

**"AT THE HEART OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE"**  
**THE CHARISM OF GASPAR DEL BUFALO**  
**AS THE BASIS FOR A LAY SPIRITUALITY**

By

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i>
AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i>
AG	<i>Ad Gentes Divinitus</i>
ASC	<i>Adorers of the Blood of Christ</i>
CA	<i>Centesimus Annus</i>
CL	<i>Christifideles Laici</i>
CICR	<i>Communio: International Catholic Review</i>
CPPS	<i>Congregation of Missionaries (Society) of the Most Precious Blood</i>
CT	<i>Catechesi Tradendae</i>
DM	<i>Dives in Misericordia</i>
DV	<i>Dominum et Vivificantem</i>
EN	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>
Ep	<i>Epistolario del Fondatore</i>
EPUPS	<i>Edizioni Pia Unione Preziosissimo Sangue</i>
FC	<i>Familiaris Consortio</i>
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
LE	<i>Laborem Exercens</i>
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
MD	<i>Mulieris Dignitatem</i>
RH	<i>Redemptoris Hominis</i>
RM	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i>
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i>

<i>SD</i>	<i>Salvifici Doloris</i>
<i>SRS</i>	<i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i>
<i>SF</i>	<i>Scritti del Fondatore</i>
<i>SR</i>	<i>Il Sangue della Redenzione</i>
<i>USC</i>	<i>Union of the Blood of Christ</i>



# INTRODUCTION

This thesis continues and expands one undertaken at the licentiate level at Regis College, Toronto, in 1989. In addition to developing some themes treated there only minimally, this doctoral dissertation represents a general reorientation of the topic. Whereas the previous thesis dealt primarily with the personal spirituality of Gaspar Del Bufalo, the present work strives to show how a form of Christian spirituality that may be termed "gasparian" can have relevance to anyone who looks to Gaspar's figure as a model of life in Christ.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This figure needs little introduction. A native of Rome born on January 6, 1786, Gaspar demonstrated from childhood a strong attraction for the spiritual life and the priestly state. He received his entire education at the Roman College and was ordained to the priesthood on July 31, 1808, having been appointed canon of the Roman Basilica of St. Mark. During the time of his priestly training, Gaspar already distinguished himself as an orator, catechist and zealous worker on behalf of the poor and infirm. Such activities characterized his early ministry as well, although a special interest in the ministry of the word was always evident.

The presence of French officials in Rome since 1798 had a direct effect on the clergy of the city when in 1810 some of their number were required to take an oath of fidelity to the emperor Napoleon. Gaspar's sense of loyalty to the pope would not permit such an oath which he adamantly refused to swear on several occasions. This defiance led to his eventual arrest and exile from the Papal States to northern Italy where he was to spend four years in a number of places under conditions of varying severity and limitation of freedom. This period, in addition to being a time of painful separation from home and family, was a formative one in which Gaspar matured spiritually and, with the counsel of his spiritual director Francis Albertini, he consolidated plans for his future ministry.

Returning to Rome after its liberation in 1814, Gaspar was appointed "apostolic missionary" by Pope Pius VII and charged with the task of reforming faith and morals in the Papal States through preaching popular missions and retreats. With this end in view, Gaspar and a few companions founded a society of secular priests on August 15, 1815: the Congregation of Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood (CPPS). Living in community

The reasons for this reorientation are several: not the least of which is the large number of studies already available which outline the contours of Gaspar's personal charism and spirituality, showing how these have been transmitted to the congregation he founded.<sup>2</sup> A broader treatment of this way of Christian life is, however, lacking: a study showing how, in the words of John Paul II, the spirituality of Gaspar Del Bufalo lies "at the heart of the Christian life."<sup>3</sup>

This lacuna in the literature is due, in my opinion, to a limited view of the gasparian charism. Obviously, the historical figure who first embodied a particular way of Christian life, a life whose origin lies in a distinct charismatic endowment of the Church, plays an intrinsic part in the delimitation of that charism's content. Yet, while never entirely prescinding from the person considered to represent a given spirituality prototypically, one

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without vows, this society was to have no other bond but charity and the common purpose of propagating devotion to the blood of Christ through the extraordinary exercise of the ministry of the word.

The remainder of the founder's life was spent establishing mission houses, or apostolic centers, throughout the papal domain; coordinating and participating in the vast preaching effort undertaken in this region by his fledgling institute; dealing successfully with the social problem of brigandage afflicting the area following the napoleonic occupation; and working indefatigably to establish his new institute on a secure footing. He died at Rome on December 28, 1837 and was canonized by Pope Pius XII on June 12, 1954. See Bibliography, "D. Biographical and Historical Resources".

<sup>2</sup>See the Bibliography, under the headings "B. Primary Sources" and "E. Secondary Gasparian Sources." Much of the available literature on Gaspar is expressly historical in nature with relatively little beyond "philological" studies based on the primary sources: indispensable research without which nothing further could be asserted with any certainty about the figure in question.

<sup>3</sup>This assertion of the Bishop of Rome can be seen as the fundamental argument of the thesis, whose principal task is the proof and defense of the statement's validity. The phrase was used by the pope at his General Audience of October 22, 1986 while addressing members of the CPPS on the occasion of the bicentennial of the birth of St. Gaspar Del Bufalo. It is cited in Achille Triacca, ed., *Il Mistero del Sangue di Cristo e l'esperienza cristiana*, vol. I, Collana "Sangue e Vita" 1 (Rome: EPUPS, 1987), 5.

may still "abstract" from the paradigm what is of wider and enduring significance. Hence, the historical material adduced throughout this thesis in favor of a "gasparian" spirituality is presented with a view toward the general applicability of what the progenitor of this way lived in his own socio-historical context. Such an approach requires, therefore, a fundamental distinction between "Gaspar" and "gasparian".<sup>4</sup>

So by extrapolating from the historical figure of Gaspar what transcends his immediate context one can determine the value of his charism and spirituality for others. This thesis represents an attempt to interpret Gaspar and the source material emanating from him for the purpose of forging a "gasparian" spirituality. Our study seeks then to make the "Gaspar of history" more legible by extracting from his figure a transhistorical significance for the universal Church: something implied by canonization itself. By highlighting in a contemporary theological idiom the relevance of a gasparian form of Christian life for the widest possible constituency, the thesis hopes to broaden the scope of gasparian studies.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>This distinction basically entails the difference between the charism and spirituality embodied in the founder personally, and the continuing presence in the Church of a charism and corresponding spirituality which transcends the founder as such: one which can be shared in by Christians in other states of life, and not only by members of Gaspar's institute. This more extensive view of the "gasparian" charism and spirituality demands as full a consideration as possible of their distinctive features. Such an approach, for instance, necessarily includes the influence and contribution of those who played decisive roles in the reception and evolution of the charism, above all Francis Albertini, founder of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood and Bl. Maria De Mattias, founder of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ (ASC). So from the perspective of the thesis, the gasparian charism is not viewed as a legacy bequeathed solely to Gaspar's direct descendants in the CPPS, or to his "collateral" descendants in the ASC, but as an inheritance destined for a much larger family which can rightfully claim a share in his inheritance.

<sup>5</sup>This hermeneutical approach is comparable to the move in scripture studies from textual criticism to exegesis, and later to the construction of a biblical and eventually systematic theology. Just as an authentic christology, for instance, can only be based on sound biblical theology, which in turn relies on exegetical affirmations derived from critical studies of the text, so this attempted construction of a gasparian spirituality requires an interpretation of Gaspar's *Sitz im Leben* based on the available studies of the textual sources.

In addition to this theological reason for reorienting the thesis, the present work is motivated by an urgency I feel to help ensure a permanent place in the life of the Church for the gasparian charism. This urgency has a negative aspect insofar as it is spurred by declining membership in the charism's priestly and religious forms. More positively, lies my conviction that furthering Gaspar's vision of the Christian life would constitute an enrichment of the Church, specifically for those in the lay state.

As the thesis hopefully demonstrates, a gasparian way of life can endow the laity with a powerful stimulus for the renewed sense of dignity and responsibility called for by the Second Vatican Council and throughout the postconciliar period. In arguing for the legitimacy of the lay members of Christ's faithful approaching the figure of Gaspar to find there a spirituality appropriate to their ecclesial state, the thesis serves as a specific response to the *Message* of the XV<sup>th</sup> General Assembly CPPS which reminded members of the CPPS that

. . . it is not just our own sense of mission that guides our vision. Rather we are acutely aware that we are part of God's people who are called to be missionaries, because everyone who has been baptized is called to proclaim the Word of God. Through our baptismal call and our incorporation into the CPPS, we have a responsibility both to participate with them and to prepare them for this role. We want to form them not just to have roles within the church community, but also to shape their lives so that they can have a sense of their social responsibility and have the skills to engage themselves in fostering Christian values in social, political and economic affairs. In all our efforts we try to be conscious that individualism and clericalism can hinder our best efforts.

Attuned to the fact that evangelization leads to the formation of community, we want to form not just individuals but groups in order to transform the world into the place where God's kingdom can be realized. We want to give attention to basic christian communities, to movements approved by ecclesiastical authorities, and to groups of lay people that wish to deepen their spirituality of the Precious Blood in the tradition of the *Unio Sanguis Christi*. In these efforts we look to our heritage of the spirituality of the Precious Blood so that its driving force can motivate such groups to witness to the Gospel in their spheres of life. In turn we are touched by

their dedication as missionaries, and we ourselves are evangelized and so share in the fruit of their work.<sup>6</sup>

With these words as a point of reference, the thesis seeks then to establish in a systematic fashion the resources made available to the Church today by the ongoing presence of the gasparian charism in the Christian community. The dissertation's focus on the charism as the basis for a lay spirituality represents a specific way of contributing to the lacuna in gasparian studies mentioned previously: one that is an essential part of the charism's historical evolution and essential to its vital presence in the Church and world today. As this work progresses, such a contribution will hopefully confirm the thesis that, in their diverse forms, the charism and spirituality bearing the name of Gaspar Del Bufalo lie "at the heart of the Christian life."<sup>7</sup>

#### Methodology of the Thesis

To achieve this end the following methodology is employed:

a) A reflection on canonized sanctity as a legitimate object of theological research completes this introduction with specific application to St. Gaspar Del Bufalo.

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<sup>6</sup>*A Message From the XVth General Assembly CPPS*, October 9-23, 1989, Rome. Published in *Vita Nostra*, internal publication of the Italian Province CPPS, no. 8 (settembre-ottobre 1989): 237-9.

<sup>7</sup>At this point, it is sufficient to indicate initially what the above-mentioned distinction between "Gaspar" and "gasparian" implies for the thesis topic. As described by David Knight in "A Practical Plan for Lay Spiritual Formation," *Studies in Formative Spirituality* IX, no. 1 (February 1988): 8, "[o]ne characteristic that distinguishes the 'charism of a founder' from just the 'charism to be a founder' is precisely a new insight into Gospel living which can be shared by the whole Church--thus, adapted to the laity. But the lay version of an order's spirituality must not tend to make the laity mini-religious." This will be a guiding principle throughout the thesis in its attempt to demonstrate the wider significance of the gasparian charism especially for those in the lay state. Cf. J.-M.R. Tillard, "*Le Dynamisme des Fondations*," in *Dossiers*, Canadian Religious Conference, May 10, 1982: 401-41.

Here and elsewhere throughout the thesis the thought of the Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988) serves as guide.<sup>8</sup>

b) Chapter 1 is foundational to the entire thesis, and consists of a review of the conciliar and postconciliar teaching of the magisterium on the subject of lay spirituality accompanied by a broad spectrum of theological reflection on the topic. This summary is framed around six themes, or elements, that together yield a comprehensive picture of what constitutes a contemporary lay spirituality; these elements are referred to throughout the thesis in order to verify gasparian spirituality as one appropriate to those in the lay state.

c) Chapter 2 presents an investigation into the major sources of gasparian spirituality, which are shown to be principally two: the example and teaching of Gaspar's spiritual director Mons. Francis Albertini, and the doctrine and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales. The purpose of this chapter is to determine how albertinian and salesian themes figure in a Christian spirituality that is properly termed "gasparian"; this is done by

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<sup>8</sup>My reasons for employing Balthasar as a chief theological resource include the following: his insistence on preserving the unity of theology and spirituality; his conviction that the experience of the saints has a properly theological meaning providing privileged access to the mystery of Christ; his emphasis on the "grace of personal mission" with its accompanying charisms given to each Christian for the benefit of the Church; his efforts to sustain the conciliar teaching on the universal call to holiness; his emphasis on contemplation in Christian life; his support for new secular/lay forms of ecclesial association; his thorough analysis of the interrelationship between state and gender in the life of the Church, and his centering of all theology in the paschal mystery.

An overview of Balthasar's contribution to theological science can be found in Hans Urs von Balthasar, "A Résumé of My Thought," *CICR* 15 (Winter 1988): 468-73; Elio Guerriero, *Hans Urs Von Balthasar* (Milan: Edizioni Paoline, 1991); Medard Kehl, "Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Portrait," in *The von Balthasar Reader*, Medard Kehl and Warner Löser, eds., trans. Robert Daly and Fred Lawrence (Edinburgh: T.& T. Clark, 1985); John Riches, "Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar I," *Theology* 75 (November 1972): 562-70; John Riches, "Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar II," *Theology* 75 (December 1972): 647-55; David Schindler, ed., *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press; Communio Books, 1991) and Angelo Scola, *Hans Urs von Balthasar: Uno Stile Teologico* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1991).

comparing significant texts of Albertini and de Sales with the *Writings of the Founder* in order to show concretely the influence of the former on the latter.<sup>9</sup>

d) Chapter 3 develops the ascetico-mystical significance of the blood of Christ as the heart of gasparian spirituality with particular attention to the founder's brief treatise on the subject, *In omnibus divites factis in Illo*. A translation, commentary and theological evaluation of this document is provided in order to situate its teaching within the mainstream of Catholic spiritual and mystical traditions.

e) Chapter 4 treats the implications of gasparian spirituality's focus on the blood of Christ for Christian mission, especially that of the lay faithful. Emphasis is given to the theological doctrine of the *tria munera Christi* as a framework for this discussion.

f) Chapter 5 seeks to situate the previously outlined elements of the gasparian charism within the full range of ecclesial expressions to which it has given rise in the Church. This diversity of expression is examined for its theological and spiritual significance especially in terms of the charism's differentiation according to state of life and gender.

