹

Even though harmony reigns in the house, and there are no disagreements, it will, however, be useful to remind everyone that an equality of affection with all, as well as behaviors, is to be desired, as St. Paul wishes, mutually courteous and anticipatory.⁶²

For St. Gaspar, the communication of ideas is important for relationships with others in community. If there should be a difference in thinking, this is not a problem, because such difference can be compatible with harmony. This comes out very clearly in the whole question that occurred with Fr. Innocenzo Betti about the habit of the brothers.

I have received your letter of April 1. I thank you for writing to me when you have the opportunity. It does not upset me; rather, I thank God for it. However, I do not think that I should refrain from expressing the ideas that I have, even though they may not agree entirely with yours, except in what is substantial. Our holy union and concord in the Lord is not altered in the least by this.⁶³

Here is the method he suggestions in misunderstandings:

You say: do we not understand each other anymore? Could all this be something permitted by God? Let us do everything with prayer. As for me, I shall adhere to this method: Pray, explain, communicate ideas; and, in case of doubt, adhere to the decision of the one who is presumed to have those helps of God without which we could only end up with confusion. . . If,

indeed, we may not agree in all of our opinions on matters that do not affect the basic rules, what does that matter? Should we be upset? No. Let us say:. . . should I then say no more? Not at all. Let us explain our position, let us pray, and that is how we will make progress. Even when I was in disagreement on accidental things with the first members of our group, I nevertheless accepted the plurality of opinions expressed and I still went forward: no ascetical person could object to such principles of procedure. Ordinarily, *ex me nulla decido* 'I decide nothing by myself.' I do recognize and I do repeat that the communication of ideas is very beneficial.⁶⁴

Gaspar's concern is not to split unity, not to lose the esteem and respect of the other; that things would be discussed peacefully, without agitation; that others are also capable of counsel and of prayer. He does not doubt the good faith of Betti: "the great veil is in the intellect, therefore not doubting the uprightness of heart."⁶⁵

Even when he sees that dialog cannot go further, he is clear and hard, but impelled by love. Thus he closes a letter, again to Betti:

May peace and concord reign in us; and since you stated that you have suffered anguish because of me, do not have any doubts, you will not receive any more letters from me, for, I repeat, they are useless. By different roads, we shall see each other again in Paradise.⁶⁶

For Gaspar, his house is the common life. Answering Betti who told him he was preparing an apartment for his going to Benevento, he states: "You say that you are preparing living quarters for me. *Palatium meum Vita Communis, secus nihil mihi sapit* 'My palace is community life, otherwise nothing gives me pleasure.'⁶⁷

These worries about attention and, I would say, about delicacy of community life have always been present in the Congregation, up to our times. Here is the warm word, insistent and sometimes also forceful, of Fr. Giuseppe Quattrino, addressed to the Missionaries in his annual letters for the spiritual exercises. He is faithful to the fundamental teachings of St. Gaspar and Merlini; he is an attentive translator and interpreter.

We must recognize that the life of the Institute, as it was conceived by the founder, bears a special accent of charity. Charity, he reminds us, flowers from mutual respect, from mutual understanding, mutual tolerance. We cannot expect the comprehension of others and refuse to give ours. . . .

We must admit with bitterness that where there is no charity, there is not the Lord. And it is not difficult to understand. *Division, discord, murmuring, intrigue exclude God and prejudice our ministry.* If, instead, we know how to live in charity, we will take giant steps in the interior life and in the progress of the Institute....

We are all called to make the *atmosphere of our houses ever warmer with inexhaustible diligent acts of charity.*⁶⁸

The primary attitude that must flourish among Missionaries is "concord." (cf. *Praxis* art. 9, of the *Rule*). He meditates on it in a circular for the exercises of 1959. For him peace is the soul of the Community, which is composed of human, broken persons, with their own prerogatives, but also united among themselves sincerely.

Peace signifies union of hearts, and therefore union of will, because the heart, deep down, is only the symbol of the affections, desires, leanings that belong to the will.

But it is not enough to unite hearts and the

will among themselves to have peace; it is necessary that such a union happens with the legitimate authority.

He invites the Missionaries not to focus on the defects of others, of the superiors, but on the gifts, the merits, their good will, their dedication, their constant work. And almost shouting, he says:

Why is it so easy for us to point out the defects and so hard to recognize the merits?

And he continues:

Peace is marvelous! Its beauty lies in the fact that, even while everyone retains their own personality with prerogatives, tendencies, different attitudes, it unites the will and the hearts around authority, for a common end, as happens in a splendid symphony generated by the sound of different instruments. . . Peace in what's good breaks any coalition of evil, because the latter already carries in itself the germ of dissolution.⁶⁹

It would be interesting and life-giving to do a study on community spirituality in the Congregation through the writings of other Missionaries, superiors and non-superiors of all the provinces. It would be a verification as to how the spiritual yearning of St. Gaspar has been received and lived in one of its basic values.

Interior Life—Prayer

The common life is animated by prayer and by the interior life, which are also means that lead toward bringing it about.

According to St. Gaspar the Community is founded on persons, if they are filled with God and balanced, the Community will also be true and in communion. He is very insistent that each year the spiritual exercises are

made and there be a spiritual retreat day each month. They are two means for growth in the spiritual life, of evaluation of one's life. He says that the Ignatian method must be followed. The director "will study the book of the Exercises of St. Ignatius very much, where many documents are found for the one who directs them."⁷⁰

He himself wrote the method to be followed for the spiritual exercises required by the Rule.⁷¹ He indicates the topics to be treated. After the "duties of a Missionary regarding his own sanctification and means to attain it. . .," immediately in second place he puts: "Duties of a Missionary regarding the companions and lay brothers, and how reciprocal edification in Community must be promoted."

Then, among other topics regarding the ministry, he says that "he is to speak. . . about abnegation of ourselves, love for suffering, the spirit of prayer, humility, and obedience, without which the holy ministry entrusted to us by God will never be well regulated. . . ."

For the seminarians he assigns as a second topic: "Duties of a seminarian in relation to the community in which he lives, and how the *Rule* is the means with which to build it."⁷²

In the "instructions" to the first letter for the exercises he exhorts to prayer, to contemplation and to the apostolate: "Love to talk with God. Be an apostle while working in the missions and a contemplative at home, but be this in accordance with the Rule."⁷³

The exercises are: ". . . days that are blessed by God who speaks to the heart in a special way. He wants to purify and free it from every bond and raise it to lofty aspirations of sanctity. . ."⁷⁴

The Institute provides the means to strengthen virtue.

. . . withdrawal from the world, recollection, silence, examination of conscience, and all the

other means enumerated in our 'Practices.' These means, indeed, do develop a strengthening of the Spirit and the progress to be made in reaching perfection! . . . This interior cultivation of the Spirit lays the foundation for the exterior life of the ministry. We are ordained to perform duties towards God, towards our Society, and towards our neighbor.⁷⁵

Prayer is the cornerstone of life and the condition for a fruitful apostolate. It is to be put in first place; only after this, should one dedicate oneself to the ministry:

Since the apostles in imitation of their divine Master *first* spend time in prayer, and *then*, in the Sacred Ministry of the Word—*nos vero orationi, et ministerio verbi instantes erimus*—often stopping external actions to withdraw to retreat alone and only with God, so must it be upon the conscience of those who guard observance, that the monthly retreat according to the *Rule* be unfailingly carried out.⁷⁶

Here we insist again on withdrawal as the opportune moment to listen to God, dialog with God. Every superior has to make it a matter of conscience so that every Missionary devote himself to it monthly. In the meeting of his visit of S. Maria in Trivio, January 30, 1881, there was the same concern: "The monthly retreat . . . it is good to remind each one to make one, since it is a practice of much spiritual profit."⁷⁷

During the meeting of May 5, 1875 "the more earnest observance of silence" is recommended.

In his collection of letters, St. Gaspar does nothing but recall things very important to the individual missionaries.

Assiduous prayer will be the principal support for all of our houses.⁷⁸

. . .do not neglect your day of recollection

called for by the rule, to gently recall to your spirit that “*exercebar et scopebam spiritum meum*” ‘I was exercising and testing my spirit.’ Oh, my beloved, how sweet God's voice sounds to our hearts in silence and withdrawal! That is when we are enkindled with warm charity, and, having a great love for God, our words then become like arrows shot into the hearts of our listeners.⁷⁹

Silence is held in great consideration not only during the spiritual exercises and retreats, but also daily at home. To the same Silvestri who had asked to have a harpsichord in the house of the Missionaries, St. Gaspar answered:

. . . As a matter of principle, it cannot be introduced, for very easily one contracts such an attachment that the observance of the rule collapses and private study goes out the window, so to speak. We all live in Community. For many, that repeated sound would constitute a disturbance. Sometimes very nice lay people would like to hear it: but, I do not want outsiders coming into our midst.⁸⁰

Prayer supports the community, as Don Quattrino says:

. . . The community is upheld by common prayer. When this is scarce and is not done, the Community does not live, it barely gets by, and starts drifting. . . . A community in prayer is a spectacle that entrances angels and afflicts sweet violence to the heart of God. The most painful trials can beat down on this community, but it will not grow faint, because it has with itself the Lord of victories. Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am in their midst.⁸¹

Also community and personal poverty are objects of reflection:

If it is stated that one of the pillars of the common life is poverty, we are not far from the truth. Saint Gaspar insists that there be uniformity in the common life and flight from all luxury. (cf. Reg. art. 3 pro *Praxi*; Cons. n. 163,1) But uniformity is based not so much on the common environment as on the type of life that is lived in the house. Those who live a refined life create a striking contrast with the others, when they don't actually offend them with their ostentation.⁸²

The use of common goods is a topic of exhortation. They are to be used with great care as though they were personal items. They must be at the disposition of all and monopolized by no one.⁸³

Obedience is strictly linked to community life and to relationships with superiors. Quattrino writes, as a matter of fact: "The cancer of disobedience is self-love. . . . Pride is a tremendous tumor. . . it nests so subtly and so tenaciously in us as to shave off the very root of love."

He reminds the superior that he himself must obey others, especially God. He is superior not to do and undo as he pleases, "but to lead the community paternally, to build it up with his good example, to direct its apostolate according to the laws of the Institute."

To the subject he says he must be docile, not let the superior find the "*fait accompli*," and not to desert community acts, and not lead the superior to do our will.

Obedience is love for the Congregation. . . Of what use would it be to work hard, work to the extent of wearing oneself out if we did it outside of obedience? We would reduce ourselves to so many unconnected cells, condemned to destruction. . . . Obedience is not only love, but is also

loyalty between superiors and subjects; it is harmony; it is peace.⁸⁴

This is the community spirituality of our Congregation, even if it is not always perfectly realized. This is our yearning; this is our fundamental choice.

The Community Meeting

The community meeting is one of the fundamental points of the Congregation because it leads to unity. Not only is it established in the Rule to be held very often (cf. art. 57), “*pro varietate circumstantiarum*” (cf. *Praxis* art. 58), but it is in fact held with almost a monthly frequency.

From a study of the record of the house meetings of San Felice di Giano, Albano and Rome (S. Salvatore in Campo and S. Maria in Trivio) we can pick up how much importance St. Gaspar, Merlini, and all the Missionaries gave to the meeting.

Merlini himself undertook summarizing “in compendium all the meetings since the opening of the said house” (of San Felice) until 1830, stating: “From 1815 to 1820 the meetings are not found in this archives, either because they were done orally, or because the loose sheets were lost.”⁸⁵ In two and one-half pages he summarizes, overall, these first years of the house. Then, he summarizes every meeting individually until 1830. From this day all the meetings are recorded. The last of the book is the “meeting of visitation held on the 23rd day of 1859.”

In the *domus primaria* of S. Salvatore in Campo in Rome, opened in 1841, there are no Community meetings for seven years. Merlini takes the situation in hand and has the superior call a meeting on July 5, 1848. In the minutes we read: “The circumstances of the house of S. Salvatore in Campo were such that, up till the present day there was no formal meeting held. However, the new general director, Most Rev. Fr. Giovanni Merlini,

wanting to execute what is prescribed in our Rule, had the superior convoke a house meeting of Community.”⁸⁶ The minutes are signed by Merlini and by the Missionaries of the house.

From the meetings of the three above-mentioned houses one can say that the formal meetings are called often, as circumstances require. Very often meetings are recorded with a monthly frequency, sometimes also more often. Even though there is not much material, they meet anyway, as is seen in the book of meetings of Giano at p. 86, where the meetings of February and March 1836 are recorded; the first of eight lines, the second of two.

Also if in the house there are only two Missionaries, the meeting is held anyway.

The content has as agenda: “items of ministry,” “items of Church and sacristy,” “economic items,” “items of the religious house,” “Community and jobs,” “various items.” When the date for spiritual exercises approaches they deal with organization of these, the schedule, the designation of the Missionary who must preach them.⁸⁷

Merlini gives the method to use, almost a methodology, during the visit meeting at Giano on November 4, 1843:

In the meetings,

- one proposes the matters to be discussed;
- there is discussion;
- the matter is resolved;
- the minutes are written, with a note as to whether the matter was resolved by consensus or a vote.

The formal meeting takes place when the record needs it, otherwise the Missionaries can take care of matters when they are gathered together.⁸⁸

The meeting was to be the place for solving every

problem, every doubt. In the first meeting of Pievetorina at n. 26 one finds this conclusion:

. . .If ever at the end some doubt should arise, which the substance of the *Rule* does not note, it will be able to be resolved during the monthly meeting, otherwise one comes to agreement with the general administration.⁸⁹

It is clear that the meeting was to be held monthly. This is the meaning of article 57 of the *Rule*: “Since the stability of the apostolic life depends so much on the unanimity of the individuals, the members will often be called into the meeting by the superior.”

That everything was to be done in the meeting, and that one was to express one’s own thinking, St. Gaspar writes also to Fr. Tommaso Meloni at Pievetorina, where there was some disagreement:

I have learned about the little clash with Fr. Santarelli. What you said comes to me as something new. But are you not a Missionary like all the rest? Everything should be handled through the house meeting. You are obliged in conscience, as an individual member, to state your opinion. If this does not work things out, let them await [my] resolution of it. . .⁹⁰

To know how the need for community meetings has always been alive in the Congregation as a means that leads to union, it is enough to go into the general archives a little and peruse the documents of the houses. Our Fr. Antonio Velardi printed a little work in 1921,⁹¹ in which he presents “The Institute in its external relationships” and in its “internal constitution.” In this second part we are interested in the paragraph in which he treats “what promotes union”: “the religious spirit,” “prudential and directive means,” “community meetings.”⁹²

The piety of the associates, the spiritual exercises,

the monthly retreat, the ascetic life lead to virtue and to love: “where there is all this there is also harmony.”⁹³

Human means, however, must not be lacking; the superior “who represents the primary life force of cohesion,”⁹⁴ must exercise the “ministry of justice. . . and all the ways of prudence”: exhortation, meeting, reciprocal clarifications and transfers of subjects in case of differences too deep and too frequent.⁹⁵

The other road is the community meeting. To periodically dedicate “a day in which all feel they are part of the same family, discussing freely on what can be a subject of division: details of schedule, assignment of ministries, competencies of offices.” Each one “assumes his part of the responsibility” and “the thickened clouds” dissipate “innocuously.”

“This healthily liberal spirit of our constitutions. . . promotes the effective and primary purpose of the common collaboration of the members, it also shows that there is an affective goal. . . not less important.”⁹⁶

The meetings must be held “with diligence (*assiduità*),” “with order,” “with a bond of responsibility.” These are the three characteristics that go back to the Rule.

Diligence. The informal meeting is held for something of minor importance. The formal meeting should be held no less than once a month and one can omit the spiritual conference to avoid the complaint of the waste of time. The lack of topics does not have to be a reason for not calling the meeting, because it would deprive someone of the freedom of having to say something, not having the strength to ask for a meeting just for himself. Even if the companions might be few, even only two, this point of the Rule may not be neglected, because also in two, there is a need to dissolve misunderstandings. The author remembers “some veterans who, remaining alone a long time, used to gladly take advantage of some passing companion, to open themselves to him and give form to a little meeting, which, equally, was recorded and

signed.”⁹⁷

With order. Keep the same method of the “study conference.” All have the right to speak, and this is carried out beginning with the youngest.

Each is free to say his own reasons and to reply.

The meeting should not degenerate into an “interminable dialectical skirmish.”

Determine the duration. A half hour could suffice if it is held monthly and if the topics have not accumulated.

The superior presides. He will have to moderate “with wise energy” and conclude the meeting at the time established by all. He should not end it arbitrarily, but at the expiration of the time, to avoid delay (longwindedness) and polemics.⁹⁸

With the bond of responsibility. Each one must assume his own responsibilities for what is stated, proposed, defended and contradicted. Everything will be registered in the meeting minutes, so that, in case of errors “you know whom to attribute them to, and they do not state differently from what is recorded.”

Thus each one will be thoughtful before speaking, proposing, contradicting. He will be wiser because he will have to take responsibility himself to answer for his words and actions.

The secretary draws up the minutes summarizing, in order, the theses, topics, defenses. His diligence and that of the superior will see to the reading of the minutes with the placing of the signatures as soon as possible, not beyond the next meeting.

Decisions and conclusions are made with secret vote as required by the Rule, article 59, even when the participants are few. “It has its *raison d’être*, since the inviolability of the urn can hide a trap, it can also accept a conscientious retraction.”⁹⁹

In this booklet by Velardi we found whatever belongs to the healthy tradition of the fundamental points of the foundation of St. Gaspar.

It is admirable to discover that our people wrote in order to help the Congregation progress and to pass on the origins of the Institute. In this regard we cite a type-written work of Fr. Amilcare Rey, for the centennial of the approval of the Rule, with its merits and also its time lapses.¹⁰⁰

CONCLUSION

At the end of the work certain things appear clear, that cannot be neglected. It is necessary to reflect on them.

- In the history of the Congregation it has always been stated that St. Gaspar intended to gather secular priests into community for a spiritual, moral, cultural recovery, and to begin accomplishing the “desired reform of the peoples.”
- St. Gaspar did not want to found a religious order in the strict sense.
- St. Gaspar, Merlini and the early missionaries stress community life very much, fighting against the difficulties of the small number of companions and against those who did not want to live a community life.
- In the beginnings and throughout the history of the Congregation, community has been held in great consideration. We have always insisted with timely reminders so that it would be implemented.
- The common life in the Congregation is conceived on the basic style of the community described in the Acts.
- Our communities are animated by the Spirit of love, so that one can speak of a Community spirituality all our own, or at least a style of community life proper to the Congregation.

A wish: that personal charisms be recognized as did St. Gaspar with his early companions; that we be able to

harmonize within the Congregation in one only Spirit; that the “*vinculum liberae charitatis*” ‘bond of free charity’ unite all and eliminate personal and collective individualism.

This article is a combination of a presentation given at the workshop for C.PP.S. formators in July 2003 and an earlier article which appeared in 1981. The translation was by Sr. Bertha Fischer, A.S.C., and Jerome Stack, C.PP.S. The earlier article is entitled, “Prete Secolari in Vita Comune,” in La Congregazione dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue, Rome: Edizioni Pia Unione, 1981, pp. 7-54.

History of the *Rule* of Saint Gaspar

Evaldo Biasini, C.PP.S

The topic of my presentation is the history of the *Rule* of Saint Gaspar. I will describe how the C.PP.S. *Rule* was gradually formed, beginning with the early years of the life of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, founded in 1815, until the canonical approval of the *Rule* given by Pope Gregory XVI on December 17, 1841.

In following the journey of the development of the *Rule*, I will quote the most important documents, nearly all taken from the manuscripts of St. Gaspar or of his early companions.

The presentation will include two parts: the first relates to the preparatory documents; the second regards the papal approval and the publication of the *Rule* without the *Praxis* in 1850 and with the *Praxis* in 1881.

For this work I was helped very much by a dear confrere, Fr. Luigi Contegiacomo, a valuable expert on this material, and the kind availability of Fr. Andrew Pollack, tireless worker in the archives of the generalate, for the research of the documents.

THE ORIGINS

The meeting was very solemn. . . Immediately the *Te Deum* was intoned. . . The following

morning the exact observance of the rules was immediately begun, which, then, consist in that which you well know.¹

With this letter of August 13, 1815, written in Giano, Gaspar informs Msgr. Belisario Cristaldi, the treasurer of Pius VII, of the arrival of Bonanni and the first companions who had arrived a couple of days before, and reassures him that with the opening of the first house of the Institute “*the exact observance of the rules was immediately begun.*”

In another letter of August 17 of the same year, again to Cristaldi, where he chronicles the birthday of the Institute, he begins:

It would be a good idea to write this letter more with tears of tenderness than with ink. The blessings of God are indescribable. Although I write this in great haste, reserving my being longwinded for the ordinary future. . . *We have introduced a holy method both in Church and in the house for the Workers*^a. I will explain everything in another letter.²

Merlini expresses regret saying: “. . . I notice that we have the misfortune of not possessing this letter that Gaspar intends here. . .”³ to send to Cristaldi in an “ordinary future,” in which he would have explained more completely “the exact observance of the rules, which consist in that which you well know,” and the “holy method introduced in Church and in the house for the Workers.”

Reading these quotations, some questions arise spontaneously: What rules or method is he talking about? Who formulated this “method” and when?

^aThe reference here is to the “Gospel Workers,” a group of priests organized by Bonanni in 1813 particularly for preaching missions.

To respond to these questions I think it is necessary to keep in mind that Gaspar had received a special charism from God which deputized him in a special way to the ministry of preaching. "This I recall positively and with certainty," testifies Merlini, "that they talked about the missions, for which he felt great enthusiasm."⁴

In a letter written from Lugo in September 1813 to the Countess Lucrezia Ginnasi: ". . . let us, therefore, keep each other often and always in the closest union in the sweetest Heart of Jesus. . . . In a special way, I myself am most needful so that, if it should please the Lord to keep me alive, I would dedicate myself to the ministry of giving holy missions."⁵ And to Santelli on January 14, 1814, he writes: "The undertaking of the holy missions has always been the object of my yearnings. . . ."⁶ And again to Countess Ginnasi: "The missions and my Xavier are constantly on my mind. . . ."⁷

But, since he had this charism, when did St. Gaspar think of founding an Institute for that purpose and giving it a rule? Was it already during the period of his deportation (1810–1814)?

Merlini, referring to a conversation he had with Gaspar "during the last year of his life," answers our question like this: ". . . during deportation there had never been a question of, nor was there talk of, the Institute and he was not planning it."⁸ But soon afterward he adds: "Fr. Biagio Valentini however told me that Albertini and the servant of God were discussing the Institute during deportation,"⁹ and gives this statement of Valentini a completely arbitrary explanation, that is, that the question being dealt with was the "Adorers of the Divine Blood." Therefore, Fr. Nicola Pagliuca, C.PP.S., general archivist, rightly adds the following note to this testimony of Merlini:

So, the words *'there had never been a question of nor was there talk of the Institute'* must have been a misunderstanding of Merlini, since he

was somewhat deaf as everyone knows; and it was a special favor of Gaspar that this defect did not prevent him from hearing confessions. Therefore in the apostolic process he suppressed these words. And how was it possible not to speak of it if they spoke about sisters, if they spoke about missions, if the prophecy of Maria Agnese communicated to Albertini spoke clearly of the Institute to be founded and of their founder? Humility, however, made Gaspar believe that, because of his weaknesses, the Lord had chosen others for that purpose.¹⁰

What must we conclude?

During their exile, Gaspar and Albertini certainly talked about an institute of secular clergy, the purpose of which would be the preaching of missions and spiritual exercises, with the title of the Most Precious Blood, in order to better spread this devotion so dear to Albertini, the spiritual director of Gaspar.

That conclusion is confirmed by the testimony of Valentini, Gaspar's confessor after Albertini's death. He is more reliable here than Merlini's doubtful statement.

But it is not for this reason that I maintain that, during exile, Gaspar and Albertini thought of composing a real rule for the Missionaries, as we know certainly they did for the women's institute, writing its fundamental articles. At the most, they would have exchanged ideas on essential points.

Therefore, if Albertini and Gaspar did not compose a rule during exile, who composed the "method" adopted at Giano during the early days of the foundation?

It is Merlini again who gives us an answer:

Regarding the *Rule*, then, I will say first of all that Bonanni drafted some very short regulations. . . These probably were written by him during 1813 when he began to deal with the union of the ecclesiastics to promote the holy missions.¹¹

This refers to the “rule for the Evangelical Workers” written by Bonanni on the occasion of the institution of the “Holy League of Evangelical Workers,” which occurred on June 17, 1813, the feast of Corpus Christi.

Merlini is of the opinion that this rule of Bonanni “did not have a place. . . in those early times” of the Giano foundation.

In fact, continues Merlini, “. . . in the rules there is some difference of feeling between Bonanni and the Servant of God. . .”¹²

The spirit was the same, because both one and the other were related to the work of the secular clergy for missions. One work, however, was not the other. Bonanni tended toward austerity; the servant of God, toward benevolence.

Bonanni. . . wanted to promote the reform of the people (the laity), the servant of God wanted not only the reform of the laity, but also of the clergy. Bonanni talked about a work limited to Rome; the servant of God, to the whole world.

The method of the missions was equally different. . . Bonanni wanted some weekly penance, the servant of God wanted this part to be left to the spiritual director, and that, being an institute of ecclesiastics it should have a less strict life according to the prescriptions of Canon Law, with the addition of rules appropriate for the purpose of the Institute.

Bonanni did not like the use of the crucifix that we customarily hang around our neck outside the mission; the servant of God put it as the distinctive symbol of the Missionary in the Institute. . .

In addition, Bonanni would have liked the choir (the divine office in choir), and the servant of God liked the method of congregations who do not have choir; and that, so much better

because the missionary has to study, preach and confess; therefore the private recitation of the canonical hours. . . ¹³

Therefore, the rules followed at San Felice certainly were not those of Bonanni.

Merlini believes that “in those early years a suitable tenor of life had been agreed upon and already agreed to by Msgr. Cristaldi and Albertini” and Gaspar.¹⁴ Therefore, according to Merlini, these men studied some practical norms together, deducing them from a way of life common to all secular priests. They completed them with some special norms based on those of some already existing missionary associations: the Holy League of Bonanni, the Work of Missions of Ven. Bartolomeo Del Monte of Bologna, that of the “Imperial” Missionaries of Rome, and others necessary for living together in view of a common apostolate.

In practice these norms were adopted by the first few missionaries in the only house that the Institute had at the time: that of Giano.

In 1820, during the early months of the year, St. Gaspar dictated to Fr. Francesco Pierantoni some real rules and had them printed in two sheets: “Regulations for Erecting the Houses of Mission and Retreats to be Promoted by the Secular Clergy” and “Spiritual Notices for the Missionaries of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Those rules were printed by the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood and Merlini himself tells us the reason that Gaspar gives for them:

. . . in producing some printed material for the Institute in 1820, he put it all under the title of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood; and here is how the servant of God expressed himself to Msgr. Cristaldi in an undated sheet about the printed material, but which is surely from 1820:

‘Everything is under the title of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood, following the criteria, although along another line, of the Archconfraternity of Christian Doctrine. How better to apply the Blood of Jesus than by means of the holy missions?’¹⁵

On June 7, 1820, Gaspar convoked the first meeting (*congressus*) of the Institute at Pievetorina. The first seven Missionaries were present: Fr. Gaspar del Bufalo, Fr. Biagio Valentini, Fr. Luigi Moscatelli, Fr. Luigi Gonnelli, Fr. Antonio Caccia, Fr. Francesco Pierantoni, and Fr. Innocenzo Betti.

The minutes of that meeting have as a title: “Clarifications on the Printed Notices and Regulations, Spiritual and Temporal.” They are practical norms in the spiritual field and directions “about the temporal.”

Then in 1822, testifies Merlini, when we were with Fr. Biagio Valentini, I was assigned by the servant of God to make a *Summary (Transunto)* of the rules on the printed and manuscript sheets, so as to have a booklet on everything that had been indicated up to that time.

Then the document was examined by the servant of God; and it seems to me he had a couple of other companions also read it before publishing it.

But Merlini, in his “History of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood especially of the First House of San Felice di Giano” also states that he had that task in 1821. In fact he says:

In 1820. . . on June 7 in Pievetorina, the first formal meeting was held. . . ; some rules were established, which in 1821 were again reordered in the mission house of Albano, and were published in synopsis with those incidental modifications which, for the time,

had to be observed, but which later had to be changed after more time and study.

Noting that this "History of the Institute" ends at 1832, and considering also that the *Summary (Transunto)* received an imprimatur on March 15, 1822, the date indicated on this occasion is more plausible, precisely because it is closer to the facts in the draft than the date indicated in the *Processes* of Albano.

The aforementioned rule was entitled: 'Summary of all that Regards the Pious Institute of the Mission Houses and Spiritual Exercises under the Title, etc. . . .' It has 45 articles and 21 pages.¹⁶

This *Summary* which presented an imperfect and not yet definitive *Rule*, and which the holy man gradually enlarged and defined better through circular letters, remained in effect in the Institute for the entire life of the 'saint,' and perhaps also in subsequent years, until the publication of the definitive *Rule* which He dictated in 1835 and then continued to correct and perfect until his death.¹⁷

Some of these circular letters were drafted by the servant of God; others by his men, always dependent on him, however.¹⁸

On August 31, 1828, Gaspar wrote to Betti from Rimini that he was in Benevento, asking him the following:

Weighed down as I am by the affairs of the Institute, I must place upon you an inconvenience. I would like you to make a summary or a resume of all the circulars dealing with the visitations required by the *Rule*, beginning, if I am not mistaken, from 1825 through the entire year of 1827, classifying them under the following headings:

- 1) Clarifications of the rules
- 2) Spiritual matters
- 3) Temporal matters
- 4) Questions regarding the *Praxis*

Adhere to this classification, or another similar to it and more methodical. Keep the originals until this circular can be distributed to all the houses, at which time notice will be given to remove from the archives all the aforementioned circulars, leaving there this one single report of which I speak, thus avoiding confusion of ideas. This document, joined to the *Rule sub omni specie boni*,^b will point out the exact purposes of the Institute. . . ¹⁹

Betti, however, despite the continuous requests of the saint, decided not to carry out that task, which remained to be completed on October 5, 1829. In fact, during the meeting of the official visit in the house of Benevento, held by St. Gaspar on that very day, we find: “Betti will review completely the whole archives, at the time when he will have to do the summary of our *circular letters*, keeping this and tearing up all the other copies.” (Cf. “Book of Congressi,” Benevento, p. 38, n. 21)

We do not know if the work was done afterward, and if it served the purpose that the saint intended for it. We did not find a trace of it in the archives. There is, instead, a document of the saint, written totally by his hand, entitled: “Reminders and Clarifications of the Rules, for which the Circular Letters of the Years 1825, 1826, 1827, may be Removed from our Archives,” divided thus: “spiritual topics—mixed spiritual and temporal points—temporal topics.”

We could imagine that Betti had sent the material he collected in the circular letters and that Gaspar used

^b“Under every appearance of good”

it to compose that document. But this supposition is not supported by any sure evidence. We can, instead, state with certainty that there was a work by Betti on the circular letters, but it did not follow the line indicated by the saint, nor did it serve the purpose that he initially wanted: it had a different and autonomous development.

Here, in fact, is what Betti himself recounts in the *Processes*:

Regarding the rules, a summary of them, it seems to me, was dictated by the servant of God, himself, to Fr. Biagio, and it is, to be exact, the summary printed in Fabriano. . . , arranged in progressive numbers, and which later, with the passing of time, was discovered to be rather insubstantial and lacking some things. These things, then, gathered from the various circulars or from letters of the servant of God, who, with experience removed and added as seemed to him useful or necessary for the good functioning of the Community and the ministry, were put into better order by me, by an order of the servant of God, given me in 1829, I think in the month of October. Then I sent them to, I do not remember what place, where he was living, to have him sign them, as he in fact signed them. I then had them printed in Naples, with the heading: "Rules of the Mission and Retreat Houses of the Ven. Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood. . ."

The work was readied in 1830 because in October of the same year, the saint sent it back to Benevento with his signature, as is learned from the "Book of Meetings" (p. 55, N. 5.).

The printing, then, must have been an initiative of Betti, and was done in 1832 (See a copy of it in the Vol. "Institute" of the archives, f. 368), not without a polemical reason.

With all probability, therefore, the work that the saint had organized as a summary of the circulars, gradually was being changed in the hands of Betti into “Rules of the Houses of Mission etc.”

Those rules, moreover, did not have importance in the formation process of the definitive *Rule*, to the extent that Merlini, describing the various phases of the process, ignores them totally. He talks about them elsewhere, incidentally, in order to clarify that in them, the date of the saint’s approval is anterior to the circular about the brothers’ clothes, and that neither the title page nor what is said on pages 5 and 6 is to be valued. . .²⁰

Before dictating the definitive *Rule*, Gaspar prepared a further document “Clarifications and Practical Reminders on our *Rule*, Following the Method of the Same.” The *Rule* to which this document refers is still the *Transunto* printed in Fabriano in 1822.

On the title page of this work, Merlini wrote a note in his own hand: “They were no longer valid, because later the *Rule* became distinct from the *Praxis*, and both have been improved, etc. In 1835 the present rules were not reviewed by the founder because he had provided as above, and the corrections are earlier.”

From that we can legitimately conclude that this is the last document prepared by St. Gaspar before the dictation of the *Rule*, quite distinct from the *Praxis*, which came precisely in 1835.

This document remains very valid for the practical information that it furnishes on the life that the Missionaries led in our houses at those times. It is very useful, also, for the corrections and additions made by St. Gaspar and Merlini in their own handwriting, while the text in the archives is written by Fr. Camillo Rossi, general secretary.

I would like to include here what was written in the

clarifications on article 45, which is the last one:

Since we can see that for the lack of printed copies of our *Rule*, it would be very inconvenient for each individual to copy the whole *Rule* along with its appropriate clarifications, so, the secretary and archivist will be giving it out at every request until a new printing.

Since now the *Rule* is a little more voluminous because of the explanations, for this reason it will suffice, in each meeting, to read 15 articles along with their clarifications, to be observed article by article.

. . . Finally, whoever needs further clarifications about the *Rule* or about the foundations should have recourse to the general director.

Blessed and thanked forever be Jesus who has saved us with his blood. *Viva Gesù, viva Maria, viva S. Francesco Saverio.*²¹

THE *RULE* APPROVED

Like a painting that is first sketched, then actualized and finally perfected and ennobled, so also has it been with our Society which presently is enjoying the good fortune of being perfected and ennobled for the greater glory of God whom alone we must serve.²²

This is how Gaspar wrote to the Missionaries on the occasion of the annual retreat in 1826. In fact, so that his Congregation, born and initiated to life, might be able to grow according to God's plan, he made sure to give it a *Rule* that was now complete.

Again, the testimony of Merlini is useful:

. . . in the meantime he was meditating on forming a *Rule* complete in all its parts, and he

often spoke about it. On the other hand, when it came down to action, nothing would be concluded; and he would say that it was not yet time, since God was ordering it. In that way we reached 1835, when one day, when I was with him here in Albano (it was the month of July), I heard him call me and say that before dying he wanted to dictate the *Rule* for canonical approval.

Immediately I began to write, and in repeated sessions I wrote, under his dictation, various sheets and then he told me to put them in order, dividing the *Rule* from the *Praxis*, as far as possible. This work was done and then re-read to him; he ordered me to have it put into good Latin by our companion missionary, Fr. Cristoforo Frioli. Following that, having gradually completed it and spending much time in prayer over it, in 1837 he had me take out various things that he wanted left in the *Praxis*.