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<sup>9</sup>Throughout the thesis preference is naturally given to primary gasparian sources, above all the *Scritti del Fondatore*[Writings of the Founder] as well as the source material from Albertini and Mattias. The complete extant *Writings* of St. Gaspar occupy twenty-three volumes of bound manuscript; they are located in the general archives of the Congregation of Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood, Rome. The *Writings* are distributed generally as follows: the founder's correspondence (vols. I-IX; XV-XIX); documents of a legislative character (vol. XII); his spiritual writings, sermons, homily and conference notes (vol. XIII); various notations in his own hand (vol. XIV) and scholastic writings (vols. XX-XXIII). The standard designation for citations from the *Writings* includes the volume number and folio pages of the manuscript, e.g. *SF* III, fol. 18-25. Where possible all references to the *Writings* are from published editions and in the case of material appearing in more than one place the most recent publication is normally cited in the notes.

As with other foreign-language references with the exception of magisterial documents, all translations of the *Writings* are those of the present author unless otherwise noted in the first footnote citation of the work in question.

g) The Conclusion summarizes the thesis findings by defining precisely what is meant by the "gasparian charism" in relation to a lay form of Christian spirituality, while being a charism of sufficient depth and scope as to lie "at the heart of the Christian life".

### A Theology of Canonized Sanctity

Before entering into the thesis proper, a preliminary word about the legitimacy of the figure and mission of a canonized saint serving as the subject of theological research is in order. The necessity for this is occasioned by the broader question of the relationship between theology and spirituality. A work such as this cannot proceed without some understanding of how a given individual in the Church whose holiness of life has been given official sanction can thereby constitute a focus of theological inquiry. Such an *apologia theologica* for the present thesis finds no better defender than Hans Urs von Balthasar.

Even a casual acquaintance with his writings reveals an approach to theology that disdains any attempt to divorce itself from the lived experience of Christian faith. In an early, seminal article Balthasar bemoans the cleavage between theological science and spirituality noting how "theology and spirituality have become, as it were, each a world of its own, with hardly any point of contact, and so the saints and spiritual writers are more and more ignored by theologians."<sup>10</sup> And while it is tempting to think the conciliar renewal of theology (a renewal in which Balthasar played no small role especially in the preconciliar efforts at the *resourcement* of Catholic theology) has remedied the situation, a recent author, quoting Balthasar, can still agree "[t]he principal peril besetting the contemporary Church. .

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<sup>10</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology I: The Word Made Flesh*, trans. A.V. Littledale (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 191.

.is the separation between `hierarchy and holiness, between speculative-academic theology and the theology of the saints.'"<sup>11</sup>

So while the contemporary explosion of interest in "spirituality" along with the appearance of new critical editions of the writings of spiritual and mystical authors, many of them canonized, might indicate the estrangement between scholar and saint is near an end, concern thus remains as to whether Balthasar's call for systematic theology to be nourished by the experience of the saints has yet been realized.

This experience of the Church's preeminent members has for Balthasar a properly theological meaning whose depths ought to be plumbed by those responsible for articulating the content of revelation: "For the saints are not given to us to admire for their heroic powers, but that we should be enlightened by them on the inner reality of Christ, both for our better understanding of the faith and for our living thereby in charity. . . .The life of the saints is theology in practice."<sup>12</sup>

Such a statement needs to be seen in the context of what is perhaps Balthasar's most original contribution: his construction of a theological aesthetics.<sup>13</sup> Here Balthasar

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<sup>11</sup>Claudia Lee, "The role of mysticism within the Church as conceived by Hans Urs von Balthasar," *CICR* 16 (Spring 1989): 126. Nor did Balthasar himself ever feel the problem was resolved; he continued to write on the matter until the end of his life as evidenced by his last statement devoted to the subject in "Theology and Holiness," *CICR* 14 (Winter 1987): 341-50.

<sup>12</sup>Balthasar, *Explorations I*, 204.

<sup>13</sup>Balthasar's *opus magnum* is contained in the multivolume trilogy published over the years 1961-1987 whose first part is titled *Herrlichkeit*, a theological aesthetic, the second *Theodramatik*, a theological dramatic theory, and *Theologik*, a theological logic. See the Bibliography, under the heading "G. Theological Literature" for the translations cited in the present thesis. For a good summary of Balthasar's aesthetics see Louis Dupré, "Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theology of Aesthetic Form," *Theological Studies* 49, no. 2 (1988): 299-318 and Michael Waldstein, "Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics," *CICR* 11 (Spring 1984): 13-27.

understands Christ to be the unsurpassable form of revelation--the irrepeatable and absolutely singular image of God--who can nevertheless be seen through secondary media that attest his one unique form. These media which point to Christ are features of the more comprehensive medium that is the Church, of which Mary is the model representative as the bearer of the Christ-form ("Christophorous"):

If the form presented by Christ can be grasped by analysis and synthesis . . . then that form must also be able to be grasped wherever it is imprinted on other men by Christ and his Spirit by virtue of the power of the same divine revelation. . . . To the extent that the Church is Marian, she is pure form which is immediately legible and comprehensible, and to the extent that a person becomes Marian (or 'Christophorous', which is the same), the Christian reality becomes just as simply legible and comprehensible in him.<sup>14</sup>

Thus Christ can be seen in those who witness his form in the world and who are his faithful images; as such, the saints present a unique opportunity for the theologian to view Christian truth from a particular perspective: living signs that provide privileged access to the mystery of Christ; their participated holiness represents a "constant repetition of the theological existence of the Lord in the life of his faithful... the context of a living and realized theology, in the sense of actual life poised between perdition and redemption, sinfulness and sanctity."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics. I: Seeing the Form*, Joseph Fessio and John Riches, eds., trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 562. Unfortunately, many of the translations employed here were either published before sensitivity to exclusive language arose, or worse, still persist in its use. Upon consultation with the thesis moderator, such translations have been left intact without attempting to correct them. The translations made by the present author, as well as the text of the thesis itself, endeavor to employ either gender neutral or inclusive phrasing as far as possible in standard English.

<sup>15</sup>Balthasar, *Explorations I*, 204. Cf. Antonio Sicari, "Theology and Holiness," in *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work*, 131: ". . .the Christ-Mary relation (speaking-listening), and thus the Christ-disciple, Christ-community, and Christ-hagiographer relation, is not only the extrinsic condition of revelation but also the 'content' of revelation,

Inseparable from the saints' witnessing the Christ-form by their holiness of life is their sharing in the mission of Christ who sends his disciples even as he is sent by the Father (cf. Jn. 20:21). Using categories drawn from the theater, Balthasar sees "the grace of personal mission" as being like a role to be played out on the stage of world history by the various *dramatis personae* in the great drama of redemption of which God is playwright, Christ the chief protagonist, and the Spirit the director.<sup>16</sup>

The action by which the human person in Christ exercises his or her mission through responsive obedience is supported by particular gifts of the Spirit; these *charismata* enable the individual to fulfill his or her task on behalf of the Church and world. For Balthasar the most authentic theology comes forth precisely from those endowed with spiritual gifts in whom "not the slightest separation is seen between theory and spirituality."<sup>17</sup>

As the principal "supporting cast" in the drama, the saints have allowed the charisms their full range, demonstrating how they are often bestowed in order to see and interpret the form of revelation as a whole or an essential part of it under a particular, perhaps up to now little noticed aspect. These commissions of charisms can be important as a kind of "inner form" of a great theology, which is given and poured out from the living revelation, the "form" here emphasizing the

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*a content into which each one should enter who wishes to treat of revelation as such.*"

<sup>16</sup>As a key concept in Balthasar's dramatic theory, mission is described by Ellero Babini, "Jesus Christ: Form and Norm of Man," in *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work*, 223, as what "empowers man for a conscious and significant exercise of his freedom and makes him enter into a living, existential co-involvement in the universal, dramatic event of which the protagonist is Christ, and the backdrop is heaven and earth, history and eternity." Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory. Vol. III: The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), esp. 149ff.

<sup>17</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Convergences: To the Source of the Christian Mystery*, trans. E.A. Nelson (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 23.

aesthetic side of a personal calling, as it breaks in from the self-revealing God through the Church to the heart and mind of the individual.<sup>18</sup>

Balthasar insists that saints whose charismatic mission achieved a properly theological purpose deserve special notice:

For the faithful, they are, above all, a new type of conformity to Christ inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore a new illustration of how the gospel is to be lived. For theologians, on the other hand, they are rather a new interpretation of revelation; they bring out the scarcely suspected treasures in the deposit of faith. Even when the saints have not been theologians, nor themselves very learned, their sheer existence proves to be a theological manifestation, which contains most fruitful and opportune doctrine, the directions of the Holy Spirit addressed to the whole Church and not to be neglected by any of her members.<sup>19</sup>

Thus it is the properly theological content of a saint's mission that interests the professional theologian. Even a saint who does not raise the general consciousness of the Church is still capable of serving as an object of theological inquiry. In this regard, Balthasar acknowledges the role of the founders of religious institutes who frequently call forth a more intense consideration of some aspect of the Christian mystery; their efforts and those of their followers bring to ever wider segments of the Church a heightened awareness of specific dimensions of Christian faith and life:

". . . This is true, above all, where the mission is not only that of a holy life but also of a doctrine, as with John of the Cross, Francis de Sales, and many of the founders of Orders. . . . In order to understand the souls of saints one must see them with the vision of God himself. . . . with the saints, as with all great masters, even their remotest visions may be traced back to a few decisive, original insights which serve

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<sup>18</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics. II: Studies in Theological Style: Clerical Styles*, ed. John Riches, trans. Andrew Louth, et. al. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1984), 28.

<sup>19</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Two Sisters in the Spirit: Thérèse of Lisieux & Elizabeth of the Trinity*, trans. Donald Nichols, Anne Elizabeth Englund, and Dennis Martin (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 25.

to integrate their souls in the way that first principles unify a science. Once they are grasped one has the key to the whole."<sup>20</sup>

The theological significance of a founder, whether one of exceptional or more modest influence, is therefore often worthy of particular consideration, resulting in what Balthasar, following M. M. Philipon above, calls a "theological hagiography". Such is the intention of this thesis as a properly theological endeavor: by complying with Balthasar's insistence that "between Christian thought and life (theology and spirituality) there exists such a unity that each of them can have a proper truth only through the other and together with it"<sup>21</sup> and by subscribing to Balthasar's association of the theological enterprise with the mission of those endowed with special charisms in the life and history of the Church. To conclude this introduction, however, it is necessary to examine more closely the figure of Gaspar, with the form of holiness and mission embodied by his charism, as a suitable object of theological reflection.

#### Application to St. Gaspar Del Bufalo

To see the figure of Gaspar Del Bufalo in light of Balthasar's theology of canonized sanctity, the major themes of that theology need to be discerned. These include the charism which shaped the founder's holiness, the mission to which the charism gave rise, and the theological content of the founder's charismatic mission. This indissoluble nexus of holiness-charism-mission would thus yield the substance of a "theological hagiography" developed around the figure of Gaspar, as well as the contours of a particular form of holiness of which the founder may be considered herald and paradigm.

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<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 37; quoting M.M. Philipon, *Sainte Thérèse of Lisieux, une voie toute nouvelle* (Paris: Desclée, 1946), 13.

<sup>21</sup>Balthasar, *Convergences*, 15.

### *The Meanings of "Charism"*

To speak of "charism" in this context, and the form of spirituality to which a charism gives rise for the edification of the body of Christ, is not without a certain ambiguity, for the term is equivocal and does not always mean the same thing in every context.<sup>22</sup> The sense, however, in which the term is employed here derives from conciliar theology, where the word "charism" is used by the Second Vatican Council to speak of those gifts of the Holy Spirit given for the service of the Christian community:

Allotting his [i.e. the Holy Spirit's] gifts according as he wills (cf. 1 Cor. 12:11), he also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the Church, as it is written, 'the manifestation of the Spirit is given for everyone to profit' (1 Cor. 12:7). Whether these charisms ('quae charismata') be very remarkable or more simple and widely diffused, they are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation since they are fitting and useful for the needs of the Church.<sup>23</sup>

More specifically, the Council, while not using the term "charism" as such, paved the way for an additional usage of the term:

It is for the good of the Church that [religious] institutes have their own proper characters and functions. Therefore 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.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology II: Spouse of the Word*, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 301-14 and Albert Vanhoye, *I Carismi nel Nuovo Testamento* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1990) for theological and biblical perspectives surrounding the word "charism".

<sup>23</sup>LG 12. Unless otherwise noted the translation of the conciliar texts is that found in Austin Flannery ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, 1988 Revised Edition (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1987).

<sup>24</sup>*Perfectae Caritatis* 2. Cf. no. 8: "In the Church there are very many institutes, clerical and lay, engaged in different kinds of apostolic work and endowed with gifts which vary according to the grace that is given them [*donationes habent secundum gratiam quae data est*]. . . . There are varieties of gifts [*gratiarum*' Vulg./'charismata' Gk.], but the same

In the first text cited, one notices an aspect of charism which is at once personal and ecclesial: the charisms of the Spirit are given to individuals for the good of the community at large in ways that may be either ordinary or extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit. In the second, this meaning of "charism" is further specified in an institutional sense and tied to the "extraordinary" event of a religious foundation. This latter extension of meaning has become commonplace in postconciliar parlance relative to religious institutes and to their founders in particular.

Albert Vanhoye, noting from a biblical standpoint the ambiguities involved in the latter usage of the term "charism", nevertheless admits the fruit this usage has borne for the renewal of religious communities. He does so while claiming a "permanent tension" between different meanings of "charisms as extraordinary initiatives of the Spirit and charisms as a normal and habitual aspect of the Church's life."<sup>25</sup>

A dialectical usage of the term "charism" is thus permissible, one which operates between the poles of the personal (what is uniquely given to individuals in whom a given charism originated) and the ecclesial (what is transmitted through them to the Church and operative in those called to share a particular way of life in Christ). Regarding the gasparian charism, it is our concern to identify what Gaspar and those most closely affiliated with his form of holiness-mission possessed that is of perennial value for the Church: what was destined for the Church as such, and not only for them individually or even the ecclesial associations they founded--however much these retain a corporate imprint of this form. In other words, to see how the different usages of the term "charism" complement each other,

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Spirit' (1 Cor. 12:4)."

<sup>25</sup>Vanhoye, *Carismi*, 12.

minimizing any possible tension between them, and distilling from the original protagonist(s) of gasparian spirituality what the specific content of the gasparian charism is.

Our guide in determining the essential features of the gasparian charism is the distinguished expert on St. Gaspar Del Bufalo, Luigi Contegiacomo who identifies the charism as having three dimensions:

1. the "great devotion to the blood of Christ," which he calls its "constitutive factor" (notwithstanding the difficulties the word "devotion" entails for contemporary sensibilities and which are addressed in due course);
2. the "apostolate of the blood of Christ," its "dynamic" or ministerial element;
3. its "communitarian component," which Contegiacomo identifies in a particular way with the Congregation of Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood.<sup>26</sup>

This view of the gasparian charism corresponds to the headings for Chapters 3-5 of the thesis where these constitutive elements of the charism are unfolded in accordance with the thesis' overriding concern to see their significance for the lay members of Christ's faithful.

### *The Charismatic Mission of Gaspar Del Bufalo*

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<sup>26</sup>Luigi Contegiacomo, *S. Gaspare del Bufalo: Vita-Personalità-Carisma* (Albano Laziale[Rome]: Edizioni Primavera Missionaria, 1984), 86ff. Cf. the author's "Spiritualità del nostro Istituto nel carisma del Fondatore," *SR LXI*, no. 2 (aprile-settembre 1975): 71-110; trans. Andrew Pollack and Willian Volk, *The Spirituality of Our Society* (Carthagen, Ohio: Messenger Press, 1976). The following studies are also useful for their development of these headings: Beniamino Conti, "L'Apostolato della nostra Congregazione secondo il Carisma di San Gaspare," *SR LXI*, no. 2 (aprile-settembre 1975): 111-150 and Romano Altobelli, "La vita comunitaria nella nostra Congregazione secondo il Carisma del Fondatore," *SR LXI*, no. 2 (aprile-settembre 1975): 151-195; trans. John Molloy and William Volk in *The Charism of Saint Gaspar* (Carthagen, Ohio: Messenger Press, 1977), 7-39 and 43-75 resp.

As we have seen, a given charism and corresponding form of holiness cannot be considered apart from the mission to which these give rise. The briefest acquaintance with Gaspar's life and work leaves no doubt that his mission was to evangelize: to proclaim what has been called the "gospel of the blood of Christ".<sup>27</sup>

The intense apostolic activity for which the founder was renowned throughout the Papal States and the Kingdom of Naples in the period following the napoleonic domination reveals a commitment to the ministry reminiscent of the pauline mission: "If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it! (1 Cor. 9:16)<sup>28</sup> Gaspar's mission was consciously modeled on the activity of the great Jesuit missionary, Francis Xavier, to whom he had a lifelong devotion and under whose patronage the founder placed his congregation.

From the moment Pius VII conferred on the Canon Del Bufalo the title "apostolic missionary" after Gaspar's return from exile, this designation characterized every aspect of his life, including his role as founder since the institute he established had no other aim than the ministry of the word undertaken in a wide variety of ministerial contexts, but especially popular missions and retreats.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>This is not to say that the blood of Christ was the exclusive, or even very frequent, subject of Gaspar's preaching. Rather, according to Contegiacomo, *ibid.*, 119: "in his apostolate we find both a content that is universal in character, one which is comprehensively religious, and a content that is distinctively his own, focused on the mystery of the redeemer's blood: both of these aspects, however, albeit in different ways, stem from the same source, are animated by a single impulse, and are illumined by the same light: the great devotion to the divine blood."

<sup>28</sup>All scripture references, unless otherwise noted, are taken from *The New American Bible with Revised New Testament* (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1987).

<sup>29</sup>To appreciate somewhat the prodigious dimensions of this mission one has only to look at the list of ministries undertaken by St. Gaspar compiled by Beniamino Conti, *Il metodo delle missioni al popolo secondo S. Gaspare del Bufalo*, Collana "Sangue e Vita" 8 (Rome: EPUPS, 1991), xiii-xxvii. Conti cites 312 distinct commitments, many of a week or more's

Gaspar's understanding of his mission can be discerned from the several memoranda he addressed to various popes; these serve as an *apologia pro opera sua* given the frequent opposition and incomprehension he encountered in the course of his ministry. The following excerpts from these documents found in the *Writings of the Founder* give, in his own words, a particular definition to the gasparian mission and express the understanding Gaspar had of his vocation.

The first two are taken from the respective *Memoriali* addressed to Pope Leo XII while the third is from the *Transunto* submitted to Gregory XVI; they all provide a defense and explanation of Gaspar's purpose. The passage from the first memorandum addressed to Leo reports on the "general idea of the work" undertaken by the Canon while the second concerns the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood which, as shown in due course, was the progenitor of a broader movement of which Gaspar's own institute formed part. The passage taken from the "résumé" submitted to Gregory XVI is similar in content to the *Memoriali*.

In the first of these important documents, Gaspar writes:

In the distressing times which it has pleased God to reserve for us, and for the purpose of reforming the people, the Lord who *is rich in mercy* has willed to provide effective ways of stemming the tide of iniquity and of reordering the human heart, making use of the most opportune helps for the sanctification of souls and their permanent growth. One such means presents itself in the establishment of mission and retreat houses. . .[u]nder the sublime title of the most precious blood of Jesus Christ.

. . .[W]e members of the clergy are imprinted with the priestly character in order to bring souls into contact with the divine blood. This blood is offered in the holy sacrifice and applied in the other sacraments; it is the price of redemption, what can be offered to God the Father for the reconciliation of sinners. . .and while the devil would prefer us all to be subject to divine justice, we ministers of the sanctuary must reveal instead the source of mercy, so that *having been justified by [Christ's] blood, we shall be saved by him from God's wrath*. . . .The divine blood is therefore

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duration, which occupied the founder from 1808-1837--an index that Conti freely admits is incomplete.

acceptable to the eternal Father, it purifies our hearts, and inebriates us with love for Jesus who *loved us, and washed us in his blood*.<sup>30</sup>

He continues along similar lines in the second memorandum to the same pontiff:

It cannot be denied that the Lord, always rich in mercy, has raised up in every time effective means to recall souls to the contemplation of Christ Crucified, so they might thus encounter the redemption brought about in his divine blood.

. . . [I]n our own deplorable times there is a general crisis among people. . . . There are, however, two things which must be accomplished today in a notable way: the first is to find a means by which to make satisfaction before God the eternal Father--something we already have in the merits of the divine blood . . . and, together with this, secure for people an effective encounter [with this blood] especially through missions, retreats and other holy works responsive to the urgent needs of our times.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>*Epistolario* III, n. 1214, July 29, 1825, 394-98 passim. The document that was actually submitted to the pope was less detailed than the original version cited here, though both versions adequately present the substance of Gaspar's vision. See *Epistolario* IX, n. 3755, July 29, 1825, 97ff. for the text submitted to Leo XII.

Unless otherwise noted, citations from the founder's correspondence refer to the definitive edition published under the title *Epistolario (Ep.)*, ed. Beniamino Conti, 9 vols. (Rome: EPUPS, 1986-1992). The reference includes the volume number, number of the letter, its date, the addressee (if not already indicated) and the page(s) in the volume cited. This edition, which includes both original, autograph letters, as well as copies of original letters, arranges the correspondence chronologically. All references from this edition have been translated by the present author.

The previous, anastatic edition of the letters, *Lettere di S. Gaspare del Bufalo*, ed. Luigi Contegiacomo, 4 vols. (Rome: Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue, Provincia Italiana, 1968-1991) preserves instead the archival arrangement of the correspondence, grouped according to destinary, and reproduces only original letters. This edition provides an extensive and invaluable commentary. It has been translated by Raymond Cera under the title *Saint Gaspar Letters* (Carthagenia, Ohio: Messenger Press, 1985--) who has rearranged them chronologically. Letters referred to in the thesis may thus be found in the English version (which unfortunately lacks continuous pagination for editorial reasons) by reference to the date of the letter in question. See Bibliography, under headings "B. Primary Sources" and "C. Translations" for a detailed listing of all editions and translations of the founder's extensive correspondence.

<sup>31</sup>*Ep.* III, n. 1215, July 29, 1825, 398-99 passim. Cf. *Ep.* III, n. 1240, Sept. 1, 1825 to Leo XII, 424-25: "The holy missions, spiritual exercises, and other holy works, which are promoted by the Work [i.e. of the Missionaries] are surely the principal bases of the reform. . . . Behold the glories of the priesthood instituted to apply to souls the price of redemption, so that the divine blood not be shed in vain through our own fault."

Lastly, to Gregory XVI Gaspar gives yet another summary of his missionary purpose:

We are living in times wherein it is truly advantageous to arouse clergy and laity alike with enthusiasm for the desired reform. . . .and in such a way that zeal for the glory of God will like fire inflame every soul bringing new glory to Christ Crucified and opening the fountain of mercy available to us when the value of the divine blood is credited to our account--which is exactly what is needed to meet the requirements of God, the eternal Father's, righteousness.

. . .The glory of God, the good of souls, the desire for the Institute on the part of both bishops and people, the urgent needs of the times, and the sight of priests who, detached from their families and every other external thing, are always dedicated to the demands of the ministry imposed on them by the constant requests of pastors for their service, priests who at the same time, love solitude, study, prayer--all of this forms a most beautiful design for the portrait which the providence of God gives us today, to whom be praise and honor. Amen.<sup>32</sup>

These representative texts (which must obviously be placed in their socio-historical context) clearly emphasize the ministry of word and sacrament as the means for a personal and efficacious encounter with the mystery of redemption "refracted" through the prism of Christ's blood. If one were to attempt a "translation" of the gasparian mission into more accessible terms, the following might serve as a provisional summary: The mission of Gaspar Del Bufalo was one of ecclesiastical and secular renewal, fully conscious of the times, in which the Christian gospel of reconciliation was proclaimed in structured ways, a proclamation to which the "blood of Christ" gave strong motivation and particularly effective content for the permanent formation of both clergy and laity.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>*Ep.* VI, n. 2140, March, 1831, 50-9 passim.

<sup>33</sup>The social, political and ecclesiastical impact of the gasparian mission has been documented in Michele Colagiovanni, *Il Brigintaggio nel Lazio meridionale e l'opera di Gaspare del Bufalo*; Gioacchino Giammaria, et. al., *S. Gaspare del Bufalo in Campagna e Marittima: La Fondazione delle Case di Missioni* (Rome: EPUPS, 1986); Nicola Storti, *Gli inizi della missione di S. Gaspare del Bufalo nel Lazio meridionale infestato dai briganti* (Rome: EPUPS, 1990) and Gianni Vergineo, *Gaspare del Bufalo e la Restaurazione Beneventana* (Benevento: Gennaro Ricolò Editore, 1988). These works make it clear that

*Theological Content of the Gasparian Mission*

The theological content of this mission may also be summarized for the time being in accord with a balthasarian perspective on the figure of Gaspar Del Bufalo. As noted previously, such content frequently involves a seeing and interpretation of the "form of revelation as a whole or an essential part of it under a particular, perhaps up to now little noticed, aspect": a theological intuition often be traced to a "few decisive, original insights which serve to integrate [the saints'] souls in the way that first principles unify a science."

It seems these observations can readily be verified in St. Gaspar case with the focal point on which his insight converges being the blood of Christ. More than a christological "devotion" giving rise to particular forms of piety that might appeal only to certain groups or historical periods, Gaspar would insist on the universal and permanent validity of this way of "seeing" the form of Christian revelation. His claim is based on the intuition that all the mysteries of the Christian faith can be viewed through the lens of the blood of Christ. Adherence to this mystery is all-embracing because, in his words, this devotion "encompasses all others."<sup>34</sup> Thus he writes in the second of the above-mentioned memoranda to Leo XII:

In this devotion we possess the treasures of wisdom and holiness; in it we find our comfort, peace and health. It is a devotion essential to Christianity. . . .In this devotion the faith itself is summarized; for this reason we say *Mysterium Fidei* at the consecration of the Chalice. Thus the well-being of souls lies in this devotion. . .