Repeatedly I read this *Rule* to him in order to improve it more; and the last time was about November of this same 1837 when he was here in Albano; and also in this circumstance he made me take out some things to be left to practice, telling me that he would rather take out rather than add.

That is how it remained with us. After he returned to Rome, I had someone ask him about a doubt that I still had; and, then, having been called to Rome the day before his death, I asked him again about another point that seemed to me to have been left suspended and he answered me: '*standum in decisis*' ('abide by what is decided.')

. . . he then wanted to submit it to the judgment of the Holy See, to which he said he wished to be subject and he gave the petition, in

his own hand, to His Eminence Franzoni, whom I saw originally; but the Lord did not give him this consolation, because he did not provide the opportunity, and he told me repeatedly that it was not yet time.²³

I am presenting the petition prepared for Pope Gregory XVI, because, at the bottom, it has a precious note of Merlini:

To His Holiness of our Lord—Pope Gregory XVI

Most Blessed Father, the Missionary members of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood of O.L.J.C., prostrate at the throne of Your Beatitude, request that the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars (Religious) be commissioned to review their rules, which, though they result from the same canonical rules and mind of the Roman Pontiffs Pius VII and Leo XII, they would yet like this pledge of good will and affection of Your Holiness; etc., etc.

And this is Merlini's note:

Consigned (the petition) of the servant of God to His Eminence Franzoni with the *Rule*, but he (His Eminence) did not believe it opportune to deliver and recommend it. After his (Gaspar's) death he turned it over to me.²⁴

Finally on April 14, 1840, Fr. Biagio Valentini, successor of Gaspar, presented to the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Regulars:

. . . the *Rule* given by the servant of God. . . which in substance, except for a few incidental changes and additions, is the one we already had in practice. This *Rule*, then, is only what pertains to the secular clergy with the addition

of what relates to a community well-ordered according to the spirit of the Institution, which is, precisely, that of applying the merits of the Divine Blood by means of holy missions and spiritual exercises.²⁵

On December 17, 1841, Pope Gregory XVI declared:

*Huiusmodi Institutum summopere laudandum et commendandum esse, ejusque Constitutiones ad scopum obtinendum esse accomodatas; et nihil obstare quominus eisdem Constitutionibus regatur.*²⁶

‘An Institute of this kind is to be praised and commended in the highest degree, as well as its Constitutions, designed to accomplish its purpose. Nothing stands in the way for it to be ruled by those Constitutions.’

The *Rule* was printed in Rome in 1850 with this title page:

**REGULA CONGREGATIONIS A PRETIOSO
SANGUINE D.N.J.C.**

**Romae, apud Joannem Oliverium typ. Univ.
Rom.—cum permissu.**

The text contains the 71 articles of the *Rule*, the “*decretum*” and the “*Ordo Benedictionum quae ab habentibus facultatem conferuntur adscriptis Archiconfraternitati vel Sodalitati Pretiosi Sanguinis D.N.J.C.*”

‘Order of Blessings that are conferred by those having the faculty upon those enrolled in the Archconfraternity or Sodality of the Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.’

“Besides what is said in the *Rule*, the servant of God ordered collecting in an organized way everything regarding the *Praxis*. . .”²⁷

This *Praxis* joined to the *Rule* was printed for the

first time by General Moderator Fr. Enrico Rizzoli on January 25, 1881, and carries the following title page:

**Regula Congregationis Missionis a Pretioso
Sanguine D.N.J.C.
Cum Praxi, Alae, Typis Filiorum Mariae, 1881.**

CONCLUSION

In his last circular letter for the spiritual exercises, sent out a few weeks before his death, and which, therefore, can be said to be his spiritual testament, St. Gaspar makes an emotional defense of the *Rule*, relating it to the mystical vineyard of the canticle (1:6 and 2:12), to which he compares our Community:

The vineyard, however, has its protective hedge, so that the foxes may not stealthily creep in to destroy the vineyard. So, too, by way of comparison, does the *Rule* serve when it prescribes withdrawal from the world, silence, proper conduct with outsiders, prudence in our dealings, and virtuous industry in our activities. The cultivation of a vineyard requires skill, toil, vigilance, and fruitful rain. Likewise, in the cultivation of our communities, we need special graces. These are obtained through prayer, through exerting ourselves in accomplishing good works, in being orderly and in being vigilant to gather the awaited fruit. In a marvelous way, our Prescriptions and our *Rule*, which cannot be too highly recommended, serve as our support.

Finally, the third point for our meditation is our activity in furthering those objectives which lead toward the glory of the Lord. This we do in seeking to give them permanence through the commitments which our Society places before us, using the means that it designates as well as the practices which it encourages.²⁸

For all of this, concluded the saint: “*Qui Regulae vivit, Deo vivit*” ‘Who lives for the *Rule*, lives for God.’²⁹

Original article: “La storia della Regola di San Gaspare,” La Congregazione dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue. *Roma: Edizioni Pia Unione del Preziosissimo Sangue, 1981, pp 171–184. It was translated by Sister Bertha Fischer, A.S.C.*

The *Rule* as a Response to the Times

Emanuele Lupi, C.PP.S.

INTRODUCTION

From our founding to the present day, “the needs of the times” and the Church’s directions have often required the Missionaries of the Precious Blood to review the rules regulating their inner life and the apostolic activity they are called to perform. Even though fewer than 200 years have passed since our founding in 1815, I must say that “a lot of water has passed under the bridges of our history” and many things have changed since our founder went to Giano to initiate this Work, as Gaspar often called the Congregation. Throughout the decades, though preserving the charismatic spirit of the beginning, our Congregation did have to change some aspects of its apostolic activity.

The Institute was founded to put into practice one of the desired reforms of the Church which Pius VII had hoped for since the beginning of his pontificate. Pope Chiaramonti’s dream was to recover the proper balance in the relationship between the Church and society, which had deteriorated as a result of those totally “horizontal” and “enlightened” ideologies that had caused a decline in the relationship between humankind and their creator.

I would say that as a Congregation we are the

children of that time of change in the history of the world that opened the doors to our contemporary epoch. We are heirs to the French Revolution and of a world which thinks on its own and expresses its own opinion. For this reason I thought of starting this work by presenting a picture of the historical reality in which we were founded, and have therefore dedicated the first three paragraphs to this topic.

The nineteenth century, which witnessed our birth, was a time of change and novelty when the majority of the churchmen were still entrenched in the sand castles they had built for themselves. At the same time, though, amid the chaos of the time, a few farsighted men and women had started understanding the thread of history once again. In 1814, with a series of decrees, Pope Pius VII re-established the ancient religious orders that had been suppressed during the Napoleonic conquests, and encouraged the foundation of new congregations. We are among these congregations. For this reason, we shall move from general history, to focus on our own Institute, founded in a specific geographical context, the Pontifical State, entrusted with the task of “repairing the streams of iniquity, reordering the hearts of humankind, and sanctifying the souls by bringing the proper help to their cultivation,”¹ as was written in the *Transunto ‘Summary.’* Saint Gaspar gave a well-defined orientation to the Congregation, which was to have the task of preaching popular missions, conducting spiritual exercises, and foreign missions. Throughout his whole life our founder worked to defend these unique features, which were later established in the 1841 *Rule*, the first one approved by the Holy See.

Seven years later, though, in 1848, thanks to the work of Fr. Francis de Sales Brunner, the Congregation went beyond the frontiers of Europe and landed in America. From 1841 to the 1940s the *Rule* remained the same. This created the ambiguous situation of having rules made in Italy with an Italian mentality and a

typically Italian pastoral environment. Even though there was a *Praxis* that helped overcome certain difficulties, the *Rule* became quite inadequate. In the second half of the 1930s, thanks to an apostolic visitation initiated for several different reasons by the Holy See, the Congregation started to look over its legislative system, and finally (and not without some suffering in the process) it rewrote its Constitutions. In my opinion there are too many judgments and too little knowledge of the historical sources of that period.

After the final approval given to the Constitutions in 1964, our Congregation began to review its Constitutions in 1966 in response to the new directions coming from the Second Vatican Council and in response to the call of the Holy See to all religious orders to review their rules. At that time the Congregation produced the *Normative Texts* that still regulate the life of our Institute today.

I think it is useful to clarify some of the commonly used abbreviations in this work. “*ArchGenCPPS*” refers to our Congregation’s general archives, “Conti” refers to the publications and archival documents edited by Father Beniamino Conti, C.PP.S. Every abbreviation is followed by its archive indications.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: CHANGES AND NOVELTIES

Even though conventional calendars mark the nineteenth century as starting at midnight between 1799 and 1800, if we look at the facts, at what came before and what followed, we immediately realize that such a demarcation is not meaningful. The culture of the nineteenth century is the result of previous evolutionary and cognitive processes that stretch back to the Age of Enlightenment, which meant shifts on the political, religious, and social levels, a whole series of revolutionary claims characterizing the passage of an age. If on one

side the nineteenth century could be considered the most revolutionary one in the socio-cultural history of the Western world, on the other we must acknowledge the fact that its upheavals, no longer contained within national boundaries, contributed to the birth of our contemporary age, in all its beauty and depth. What used to be, no longer existed; it seems that all of a sudden history quickened its pace.

The year 1789 calls to mind what is commonly called the French Revolution. It represents the climax of the time that had preceded it by working to "enlighten" the minds of humankind, awakening it from the existential slumber it had been forced to live in. The time had come to free human spirits from ignorance, superstition and prejudice. Reason could breach the fog of the unknown and the mysterious reality that surrounded it.² The sense of mystery had relegated people to the slumber of reason for too long. Kant and other authors had tried to awaken humanity from its sleep. History was put in question: according to Voltaire it was no more than "a tale of facts, which, unlike fairy tales, are believed to be true, whose degree of certainty is nevertheless extremely troublesome."³

Faith itself was no longer founded on the "traditional God" which the Church had proclaimed, and Christianity itself "was no longer something warming the hearts and enlightening consciences, but simply a label and an outer embellishment."⁴ Reason had become the *primum*, common to all human beings, which every consent and dimension of life should come from, and nature the freshness of humanity's condition, untouched by the fabrications of history and the idols of old. There was a lively spirit of denouncing, to the point of calumny, of the obscurantism of theological arguments, religious intransigence, and popular superstition. Religion was to be delivered from the power and from the intolerance justified by scholasticism and Canon Law at the service of a priestly caste. This was the attractive and

powerful vision of the *esprits forts* of the time.

A rise of tourism characterized the eighteenth century. European inhabitants started to build a vast community characterized by increasingly common social behaviors. "Montesquieu called Venice 'the joyful tavern of Europe,' the English started to visit the south of the continent starting from the carnival in Nice, soon in competition with that in Venice. There were also Florence and Rome and the thermal sites of Aix and Plombières, the trend of seaside holidays and, by the end of the century, the mountains."⁵

The nineteenth century, building on the legacy of the eighteenth, was a time of mass migrations toward places promising favorable future perspectives and chances for free development. Public opinion had started showing its face in the previous century and now it was strengthened. Newspapers and magazines increased in numbers and started reaching single citizens, even by subscription. In November 1792, the French Republic conquered Savoy and then the County of Nice. In 1797 the Cisalpine and Ligurian Republics were formed, in 1798 the Roman Republic and in 1799 the Parthenopean Republic. In all these battles, the army became a vehicle conveying this "new evangelization," characterized by a sense of superiority and the despising of Christianity.

Writers, researchers, and adventurers traveled with the armies. They revealed new places to growing numbers of people. In Italy, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the French writer Henri Beyle, better known as Stendhal, came to the peninsula with Napoleon's army. Thanks to him we have more than an idea about what life in the main Italian cities was like at the time and what European intellectuals used to think about Rome. Even though French was the international language and most of the noble classes in Europe prized the "Gallican" cosmopolitan style, Italy still was one of the main sources for sampling a bit of culture. Napoleon

himself was in love with Italian history and culture. We know he was a great reader of the works of Plutarch, Cicero, Cornelius Nipote, Titus Livius, Tacitus, and many others. In spite of all this, he never went to Rome, which he saw as the city of the conquering empire, more than the city of the popes. His idea of Rome was “particularly sublime, founded as it was on ancient historical memories and his personal desire for glory, a community of language and culture, and at the same time connected to the lack of proportion between individual destiny and the yearning for immortality that the Roman Empire and its emperor [. . .] had once embodied.”⁶

A NEW CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The Church was not exempt from these winds of change, which touched her very core.

For the first time since Constantine, the French Revolution accomplishes the complete separation of the Church from the state. From the Revolution onward, humanity, even Catholics, got used to living its social and political life without the Church’s interference, without recurring to its transcendent powers and to its ministers deemed to be provided with those powers. Until the time of the French Revolution people didn’t even know what it meant for the Church and the state to be separate.⁷

The two realities had become one, to the point that there was confusion between the terms “the faithful” and “citizens.” We should also point out, however, how some people had started to grasp the need for a reform in religious life and in the clergy itself. A few members of the clergy had started to sense the embarrassment the civil society felt. The Revolution violently and quickly did what a few experienced priests had been denouncing

since the beginning of the century.

This is the case of Monsignor Giuseppe Antonio Sala, who attacked the behavior of many churchmen of his time in his “Plan of Reform Humbly Submitted to Pius VII.” In several passages of his work, he reproves the Church of the previous decades for

. . . 1) having confused the sacred with the profane; 2) not having wanted to amend many mistakes, justifying them by saying “that’s the way it’s always been done”; 3) having adopted the maxim: “lets try not to do worse” and in doing so, reaching the point that many people deservedly call it the heresy of our times; 4) having lost and forgotten the science of knowing people.⁸

He answers these issues, saying that in order to avoid committing the same mistakes, “it is necessary to:

. . . 1) separate what is spiritual from what is temporal; 2) correct abuses, without being hindered by frivolous pretexts, such as contrary customs; 3) to ban, especially in ecclesiastic matters, any wrongly placed fear and any overwhelming compliance; 4) learn how to understand humanity deeply and well, to be more concerned with offices than with personalities.⁹

In the same article he also underlines how:

In his being the Supreme Pontiff unites the twofold presence of head of the Church and temporal sovereign of his states. The first quality is crucial and inherent. The second is accidental and accessory. The former must stand out against the latter; one should not mix with the other. As a consequence, if the two qualities are distinguished, they will not be confused.¹⁰

On more than one occasion the author takes

specific care in stressing that, being the see of the pope, many strangers see Rome as the “angelic” city, but often it is not as it should be, due to the indulgence of much of the clergy. Monsignor Sala is one of the authors who pressed the most for the reconstitution of the religious institutes suppressed by Napoleon’s religious reforms. Napoleon considered the orders and their vows as a form of disrespect for human rights and an immoderate exercise of power. Religious vows are useless, they are senseless, and they enslave humankind. There were frictions in the history of the orders, and Sala’s objective was to seek for dialogue, looking beyond the diversity in their charisms. None should feel better than the other; each is called to preserve its own original vocation, since:

Those who professed a contemplative life should not embarrass themselves with an active one and vice versa. Those who were engaged in a mixed life should satisfy their double obligation. Those who embraced an institute prescribing little things should not aspire to greater ones. If the Carthusians went around preaching and building missions they would get nowhere; the same if the Dominicans shut themselves in cells like the Camaldolese Hermits; if the Camillians opened schools and the Scolopi closed them and started assisting the sick. Each institute should attend its own office, which is good and holy, without getting mixed with those tasks which do not belong to it.¹¹

Sala was not against new foundations, but he said it would be better to take it easy, so that too many institutes do not repeat the same charism with the result of creating duplicates or exaggeratedly personal interpretations. This is the reason why he says it is important to return to the original root of every spirituality, in order to avoid creating too many institutes regulated by the *Rule* of Saint Benedict, Saint Augustine, or others. He

severely condemns the error of those who say that all ancient things are wrong.

Sala's project was a personal reform which was never well known to the public.

Therefore, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Church, especially in Europe, was on one side subjected to persecution and bullying (Pius VI died an exile; Pius VII began his pontificate in neutral land, far from Rome, and lived five years in exile; many priests were imprisoned and sent into exile for not having sworn fidelity to the Napoleonic Constitution.) and on the other, it realized it needed a renewal after centuries of abandonment, in spite of clumsy attempts of reform which only dulled it with useless burdens. Unfortunately, it realized this due to tragic events, which were part of an exaggeratedly harsh revolutionary context.

Though dramatically affecting religious practice, declericalization and desacralization undoubtedly did lead to purification, an urge to start afresh, getting rid of old structures and starting to associate religious forms to civil forms. [. . .] By overthrowing the protective thrones and driving the bishops out of their principalities, the revolutionary tide had overturned the situation. Consequently, the clergy, who used to seek inspiration from bishops immersed in temporal concerns, could now see inspiration for their conduct in the instructions of the Holy See.¹²

The Italian ecclesiastical geography was varied from a social and cultural point of view. There were more priests in the south than in the north. Theological studies were far from being scientifically sound in several regions. In Naples there was a solid scholastic tradition, while in Lombardy and Venice the reform of Joseph II continued. The study of Scripture as an autonomous

subject was generally totally absent, while dogmatic and moral theology were widely studied.

On March 18, 1800, Pope Barnaba Chiaramonti was elected. He was called to confront Napoleon and start a new chapter in the history of the Church in the nineteenth century. Pius VII's ideas were clear and he knew where he wanted the Church to go.

God shall rule his Church. What are we? If we weren't sure of the protection of such a grand ruler, conscious of our weakness and acquiescent only to his Providence, wouldn't we take any care of the Christian flock? On the contrary, the more we acknowledge our weakness and serve the Church as if we were hoping and expecting nothing from Divine Providence, the more industrious we shall be. Do we expect to govern such a complex reality, such a serious and dangerous reality only by our own strength? How could we support such anguish on our own, so many duties, if you, venerable brothers, will not be available to help? You understand how unhappy the conditions of the Christian world are. You see how much help the Christian flock needs in times of so great corruption, for its own salvation. You are above us due to your age and wisdom. Come to our aid (we beg you for love of our Lord Jesus Christ); come to our aid with your advice; let us know what should be eradicated or planted, destroyed or edified; relieve a little of the weight you put on our shoulders with your strength. We give our sacred promise that your word, advice, and help shall be much appreciated at all times.

[. . .] We pray God to assist us in our intentions, and the more this weakness of ours is revealed to everyone, the more may his grace make His Divinity shine and be admired in the ruling of his Church.¹³

Thus he wrote in the first official document after his election. Another document followed in the bull *Post diuturnas*, on October 30, when he:

. . . drafted a timid attempt to renew institutions by eliminating a certain amount of abuses, which were much too evident, and by introducing a few noble laypeople within the administration, which until then had been reserved for the clergy only. He took a few useful economic measures, such as the proclamation of freedom of trade (March 11, 1801), a limited division of the large holdings of land (September 15, 1802), a compromise solution for secularized Church property and a partial recovery of the disastrous financial situation and a simplification of the tax system.¹⁴

From 1809 to 1814, like many other Italian prelates, Pius VII lived in exile. In the end this had positive consequences for the re-establishment of the charismatic authority of the Roman Pontiff. "The capture and captivity of Pius VII in 1809 gave back to Rome the moral authority of martyrdom"¹⁵ and it awakened once again in the men and women of the time their love for the Vicar of Christ. Even though the Church lost its political power, it "intensified its spiritual activity"¹⁶ in any case. I believe it is important to underline the fact that at the time of his defeat, Napoleon found his sole defender was the successor of Peter, who, as a true shepherd, was ready to forgive him.

THE RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH BEGINS

In 1814, after having returned to Rome, Pius VII started to put his plan of renewal of the state of the Church into practice, especially by re-establishing the religious congregations suppressed during the Napoleonic regime. On July 1 of that same year he

issued a circular letter exhorting bishops to open houses in the shortest time possible to host temporarily all dispersed religious. In the same document the pope mentioned a general reform which would have started as soon as possible. For this reason he explicitly referred to his desire to create a commission made up of cardinals, archbishops, priests, a few superiors of religious orders, canonists and theologians to put this idea into practice.¹⁷ On August 22 of the same year, the newborn Congregation for the Reform of Regulars issued the decree that was much desired and which was to be used as a foundation stone for the renewal, being the expression of the guidelines proposed by the Apostolic See.

*Ubi Primum*¹⁸ was issued at a truly appropriate moment. It is made up of eleven articles. The first two prescribe the opening of at least one house of each religious order in Rome. At least twelve religious men or women that maintain the customs of their institute should live in them. The third article requests the opening of a house in Rome to house at least one general procurator to discuss the matters concerning the religious institute directly with the Apostolic See.

Article four states that the general superiors will be chosen directly by the pope. According to the fifth, the generals may choose their councilors, but their choice must be later confirmed by decree of the sacred congregation. The following articles state that power of readmission of single religious is reserved to superiors, and all those who wish to re-enter the convents must sign their written pledge to live by the rule of their order, with special regard to community life. Article ten establishes the conditions for this and the eleventh ends the decree recalling that:

Everyone should abide strictly by what is established with prudence and piety by the sacred canons, the apostolic decrees, the rules and the constitutions of the individual orders, especially

with regard to mental prayer, choir services, examination of one's conscience, frequent sacramental confession, silence, the chapter and the correction of faults, readings at the table, the reading of the Holy Scripture, the discussion of cases of conscience, the sermon on the discipline of the rule and acquiring virtues, and finally with regard to the prohibition against accepting offices or other spiritual tasks of any kind outside one's order without the superior's explicit permission.¹⁹

Orders such as the Benedictines, the Camaldolese and the Carthusians were re-established, and on August 7, 1814, with the bull *Sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum*,²⁰ after considering how in 1801 and 1804, adhering to the requests of their rulers, he had consented to the re-establishment of the Society of Jesus in the Russian Empire and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, Pius VII ordered its re-establishment in all states.

The pontiff was again the ruler of his lands and was reconstructing the life of the Church. In the struggle with Napoleon, the pope had won and the emperor was defeated. The successor of Peter was the man who would lift the fortunes of all believers who looked at Rome as the true center of Catholicity, the conqueror of human misery. "The pope had acquired great prestige and everybody saw him as the only power capable of saving and defending the freedom of peoples."²¹ Italian Jansenism was defeated in these very years and Gallicanism was forced to give way to ultramontanism. The latter reached its ultimate victory with the Vatican Council I and the dogmatic constitution *De Ecclesia Christi*, which stated once and for all the infallibility and primacy of the Roman pontiff. The only council in the nineteenth century was just the culmination of a series of aspirations that characterized religious restoration. Love for the pope became something so significant that

there was an extraordinary increase in phenomena of devotion to the bishop of Rome, to the point that De Maistre wrote his *Du Pape* (1819), placing the Church at the head of society and stressing how the whole of Christianity, therefore, was completely synthesized by the pope.

In the hearts of the men and women of the nineteenth century there began what will later be considered a central issue in the history of that age: Providence as a grace of God which overturns the plans of humankind, changes hearts and makes people who seemed to pay tribute only to their own passions the instruments of his justice. According to Rosmini the sense of Providence is

. . . an act of faith in God, who knows all ages and all events and governs them with his power, wisdom and love. Drawn toward humankind by his love, God calls men and women to take part in his life and with his 'very active Spirit,' he guides it to attain the goals assigned for the 'constitution of the world.' The sense of Providence therefore leads to see not only one's life, but the entire breadth of history, all ages, under the sovereign action of God.²²

Other figures of the age also found Providence to be their reference point and their motive within their personal life and the institutions they founded. Saint Paola Frassinetti, the founder of the Dorothean Sisters, abandoned herself to Divine Providence. Asking for the constancy of the cross, she used to repeat: "Will of God, my heaven," as if to express her complete and full abandonment to the arms of God the creator and guide of all those who entrust themselves to him.²³ Saint John Bosco showed an extremely realistic attitude, taking the initiative in order to urge Providence to help him. He used to pray and make others pray for Providence to give to his work in favor of young people all the help it needed.

Saint Joseph Benedict Cottolengo, from the same

territory as Don Bosco, had a different perspective. He founded a congregation, the Little House of Divine Providence, engaged in assisting incurables and offering everlasting praise to God. The “Heavenly Father” gave us “the best,” Jesus Christ, through his redemption; he will never withhold lesser things, such as our daily bread and heaven itself. This meant abandoning oneself completely to our provident God, “master of unlimited trust in Providence.”

The spirituality of Cottolengo was influenced by the forms of ascesis of the nineteenth century, which had a hierarchic and Christ-centered piety with a strong presence of the doctrine of the Mystical Body²⁴ of the suffering Christ, who gives himself to humankind as it finds in prayer the strength to face life’s tests. The Body of Christ put to the test by his cross and death to save humankind from its sinful condition is another important issue within nineteenth century spirituality, which sees the complete gift of the Son of God as the source of salvation.

Such a spiritual dimension also has social consequences. Overwhelmed by the suffering inflicted by the unjust, the Church now rejoices, for it stands once again and there are many parallels to the death and resurrection of Christ. All forms of spirituality and devotion referring to the “suffering-gift” of Christ were born here. In an age where an “eclectic and composite”²⁵ spirituality ruled, several Christ-centered devotions rose, and today they are still an active part of the Church. In the course of the last three centuries they characterized the life of the saints, sometimes the founders, all of which became its heralds.

Saint Gaspar was formed in this climate and in this climate he founded our Congregation. He actively took part in this milieu, by proposing the devotion to the Blood of Christ in the forms we know. Its devotion “is connected to the cruelty of the French Revolution and it implies an expiatory and reparatory purpose.”²⁶ Along

the same line of thought of Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Bonaventure, Blessed Angela of Foligno, Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Mary Magdalene de'Pazzi, and Monsignor Albertini, Saint Gaspar proposed the theme of the Blood of Christ as a sign of the total self-giving of the Son of God to humankind, sparing nothing of himself.

Even though it was a typically Italian reality, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the spirituality of the Blood of Christ started to spread from the Peninsula to other environments. We must mention the young Oratorian Frederick William Faber, a convert from Anglicanism, who besides being so convinced as to write that "the whole history of the Church is a history of the devotion to the Precious Blood,"²⁷ was also the one who spread this style of piety in England, giving life to several confraternities.

A RESPONSE TO THE DEMANDS OF THE TIMES

When spirituality turns into visible fruits, it generates new realities. Sanctification is necessary inside and outside the Church. The body of Christ continues to suffer the torment of the cross. Divine justice is apparently suffocated by human injustice.

Together with others, these were Saint Gaspar's feelings when he founded the Congregation, an institute he wished to offer to the Church, for his times and for the future, an effective collaboration in response to the demands of the times.

"*Ubi societas, ibi lex*" 'where there is a society, there is law' states a passage of Canon Law. However large or small it may be, a society does need laws. Because of this, some time after its foundation, the newly founded "Work" began to feel the need for a rule. The first one to be approved was the *Rule* of 1841, four years after the death of the founder. Until then the *Transunto* 'Summary' had been in force. This was a series of

memorandums written to the pontiff and printed in 1822. It was mainly an apologetic document, with some indications given now and then by del Bufalo himself in response to specific issues. In his chronicle, Guglielmo Aretini-Sillani wrote:

. . . after the foundation of Pievetorina^a some notices were printed, specifically designed for missionaries, and they were used as a rule. There were some doubts concerning the application of said notices, so proper explanations and correct interpretations were given. This was done in the house of Pievetorina, where a meeting was held on June 7, 1820, attended by Fr. Gaspar Canon del Bufalo, general director, Fr. Biagio Valentini, superior, Fr. Luigi Moscatelli, secretary, Fr. Luigi Gonnelli, bursar, and Fr. Antonio Caccia, Fr. Francesco Pierantoni, and Fr. Innocenzo Canon Betti, all Missionaries. This meeting deliberated on many issues, among others the habit of the lay brothers, that is the overcoat, tie and black socks with a round hat; half an hour meditation was introduced, either before lunch or during the night, as well as the conference an hour and a quarter before midday and the examination a quarter of an hour before. It established dates for the church and for the house; that there should be a few spiritual books at the doorkeeper's lodge; that those who entered should be accompanied; that during Lent, where collections are customary, they should go to the preachers; that the keys to the house and to the

^aThe house of Pievetorina, including the convent and the church, was given to the Congregation by a rescript dated December 9, 1819.

Church should be given to the superior; that the outside bell should be turned off during the time of rest, even during the day. And finally, the bursar should take note of all persons.²⁸

As we can see, with regard to internal house management a few interesting elements start to come to the surface. In the same chronicle, Sillani reports something else, which is very interesting.

In 1821 the government of Pievetorina asked the Missionaries to take upon themselves the care of the souls and public education as well, in order to increase their earnings and the number in residence, but Venerable del Bufalo wrote from Giano that it was contrary to the Spirit and the purpose of the Institute. Therefore, it would have been an abuse to go and confess in the parish church.²⁹

The canon's ideas were clear since the beginning and in article 33 of the *Transunto* he explicitly stated that:

Schooling is not in line with the Institute; therefore, it is forbidden to do so, whatever pretext there may be, even in private forms. The Missionary should take an interest uniquely in spiritual matters. Who, furthermore, is not well aware of how troublesome it is to be tied to the parish or other similar offices for the frequent ministry of mission?³⁰

Ministries requiring stability were not in tune with Canon del Bufalo's ideas. On January 22, 1821, he had written the following to Don Luigi Gonnelli who belonged to the Community at Pievetorina: "Totally negative on the vicariate at the holy office. It is not compatible with the life of a Missionary. It is a resident office."³¹ By "resident" he means "static." Saint Gaspar

profoundly believes it is impossible to stay still, and when mission does not carry the missionary to preaching outside, he should carry out his ministry at home. For this reason the mission house, as he loved to call the residences of the Congregation, must always be a reference point for the surrounding clergy and people. The mission house is useful

. . . to the bishops, in order to facilitate the healthy practice of mission and exercises in the diocese; to the parish priests, since it helps them to promote morals and frequent attendance to the sacraments, by preaching and confessing; to the clergy formed for apostolate, or any branch of ministry it may be in charge of, for through the communication of the spirit it learns how to be truly holy and sanctifying; to regular institutes, enlivened by regenerating and directing the youth to its true vocation; to the people, by founding brotherhoods or pious congregations according to sex, condition and age, and finally to all those who wish to withdraw and undertake holy spiritual exercises.³²

Everything should aim at putting into practice the much desired reform of religious life, desired by Pius VII and embraced by Saint Gaspar.

In the disorder of the times, in which it pleased God for us to live, and in the needs for the reform of the people, the Lord, rich in his mercy, wished to raise up an effective instrument to repair the stream of iniquities, bring order to the hearts of humankind and sanctify souls by administering the proper aid to their cultivation. Therefore, by means of his Providence, he presented to the Roman Pontiff Pius VII, happily reigning, the high plan of instituting some houses of mission and spiritual exercises.

With these two arms of apostolic ministry he could fight sin and bring the stray back to the open heart of Jesus. In doing this, the Most Blessed Father set as his rule what Benedict XIV of happy memory established by promoting the very important work of the Archconfraternity of Christian Doctrine, which served to urge the clergy and the people to renew education, such a necessary element for knowing and observing the holy law of God.

We truly live in times when it is necessary to urge the clergy and the people to the much desired reform. The libertines do not love the Catholic religion and they resolutely wage war against the crucified, and they would be pleased at seeing everyone fall victim to justice, by multiplying vices and sins. Therefore, zeal for the glory of the Lord should light every heart with holiness like a fire; and reproducing the glories of the crucified, it should open the springs of mercy in applying the merits of the Blood of Jesus Christ, which alone can appease the justice of the eternal divine parent.³³

In the *Transunto* there are also some parts of the previous rules of the Gospel Workers: there are some elements of the spirituality of the Sacred Heart, which will develop in other environments in the second half of the century, and there is some mention of the Precious Blood.

Even though not recognized as a religious institute in the full sense of that term, community life played a role of highest priority. The community takes care of the requirements of its members: “where it can, the house shall not neglect taking care of the specific needs of each subject,”³⁴ states article 3, and the life of prayer plays a most important part in the house of the missionaries.

One element, which is not present in the *Transunto*

but is present in several of the memoranda presented to the pontiff, is the issue of foreign missions. In 1825, one memorandum addressed to Leo XII clearly states that the Congregation: “must be immediately subjected to the Holy See and to the bishops, since the Institute also envisages foreign missions.”³⁵ And the memorandum presented in 1829 to Pius VII says:

The bishops’ agreements for other foundations go on. They shall compensate the lack of vocations to solemn vows, and activate the clergy to apostolic life. The Isle of Malta has recently started exchanging letters with Naples, since it wishes to establish in detail one of these, and God has already given rise to others abroad.³⁶

The same document continues:

Returning to Pope Leo XII, of happy memory, and observing his work in greater detail, he too yearned to continue and protect the new Institute. He advised Most Eminent Cristaldi, present today and then treasurer general, to seek for some premises to establish the Congregation in Rome, where languages could be studied for missions abroad, in order to bring new support to the supreme concerns, which the high pontiff advocates.³⁷

In the memorandum Canon del Bufalo sent Gregory XVI in 1831, he still mentions Leo XII’s desire to give ample property to the new Congregation in Rome, where Missionaries studying languages to dedicate themselves later to missions abroad could find a place to stay. Further on in the same memorandum, he adds: “That communication is urgent for making necessary changes either in personnel or in climate, as well as to cooperate, *a suo tempo* ‘in its time,’ in spreading the glory of the Lord abroad. (Pope Leo XII, through the propaganda, made use of one of our men to give missions, precisely to

the island of S. Maura. That member has recently been called by God to eternity.)”³⁸

Even though he does not explicitly mention him, Gaspar refers to Fr. Gaspar Carboneri,^b who responded to the invitation from the cardinal pro-prefect of the propaganda, Dalla Somaglia, to del Bufalo on January 7, 1826, and who had left for Zante on March 12 the same year. The mission however was not successful, and on January 27, 1827, he retired from his office and left for Corfu and then for Rome, arriving on February 15. He then left for Sonnino, and nearly immediately afterward for Vallecorsa and finally for Benevento, where he lived only 6 months. On January 30, 1828, he died. We still have a letter written by Fr. Carboneri, a very interesting one, which I wish to quote. He wrote it on February 25, 1826, to Fr. Giovanni Merlini, saying:

When St. Ignatius founded the Society of Jesus, before the pope sent the bull of approbation, St. Francis Xavier was the first to be elected to go to the lands of the infidels. After the establishment of the Congregation of the Precious Blood, before the bull of approbation

^bBorn at Monastero di Vasco, close to Mondovì in 1778, after having attained a degree in letters, he moved to Rome in 1803. He worked as an educator in the Clementine College. Two years later he became canon at Ariccia and taught rhetoric in the seminary of Albano. In 1810 he was imprisoned and deported to Corsica for not having sworn loyalty to Napoleon. He managed to escape and take refuge in Sardinia, which was not under Napoleon’s rule. He held different offices at Cagliari. In 1814 he returned to Albano and continued his ministry until 1820, when he had to leave his office for health reasons. In 1820 he retired to Ariccia, where he met St. Gaspar in 1823, who was preaching a mission to the people in that very year. He left his office as a canon and followed del Bufalo collaborating with him until the time of his death.

was sent, I am the first to be elected to go to the Ionic Isles, where the main faith present is the schismatic-Greek. What do you think of my destiny? It could not be more peculiar. But will I be up to it? This is what makes me tremble, so I must recommend myself warmly to your prayers and the prayers of all your companions, so the characteristics of God's specific goodness may not be directed to me to my fault and ruin.³⁹

Carboneri's was not the only collaboration St. Gaspar offered to the *Propaganda Fide*. In those very years he wrote to Fr. Francis Niel, parish priest of Saint Louis, Missouri (U.S.A.), who wrote to him about the missions assigned to the young United States, requesting missionaries for those lands.^c They also wanted to open a mission in Goa (in India), but Cardinal Fransoni implied that the missionary chosen for the foundation, Fr. Raffaele Brandimarte, was too old and besides being physically impaired, he would have had trouble in learning the languages. (Fr. Raffaele was about 50 years old).⁴⁰

Treading along the path of our own history, we have arrived at the pontificate of Gregory XVI, who guided the Church from 1831 to 1846. During this time our

^cCf. *ArchGenCPPS*, G V, 4, *Storia singulorum Sodalium*. There are letters written on May 20, 1826, from Turin, and August 25, 1826, from Paris. In the first he says he has found favor for the missions to Missouri with the king and the queen and many other highranking officers, like the Marquis D'Azzeglio and he gives indications as to the journey of the Missionaries St. Gaspar will send. In the second he says he has been waiting for the Missionaries St. Gaspar was supposed to send for a long time, in order to leave together for the United States. He describes his great sorrow in the event they cannot leave.