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the charismatic mission of St. Gaspar, and the spirituality which the gasparian charism inspires, cannot be exercised purely on an individual religious-moral plane; gasparian spirituality also has a definite social orientation aimed at animating the temporal order with the gospel values of love, peace and justice. That this aspect of gasparian spirituality makes it especially assimilable by those in the lay state is developed by this thesis in due course.

<sup>34</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 105, March 1, 1815 to Gaetano Bonanni, 230.

.The other devotions are means of promoting Catholic piety, but this one is its basis, support, and essence.<sup>35</sup>

This judgement on the pivotal status of the blood of Christ relative to the mysteries of faith in their totality is a theological position also defended by Natale Da Terracina in his magistral work on the subject. After reviewing the biblical, patristic and theological bases of the particular *cultus* shown to the blood of Christ in the history of the Church, he concludes how, in the language of traditional theology:

This devotion has the person of Christ directly (*in recto*) as its total and sufficient object: the person of Christ endowed with every saving virtue corresponding to the entire work of redemption, a work that extends from his entrance into this world until the parousia. Indirectly (*in obliquo*), the devotion has for its object all the mysteries of Christ which extend from the first moment of his conception to the eschatological consummation (i.e. his earthly life, death, resurrection, ascension, heavenly mediation, eucharist). These are mysteries that enter into the devotion to the precious blood in a formal way, because all these moments pertain formally to the sacrifice of the blood of Christ.

This is a truth which emanates from the Fathers, theologians, and especially from the Scriptures, in which the term 'blood' refers not only to the pure and excellent element of Christ's blood in itself, hypostatically united to the Word, but also to a symbolic-realistic expression indicating the sacrifice of Christ. The devotion to the divine blood excels other devotions because it is the foundation and the essence of them insofar as the sacrifice of the blood of Christ is the basis of the relationship between God and humanity--at the center of the economy of redemption

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<sup>35</sup>Ep. III, n. 1215, July 29, 1825, 399-400 passim. The liturgical reference has in mind the tridentine missal where the words "mystery of faith" appeared in the consecratory formula pronounced over the chalice. The insight of St. Gaspar appears in the theological tradition as well, in particular in Albert the Great who writes: ". . .est profunda sapientia, qualiter sanguine Christi redemptus est mundus. Et in profundo omnia misteria fidei sunt revelata. . ." (It is a matter of profound wisdom [to understand that] the world should be redeemed through the blood of Christ, and in this wisdom how all the mysteries of faith are revealed...). (In *de Sacr. Mis.*, tr. III, c. 12, quoted by Mario Ansaldi, *Il Sangue di Cristo in S. Alberto Magno*, Collana "Sangue e Vita" 6 (Rome: EPUPS, 1991), 67, n. 60.) The same Doctor also writes that "*tota. . .fides in sacramento sanguinis fundatur, secundum quod redemptio facta est per sanguinem...* (. . .the whole faith is founded on the sacrament of the blood, by which blood the world has been redeemed. . .) (In *de Euch.*, d. VII, tr.2, c.3, n.4, quoted in *ibid.*, 104, n.15.)

and of God himself--such that its roots sink, as we have seen, into the depths of the most holy Trinity.<sup>36</sup>

While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to report on the immense fund of research available on the theology and spirituality of the blood of Christ outside what is directly relevant to our topic, it can be said the insight of St. Gaspar has given new impetus to the Church's reflection on this mystery; thus has he been designated "apostle" of the devotion to the blood of Christ.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, Gaspar's insight forms the core of the theological content of his mission and may be viewed as original and decisive in the balthasarian sense.

In conclusion therefore, it appears Gaspar Del Bufalo embodies the categories laid down by Hans Urs von Balthasar whereby the founder merits definite theological consideration. These categories are verified in virtue of the gasparian charism understood as a gift of sufficient scope to be of significance to the whole Church because joined to a properly theological mission of proclaiming a message whose content is a mystery central to

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<sup>36</sup>Natale Da Terracina, *La Devozione al Prez.mo Sangue di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo: Studio Storico Teologico a proposito di un trattato inedito di S. Giovanni da Capestrano "De Christi Sanguine Pretioso. . ."*, 2d. ed. (Albano Laziale [Rome]: Edizioni Primavera Missionaria, 1986), 403-04. For another study utilizing the language and method of scholastic theology see Luigi Contegiacomo, *Il Culto al Preziosissimo Sangue di nostro Signore Gesù Cristo*, Collana "Sangue e Vita" 7 (Rome: EPUPS, 1991). Unfortunately, there does not yet exist a systematic work on the theology of the blood of Christ which employs a more contemporary theological idiom and method. The resources for such are, however, continually being assembled through the efforts of the *Centro Studi Sanguis Christi*, Rome which regularly publishes the *acta* of annual study weeks held since 1981 devoted to every aspect of the mystery of the blood of Christ. See Bibliography under heading "I. Literature in the Theology and Spirituality of the Blood of Christ".

<sup>37</sup>Cf. Pius XII, *Decree of Canonization*, June 12, 1954, AAS 47 (1955):176 and John XXIII, *Allocution* given at the close of the Roman Synod, January 13, 1960, AAS 52 (1960):306.

Christian faith. It remains to see how the essential elements of the charism contribute to form a new way of being in Christ that remains at the "heart of the Christian life."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>In suggesting the figure of St. Gaspar Del Bufalo as a suitable subject for a "theological hagiography", there is no desire to claim for him a position among the canonized saints he may or may not possess. Others, though, have argued on behalf of Gaspar's "greater" importance, e.g. Luigi Contegiacomo, "Universalità e Attualità di San Gaspare," *SR XLIX*, no. 1 (gennaio-marzo 1963): 13-48. This article, published at the time of the Council and the impending liturgical reform, sets forth to give reasons for the extension of St. Gaspar's feast to the universal Church. In so doing, the author speaks of St. Gaspar very much along balthasarian lines, that is, of his having a "special mission" (14) of universal significance for the Church of Christ. This mission has its center in calling the attention of the Christian faithful to the mystery of the blood of Christ, a mission that resulted in a distinction among the founders of religious institutes, of being "the initiator and master of a special current of spirituality." (30) The number of faithful, clergy, religious and lay who have been drawn to this spirituality through the foundations and influence of St. Gaspar further testify, according to the author, the universal scope of his theological mission. These arguments, however, were not to have the desired effect--the reform of the calendar even saw the feast of the precious blood suppressed for the universal Church not to mention a place for Gaspar. This thesis, without any partisan or polemical spirit, seeks simply to pose anew the question of Gaspar's mission and its ongoing significance for the Church.

# CHAPTER 1

## ELEMENTS OF LAY SPIRITUALITY

As noted in the introduction, this chapter provides a survey of conciliar and postconciliar teachings of the episcopal and pontifical magisterium on the topic of lay spirituality accompanied by the theological reflection of contemporaneous authors, especially Hans Urs von Balthasar's theology of the Christian states of life.<sup>1</sup> In this way, the thesis can be situated within a broader field of ecclesial and theological thought prior to an explicit consideration of the gasparian charism and its corresponding spirituality.

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<sup>1</sup>Our principal guide to Balthasar's thought is his *Christlicher Stand; The Christian State of Life*, trans. Mary Frances Mc Carthy (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983). This major contribution, originally written in 1945 but not edited and published until 1977, develops Balthasar's understanding of the laity vis a vis the clerical and religious states of "election". The essential points of this work are summarized in the article "Are There Lay People in the Church?," *New Elucidations*, trans. Mary Theresilde Skerry (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 168-87. In addition to *Christlicher Stand*, Balthasar's thought on the lay forms of Christian presence in the world may be found in *Gnade und Einsatz; L'impegno del cristiano nel mondo* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1971); *Il nostro compito*, ed. Elio Guerriero (Milan: Jaca Book, 1991); *In Gottes Einsatz leben; Engagement with God*, trans. John Halliburton (London: SPCK, 1975) *Sponsa Verbi: Skizzen zur Theologie II* (1960); *Explorations in Theology II: Spouse of the Word* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), esp. Part Two. See also the articles by Giuseppe Angelini, "Una Voce Critica: H.U. von Balthasar," in *Laico e Cristiano* (Genoa: Casa Editrice Marietti; "Dabar." *Saggi teologici* 12, 1987), 132-46 and Libero Gerosa, "Secular institutes, lay associations, and ecclesial movements in the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar," *CICR* 17 (Fall 1990): 343-61.

Indeed, the general elements of lay spirituality outlined in this chapter must serve in the course of the thesis to verify the argument in favor of a specifically "gasparian" spirituality of the laity. As each component of the gasparian charism is examined, reference will be made back to this prolegomenon. Hence, this opening chapter serves as an indispensable foundation for the entire thesis whose structure thereby rests on a secure basis.

### Lay Spirituality from the Second Vatican Council to the 1987 Synod of Bishops

The recent magisterium of the Catholic Church has devoted considerable attention to both general issues surrounding the role of the lay faithful in the Church and world as well as to specific questions concerning lay spirituality. The stimulus for this wide-ranging attention to the laity was provided by the Second Vatican Council, above all in its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (November 21, 1964), especially Chapter IV; the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (November 18, 1965), and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes* (December 7, 1965).

The ongoing hierarchical reflection which followed the Council peaked in the postsynodal apostolic exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*, issued by Pope John Paul II following the 1987 Synod of Bishops whose topic was the "vocation and mission in the Church and in the world of the lay members of Christ's faithful people twenty years after the Second Vatican Council."<sup>2</sup> Other significant statements of the magisterium during this

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<sup>2</sup>Prior to the synod, whose theme was announced by John Paul II on May 19, 1984, two documents emerged that would orient the discussion of the synod delegates: the first one, issued by the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops on January 25, 1985 and entitled *De vocatione et missione laicorum in Ecclesia et in mundo, "Lineamenta,"* was consultative in nature and designed to obtain a wide-ranging contribution, above all from the laity

interim and after, while not dealing exclusively with the laity, nevertheless represent a further enrichment of the major documents and are thus noteworthy.<sup>3</sup>

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throughout the Church, in preparation for the synod; the second, *De vocatione et missione laicorum, "Instrumentum laboris,"* issued for general dissemination by the Secretariat with a cover letter from the pope on April 22, 1987, gathered this collected data into what would serve as the working document of the synod itself. Thus the Seventh Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, with its 232 "fathers" and 60 lay "auditors," was convened in Rome from October 1-30, 1987 after an unprecedented opportunity for all the faithful to express their views, including lay "interventions" during the course of the synod itself.

The results of the synod deliberations, besides the customary *"Message to the People of God"* issued at its conclusion, were summarized in the form of 54 final *"Propositii"* submitted to the pope. All of this material was eventually summarized in the postsynodal apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici* ("On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World") issued by Pope John Paul II on December 30, 1988. The title reflects current canonical usage stemming directly from conciliar ecclesiology, which no longer designates only the laity as "the faithful" but rather the entire people of God (*"Christifideles"*) of whom some are "lay" faithful, others "clerical" and others "religious."

Numerous articles and commentaries on this exhortation have been published, including Peter Coughlan, *The Hour of the Laity: Their Expanding Role* (Philadelphia: E.J. Dwyer, 1989); Joannes Farnleitner, et. al., *Christifideles Laici: Spunti per uno Studio in "I Laici Oggi,"* Journal of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, nos. 32-33 (1989-90); Raul Lanzetti, "L'indole secolare propria dei fedeli laici secondo l'Esortazione Apostolica post-sinodale 'Christifideles Laici'," *Annales teologici* 3, no. 1 (1989): 35-51; Mario Toso, ed., *Laici per una Nuova Evangelizzazione* (Turin: Editrice Elle di Ci, 1990); Franco Pizzolato, "La 'Christifideles laici' nella scia del Concilio," in Fiorino Tagliaferri, et. al., *Essere laici* (Padua: Libreria Gregoriana Editrice, 1990), pp. 141-51 and Massimo Ubaldi, ed., *I Laici Fedeli di Cristo* (Rome: Edizioni Logos, 1989). See also Vittorio Leonizio, ed., *La Missione del Laico* (Rome: Edizioni Logos, 1987) for a synthesis of the relevant documentation emanating from the synod itself, including the final *Propositii*, which are frequently cited in *CL*.

<sup>3</sup>These statements include the apostolic exhortation of Pope Paul VI *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975); an instruction on the formation of the laity from the Pontifical Council for the Laity (October 3, 1978); the encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II on human work *Laborem Exercens* (September 14, 1981); the apostolic exhortation of the same pontiff *Familiaris Consortio* on the role of the Christian family in the modern world (November 22, 1981); the *Relatio Finalis* of the Second Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Ecclesia sub verbo Dei mysteria Christi celebrans pro salute mundi* (December 7, 1985); the apostolic letter of John Paul II on the role and dignity of women in the Church

An examination of these documents, together with complementary theological investigations, yields the elements of a lay spirituality faithful to the mind of the Church in our time.<sup>4</sup> These summary elements also provide the backdrop for developing lay forms of gasparian spirituality; the following may thus be considered the formal basis of the spirituality proposed in this thesis while the specific shape given these elements by the gasparian charism can be considered its material basis.

### *The Elements of Lay Spirituality*<sup>5</sup>

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and world *Mulieris Dignitatem* (August 15, 1988); and the encyclical letters of John Paul II *Redemptoris Missio* on the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate (December 7, 1990) and on the hundredth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, *Centesimus Annus* (May 1, 1991).

<sup>4</sup>It is important to emphasize here the modest aim of this chapter for, in Balthasar's words, *Explorations II*, 315, "[o]ne who wishes to tackle a central problem in the Church, such as that of the lay state in her, may not hope to master the fullness with a few sparse lines: he must dive down with living faith into the living mystery and seek to fashion a statement out of the fullness, to the extent that this is given him in faith."

This is far from being, then, a comprehensive theology of the laity. It is sufficient for our purpose to orient the discussion of lay spirituality within the conciliar context while being aware that many complex issues attendant on the theme remain in a state of ferment and will undoubtedly attain greater clarity and more precise theological formulations along with corresponding pastoral applications.

For a critical appraisal of the present state of the theology of the laity and of magisterial and ecclesiastical positions as well as a prospectus for future developments, see the general works of Giuseppe Angelini and Gianni Ambrosio, *Laico e Cristiano*; Bruno Forte, *Laicato e laicità* (Genoa: Casa Editrice Marietti, 1986); Ettore Malnati, *Teologia del Laicato*, Collana "Prospettive Teologiche" (Trieste: Edizioni Lint, 1992) and the articles by Giuseppe Colombo, "La `Teologia del Laicato': Bilancio di una Vicenda Storica" and Giuseppe Angelini, "La Condizione Cristiana del Laico: Per una Definizione Teologico-Pratica del Problema," in *I Laici nella Chiesa* (Turin: Editrice Elle di Ci, 1986), 9-27, 28-56 resp. For multilingual works see Leonard Doohan, *The Laity: A Bibliography*, Theological and Biblical Resources, vol. 3 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987).

<sup>5</sup>These elements have been distilled from a reading of the relevant documents and theological texts; they appear to be the constants, or points of departure, to which the sources make significant reference. Others have developed comparable schemata more or

First element: Universality

*The call to Christian holiness is universal and therefore addressed to the laity no less than clergy and religious, holiness being essentially one reality.*

This cardinal principle forms the basis for any discussion of Christian spirituality today and, while it may seem obvious, it is nevertheless so fundamental as to merit explicit mention.<sup>6</sup> This element safeguards the essential unity of Christian "holiness", and hence of "spirituality". It holds the Christian state of life to be essentially the same for all while proposing no attenuated form of Christian life is possible: one incapable of full realization because situated outside the so-called "states of perfection".<sup>7</sup>

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less in agreement with the present summary. Cf. e.g. the "presuppositions of a lay spirituality" in Armando Oberti, "The Spiritual Experience of the Layperson" in *Essere Laici*, 84-98.

<sup>6</sup>It is what Yves Congar, anticipating the Council in his seminal work *Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat, Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of the Laity*, trans. Donald Attwater, Revised edition with additions by the author (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985), 400, had already called a "primary truth" governing the whole question of spirituality, namely that "there is only one Christianity, one obligation to seek union with God in Christ, and so to tend to holiness; it is not the onerous privilege of priests and religious alone, it is the obligation of all Christians whatever in virtue of the one Christianity that is common to them all."

<sup>7</sup>A clarification of terminology is in order. By the Christian "state of life" we mean the condition arising from faith and sacramental initiation: the state of being made children of the Father, regenerated in the Son, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and incorporated into Christ's Body, the Church. This participation in the trinitarian life of God within the communion of the Church constitutes the essential, or objective, "holiness" of the Christian. By "spirituality" is meant growth in this holiness whereby a person, cooperating with the inherent dynamism of the Christian life, experiences an ever-deeper consciousness of, and response to, grace received. This constitutes the existential, or subjective, holiness of the Christian. Simply put, holiness is "being in Christ" while spirituality is "be-ing in Christ," where the former designates an habitual or stat-ic reality, and the latter a dynamic one.

Given this understanding, it is clear one cannot speak strictly of anything but a "universal call to holiness", much less of one differing essentially for the lay Christian from that of the priest or religious: "The Gospel engages in no casuistry about the extent to which the laity must strive for perfection or to which they may consider themselves dispensed

The Council, above all in Chapter V of *Lumen Gentium*, officially sanctioned this universal call to holiness, thereby repudiating any lingering belief that the fullness of Christian life was open only to those established in the states of special election, i.e. bishops and priests, and consecrated religious, leaving to the laity an enervated Christianity lacking something important to the full development of being in Christ.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, the Constitution on the Church is at pains to point out the differentiation of states does not imply an inequality with respect to the "common dignity of [the Church's] members deriving from their rebirth in Christ, a common grace as sons, a common vocation to perfection. . . .In the Church not everyone marches along the same path, yet all are called to sanctity and have obtained an equal privilege of faith through the justice of God."<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, the Constitution makes it clear that all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love, and by this holiness a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society. . . .The forms and tasks of life are many but holiness is one--that sanctity which is cultivated by all who act under God's Spirit and, obeying the Father's voice and adoring God the Father in spirit and in truth, follow Christ, poor, humble, and cross-bearing that they may deserve to be partakers of his glory.<sup>10</sup>

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therefrom. Its only concern is with perfection itself: the perfection of what the Christian *is* by reason of his participation in God by grace, and the perfection of what he *ought* to be by reason of that same grace." (Balthasar, *Christian State*, 343)

For some theoretical and anecdotal accounts on lay "spirituality" from a layperson's perspective see *CICR* 6 (Winter 1979) which is devoted exclusively to the topic, esp. James Collins, "Spirituality and scholarly intent" (386-91); John Garvey, "Some difficulties of modern spirituality" (378-85); Monika Hellwig, "Joy is for today: autobiographical reflections on lay spirituality" (392-8); Mary Rosera Joyce, "Caring for wisdom" (399-404) and Glenn Olsen, "Lay spirituality ad majorem Dei gloriam" (405-12).

<sup>8</sup>For a careful analysis of the history and significance of this chapter of *LG*, see the article by Gustave Thils, "The universal call to holiness in the Church," *CICR* 17 (Winter 1990): 494-503.

<sup>9</sup>*LG* 32.

<sup>10</sup>*LG* 40-41.

Taking this theme up in his own exhortation, John Paul II reaffirms the full dignity of the laity, a dignity rooted precisely in the common vocation to Christian holiness:

We come to a full sense of the dignity of the lay faithful if we consider *the prime and fundamental vocation* that the Father assigns to each of them in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit: the vocation to holiness, that is, the perfection of charity. Holiness is the greatest testimony of the dignity conferred on the disciple of Christ.

. . . Everyone in the Church, precisely because they are members, receives and thereby shares in the common vocation to holiness. In the fullness of this title and on equal par with all members of the Church, the lay faithful are called to holiness.<sup>11</sup>

*A theological perspective.* Balthasar's subtle analysis of the Christian state of life begins with the thesis that the prelapsarian state of humanity was the original state of perfection "in which no distinction between secular state and the state of election was either necessary or possible;<sup>12</sup> it was but "the perfect synthesis of the Christian state of life whether in the world or in the way of the evangelical counsels."<sup>13</sup>

The disintegration of this unity that resulted from original sin was repaired in the Christian dispensation above all by Jesus whom Balthasar sees as perfectly comprising in the successive stages of his lives both the "secular-lay" state as well as the "evangelical-religious" state. In this way, Jesus becomes the source of the (one) Christian "state of life" which in him has achieved a unity that transcends any ecclesial division into "states": a unity, however, that remains immanent in each of them.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>CL 16. Cf. no. 20: ". . . what distinguishes persons [in the Church] is *not an increase in dignity, but a special and complementary capacity for service. . . .*"

<sup>12</sup>Balthasar, *Christian State*, 158.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>14</sup>See *ibid.*, 194.

The members of the Church are called to exemplify the unity of the Christian state, even though this can only be achieved fully in the eschatological state of heaven. In this life there is an inevitable tension, or discrepancy, between the Christian's final destiny and present existence. This translates immediately into the division of the one Christian state into several distinct states: "first the division *between the `state of the evangelical counsels' and the secular state*, then the division *between the priestly state and the lay state*."<sup>15</sup>

The differentiation of the Christian state which yields from the unity of the one (secular) state the two "states of perfection" is not understood though as a denial of the "perfectibility" of Christians in the secular state; indeed, "[e]very Christian state, if it is truly a state, has the perfection proper to it. . . . [A] permanent form of life within the Church must be such as to guarantee to those who live in it the attainment of Christian perfection, which consists in love. . . ."<sup>16</sup>

This is all the truer if one believes, with Balthasar, that "the lay state is to be designated as the primary, and at the same time, *the fundamental state in the Church*. Since

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<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 301. This implies, moreover, that the form(s) of holiness should reflect the original unity of the Christian state. Precisely because of this unity, one must say that the outer forms of holiness in the states of perfection, forms which are rooted in the evangelical counsels (whether explicitly as with religious or analogously as with priests) must be matched in the laity at least by an interior profession of the spirit of the counsels. This is because the one call to holiness always takes at least the "inner form of a vow" (*ibid.*, 162): "This vow. . . is something inherent in love itself and antecedent to every differentiation of individual Christian states and forms of life. Precisely because it is an essential characteristic of perfect love, and because all states within the Church are called to this love, every objective differentiation of the individual states of life will be based on the extent to which the totality of this vow is realized in each one of them. . . ." (*ibid.*, 61).

Thus there is a real, though analogous, relationship between the *renuntio saeculi* of the baptismal vow common to all Christians and the renunciation entailed by religious vows. It is one task then of "lay" spirituality to help determine concretely how the state of election, "the definitive form of Christian life. . . must also inform the `matter' of the Christian secular state." (*ibid.*, 173)

this is so, and *since the other two states* are formed by specific differentiations of this first state, they may be regarded as classifications, emphases and *concretizations* of this state, to which they stand in a relationship of service."<sup>17</sup> Those in the lay state, because they possess the dignity based in God's call and election, are guaranteed the possibility for genuine holiness of life, that is, the "perfectibility" of the grace in which they stand:

The two concepts, election and vocation. . . stand together and complement each other to form the basis of the *state of life* of the Christian in the Church. This state of life has its origin simply and solely in the act of God by which the Christian is separated from the world by election and vocation and placed where, by reason of this election and vocation, he both can and must find his state of life. . . . It cannot be doubted that God's election is so constituted that it demands for its accomplishment both the cooperation and the continued effort of the elect. . . the grace of his calling contains within itself the demand for an answer, for a way of life that befits the state to which he has been elected and called. . . . [T]hrough objective sacramental sanctification and objectively accepted faith. . . arises the. . . obligation to respond to this act, this election, and this vocation of God by a life worthy of such a calling. . . .<sup>18</sup>

It is apparent by now that such affirmations are in seeming contradiction to the traditional view that the states of election are of a higher order than the secular state.<sup>19</sup>

Balthasar himself cannot deny the weight of this tradition when he states the purpose of his

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<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 333. Cf. 329: "[T]he state of lay persons in the world is not (theologically speaking) related to the priestly state and the state of the counsels as a third specific state, but rather as a general state to particular states having their own distinguishing characteristics."

<sup>18</sup>Balthasar, *Christian State*, 140-1 passim.

<sup>19</sup>See e.g. Council of Trent, *sess. XXIV, can. decimus*; November 11, 1563: "If anyone says that the conjugal state is to be preferred to the state of virginity or celibacy, and that it is not better and more blessed to remain in virginity or celibacy than to be joined in matrimony, let him be anathema"; quoted in *ibid.*, 17. Cf. *Familiaris Consortio* 16: "[T]he Church, throughout her history, has always defended the superiority of this charism [of virginity] to that of marriage, by reason of the wholly singular link which it has with the Kingdom of God."

study is to reveal "[t]he fruitful complementarity of states of life within the Church, which on the one hand refer each to the other (and therefore, depending on perspective, can each claim for itself the primacy), and which on the other hand are admissible of certain higher or lower rankings that it is anathema to gainsay."<sup>20</sup>

The tension involved in any attempt to resolve the issue is evident in Balthasar's following attempt at a rapprochement:

Because it is the prescriptive will of the Church's Founder that those called to the state of election should be a permanent minority in the world in contrast to those forming the general state of believers, it is likewise his prescriptive will that the many who are not called to the special state of life should remain in the general, secular state. By reason of this prescriptive will, we must, therefore, regard the secular state, not just as the negative side of the state of election, but rather as a true state in the realm of redemption and of the Church. Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to designate this will as a second vocation to the Lord's service of equal rank with the first. Being placed in the secular state can be described only as a not-having-been-called to a qualitatively higher state.<sup>21</sup>

A satisfactory resolution of the tension between the traditional and conciliar view of the states seems to lie in Balthasar's insistence that any qualitative difference in the Church can only exist for the sake of service. In other words a "reciprocal subordination in love"<sup>22</sup> within the Church of the Crucified is no cause for dismay, but constitutes rather its innermost structure as the *communio sanctorum*.

Christian diversity, always rooted in prior unity, serves to edify the whole body of Christ:

[T]he common calling to perfect love is a fact that continually permeates this relationship [between the two states] and is superior to it. . . .in the last analysis, one can be greater in the Christian order only to the extent that one is, by calling as well

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<sup>20</sup>Balthasar, *Christian State*, 17.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 180.

as by voluntary inclination, the servant of those who are lesser. . .those in the secular state may acknowledge as such the state of those who are chosen and may model themselves on the pattern of their lives, but those in the state of election may [also] acknowledge that they are entirely at the service of those in the secular state. . . .Instead of a one-directional subordination of the secular state to the state of election. . .there exists between the two states a totally different relationship in which, now one, now the other, assumes the ascendancy.<sup>23</sup>

The resolution lies then in wholly evangelical and ecclesial directions where, in the Church founded on the gospel of Jesus Christ, to speak of "gradations" is permissible only in terms of service. This is so much the case that "the second state of life within the Church is not an end in itself, but is ordered to the first just as everything higher in the Church is higher only because it renders or may render and is ready to render greater service."<sup>24</sup> What is clear is how the element of universality, or alternatively, unity, is the foundation for any discussion of Christian spirituality today; diversity cannot imply inferiority when life in Christ is seen to be a single call to the fullness of faith and charity.