Congregation lived through three very important events: the death of the founder in 1837, the approbation of the first *Rule* and the *Decreto di Lode* 'Decree of Praise' which officially recognized the Institute, on December 17, 1841, and the arrival in Cincinnati of Fr. Brunner and consequent foundation of the American branch of the Congregation on December 31, 1843.

THE 1841 *RULE*

Cardinal Mauro Cappellari was elected Pope Gregory XVI on February 2, 1831. Before being elected he was the prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. For this reason, and others as well, he was already well known among the clergy. I say "others as well," since shortly before his election he had published a work titled *Triumph of the Holy See and the Church Against the Assault of Renovators, Fighting and Rejecting Them by Using Their Own Weapons*, where he affirmed rigorous Catholic doctrine against Febronianism and Jansenism. Later he offered his collaboration to Gaetano Moroni's work: *Historical Dictionary of Ecclesiastical Learning*.

The judgment of historians on this pontiff is a little controversial. On one side he is deemed a "conservative" for the direction given to the state of the Church and diplomatic relations with European Catholic countries and for his choices in matters of nominations for the curia. He summoned Cardinal Lambruschini as secretary of state, who was so conservative that he would not allow the railway to pass through the state of the Church, since he considered it an element of modernity. On the other side he furthered the missions of the Church abroad, founding new missions and establishing dialogue with some "fringe groups" of philosophers and authors, a dialogue that produced significant fruits with Chateaubriand, Schlegel, Rosmini and Manzoni.⁴¹

He wrote the encyclical *Mirari vos* (August 15,

1832), condemning religious indifferentism, freedom of conscience, press and thought; but he also wrote *Probe nostris* (August 15, 1840) specifically on the issue of propagating the faith by proclaiming the Gospel in missions abroad. In this context of openness to missions and the hardening of the Church with regard to new ideologies, the Church approved the *Rule* that came at the same time as the Congregation's expansion, largely abroad, but in Italy as well.

The *Rule* was conceived to guide the Congregation in contexts similar to the one where it had developed and where it found confirmation. If there had not been new pastoral and cultural contexts, perhaps it would not have been necessary to go beyond the limits that the *Rule* maintained. The expansion of the Congregation made adaptations necessary. They were one of the main concerns of General Moderator Merlini.⁴²

In the forties of the nineteenth century the Missionaries of the Precious Blood were becoming an international reality. If on one side expansion abroad proceeded quickly, on the other the situation in Italy suffered from the powerful contrasts caused by the precarious political situation and by the troublesome relations between the state and the Church.

St. Gaspar always wanted to start missions outside the borders of Italy. He tried and he failed. This desire of the founder was mentioned only with the issue of the first official *Rule* and it found such a powerful response that a little later, thanks to Brunner, the failed attempts of St. Gaspar's found success. I would like to follow the documents of the general archives and describe the development of the Congregation in the years going from 1841 to the forties of the twentieth century, when, after a century the Congregation was invited to review its *Rule*. From 1841 to 1940 the Congregation truly

acquired a nearly totally new face and there were a series of new developments which moved it to review many of its dimensions.

On April 13, 1858, Fr. Francis de Sales Brunner spoke at the meeting of the general curia and gave an account of the missions in North America, established in eleven places of the two dioceses of Cincinnati and Cleveland. He also presented fourteen Missionaries for confirmation as members. He said the *Rule* of the Congregation was not always adequate to local demands and he reported his plans to open a central house and then a boarding school. He pleaded to resign from his office as superior in America, but the moderator general and his council believed it was better that he stay.

On July 15, 1858, the official residence of the Institute moved from San Salvatore in Campo to Santa Maria in Trivio, which was called the "Primary House of the Congregation." On April 14, 1869, during a meeting, the general definitors unanimously agreed to the request made by Fr. Patrick Hennebery, our missionary in America, in California, on behalf of Bishop O'Connell from Marysville, California, to establish a mission house dependent on Rome in that state. On January 2, 1870, the superior of Eureka, California, (a house opened on the feast of the Precious Blood, in July 1869) was given authorization to open schools for our boarding students and for young people not belonging to the order, secular, and even non-Catholic. The Congregation also temporarily consented to the request to consider California as a province of the Congregation, directly under the moderator general, separate from the province of the United States of America. (This was supported by the bishop who was in Rome in those days for the Vatican Council I.)

On September 20, 1870, Italian troops entered Rome, putting an end to the state of the Church. Several religious institutes were suppressed and part of the property of the Church was confiscated. On May 8, 1871,

the Congregation accepted the request of the parish priest of Bedernau, Fr. Antonio Stiegeler, from the Diocese of Augsburg, to establish our Institute at Baumgaertle, where there is a Marian sanctuary. This house would be dependent on the house at Trois Epis (*Drei Aehren* in German). But the foundation could not be made on behalf of the Congregation before the government recognized it.

On January 12, 1873, Fr. Giovanni Merlini died. On June 3, 1873, Pius VII named Enrico Rizzoli general moderator.

On June 22, 1873, the meeting of the general curia concluded that our Congregation should consider itself included in the law of suppression which was about to be put in force. Many Missionaries responded that even though it might happen, they would still remain faithful to the spiritual bond which united them to the Institute. On December 25, 1874, news arrived that the Prussian government had expelled our Missionaries from Trois Epis.

On August 7, 1895, the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Religious confirmed the division of our Congregation into four provinces, Rome, Naples, Romagna, and America, and it gave the general administration the powers to select the provincials and their associates for the general chapter.

On August 27, 1898, the Congregation decided to accept the usufructuary inheritance left to it in the city of Cáceres, in the province and diocese of Coria in Estremadura, in Spain. The moderator general was asked to draft a document to safeguard our rights and *Rule*. On October 26, 1898, a missionary was sent to Spain, at our own expense, to end the negotiations with the bishop of Coria, with specific reference to the house that our Congregation decided to build at Cáceres. On April 22, 1930 our Congregation with its properties was given juridical recognition.

The session of the general curia from September 24

to 28, 1932 was totally dedicated to the moderator general's report of his visit to the American Province and the Italo-American delegation. During the visit he personally assessed the possibility of dividing the province. With regard to this, though, he pointed out that:

I did not believe it would have been effective to insist on the planned division of the province [. . .] Fr Ignatius Wagner made me consider how the different houses and colleges were grouped together in such ways that any division would have been perceived as unnatural and violent.⁴³

Continuing to state his impressions, he presented his report, underlining religious life, the relationship with the rules and the hierarchy of the Institute and, finally, the economic conditions. With regard to the state of religious life, he points out that:

On first sight, the spirit of rigor and poverty, a primary element of religious life, seems to be neglected and even completely gone, given the contact with such a high and refined civilization as that of the United States. Even secondary residences of the clergy and religious show a magnificence which is much too showy and refined, where the ever-present housemaid has taken the place of the simple lay brother. This reflection is mitigated by the thought that such comfortable parishes are required by the refined sense of hygiene, the climate and the often huge amount of ministry work; it is furthermore rare to find men available for domestic services. Though all this is true, our thoughts still go to St. Francis, the poor person of Assisi, and a breath of his spirit would not be inappropriate there. [. . .] In those very days, the Most Reverend Provincial had forbidden the

use of the radio with too much superficiality in the rooms of the lay brothers. [. . .] To crush any harsh judgment that the previous remarks may have generated, I wish to remember and purposefully praise the hardworking life of the Missionaries of America, nearly everywhere too few to meet the needs, devoted to confessing and preaching, ready to move with their car, which they drive themselves, from one church to the other, even in winter snows. I was not apprised of anything significant in matter of breaches of morality, and indeed I noticed manifestations of powerful religiosity and piety in them.⁴⁴

Speaking about their relationship with the *Rule*, the moderator general underlined how, notwithstanding the bond between Brunner and the general curia, there are some elements of monastic life in the communities of the Congregations, doubtless due to the previous life of Brunner himself. About the bond between Brunner and the general administration he said:

It will be possible to express a judgment over it once the correspondence of the brave Swiss missionary with the superior general of the time is published and studies on that period of our history are more complete.⁴⁵

We should also add that:

Besides the common sense of the *Rule*, I noticed in nearly all our churches in America a flourishing of the devotion to our Blessed Gaspar del Bufalo. From a juridical point of view, the actions of the American Province are always subject to the authority of Rome.

Only with regard to the human relationships, there are still efforts to be made to overcome that sense of coldness, caused by

too infrequent meeting and different tempers. The task of the general administration, therefore, should be to mitigate differences and further fraternity.

With regard to disagreements, as a rule, the *Rule* and Roman spirit of the Congregation should clearly prevail. I mean to say that, if required, it should not be our *Rule* that bends to the American *Praxis*, but the latter should give way to the former, since the original character of the Congregation must not be distorted. (Parishes, though, should remain there indefinitely, since they are considered the completion of missionary activity there. My predecessor, Fr. Luigi Biaschelli, tried to eliminate them, but the result was that the Franciscans or others took them and our own men went looking for new ones elsewhere.)

[. . .] With regard to fraternity, more and more attention should be given to the brothers coming from across the ocean. But much shall be accomplished once the delegate of the American Province will be once more stationed in Rome.⁴⁶

The economic conditions of the province turned out being rather sad. The Italo-American delegation had economic problems, as well, and their crisis was even more severe. The delegation then had three houses, and according to the report contained in the general archives, it seems the Congregation thought of suppressing it and giving it over to the American Province.

Coming to the end of his report the general remembers that all the Missionaries present at the provincial chapter on June 15 swore obedience to him. He considered this as a sign of hope, since behind this act of free will, he could see the desire to strengthen the bonds of fraternity with such a distant province.

On January 18 and 19, 1934, during a meeting of the general definitors, the moderator presented a report on his visit to the Iberian Vicariate. He made the visit at the time when the Church in Spain was suffering from persecution. Father moderator underlined the fact that if the Iberian side of the Congregation suffered from a lack of members, this was because there were similar problems also in Italy. The Iberian side, therefore, could not count on the help of their Italian confreres, who were in trouble as well. The general hoped to have such a high number of Spanish and Portuguese members so as to withdraw the Italians one day, because "Spain should go to the Spanish, as is done in other provinces."⁴⁷

In those very days, on January 18 and 19, 1934, a document was presented on the Teutonic Province. The document speaks of this part of the Congregation in these terms:

I received some complaints about their spirit of piety and sanctification. Even taking into account that progress in this field is entrusted, first of all, to personal goodwill, I did not omit recalling the attention of the provincial on this complaint, since in the smaller communities even I noticed the neglecting of some acts of the *Rule*, like reading at the table, some common prayers and similar things. The provincial assured me he would have dealt with it during his next visit to those communities. [. . .] Their sense of discipline is commendable and also their attachment to the Institute and to this central seat. [. . .] I am satisfied with my visit abroad, especially since it strengthens the bonds of unity between the different parts of the Institute, which is now happily spread so widely.⁴⁸

The moderator general had previously pointed out the origin of the Teutonic Province and how hard the

fathers who had founded it had worked to accomplish its present growth.

Many things had changed since 1815. On September 19, 1935, the apostolic visitation began, initiating a major turning point that brought the Congregation to a complete revision of its rules. Though continuing to be the Congregation of St. Gaspar, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood were forced to make concrete in their statutes a whole series of realities that had become attached in the course of their history. If in some cases these broke from the practice of the founder, they were accepted as the proper apostolate of the Institute.

I should point out that it is time for us to reflect on what is called the "historical charism" of the Institute and concrete practice. Can we put our charism into practice in the way St. Gaspar used to in his time? Does changing the methodology of a pastoral approach mean betraying the charism of the beginnings? If we had to review something of our inner life to keep in line with the general law of the Church (Canon Law), would we betray our founder? This is a linguistic matter and a practical one as well, both in need of clarification. The contents characteristic of our spirituality are one thing, while the modalities we wish to use to convey them are another. In my view, once the contents are preserved, circumstances make us understand how we can convey the message we wish to proclaim.

THE FORTIES: THE APOSTOLIC VISIT AND NEW RULES

On September 19, 1935, Fr. Lazzaro d'Arbonne, Capuchin, officially initiated the apostolic visitation of the Congregation. Father d'Arbonne's term lasted only two years. In 1937 he had to leave because of other engagements he had within his own order and Fr. Angelico d'Alessandria continued the visitation. We do have some documents of the time of the first visitor,

but they are not as significant as those of the second one. We shall therefore focus on the second part of the visitation. The following is a passage from a letter written by Fr. Marling on June 3, 1944 regarding the visitation:

. . . an apostolic visitor was appointed because of the sad state of the Italian provinces. He announced at once that the *Rule* must be brought into conformity with the Code of Canon Law. In 1938 he appointed the members of the general curia as a commission to work on the new *Rule*.⁴⁹

The new visitor *ipso facto* became superior general of the Congregation, even though all the superiors of the Institute remained formally in charge. On November 10, 1937 before the local superiors of the Italian communities, the general and all his council, a report was presented on the situation of the Congregation in Italy and abroad. With regard to the Teutonic Province, the general said he had no particular concern. The province was present also in Czechoslovakia and Brazil. The visitor asked why there was no representative from the province at the general council. The moderator answered that during the previous chapter the Missionaries in Germany did not reach the number of fifty.

The inquiry moved to other subjects and when asked which, in his view, the Congregation's best province was, the moderator answered that it was the American. Then the examination of the situation of the Italian Province began, where it seemed that

. . . the houses are dying and the Missionaries no longer obey, they leave the Institute justly concerned for the future, or sick of having even their most secret affairs made known outside the Institute, because of the actions even of some members of the Congregation's

administrative council, who forget about the grave obligation of *de secreto in omnibus servando* 'observing secrecy in all things.'⁵⁰

The province with the best overall situation was the American, living a little detached from Rome, however. The Italo-American delegation was praised because in spite of the fact that there were very few members, eight in all, they worked on and even managed to send to Rome a good yearly contribution. Others reported on Iberian Vicariate, the communities of Cáceres, Valencia de Alcántara and Villa Viçosa in Portugal.

With regard to the formation of the lay brothers, the visitator noted with bitterness that they were totally abandoned. There was no one who took care of their formation. Once he had established all this, using his authority, the visitator ordered all superiors to be suspended, including the moderator general. On November 25, 1937, a new general administration was nominated.

On January 16, 1941, work finally began on the revision of the *Rule*. It was not an easy process, and *de facto* the meetings went on for most of the decade, due to the interruption of World War II. There are, however, several elements, which I consider extremely interesting. The positions of those taking part in the meetings, for instance, were very clear from the outset. If there was friction, I believe it was the fruit of the different parties' sincere love for the Congregation, as well as of a profound lack of information on all sides.

The visitator's desire and final intention was to see the *Rule* conform to the Code of the Canon Law, but the Italian contingent would have been content with leaving it as it had been written by St. Gaspar, making a few adjustments here and there, according to the indications given by the Church.^d The Germans and the Americans, however, proposed some new issues such as the promise of fidelity and the *peculium*. In my opinion, this was for practical and historical reasons. It was not possible to

continue with the scandal of seeing people look for Masses where the largest stipends were to be found.

All this happened during the meeting in 1941. Then everything had to stop because of the war, but in the meantime a *Rule* that fully reflected the ideas of the Italians was approved. On their side the Americans wrote another *Rule*, and according to Fr. Marling:

. . . when Father Dirksen and I were in Rome in the summer of 1939, we emphasized to the Visitator that conditions in the American Province were quite unique and needed study. We begged him to come to America, study those conditions, and revise the Rule in accord with what he saw. After all, the American Province was healthy and sound - we argued - and counted the vast majority of members of C.PP.S. Hamilcare Rey, we indicated, was in no position to legislate for the American Province, since he did not have the slightest notion of conditions in the United States. All that we were able to obtain from the visitator was permission to prepare a version of the *Rule* ourselves, and to submit it for comparison with the version of Hamilcare Rey.⁵¹

During World War II, there were no

^dOn this subject, it is interesting to read the letters sent by the members of the Italian Province to protest against the project of the new Rule. The archive of the Casa Generalizia still keeps these letters and looking at their numbers, it does seem that some reflection is necessary. There were 98 members in Italy at the time, 70 were priests and 28 were brothers, spread over 19 residences. There were 47 letters that reached the general house, 46 protesting against the American proposals, 1 remitting any decision to the hands of the superiors.

communications between Rome and the United States. The visitator ended his visitation in 1942. When peace returned, the former realized that their discussion of the *Rule* was far from concluded, so they went back to work. On March 22, 1946, they started once again. There was a meeting in Rome and Fr. Marling attended it as well, since he was in Italy at the time.

During the meeting, someone pointed out that the American Province, daughter to Fr. Brunner, maintained some strictly Benedictine customs, which were initiated by the person who founded it.⁵² That was why in the *Rule* they proposed, the Americans kept some elements such as the promise of fidelity (*la promessa di appartenenza*) to the Congregation. The discussion touched on the apostolic works that had developed in the United States, and with specific reference to the difficulties of the old *Rule*, Fr. Marling said that

Papal nuncios and bishops from South America had asked for Missionaries of the Precious Blood, but seeing that parishes are barely tolerated in our *Rule*, they answered that there was no room for the Missionaries of the Precious Blood in South America.⁵³

Those who attacked Marling and the American side were obviously not well informed about the situation beyond the ocean. They knew nothing of how other Congregations also had to start apostolic work far beyond their tradition in order that their presence there would make sense. For example, the Jesuits, the Augustinians, and the Benedictines all had to accept parishes.

During the meeting on April 13, 1946, the situation was still hot and the general invited everybody not to give heed to Marling and continue along their own line: the Holy See would have the last say. At the meeting on July 7, 1946, the final verdict was read out and the new *Rule* was accepted. The text of the memorandum of the

meeting states

. . . having learned of the decision the meeting took on April 13, 1946, and pleased with the full plebiscite of assent given by the Italian Province, which decided upon a single text to be used as a *Rule* in order to avoid divisions of any kind, the single text was definitively approved. It is actually the result of the blend of the Italian text with the one prepared by the Germans and the Americans.⁵⁴

We have no way to be sure what actually happened. We must point out, however, that common sense prevailed and the unity of the Congregation was preserved, in spite of the climate of suspicion and calumny, and no lack of threats of a break among the different parts of the Congregation. The general archive is very well supplied with documents referring to the details of the different passages, which I synthesized for sake of brevity.

The Sacred Congregation of Religious approved the new text for a period of seven years. It indicated the purpose of the Congregation as spreading the worship of the Precious Blood by means of missions and spiritual exercises and other similar ministries. It accepts parishes, chaplaincies and schools. It kept the *probandato*, the promise of fidelity, the peculium and universal suffrage for the election of the provincial superior and his council.

Due to a series of circumstances the period of experimentation was extended until 1964. On April 15, that year, Fr. Herbert Linenberger, moderator general, wrote to Cardinal Ildebrando Antoniutti, prefect of the Holy Congregation of the Religious:

Most Eminent Prince, with the present note, as general moderator of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, prostrate to kiss the holy purple, I hand you once again our

fervent plea for the desired final and definitive approval of the new Constitutions given to said Congregation in 1946 “*pro experimento*,” as an updated application of the *Rule* of its founder, St. Gaspar Del Bufalo.⁵⁵

On July 1, 1964, the Holy See definitively approved the Constitutions. They bear a few changes, such as the renewal of the general definitors every six years, and a few marginal and formal touches.

THE PRESENT *NORMATIVE TEXTS*

“On September 21, 1966, the general definitors gave the official communication of the program of renewal of the Congregation.”⁵⁶ Little more than two years had passed from the definitive approval of the 1946 *Rule* before work started once again for further renewal after Vatican Council II. On this occasion all provinces were sent questionnaires to be sent back to the general administration. The answers were to be synthesized to lay the foundations for the works of an interprovincial commission, which later convened at St. Charles Seminary in Ohio.

Proposals reached Rome by May 31, 1968. The general archive contains the memoranda.⁵⁷ I now wish to present an overall profile of the shower of ideas and suggestions that arrived from all different places.

The Province of the Pacific made requests with regard to the title of the Congregation, even at the light of the Vatican Council II, stating the importance of stressing the fact that we are “missionaries,” and that this word should prevail over the word Society and other names. It also suggested removing the denomination “specific activities,” referring to the Congregation’s pastoral activities, and it proposed the use of the phrase “to care for the needs of the people of God, guided by the bishop and safeguarding our *Constitutions*.” They also

recalled that the special mission of the Congregation was to be an active witness to the Precious Blood in the liturgy and in the life of all members. They also asked themselves if we should try and channel our efforts towards a specific line of work, such as schools or missionary work, for instance. They also underlined that in the United States, apostolic work generally meant meeting the needs of the bishops in different ways.

They pointed out that they felt it important for members to take part in the diocesan conferences. Members should also continue and study the Holy Scripture on a private basis. They should respect the regulations of the diocese where they live, especially those referring to diocesan conferences and synod decrees.

They felt it necessary to review some of the terminology, as well, like "sacred ministry," for instance, to be substituted with "the works of the Society," since the former phrase seems to denote only priestly or sacramental works.

Some members said the method of the missions of St. Gaspar should be updated, taking into account the modern mentality and the experimentation encouraged by Vatican II. Some believed the consensus required for foreign missions should be preserved as it was, others that it was better to leave the consensus to the competence of each province, and therefore place it in the "*Customary*." (*Editor's note: The Customary was an interpretation or adaptation of the Rule of the Congregation for a particular province.*) In the Constitutions, furthermore, the Congregation's readiness to abide by the needs of the Holy See when dealing with foreign missions should be mentioned.

The provincial superior should make sure that teaching priests and brothers remain in touch with present theological thinking through classes or by other means.

The Teutonic Province believed that popular

missions should conform to the instructions of the Institute with regard to pastoral care of the missions, making sure they take into account the holy founder's method.

With specific reference to the issue of missions and students, they suggested they study missionary theology and, if not possible, to attend conferences on missions, which should be held more often. The students should attend medical missionary courses and they should be stimulated to be available to work for a few years in popular missions or foreign missions.

Some confreres made simpler proposals, which I report as follows:

- the moderator general should have greater faculties over the whole Congregation;
- the moderator general should be able to intervene in cases where the financial situation of single provinces makes it necessary for the good of the whole Congregation;
- the moderator general is asked to assume greater spiritual direction in the Congregation. The general curia should give greater impulse for the progress of single provinces;
- the moderator general should send a “pastoral letter” to the provinces more often;
- the moderator general should send reports to all provinces about the situation of the Church from Rome's point of view more often;
- the general curia should take upon itself the task of collecting all literature referring to the worship of the Precious Blood from the provinces, to translate it and make it available to all provinces;
- the general curia should introduce and promote the exchange of news about the successes, failures, experiences and general events involving the different missionary regions of the Congregation;
- in foreign missions there should not be just one

member in a residence; if such an event were to take place by exception, it should be mandatory to take part in one day retreats every month with the other confreres;

- every province should have a pastoral council, made up of the four councilors, the rector of the major seminary, one representative from the group of internal missionaries and one representative from the foreign missions.

Speaking of terminology, the Kansas City Province proposed the whole text of the Constitutions use the word “Society” and not “Congregation.” In this regard it is interesting to point out how the Province of the Pacific questioned the use of that very word. In the U.S.A. Society is used for legal purposes. *Congregatio* helps define our organization within the law of the Church. *Communitas* or *fraternitas* give a clearer idea than other words of the true nature of our Institute.

In the editing of the new statutes, they proposed the use of quotations from the Holy Scripture and St. Gaspar as an introduction to every Title.

The general purpose of the Congregation would be to serve the Church, generously and readily, wherever its service is accepted and requested by the competent religious and ecclesiastic authorities. They also proposed that the specific works of the Congregation be established by the *Customary* of each province.

The Society’s purpose would be to serve the Church, guiding the people of God to respond to his love manifested in the Blood of his Son. The Society should serve the Church especially by helping local ordinaries.

They asked for the Constitutions to be simple, flexible and not dogmatic, warm and attractive. The Constitutions should be broad in their scope, general guidelines, similar perhaps to the decrees for applying the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Details on other specific issues should be left to the provinces or the houses.

They suggested that provincials take turns in taking up the office of moderator general; that the moderator general be elected by a “curia of the provincials” and remain in charge for one year (like the U.N.). The president or moderator, furthermore, should not be re-elected for more than two years.

The Cincinnati Province decided to make an initial statement to say that after having read and reflected on the documents of the council about religious renewal (especially the *motu proprio, Ecclesiae Sanctae*, art. 12–19), and after having consulted the work done by other religious institutes in renewing the regulations of their communities, they believed that our Constitutions should not be simply a superficial re-elaboration of the text in force. They should be a document drafted *ex novo*. The regulations and statutes placed in the Constitutions should be general guidelines, since they must be applied to the local sphere of different provinces. The rules referring to aspects of the province should be codified in texts of provincial rules or customary laws. Since the new Constitutions will serve a different purpose than the present ones, present legislation should not be used as a starting point for the program.

The Italian Province suggested our Congregation should again have a proper juridical form, responding to its original nature as a society of secular clergy, gathered together in the Church by means of the *vinculum caritatis* ‘bond of charity,’ and addressing the ministry of preaching, especially of missions and spiritual exercises, enlivened by devotion to the Blood of Christ, thus delivering it from the “*instar religiosorum*” ‘after the fashion of or like religious’ schema forced on it by the Code of Canon Law. It furthermore asked for the promise of fidelity to be removed, since it reflected the law of the religious orders. It suggested incorporation to the Institute should take place by means of an external ceremony, after a time of preparation. It should have juridical effects for the Institute and the person involved and

one of these effects should be exemption from the diocesan ordinaries.

Someone offered the ironic suggestion that the title “Congregation of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood” should be changed to “Society of the Divine Blood” since we were no longer distinguished by our missionary apostolate. Others emphasized that the apostolic works most suitable to our Congregation and the Church’s present needs were the preaching of missions and spiritual exercises. These were the works for which the Congregation was begun and they were still important for the Church. Methods needed to be updated, and new efforts placed into carrying out the main work of our Congregation.

Foreign missions were something the founder had yearned for, and they were very important to the Church. Parish ministries, though contrary to the instructions of the founder, were necessary to help the Church in its needs, due to the lack of diocesan priests. Such a ministry should not, however, absorb the entire activity of the personnel. The parishes should be effective and their numbers should be proportionate to those of other works of the apostolate.

In order to leave the Congregation free to initiate other works of the apostolate which might be justified by the time and place, they suggested adding a general article to the Constitutions, saying that the Congregation shall dedicate itself to other suitable works of the apostolate, to be authorized by the provincial chapter and approved by the general definitors.^e

Superiors may assign members to foreign missions, considering the needs of the missions and the companions’ abilities, going beyond the principle of voluntary

^eSixty priests were in favor of the article. In that year, in the Province of Italy there were 15 parishes, 29 houses and 96 priests. These numbers include the Atlantic Vicariate and the newborn mission to Tanzania.

service. The students should be formed to love the foreign missions and they should be prepared technically (the importance of studying languages). There was also the request to assure the rotation of the people involved in missions abroad after a certain amount of time and, in drafting the statutes, the chapter on foreign missions should be inspired to the council decree *Ad Gentes*.

They also asked for a better juridical clarification of the nature of the lay brother within our Constitutions.

To reach a higher degree of effective unity and dynamism within the Congregation, it was suggested that the following find a place within the general curia: a secretariat for devotion to the Precious Blood, a historical institute, and a secretariat for foreign missions and for other apostolic works. In order to facilitate the creation of the secretariats, at least the historical institute would be required to start its activities immediately, divided into three branches: historical, Precious Blood, apostolate. Similar secretariats should be instituted in each province. Each provincial secretariat would provide a delegate to relate to the general secretariat. The delegate should coordinate the work in the province with the work at the general curia.

After having heard the interested provincial superiors and the member in question, the moderator general and his definitors would have the power to temporarily transfer a member from one province to another to respond to specific necessities of the Institute. The Italian Province also suggested establishing a council of provincial superiors, at which the moderator general would preside, to periodically exchange ideas and examine problems related to the whole Congregation and meeting in different provinces.

When the proposals of the provinces reached the general curia, the definitors found themselves facing a stunning complexity of problems. No member on the *definitorium* 'general council' was an expert theologian, recalled Fr. Linenberger, general moderator at the

time,⁵⁸ so they requested Fr. Jean Beyer, S.J., dean of the faculty of Canon Law at the Pontifical Gregorian University, and Fr. Elio Gambari, Monfortan, an official of the Sacred Congregation for Religious, to assist as consultants.

On July 2, 1968 in his homily at the Mass marking the beginning of the work of the interprovincial commission, held at Saint Charles Seminary, Fr. Linenberger pointed out how by then the main culture of the Congregation was no longer Latin, since there were now also the Anglo-Saxon and the Teutonic cultures. The guiding principles for the work of the commission should be those indicated in the *motu proprio, Ecclesiae Sanctae*, he said, and he stressed how important it was to start afresh from the initial charism, setting aside any kind of individualistic apostolate. When the discussions began, he said, "The habit of love should take the place of the toga of judgment."

The subjects discussed during July 1968 were presented at the special Tenth General Chapter and they were published in a booklet on October 21, 1969. Meanwhile, in 1971, the Eleventh General Assembly began its work in Salzburg, Austria. It marked another important stage along the path of the reform of the *Rule*. The assembly made no major changes to the work of the previous assembly but there is one important element that emerged and it was of such importance that Bishop Augustine Meyer, the secretary of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, wrote the following lines to Fr. Daniel Schaefer on April 5, 1974:

As regards the *Normative Texts* approved by the chapter, we noticed that the principle of decentralization was applied extensively, effectively increasing the autonomy of the provinces. We wish to point out that a legitimate pluralism is, of course, admissible to meet the different

conditions in which different provinces operate. On the other hand, though, the central government must maintain its power of direction and effective coordination in order to preserve the unity of the Institute, which ought to be everyone's heartfelt desire.⁵⁹

Decentralization was actually one of the characteristics most visibly and concretely introduced in the administration of the Congregation. Since then much of the power of the moderator general and his curia depends on the charismatic role they play in the administration of the Congregation.

On November 25, 1978, another letter from the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes addressed to the general administration of the Congregation mentioned further reviewing of our regulations.

In general, the Constitutions, submitted for approval, contains a judicious blending of spiritual principles and necessary juridical norms. In particular, the nature, purpose and character envisaged for the Society by your founder, St. Gaspar del Bufalo, have been faithfully safeguarded.

Some lacunae have been noted in the Constitutions regarding formation, incorporation into the Society and release from it, and the nature and extent of the commitment made. It is true, some of this matter is specified in the general statutes; but their more essential aspects properly belong in the Constitutions. Since the common law for societies without vows is quite broad and generic—contrary to that for religious institutes—it is all the more necessary that the fundamental code of your Society provide for the above-mentioned points.

With the necessary additions and corrections

recommended in the appended observations, the Constitutions of the Society of the Precious Blood is hereby approved by this Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes for ten years.⁶⁰

A booklet containing the *Normative Texts* was published shortly afterward. The Italian edition is dated 1980.

It was not until May 24, 1988, that the Holy See gave its final approval of our regulations by a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Religious and Secular Institutes. At that time the *Normative Texts*, which today guide us and animate the mission we carry out wherever we are, were officially published.

I believe it is not necessary to add further comments here. However, I wish to stress how the statutes governing us now enable managing the Congregation in ways which make the life of its members more suitable to the demands of the times. Still maintaining a solid overall unity, the specific elements that characterize the life of every province are respected and preserved. Direct participation in the election of the provincial director, participation in the general assembly through representatives and, the assemblies held by every province, do make each member more responsible.

As regards the principle of subsidiarity that unites us all, several confreres now have the chance to work outside the province, vicariate or mission they belong to, and bring their help to places where it is required.

CONCLUSION

“O Lord, make us aware of our ever-changing tasks. Help us to understand the signs of the times, so that our work may bear fruit for the salvation of humankind and for your glory.” I often repeat this during the week when I say the “Prayer for the Needs of the Congregation.”

“Help us to understand the signs of the times” is something that prophets, more than others, are capable of doing. To be prophets: this is the invitation I feel I should make to those who have read these pages. A prophet is a person who knows where he comes from (his past), whose feet are well rooted in the reality he lives in, who is capable of reading the events that surround him (the present), and of making wise decisions for the future. To start afresh from our history, therefore, does not mean we are nostalgic, or judges of what could have been done but was not. It means to go back to the source from which we came.

Our Congregation was founded in a time when history was turning a page and a new reality was at its beginning. Whatever had existed before the coming of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution was stripped of much of its sense and meaning once those events had unfolded. The official Church started to realize this only too late and it did so in a traumatic manner. With a polemical quip, I could say that the Church could have avoided some things, if it had kept its eyes a little more open. Unfortunately, though it did not realize it was no longer speaking the language of the people that, by divine mandate, it was supposed to serve.

The “powerful spirits” (*spiriti forti*) who were the heart and soul of new ideologies had started to see this difference of language, as had also the “saintly souls” working in the “undergrowth” of common evangelization. The saints of that period of epochal change realized this and they sought remedies. They found shelter in Pius VII. At the time when our Congregation was founded, a new stage was beginning in the history of the Church. St. Gaspar was one of those “saintly souls,” capable of reading the signs of the times, and the Congregation he founded was a response to the cry of those who asked for justice in a Christian sense. The Missionaries of the Precious Blood, therefore, were a response to the demands of the times.

As the years passed, shortly after the founder had died and the first *Rule* was approved, the Congregation was challenged anew: to leave Italy and bring the message of its charism beyond the ocean. This is how we landed in the United States. Our arrival in “the new world” brought a new reading of our charism, and it led us to choose new ways and languages, and new forms of apostolate, which needed a concrete body in new rules.

I believe this found us completely unprepared and it put the wisdom of those who guided us to a difficult test. In the forties of the twentieth century we ran the risk of division for a series of misunderstandings and lack of knowledge of the reality. The hand of God then took the rudder of our history and brought us to the shores we stand on today.

If we were to divide the events that came after our foundation until the present into two great chapters, I would say that starting from the second half of the twentieth century, something new started that cannot end. The Missionaries of the Precious Blood continued to be the Congregation of St. Gaspar, even though from a pastoral point of view they did not fully realize his plan. Our predecessors started to read the signs of the times and they offered our charism according to the concrete needs of the places where they found themselves working. They started to translate into action that which belongs to us in spirit.

All this cost us dearly, but it helped us understand who we are and it must press us to continue. History, therefore, has become the compass leading our steps forward, and a wise guide from which to draw our inspiration.