Second element: Specificity

*Specific forms of Christian holiness assumed by the laity must correspond to their state of life and to the vocations and situations that further specify their state.*

Although holiness is rooted in a common baptismal consecration which is the source of its essential unity, there nevertheless exists a variety of ways in which the people of God live out their call to holiness: a diversity corresponding fundamentally to the different states of Christian life. As a consequence of this unity-in-diversity, one may

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<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 178-9 passim.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 205. The interrelationship of the states of life is a theme to which Chapter 5 returns when discussing the ecclesial forms gasparian spirituality takes; it is sufficient for now to indicate the complexity of the issues involved and to indicate a line of approach in the direction of communion-in-diversity.

legitimately speak in the plural of Christian "spiritualities" or "forms of holiness" without thereby diminishing the Christian state of life's essential unity.

Thus Congar notes how Christians' vocations are diverse, their states and conditions of life are diverse, their actual duties are diverse: and accordingly, while it is true that there is no spirituality proper to the laity because theirs is the common Christian spirituality, it is also true that there is a spirituality of lay life, as there is of priestly life or of monastic life. Each form of life has its own conditions, duties and resources, and the *vita in Christo* is influenced accordingly. . . . Obviously [the laity's] `being in Christ,' while of the same essence as the being in Christ of priests and monks, is not in its conditions and actual living exactly that of priests and monks.<sup>25</sup>

One sees from this how specificity is the necessary counterpoise to universality. Thus *Lumen Gentium* affirms the unity of Christian life where "each one. . . according to his own gifts and duties must steadfastly advance along the way of a living faith, which arouses hope and works through love" while, at the same time, enumerating specific "ways" that concretely determine Christian diversity.<sup>26</sup> Within its comprehensive delineation of Christian states, vocations and situations, the Constitution simultaneously indicates the interplay between the universal call to holiness and the many forms for living this out: all Christians, in the conditions, duties and circumstances of their life and through all these, will sanctify themselves more and more if they receive all things with faith from the hand of the heavenly Father and cooperate with the divine will, thus

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<sup>25</sup>*Lay People*, 400-01. Cf. 426: "We know, and they know, that lay people do not have a special `spirituality'. They nourish their spiritual life and seek their sanctification by turning ever more directly towards God's will, lovingly endeavoring here and now to co-operate with it on earth as in Heaven. That is the essential consideration in a `spirituality' of Christians busied in the world: it is hardly its `own' or its `proper' value, for it is not peculiar to that `spirituality', but may be said to be the most sufficient and the most fitting to it."

<sup>26</sup>*LG* 41. G. Thils in "Universal call," 497ff. deals with the Constitution's nuanced treatment of the dialectic between the "one true holiness" of the Christian life and how this holiness is lived concretely "under all sorts of forms".

showing forth in that temporal service the love with which God loved the world. . . .Therefore all the faithful are invited and obliged to holiness and the perfection of their own state of life.<sup>27</sup>

The decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem* underscores further how lay spirituality "will take its particular character from the circumstances of one's state in life (married and family life, celibacy, widowhood), from one's state of health and from one's professional and social activity. Whatever the circumstances, each one has received suitable talents and these should be cultivated, as should also the personal gifts he has from the Holy Spirit."<sup>28</sup>

*Levels of specificity.* Having established the principle that Christian life admits a diversity of form, some further clarification is called for since the texts cited betray a certain fluidity (if not confusion) between a Christian "state" of life, a more restricted "vocation") within that state, and even more determinate "situations"--the last referring to sets of circumstance arising from highly individual factors and conditions which in turn condition the other two. If one is going to speak of an element of "specificity" in Christian spirituality, it seems a more careful designation of these levels is desirable.

Something of the sort is approached in Chapter IV of *Christifideles Laici* where the exhortation speaks of the "diversity of callings and situations, charisms and ministries. . . .linked to age, but also the difference of sex and to the diversity of natural gifts as well as to the careers and conditions affecting a person's life."<sup>29</sup> It seems to me, however, that the exhortation's stated concern to emphasize the diversity of lay forms of Christian life does not always allow for clear distinctions between the spectrum of vocations within the lay state, not to mention the numerous situations that further delimit such callings.

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<sup>27</sup>LG 41-42.

<sup>28</sup>AA 4.

<sup>29</sup>CL 45.

For instance, after giving many examples of lay "vocations" throughout the chapter, its penultimate section reiterates the usual differentiation of "states of life" except for a distinct recognition of secular institutes, saying their members "fully" maintain their lay status. Yet shortly afterward, the pope refers once again to the "lay faithful" who profess the evangelical counsels as having a special "vocation".<sup>30</sup>

The problem here is that, while emphasizing the manifold ways in which the grace of God is operative in the lay state, there is a mixing of elements: some of which pertain to the permanent "status" of a person, while others pertain to relatively stable "vocations" and still others to variable "situations". Within this broad range of possibilities open to the laity, clearer distinctions could be made between a "vocation" such as marriage which pertains to the lay "state", and "situations" such as age, health, and occupation which may further characterize a vocation within the lay state, but hardly determine it essentially.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Cf. *CL 55* and *56*. The identification of secular institutes as both a distinct (lay) "state" as well as a "vocation" exemplifies the imprecision of which we are speaking. For members of secular institutes--though they live in a secular ambience--belong to the state of election because they profess the evangelical counsels: the vows being "the basic requirement of this state." (Balthasar, *Christian State*, 360) The secular ambience, however, qualifies their state by a particular way of life (i.e. a "vocation"), one which should only be considered "lay" analogously, and this because of its secularity and not because of its state for the state is not "lay" but that of "election". Moreover, should members of a secular institute work in a profession, live with family or in some communal setting, etc. these would further qualify their way of life. Because these are accidental to their "vocation" to live in a secular ambience as members of the "state" of election, such highly-variable circumstances are better termed "situations." This is where the papal document, in my opinion, falls into an imprecision that confuses the element of specificity we are attempting to clarify.

<sup>31</sup>Balthasar, *Christian State*, 392-3 seems to accept this view basing himself on the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola: "These three stages of the call--to a general state within the Church, to a particular state within the Church, and, finally, to a concrete situation within the particular state--are, in some way, analogous to the call by which the Christian is first summoned out of the world to be a Christian and then translated, by a unique second and later call, to a particular state so that, in this state, there may be bestowed upon him, through the concrete call that is spoken at this moment and at every moment, a Christian life that endures." He is not, however, above a terminological lapse when he

*Importance of the distinctions.* Lest this point seem overly abstruse, the distinctions between "state," "vocation" and "situation" are important for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the relative permanence and dominant character which mark a Christian existence, revealing in the concrete what God does and does not require of someone. In other words, they are important for discerning the precise form of Christian spirituality that corresponds to these levels of specificity.

By drawing the distinctions carefully--whose basic intent is to underscore the diversity of forms of Christian life--one could help rectify, for example, a glaring absence of any mention so far of the value accruing to a single life in the world without any profession of private or public vow. Clearly, there is a value simply in being a Christian man or woman without necessarily being called also to marriage or consecrated celibacy; *Christifideles Laici* and other statements of the magisterium seem to support this view.<sup>32</sup> Thus a

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confuses the ignatian *estado* and *vida* by speaking of the married "state" in *ibid.*, 224-49. It would be more accurate I think to speak of the married "life" (i.e. "vocation").

<sup>32</sup>The exhortation itself points out that sexual difference is of such fundamental importance to the human person that it constitutes a distinct "vocation" (way of life) and can in no way be placed on the same level as age or career which are situational determinants of the vocation in question. The latter are, in other words, specifications--however important or even decisive--of what remains a far more basic qualification of the lay "state." See *CL* 49: ". . . women with their own gifts and tasks have *their own specific vocation*." Cf. *Mulieris Dignitatem* 29: "When we say that the woman is the one who receives love in order to love in return, this refers not only or above all to the specific spousal relationship of marriage. It means something more universal, based on the very fact of her being a woman within all the interpersonal relationships which, in the most varied ways, shape society and structure the interaction between all persons--men and women. In this broad and diversified context, a woman represents a particular value by the fact that she is a human person, and, at the same time, this particular person, by the fact of her femininity. This concerns each and every woman, independently of the cultural context in which she lives, and independently of her spiritual, psychological and physical characteristics, as for example, age, education, health, work, and whether she is married or single."

single person might have discerned a genuine vocation in response to a disposition of providence and not be seen merely as a "borderline" case.<sup>33</sup>

In what is evidently a still developing theology of the lay state *as such*--of which the lack of clarity in both magisterial and theological texts is no doubt a sign--a "fundamental objective" remains for the layperson, with clear ramifications for spirituality: the "ever-clearer discovery of one's vocation and the ever-greater willingness to live it so as to fulfill one's mission . . . .This personal vocation and mission defines the dignity and responsibility of each member of the lay faithful."<sup>34</sup> Any obscuring of what this does or does not concretely entail can only compromise the position of the laity in both the Church and world.

It is, in other words, essential for the Church as a whole and the laity in particular to understand the exigencies of their state *in se*, *i.e.* the most general demands made by their Christian profession, then of those arising from their vocation as married or single Christian men and women, and finally of those manifold situations which will affect their way of life:

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<sup>33</sup>Balthasar categorically denies the possibility of a "third state" when discussing marriage and virginity as the only two life-forms recognized according to the general tradition of the Church because "the absolute bond created by sacrament or vow is the fullness of Christianity." (*Christian State*, 242) He does, however, mitigate this view when he acknowledges how circumstances might make single life "far from. . . imperfect since it corresponds to the will of God." (*ibid.*, 242) He even asserts how an individual might be so passionately devoted to some life task as to "remain unmarried, and the ordinary routine of his life may become a chain of unbearable situations and sufferings--in such 'vocations', which undoubtedly have their origin in a natural gift, but which develop manifestly and inevitably under the guidance of 'divine wisdom,' no one will fail to see a genuine analogy to vocations to the priesthood or the religious life within the Church." (*ibid.*, 424)

<sup>34</sup>CL 58. For a critical survey of many issues surrounding the developing theology and spirituality of the laity making for the kind of ambiguity noted here, see Leonard Doohan, "Contemporary theologies of the laity: an overview since Vatican II," *CICR* 7 (Fall 1980): 225-42.

all of which comprise the element of specificity. Together these determine the precise form of holiness that corresponds to God's call and election.

### Third element: Secularity

*An authentic spirituality of the laity must assume a proper, that is, secular, character distinctive of the lay state.*

As first principles the previously defined elements of lay spirituality might be considered formal in nature, that is, general and abstract. These need to be completed by the following "material" elements which speak more concretely of what a lay spirituality entails. The first of these concerns how the laity live their baptismal consecration with full regard to the secularity which is the proper characteristic of their state and whose reality marks their daily existence.

This principle was enshrined by the Council in the following text from Chapter IV of *Lumen Gentium* which deals specifically with the laity:

Their secular character is proper and peculiar to the laity. . . .[B]y reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, constitute their very existence.<sup>35</sup>

This "secular" character is not, however, opposed to the "sacred" character imprinted on the existence of the lay faithful in virtue of their baptismal consecration and membership in the communion of believers: such enmity between the spheres of Church and world is better termed "secularism" along with its hostile companion "laicism".<sup>36</sup> Secularity, which

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<sup>35</sup>LG 31.

<sup>36</sup>The *Relatio finalis* of the extraordinary Synod of Bishops convoked in 1985 defined secularism in this sense as "an autonomistic view of man and the world, a view prescinding from the dimension of mystery, neglecting or even denying it. This immanentism is a

looks to the inherent goodness of the created order and human activity in it, has by contrast a positive meaning located "in light of God's plan of salvation and in the context of the mystery of the Church."<sup>37</sup>

Such regard for the temporal order was a major preoccupation of the Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, especially Part I, Chapter III on "Man's Activity in the Universe." A positive evaluation of secularity is seen in the following text typical of the document's spirit:

Individual and collective activity, that monumental effort of man through the centuries to improve the circumstances of the world, presents no problems to believers: considered in itself, it corresponds to the plan of God. . . .Far from considering the conquests of man's genius and courage as opposed to God's power as if he set himself up as a rival to the creator, Christians ought to be convinced that the achievements of the human race are a sign of God's greatness and the fulfillment of his mysterious design. . . .there is no question, then, of the Christian message inhibiting men from building up the world or making them disinterested in the good of their fellows: on the contrary it is an incentive to do these very things. . . .Here then is the norm for human activity--to harmonize with the authentic interests of the human race, in accordance with God's will and design, and to enable men as individuals and as members of society to pursue and fulfil their total vocation.<sup>38</sup>

"Christian secularity", far then from being an oxymoron, brings into relationship on the one hand the anthropo-sociological factors bearing upon Christian life and, on the other, theologico-ecclesial ones. These factors admit of a concrete interrelationship because of the undeniable connection in the Christian dispensation between the orders of creation and

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cutting down of the integral view of man, which leads, not to his genuine liberation, but to a new idolatry, to slavery under ideologies, to life in the narrow and often oppressive structures of this century." (*Ecclesia sub verbo Dei mysteria Christi celebrans pro salute mundi* II, A, 1).

<sup>37</sup>CL 15.

<sup>38</sup>GS 34-35. Cf. *Laborem Exercens*, esp. Ch. V for the implications of this teaching for spirituality.

redemption, between the natural and supernatural orders. And while "[t]hese orders are distinct; they are nevertheless so closely linked that God's plan is, in Christ, to take the whole world up again and make of it a new creation, in an initial way here on earth, in full realization at the end of time."<sup>39</sup>

*Christifideles Laici*, taking its cue from the johannine text affirming the simultaneous fact of Christian existence "in" but not "of" the world (Jn.17:16), notes how the Church thereby has a secular dimension; this dimension necessarily circumscribes the lives of all the faithful, but in a particular manner the lay faithful. Thus, the pope, quoting the fourth *Propositio* submitted to him by the episcopal delegates to the Synod, remarks:

`The secular character of the lay faithful is not therefore to be defined only in a sociological sense, but most especially in a theological sense. The term secular must be understood in light of the act of God the creator and redeemer, who has handed over the world to women and men, so that they may participate in the work of creation, free from the influence of sin and sanctify themselves in marriage or the celibate life, in a family, in a profession, and in the various activities of society.<sup>40</sup>

Although the general import of these statements for lay spirituality clearly consists in disavowing any necessary incompatibility between the secular and the Christian character of the laity (thereby indicating the only authentic direction for such a spirituality to take is sanctification precisely through involvement "in" the world) a certain caution remains in

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<sup>39</sup>AA 5. Cf. Balthasar, *Christian State*, 424: "There is no abyss between the secular orders and the grace of redemption; on the contrary, each of man's secular potentialities can be perfected from above by God for the good of the Church and the redeemed world. . . . [T]here is, for every natural gift bestowed on man by God, a grace-filled charism that marks its perfection. Since God decided to establish creation in the reconciliation wrought by Christ, this perfection belongs, by a kind of necessity, to man's natural heritage, which will be forever incomplete without it. . . . This grace-filled perfecting and appropriating of secular skills by God can manifest itself in a variety of forms and degrees."

<sup>40</sup>CL 15.

order; this caution lies in the opposite direction of the johannine dialectic: being not "of" the world.

Yves Congar, for instance, framing his discussion of lay spirituality around Jn. 17:16 notes how

[t]he gospel teaches that the Christian position is one of opposition to the world, which presupposes--and the gospel says this--that the faithful are called to live 'in the world'; it is concerned with this present life in relation to life everlasting. It is striking to what a degree our Lord concentrated on the right ordering of things in this world, always, of course, in view of the next. . . . The gospel insists that effective primacy be given to service of the Kingdom and of God's reign,. . .but it leaves Christians to pursue their life of obedience to Christ *in the world*.<sup>41</sup>

After reviewing the history of various Christian responses to life in the world, ranging from the diffidence evident in the spiritualities of martyrdom and asceticism to the accommodation afforded by the sacral world view of medieval Christendom, Congar notes that the "call to holiness of living, even 'in the world', was not accompanied by full and candid examination of all the Christian possibilities for those engaged in the world's affairs. . . ."<sup>42</sup> This has only been exacerbated by the modern phenomena of secularism and laicism and the consequent removal from the influence of the Church of whole sectors of society which in Congar's view has more or less forced the Church "to inspire and foster a lay holiness of men engaged in the secular work of the world, having to sanctify themselves in and through this engagement itself. . .[making] the problems of lay sanctification arise with unexampled acuteness today as a consequence of engagement in the work of a world that is thoroughly secular."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Lay People*, 401.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 408.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 410-1.

Considerable ambiguities thus surround the double precept of being "in" and "of" the world. Indeed, a principal challenge to lay spirituality lies precisely in overcoming the potential alienation between these poles, notwithstanding the inevitable tensions that arise between them. A truly Christian secularity must always navigate between an overly optimistic evaluation of the world, one which could end up identifying the earthly with the heavenly kingdom, and an overly pessimistic one which would so disassociate them that an equally unhealthy dualism would arise. Both extremes end up betraying Christians' paradoxical calling out of the world while being left to live in it.

Congar does not shrink from stating this paradox in stark, if balanced, terms:

The Christian's position as God's faithful servant in the world makes two principal demands, corresponding respectively to an aspect of detachment or transcendence and one of engagement or immanence. In relation to engagement. . .the great requirement is to have respect for things and to be competent and efficient. . . . The requirement of transcendence concerns, not the actual discharge of one's service, but the spirit that animates it. It is a matter of respecting in all that we have the quality of its being something belonging to one of God's children, a member of his family and of Christ's mystical Body: being ours, it is yet not altogether ours, it belongs to God and to all our brethren.<sup>44</sup>

The challenge of these demands constitutes as it were the core of a belief, expressed by Balthasar, that a properly lay spirituality represents a far more difficult way of being Christian than the ones proposed to priests and religious. He affirms, for instance, that the Christian in the secular state must not only fulfill the Creator's cultural command [to subdue the earth, to increase and multiply, to rule the world], but must also follow the universal calling to Christian love, which summons him out of the fallen world and into the order of redemption. He is bound by a double precept, and the tension grows greater as he becomes increasingly aware of his situation. . . .He experiences and suffers it as the separation of nature and supernature. . . .the secular state embodies life in transition from this world to the world to come. The `division' inherent in it is bearable only in the movement of transition. It is not possible to establish a peaceful balance between affirmation of

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<sup>44</sup>*Lay People*, 433-4.

this world and rejection of it, between earth and heaven or between family and state on the one side and ecclesiastical life on the other. Every synthesis that strives for a final solution in this direction will be ruptured again and again by the ceaseless movement that is the only medium in which Christian life can be lived in this world. . . .In consequence, the Christian. . . performs works of longing rather than of fulfillment, or, at most, those works of fulfillment that he achieves are designed to awaken in the receiver a longing for the heavenly abode of all beauty, goodness and truth.<sup>45</sup>

In short, the element of secularity, if taken seriously, poses the difficult task of living a fully Christian existence in the world so the world might "*find in Jesus Christ the fullness of its meaning.*"<sup>46</sup> The remaining elements of lay spirituality further highlight this endeavor together with the means for embracing the challenge effectively.

#### Fourth element: Integration

*A spirituality of the laity integrates the life of faith with the secularity proper to the lay state.*

This element, closely aligned with the previous one, seeks to avoid any tendency that would make lay spirituality something "added on" to the daily existence of Christians in the world--as if a spiritual life were to be lived from some point outside the characteristic framework of secularity proper to the laity, thereby making it appear unrelated, or merely parallel, to the secular realities with which the laity are habitually involved.<sup>47</sup> Called to

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<sup>45</sup>*Christian State*, 169-71 passim. Cf. Balthasar's chapter on "The Christian and the World," in *Engagement with God*, 81-90.

<sup>46</sup>CL 15.

<sup>47</sup>See Balthasar, *Christian State*, 221: ". . .the inconceivable fullness and breadth of the Christian state--which is the taking of one's stand with Christ in the Father, with the Redeemer on the Cross, and with the resurrected Christ in heaven--*does not destroy the normal earthly framework of man's existence.* Although the Christian shares in these incomprehensible realities and finds in them his very *raison d'être*, he is not for that reason any less a member of human society; as loyal servants of the state. . . . Christians do not

integrate faith and life, the layperson makes harmonious what is potentially in conflict: "at one and the same time a believer and a citizen of the world, [having] only a single conscience, a Christian conscience."<sup>48</sup> The Council was insistent about this dual, but not double, existence:

Because of the very economy of salvation the faithful should learn to distinguish carefully between the rights and duties which they have as belonging to the Church and those which fall to them as members of the human society. They will strive to unite the two harmoniously, remembering that in every temporal affair they are to be guided by a Christian conscience, since not even in temporal business may any human activity be withdrawn from God's dominion. In our times it is most necessary that this distinction and harmony should shine forth as clearly as possible in the manner in which the faithful act, in order that the mission of the Church may correspond more fully with the special circumstances of the world today.<sup>49</sup>

In its culminating document, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vatican II was even more forceful:

The Council exhorts Christians as citizens of both cities, to perform their duties faithfully in the spirit of the Gospel. It is a mistake to think that, because we have here no lasting city, but seek the city which is to come, we are entitled to shirk our earthly responsibilities; this is to forget that by our faith we are bound all the more to fulfill these responsibilities according to the vocation of each one. But it is no less mistaken to think that we may immerse ourselves in earthly activities as if these latter were utterly foreign to religion, and religion were nothing more than the fulfillment of acts of worship and the observance of a few moral obligations. One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith which many profess and the practice of their daily lives. . . . Let there, then, be no such pernicious opposition between professional and social activity on the one hand and religious life on the other. The Christian who shirks his temporal duties shirks his duties towards his neighbor, neglects God himself, and endangers his eternal salvation.<sup>50</sup>

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observe [its] laws exteriorly and ostensibly while engaging interiorly and actually in quite other matters. Because they have taken their stand in Christ, who manifested his divine freedom in service to his brethren, they direct their whole attention to them. . . . The genuineness of the Christian state must be preserved in the world as it is here and now."

<sup>48</sup>AA 5.

<sup>49</sup>LG 36.

<sup>50</sup>GS 43.

Prior to the 1987 Synod, the consultative document (*Lineamenta*) raised a number of issues considered "new problems" emerging from the interpretation and application of conciliar teaching; they all concern the element of integration and the related one of secularity.

For instance, among the "problematic tendencies" which the *Lineamenta* indicated would merit special attention by the Synod is the "refutation or else compromising of the fundamental and unrenounceable reference to the faith"<sup>51</sup> which must govern the Christian animation by the laity of the temporal order; this is seen by the document as a betrayal of authentic secularity by "secularism": judged to be "a radical contradiction of the true secular vocation of lay Christians."<sup>52</sup>

A second tendency, moving in the opposite direction, involves such a distancing or "escape from the world" on the part of lay Christians that their specific mission goes unfulfilled. Both tendencies, whether their uncritical acceptance of secular values or their refusal to engage in secular affairs, indicate a failure to integrate the laity's twofold participation in ecclesial and temporal realms.

Closely aligned with these tendencies is a postconciliar phenomenon cited by some as a "clericalization" of the laity with respect to ecclesial involvements. The tendency, in other words, to devalue secularity in favor of a more "devout" site for the exercise of lay spirituality and mission--often under the guise of promoting the "active participation" of the laity in the life of the Church--but which can have the unintended effect of taking the laity away from their proper sphere of influence. Thus the *Lineamenta* note how:

in certain situations present in some local Churches one notes a tendency to reduce apostolic activity to 'ecclesial ministries' only and to interpret them according to a

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<sup>51</sup>*Lineamenta* 9.

<sup>52</sup>*Lineamenta* 9.

`clerical image.' This can bring with it the danger of a certain confusion regarding the correct relationship which must exist between the clergy and laity in the Church, and of an impoverishment of the salvific mission of the Church itself, called as it is--in a specific way through the laity--to realize itself `in' and `for' the world of earthly and temporal realities: `Their (the laity's) primary and immediate task is not the foundation and development of the ecclesial community--which is the specific role of pastors--but the bringing about of all Christian and evangelical possibilities hidden, yet already present and at work, in the realities of the world.<sup>53</sup>

This concern is not raised, however, in order to denigrate or render peripheral the legitimate responsibilities which the laity ought to exercise within the ecclesial community, including areas traditionally identified as being of clerical competence. The ecclesiology emanating from the Council, and further developed in the postconciliar period, envisions without equivocation an active role for the laity in both the Church and "the world".<sup>54</sup> At this point, the cautionary note raised during the presynodal consultations is sufficient to introduce what is more explicitly treated in Chapter 4 of the thesis, with the following observation of Balthasar placing the issue in context:

It should not be forgotten, however, that the lives of the laity will always be directed toward goals proper to themselves and that any attempt to burden them with an ecclesial ministry as well. . .in imitation of the apostolate of those in the states of election, will soon prove to be impossible not only because of the practical difficulties involved, but also because of the practical difficulties that separate the lay state from the states of election. Lay persons are obliged to practice Christian love of God and neighbor as perfectly as possible in their daily lives and so to shed a warm, deep and fruitful light upon their surroundings. But they are not obliged by their general Christian mission to exercise any further special or widely visible apostolate within the Church. . . .Practically, however, this is best done. . . when the lay person translates the spiritual impulses emanating from the `Church' (in the narrower sense of the priestly and evangelical states) into the secular sphere and

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<sup>53</sup>*Lineamenta* 8 (quoting *EN* 70). Cf. *Instrumentum laboris* 31: "In specifying and coordinating non-ordained ministries, one must not forget the particular insertion of the lay faithful in the world. Respect for their secular involvement, from this angle of vision as well, will impede the grave risk of clericalizing the laity."

<sup>54</sup>Cf. *CL*, Chapter II. This ecclesiology is discussed more fully in due course.

competently furthers them precisely in that place where the competence of the states of election ceases to be operative.<sup>55</sup>

To the tendency of "clericalizing the laity" a similar tendency of "monasticization" could be added, especially where there is lay collaboration with institutes of consecrated life and a sharing in their spirituality. David Knight summarizes the dangers here which, given the topic of this thesis, are of particular concern:

. . .lay spirituality as such is not a matter of dedicating oneself to some good, though optional, way of responding to the Gospel, which is what distinguishes one religious rule from another, or one devotional spirituality from another... Within lay spirituality any particularization based on devotion or association with a particular religious order can be helpful. But we need a growth plan based on the call of the laity as such, and this must be a plan directly based on the common denominator of everyone's baptismal commitment.<sup>56</sup>

So without prejudicing the necessary and legitimate interrelationship, collaboration and coresponsibility that exist in the Church between the different states of Christian life, the element of integration and the related one of secularity both affirm the priority which is given to the sanctification of the laity through temporal means, in ways congruent with Christian faith.<sup>57</sup> Otherwise lay spirituality risks becoming a mere abstraction, because

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<sup>55</sup>*Christian State*, 383-5 passim. Cf. the provocative challenge of Giuseppe de Rita, "Being with 'The Others': 'No' to the 'Half-Priest' Lay Person," in *The Laity and the Religious: Toward the Future of the Church* (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 1988), 51-2: ". . .in these days of the Synod of the laity, only two kinds of lay people are spoken of, either those who belong to a movement or those who are 'capable of serving.' If a lay person is not capable of serving, he or she is not considered lay. . . .They must be inserted into movements and into religious or spiritual organizations, or they must be in the service of the bishop himself, and be 'capable of serving' as much as possible." For another perspective that sees as something desirable the promotion of lay spirituality precisely as one of "engagement" in specific ecclesial and social commitments, cf. Pier Angelo Sequeri, "Le forme 'laicali' della spiritualità cristiana," in *I Laici nella Chiesa*, 114-57.