At the end of this work, I wish to say we still have a long way to go. Our charism, due to its own character, urges us to walk according to the example set by St. Gaspar and all those who followed him in the course of history. Society presents us with many challenges today, and we are called to respond to all of them by

proclaiming the message of love that springs from the bleeding side of the Son of God who became human for our sake.

The above presentation was given at the workshop for C.PP.S. formators, July 2003. The translation from the Italian text is by Dr. Matteo Bruni.

Historical Overview of the *Rule*

Mario Brotini

I have been asked to explain the juridical evolution of the rules of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. This presentation will be primarily juridical in nature and will examine the historical or cultural context in which the Congregation has operated.

THE *RULE*

To place the evolution of the *Rule* in a chronological framework, we can say that the Missionaries of the Precious Blood have had three *Rules*: The first is that of 1841, fruit of the missionary charism of the time, in the state of the Church. The second is the fruit of the codification (and adjustment) of Canon Law in 1917. The third is the fruit of Vatican Council II.

From 1814 to 1862 (that is the period of the restoration after Napoleon), there were at least 122 new Institutes approved. To deal with the vitality of new foundations as well as the work of classifying the already existing works of religion, the *Sacra Congregatio Super Statu Regularium* was restored, and it began to enlarge the offices for the activity of the secretariat of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. With the re-establishment of the *Sacra Congregatio Super Statu Regularium*, after the election of Pius IX, there were three sacred congregations to take care of religious:

the one mentioned above joined the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, and that of the Discipline of Regulars.

Pius IX continued, like his predecessor, to supervise and to draw up a type of "inventory" of religious life, as can be seen in documents published at the beginning of his long pontificate. The development of these institutes was such that, toward the middle of the century, the Sacred Congregation of Regulars issued new norms for their approbation, the so-called *Methodus*. It was the first step of an evolution, which will reach its climax in the redaction of the Code of Canon Law in 1917.

To summarize: a procedure for approval was established analogous to the one used in the past by religious orders: 1) examination of the constitutions (freely composed by the founders) by the Holy See; 2) issuing of the "decree of praise" and asking for a period of experimentation under the dependence on the ordinaries; 3) definitive pontifical approbation. Up to the time of the Code of Canon Law of 1917 it can be said that the juridical recognition of the congregations with simple vows took place through a gradual formation of the jurisprudence of approbation: at the beginning the Holy See did not apply the common law of religious to such congregations unless there were explicit concessions. Then these single concessions came to be applied in similar cases, up to the point of structuring the life of these congregations with many norms from the laws for religious. Various expedients of the institutes aimed at obtaining the autonomy that would allow them to develop more freely, for example the recourse to the authority of Rome for indulgences, privileges, and particular concessions.

The *Methodus* had made official the internal authority, that is the role of the superior (man or woman) or general moderator, and therefore, the internal autonomy of the institute in relation to the diocesan bishop, according to the proper code approved by the Holy See. In the expansion of the institutes outside the dioceses, it

seemed more appropriate to change from diocesan to pontifical right: it was this that reopened in a very short time the question of exemptions.

With the *Normae* of 1901, the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars finally issued the norms for the procedure to approve the many religious congregations and their constitutions. The document contains two parts: in the first part are the norms for approbation; in the second there is the true and proper juridical schema, with 325 articles, which serves as a model for the writing of constitutions of the congregations. In this way the law for religious for congregations of simple vows also enriches the previous legislation of the canonical religious state with an organic series of general norms. Everything that had been proposed in the *Methodus* of 1854 was now established in a definitive way and defined in three successive degrees.

Doubts on the Definitive Approbation of the *Rule*

We have already said that before 1800 the apostolic letter of the pope established the definitive approval of the institutes. In the 19th century this practice also changed. Gradually the apostolic letter began to be abandoned, because the pope sent the request for approbation to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, which, once all the documentation was considered, formulated and sent its judgment to the pope. Then with the blessing of the pontiff and by his order, the Sacred Congregation sent the decree to the institute. As we have seen the approbation was gradual, even if this procedure was not always constant in the first half of the 1800s: sometimes with a single decree both the institute and its constitutions could be approved simultaneously.

The approval of the *Rule* of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood was not obtained through an apostolic letter of the pope, but rather by a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars:

Et facta praemissorum relatione Sanctissimo Domino Nostro Gregorio PP. XVI in audientia habita a Subsecretario die 17 Decembris 1841, Sanctitas Sua resolutionem Sacrae Congregationis in omnibus ratam habuit, et confirmavit, ac super expressam exemptionem a parochis benigne impertita est: contrariis quibuscumque non obstantibus.

‘A report of these facts was made by the sub-secretary in an audience with our most holy Lord Supreme Pontiff Gregory XVI, held on December 17, 1841. His Holiness ratified and confirmed the resolution of the Sacred Congregation in all details, and kindly granted a special exemption from having pastors. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.’

It is necessary, however, to remember that the custom of approbation by apostolic letter was not immediately abandoned. The second moderator general of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Giovanni Merlini, began his mandate at the end of 1847 during a period in which the activity of the Holy See in the matter of religious institutes was particularly fervent. In the first meeting of the general curia over which he presided, he asked if “it were appropriate to ask for the papal letter of our *Rule* which was already recognized by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars by the Decree *ex audientia SS. mi* of December 17, 1841.” In that same meeting he proposed to revise the *Rule*, simplifying it in order to leave freedom for adaptation to the foundations made abroad. The Missionaries of the Precious Blood already worked in America and they had to bring something new to the *Rule* precisely to meet the needs there.

In addition, the Church had for some time pursued the path of a concordat with several states, given its own labile legal situation, particularly in the matter of religious orders, in the liberal state. The Missionaries of the

Precious Blood also considered solemn approbation, that is, approbation in conformity with the apostolic letter of the pope, necessary to open legally a residence in the Kingdom of Naples. In a meeting of the general curia in 1855 it was noted that:

. . . to open legally the foundations (in the Kingdom of Naples) it is necessary that our Congregation has the apostolic papal letter which approves the Institute and the *Rule*; in view of this, it has resolved to present this petition to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars with the *Rule* in a simplified style following the one already recognized.

All these historical realities confirm, in my view, the yearning and the expectation of Merlini to obtain the papal letter with which his Institute could be confirmed by the pope. The consequent stability would have also facilitated the recognition of the foundations abroad. Merlini hoped to obtain the papal letter, that is definitive approbation, with regard to the approval of a modification made to the *Rule*. In 1856 Merlini, the moderator general, asked the bishops of the places where the missionaries were present to send him the certificates and references and everything necessary for the approbation of the simplified *Rule*.

This was presented to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, but the papal letter was never received with the definitive approbation.

Nevertheless, the *Methodus* described the definitive approval in terms that did not appear in the decree *Sacerdos* of 1841. In fact, in the decree *Sacerdos* is written "*laudandum, et commendandum esse.*" 'to be praised and commended' This terminology in the *Methodus* only indicates the praise and recommendation of the Institute. It is worth pointing out that the pertinent terminology for definitive approbation is "*approbamus et confirmamus*" 'we approve and confirm.' For a long time

this was already the custom of the Holy See, for example, in the apostolic letter of Pius VII, with which in 1820 he erected the Congregation of the Christian Schools, and that of Leo XII with which he definitively approved the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1826. Because the terms *approbamus et confirmamus* were already existing in the practice of the Holy See before the decree *Sacerdos* of 1841, and because they were confirmed in the *Methodus* of 1845, their absence in the *decree of approval* of the Congregation of the Missionaries leads us to deduce that the approbation of 1841 was not canonically definitive.

Merlini's doubts were, therefore, justified by the methodological innovation which the Holy See introduced to the procedure of the approbation of the institutes.

For the Precious Blood the end of the century brought on a convergence of three factors of a certain institutional importance: 1) the need to define the procedure for electing the moderator and his collaborators, and the conducting of the chapters; 2) the need to establish the provinces in order to ensure a more homogeneous control of the Congregation; and 3) the beginning of an institutional adaptation motivated by the Holy See with the above mentioned documents.

The measures and requests of the Holy See echoed in the Congregation so that again doubts emerged concerning the definitive approbation of the Institute, since its approval was not in line with procedure established by the *Methodus* and the *Normae*. Luigi Biaschelli, the moderator general of the Missionaries, on June 16, 1901, inquired about the validity of the decree *Sacerdos* in relation to the new rules proposed by the Holy See. The doubts about the definitive approbation of the *Rule* remained, so much so that Biaschelli preferred to consult the Missionaries. Some of them knew that the decree *Sacerdos* did not fulfill the process of approval perfectly, according to the new norms of the Church.

The problem arose again at an inconvenient moment for the Congregation: during the apostolic visitation, about which we shall speak later. The apostolic visitor pointed out that the decree *Sacerdos* was only a “decree of praise” (*decreto di lode*) and therefore, the process to obtain the formal pontifical approval of the Institute had to be initiated. This approval was then obtained on the occasion of the approval of the *Constitutions* in 1942.

Proposals for Modifications

Merlini, the moderator general, convened his council for the last time on November 15, 1872. In that meeting of the council some modifications were made to the *Rule* and were approved (unanimously or with a sufficient majority). Above all, these concerned the election of the so-called councilors of the moderator general, because the *Rule* in force at that time dealt only with the election of the moderator general: “*Generalis quidem moderator semel adlectus, perpetuo manet; plenamque gerit potestatem, quae solum hisce legibus circumscribitur.*” “The moderator general once elected remains in office until death; he possesses full power which shall be limited only by these laws’ (Art. 63).

It is useful to remember that the councilors, that is, the four definitors and the three consultors, up until now had been chosen personally by the moderator general. This was the practice that was confirmed and published some years later. Thus already in 1872 they wanted to elect both definitors and consultors, and to divide the Congregation into provinces.

Article 67 added that the term of consultors and definitors lasted six years; after that there would be a new election. In the modifications to article 68 it was proposed that the moderator general convene the general council, even extraordinarily, any time that this was requested by the majority of the definitors.

The *Rule* which was in force established the

involvement of the general council in questions of the law and the customs of the Missionaries: the erection of new mission houses or the suppression of those already erected and the dismissal of an already confirmed member. Now they wanted to add other cases in which the moderator general could not act without the consent of the council: the more important financial questions; the delimitation of the provinces and the faculties delegated to the (provincial) vicar, the approval of the matters which the procurator and other councilors administered, accusations against the superiors of the houses, the approval of the members and their definitive acceptance to the Congregation, and finally, the dispensations granted to accept new members in the Congregation, given the restrictions given by the *Rule*. Another modification concerning the method of the election of the moderator was proposed for article 71 as well as an addition to article 72.

The minutes of this meeting were signed by the participants, including Merlini, and were presented to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars for approval. But only a week later, Merlini himself had second thoughts and wrote again to the same Congregation to annul everything submitted.

This letter is of particular importance, insofar as it is one of the last official acts of Merlini and since it reflects his fidelity to the founder. In 1872, 35 years had already passed since the death of del Bufalo, and few of the Missionaries had known him personally. Merlini could be considered, in the light of the events that followed his death, the last bulwark of the first generation of the Missionaries, that is of the companions of Gaspar del Bufalo. In that moment, either because of the expansion of the Congregation, or because of the historical context in itself, they were pressing for the adaptation of some characteristics of the Congregation. In the meantime the Holy See held to the last dispositions of Merlini and for the moment did not approve the modifications

foreseen in the congress of November 1872.

Merlini died a few days later. To elect his successor, the Missionaries asked the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars to use the method agreed upon in that meeting of the general council on November 15, 1872—which Merlini had first accepted and about which he later had second thoughts. It would have been the occasion to hold the first assembly of a general type, gathering together in Rome the delegates, and together electing the moderator as well as his assistants. The Holy See at the beginning was favorable to the proposal, and calling for this process on May 2, 1873: “*Ex audientia Ssmi. . . pro hac vice tantum*” ‘From the audience of the Holy Father. . . for this time only.’

But probably there was still some concern about this new procedure. In fact Pius IX on May 29, 1873, took upon himself the right to name the future moderator general and chose Enrico Rizzoli as third moderator of the Missionaries. The first general assembly was to be held later at a date established by the Holy See. There was no election of the consultors and the definitors. The moderator chosen by the pope was in charge as if he had been elected, enjoying all the rights and the obedience of the members. The intervention of the pope, as it is read in the decree, is due to contingent causes, because of the political and military events by which the state of the Church had been annexed to Italy a short time before with the pope confined to the Vatican. However, considering the recent proposals to modify the *Rule*, one cannot exclude the possibility that the papal intervention was a cautious step in order to avoid dangerous tensions within the Congregation. At the moment nothing more was done for the revision of the *Rule*.

Having avoided these changes, in 1881 it was possible to print the *Regula cum Praxi*. Because it had not been approved, the way of electing the moderator had only an indicative value and for the successive elections of moderators it would be necessary again to have

recourse to the Holy See. In fact, for the election of the successor of Rizzoli, who died in 1884, there were some consultations between the cardinal prefect of the Sacred Congregation and the Missionaries. Because it happened that at this moment there was an epidemic of cholera they did not hold a general chapter. This time all the Missionaries were consulted by letter in order to choose the names of three Missionaries that would be presented to the pope. From among these, Leo XII, on November 2, 1884, designated Gaetano Caporali as fourth moderator general of the Congregation. In the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, there is something new: the term of the moderator elected was no longer for life but only for ten years.

The Congregation was still waiting for the time to be able to hold its first general assembly. During this time the number of American Missionaries increased. They had introduced a few new elements into their customary, among which was the election of the vicar (*delegato*) for America.

In 1891, Caporali became Archbishop of Otranto, and the problem of his successor arose once more. A precise norm for a valid and licit election is still lacking. As in the past, they wrote to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. Caporali himself advised a vote by letter, by those who formed part of the general administration and by the superiors of all the houses, and to send all this to the Sacred Congregation. The final choice would belong to the pope. This time the suggestion was also accepted, but for other reasons the pope directly appointed Palmieri as the fifth moderator general, before sending him as bishop to Brindisi in 1894.

The pope named his successor, the sixth moderator general, after having obtained the list of three names from a mail ballot of all the Missionaries living in Italy. Biaschelli was chosen. In the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars it was expressly

mentioned that once the election had taken place the Missionaries would provide for the division of the Congregation into provinces and for defining the method for conducting general chapters and the election of the superiors.

The Provinces

On November 29, 1894 the moderator general presented a memorandum to the pope in which he explained the status of the Congregation and the proposal for the division into provinces: On August 3, 1895 the Sacred Congregation answered affirmatively to the project, and with such a decree the new provinces were established.

The General Assemblies

The first general chapter was held in 1896, and up to the time when the new *Constitutions* entered into force in 1946, four other chapters were held: 1902, 1905, 1921, and 1928.

The Congregation of the Missionaries held its first general chapter in 1896. On that occasion, following the instruction of the Holy See, the manner of conducting the future chapters was established as well as the method to be followed in the election of major superiors. According to these decisions, the chapter should be held every six years, convoked by the moderator or, if he was deceased, by the vice-moderator. The moderator would be elected (if the previous one had died), along with four definitors and three consulters, and the provincial superiors.

The last assembly before the apostolic visitation was announced and convoked by the moderator general on March 4, 1928. An innovation introduced at this chapter was the decision that the office of the moderator would last 12 years. The previous moderator general, in office since 1905, raised the issue: he considered his old age as an obstacle to the fulfillment of his duty. A rescript from the Sacred Congregation of Religious on April 23, 1928,

permitted him to resign from office.

The Exemption

From the moment a religious institute of any kind has its own superior, there arises a conflict of competence with the diocesan bishops. The Holy See, with the *exemption*, has always tried to regulate these respective competencies. The exemption has continued to act as a canonical institution, up to the time of its incorporation in the Code of Canon Law in 1917.

The difference between exempt and non-exempt consists principally in this: the exempt (Regulars) receive from the Roman pontiff, not from the diocesan bishop, the necessary jurisdiction for the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments, for the ordinary life in their own community and the Church. The superiors of non-exempt institutes do not have the power of jurisdiction and therefore, exercise only the so-called dominative power in the internal relations of the institute. For the rest they are under the jurisdiction of the ordinary and the faculties which he grants them, whether for the members of their community or for the faithful in general, and also in their own churches and communities.

The decree of approval of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood did not declare any exemption from the ordinary of the place. Historically the first house of the Missionaries was that of San Felice in the Diocese of Spoleto, but the Congregation did not begin as a specific work for that diocese. The *Rule* affirmed that the Congregation was born by the will of the pope and indicated as the first house that of Rome:

Cumque Sanctae Apostolicae Sedis auctoritate nata sit Congregatio, et ejus imperio non communi tantum jure, sed firmiori nexu obstringi, ac subjici gloriantur, aequum est; ut missionis domus in alma Urbe existens sit caeterarum caput; ibique sub ejusdem Pontificis Maximi

obtutu, atque oboedientia is resideat, qui hoc opus ad divini Numinis, Ecclesiaeque obsequium legitime dirigere debet.

‘And since the Congregation came to be through the authority of the Holy and Apostolic See and by its command, let it be proud to be bound by and subject to not only the common law of the Church, but to an even stricter obligation. It is fitting that the mission house in Rome should be the head of the others. There, under the eye of the same Supreme Pontiff and in obedience to him, he who according to law is to direct the work in submission to God and the Church ought to take his residence’ (Art. 62).

The supreme authority in the Institute was that of the pope, not only by common law but also by a stronger bond. We have already seen that at the moment of the official recognition, some were inclined for the approval of the *Rule* only, in so far as the pope had desired the Institute and therefore it was superfluous to speak about his approving it.

From the Dominative Power to the Power of Jurisdiction

In the terminology after the Council of Trent, the superior of an exempt institute was called a *prelate*. The prelate has the power of ordinary jurisdiction properly so called, not only in the internal forum, but also in the external forum. In congregations of men that did not have solemn vows and were not exempt, superiors were not prelates because they had no power of jurisdiction.

In the nineteenth century the distinction between power in the public realm (or of *jurisdiction*) and in the private realm (or *dominative*) was based on the doctrine of Suarez, who considered the power of jurisdiction, properly so called, as true, derived from Christ and exercised for the good of the Church. It is different from the

dominative power (or domestic or economic) which is not true and public jurisdiction, but a type of private jurisdiction like that of the father in relation to his son or of the master in relation to the servant.

The Ordinary of the Congregation

Some acknowledgement of the power of jurisdiction also for the non-exempt was given in 1952 with the promulgation of some parts of the Code for the Oriental Churches. To major superiors of non-exempt monks, and of non-exempt clerical congregations of pontifical right or of patriarchal right jurisdiction is recognized, by the clause "*tantum in casibus jure expressis*" 'as much as expressed in cases by law.' The ecclesiastical office is described as "*secumferens aut aliquam participationem ecclesiasticae potestatis sive ordinis sive jurisdictionis aut aliam publicam ecclesiasticam potestatem*" 'carrying with it either some participation in ecclesiastical power, either of orders or of jurisdiction, or some public ecclesiastical power.'

On November 6, 1964 with the Pontifical rescript *cum admotae*, superiors general of clerical institutes were granted a whole series of delegated faculties, in order that they could more easily exercise their own function. Concerning the power of jurisdiction, the delegation of special faculties to superiors general of clerical religious is particularly important.

When John XXIII admitted to the Vatican Council II the supreme moderators of clerical societies having more than one thousand members, he recognized that they had certain importance at the level of government and of the Magisterium.

With the Code of Canon Law of 1983 all the institutes of consecrated life recognized by the Church will be considered as public societies.

Incorporation of the Missionaries and the Proper Diocese of the Missionaries

Up to the twentieth century, priests who formed part of pious associations or similar institutes remained incardinated to the dioceses of origin or of ordination; therefore their own ordinary was the one of the place. Only in making solemn vows in exempt institutes would the clerics lose their diocese of origin.

Tacitly, ecclesial jurisprudence recognized the effects of the aggregation to pious societies, and it suspended the duty of these clerics toward the diocese. Therefore, the clergy of a society, of an association or congregation without vows, lived in a hybrid condition. Juridically, he was dependent on an ordinary, that is the bishop who had ordained and incardinated him and in whose diocese he might live, but because of his membership in a society, he had to render a necessary obedience to another superior, who normally administered the internal life of the association.

For the clerics of a society without vows there were some difficulties in regard to their ordinaries. Already during the period of formation the relationship between the candidate and the ordinary was weakened, in so far as the latter was reduced to being, in certain cases, a mere juridical necessity for canonical incardination in the diocese and for the various documents necessary for ordination. It was not infrequent that a society would have interests different from those of the diocese, and thus there was lacking in the member the filial spiritual and charismatic relationship with the bishop.

To this was added the element of greatest concern: the bishop always remained the ordinary of those who joined any society and when these abandoned the association they remained priests with full rights in their diocese, even in the less edifying cases. In fact, in 1903 there were still cases of this type, and the Holy See confirmed that the members of the community did not renounce their own diocese, having been ordained with

the title of patrimony and the dimissorial letters from the diocesan bishops.

On his part, the ordinary of those who were preparing themselves for the priesthood in a society without vows could deny their access to orders, in so far as he was responsible for all these juridical acts necessary for the candidate to the priesthood. He also had the power to decide regarding the spiritual exercises to be made before ordination. All these factors justified a certain hindrance or difficulty which the practice of the Holy See resolved gradually in 1900.

The Congregation of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood also proceeded under these same conditions. Initially the priests gathered together by del Bufalo were diocesan priests, registered in the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood. With the approbation of the *Rule* by the Holy See, while remaining incardinated in their diocese, they were ready to carry out the work of the Congregation under the direction of the moderator general. But he was not an ordinary and he could not grant to the students who successfully completed their scholastic curriculum dimissorial letters nor the title of ordination. The promotion to major orders, especially the priesthood, belonged to the proper bishop or ordinary of the diocese where the member was canonically incardinated.

For the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, the proper bishop was the one from whom they had received the first tonsure, who almost always was the ordinary of the diocese where the seminary was located. According to the *Praxi*, it was foreseen first to have the incardination in the diocese and then to begin a time of probation, at the end of which was the aggregation to the Society. “*Cum Convictores cursum scholasticum expleverint, et Sacerdotes fuerint consecrati, mittantur ad Probationis Domum ibique vivent sub Regula Probandorum, et eorum nomen in Libro Probationis describatur*” “When the students have completed their academic work and

have been ordained priests, let them be sent to a house for evaluation and live there under the rule for those to be evaluated, and let their names be written in the book for those to be evaluated.' For example, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood who lived in the United States were incardinated in the dioceses of the United States; those who were in Italy were incardinated in the Italian dioceses and so forth.

The Dimissorial Letters

The Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, following the legislation of the Council of Trent (and the documents of the Holy See) did not permit, except by way of indult, members of the congregations with simple vows to be ordained with the dimissorial letters of any bishop, but only with those from the ordinary of the diocese where the first house was.

It is necessary to remember that for particular reasons, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith granted superiors of missionary societies that depended on it a temporary faculty to present the candidates to orders without the dimissorial letters of the bishop of the house of origin.

At the end of the century the decree *Auctis Admodum* confirmed the practice: priestly ordination could take place only when there were no doubts about the incardination of the cleric. The same was true for religious, who were permitted to have access to the priesthood only after their solemn profession, that is, when it was certain that the religious had lost the diocese of origin. In this case the religious superior granted the dimissorial letters. For those having simple vows, the legislation did not as yet permit the granting of the dimissorial letters by the superior, unless there was an indult or privilege.

The legislation up to this moment had tried to avoid "wandering (*vagi*) and acephalous" clerics, keeping them incardinated to some diocese, even when they belonged

to a congregation without vows. Now problems arose precisely for those clerics who left the congregations, including those without vows, to live as diocesan priests again. The Holy See, then turned its attention to a juridical institution according to which the priests, once they were aggregated to this society without vows, could not easily abandon it, creating the above-mentioned problems for the bishop.

In order that this could take place, the relations between the priests and their congregations had to be strengthened in some way, for example by giving the superior of those congregations the faculty to grant the dimissorial letters, as happened in the following century. Already in 1885, in a petition presented by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, it appeared certain that soon major superiors would obtain the faculty of presenting the candidates for ordination.

Then the students of the congregation could be ordained with the dimissorial letters of the moderator general, and not with those of the diocesan bishop. The ordination could take place anywhere, respecting what was indicated in the concession. This was a question of an indult and not of a true and proper right.

In the years before the promulgation of the Code of 1917, the Congregation for Religious had granted to some superiors of the societies (and among these, as we have seen, to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood), the faculty to promote their subjects to orders without the dimissorial letters from their bishop, but only with the dimissorial letters given by the superior himself.

In 1925, the superior general of the Congregation was authorized to grant the dimissorial letters for the ordination of thirty members of the Society; up to that moment, the number was limited to fifteen cases.

After that the Congregation for Religious with the decree *Quantum Religiones* of 1931 made it clear that the members of societies without vows could not receive major orders until they had been definitively aggregated

to the institute, or at least until after three years had gone by after their provisional (temporary) aggregation. The members of the society did not as yet lose their diocese of origin, even when the dimissorial letters were granted by the moderator general; but just the same, in practice everything regarding religious who lost their diocese of origin, according to the decree *Auctis admodum* and c. 641—1 of the Code of Canon Law, was applied to them.

In fact, when a cleric left a society of common life to continue his priestly ministry, he would have to find a *episcopus benevolus receptor* 'benevolent bishop,' otherwise he remained suspended until the Holy See would take special measures. This was also the case for the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, according to what was stated by the moderator general in 1935 in asking for the faculty to grant the dimissorial letters for the first tonsure, minor orders and major orders. In 1938 the faculty was requested for the last time.

When the Congregation of Religious established this practice, it is worth noting that these special measures concerning the dimissorial letters were inserted into the constitutions of some societies. In fact, there were no express indications from this Sacred Congregation that approved members being disincardinated from their dioceses; only the proper right of some societies, like that of the Precious Blood, approved in 1942, are a confirmation of something which had already been initiated in the direction of this new practice. Through perpetual or temporary incorporation, the diocese of origin was lost. In fact, in the proper law of the Congregation, according to the *Constitutions* of 1942, the diocese of origin was lost through incorporation in the Society and the right to issue the dimissorial letters for ordination of the members was given to the moderator general. Similar measures were taken in other societies, for example the Congregation of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri.

In 1946, a new edition of the *Constitutions* was

approved, stating that the moderator general retains the power to incorporate new members in the Institute and to grant the dimissorial letters with the title of the "common table." For the Missionaries of the Precious Blood as well as for other societies of common life without vows, the evolution in this area was notable. In regard to aggregation, the Society constituted as a congregation of diocesan priests has progressively assumed a configuration similar to religious institutes. From this new practice we deduce then a fundamental change for the Congregation: the *Rule* provided that the candidate would first receive ordination to the priesthood (thus he would certainly be incardinated into the diocese) and then the period of probation with the Missionaries would begin. In the *Constitutions*, on the other hand, we have the opposite process, since they provide for the definitive incorporation of the member to the Society, thus losing his own diocese, and then follows ordination to the priesthood.

The Nature of the Bond

In the Code of 1917 the societies of common life were not granted the distinction they have in the Code of 1983. Just the same, there were some societies that explicitly professed the evangelical counsels through oath or promise or vows such as the Pallotines, and other societies that implicitly profess the counsels by a simple incorporation into the society. The Code does not speak expressly of the juridical bond between the members and the Society, but just the same, it presupposes it in so far as it describes the Society as a true ecclesiastical society with common life and establishes the effects in canon 681. It leaves further definition to the law of the institute.

Among the Missionaries of the Precious Blood there was no promise of assuming the evangelical counsels, but rather a promise of perseverance in the Society, which was a custom of the American Province, verifiable

in its own *Praxis*; the *Rule* did not contain any reference to the formula of the promise.

Incorporation is an act constituted by the member who gives himself and of the ecclesiastical superior who accepts him in the name of the Society and the Church. This act is of public nature, and establishes a moral and juridical bond between the member and his Society, such as obedience to the *Constitutions*, to the superiors, having rights and duties like the other members. With the valid admission in the Society, the member is bound to the Society. With this he renders his life juridically stable and he is permitted to realize that way of life prescribed by canon 673 of the Code of Canon Law of 1917, imitating the religious.

A great part of the evolution of the societies of common life was due to the ministerial priesthood of their members, which had to be administered under the authority of an ordinary. In the case of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, for example, clerics were no longer incardinated in a diocese and it was necessary to establish a bond between the cleric and the ordinary. In fact, now that they no longer belonged to a diocese, the completely free gift of himself to the Society, which del Bufalo and the *Rule* had confirmed as the *bond of charity*, came to have less value.

CONCLUSION

The *Rule* remained in force for over a century, up to 1942. A few years after its approval, the Holy See began a series of measures or acts with the purpose of regulating the legislation of many institutes that were coming into being. This process will culminate with the promulgation of the Code, in 1917. In this space of time the Roman curia concentrated attention on the institutes in the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars: the new practice gave rise to doubts concerning the definitive approbation of the *Rule*. From the constitutional

point of view, one limitation that soon emerged was the lack of a general chapter.

One could have been convoked for the election of the successor of the second moderator, Merlini, if he had accepted the modifications proposed by his councilors. I believe that progressive democratic politics had in some way influenced the Missionaries to wish to participate, with their vote, in the choice not only of the moderator but also of the councilors. In fact, the charismatic figure of the founder and of his capacity to maintain the government of the Congregation alone declined with his successor and collaborator Merlini.

In the meantime the Missionaries went to America, finding themselves in a pastoral context, which was different from that in which the Congregation had been founded and encouraged. The Missionaries, in order to continue to be a gift for the Church in America, adapted themselves to the directives of the local bishops. The moderator general, while seeking not to dilute the original charism of the Congregation, recognized the particular needs of the time. Various factors, however, continued to exert pressure on the original tradition of the Congregation, not only in provisions for the apostolate but also in the very institution of the Missionaries, for example, in having an equal monthly stipend, in the area of formation, and above all, in the bond of the promise. Sometimes it is described as a promise made by oath, which is of the same nature as a vow. It was a time in which the Missionaries left the confines of the Papal States and therefore had to face diverse realities.

Judging from the point of view of many years after these events and in the light of the parallel experience of other institutes, it seems obvious to say that this innovative procedure was linked to the expansion of the Institute, and was also the condition for its expansion. Regarding the beginning of the Congregation in America, we can say that its members were established there but not with the "classical" forms of its apostolate,

that is, popular missions and the spiritual exercises. The Missionaries responded to the invitation to help the Church in America, and remained there at the cost of suspending momentarily all that was more characteristic of their Congregation. The events then demonstrated that those initiatives were not only not abandoned, but were developed to such a point that they were adopted in other parts of the Congregation.

In the same way, they were the cause of that innovative tension which characterized the evolution of the institutes and in particular that of the Missionaries up to the next century. From the strictly institutional point of view, the commitments that demanded a fixed residence were not permitted by the *Rule*. Therefore, we can say that assuming such fixed commitments in the parishes was a real institutional jump; in some cases, I think the daily parish and the pastoral commitments carried out correspond by analogy to the houses of mission as conceived by the founder.

It remains to be seen if it is possible for the Missionary to have the mobility desired by the founder, and if the spirit of the Community attached to the parish respects the spirit of the Congregation. The pastoral adaptations, the promise, the period of formation, the decentralization with faculties delegated to those responsible, an appropriate "smaller rule" for that region (even if not as yet approved officially) are elements which will be adopted by the entire Congregation and many of these were subject of example during the Second Vatican Council.

In the first one hundred years of the Congregation there were also some changes due to the evolution of the common law, and in a parallel way there were also some new institutional foundations of the Congregation. In all this we must say first of all that the Missionaries, except for some indulgences for the granting of a limited number of dimissorial letters and of the title of ordination, did not present requests to the Holy See to modify the

physiognomy of the Institute or of the *Rule* (for example in matters of exemption from the bishop) as other institutes did. The change of the common law of the Church stressed, from 1800 on, the power of the governing bodies of the congregations. The practice of the Holy See has had to provide for the many new foundations, for the diverse conditions of those who make only simple vows, and has had to take into account the aspirations, which in general, civil society passed on to members of religious institutes: the mobility, the new missionary effort and the geographic expansion of those institutes which required an adequate structure of government.

Many of these elements influenced the preparation of the Code of 1917. From the purely juridical point of view, the evolution is constituted by the gradual attachment of clerics to the Congregation with the consequent loss of the diocese of origin. In this the Church has followed a process that will lead the Congregation to have a superior having a quasi-episcopal jurisdiction, on which the members depend in a juridical manner. Juridically, the process comes to be realized in the *Constitutions* of 1942, confirmed in 1946, in the matter of the incorporation of clerics to the Society, the loss of their own diocese, the granting of the dimissorial letters and the title of ordination.

With the Code of Canon Law of 1983 the power of jurisdiction of superiors of the Congregation was fully stated. The Congregation is autonomous, in the sense that it can provide for the formation and incardination of its own clerics, having recourse to bishops only for the administration of the sacrament of Orders. Strengthening this aspect, the Church recognizes the nature of the institutes in the diocese, since they cut across the organizational structure and are in a certain sense supplementary. Certainly, the power conferred to the moderator general had to supply the lack of control of those bishops who were the ordinaries of the members, but who could not always take care of them in their

changing apostolic commitments. With incorporation into the Society and the loss of their own diocese, the free gift of themselves to the Congregation in the bond of charity came to be of less significance. The promise became necessary as an act that in some way constitutes the bond of union of the person to the Institute and therefore establishes a new identity publicly recognized in the Church.

In my opinion, the loss of the diocese of origin of the Missionary, and the fact of becoming totally dependent on his Congregation, is the greatest change in the history of the Missionaries. That was obtained not so much by the desires of the Missionaries, as by the will of the Church to clarify this phase of its history, marked by the notable development of religious institutions and of the development of rules that accompanied this. At least under these aspects, there was a progressive approximation to a religious institute.

It is not easy to ask ourselves if this new condition is consistent with the spirit of the foundation. On the other hand, it does not affect the fundamentals of apostolic action, the very reason for being a member of the Institute. Perhaps this permits greater autonomy and inner initiative.

Fr. Mario Brotini presented this article to the workshop for C.P.P.S. formators held in 2003. The English translation of the Italian original is by Sister Mary Berchmans, R.S.M.

The Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood

Francesco Bartoloni, C.P.P.S.

I should like to begin by noting that in preparing this presentation I have relied heavily on Michele Colagiovanni's, *Il Padre Segreto, Vita di Monsignore Francesco Albertini*, especially chapters 10, 11, 12, and 18, and an article by Mario Dariozzi, C.P.P.S., "*L'Arciconfraternita del Preziosissimo Sangue in San Nicola in Carcere Tulliano.*" (See the end of the article for full references.)

The *Enciclopedia Cattolica* defines a confraternity as an ecclesiastical corporation, composed primarily of the laity, canonically erected and governed by a competent superior, with the aim of promoting the Christian faith by means of special good works directed to divine worship or to charity to one's neighbor. Often worship and charity are associated aims in the statutes of confraternities. Thus conceived, they are genuine and stable ecclesiastical foundations with their own organization, capable of having their own statutes, etc.

According to the Code of Canon Law of 1917, confraternities are not to be confused with:

1. those institutes that have the title of "pious causes" (hospitality, recovery houses, orphanages, etc.) which have a more complex aim;
2. pious unions that exist for a particular occasion,

- held together by the will of their members, which go out of existence when there are no more members;
3. secular third orders that are closely linked with the religious order from which they derive their name;
 4. associations of the arts and of craftsmen which have an aim that is primarily economic, even if they place themselves under the protection of a saint.

Confraternities can continue to exist even if they have no members, thanks to their canonical erection. They depend on the diocesan bishop and on the major superiors of the institutes or religious orders with whom they are associated or by whom they were founded.

They came into existence during the Carolingian era, but we have documents on associations of priests from the tenth century or in the case of associations of the laity, from the twelfth century. Each confraternity had, according to its importance, an altar or a chapel or a church in which it could perform its religious practices (Mass, processions, special prayers) and also a place where they could meet under the guidance of a head and with the assistance of a priest or member of a religious order. Their stated purpose generally went beyond religious practices: assistance to sick members, the suffrages and funerals for the deceased, aid for the poor and for strangers, the gathering of alms, and help for those condemned to death or to the imprisoned.

The new Code of Canon Law does not speak of confraternities but of *associations*. They are treated in Title V of the second book which has the title, "The People of God." Canons 298 through 329 deal with these associations. The Code emphasizes that it is a right of each of the faithful to be able to join associations, whatever their state in life in the Church: lay person, priest, religious, or bishop.

The Archconfraternity has this title because it has the capacity to aggregate to itself other confraternities or associations.

How Did the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood Begin?

In the church of San Nicola in Carcere in Rome, a relic of the Blood of Christ was exposed for the veneration of the faithful. The relic consisted of a piece of cloth stained with blood which, according to legend, had poured forth from the side of Christ. This cloth was part of the cloak of the centurion who participated in the crucifixion and who became the progenitor of the Savelli family. In the course of the centuries this family had given the Church the relic. The relic was arranged at the foot of a venerated crucifix which is said to have spoken to St. Bridget. The relic and the crucifix were venerated to such an extent that there arose a feast of the Precious Blood in which the entire parish participated.

In the climate of the renewal of the first years of the 1800s, the church of San Nicola underwent important works of restoration, the express wish of Pius VII. An engine of this restoration was Monsignor Francesco Albertini. His was not only a physical restoration of the church building, but also a spiritual renewal that encompassed the faithful who frequented the church. In his intimate reflections, which we approach in the context of profound prayer, and in the apostolate he engaged in with intense devotion, Albertini found himself attracted to greater and greater involvement with the relic of the Blood. The legend of the Savelli family was overlaid on the testimony of the Gospel of John, which attests that from the side of Christ flowed blood and water. The Blood that had soaked the cloth of the relic was the Blood of the covenant, the Blood of the birth in which the Church was born, the Blood of the Eucharistic chalice.

In that Blood the thoughts of Don Francesco came together, linked to the fatherhood of God. He is the absolute parent, in whom paternal and maternal love is based and in whose arms we live, move, and have our being. The Father sends the Son for the sons and

daughters and pours out upon them the Spirit of love which reunites them to the Father. Every person is in the heart of God. The proof that we are in the center of the love of the Trinity is the Blood.

Devotion to the Blood united the romantic dimension, permitting the revival of an intense participation in the events that had accompanied the sufferings of Christ, with the dimension of the enlightenment, because there was no doubt that in the sign of the Blood, one summed up the theology of redemption. Albertini confirmed that he was taken by these inspirations that came to him "in the morning, at the holy altar, while consuming the Blood of Christ." He wanted to promote an interior and spiritual revolution, to stir up the people, and to affirm that he had discovered there a hidden secret: the true devotion of the Church, the inexhaustible source. If every Christian had understood his own worth and the worth of his neighbor, even when sinning, he would do everything possible to live accordingly.

He began to think about instituting a sodality which would place at its summit the devotion to the Blood of Redemption and this hidden treasure which the Church possessed, so that every member of the faithful would experience the same interior movements which he had. Such a project became irrepressible on the first of July 1807, during the annual celebration of the feast of the Precious Blood. The true feast of the Blood must be a vigorous Church, stirred up by love.

In a meeting of the chapter of the Church, Don Francesco posed the question of finding something, a gathering or *adunanza* as he called it, "capable of calling back the faithful." He knew where he wanted to arrive. For "calling back" the faithful there was nothing better than the devotion to the Precious Blood, "all the more so since there was already a feast of the Precious Blood being celebrated on the first day of July." The influx of the faithful would mean that they would stream into the

Church, or better, made them become Church. This would have increased the income of the Church and would have permitted the maintenance of the work of modernization already completed and still to be done.

Meanwhile, in a church dependent on San Nicola, Santa Maria in Vincis, a group of priests—Don Gaetano Bonanni, Don Gaspar del Bufalo, Don Antonio Giampedi, Don Luigi Gonnelli, and Don Antonio Santelli—had begun an evening oratory. This consisted in the apostolate for the catechesis of adults, who could be present for the catechesis and the other functions only late in the evening. Don Francesco had wanted to unite the two works, his association dedicated to the Precious Blood and this group of priests who were dedicating themselves to the evening oratory, but Don Gaetano Bonanni opposed it. For his association Don Albertini provided for a more structured organization of the participants while participation in the evening oratory was more casual.

In any case Albertini continued to be attracted by this group of priests who were promoting the oratory and he wanted to dispose them to promote the devotion to the Blood of Christ. With the passing of time he strengthened his opinions of the young priest Gaspar del Bufalo. He had found in him a worthy preacher and good organizer. Now he noticed that he was rising above his companions. They were united together around Bonanni, who remained the guiding force, but Gaspar was full of energy and promised to become a decisive force.

With regard to temperament, Gaspar had what Don Francesco lacked. He was an impulsive protagonist, a fluent orator, and was elegant in form and in his person. If Albertini was better in his one-on-one conversations, Gaspar excelled in the pulpit. He seemed to be possessed by an overwhelming force.

Don Francesco, inclined to read events as the place where God made himself known, began to think not only

that the activities of the evening oratory of Bonanni and of his own group could be held in the same day, but also that they could be integrated in some way into a single idea. For the moment what was important was that the two initiatives not hinder one another, because at the moment their integration seemed to be possible.

Thus it was that he began to offer some rough sketches of the rule for his own work and began to put them into action, centering everything in the celebration of the Mass in the morning, at an early hour, before the start of the working day and the opening of the shops and the start of work activities. It was a happy intuition. The church immediately was filled with the faithful as it had never been before.

Albertini summarized the ideal of the sodality or association:

To promote the greater glory of God, the devotion and frequent reception of the sacraments among the people, especially in the poor artisans, workers, and peasants, and to obtain a more abundant suffrage for the souls of the deceased, particularly of those who died in the inns and in those places where they are ordinarily most forgotten.

The idea was more precise, in stating that those inscribed would have to:

. . . engage in many pious works. . . for the spiritual benefit of large surrounding population and neighboring places, especially to the poor peasants and day laborers, who are so numerous in this vast parish.

Three features immediately stand out: the missionary vision of the Institute, its being deeply rooted in the parish, and its openness to the laity. The association, in fact, was created with a view to action. The activity had to be directed principally to the fringes of a very

emarginated population. The priests were not coming to them and so he would have to think about enlisting the laity. Albertini wanted an army of missionaries to spread the devotion in the world, precisely because of the universal effect of the Blood of redemption.

This was being hampered by Albertini's personal character. He leaned toward personal dialogue, to personal contacts, and he let it be known that he was solidly against putting himself at the head of this, to working with large groups, to being on the front lines, so to speak. His thought was that Don Gaspar del Bufalo would know how to do this.

The association was formed of men and women. It would remain dependent on the chapter of San Nicola. A canon of the chapter would be in charge and would be elected yearly, at the same time in which the officers would be elected. The number of members was not limited, but that of the officers was fixed at 15 men and 15 women, in memory of the mysteries of the rosary.

A strict body of norms regulated the functioning of the institution. Albertini maintained that "everything must be done with order, because it should succeed in becoming acceptable and pleasing to the Lord." Order depended on "good rules and their exact execution."

The canons of the chapter of San Nicola in Carcere chose from among themselves those who had initiated the institution: Monsignor Pittori, Don Gregorio Muccioli, and naturally, Albertini. These three chose fifteen men and fifteen women as "representatives" or persons in charge, having the duty of bringing together "the most active persons and capable persons to be the foundation stones of the aforementioned devoted gathering."

After this the chapter set the date for the ceremony of the founding for December 8, 1808. Albertini had a preference for meaningful dates and numbers. On this date occurred the first centenary of the gift of the relic to the parish of San Nicola in Carcere. On this date is celebrated one of the most important Marian feasts, the

Immaculate Conception, which recalls the mystery of the incarnation. Through Mary, conceived without sin by the foreseen merits of the Blood of Jesus, humanity gave its own best blood to the Word made flesh.

The day was preceded by a novena that began in the morning, after the Mass. Don Francesco invited many priests for confessions and chose Gaspar as the preacher.

On December 8, during the sung Mass and general communion, Gaspar delivered “moving and effective short sermons.” At the end of the Mass “he made a brief but energetic discourse, directed entirely at the ‘representatives,’ both men and women, in which he made them see the principal aim of the new association, which had just been founded, and consequently what ought to be the disposition of those who were destined to become its foundations.” He concluded, “animating and encouraging all to dedicate themselves completely” to the work.

On December 26 the chapter of the church met to elect the president. This could not be anyone but Don Francesco. He accepted and the day after his acceptance he held the first gathering of the representatives. In this meeting “different tasks were given to each one.” In the meeting of January 1 the association thought to seek pontifical approbation. After a thorough and strict examination of the institution, of its rules and its aims, the Cardinal Vicar granted with the decree of February 27 “the perpetual and apostolic approbation of the association and of its constitutions.” With this act Albertini remained “freed of whatever dependence he had on his two partners,” Pittori and Muccioli, and the consequence was a sharper focus of the directives. The dependence on the chapter as a whole, for those matters foreseen by the constitutions, remained in force.

What Did the Constitutions Consist Of?

The full name of the association was “of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, of the Rosary of the

Blessed Virgin Mary and of the Holy Souls in Purgatory.” The constitutions were simple and to the point. They described the history of the birth of the Association, its relationship with the chapter of the church of San Nicola in Carcere, of its purpose, spiritual as well as social and moral, and of the duties of its officers or managers.

The constitutions were concise and at the same time detailed. They were centered on a total vision of the Blood of Christ. The discourse is not only “spiritualistic,” about the salvation of one’s own soul or that of the other. It was also based on the necessity of establishing a just social order. Its methods were those proper to the time: devotion to the Blood of Christ, prayer, the life of charity, and of social action both for the benefit of the members as well as that of others, especially the most marginal, who could not be reached by the parish structure.

One can imagine the power of such concepts, proclaimed among the degraded populace of the *Campo Vaccino* ‘cow pasture’ (the Roman Forum) or those who had settled on the expanse of brush and ruins between the Palatine and Aventine hills.

Albertini called the sodality he founded an “assembly” ‘*adunanza*.’ One could define “assembly” as the original name given to the church founded by Christ and gathered or assembled by the apostles: assembly, gathering, convocation. Jesus called together, gathered, his own and now the Blood of his side, soaked into the cloth, was doing this again. The relic of San Nicola was truly incendiary!

Some months later Don Francesco thought about giving the assembly specific prayers, to nourish the devotion to the Blood of Redemption. Thus he went on retreat at the house of the Vincentians in Montecitorio, “to confer in deeper solitude with the fathers of light about that which would be pleasing to his divine majesty for the progress of the same assembly.” Following the model of the rosary, he composed a chaplet of the seven

bloodsheddings of Christ.

Meditations and prayers flow from the fullness and intensity of the heart. There is no verbose oratory here, but an affective sigh of inspiration, quite consistent with his personality. Even in their restraint, the texts appear aimed at bringing to life in the faithful the dramatic hours of the passion. It is evident that the intention is to arouse strong emotions in the soul of the one who prays, because from these emotions flow the impulse to change one's life. He also composed a "Prayer to the Most Precious Blood" which was to conclude the chaplet and which constituted an extreme stirring of the emotions.

In the following days he presented the little manual to the Sacred Congregation of rites and, having obtained their approval, had thousands of copies printed. These were rapidly exhausted. By now the Assembly of San Nicola in Carcere had become the Assembly of the Most Precious Blood and its goal was clear: to spread the devotion to the Precious Blood. It was an important turning point. A new devotion appeared in the Roman religious panorama that was not simply one devotion among many.

The Historical Context: An Excursus

I would like to situate this "little" history of the foundation of the Archconfraternity begun by Albertini within the "big" history that was developing and being lived in that same period.

These were the times in which Napoleon's star reached its zenith in Europe. Having declared himself to be emperor and departing from France, Napoleon wanted to become the head of all Europe and to make of Europe a community of nations under his sovereignty. In the first years of the 1800s Pope Pius VII, sought to agree to his aims. The Church was in a certain way indebted to Napoleon because he had been the architect of the restoration of Catholicism in France after the antichristian orgy of the French Revolution. For

Napoleon, however, Catholicism was just an instrument of the empire he wanted to form. The pope for him was only a "prime minister of religion," dependent on the emperor just like any other minister.

The position of Napoleon had become absolute in 1807, that is, just as the initiative for the Albertini's sodality was in its germinal state. The emperor, having defeated Prussia, had let the pope know that he had to enter into his coalition against the world. In this way the pope would keep his state and his temporal power; otherwise he would lose everything.

Pius VII gave a clear refusal. On January 21, 1808, Napoleon gave the order to General Miollis to invade the Papal States and to occupy Rome. On February 2 the French troops entered Rome. During the course of 1808 there were a succession of overwhelming intimidations and moral violence to the detriment of the pope. On June 10, 1809, the progressive strangling of papal liberty set in motion to wear down the pontiff came to an end when at 10:00 a.m. the papal coat of arms was taken down from the Castel Sant'Angelo and the French flag was raised. Rome had become French. The pope, resolute, signed the bull of excommunication against Napoleon and all those who had collaborated with him in this act. The reaction was to make the restrictive measures against the pope even harsher.

On the night between July 5 and 6 Pius VII was thrown into a dilemma: either accept "spontaneously" the end of his temporal power or submit to deportation. Pius VII offered a complete refusal. The imperial response: condemnation to exile.

These were events which stirred up emotions in the entire Catholic world. In Rome and in all of the Papal States the imperial provisions in their totality came into force: requisitions and the oath of loyalty to the new regime on the part of all those who received an income from the state or who exercised a public office.

As an eminent priest in that part of Rome, dean of

all the clergy and recognized as a spiritual man, Don Francesco was required to take the oath, and at the end of June 1810 was called to subscribe to the declaration of loyalty to the emperor. We do not know what his reply was, but perhaps it was that which Pius VII is said to have offered when the French asked him to ally himself with Napoleon: I cannot, I must not, I will not. This was the response which Don Francesco's great spiritual son, Gaspar del Bufalo, will repeat a few days later.

It is easy to imagine what a difficult and repugnant idea it was for Albertini to leave Rome in a period so delicate, in which his child, that is the Archconfraternity, was taking its first steps. On July 1, 1810, the day in which the feast of the Precious Blood was celebrated in San Nicola in Carcere and a few days after his refusal to take the oath, he wanted Don Gaspar to be at San Nicola for preaching the short sermons, and the chaplet during the Mass of general communion. Young Gaspar carried these out "with great power and grace."

He also had responded to the command to take the oath: "I cannot, I must not, I will not." Both of them, Don Francesco and Don Gaspar, were awaiting punishment. They knew that they would be condemned to exile.

Neither of them liked the thought of leaving Rome, but for both of them it was comforting that there was the possibility of confronting the unknowns of exile together. Albertini knew that he could continue to cultivate Gaspar for his project and Gaspar knew he would continue to enjoy the reassuring presence of a father.

The deportation was a difficult period on account of the discomfort and of the sufferings of being in a foreign and unfamiliar land, but at the same time it was rich in that it was a time for acquiring new awareness, new experiences, and apostolic activities. Albertini and Gaspar remained together for the greater part of the time of exile, about four years, until Albertini was taken away and deported to Corsica. The two had to separate. Albertini had, in any case, all the time to "cultivate"

Gaspar, to speak to him in depth of the association he had founded in Rome, of his dream to have a group of missionaries who would extend the devotion to the redeeming Blood of Jesus to all people, of the “prophecy” of the holy nun, Sister Agnese del Verbo Incarnato, that he would find a young and energetic priest who would help him in realizing his dream, his project.

In January 1814 the deportation ended with the overthrow and deportation of Napoleon by the Central Empires with the help of England. Gaspar returned to Rome immediately and responded to the invitation of the association of the “Gospel Workers” to join them.

The Missionaries of the Precious Blood and the Archconfraternity

The Gospel Workers, founded by the holy priest Gaetano Bonanni, were secular priests who made themselves available for preaching and for various charitable social works. In April 1814 Gaspar conducted a course of spiritual exercises for the staff of the Roman curia. Among them was Monsignor Cristaldi, who knew well how to take the measure of a man. He was not a priest, but he felt an immediate admiration for Gaspar, whom he knew as a young priest, full of energy and apostolic commitment, whose misfortunes during the deportation he had followed. From this grew a friendship born of deep esteem. He understood that Gaspar, despite his youth and his recent return from exile, was just the man to give to the Gospel Workers the strength and cohesion that Don Gaetano Bonanni did not know how to communicate.

Meanwhile Albertini, just returned to Rome from Corsica, was devoting himself to his association, but he immediately got in contact with Gaspar. He presented Gaspar to Cristaldi. Don Francesco spoke to Cristaldi of his work and found himself in agreement on two fundamental points: organizing a body of missionary priests who would dedicate themselves completely to preaching,

above all in the Papal States, and entrusting this enterprise to Gaspar. Albertini would have the task of spreading the devotion of the Precious Blood. The missionary commitment of the group and the devotion to the Precious Blood were not in contrast to one another but bestowed a greater cohesiveness on the group and greater efficacy to the preaching.

Bonanni, after some hesitation, joined the project, and on August 15, 1815, in the Abbey of San Felice di Giano dell'Umbria that had been given them by the pope, Gaspar, Bonanni, and other friends started the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

That day Albertini was in Rome and spent the entire day in prayer before the Madonna to beg success for a foundation that was dear to his heart for three reasons: it fulfilled the "prophecy" of Sister Agnese, it destined a group of priests for the glorification of the Precious Blood, and it all happened without his being part of the picture.

Above all Albertini and Gaspar were thinking that it would be advantageous to have the pious assembly promoted to the status of an archconfraternity and have this enriched with indulgences. Pius VII, who wanted the Blood of Christ to be honored in a special way in every part of the world, consented to the request for the indulgences (September 22, 1815) and for the elevation of the assembly to an archconfraternity (September 26, 1815), conceding to it the faculty to aggregate other confraternities and pious unions already existing or in the future.

What was the scope of the new institution? Was it devotion to the redemptive Blood of Christ or the preaching of missions and pastoral animation?

Don Francesco could combine these two questions. It was not the case that the Archconfraternity was *his* devotion. He dreamed of a Church converted to the Gospel of the Blood. He considered it only the beginning of an ongoing work, which would have to accompany the

life of the Church in future ages. This is why he did not find it strange that a new institution to be dedicated to the spread of a devotion should be born. It was not a matter of one devotion among many, but of *the* devotion. It was the soul of the Church!

In the fullness of Christian witness the value of the person finds its highest level conceivable. Human nature is of such value that God became flesh to redeem it. In the Son of God who assumes human nature, the human condition is revealed and realized to its fullness. The greatest evidence of this value is that the Son of God pours out his Blood to save each and every human being.

The adjective “most precious” in the popular devotion was thus applied to the Blood of Jesus in itself, but it also reflected on humankind, because it was as though it were the price “paid” for humankind. It was thus the sign revealing the value of humankind, because without a doubt the value of something is the price one is prepared to pay to acquire it. The Blood of Christ was the price that was paid “for every person.” That was the price of every human being: man or woman, slave or free, to whatever tribe, language, people or nation he or she might belong.

Now it was necessary to act in a way so that the price had not been paid in vain. The Missionaries of the Precious Blood would have to spread such an overwhelming message and the prayers of the Archconfraternity, which reinforced the message, would be able to create a new culture in the villages and in the cities. It was a genuine revolution which did not *require* blood, but *gave* it! The proliferation of centers of devotion in each place would create such a constellation that would spread messages of reform: of social commitment, of the involvement of the laity, of general mobilization.

Such a project saw the urgent need to enter into the arena of restoration: missionary teams of great preachers to go throughout the Papal States, to call the people to fidelity to the Church understood as the deposit of

eternal salvation and also as a civil state.

St. Gaspar developed this project of Albertini and in 1817 he was elected "First Promoter and Missionary of the Archconfraternity." With St. Gaspar began the missions of the Archconfraternity.

As long as he lived, St. Gaspar maintained this union with the Archconfraternity and he said in his letters that he wanted to keep intact what Albertini had initiated. His Missionaries continued to do the same, making every effort to spread the Archconfraternity until 1869, when the administration of the Archconfraternity was taken from them. In 1869 the Archconfraternity had 169 affiliated confraternities in Italy and in other countries of Europe.

Albertini's work had an unbelievable resonance throughout the nineteenth century, above all because other institutes of religious bloomed from his spirituality inspired by the Blood of Christ.

In 1936 the chapter of San Nicola in Carcere was dissolved and the Archconfraternity was transferred to San Giuseppe Capo le Case. In 1946 there was an attempt on the part of those inscribed in the Archconfraternity to restore the administration of the organization to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, but this proposal was not successful.

As one sees, the bonds between the new Congregation founded by St. Gaspar and the Archconfraternity were very close. In fact, until 1833 the Missionaries of St. Gaspar were called "Priest Missionaries of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood," and St. Gaspar signed himself as "Director general of the holy missions of the venerable Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Archconfraternity in turn spoke of the Missionaries of St. Gaspar as "our Missionaries." All of the members of Gaspar's Congregation as well as the students in the houses of study of the Congregation,

automatically became part of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood. Nevertheless there was always a clear juridical and real distinction between the two realities.

The Pious Union of the Blood of Christ

After 1833 the title of “Missionaries of the Archconfraternity” was no longer used. Once approval of the *Rule* of the Congregation had been obtained in 1841, the distinction between the priests of the Archconfraternity and the Missionaries of the Precious Blood became even clearer. The latter, however, to establish unions and add new associates always had to have recourse to the authorities of the Archconfraternity

This procedure was the cause of some inconvenience for the Missionaries, so much so that in a meeting of the general council of the Congregation, held on July 8, 1851, one reads the following:

Thus it is decided that for our own peace and to have greater freedom in spreading our devotion of the Precious Blood, that we obtain from the Holy See emancipation from the Archconfraternity.

One of the signers of the decision was Giovanni Merlini, moderator general.

The result was that Pius IX, with a letter dated July 29, 1851, granted the faculty to erect a sodality under the title of the Precious Blood, independent of the Archconfraternity, in the primary church of the Congregation. He granted it the same title and it would enjoy the same faculties, privileges, indulgences, and spiritual advantages already granted or which would be granted in the future to the Archconfraternity.

Thus was born the Pious Union of the Precious Blood, whose first headquarters were at the Church of San Salvatore in Campo, which was attached to the headquarters of the general administration of the

Congregation. From July 15, 1858 the headquarters of the Pious Union were located at the Church of Santa Maria in Trivio, at the altar of Jesus the Nazarene, attached to the new house of the general administration of the Congregation, given by Pope Pius IX.

This article was a presentation given at a workshop for C.PP.S. formators held in Rome and Giano dell'Umbria in July 2003. Translated by Jerome Stack, C.PP.S.

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The History of the C.PP.S. General Curia

Jerome Stack, C.PP.S.

THE GENERAL CURIA, 1815–1946

Most members, I suspect, have not thought much about the topic of my presentation: the history of the general curia. The activities of the general curia must seem fairly remote from their daily lives. Most decisions that affect them directly are made at the local level. We are a decentralized Congregation.

Our governmental structure reflects the principle of subsidiarity. In our *Normative Texts* we have defined the role of the moderator general and the general curia in terms of animation and support rather than in juridical terms. The curia has taken a proactive role in promoting our charism, in the ongoing formation of members and lay associates, and in promoting greater collaboration. *The Cup of the New Covenant* (a magazine primarily for members and lay associates), formation opportunities such as the meeting for lay associates (MERLAP) held in 2001 and this course for C.PP.S. formators held in 2003, the C.PP.S. international website, and the canonical visitations by the moderator and members of the general council all reflect the animating and supporting role of the curia.

Remarks made at the 2002 meeting of the major superiors with the moderator general and general

council suggest that we might be re-examining the role of the general curia in the light of the growing interest in greater collaboration and the “internationalization” of the C.P.P.S. It may be that we might have different expectations of the general curia after the assembly in 2004.

I believe that knowing more about the history of general government will help us to reflect more fully on the challenges that face us right now. Knowing more about our history will help us understand ways of perceiving and understanding our Society and its governance that are different from our own.

Some Definitions

Years ago one of my high school English teachers, the late Fr. Jim Froelich, often admonished us: “Define your terms!” In the forty years since I heard those words I have come to realize the wisdom of his dictum and I realize that a lack of precision in language can lead to misunderstandings and worse.

The general curia of the Congregation in its broad sense consists of the moderator general, the four elected general councilors, along with the economist general, secretary general, procurator general, postulator general and archivist general. In other words, the general curia embraces more than just the moderator general and the four general councilors. In common usage, general curia generally refers to the moderator general and the general council, and generally I will be using it in this sense.

If you look at the chronological list of the general curias, the various tasks have been assigned in different ways in past years, sometimes given to the elected general councilors and sometimes to non-members.

The term “general council” is often used to designate the five *elected* members of the general curia, but this is not strictly speaking correct. The moderator general is *assisted* by the general council and in some cases their

consultation and/or consent is required, so it is more proper to speak of the “moderator general and the general council.” In common speech and for reasons of brevity, the term “general council” is commonly used for the moderator general and the four elected councilors, and, as noted above, is commonly used as synonymous with “general curia.”

I will say more about the functions of the various members of the general curia as it exists today later on.

In the Beginning

Saint Gaspar, as we know, was a charismatic and tireless priest, and as founder and first director general of the Society he functioned as an animating leader as well as a practical and knowledgeable manager. In the nearly four thousand of his letters available to us today, it is quite evident that he not only was intensely concerned about the spiritual health of the members and of “the Work,” as Gaspar sometimes called the Congregation, but also about the day-to-day operation of the various houses of the Community.

During Gaspar’s lifetime and for years afterward the governance needs of the Society were in many ways different than they are today. We must remember that Gaspar was creating something new—a Congregation of secular priests who lived a common life and who were dedicated to the apostolate of preaching. Today we are known as a “society of apostolic life,” but there was no such term in the theology or canon law of the Church in the early years of the nineteenth century. The Congregation as we know it today did not spring fully developed from the mind and heart of Gaspar and his companions. It was a work in progress that evolved over time.

Membership in the Congregation seems to have been rather fluid. Since there were a good number of priests in Italy at the time, many bishops apparently did not have a problem with some priests joining the

Society, particularly since they never lost incardination in their own dioceses. Members could easily leave and go back to their dioceses. One bishop, Guglielmo Sillani, even resigned from his see in order to become a Missionary.

(By way of historical note: When St. Alphonsus Ligouri became bishop of the small diocese of Sant'Agata dei Goti south of Rome not many years before the birth of St. Gaspar, there were about 30,000 people in the see, along with 17 religious houses and 400 diocesan priests!)

During Gaspar's lifetime there was no "Rule" in the sense of a fully developed document approved by the Holy See. The first *Rule* of the Congregation was approved only in 1841. Merlini states that Gaspar began dictating the *Rule* to him a few years before his death and both the *Rule* and the *Praxis* reflect his thoughts, although some think that Merlini may have had a greater hand in shaping the *Praxis*.

Of course, the young Society had its rules. These were eventually collected in a document called the *Transunto* 'Summary,' printed in 1822. The last twelve articles of the *Transunto* deal with government. Most of these deal with government in the individual houses, however, and there is little mention of the office of the moderator (or director) general or of anything like a general curia. There was no provision for a general assembly or other body to exercise collective authority or elect the head of the Society. In fact, the Congregation would hold its first general assembly only in 1896, nearly sixty years after the death of Gaspar.

This lack of anything like a general chapter or general assembly probably was the result of the original scope of the Congregation: diocesan priests who lived in common and engaged in preaching missions and retreats. It did not begin as a new religious institute modeled on the traditional model with the vows. The lack of provision for a general chapter would be noted by the Holy See, however, and continued to be a matter of

concern, especially in the question of choosing a moderator general, who at that time held the office for life.

The *Transunto* notes that the director general was the head of the Congregation and had the responsibility for admitting new members. The principal or primary house (*casa primaria*) was envisioned as being in Rome (although the only house of the Community in Rome during Gaspar's lifetime was his apartment in the Palazzo Orsini-Savelli, otherwise known as the Teatro di Marcello). At the principal house there were to be Missionaries selected by the director general to help with the governing of the Society, particularly in the areas of interpreting the *Rule* and economic matters: the definitors and consultors. (More about these offices will come later.)

The *Transunto* states that if the office of director general should become vacant, the president of the house of Rome would call for a new election, collecting the votes from all of the houses. Each house would send the name of the one who received the most votes in sealed envelopes to the primary house in Rome where they were counted at a *congressus* 'meeting' of the definitors and consultors. In the case of a tie, the president would have two votes. In the event that vote would be for him, the right to decide fell to the house superior (Art. 36).

If Gaspar did not deal with the central government of the Congregation in detail, he was very careful in describing and defining the *mission houses* and the various offices and responsibilities to be carried out in them. It is worth taking a look at these offices and the organization of the mission house not only for their historical interest but because they might offer us some insights into our present challenges.

The offices of the mission house were the president, the superior and vice-superior, who was also the secretary-librarian and archivist, the director of the missions, the director of internal exercises, who was in charge of

spiritual exercises made in the house, the prefect of the church and sacristy, and finally, the economist. Gaspar gives some rather detailed instructions about their duties and about how they were to be carried out. (For example, he even specifies that during times of rest the doorbell of the house was to be turned off! [Art. 20])

The ideal size of the mission house that Gaspar envisioned would have seven priests and three brothers, although this ideal was not always realized. The monthly house meeting or *congressus* decided most issues.

Reading the *Transunto* suggests that Gaspar's focus was very much on the local level. He seems to have wanted the local houses to enjoy a certain amount of autonomy, although Gaspar kept a close eye on things.

In some ways this appears to be a rather decentralized structure of government. It was well adapted to a Congregation that saw itself as being flexible and responsive to the needs of the time. We should also remember that by the time of Gaspar's death the Congregation numbered about thirty-five priests and about as many brothers. My guess is that they did not see much need to define more fully the central government given the size of the Institute and the kind of work they were doing, especially with a charismatic and capable man as Gaspar as director general.

At the same time, the government was also focused and centralized. Gaspar visited the houses often and he was in touch with them constantly by letter, actually specifying that the houses "maintain a bond of correspondence and spiritual concord with the house of Rome, where the director general, head of the entire Work, will reside" (Art. 36). One can only imagine what Gaspar would have done if he had access to cellular phones and e-mail!

One of the tasks of the director general specified in the *Transunto* is that he visit the houses annually. At the time of the visit he would confirm or change the assignments of the members there, calling for a meeting

of the house with a secret ballot (Art. 36). Gaspar actually published some rather detailed instructions on how these visits were to be conducted. He obviously thought that his visits to the houses were quite important. They were a source of animation and support for the missionaries, as well as a time to evaluate the apostolic activities and life of the house.

As John Klopke observes in an unpublished essay on the mission house, Gaspar was careful to keep his Missionaries focused on “the Work.” Despite a certain autonomy given the houses he was also careful to monitor them and the activities of the members closely.

A book on management that I read many years ago referred to this manner of governing an organization as one that had both “loose” and “tight” qualities. It was loose since the houses, governed by leaders with specific duties and with a monthly house meeting, had some autonomy. It was tight since Gaspar kept the focus of the Missionaries on their ministry of evangelization. He kept them attentive to the work of proclaiming the Word through missions and retreats.

Such a style of organization is healthy since it honors two values that many theories of management hold as significant: *autonomy* (of the individual or of the local house) and a focus on the “*core business*.” Managers or superiors should respect individuals and their ideas and initiatives and should encourage innovation, better ways of achieving the goals of the organization. Decisions are often best when made at the local level. At the same time managers-superiors should have a clear idea of the goals of the organization and should take care that all of members of the organization are working toward accomplishing these goals. In theological-pastoral terms, in other words, they are to be animators.

The General Curia in the *Rule* of 1841

According to the testimony of Merlini, Gaspar began dictating the *Rule* and *Praxis* to him a few years before

his death in 1837. Merlini edited these texts and the Holy See approved the *Rule* in 1841. This *Rule* would serve the Society for the next hundred years, until the approval of a new *Rule* in 1942.

In the *Rule* of 1841 one finds three articles on the moderator general, four on the governing tasks of the general curia, and two on the method of electing the moderator general.

The first of these articles, no. 61, notes that the mission houses are united among themselves and are subject to the same *Rule*. Article 62 goes on to say that it is fitting that the mission house in Rome be the head of the others, given that the Society came into being through the authority of the Holy See and by its command.

Article 63 stipulates that the moderator general is elected for life and possesses full power limited only by the *Rule*. The moderator did not have the same power as a major superior of a religious institute, since at that time only institutes with solemn vows had superiors with *ordinary* jurisdiction, unless otherwise granted this power by special indult. The major superiors of institutes without solemn vows had *dominative* jurisdiction, meaning that they did not have jurisdiction in the external forum by virtue of their office, but rather had authority based on the private relationship between superior and the religious, a relationship established by the latter by a free act of the will.

According to Brotini, Gaspar had proposed to elect the moderator through a simple process. Every mission house would conduct a voting process (using paper ballots) and the name of the one who received the most votes would be sent to Rome in a sealed envelope and there, at a meeting of the *casa primaria*, the votes would be tallied. In the case of a tie, the elections would be settled by a vote of the definitors and consultors. This method was only for electing the moderator, who, once elected, would choose the definitors and consultors.

The Holy See, however, did not approve of this

method since it involved electing a moderator general for life without a general chapter. This could only be done by apostolic dispensation. The *Rule* eventually approved in 1841 omitted any precise mention of the method of electing the moderator general. Each time a moderator general would be elected during the next sixty years, the Holy See had to grant special permission to elect him without holding a general chapter.

The next article deals with the regular visitation of the mission houses by the moderator general. The visits were to be yearly or at least every third year. The moderator general will:

. . . assemble the members in secret. Everything which affects interior discipline, sacred works, the upkeep of the church, or the administration of officers must be examined thoroughly; and likewise, after convening the meeting of that place, he will issue decrees as bespeaks the occasion.

Modern moderators general have not conducted visitations in this way, but certainly have tried to be faithful to the spirit of Gaspar. Visitation of the members remains a central responsibility of the moderator general, who usually is assisted by one of the general councilors in his visits.

Article 65 introduces the notion of delegation of the duties of the moderator general; he can appoint someone to act as his vicar, “especially in distant locations.” Here we see the seed of what would later develop into provincial directors (also called “special vicars” in some sources) and the notion of provinces, although different in law and in functioning from the provinces we have today.

Article 66 mandates that the house in Rome should be run in the same manner as other mission houses. It also specifies that there be seven appointed members who were to be consulted in conducting the business of

the entire Society: “the first four to help in defining affairs and the next three for consultation.”

The following article further delineates the respective roles of these “definitors” and “consultors.” The former have the right to introduce matters for a decision while the latter three are considered witnesses. A consultor could, however, take the place of an absent definitor.

There are certain circumstances in which the moderator general should not make a decision without meeting with the definitors and consultors. These cases were the interpretation of the laws and customs of the Society, establishing or abolishing mission houses, and the dismissal of a member.

Finally, articles 69 and 70 specify that the rector of the primary house in Rome is the vice-moderator general. The article also mandates three appointed officials: the procurator, secretary of the Congregation, and a member who is to write down the mission annals. On the death of the moderator, the vice-moderator general is in charge and he arranges for the election of the next moderator general.

The Challenge of the Mission in the United States

Within a month after the death of Saint Gaspar, a Swiss priest stopped in the old Servite convent in Cesena that had been, since 1832, a house of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Here Francis de Sales Brunner saw a Missionary in the sacristy, dressed in cassock and mission cross. Later he would write: “At the sight of this Missionary a great desire took hold of me to honor the Precious Blood and to be received into the Society.”

In April of the same year Brunner entered the house of the Congregation at Albano and, after a period of formation lasting two months, left Rome for Switzerland to establish the C.P.P.S. there. He was formally incorporated into the Congregation in September after being

released from his previous vows as a Trappist.

With the blessing of the second moderator general, Biagio Valentini, Brunner responded to an invitation of the bishop of Cincinnati, Ohio, in the United States, to minister to the German-speaking immigrants there. Along with fourteen members he arrived in the United States at the end of 1843. By 1850 he had left Europe completely, with the exception of the house in Alsace (Trois Epis) which remained under the direction of the Society in Italy and which would later send members to work in the United States.

As the late Fr. Andrew Pollack observes in his *Historical Sketches of the C.P.P.S.* (revised edition):

The wilderness of Ohio did not lend itself to the perfect observance of the Precious Blood Society's *Rule*, which had been approved in 1841. Father Brunner itemized those elements which needed to be adapted to these pioneer conditions and fitted them into the framework of the *Rule* of Saint Gaspar. The resulting *Lebensordnung* or *Rule of Life* received the approval of the Society's authorities in Rome in 1858.

The United States became the first long-term field of foreign mission work of the Society. Circumstances were quite different from those in the Italy of Gaspar: the mission territory called for working in parishes rather than the kind of evangelization that the Missionaries were undertaking in Italy. Here we see that the moderator general and curia decided to interpret the charism of Gaspar in the light of the signs of the times, giving approval to Brunner's venture in Ohio and eventually approving what amounted to a new *Praxis* or "*Customary*," adapting the *Rule* of 1841 to the circumstances in North America.

Thus very early on in the history of the young Congregation the general administration made an

important decision to approve a different way of living the charism of the Society in the light of the needs of the Church and the world in North America. This function of the general curia—encouraging and evaluating the enculturation of the C.P.P.S. in different areas of the world—continues to be important today as the Congregation moves into different countries and cultures.

By way of an interesting historical footnote, the general curia agreed to the establishment of a California Province in 1869. I include this partly because I am a member of the Province of the Pacific and we consider the California Province to be part of our patrimony, even though there is no direct historical link between that foundation and the current Province of the Pacific. More important, this episode in our history illustrates how the general curia, or at least Merlini, was operating at the time.

The province was erected at the request of the first Irish member of the American Province, Patrick Hennebery, who for some years was the only English-speaking member in an otherwise German community. He had gone to minister in California about 1865 and soon had dreams of making a foundation of the C.P.P.S. there. Apparently the provincial director of the American Province did not support the enterprise, however, and Hennebery dealt directly with Merlini, who established the new province in 1869, noting that it would be better to be an independent province given that it was more than two thousand miles from Ohio.

Within a few years it became evident that Hennebery may have been a wonderful and hardworking priest but apparently lacked administrative skills. The new province was suppressed in 1874, although Hennebery and other Missionaries continued to work there through the 1890s.

Again, this event showed that Merlini and the rest of the general curia were open to new directions in the

apostolate, responding to the needs of the people of California, even if the foundation was, in retrospect, ill considered.

The Development of Provinces

We are used to a Congregation made up of certain administrative units: provinces, vicariates, and missions. These divisions did not exist from the beginning of our history, however. In fact, one could say that provinces in the strict sense have existed only since 1942, even though the term "province" was used for many years before that in America and somewhat later, in Italy.

In the last meeting of the general curia called by Merlini shortly before his death, there was an agreement to propose a change to article 63 of the *Rule* to provide for division of the Society into provinces with provincial superiors to be elected for six-year terms. Merlini and his curia also agreed to seek changes that would have specified additional circumstances in which the moderator general would be required to seek the advice or consent of his definitors and consultors.

Merlini sent the proposed changes to the Congregation for Bishops and Religious, but a week later he had a change of heart and wrote the congregation, asking to withdraw the proposed changes, noting that they would not be in the spirit of the founder. Merlini died not long afterward and the matter seems to have died with him.

According to Brotini, it was only in 1895 that the Society was formally divided into four provinces: Rome, Naples, Romagna (also known as Flaminia) and America. The term "American Province" was used before that time because of the special circumstances that existed there. The "provincial director" was elected by the members and was given his powers by the moderator general. The provincial superior was the "special vicar" spoken of in the *Rule* and *Praxis*. He had

significant authority in the United States, delegated to him by the moderator general. (Brunner signed the minutes of the general council meeting he attended in 1858 as "*Vicarius Specialis*." His successor, Andrew Kunkler, also signed the minutes in 1868 as "*Vicarius Generalis pro America*.")

With regard to the provinces in Italy, it appears from my reading that the provincial superiors had little authority. They were delegates or vicars of the moderator general and, given the structure of the Society outlined in the *Rule*, one wonders exactly how it could be otherwise, at least in Italy. Of course America, given the distance and difficulty of communication and travel, was a special case. The major function of the provincial directors in Italy was, according to Pollack in his *Historical Sketches*, limited to presiding at provincial chapters held for the sole purpose of choosing a delegate to the general chapters.

Developments in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century

After Merlini's death, the Congregation proposed to use a method of election of the moderator general and general councilors that had been proposed in the November 1872 meeting of the general administration and which, as noted above, was withdrawn from consideration by the Holy See by Merlini.

There would be a general assembly in which the moderator general would still be elected for life but the councilors would be elected for six-year terms rather than be appointed by the moderator general. Delegates would be the definitors and consultors, the vicars of the regions or provinces and a member elected from each province. This would have been the first general chapter of the Society. There would be a paper ballot and apparently a delegate of the pope would be in attendance.

The year 1873 was not a good year for the Holy See however. This was the period of the *Risorgimento* (the

movement toward Italian political unity in the nineteenth century) in Italy and the Papal States had just been annexed to the new state of Italy. The pope had confined himself within the Vatican. Perhaps because of this, Pius IX, while initially favorable to holding the first general assembly of the Congregation, ended up deciding the issue by choosing Enrico Rizzoli as the fourth moderator general. The pope did, however, call for a general assembly to be held at a date to be determined by the Holy See. Brotini notes that one cannot exclude the possibility that this course was chosen because of serious internal tensions within the Society.

With the death of Rizzoli eleven years later there was discussion with the prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Religious over the method of electing his successor. Because of an epidemic of cholera in Rome a general assembly or chapter was ruled out and Leo XIII chose Gaetano Caporali from three names obtained by consulting the Missionaries by letter. This time, however, something new was added: he was chosen for a period of ten years.

Caporali became the bishop of Otranto in 1891. He suggested that his successor be named through a process of consulting the members of the general curia and the superiors of all the houses with the final choice up to the pope. For "other reasons," according to Brotini, the pope simply chose Salvatore Palmieri to be the next moderator general. He was to occupy the office for only three years before becoming the bishop of Brindisi.

The sixth moderator general, Luigi Biaschelli, was chosen by the pope in 1894 after examining three names provided by means of a mail vote of all Missionaries living in Italy. The Congregation of Bishops and Religious decreed that once this "election" had been held, that the Congregation be divided into provinces and that a method for holding general chapters and electing superiors be determined.

The First General Chapter

Some sixty years after the death of St. Gaspar and eighty years after the founding of the Society, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood held their first general chapter or assembly in 1896. The delegates established a method for holding future chapters and a method for electing major superiors. The chapter was to be held every six years, convoked by the moderator general or, if he had died, by the vice-moderator. Four definitors and three consultors were to be elected along with the provincial superiors. The unique process for electing and nominating the provincial superior in America would continue.

During the next fifty years the Society would hold four more general chapters: in 1902, 1905, 1921 and 1928.

The Holy See approved this method of election definitively in 1910. The Congregation for Religious asked for more balance between the members participating *ex officio* (moderator general, definitors, consultors, provincial directors) and those elected by each province in proportion to their numbers. The participation of the consultors was abolished to avoid *ex officio* members having a majority in the election process. It is interesting that a call for this same kind of balance came from the Holy See during the process of examining our current *Normative Texts*, and article C57 of those *Texts* addresses this issue.

The term of the moderator general remained for life, while the general assemblies were to be held every twelve years. The next chapter was not held until 1921.

The general chapter of 1928 decided that the term of the moderator general would be for twelve years. The moderator general at the time, Giacinto Petroni, elected at the third general chapter in 1905, made this suggestion. The Holy See permitted him to resign because he considered his advanced age as an obstacle to fulfilling the duties of his office.

Velardi and the Apostolic Visitation

The fifth general chapter in 1928 elected Antonio Velardi moderator general. His term was to be a difficult period for the Congregation. In 1933 a newly ordained priest of the Congregation brought some accusations to the Holy See regarding alleged problems with the seminary program in Albano. As a result, an apostolic visitation of the Congregation began in 1935. While it extended to the entire community, its principal focus was on Italy.

Little has been written about this chapter in the history of our Congregation. From what I gather from material in the archives, the problems that occasioned the visitation had to do with the way the Society was governed at the time. These problems were evidently at least partly due to the fact that the *Rule* of the Society, according to the report of the apostolic visitor, was not adequate and needed updating in light of the new Code of Canon Law promulgated in 1917. According to one of his reports the *Rule* had not been reprinted since 1881 and many members had little or no knowledge of its provisions.

The visitation went badly for Velardi and the general administration of the Society because in 1937 the apostolic visitor removed him from office and installed Lorenzo Colagiovanni as the moderator general. He would serve during the difficult years of World War II until a general chapter in 1947 would elect Herbert Kramer as the moderator general.

The New *Constitutions* of 1942 and 1946

A commission of five Italian Missionaries began working on the text of a new *Rule* or *Constitutions* of the Congregation during the late 1930s and they completed a draft text in 1940. That same year a new apostolic visitor appointed another team that included two Americans. Because of the outbreak of the war, the Americans left Rome and asked a member of the

Teutonic Province to represent their concerns.

According to a letter written to Fr. Andrew Pollack by American Provincial Joseph Marling in 1943, (Pollack was a chaplain with the Allied Forces advancing north from Anzio to Rome) the Americans had been trying to seek a thorough revision of the *Rule* for some thirty years, even submitting a proposed text in 1927. (According to Marling this was “lost” and never presented to the Congregation for Religious.)

The reason for this was, as mentioned above, that the situation in the United States was quite different from that in Italy. Although the American *Praxis* tried to take this into account, this was “never more than a makeshift” according to Marling. A thorough revision was needed, a new text that took into account the way the Society had actually evolved in the United States.

I am not quite sure what happened at this point since I have not had the chance to research this more thoroughly, but in the end a new *Rule* (now called *Constitutions*) of the Society was approved in 1942. It apparently reflected an Italian point of view more than that of the Americans. Although copies of this new *Rule* were sent to the United States via Switzerland, the 1942 *Constitutions* were apparently never promulgated in the United States and at least one source notes that there was never an acknowledgement that they had even been received.

The 1942 *Constitutions* introduced greater autonomy to the provinces of the Society and called for the election of provincial superiors by the members, although by elected representatives and not by universal suffrage.

One significant result of the new *Rule* of 1942 was the creation of the Italian Province and the end of the three “provinces” that had existed for some fifty years. Fr. Giuseppe Quattrino, became the first provincial director. With his election the apostolic visitation came to an end. With the establishment of an autonomous Italian Province the relationship with the general

administration of the Congregation changed, although for the next five years both the general curia of the Society and the provincial curia lived together at the house at Piazza dei Crociferi.

I mentioned earlier that the Americans did not believe that this new *Rule* adequately addressed the very different situation in the United States and the concerns and practice of the American Province. There apparently was even talk of the American Province seceding from the Congregation.

As a result, in 1946 Marling came to Rome to argue his case with the moderator general and general curia and ultimately with the Congregation for Religious. A new version of the *Constitutions* was approved in 1946 for a period of seven years "*pro experimento*." This version was ultimately approved in 1964.

The approval of this new *Rule* seems to have been amazingly quick, given that the wheels of the Vatican often turn quite slowly. Brotini suggests that this prompt approval by the Holy See may have been due to the very real danger of a split in the Congregation over the issue of the *Constitutions*. It may also be that Marling had some powerful friends among the American hierarchy and was able to use their influence in the matter as well. I would hazard a guess that the difficult conditions after the war also played a part in this unusually quick process.

The effect of the 1946 *Constitutions* on the general administration of the Society was significant. There was a decentralization of the Congregation, the provinces were independent of one another, and the provincial directors now enjoyed real power. They were no longer appointed but were elected and all clerical members had the right to vote for them. (Voting rights for the brothers would come only in the current *Normative Texts*.)

The general administration of the Society now consisted of the moderator general and four general councilors, referred to as "members of the general curia." The

first elected is the vice-moderator general, the second the procurator general, and the third and fourth *may* fill the offices of secretary and economist general. Both the moderator general and the councilors are elected for terms of twelve years, although this was changed to six-year terms in the version of the *Constitutions* finally approved in 1964. Another change in the final version is that the third and fourth councilors were to fill the offices of secretary and economist general respectively, omitting the “may fill” of the 1946 version.

To be elected one had to be a priest member and in the Congregation at least ten years, computed from the time of temporary profession. Whenever a new moderator general would be elected a new curia would be elected with him.

Summary: The General Curia until 1946

Saint Gaspar’s ideas formed the legal basis of the Society for one hundred and twenty years, if one begins counting from the printed version of the *Transunto* in 1822. In the early years the *Rule* of 1841 served the Society well given the circumstances of the time. The moderator general had a great deal of authority although there was also a certain degree of autonomy given to the mission houses and to the members who filled the respective offices in them.

During the first decades of the young Society, with the leadership of dynamic and charismatic men like Gaspar and other early Missionaries, it is likely that few thought that there was a need for more attention to the question of the moderator general and general curia. At the same time, the Holy See did not like the idea of a moderator general chosen for life without holding a general chapter. Indeed, Brotini sees this as the most notable shortcoming of the 1841 *Rule*. He goes on to say, however, that one must remember that:

. . . priests of the Congregation were dependent

on their bishops and belonged to an apostolic project and thus gave themselves freely to the Congregation, or rather without the need of bonds in such a way that would clash with episcopal jurisdiction. The moderator general who directed them was for them a father who administered the goods of the association and proposed the various ministerial commitments. Perhaps because of this state of affairs the need for a general chapter did not occur to them: the moderator and the orders of the bishops were sufficient to administer the Congregation. I believe that the initial lack of a chapter must be attributed to the personal charism of the founder and of his first successors, to whom the Missionaries were bound with great respect and by whom their trust was nourished.

The situation in America, however, posed a challenge to the Society, in that the shape of ministry and way of life in the mission country was quite different from that in Italy. A new *Praxis* was developed and the general government of the Society responded by, in effect, approving the new ways as faithful to the spirit of Gaspar and of the *Rule*. Thus while the moderator general and general curia continued to govern the Society in Italy as it always had, the provincial superior and his council in the United States enjoyed more independence of action, even though the provincial directors there were technically *vicars* of the moderator general.

Eventually, partly because of the urging of the Holy See and partly because of the concerns of the members, a less centralized form of government came into being, with provinces enjoying real independence and provincial superiors enjoying authority in their own right along with universal suffrage in electoral assemblies for all priest members.

1946 TO THE PRESENT

The first general chapter held after World War II took place in 1947. The delegates of this chapter elected Herbert Kramer of the American Province to the office of moderator general. This was the first chapter held in nineteen years, the last being that of 1928. The moderator general and general curia had been, as you recall, appointed by the apostolic visitor in 1937. Kramer was the first non-Italian moderator general.

It is interesting to note in this regard that the first member of the general curia from the American Province was Isidore Oberhauser, elected in 1928. (An American citizen, Joseph Schaeper, served as a member of the general curia for some thirty-eight years, from 1896 through 1934, but he was actually a member of the Roman Province even though he and his brother Frederick, eventually a member of the American Province, were born in the United States.)

Oberhauser's term was short-lived, however, since he resigned the following year and left the Society, eventually joining the Passionists. He was replaced by Francis Beuke in 1932, who resigned three years later. The next member of the general curia from the U.S.A. was Othmar Knapke, who became vice-moderator general under Lorenzo Colagiovanni in 1938. He died in 1939 in Rome. He was succeeded by Cyril Knue in 1939, but the latter had to leave because of the outbreak of the war. Fr. Knue died in 1943. The Americans certainly did not have a good track record in serving on the general curia!

The lack of a stable American presence in the curia may explain some of the tension that once existed from time to time between members of the Italian Province and those in the United States. Given that a member of the American Province first served on the general curia some eighty-four years after Brunner came to the United States, it is not surprising that there would be a certain

lack of communication and subsequent misunderstandings. As we have seen, the apostolic visitation and the Second World War also added to the problem. Today I think it would be fair to say that most of these tensions are only part of historical memory, but it is helpful to understand that these tensions did exist for a number of years

The general curia was now more representative of the demographical makeup of the Society: the moderator general and two definitors (councilors) were Americans, and another definitor was from the Teutonic Province. According to the new *Constitutions* just approved the year before, the terms of the moderator general and definitors were for twelve years. Subsequent general councils have been of similarly mixed makeup.

At the same general chapter of 1947 the delegates agreed that the headquarters of the general curia should move from the house at Piazza Crociferi to a new Casa Generalizia in Rome. One reason was the desire of the Italian Province to move the seminarians to the house at Crociferi and the other was to separate the two administrations, certainly a wise move that would guarantee independence of both the Italian provincial curia and the general curia.

Planning began immediately and in 1948 the general curia moved to temporary quarters at the house of the Mercy Fathers on Via Po, 11. Four years later the current Casa Generalizia was ready for occupancy and the general curia moved in during October of that year. I will have more to say about the history of the “primary houses” or general houses of the Society later on.

In 1959 Herbert Linenberger, another American, was elected for a twelve-year term but now the councilors would serve terms of six years. He was followed in 1971 by Daniel Schaefer, another American. Schaefer was the first general to be elected for a six-year term under the provisions of the current *Normative Texts*. He was re-elected in 1977.

The general assembly of 1983 elected the first member of the Teutonic Province, Anton Loipfnger, as moderator general, and he was subsequently elected for a second term. In 1995 our current moderator general, Barry Fischer, was elected for his first term and was re-elected for a second term at the assembly of 2001.

The General Government of the Congregation According to the Current *Normative Texts*

A quick comparison of the *Constitutions C.P.P.S.* of 1964 and our current *Constitution* reveals a quite different approach to the whole question of governance. In the seventh title of the former document the first chapter, on authority, begins by noting the members are subject to the Roman pontiff and to the ordinary of the place in which they live and work. The second article speaks of the “supreme authority” of the Society which is exercised “in an ordinary manner” by the moderator general and “in an extraordinary manner” by a general chapter. Qualifications for election to moderator general were described in juridical terms (a priest, at least 40 years old, member for at least ten years).

I will not go into further detail but this gives you some idea of the tenor of the 1964 *Constitutions*. They are fundamentally legal in tone, couched in canonical terms, and probably are similar to the constitutions of other congregations written and approved at the time.

By contrast, the title on “government” in the current *Normative Texts* begins by describing the Society as “a fellowship of men freed through the Blood of Christ and united in the bond of love. As brothers the members work together to create a Community in which each of them can respond in full freedom to the call of Christ” (C45).

Authority is called “a necessary support for the Community.” Some members “are called to the office of leadership in which they are to put themselves in a special way at the service of the Community” (C46). The

function of authority is to unite, “to reconcile conflicting spirits,” and “to keep the members faithful to the ideals of the Community” (C47). The ministry of leadership, “if it is to be faithful to the Gospel, must be characterized by humility, simplicity, brotherliness and the absence of a domineering spirit” (C48).

The ministry of service and leadership is not limited just to those elected. “Every member is to show a responsible initiative in promoting the welfare of the Society” (C49). Universal suffrage, whether direct or by representation, is to be maintained (C50).

Authority in the Society “has the faculty of adapting the manner of government to the cultural and sociological needs of time and place” (C53). The same article emphasizes collegiality, the participation of all members in choosing directors at the general, provincial, and vicariate levels “as well as in the activity of those bodies which collaborate with the directors in making decisions.”

Whereas the 1964 *Constitutions* speak of two kinds of supreme authority, ordinary (the moderator general) and extraordinary (the general chapter,) the current *Constitution* speaks only of the *supreme* authority of the general assembly, (C54), although the moderator general is described as being “endowed with the authority over all the provinces, houses and members invested in him by common law, the *Constitution* and the *General Statutes*.” (C61)

Our current *Normative Texts* focus much more on the role of the moderator general as an *animator*:

The visible sign of unity in the Society is the moderator general. . . . His first duty is to vivify and renew the spirit of the Society, and to promote its expansion. Working in the closest harmony with the major superiors, he coordinates the whole life of the Society and promotes unity among members and provinces (C61).

John Klopke, in an essay on St. Gaspar's idea of the mission house, sees this description of the role of the moderator general in many ways the same as that of the role of the *president* or rector of the mission house, an office that is less juridical than it is spiritual. While it is certainly true that the moderator general has certain juridical responsibilities and powers by virtue of his office as the ordinary superior of the Congregation, the emphasis is much more on his responsibility to animate, to work with the major superiors of the Congregation and to promote unity.

The moderator general is assisted by a general council that consists of at least three members as well as by the provincial and vicariate directors, as determined in the statutes. Our current statutes call for a four-member general council (S30). They, along with the moderator general, are elected for six-year terms at the regular general assemblies of the Society.

The first councilor elected has the office of vice-moderator general. From among the members of the council, or from outside the council, the moderator general, with the consent of the councilors, appoints members to certain offices. The procurator general transacts business with the Holy See. The postulator general promotes causes of members for canonization of saints. The secretary general is to write the minutes of the general council meetings and general assemblies and acts as the notary public of the Society. The economist general is in charge of the budget of the general curia.

The *Normative Texts* outline a number of instances in which the moderator general must either *consult* the general council, *obtain the consent* of the general council, or *act collegially* with the general council.

In matters in which he *consults* the general council, it is sufficient only that he hears what they have to say but he is not strictly obliged to act according to their vote. It would be rare, however, that the moderator would not follow their vote.

In matters in which he is required to *obtain the consent* of the council, the moderator general may not override their vote. While the vote of the council is necessary for him to act validly, he is not obliged to act.

In matters requiring the moderator general to *act collegially*, “a majority affirmative vote imposes on the moderator the obligation of acting, just as a majority negative vote prohibits him from acting” (S33).

An important innovation in the current *Normative Texts* is that the moderator general and general council are to meet at least every two years with the provincial and vicariate directors in the other provinces of the Congregation, “to share their experience and discuss questions that pertain to the whole Society.”

At least every two years the major superiors now come together and hear what is happening in other regions, share ideas, and perhaps even engage in a bit of dreaming together. These meetings also provide an opportunity for them and the general curia to spend time with members of a particular province or vicariate, to listen and to learn from them, to gain an understanding of the reality of their area and their culture. The suggestion for an extraordinary general assembly in 2004 was an idea that came out of discussions at the last meeting of the general curia with the major superiors of the Congregation.

The *Normative Texts* specify certain cases in which the major superiors have *deliberative* and not merely *consultative* voice: a) to divide the Society into provinces and vicariates, join present divisions of the Society, restrict them or suppress them; b) to approve an extraordinary expense by a province or vicariate which, according to the moderator general and general council should be submitted to them; c) to modify an article of the *General Statutes* until the next general assembly; d) to approve the general formation program; e) to approve extraordinary assessments for the needs of the Society (S36).

The Recent History of the General Curia

In the late 1980s a question arose about the need to have four general councilors living in Rome. Many were asking if was really necessary to have all four councilors living in the Casa Generalizia. The resignation of two councilors in 1985 also helped to bring about a discussion of this issue at the General Assembly of 1989.

The final result of this discussion was the current arrangement, begun with the general council that took office in 1989, in which two councilors, the vice-moderator general and general secretary, live in Rome at the Generalate, and the other two councilors continue to live where they are engaged in ministry. General council meetings with all councilors in attendance are held at least twice a year. More important decisions and planning are dealt with at these meetings and more routine matters are handled at meetings with only two councilors present. We are now into the fourteenth year of this system (in 2003).

The system works reasonably well, although it does mean that the meetings of the entire council have a very full agenda and regularly last for more than a week. Sometimes important matters have to be delayed until meetings of the entire council can be scheduled. On the other hand, this system encourages efficiency and a sharper focus since there is often so much to be done in a relatively short time. It also provides for a larger pool of willing candidates for offices on the general curia since one can continue in another ministry while serving as a member of the council.

There are inevitably periods when only one councilor will be at the house, for example, when the moderator general and another councilor are making a canonical visitation. This is not an ideal situation, of course, but is one of the “trade-offs” for the current system.

In recent years there has been an increase in the kinds of activities in which the general curia is engaged—workshops, the publication of *The Cup of the*

New Covenant, and the website, just to name a few. There seem to be more expectations for the general curia. It may be time to re-examine this system. If we expect more from the general curia then we may have to increase the staffing in some way. We may wish to tap the interest and skills of members to work as members of the general curia or perhaps to work with them for periods of time. If we move toward greater collaboration among the various units of our Congregation, it may be that we might be looking to a larger role for the general curia. I will say more about this later on.

The Houses of the General Curia

Although St. Gaspar loved the house of San Felice in Giano and established the “*casa primaria*” of the Society in Albano, where it remained until some years after his death, he always sought to have a house in Rome. Part of this, I suspect, was due to a desire to have a house from which it would be easier to visit various officials and offices of the Holy See, especially given the problems he encountered during his lifetime. I think that it was also because Gaspar was a Roman and liked the urban environment of Rome, although this is just speculation on my part.

Gaspar maintained an apartment in Rome, first in the Via Margana, 3, and later on the top floor of the Palazzo Savelli or Teatro di Marcello. This was, as you recall, where Gaspar died. He also rented a house near the Colosseo on Largo Corrado Ricci, to be used as a house of hospitality for the Missionaries who might have an assignment in Rome or who might be passing through.

When this house proved to be too expensive, the Missionaries stayed in Gaspar’s apartment in the Palazzo Savelli. Valentini, Gaspar’s successor, used Gaspar’s apartment as his headquarters in Rome until 1841. Apparently during Gaspar’s lifetime Pius VII had promised to give him the church and attached building

of San Clemente, but then his successor Leo XII gave it to another community with the understanding that the Congregation would receive another property. With the death of this pontiff the promise was apparently forgotten.

The primary house in those years was actually Albano. In a meeting of the general curia in 1838 we read that “. . . this house of Albano remains approved for the time being as the principal house of the Society, just as our founder had regarded it up to this time. Here the general director will reside. . .” (Pollack, p. 53).

Albano remained the primary house until 1841 when the Society received the church and house of San Salvatore in Campo in Rome by a papal brief. (The church and house still stand today. They are located between the Campo dei Fiori and the Ghetto just off Via Arenula. The church is currently used for services by Eritrean Copts.) Valentini, the second moderator general, and some other Missionaries are buried in this church.

This house was in use during the entire term of Valentini and during the first eleven years of the term of Merlini. The last meeting of the general curia was held there in 1858, with Fr. Brunner in attendance.

Four years earlier the Society had received the church and attached house of Santa Maria in Trivio, on the corner of Piazza dei Crociferi and Via Poli, next to the Trevi Fountain. Pius IX, a friend of Merlini, gave the house to the Congregation in 1854 but two floors continued to be occupied by a group of religious brothers.

By 1858 it had become difficult to maintain two houses and two churches so the Society gave up San Salvatore to the Train-Bearers Guild. (No doubt this guild has gone out of business due to the unfortunate lack of trains to bear in our modern age.)

The first meeting of the general curia was held at S. Maria in Trivio in 1858. For the next ninety years the moderators and general curia members would reside

here. The remains of Gaspar were brought here in 1861. The remains of Gaspar's father Antonio were also transferred here when the church in which they were buried was deconsecrated and torn down during the restoration of the Roman Forum. (It had been built into the old curia building.) Merlini is also buried in this church. The first six general chapters of the Society were held at the Crociferi house.

At the present time the house once again houses students of the Italian Province. While not as spacious as the house at Via Narni (and much noisier due to the tourist traffic) it is located just minutes away from the Gregorianum and the Angelicum where many of the students take their classes.

As I mentioned above the 1947 general chapter mandated that the Generalate should be an independent house. The general curia was authorized to buy or build a house of this purpose.

The house was to be of sufficient size for a curia of five to seven members (depending on whether or not the secretary general and economist general would be general councilors). At the time the delegates also envisioned the house serving to provide a residence for members from other countries who would be pursuing graduate studies as well as for visiting guests.

In a narrative written in 1977, Robert Neumeyer, former economist general (1947–1965) tells of making more than one hundred personal visits to prospective houses. Only a few would have been suitable, according to Neumeyer, and either the price was too high or the occupants would not move out.

The curia finally decided to build, and construction on the current Generalate began in 1951. The general curia moved in during November 1952.

Thirty years later some began to question whether or not the current Generalate was really needed. It seemed to be too large and too extravagant. Indeed, with its extensive and beautiful grounds our Casa

Generalizia is impressive. One of the reasons that we have such a large piece of property is that fifty years ago the Society had to buy the entire lot even though the general curia at the time only wanted half of it. According to zoning regulations nothing can be built on the eastern part of our property because of its proximity to a monument, the Bastione di Sangallo. Neumeyer later would admit that it would have been better to build only a two-story building, but at the time people thought that there would be many members coming to Rome to study.

During the second term of Anton Loipfinger as moderator general, possible ways of responding to the ongoing question about the cost of running the house were discussed by the general curia and eventually this discussion led to the approval, at a meeting of the general council and the major superiors in 1993, of the remodeling of the Casa Generalizia so that it could be rented to another religious community. The renovation began at the end of 1993 and was completed in mid-1994.

For those not familiar with the Casa Generalizia, the C.PP.S. continues to have the front part of the building plus most of the terrazza on the second floor. There are suites (living room, bedroom and bath) for the moderator general and members of the general council as well as four guest rooms, all with bath. (Two of these are currently occupied by a diocesan priest who has lived at the Casa Generalizia for fifteen years). The three Sisters of the Holy Family who work at the Casa have their convent on most of the second floor. In all, the C.PP.S. has retained about 60% of the total floor space of the house.

The other community, the Missionaries of the Holy Family, has the rear portion of the house, the part which is closest to Via Edoardo Beccari. They have a separate access on that street. Until 2005 they pay one half of the agreed rent since they shared in the expenses of the remodeling. They also pay a percentage of other expenses such as gas, heating oil, water, taxes, and grounds

maintenance. The rent increases each year according to a formula based on increases in the cost of living.

This arrangement has worked well over the years and our two communities have had a cordial relationship. It would seem that this agreement should be one that will last for the foreseeable future.

The renting of half of the Generalate has helped to offset the expenses of the general curia. It has enabled the C.P.P.S. to retain an attractive, convenient, and well-utilized property in Rome. It is a place where visitors can stay and enjoy the tradition of C.P.P.S. hospitality. Having lived there for more than a year and a half I assure you that there is much to be said for having a house with a location like ours. It is an oasis of tranquility amidst the hubbub of Rome.

Financing the General Curia

The division of the Casa Generalizia and the rental of a portion to the Missionaries of the Holy Family was part of a process, already initiated in the late 1970s, of examining the larger issue of the funding of the Casa and of the activities of the general curia. It appears that the question of the Casa Generalizia came up on a regular basis in general assemblies and meetings of the general council with the major superiors for a number of years.

Running a house like the Generalate along with the various activities of the general curia is, as you might expect, expensive, although I think that we accomplish much on a relatively small budget. Since the bulk of the funding for the operation of the curia comes from the provinces I believe it is important for you to know a little about the way we get the money for our operating budget each year.

In 1996 a commission to study this issue began meeting and presented proposals to a meeting of the major superiors and the general council. The goal was to establish a secure and equitable plan for financing the

general curia for the future.

Under the plan finally adopted and subsequently implemented in 1997, five provinces (Italian, Cincinnati, Kansas City, Teutonic and Iberian) contributed to an “investment fund for the general curia.” The principal remains the property of each province and the interest from the investments then becomes the contribution of each province to the support of the general curia. This agreement is in effect until 2007 and is to be discussed at the Major Superiors’ Meeting in 2007. The provinces that have not invested money in the fund continue to contribute an assessment each year based on the size of the province.

I should note here that for a number of years the general curia had been putting money into two investment funds each year. The goal was to build up an investment so that the interest would be an income for the general curia.

Reflections on our History and for our Future

I must admit that I was a bit surprised by some of the facts I discovered in the course of doing my research. Perhaps I was affected by that tendency to view the past as a kind of golden age when the great figures of our history governed and all was right with the Congregation.

Without denying the greatness of many of our “fathers in faith,” our history has not always been glorious. There were many tensions in the Society over the years and the threat of a genuine schism was apparently quite real during and immediately after World War II. Just prior to that difficult time the moderator general had been removed by the apostolic visitor during a painful process which lasted nearly a decade.

Even though Giovanni Merlini was a wise and holy man, he chose to ignore the counsel of his advisors. He vetoed some proposals for reform for the governance of the Congregation, which, in retrospect, probably should have been implemented.

Through all this the Congregation survived and continues to grow. We have expanded our horizons and are rejoicing in the growth we see in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. We can draw strength and confidence from our history, affirming how it has survived and grown despite the problems it had to weather.

There continue to be tensions in the Congregation today and no doubt there always will be. Over the years the members of the past have developed ways of dealing with those tensions and the role of the “directors of the Society” is “to reconcile conflicting spirits and to keep the members faithful to the ideals of the Community by exhortation and counsel and, if necessary, by direct command” (C47).

In particular the moderator general is the “visible sign of unity in the Society.” His first responsibility “is to vivify and renew the spirit of the Society and to promote its expansion.” Working with the other major superiors, “he promotes unity among members and provinces” (C61).

For me a significant result of my research has been the importance of the *mission house* in the government of the Society. In the earliest *Rule* of St. Gaspar the life of the house and the responsibilities of the various officers were spelled out in great detail while the function of the director general or moderator general was left surprisingly vague. Indeed, the moderator general was in effect the “president” of the primary mission house in Rome. The head of this primary house was the supreme authority but it appears that Gaspar and subsequent heads of the Congregation placed a great deal of trust in the responsibility and initiative of the local communities or mission houses.

I am not suggesting that we try to imitate the structure and life of the mission house in any kind of slavish manner, but perhaps we might need to be challenged by Gaspar’s vision of a vibrant and lively community continually “on mission,” continually preparing the

members for a fruitful apostolate. Perhaps one of the challenges of our general government might be to see how this idea, perhaps one of Gaspar's unique contributions to the life of the Church according to John Klopke, might be translated into community life today.

As we move ahead it will be important for us to understand what we expect from our leaders, how we define good government in the Congregation, and especially examine our notions of what good leaders should be. What kind of leaders do we want to serve as moderator general and general councilors in the years ahead? What kind of vision, what kinds of skills, should they have?

Predicting the future is sometimes a perilous task but despite the uncertainties involved we must try to determine as best we can what the future needs of our Congregation might be. I do think that we can project into the future certain trends that can be observed now as well as our hopes for what might be our response to the "signs of the times."

The theme of the last general assembly was "The Future Face of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood." When we looked around the assembly hall we noted that the *current* faces in that room were all of people from Europe or North America! This does not reflect the future face of the Congregation, given the growth trends we are seeing these days. What kind of leadership is needed to respond to this changing future face of the Congregation?

Given the shift in growth patterns in our Congregation, what kinds of skills will be needed in a multicultural and multigenerational Community in the future? From my own experience of living in a different culture and visiting with people of other cultures, I can assure you that being able to bridge this "culture gap" is not always easy. I hear the same thing from other members of religious communities in similar situations.

We may need to be more deliberate in our planning

with more emphasis on developing the skills for multicultural living and multicultural leadership in our members. We should remember that what constitutes good leadership in one culture or context may not be so good in another. We need people who are aware of that and who can allow that awareness to shape their actions.

As I noted earlier, the general curia has taken on a larger role in “animating” the Congregation through publications, workshops, the Internet, and the like. This is very much in line with the spirit of our *Normative Texts* as well as with the desire of the members and of our lay associates.

If we wish to continue these activities we should look for people in leadership who have skills in this area or who are willing to enlist the aid of people who have them. We should also be willing to free members with such skills to work with the elected leadership of our Congregation.

We may need to change attitudes about serving on the general curia (and perhaps leadership positions in general). Sometimes people do not see this as “real” or genuine ministry and hence are unwilling to leave a different kind of ministry for this ministry of service, of animation. It is a genuine form of ministry to the Congregation and to the Church.

We may need to reconsider the current situation in which two councilors continue to live and work in their own provinces. It may be that the level of expectations of the general curia may rise and that the staffing of the general curia may need to be augmented, if not by additional councilors by other members who have needed knowledge and skills.

In closing I might just offer a word of praise and of gratitude to those members who have served in positions of leadership in the general curia in the one hundred eighty-eight years of our existence. Sir Isaac Newton wrote to a friend: “If I see further it is because I stand on the shoulders of giants.” We indeed stand on the

shoulders of giants, of dedicated men who had great vision and courage and who above all loved God, loved God's people, and who loved the members of the Congregation. I hope that we can honor their memory and their legacy by nurturing and supporting able leaders and by recognizing our own call to the ministry of leadership and service in our Congregation so that all may be empowered to carry out what Gaspar called simply "the Work."

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The Madonna of the Precious Blood

Beniamino Conti, C.P.P.S.

Like all the great missionaries dedicated to popular missions, St. Gaspar also had his picture of the Madonna of the Missions and he also ordered it to be used in the Congregation.¹ In the tradition of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, this picture, which represents the Madonna and on her right the infant Jesus offering the chalice of his Blood, has been given various titles: Our Lady, Help of Christians; the Madonna of the Missions; the Madonna of the Cup; and the Madonna of the Precious Blood.²

Before discussing its spiritual significance, I would like to offer a sketch of the historical character of the image. Dr. Maria Antonietta De Angelis³ has already made an expert examination of the image from an artistic perspective.

The History of the Painting of the Madonna of the Missions

Some evidence asserts that Pius VII gave this image to St. Gaspar when he entrusted the preaching of missions in the Papal States to him. In fact, on the reverse of the painting of the Madonna of the Precious Blood, given a new backing at the end of the nineteenth century and now preserved in the museum in Albano Laziale, there is the following inscription:

Memorandum. By the testimony of old Missionaries and mentioned by the Most Reverend Giacinto Petroni, who brought it back from 'Sora Gigia' [Gaspar's niece, Luigia Del Bufalo], and by Most Reverend D. Nicola Pagliuca, the present *Auxilium Christianorum*, the image used by Venerable Gaspar in the holy missions. . . is the original picture. Brother Adeodato De Filippis states that he has always heard it agreed that this image was given by Pius VII to our Venerable [Gaspar]. Joseph Schaeper, Missionary. Rome, September 16, 1898.

That the painting of the Madonna *Auxilium Christianorum* 'Help of Christians,' preserved in the museum of Albano Laziale, is the original that St. Gaspar used to take with him on the missions is beyond doubt. That this image is the one given by Pius VII according to the testimony of De Filippis is not supported by evidence in the canonical processes of St. Gaspar, as far as I have been able to determine. There is only one reference by Merlini about the gift of an image of the Madonna to St. Gaspar on the part of Pius VII, but it is not relevant.

Merlini states:

It is quite well known to all that with peace restored in the Church, the servant of God occupied himself not only with the ministry of the holy missions, which he found highly stimulating, but also with other kinds of preaching. And I must note that he wanted to become a Jesuit. Accordingly I have confirmation from Gaspar himself that he was thinking about carrying out his holy desires in the Society of Jesus.

It happened, however, that in those early years, Pius VII, of happy memory, wanted to have the holy missions preached in the

principal cities of the state with the aid of ecclesiastics. Among others he called the servant of God, who presented himself to His Holiness. Because, as he told me one day, he was not accustomed to present himself [in the papal court], while standing before the pope while he spoke to him about the holy missions, Gaspar found himself at a loss for words and did not know how to respond except with “Yes, yes, most Holy Father, I will do what you want.” The servant of God also told me that when Pius VII sent the missionaries to Benevento, among whom was Gaspar himself, the pope graciously said to them: “When you are in Benevento, do not say “Madonna mia” but “Madonna mea,” and further, he told me that he had as a gift *a copper engraving (rame)^a of the Most Holy Virgin.^b* I saw that he had it in a frame in his room in Rome and he himself pointed it out to me.⁴

If Merlini is speaking here of a “*copper engraving of the Holy Virgin,*” which Pius VII gave to all the missionaries who had to go to Benevento, elsewhere, speaking of the paintings which St. Gaspar had in his room in Rome, and referring to the very image of the Madonna given him by Pius VII, he affirms that it was an image on paper: “In front of the bed he had the image of Holy Mary on paper; it was the one given him by Pius VII, of which I have spoken.”⁵

I have examined all of the depositions of Merlini in

^aEditor’s note: The Italian *rame* ‘copper’ may also mean a copper engraving or a print made from an engraved copper plate.

^bThe words and expressions in italics here and following are mine.

the processes of St. Gaspar thoroughly, but have not found other places where there are references to the image of Mary given by Pius VII to St. Gaspar, except the one I have just referred to. Therefore the Madonna on copper of the first testimony is the same Madonna on paper of the second. It is not possible, therefore, as is stated in the so-called "Memoria" of Brother Adeodato De Filippis, that the painting of the Madonna of the Precious Blood, which is neither on copper nor on paper, but on canvas, was given by Pius VII to St. Gaspar, because "he surely would have left some note of this"⁶ and we would find some trace in his writings or in the depositions of the process.

For the rest, we know that in the first missions preached in Benevento and in Frosinone by order of Pius VII in 1815–1816, in which St. Gaspar, as he himself says, was only the "caretaker in the missions,"⁷ the choice of the painting of the Madonna was up to the director of the mission. Later on, after the foundation of the Congregation (August 15, 1815), the missionaries used to take along only the painting of the Madonna del Soccorso of Don Gaetano Bonanni, first superior of the house of San Felice in Giano. In fact St. Gaspar, in a letter of November 22, 1820 to missionary Don Francesco Pierantoni, simply calls it the "Madonna of Bonanni."⁸ Valentini, in his deposition, always refers to this "Madonna del Soccorso" when speaking of the Madonna of the missions prior to 1820.⁹ Therefore, in the same letter of November 22, 1820 to Pierantoni, who was in residence in Giano with Bonanni, St. Gaspar affirms decisively: "The Madonna of our missions will always be uniform: for now the image of Bonanni is to be used."

Nevertheless, a few days later, precisely on November 29, 1820, St. Gaspar in another letter to the same Pierantoni, writes something that appears to contradict this provision: "You tell me that Bonanni leaves the crucifix, etc. Very well. But our Madonna must be uniform. It will be good, however, to have also the one of

Bonnani.”¹⁰ Why does Gaspar not say again: “For now the image of Bonnani is to be used” but reaffirms, on the other hand, that “our Madonna must be uniform,” distinguishing it from that of Bonnani, which he wants to have along with his crucifix? What is this “our Madonna?”

This mystery was revealed sufficiently in the biography of St. Gaspar written by Santelli.¹¹ The latter, knowing with certainty that Pius VII intended to make Bonanni a bishop, wrote to communicate the news to him in San Felice on September 7, 1820. St. Gaspar was also informed of the promotion of Bonnani to the episcopate. In fact, in a letter which he wrote to Pierantoni between August 29 and September 2, 1820, he was still uncertain “if the episcopate [of Bonanni] would come to nothing.”¹² In another letter of October 7, 1820 to the same Pierantoni he says with certainty that “the episcopate for the same [Bonanni] is said to be *very certain*.¹³ Cristaldi has confided this in me.”¹⁴ Thus, despite the fact that St. Gaspar was aware that Bonanni would be promoted to the episcopate, without, however, knowing when he was leaving San Felice, he wrote to Pierantoni on November 20, 1820 that in the mission there was need to use again the Madonna of Bonanni.

On the other hand, in the letter of November 29, he reasserts the principle of the uniformity of “our Madonna” of the missions; he expresses the desire to have in San Felice not only Bonanni’s crucifix but also his Madonna.^c An indication, therefore, that Bonanni

^cWe do not know if Bonanni had left the painting of the Madonna del Socorso at San Felice di Giano. It is true that in 1832 it is certain that in the church of this ancient abbey there was an altar with the painting of his Madonna del Soccorso (cf. *Regolamenti*, I, Roma 1998, 153; 144), painted by Francesco Melanzio (Montefalco circa 1465-1530) and restored in 1961 by Professor Giovanni Bartoloni. This painting, which was

had decided to leave San Felice for his episcopal see in Norcia is that Gaspar had to establish the uniformity of "our Madonna of the Missions" around another painting. The painting is the one which St. Gaspar in his letters calls many times "my Madonna,"^d that is, the painting of the Madonna about which we are speaking. In fact, while at first St. Gaspar would always use the Madonna

subsequently moved to the Sanctuary of Fosco now is preserved inside San Felice, measures two meters in height and 1.5 meters in width. It depicts the Madonna standing up, with the left hand holding a baby who is about to be taken away by the devil and with the right holding a club to strike the demon. Next to the Madonna, kneeling, is the mother of the child who is interceding for her son and a group of Augustinian monks also praying. Moreover, in the church of San Felice di Giano dell'Umbria, until the first years of the 20th century there was on the confessions an engraving of Maria Santissima del Soccorso, painted in 1813, with this inscription: "An image of Maria Santissima del Soccorso which is carried in the Holy Missions by a Union of Secular Priests of the Roman Clergy, propagators of the devotion of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ." (cf. *Bollettino*, 113 [1929], 165; j2 [1965], 75–80. This image, nevertheless, was certainly made later than 1813, because only in 1815 did Bonanni devote himself to spreading the devotion to the Precious Blood (cf. *Epistolario*, I, 238: letter of July 5, 1815), with great probability he was reproducing the painting of the "Madonna of Bonanni" (cf. B. Conti, *Il metodo delle missioni al popolo secondo St. Gaspare del Bufalo*, Rome 1991, 26, note 47).

^d*Epistolario*, II, 77, letter 453. St. Gaspar uses for the first time the expression "my Madonna" in the negotiations for opening a mission house in Offida. In fact, he writes thus in a letter of August 10, 1821 to Sig. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci: "Once the house has been opened make a copy of my Madonna" (Ibid.) But even later St. Gaspar in his letters speaks of "my Madonna" (July 1, 1825; November 13, 1825; July 18, 1836, etc.) as the Madonna of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

of Bonanni in his missions, after the mission he preached from December 8–21, 1820 in Rome at the Church of San Nicola in Carcere (a mission which had the highest importance also for the founding of the Sisters of the Precious Blood through the work of Countess Caterina Bentivoglio Orsi [1765–1826],¹⁵ who from May of 1820 went from Bologna to Rome for this founding) Gaspar will always use the painting of his Madonna.¹⁶

In a letter of November 13, 1825 to Sig. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci of Offida, St. Gaspar lets us know that this image of the Madonna “was being carried in the mission by other missionaries now deceased.”¹⁷ Thus, it is not correct to say that this painting of the Madonna was Gaspar’s idea and that he had it painted.¹⁸ Gaspar only had the chalice in the hand of the infant Jesus added.^e In the same letter to Palmucci he writes that in “Rome there is no information as to who painted my Madonna. The one who added the chalice is Signor Pozzi.”^f Probably St. Gaspar also had Pozzi add the golden gown of the Infant,¹⁹ whose innocent and tender little body was restored to its original form during the restoration carried out in 1984.²⁰ The painting is attributed to Pompeo Batoni (1708–1787), in his youthful period.²¹ Batoni is the same painter who produced the painting of the Sacred Heart venerated in Rome at the church of the Gesù.

^eIt is not known precisely what had been painted previously in the hand of the Bambino: a little cross? a scapular? an olive branch?

^f*Epistolario*, III, 456, letter 1271. Probably he means Andrea Pozzi, a painter esteemed in Rome in that era and an academic of San Luca (cf. De Angelis, op. cit., 4). Moreover, De Angelis thinks that by the painter “surely the index finger and possibly also part of the thumb were modified to adapt them for grasping” (cf. *Ibid.*).

Saint Gaspar had several copies of the painting made for his missionaries or for other persons who asked him for one. He did not want them to have other images painted and then used for the missions. In a letter of July 1, 1836 to Don Orazio Bracaglia, he writes with delicacy but with firmness: "I do not know whether it is true that you had some influence on the new design of our image of the most holy Mary of our Missions. If this is true, I would not be able to give it my approval. It would be a mistake."²²

The reproductions of the Madonna of the Missions had to be perfect and beautiful. He writes thus in May 1837 to his niece Luiga, asking her to repeat his very words to the painter Luigi Spalladaro: "You will have to plan to tell Spalladaro that he should make a beautiful Madonna for our Missions; a beautiful one, not sad-looking, not with a drawn-down face, not languid. Tell him very clearly what I am pointing out here."²³

The Spiritual Significance of the Painting

Saint Gaspar never speaks explicitly about the spiritual significance of "his Madonna" either in his letters or in his preaching. In the *Rule* of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood one finds a description of the image in the *Praxis* for article 6 of the *Rule*:

. . . And [it is also] a custom of the Congregation that in our churches there be an altar on which is displayed for the veneration of the faithful *the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary who holds in her arms the Infant Jesus, who holds in his right hand the chalice of his Precious Blood in a gesture of showing it to his Mother. The same Blessed Virgin invites sinners to make use of this divine remedy, prepared for men with such urgent love to wipe out their sins and to clothe them again with virtue.*

The venerable founder established that our

priests make use of the image in the missions. . .²⁴

Thus, according to this explanation, the infant Jesus presents the chalice of his Blood to his Mother and she invites sinners to “make use of the divine remedy,” not only that they be purified of their sins but also in order to be clothed again with all the virtues.

Another interesting description–interpretation of the image of the Madonna of Saint Gaspar is given in the deposition of Saint Vincent Pallotti (1795–1850) during the canonical processes of Saint Gaspar. Speaking of the Marian devotion of Saint Gaspar, with respect to this image of the Madonna of the Precious Blood Pallotti affirms:

This same active faith toward the great Mother of God, following the example of other missionary saints, induced him to include in his regulations for missions that a sermon on the Madonna should be given, urging the people to have devotion to her by bringing before them the sacred and devout image of Mary. . .

That image, I believe that I can say, could be called the expression of the servant of God’s faith in most holy Mary and in the infinite power of the Precious Blood of her divine Son Jesus, since one sees in that picture a loving invitation stimulating hearts to devotion to her. I mean to say that the image of our dear Mother Mary is holding the child Jesus in her right hand. He is holding a chalice in his right hand strengthening the gesture of Mary’s invitation to offer the Precious Blood to the Divine Father to obtain the abundance of divine mercy in favor of all of us miserable sinners.

In promoting the pious use of such a holy image I do not know how to consider

adequately how vigorous was the exercise of faith in the servant of God, because I am not aware of all that he did and all the hard work he had to sustain to spread such an image, which is distinctive to the Institute. I can say, however, that having known the servant of God so intimately (if it is permissible to say so) and passionately, that I believe he had wished to promote its use everywhere in the world and that it would be his great consolation if he had seen everyone engaged in promoting the use of said image.²⁵

Thus, according to this interpretation, the Infant, moved by the prayers of Mary, offers to the eternal Father his Precious Blood to obtain the abundance of divine mercy in favor of sinners.

What is to be said of these two interpretations? It seems to me that they are not faithful to the pictorial language of the image itself. The painting presents us with Mary and at her right the infant Jesus, who offers the Eucharistic chalice. With her left hand the Madonna holds up the Infant and with her right invites the viewer to receive the chalice offered by her son.

To whom does Jesus offer the chalice? In the painting both the eyes of the Infant and those of his Mother are directed to the observer, from whatever angle of view.²⁶ Thus it does not seem that the Infant presents the chalice of his Blood to his mother, as article 6 of the *Praxis* suggests, nor does he offer it to the heavenly Father, according to Pallotti's interpretation, even though one cannot exclude these truths from a more comprehensive understanding of the mystery of the Blood of Christ.

Nevertheless, given that the eyes of the Infant and of the Madonna meet the gaze of the observer directly and given that the Infant offers the observer the chalice of his Blood and that with her right hand the Madonna

invites the observer to accept it, there is no doubt that the fundamental meaning intended in the painting is the offering of the chalice by the Infant to all those who look at it, to those who fix their gaze of faith on it, as if to repeat for them the words of the last supper: "Take this all of you and drink from it. This is the cup of my Blood for the new and eternal covenant, poured out for you and for all in remission of sins." The Madonna reinforces this with her loving gaze and with the gesture of her right hand, welcoming the offering of her Son. Who would refuse such an offering made by such a tender and innocent Infant, reinforced as it is by the face of his Mother, so beautiful and sweet?

It seems to me that one finds the direct interpretation of the spiritual significance of the painting of the Madonna of the Precious Blood in the first of several books on the subject of the month of the Precious Blood,²⁷ which St. Gaspar regularly used for meditation and which he suggested that others use as well:

How great was the desire that Jesus had in his mortal life to shed his Blood for the redemption of the world, how great his desire that all should benefit from it, that all souls share in it. Therefore, inviting us to this fountain of mercy he says: All of you, drink from it.²⁸

Elsewhere, speaking of Mary, Mother of the Savior, St. Gaspar says that she also wished that everyone "should profit from the price of redemption."²⁹

Even though St. Gaspar, as I have said, has left no written theological-spiritual interpretation of the Madonna of the Missions and even if the painting seems to emphasize only the aspect most desired by the Missionaries in the missions, that is, the conversion and sanctification of sinners, nevertheless this recalls all the fundamental elements of the preaching of St. Gaspar on the devotion to the Blood of Christ:

It is, therefore, the divine Blood that will placate the divine eternal Father, that will purify our hearts and will inebriate us with love for Jesus who *dilexit nos, et lavit nos in Sanguine suo 'loved us and washed us in his Blood'* (Rv 1,5).³⁰

In this painting of the Madonna of the missions the Holy Virgin exhorts us to receive with confidence the chalice of the Blood since she was the first to experience its saving effects and thus she presents to us the perfect model of the person redeemed by the Blood of Christ. She, in fact, is the creature who *welcomed in herself*, the saving power of the Blood of Christ in all its fullness, from her Immaculate Conception³¹ because she was greeted by the Archangel Gabriel as “full of grace” (Lk 1, 28). Moreover, she *collaborated* in a very special way with her Son in the work of redemption[§] so that on Calvary she was proclaimed Mother of the Church by Jesus (cf. Jn 2, 4; 19,26–7). Thus Mary, who already knows through personal experience the immense benefits contained in the Precious Blood of her Son, with the gesture of her right hand invites all to drink from the same chalice, that all might *welcome* its saving power for their own sanctification, that they might *collaborate* with Jesus in the work of redemption (cf. Col 1, 24) and *also seek that others welcome the same offering of the divine Blood*, thus expanding—by means of the holy chain of *welcoming, collaborating and offering*—the saving effects of the Precious Blood upon the great evil of

[§]As a fitting sequel to a meditation on the collaboration of the Virgin Mary in the work of the redemption of her Son which took place in the church of Santa Maria in Trivio (Rome) in the month of May 1994 during a *Cenacolo Sanguis Christi*, there appeared the chaplet or rosary of *Our Lady of the Most Precious Blood*, approved by the Vicariate of Rome on July 16, 1994.

the world, “so that God might be all in all” (1 Cor 15, 28).

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Mary, Woman of the New Covenant

Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S.

Mary in the Life of the C.P.P.S.

Mary has always played an important role in the life of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Don Beniamino Conti has already explained the place of Our Lady of the Precious Blood—or the Madonna of the Chalice, as she is also known—in the mission preaching of St. Gaspar and the early Missionaries.

In the course of the Congregation's history, Mary has been honored under a variety of titles. We know, for example, of the importance of the title "Mary, Help of Christians" to the Venerable Giovanni Merlini. For Fr. Francis Brunner, the veneration of Mary was promoted under the titles of Mother of God and the Sorrowful Mother. Fr. Brunner set up a shrine to the Sorrowful Mother in northwest Ohio in 1850, a shrine which continues under the care of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood this day.

In recent years, other images of Mary have been created. Perhaps most notably is that of Mary, Our Lady of the Precious Blood as "*Qaloq'Lajna' Aj Uk'Tesinel*," her title among the Q'ecqchí in Guatemala. In Q'ecqchí ritual, the sacred cacao drink is served to the chief members of the community, and then to everyone, by the young women of the community. They, in turn, have received this drink from the senior women. It is a ritual which makes and seals a covenant, affirms friendship, and

celebrates life. Fr. Dario Caal of the Central American Mission has developed this image of Our Lady based on this rite. The name “*Qalooq’Aj Uk’Tesinel’*” means “Our Lady who gives us to drink.” In developing this image, Caal has linked the role of women giving life and sustenance to the Community with that of Mary, Our Lady of the Precious Blood.

In this presentation, I would like to explore an image of Mary, related to our spirituality, which was developed by the Adorers of the Blood of Christ (hereafter referred to as A.S.C.) in the 1970s. It is that of “Mary, Woman of the New Covenant.” Mary is first invoked under this title in the A.S.C. *Constitution* in the 1970s, and again in their 1992 *Constitution*. Although relatively little has been written about this title of Mary, the A.S.C. have designed a dramatic statue and chapel to Mary under this title in their convent in Wichita, Kansas.

The development of this image of Mary exemplifies in significant ways the shift from devotion to spirituality in relation to Mary. As was noted in the discussion of a similar shift regarding the Blood of Christ, the move from devotion to spirituality was prompted in the twentieth century by renewal in biblical studies and the liturgical renewal. One of the concerns of spirituality is how we bring the resources of our tradition to bear upon interpreting situations in which we now find ourselves. Spirituality so conceived is hermeneutical, i.e., concerned with interpretation. It realizes that whatever we say about our present situation must be grounded in an appreciation of the best of our tradition. At times that has required a return to those sources, and the capacity to move beyond accretions of piety which give expression to our sentiment regarding someone as Mary so as to forge a new unity with Mary in a way that speaks more directly to our own time. As we saw in the case of the relation of devotion and spirituality in the Blood of Christ, this does not mean rejecting previous images,

but rather creating space for new possibilities.

This is the case certainly with Mary. From the middle of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th, there was an intense development of devotion to Mary among Catholics. The Second Vatican Council had to take that into consideration in presenting a doctrine of the Church. Pope Paul VI's 1974 apostolic exhortation *Marialis cultus* sets out sound principles for elaborating a Marian spirituality today. Pope John Paul II has made the veneration of Mary a cornerstone of his own papacy. In his reign, no major papal document has concluded without a reference to Mary.

In this presentation of Mary as woman of the new covenant, I would like to begin by recalling the discussion of Mary in the life of Christians as was held at the Second Vatican Council. Then I would like to present some of the distinctive features of this title, both as they relate to Mary, and as they relate to a spirituality of the Blood of Christ. Third, I will elaborate this image of Mary in terms of a number of biblical passages where Mary's activity can be interpreted as actions of the woman of the new covenant.

Mary in the Teaching of the Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican Council was convened in 1962, less than a decade after the celebration of the Marian Year in 1954. With that celebration, Pope Pius XII had wished to call attention to a century of unusually intense devotion to Mary.

There was considerable debate in the preparatory commissions of the council about how to address teaching on Mary. A significant group of the council fathers pressed for a separate dogmatic constitution on Mary. This was not surprising, given the interest in Mary at that time. Two dogmas regarding Mary had been promulgated by the Church in those previous hundred years: the Immaculate Conception in 1854 and the Assumption in 1950.

This proposal was rejected by the majority in favor of devoting a chapter of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*. The reason for this was a fear on the part of some of the council fathers that veneration of Mary had reached exaggerated proportions in some quarters. In the 1950s there had even been discussion of proclaiming Mary co-redemptrix and mediatrix of all graces. While this responded to the experience of some of Mary's mediation on behalf of the faithful, it would have had serious and perhaps erroneous impact on doctrinal development.^a

Instead, chapter eight of *Lumen gentium* was devoted to Mary as she was to be understood in the context of the Church. Again, a group lobbied for proclaiming Mary Mother of the Church. But in the final redaction of the document that was rejected, Mary was presented instead as a model of the Church. As the first disciple of Jesus, she is in turn for all of us a model of discipleship. Such a position corresponds more directly to the biblical evidence. In the Acts of the Apostles Mary is present at the birth of the Church at Pentecost (Acts 1: 14). For that reason it would be more proper to say that it was the Holy Spirit who gave birth to the Church or, that the Church was born when water and blood flowed from the pierced side of Jesus on the cross at Calvary (John 19: 34), an idea favored among some of the fathers of the Church in the Patristic period.

Much of the Marian piety of the 19th and 20th centuries focused nearly exclusively on Mary's relation to Jesus. What the council fathers appeared to have intended in *Lumen gentium* is to situate Mary more clearly in God's overall plan of salvation, that is, both in relation to the Father and to Jesus, and also in relation to the unfolding of the Church and therefore to us. By

^aA campaign to revive this movement occurred again in the 1990s, but was rejected by the Roman curia.

invoking Mary as the model of discipleship in following Jesus, Mary assumes that place in salvation history.

Mary and Spirituality of the Blood of Christ

Significant in the title of Mary as Woman of the New Covenant is the emphasis placed on *woman* rather than the more traditional title *mother*. Honoring Mary as Mother of God received dogmatic confirmation at the Council of Ephesus in 431 and has held a special place in the hearts of Catholic and Orthodox Christians (for the latter, as the *Theotokos*, or *God-bearer*) ever since. As the one who bore Jesus, her motherhood links her to God's plan in history in a unique way. It also links her to all of God's children. Mary as Mother has been, and will continue to be, central to our faith.

To focus on Mary as *woman*, on the other hand, provides a two-fold focus especially fruitful for a spirituality of the Blood of Christ. By calling her "woman of the new covenant," Mary is situated in the larger plan of God's saving action in our world. Her status for us is first and foremost guaranteed by her "fiat," her "yes" to being part of God's saving action among us. She does not create this action; she consents to be part of it. This larger action is salvific for Mary as it is for all of us. Her fiat directs our attention to what God is doing, rather than focusing it upon her own self. For no matter how central a role we accord Mary in what God has done for us, it cannot be forgotten that she, too, is a recipient of God's grace. That is why the proposed title "co-redemptrix" is misleading at best, and heretical at worst.

But that *caveat* having been given, we can return to contemplating her role as a vital participant in God's elaborating a new covenant for humanity. Even though most of the references to Mary in the New Testament occur before the inauguration of the new covenant in Christ's Blood in his passion and death, they carry a special importance for us because they anticipate what that new covenant is to become. By following the actions of

Mary in those stories, we learn more about what the new covenant is to become for us. For even with the hindsight of two millennia, we must admit to ourselves that that covenant is still unfolding for us and before us. Mary's actions can continue to serve us as a guide to what we as disciples are to become, and what that still anticipated covenant is to be for us.

In a spirituality of the Blood of Christ, Mary is at once a central figure in the story of the covenant, and also the first recipient of its benefit. It is in this sense that the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and of the Assumption must be understood. Mary led us in trying to grasp the meaning of what the shedding of Christ's Blood means for us. In line with a more integral understanding of the meaning of the Blood of Christ within the Scriptures, one must begin with God's offering to us again and again a covenant. It is God's covenanting action which gives the Blood of Christ its special significance, as we have already seen. So this approach to Mary calls us to following out Mary's role in God's action of covenant.

The other side of a contemporary spirituality of the Blood of Christ has to do with how the "cry of the blood" invites us to re-enter the "call of the Blood." From this perspective, Mary as woman calls to mind the new awareness of women in much of the world today. The second half of the twentieth century has been a time when the status and appreciation of women in human society has been undergoing fundamental re-evaluation. In the setting of the First World, there has been a struggle for greater equality of women with men. This struggle has been in turn taken up in the poor Two-Thirds World, which has meant emancipating women from undue subjugation to men, but especially also providing them with opportunities for education. The endemic poverty in the world is one of the most urgent challenges to justice today. Experts have noted time and time again that the single most important factor in raising people

out of poverty is better education for women. Women who are literate and receive education are better able to care for their families in matters of health and nutrition. By allowing them greater status, they improve society as a whole.

For us as Christians, it is not only these matters of justice and human promotion which obtain. More fundamentally, it is an article of Christian faith that human beings, men and women, are created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1: 27).

Just as Mary's role in the enactment of the new covenant as found in the Scriptures must be recalled, so too, following the "cry of the blood," we need to pause to consider what the covenant means for us in our own times. I have tried to elaborate a spirituality of the Blood of the covenant on other occasions. Let me summarize the major points here.

A spirituality of the covenant has three characteristics: commitment, connection, and communion. It is first of all about commitment, that is, God's steadfast mercy manifested to us in covenant, staying with us and accompanying us in good times and bad, when it is easy and rewarding and when it is difficult. God's steadfast mercy is one of the distinguishing features of the divine in the Scriptures. Second, covenant is about connection, that is, the establishing and sustaining of relationships. Belonging is one of the most important needs of us as humans, and covenant spirituality requires special attention to our relationships: with God, with one another, and with ourselves. Third, covenant is about communion, that is, going so deeply into those relationships that we discover the reconciliation God offers us, a reconciliation we cannot find in and of ourselves. Reconciliation is an acknowledgment, and a participation in, God's healing a broken world and bringing it to a new place.

With that in mind, let us turn now to how Mary exemplifies discipleship for us, how she is indeed woman

of the new covenant, and how her actions in the Scriptures help us respond to the cry of the blood and to the demands of the new covenant in our world today.

Mary in the Scriptures as Woman of the New Covenant: Commitment

In the Scriptures, Mary teaches us about covenant commitment in a number of ways. Think first of all of her “fiat,” her “yes” to God in the annunciation (Luke 1: 26–38). In the story, here is a young unmarried woman from an insignificant village in an insignificant country, being asked by an angel to play a role in God’s action in the world beyond that never was asked before of a human being. Her question to the angel is telling of the awesome thing being asked of her: how can she, an unmarried young woman, become the bearer of a child of such importance? Yet she gives her assent, not knowing what the outcome will be. She commits herself to a path into the future, because she experiences how God is committed to her.

In the midst of this story, we cannot but think of the struggles that mothers undertake for their children and their families today. Think of rural Africa, where women often have to walk long distances to gather water and to find wood for cooking, then tend to the gardens where food is grown, and then care for their children as well as be responsible for the cooking and providing of everything for their families. Think too of the many places in the world where single mothers carry out all of these responsibilities alone, and what it means not only to be able on a day-to-day basis to achieve all of this, but also what it means to maintain one’s dignity in society in the midst of being considered by some in the wider society as a “sinner.” We see, in Luke’s account, how Mary’s first act after the angel leaves her is to set out to care for her aged cousin Elizabeth, who is also with child (Luke 1: 39–56). Even though Mary herself is pregnant, she stays with Elizabeth for three months.

Second, Mary shows commitment in her prophecy. Her conception of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit carries with it an anointing of the Holy Spirit. Out of her lowliness she is able to praise the great works of God (Luke 1: 58–79): how God works through the lowly, filling the poor with good things, and sending the rich away with empty hands. In her prophetic praise of God, she reminds us that it is women who bear the brunt of poverty in our world, and that God stands by those who are poor even when they are abandoned by the powerful of the world. Given such a prophetic text as the Magnificat, it is no wonder that the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua in the 1970s forbade it to be recited publicly in church services!

But there is another side to prophecy as well. It is brought out in the prophecy of Simeon in the temple (Luke 2: 33–35), where he says that a sword of sorrow will pierce her heart. Her heart will be pierced with sorrow and disappointment, just as her Son's shall be upon the cross (John 19: 34). To commit oneself to the new covenant means going at times against what direction the world seems to be moving, and running the risk of having our own hearts pierced as well. Mary shows us the way on this.

Mary shows us a third thing about commitment. As events unfolded, we are told "she kept all things in her heart" (Luke 2: 51). In having to carry in her heart her own feelings, as well as the burdens of others, Mary shows herself to be a true disciple of Jesus. Jesus invites the disciples to come to him with their heavy hearts to seek comfort and relief, and to learn how to carry those burdens as he carries them (Matt 11: 28–30). Those who hear the cries of suffering of others can hear God speaking in those instances in a special way. We, too, in our discipleship, are often called upon to carry the burdens of others, to carry within ourselves the pain of the world which God will one day transform.

Mary as Woman of the New Covenant: Connections

Part of building covenant, as we have seen, is learning how to make connections, how to develop and sustain relationships within the context of commitment. Mary shows us the way in two stories from the Gospel.

The first is the story of the wedding feast at Cana (John 2:1–12). Here Mary shows herself attentive to the needs of the young bridegroom and bride in the midst of their celebration of commitment to each other. They have run out of wine. With no more wine, the celebration will come quickly to an end. By not providing enough wine for the wedding feast, the families of the bride and bridegroom are showing themselves to be inhospitable, less than gracious hosts, and less than committed to the relationships which such feasts reaffirm.

She turns to Jesus for help, and gets a rather cold and curt reply. It doesn't fit into Jesus' plan. But she persists. There are some things more important than preset timetables. Jesus' timetable will have to take second place to the needs of this young couple just married, and to their future relationships with their families and friends.

Jesus relents, and the wine which results is a surprise: it is better than the first wine which had been served. Struggling to make relationships work, and to sustain them in moments of crisis often brings surprising results. We come to a new place, a place we could not have anticipated. Even Mary, in her persistence, could not have predicted the outcome. In this incident Mary teaches us that our reliance on the steadfast care of God can lead us to places which we might not have anticipated, places that surpass our well-laid plans.

A second incident from the Gospels teaches us something about the other side of making connections: a challenge to what we thought were our commitments. In the story in Mark 3: 31–35, Jesus is teaching inside a house, and is alerted that his mother and his brothers are

standing outside. They have come to take him home, because they cannot figure out what has happened to him. Jesus' life had taken a sudden turn, a turn which has taken him away from his village and his family. When Jesus hears that they are waiting outside, he delivers a sharp retort, saying that those who are listening to his preaching are his true mother and his true brothers.

Our sustaining of relationships often hits moments of crisis. One of the most common to be experienced is that moment when children become adults, and go their own way. This is hard for parents to accept, for families to imagine that relationships could be—and may have to be—otherwise. Jesus in this story seems to call for a break in those relationships within his family that have heretofore obtained. But he does not reject his mother and his brothers. He says, rather, that to be a mother and a brother is more than a claim of bloodline. To be a mother and a brother is to do the will of God. And doing the will of God may call us from time to time to accept another and a larger pattern of relationship than the one we may have settled upon. Thus, we can be happy and fulfilled in the ministry we are doing, but are at one moment called by the Community to take on a larger responsibility, such as that of formation. Having been a formation director myself for six years, I know and would easily concur that there are more satisfying and fulfilling ministries than formation work. But formation of candidates for the future is an essential service to the larger Community. And someone must do it.

In the story, Jesus and his brother receive this rebuke from Jesus, but the rest of the Gospel story indicates that they did not abandon their relationship with Jesus because of it. They were able, under his urging, to find a wider relationship to include those relationships of the past, yet bring them further. To live in covenant means facing those moments of crisis, and to be able to enter new paths while remaining faithful to those initial commitments.

Mary as Woman of the New Covenant: Communion

Mary's deep communion with God, and her deep communion with her son Jesus in the Gospel stories give us models of how to live in communion in the new covenant God is offering us. We can point to three moments in her story which give witness to this communion.

The first is in the birth of Jesus. The picture of Mary adoring Jesus in the crib in Bethlehem shortly after his birth is one of the favored images of communion we have in Western art. It presents a kind of communion that only a mother can have with a child she has born but also, for us, a contemplation of God's wondrous action in our world. But communion is tested. Matthew's Gospel recounts how Mary and Joseph had to flee with their newborn son to a foreign country to escape the madness of Herod (2: 11–15). Becoming a refugee means not only leaving one's home, but losing all safety as well. Mary knows the plight of the more than one hundred million people today who are displaced persons or refugees. To travel with a newborn child to a strange place without any support of a larger circle of family continues to occur today. Even though some exegetes present this dramatic story as a literary trope, I have encountered numerous refugees and migrants who take great comfort in this story: Mary knows what it means to be a refugee, and that is a great comfort for them. Even though covenant relationships promise safety, relationships and care, these things are sadly missing in many people's lives today. Looking toward the new covenant with Mary can provide hope for those so profoundly disconnected from their families and homelands.

The second story of Mary's communion with Jesus draws out these tragic implications. In John's Gospel, we are told that Mary stood at the foot of the cross while Jesus was dying (John 19: 22–27). That the career of Jesus as a prophet of God would end in cruel and summary execution as an enemy of the Roman state was a

crushing disappointment. The sword once prophesied has now pierced her heart. Mary stands there with all the women whose sons are abducted and “disappeared,” with all those women whose sons are arrested on trumped-up charges and left to rot in prison, a dooming of dreams and of a better life. Things often end this way for the poor—crushing of dreams and hopes, with nothing left but the void of disappointment. Her own life of commitment and fidelity to Jesus faces another threshold of communion in facing the end of Jesus’ life, an end which appears to be the dashing to the ground of promises and possibilities. It is in such moments of anguish, where presence seems to have been replaced by a yawning absence, that communion sometimes (but not always) finds a deeper source.

The third story of Mary finds her present together with the disciples in the Upper Room, where the Holy Spirit descends upon them at Pentecost (Acts 1: 12–14; 2: 1–4). For Mary, it is the second account we have of the Holy Spirit descending upon her, the first having been at the annunciation. I do not think we should read this as some kind of reward for Mary having remained faithful. It is, rather, the kind of rebirth we ourselves experience when we have been taken through failure, disappointment, the loss of our dreams, into what seemed to be a dead-end absence of all that has sustained us. To experience rebirth at those moments profoundly reorients our lives. It allows us at some point to see that past, not as failure, but as perhaps what we needed to experience in order to comprehend where we are now. Mary has trodden that path with us. From the uncertainty of beginnings, into the thrill of first achievement, through many twists and turns along the way, into what seemed like final disappointment, Mary, the woman of the new covenant, walks with us. From her we learn how to live through the awe and the ache, the beauty and the burden, the fragmentation and the fulfillment of the promise.

Conclusion

Those who experience the profound moment of reconciliation in their lives, when God brings them to a new place which they could have never imagined in their suffering, can understand most fully how Mary is the woman of the new covenant. In a spirituality of the Blood of Christ, which traces its way through covenant, through suffering, to new possibilities in hope, Mary provides us a sure and steady guide. In her life she has revealed to us the meaning of what it means to be loved by God, what it means to stand with those whom God loves in a special way even as the world rejects them. She stands there, too, waiting for us at Pentecost, to receive gifts we could not have anticipated or imagined.

Mary, Woman of the New Covenant, pray for us.

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NOTES

Michele Colagiovanni, C.PP.S.

¹*Regula*, art. 9, *Prassi*.

²Gaspar del Bufalo, *Metodo per i Santi Spirituali Esercizi di Regola e Circolari di Eccitamento*, Tip. Fratelli Pallotta, Roma 1892, p. 14.

³*Regula*, art. 46

⁴Gaspar del Bufalo, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷*Regula*, art. 43.

⁸Giovanni Merlini, *Lettere a Maria De Mattias*, vol. II, p. 683.

⁹*Regula*, art. 44.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹Gaspar del Bufalo, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–44.

¹²*Regula*, art. 44, *Prassi*.

¹³*Ibid.*, art. 47.

¹⁴Ibid., art. 48.

¹⁵*Regula*, Conclusio Regulae, p. 86.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁸*Regula*, art. 52.

Romano Altobelli, C.PP.S.

¹“La morte di un santo,” in *Vita Nostra*, n. 7, 1967, p. 5.

²P. Tacchi Venturi—G. Castellani, *Storia delle Religioni*, vol. 4, UTET, Turin 1971, p. 491.

³I. Lortz, *Storia della Chiesa nello sviluppo delle sue idee*, vol. 2, Alba 1967, p. 375. One could profitably consult the volume that treats this historical period in relationship to St. Gaspar: Nicola Spezzati, *Gaspare Del Bufalo nella restaurazione postnapoleonica*, ediz. Sanguis, Roma 1974.

⁴*Lettera del Delegato di Benevento Sig. Luigi Bottiglia circa le condizioni morali e sociali della città e Ducato di Benevento*, in C.PP.S. general archives, *Notizie del Fondatore*, vol. 1, f. 347.

⁵Gaspar del Bufalo, *Letter 42*.

⁶C.PP.S. general archives, *Scritti del Fondatore*, vol. XI, “Riflessi sulla bramata riforma,” p. 267.

⁷Cf. *ibid.*

⁸Ibid., p. 724.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 267.

¹¹“Supplica e Rescritto” for opening of the house for mission and spiritual exercises at San Felice which is also the first house of the Institute. C.PP.S. general archives, G III, 2, 1815–1837.

¹²Cf. Giovanni Merlini, *Istoria della Casa di missione e Spirituali Esercizi di San Felice di Giano*, written in 1832, in the C.PP.S. general archives, G III 12. Cf. also the deposition of Merlini in *Un santo scruta un santo*, Roma–Albano Laziale 1984, 189–194, 213–214.

¹³*Storia della Congregazione del Prez.mo Sangue specialmente della prima casa di San Felice di Giano, fino al 1832, scritta dal Servo di Dio Giovanni Merlini*, C.PP.S. general archives, folder “Giano e Fosco.” We are using a copy typed by Fr. Giuseppe Quattrino, C.PP.S., left in the house of San Felice.

¹⁴G. Merlini, op. cit. p. 50.

¹⁵C.PP.S. Gen. Arch., vol. *Istituto*, “Resconto dei Congressi degli Operai evangelici,” pp.1–27.

¹⁶G. Merlini, op. cit., p. 51.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁹Cf. G. Merlini, *Un santo scruta un santo*, pp. 214–215.

²⁰Cf. Gaspar del Bufalo, *La Congregazione dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue*, I (1815–1837), pp. 33–34.

²¹Gaspar del Bufalo, *Regolamenti*. I, p. 41.

²²Ibid., p.43.

²³*Congresso di Pievetorina—1820*, in Gaspar del Bufalo, *Regolamenti*, I, 45.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 45.

²⁵Cf. Beniamino Conti, C.PP.S., note 1 to the manuscript of the *Transunto*, in Gaspar del Bufalo, *Regolamenti*. . . , *op. cit.*, 59–60.

²⁶*Transunto*, n. 37, in *ibid.*

²⁷Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 53–58.

²⁸*Ibid.* pp. 57–58.

²⁹I—*Memoriale sull’Opera* (July 1835), C.PP.S. Gen. Arch., *Manuscripts of the Founder*, vol. XII, pp. 48–58.

³⁰*Memoriale a Pio VIII* (1829), *ibid.* pp. 83–83.

³¹Cf. C.PP.S. Gen. Arch., G II, 1, n. 6. The three documents are arranged under the letters b, c, g.

³²*Ibid.* b. The manuscript begins with this heading: “*Si presentano in succinto alcuni schiarimenti sopra punti relativi alle Regole de’ Missionari.*”

³³*Ibid.*, c. The heading is: “*Riflessioni sulla Regola della Missione del Prez.mo Sangue.*”

³⁴*Ibid.* g. The heading is: “*Ristretto della posizione riguardante l’Istituto e Regola della Congregazione sotto il titolo del Prez.mo Sangue.*”

³⁵This is cited in Gaspar del Bufalo, *Regolamenti. La Congregazione dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue, II* (1838–1873), edited by Beniamino Conti, Roma, 1999, 90–130. There follow three editions of the *Regola C.PP.S. semplificata (1847–1856)*, pp. 131–148; 149–157; 158–168. Merlini wanted the “Simplified Rule” in order to spread the Congregation

more easily abroad. Some articles were taken from the text of the *Rule* and placed in the *Praxis*: cf. *ibid.*, p. 131. The *Rule* with *Praxis* edited by Merlini is cited *ibid.*, pp. 170–227. There follows the *Praxis Americana* with its history covering the years 1848–1858–1868. *La Regola CPPS con la Prassi stampata nel 1881*, edited by Director General Don Enrico Rizzoli is found *ibid.*, pp. 273–346. This is the text followed by the Congregation until 1947.

³⁶Cf. Gaspar Del Bufalo, *Regolamenti*, o.c., I: *Delucidazioni delle Regole dalle Circolari del 1825–1826–1827*, pp. 154–162.

³⁷*Ibid.*, *Delucidazioni sulla Regola*, 163–172. Cf. note 1, 163.

³⁸*Ibid.*, *Delucidazioni e ricordi pratici sulla regola*, 173–201, cf. note 1, 173.

³⁹*Ibid.*, *Avvertimenti inviati con la lettera per gli esercizi spirituali di regola nel novembre dell'anno 1835*, pp. 212–213.

⁴⁰We make this reference to Canon Law [*Editor's note*: The references are to the 1917 Code, not the Code of 1983.] because one copy of the *Regola cum Praxi of 1881*, in our hands is annotated with references of canons in the articles that require it. Article 1, after the words “...actiones, vitamque universam ex sacrorum Canonum,” there is the reference to Can 673 and then continues “praescripto componant. . .” This booklet is a type of “*Massima aeterna*” or the *vademecum* that our ancient missionaries composed for practical use. It contains: the *Regola cum Praxi* of 1881, with the decree of approval, the “*Monita Salutaria*” and aphorisms analogous to the study of the holy virtue of humility, the “*index rerum Regulae*.”

⁴¹*Perf. Caritatis*, p. 15.

⁴²*Schiarimenti*. . . C.PP.S. general archives, G II, 1, n. 6.

⁴³*Historical Report for the updating of the Constitutions of*

the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood, Rome 1968, p. 9.

⁴⁴cf. *Perf. Caritatis*, 15.

⁴⁵*Primo Congresso tenuta nella Pia Casa di Pievetorina il dì 7 giugno 1820 'The First Meeting Held in the Religious House of Pievetorina June 7, 1820.'* C.PP.S. general archives G V, "Institute, 1808, 1813–1841," Box 125.

Gaspar del Bufalo, *Circular Letter of 1825*.

Congressi S. Felice di Giano 'House Meetings of San Felice di Giano,' C.PP.S. general archives.

Congressi della Casa di Missione e degli Esercizi Spirituali di Albano dall'inizio alla visita di Regola eseguita in agosto 1825 'House Meetings of the Mission House and of the Spiritual Exercises of Albano from the beginnings until the mandated visitation held in August 1825.' C.PP.S. general archives.

Libro dei Congressi di S. Salvatore in Campo 'Book of the Meetings of San Salvatore in Campo.' C.PP.S. general archives.

Libro dei Congressi di S. Maria in Trivio 'Book of the Meetings of Santa Maria in Trivio' and *Cartella Congressi della casa di Roma, S. Maria in Trivio 'Folder of the Meetings of the house of Rome, Santa Maria in Trivio.'* C.PP.S. General Archives.

Storia della Congregazione del Preziosissimo Sangue specialmente della prima casa di S. Felice di Giano, fino al 1832, scritta dal servo di Dio Giovanni Merlini 'The History of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood, especially of the first house of San Felice di Giano, until 1832, written by the servant of God Giovanni Merlini.' C.PP.S. General Archives.

Gaspar del Bufalo, *Circular Letters*. English translation, 1986, by Fr. Raymond Cera, C.PP.S. [*Editor's note*: This is an English translation of the circular letters Gaspar wrote on the occasion of the annual retreat. There are also other circular letters, some of which are referenced in this article but which are not available in English translation.]

Gaspar del Bufalo, *Letters*. English translation by Fr. Raymond Cera.

Antonio Velardi, *Per la Saldezza e l'incremento della nostra Congregazione 'For the Strength and Growth of our*

Congregation, Tipografia Fratelli Pallotta, Roma, 1921.

Giuseppe Quattrino, *Lettere circolari per gli Esercizi Spirituali*, 'Circular Letters for the Spiritual Exercises,' in *Vita Nostra*. Internal bulletin of the Italian Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Official for the Acts of the Province, 1950–1966.

It seems opportune to us to quote one who loved St. Gaspar, Merlini and the Congregation. His writings during his 24 years in government of the Italian province have the flavor, clarity and love of the very writings of our saints.

⁴⁶*Direttorio per i giovani Convittori addetti alla Congregazione della Missione del Prez. mo Sangue* 'Directory for the Young Students of the Mission of the Precious Blood,' Chap. I, *Entry Requirements*, C.PP.S. Gen. Archives, G VII 30.

⁴⁷G. Quattrino, *La Congregazione dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue compie centocinquant'anni (1815–1965)* 'The Congregation of Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood Celebrates One Hundred Fifty Years (1815-1965)' in *Il Sangue Prezioso della nostra redenzione*, special number, n. 3, July–September 1965, pp. 10–11.

⁴⁸G. Merlini, op.cit. p. 46.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 47.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 50.

⁵¹cf. ibid.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 51–52. The emphases are ours.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 57–58. The emphases are ours.

⁵⁴*First Congressus of Pievetorina (Primo Congresso di Pievetorina)*, C.PP.S. Archives, G V, volume: Institute 1808, 1813–1841, pp. 85–88.

⁵⁵Gaspar Del Bufalo, *Circular Letter of 1825*, C.PP.S. Gen. Archives, volume: Institute 1808, 1813–1841, pp.

282–283. We found this letter re-written, as ordered, in the *Libro dei Congressi della Casa di Albano*, in the minutes of August 6, 1825, in the C.PP.S. Gen. Archives. [Editor's note: This letter may be found in Conti, B. (editor), *Regolamenti: La Congregazione dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue (1815–1837)*. Rome: 1998. Apparently Gaspar had some of his circular letters transcribed into the books of the minutes of the house meetings so that they could be read from time to time during those meetings.]

⁵⁶Gaspar Del Bufalo, *Circular letters 1*.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, *Letter 4*.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, *Letter 8*.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, *Letter 11*.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, *Letter 1*, “Admonitions” (*Monita*).

⁶¹*Libro dei Congressi di S. Maria in Trivio*, cited. *Congresso di visita 25 maggio 1875 ‘Meeting for the Visitation May 25, 1875.’*

⁶²*Ibid.*, *Congresso di visita 30 gennaio 1882 ‘Meeting for the visitation of January 30, 1882.’*

⁶³Gaspar del Bufalo, *Letter 1726*.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, *Letter 1771*. All the letters to Betti have this tone. Cf. also *Letter 1772*, where there are also norms for a fruitful dialog.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, *Letter 2113*.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, *Letter 2191*.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, *Letter 1878*.

⁶⁸Fr. G. Quattrino, *Circolare n. 48. Decennale della canonizzazione di San Gaspare ‘Tenth Anniversary of the*

Canonization of St. Gaspar, in *Vita Nostra*, n. 8, August 1967. The emphases are ours.

⁶⁹*Ibid.* *Circular* n. 36: “*La Concordia*” ‘Concord’ or ‘Agreement’ in *Vita Nostra*, n. 8, August 1959, pp 1–4, 5.

⁷⁰*Avvisi Spirituali per I Missionari dell’Arciconfraternita del Prez.mo Sangue del N.S.G.C.* ‘*Spiritual Instructions for the Missionaries of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood of O.L.J.C.*’ in C.P.P.S. Gen. Archives G.V, volume: Institute 1808, 1813–1841. fol. 84. These instructions were printed in 1820, before June 7, date of the 1st Congressus in Pievetorina which wrote up the “Clarifications on the Instructions.” This is attested to by Merlini in Proc. Alb. vol. V, fol. 2285.

⁷¹Gaspar Del Bufalo, *Metodo per i Santi Spirituali Esercizi di Regola per le nostre comunità* ‘*Method for the Holy Retreats Prescribed for Our Communities,*’ Fratelli Pallotta Printers, Rome 1892.

⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁷³*Ibid.*, *Circular Letter 1.*

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, *Circular Letter 4.*

⁷⁵*Circular Letter 9.*

⁷⁶St. Gaspar del Bufalo, *Circular Letter of 1825.* The text cited is n. 7 of this important circular letter which was used, as already noted, in the writing of the *Rule.*, op. cit.

⁷⁷*Libro dei Congressi di S. Maria in Trivio*, already cited.

⁷⁸Gaspar del Bufalo, *Letter 2386.*

⁷⁹Gaspar del Bufalo, *Letter 1576.*

⁸⁰Gaspar del Bufalo, *Letter 3229.*

⁸¹Idem. *Circular letter* n. 25, “La preghiera” ‘Prayer,’ in *Vita Nostra*, n. 8, August 1953.

⁸²Idem. *Circular Letter*, n. 30, “La povertà” ‘Poverty,’ in *Vita Nostra*, n. 8 August 1956.

⁸³cf. *Ibid.*

⁸⁴Idem. *Circular Letter*, n. 31, “L’obbedienza” ‘Obedience’ in *Vita Nostra*, n. 8, August 1957.

⁸⁵*Congressus San Felice di Giano*, C.PP.S. Gen. Archives, p. 3.

⁸⁶*Book of Congressus of S. Salvatore in Campo*, C.PP.S. Gen. Archives, file *Domus Primaria S. Salvatore in Campo*, Rome, Congressus July 5, 1848.

⁸⁷cf. *Congressi of San Felice in Giano*.

⁸⁸*Congressi San Felice di Giano*, p. 160.

⁸⁹*Primo Congresso tenuto nella Pia Casa di Pievetorina il 7 giugno 1820* ‘*First Congressus held in the Religious House of Pievetorina June 7, 1820*,’ Gen. Archives G. V, vol. Istituto 1808, 1813–1841, fol. 85–88.

⁹⁰Gaspar del Bufalo, *Letter 2954*.

⁹¹Antonio Velardi, *Per la saldezza e l’incremento della nostra Congregazione*, F.lli Pallotta Printers, Rome 1921. The author was general secretary when he composed the little volume. Later he was general director. The second part is divided into three chapters which treat: the seminary, the lay brothers, general ordering of the Institute. In this last topic he speaks of “foundations,” of the “constitution inside the houses” (culture, action, union) and “relationships and criteria of general government” (union among houses, alternations from one community to another; the general director as irradiation of unity, life strength). It is a testimony of affection to the

Congregation, a summary of what is essential in it and also a proposal for its future.

⁹²Ibid., pp. 172–176.

⁹³Ibid., He cites here the words of *Praxis* of art. 54: “*Pacem, concordiam, caritatem inter socios fovebit*” ‘It will sustain (or encourage) peace, harmony, and charity among the members.’

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 173–174.

⁹⁷Ibid., pp. 174–175.

⁹⁸cf. Ibid., p. 175.

⁹⁹cf. Ibid., pp. 175–176.

¹⁰⁰Amilcare Rey, C.P.P.S., *Nel primo centenario del Decretum di S.S. Gregorio XVI per la Regola C.P.P.S. (17 dic. 1841.17 dic. 1941). Appunti apologetici ‘On the First Centenary of the Decree of Pope Gregory XVI for the C.P.P.S. Rule (December 17, 1841–December 17, 1941).’* Rome, Piazza dei Crociferi 49, Dec. 29, 1940. January 13, 1941. Typewritten work in the C.P.P.S. Gen. Archives.

These topics, enunciated thus are already a proof of what truly has always been thought of the Congregation. The documents adopted are the ones known. The tone of the work is apologetic, as said in the subtitle.

Evaldo Biasini, C.P.P.S.

¹*Letter 118.*

²*Letter 119.*

³*Proc. Ord. Alb.*, vol. II, p. 919 b. [*Editor's note:* The author quotes from the Italian text of the depositions given for the process of the beatification of Gaspar, *Processo Ordinario di Albano per la beatificazione e canonizzazione del Servo di Dio Gaspare Del Bufalo* (hereafter cited as: *Proc. Ord. Alb.*). Merlini's deposition is contained in parts of volumes II, III, and V. Fr. Beniamino Conti, C.PP.S., has published the relevant sections in the Italian work, *Gaspar Del Bufalo: Un santo scruta un santo* (Roma-Albano: Pia Unione Prez.mo Sangue, 1984). An English translation of most of the work was made by Fr. Raymond Cera, C.PP.S., and is currently available only in digital form, entitled *A Saint Scrutinizes a Saint*. We have kept the original references here since they can be found in the Italian edition by Conti noted above. Unfortunately there is no cross reference to the English translation at the present time.]

⁴Op. cit., vol. V, p. 2234 b.

⁵Letter 79.

⁶Letter 2499.

⁷Letter 102.

⁸*Proc. Ord. Alb.*, vol. V, p. 2234 b.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹*Proc. Ord. Alb.*, vol. II, p. 944 b.

¹²Op. cit., vol. V, p. 2273.

¹³Op. cit., vol. V, pp. 2273–2274.

¹⁴Op. cit., vol. II, p. 944 b.

¹⁵Op. cit., vol. II, p. 940.

¹⁶Op. cit., vol. II, p. 941.

¹⁷*Letter 356*, note.

¹⁸*Proc. Ord. Alb.*, vol. II, p. 941.

¹⁹*Letter 1828*.

²⁰*Letter 1898*, note.

²¹Conti, Beniamino, ed., *Regolamenti: La Congregazione dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue* (1815–1837), vol. I, (Rome, 1998), pp. 200–201.

²²*Circular Letter for the Spiritual Exercises*, 1826.

²³*Proc. Ord. Alb.*, vol. II, p. 946.

²⁴Conti, op. cit., p. 405, footnote 1.

²⁵*Proc. Ord. Alb.*, vol. II, p. 946.

²⁶Cfr. *Decretum* of the *Rule* approved in 1841.

²⁷*Proc. Ord. Alb.*, vol. II, p. 946.

²⁸*Lettere di San Gaspare del Bufalo*, vol. II, part 1, (Rome 1970), pp. 117–118, note.

²⁹*Il Sangue della Redenzione*, LXI, n. 2 (1975) p. 79.

Emanuele Lupi, C.PP.S.

¹Conti, *Regolamenti*, vol. I, p. 61.

²*Dizionario delle idee*, Florence 1977, p. 516.

³Bianca Magnino, *Illuminismo e Cristianesimo, vol. II, Francia*, Brescia 1960, p. 85.

⁴Ibid., *Illuminismo e Cristianesimo, vol. I, Inghilterra*, Brescia 1960, p. 58.

⁵Pietro Chiochetta, *Il secolo XVIII nella luce della prospettiva missionaria*, in *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum, 1622–1972, vol. II, 1700–1815*, edited and studied by J. Metzler edita, Rom–Freiburg–Vienna, p. 17.

⁶Philippe Boutry, *La Roma napoleonica fra tradizione e modernità (1809–14)*, in *Storia d'Italia, Annali 16, Roma la città del papa*, edited by Luigi Fiorani and Adriano Prosperi, Turin 2000, p. 938.

⁷Pietro Chiochetta, *Il secolo XVIII nella luce della prospettiva missionaria*, in *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum, 1622–1972, vol. II, 1700–1815*, edited and studied by J. Metzler edita, Rome–Freiburg–Vienna, p. 19.

⁸Giuseppe Antonio Sala, *Piano di Riforma umiliato a Pio VII ora per la prima volta integralmente pubblicato dal nipote di lui Giuseppe Cugnoli*, Tolentino 1907, p. 16.

⁹Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 17.

¹¹Ibid., p. 234.

¹²Luigi Borriello, Giovanna Della Croce, Bruno Secondin, *La spiritualità cristiana nell'età contemporanea*, in *Storia della Spiritualità*, Rome 1985, p. 16.

¹³Pius VII, *Allocutio Ad supremum*, 28 marzo 1800, in *Bullarii Romani Continuatio*, edited by Andrea Barbieri and Alessandro Spezia, 19 voll., Rome 1835–58, vol. XI, p. 1.

¹⁴Roger Aubert, *La Chiesa cattolica e la Rivoluzione*, in Roger Auber, Johannes Beckmann, Rudolf Lill, *Tra*

Rivoluzione e Restaurazione (1775–1830), in Hubert Jedin, *Storia della Chiesa*, Italian ed. by Elio Guerriero, Milan 1993, p. 59.

¹⁵Stuart J. Woolf, *Napoleone e la conquista dell'Europa*, Bari–Rome 1990, p. 261.

¹⁶Giacomo Martina, *Storia della Chiesa da Lutero ai nostri giorni*, vol. III: *L'età del liberalismo*, Brescia 1998, p. 102.

¹⁷*Du rétablissement des ordres religieux sous le pontificat de Pio VII*, in *Analecta Iuris Pontificii*, Rome 1855–1891, 1 (1855) 931.

¹⁸*Collectanea in usum Secretariae S.C. Episcoporum et Regularium*, edited by Andrea Bizzarri, Rome 1885, p. 42.

¹⁹Personal translation from the Latin text in *Bizzarri*, p. 44.

²⁰*Bullarii Romani Continuatio* edited by Andrea Barbieri and Alessandro Spezia, 19 voll., Roma 1835–58, vol. XIII, p. 323.

²¹Giovanni Velocci, *Crisi e rinascita della spiritualità, dal sette all'ottocento*, Rome 1982, p. 38.

²²Evangelista Vilanova, *Storia della Teologia cristiana*, vol. III: *Secoli XVIII, Nineteenth, XX*, Rome 1995, p. 375.

²³Angelica Del Pezzo, Francesco Repetto, *Frassinetti Paola*, in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, IV, 588 ss.

²⁴Pietro Zovatto, *Dalla spiritualità del Settecento ai nostri giorni*, in *Storia della spiritualità italiana*, edited by Pietro Zovatto, Rome 2002, p. 491.

²⁵*Ibid.*, *Dalla spiritualità del Settecento. . .*, p. 483.

²⁶Evangelista Vilanova, *Storia della Teologia cristiana*, vol. III: *Secoli XVIII, Nineteenth, XX*, Rome 1995, p. 375.

²⁷Federico Guglielmo Faber, *Il Prezioso Sangue*, Turin 1950, p. 300.

²⁸Typewritten copy, *ArchGenCPPS* G V, 1/1 n .3, p. 10 e ss. Original *ArchGenCPPS* G VII, 9, n. 1.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 11 e ss.

³⁰Conti, *Regolamenti*, vol. I, p. 72.

³¹Conti, *Epistolario*, vol. IX, p. 76.

³²Conti, *Regolamenti*, vol. I, p. 62.

³³Conti, *Regolamenti*, vol. I, p. 61.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 63.

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 361.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 376.

³⁷Conti, *Regolamenti*, vol. I, p. 376.

³⁸*Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 385.

³⁹The letter is in *ArchGenCPPS*, *Ministerio*, Part I, 1801–1826, f. 255; but it is also typewritten and kept in *ArchGenCPPS*, G V, 4, *Storia singulorum Sodalium* (Rey), box 1, binder W IV, ff. LVIII–LXII.

⁴⁰Letter of July 30, 1836, in *ArchGenCPPS*, *Ministerio*, Parte I, 1801–1826, f. 664.

⁴¹Battista Mondin, *Dizionario enciclopedico di Papi, storia e insegnamenti*, Città Nuova 1995, pp. 445–451.

⁴²Mario Brotini, *Inizio ed evoluzione giuridica della Congregazione dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue*, *Dissertatio ad Doctoratum in Facultate Iuris Canonici*

Pontificiae Universitatis Gregoriana, Rome 2001, p. 124.

⁴³*Congresso della Direzione Generale del 24–28 settembre 1932*, in *ArchGenCPPS, Congressi della Curia Generalizia, Book III*, G III, 2 Acta Congressus Curiae Generalis, box 1 1838–1947, ff. 129–130.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, ff. 130–132.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, f. 133.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, ff 134–135.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, f. 158.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, f. 162.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, *Provincia Americana, Marling* 1938–1947.

⁵⁰*Verbale del Congresso del 10 novembre 1937*, in *ArchGenCPPS, IV libro dei Congressi della Direzione Generale (19 settembre 1935–24 settembre 1947)* G III, 2, box 1, ff.127–131.

⁵¹This is a continuation of the letter written by Fr. Marling quoted in note 49.

⁵²*Verbale del Congresso del 22 marzo 1946*, in *ArchGenCPPS, IV libro dei Congressi della Direzione Generale (19 settembre 1935–24 settembre 1947)* G III, 2, box 1, ff. 169.

⁵³*Ibid.*, f. 171.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, f. 179.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, G II, 1 *Constitutiones 1947–1964*, box 7.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, G II, 1 *Constitutiones 1968*, box, 9, *Indirizzo del Moderatore Generale ai mebrì della Commissione interprovinciale durante la messa*, p. 73.

⁵⁷Ibid., G II, 1 *Constitutiones 1966–1968*, box 8.

⁵⁸*ArchGenCPPS*, G II, 1 *Constitutiones 1968*, box 9, *Indirizzo del Moderatore Generale ai membri della Commissione interprovinciale durante la messa*, p. 74.

⁵⁹*ArchGenCPPS*, G II, 1 *Constitutiones, Textus Normativi 1969*, box 12.

⁶⁰Ibid., G II, 5, *Acta Assemblee Generali XIII–1983*, box 4, p. 62.

Beniamino Conti, C.PP.S.

¹Cf. Gaspar Del Bufalo, *Regolamenti. La Congregazione dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue* (1838–1873), II, Roma 1999, 281. Hereafter cited as *Regolamenti*, volume and page.

²Cf. L. Contegiacomo (editor), *Lettere di S. Gaspare del Bufalo II/I*, Roma 1970, 202–203.

³M. A. De Angelis, “Fiorir sul caro viso veggo la rosa.” *La Madonna del Preziosissimo Sangue di Pompeo Batoni*, Roma 1984. Hereafter cited as De Angelis, op. cit., and page number.

⁴G. Merlini, Gaspare Del Bufalo, *Un santo scruta un santo*, Roma–Albano Laziale, 1984, p. 46.

⁵Ibid., p. 365.

⁶De Angelis, op. cit., p. 5.

⁷*Epistolario*, III, letter del 20 luglio 1825, letter 1207.

⁸*Epistolario*, I, p. 495, letter 362.

⁹Cf. B. Valentini, *Gaspare Del Bufalo quasi un oracolo divino*, Rome, 1990, 105; 119; 124; 129. Cf. also A. Santelli, *Vita del Canonico Don Gaspare Del Bufalo, Missionario Apostolico*, Roma, 1992, 261; 282.

¹⁰*Epistolario*, I, p. 499, letter 366.

¹¹Cf. Santelli, op. cit., 457–458.

¹²*Epistolario*, I, 455, letter 326.

¹³The italics are St. Gaspar's.

¹⁴*Epistolario*, I, 469, letter 340.

¹⁵Cf. *Epistolario*, XI, 59–60, letter 3985.

¹⁶Cf. Santelli, op. cit, 414.

¹⁷*Epistolario*, III, 456, letter 1271.

¹⁸Cf. *Primavera Missionaria*, n. 4–8 April 2002.

¹⁹Cf. De Angelis, op. cit, 4.

²⁰Cf. *Ibid.*, 3.

²¹Cf. *Ibid.*, 12–13; 20–21.

²²*Epistolario*, VIII, 114, letter 3159.

²³*Ibid.*, 354.

²⁴Cf. *Regolamenti*, II, 174. The *Praxis*, according to the deposition of Merlini, even though written by him, was dictated by St. Gaspar (cf. *Ibid.*, 168–169).

²⁵V. Pallotti, *Gaspare Del Bufalo come l'ho conosciuto*, Roma 1989, 27–28.

²⁶Cf. De Angelis, op. cit., 12–13. Cf. also the study of W. Wermter, *La Madonna in S. Gaspare Del Bufalo*, Roma 1988, 42–46, especially page 45.

²⁷The complete title of the work is: *Il mese santificato con devote considerazioni ed affetti sopra il Sangue Preziosissimo*

di Gesù Cristo per infiammare i cuori dei fedeli all'Amore del Nostro Divin Redentore Crocifisso, published for the first time in 1820 without the author's name. Later, after the death of Bishop Vincent Mary Strambi (1745–1824), a Passionist, it was always published with his name. The true authors, however, were Strambi and Bonanni (cf. B. Conti, "Il mese del Preziosissimo Sangue," in A.M. Tiracca, ed., *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo nella Liturgia e nella pietà popolare*, II, Roma 1989, 291–292).

²⁸Gaspar del Bufalo, *Scritti spirituali*, I, Roma 1995, 503: This selection, copied by Missionary D. Pietro Torsani, is found among many outlines for preaching sent to him by St. Gaspar (cf. *Ibid.*, 491–506). Thus in my editing of this volume of the *Scritti spirituali* I considered the selection to be erroneously attributed to St. Gaspar, since it is a quotation which belongs to the meditation of the seventh day of the book, *Il mese santificato* of Strambi-Bonanni.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 190.

³⁰*Epistolario*, III, 398, Letter 1214.

³¹Denzinger-Schonmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (1965), 2803.

Robert Schreiter, C.PP.S.

¹Dario Caal, C.PP.S., "Qaloq'Lajna'aj Uk'Tesinel: Our Lady of the Precious Blood," *The Cup of the New Covenant*, no. 2, April, 1997, 10–11.

²See for example, Antonio Paquea Márquez, "Maria, Mujer de la Nueva Alianza: La Misericordia tiene rostro materno," *IV Cuartas Jornadas de Espiritualidad de la Preciosa Sangre* (Cáceres, 1999), 90–98; Robert Schreiter, "Mary, Woman of the New Covenant," *Newman Review* 3(2002); Angelita Myerscough, "Woman of the New Covenant," *The Cup of the New Covenant*, no. 14, 2002, 4–6.

³Robert Schreiter, "Covenant: Making Connections," *The Wine Cellar*, no. 5 (February, 1996), 5–12; "Spirituality of the Covenant," *Acta of the XVII General Assembly, C.P.P.S.* (Carthage: The Messenger Press, 2002), 136–151.