<sup>56</sup>D. Knight, "A Practical Plan", 9.

<sup>57</sup>This interrelationship is treated at length in Chapter 5 where the ecclesial forms of

divorced from the concrete circumstances of life where the laity are called to incarnate the mystery of Christ and the Church. They, more than the clergy and religious, must live the Christian tension of being "in" the world but not "of" it, for they are indeed both its citizens and members of the Church at one and the same time.<sup>58</sup>

Numerous magisterial texts encourage this "secular holiness" of the laity, beginning with the Constitution on the Church:

[The laity] live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit of the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus, especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope and charity they

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gasparian spirituality are discussed in both historical and theological terms. What is important here is to avoid giving the impression that such a sharp differentiation exists between the states that the boundaries between them are virtually impenetrable. Thus, while the accent in discussing the lay state will inevitably fall on secularity, this does not imply that the states of election have nothing "secular" about them. Conversely, while the priestly and evangelical states are inevitably viewed in terms of ministry and special consecration, this does not mean that the laity do not have a true ministry or real consecration, much less that they live apart from a realm that is "sacral." Any "division of labor" in terms of the Church's mission "must not be interpreted to mean that the side the Church turns to the world is the special preserve of the laity, while the states of election are limited to presenting only the side that transcends the world. Every Christian grace is at the same time a mission to the world." (Balthasar, *Christian State*, 359) Cf. *ibid.*, 346: "It is clear in any case that the mission to the world involves the Church as a whole. It would be erroneous to assume that. . .this task falls exclusively [or nearly so] to a particular state--for example, the lay state. At most, it can only be that, within the mission of the whole Church, certain dispositions and functions fall to the individual states."

<sup>58</sup>This point, mentioned earlier, bears repeating since it highlights an aspect of lay spirituality perhaps overlooked more by laypersons than by anyone else, especially when those in the state of election are seen by the laity to have made a more heroic choice: "The call to perfect love, we noted, is equally binding on one in the secular state, but his task is more difficult since he must attain the same goal from a state in which innerworldly ordinances are inseparably linked to the fallenness of man's nature . . . .[This] creates for fallen man an agonizing tension between the laws of sinful nature and those of reconciling grace." (Balthasar, *ibid.*, 211-18 passim)

must manifest Christ to others. It pertains to them in a special way so to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are so closely associated that these may be effected and grow according to Christ and may be to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer.<sup>59</sup>

The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity likewise affirms the necessity of maintaining an integral unity between the lay faithfuls' relationship with Christ and their secular condition, so that "the very performance of their tasks, which are God's will for them, actually [promotes] the growth of their union with him. This is the path along which laymen must advance, fervently, joyfully, overcoming difficulties with prudent patient efforts. Family cares should not be foreign to their spirituality, nor any other temporal interest."<sup>60</sup>

This theme was emphatically taken up once more by the 1987 Synod of Bishops, and later in *Christifideles Laici*. Quoting the fifth *Propositio* of the episcopal delegates, the Holy Father reiterates the element of integration:

"The unity of life of the lay faithful is of the greatest importance: indeed they must be sanctified in everyday professional and social life. Therefore, to respond to their vocation, the lay faithful must see their daily activities as an occasion to join themselves to God, fulfill his will, serve other people and lead them to communion with God in Christ."<sup>61</sup>

The laity who achieve such unity of faith and life present to the world a powerful witness of Christianity's ability to respond to the needs of the person and society--not by

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<sup>59</sup>LG 31.

<sup>60</sup>AA 4.

<sup>61</sup>CL 17. Cf. no. 59: "There cannot be two parallel lives in their existence: on the one hand, the so-called 'spiritual' life, with its values and demands; and on the other, the so-called 'secular' life, that is, life in a family, at work, in social relationships, in the responsibilities of public life and in culture. The branch, engrafted to the vine which is Christ, bears its fruit in every sphere of existence and activity."

proposing a transcendental dimension to human existence that is unrelated to the world, but rather one that is, at the same time, fully immanent in it. This will not be possible, however, unless the lay faithful "will know how to overcome in themselves the separation of the Gospel from life, to again take up in their daily activities in family, work and society, an integrated approach to life that is fully brought about by the inspiration and strength of the Gospel."<sup>62</sup>

These texts leave no doubt then as to the possibility of true Christian holiness in the world; they do so by positing a strict integration between the laity's baptismal regeneration and the fact of their "life according to the Spirit [which] expresses itself in a particular way in their *involvement in temporal activities* and in their *participation in earthly activities*."<sup>63</sup>

#### Fifth element: Mission

*Lay spirituality includes sharing in the mission of the Church to animate the temporal order with gospel values by which the laity participate in the threefold office of Christ.*

This element flows directly from the previous two, specifying how the laity share in the one mission of the Church. This mission forms an indivisible nexus, along with the call to holiness and membership in the *communio sanctorum*, whereby "a new aspect to the

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<sup>62</sup>CL 34. On the possibility of being fully Christian and fully "secular" see Balthasar, *Christian State*, 222: ". . .the Christian is to find his whole work in the world. It is not his task to mediate between Christianity and the world, but to bear witness to, to exemplify and to recall to the world the form of Christ. . . .The descriptions of Christian life offered by Holy Scripture always stress the possibility of an unconditional Christianity, of the believer's uncompromising answer to the full gift of the Christian state of grace."

<sup>63</sup>CL 17.

grace and dignity coming from Baptism is here introduced: the lay faithful participate, for their part, in the threefold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King."<sup>64</sup>

*Christological framework of mission.* The laity, together with the whole people of God, participate in the *tria munera Christi* according to their state, vocation and situation.<sup>65</sup>

Thus the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People affirms: "To the apostles and their successors Christ has entrusted the office of teaching, sanctifying and governing in his name and by his power. But the laity are made to share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ; they have, therefore, in the Church and in the world, their own assignment in the mission of the whole People of God."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>CL 14. These "existentials" of Christian life (holiness-communion-mission) are continually referred to one another in the documents, such that personal holiness cannot be conceived apart from ecclesial communion, nor from the Church's share in Christ's mission to sanctify, evangelize and serve not only the Christian community, but the world as well.

Cf. CL 17: ". . .the vocation to holiness is intimately connected to mission and to the responsibility entrusted to the lay faithful in the Church and in the world" and CL 32: "Communion and mission are profoundly connected with each other, they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other to the point that communion represents both the source and the fruit of mission: communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion."

<sup>65</sup>Before the Council, Congar had developed his study on the laity around the theologoumenon of the *munus Christi* systematized in the sixteenth century; his role as *peritus* deeply influenced the conciliar perspective. His work, however, is admittedly dated in that his consideration of the Church's priestly, kingly and prophetic functions is largely concerned with what, at the time, were highly contentious questions about the relationship of the laity to the ordained priesthood, the doctrinal magisterium and hierarchical authority. To a large extent many of these questions have ceased to be as problematical or at least their frame of reference has shifted as a result of the Council. For a view of Congar's influence on the Council and the subsequent changes in Congar's own thinking see G. Colombo, "La teologia del laicato": 15-22.

<sup>66</sup>AA 2.

*Christifideles Laici* likewise speaks of "[t]he participation of the lay faithful in the threefold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King [which] finds its source in the anointing of Baptism, its further development in Confirmation and its realization and dynamic sustenance in the Holy Eucharist. It is a participation given to each member of the lay faithful *individually*, inasmuch as each is one of the many who form the *one Body* of the Lord. . . ." <sup>67</sup>

The Constitution on the Church treats each *munus Christi* in relation to the life and spirituality of the laity. Of those consecrated a holy priesthood in the anointing of baptism and confirmation *Lumen Gentium* teaches:

To those whom [Christ] intimately joins to his life and mission he also gives a share in his priestly office, to offer spiritual worship for the glory of the Father and the salvation of man. Hence the laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and prepared so that even richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, prayers and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit--indeed even the hardships of life if patiently born--all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5). In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord. And so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God. <sup>68</sup>

Thus as members of the priestly people of God the laity participate in the high priesthood of the Redeemer, meaning they contribute both to the sanctification of the Church and the world. Through their participation in the sacred liturgy, which is an exercise

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<sup>67</sup>*CL 14*. Other documents also place lay mission and spirituality within this framework, e.g. *FC* Part III, Chapter IV, nos. 49-64 concerning marriage and family life, and *LE 24* which speaks of the Church's "duty to form a spirituality of work which will help all people to come closer, through work, to God, the Creator and Redeemer, to participate in his salvific plan for man and the world and to deepen their friendship with Christ in their lives by accepting, through faith, a living participation in his threefold mission as Priest, Prophet, and King. . . ."

<sup>68</sup>*LG 34*.

of the priesthood of Christ, the lay faithful fulfill their mission to sanctify the Church by contributing to ecclesial communion through its public prayer.<sup>69</sup> The strength and nourishment they receive in the liturgy enables them in turn to engage in the Church's mission of sanctifying the world, above all by making each and every feature of daily life "holy" by doing all things in the name of Christ and for the glory of God: "the faithful are called to self-oblation in order to render testimony everywhere to Christ."<sup>70</sup>

Affirming the lay faithfuls' share in the prophetic office of the Lord, the Constitution teaches that

[Christ] accordingly both establishes them as witnesses and provides them with the appreciation of the faith and the grace of the word. . .so that the power of the Gospel may shine out in daily family and social life.

. . .This evangelization, that is, the proclamation of Christ by word and the testimony of life, acquires a specific property and peculiar efficacy because it is accomplished in the ordinary circumstances of the world.

. . .Therefore, even when occupied by temporal affairs, the laity can, and must, do valuable work for the evangelization of the world.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>See *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 7. Cf. Leonard Doohan, "Lay Life and Celebration: Foundation for Liturgy," *Studies in Formative Spirituality* 9, no. 1 (1988): 55-62 for a view of what constitutes an integral liturgical-ecclesial spirituality of the laity.

<sup>70</sup>*Instrumentum laboris* 25. Cf. D. Knight, "A Practical Plan," 10-11: "The priesthood we share with Christ consists essentially in *mediating the life of God to others* by offering our bodies, our humanities, to be the medium through which Jesus Christ can continue to give the life of grace to every person on earth. We offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God for the life of the world. This means that wherever our live bodies are, in whatever action we are engaged in, we are sacrificed to the work of the kingdom, surrendered to be instruments of the redemptive love of Christ."

<sup>71</sup>LG 35. Cf. *Instrumentum laboris* 25: "For this reason the lay faithful do not cease throughout their daily existence to penetrate ever more the mysteries of faith wherever providence calls them to work, witnessing to their faith, and proclaiming the gospel by word and deed. Within the contradictions of the present age they verify with patience, and not without suffering and struggle, their hope in glory." This prophetic mission of the laity is given further emphasis in the magisterial documents with regard to the Christian family as a believing and evangelizing community (see *FC* 51-54), the designation of members of the lay faithful as catechists (see *Catechesi Tradendae* 66-71) and the laity's share in the mission of the Church *ad gentes* (see *Ad Gentes Divinitus* 41 and *Redemptoris Missio* 71-

Through their sharing and appropriating the Church's profession of faith in God's word, their appreciation and deepening of the Church's *sensus fidei*, and their proclaiming the word in the liturgical assembly and various teaching ministries, the laity thus build up the household of faith, which comes from hearing. By their efforts at evangelization, especially the witness of their lives before those who do not believe, the laity partake further in the prophetic office of Christ who calls the whole world to faith and discipleship.<sup>72</sup>

Finally, the laity participate according to *Lumen Gentium* in the royal office of Christ insofar as

[Christ] communicated this power [of subjecting all things to the Father] to the disciples that they be constituted in royal liberty and, by self-abnegation of a holy life, overcome the reign of sin in themselves. . .that indeed by serving Christ in others they may in humility and patience bring their brethren to that king to serve whom is to reign. The Lord also desires that his kingdom be spread by the lay faithful: the kingdom of truth and life, the kingdom of holiness and grace, the kingdom of justice, love and peace.<sup>73</sup>

Thus the lay faithful exercise the Christian "power" of service in the midst of the Church when, overcoming any tendency to selfishness or isolationism, they contribute to ecclesial life by placing at the disposal of the Christian community the human and divine gifts bestowed on them by God. Moreover, by their service to the world the laity bring about that subjection of earthly structures to the law of God's kingdom, thereby overturning

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<sup>72</sup>Cf. D. Knight, "A Practical Plan," 10: "What we are talking about, then, is a commitment to *live a life of continual change* in an effort to embody Gospel principles more authentically in our lives. . . .It is to live a life of *prophetic witness*, because a 'prophet' in Christianity is best defined as someone who sees how the general, abstract teachings of Jesus should be lived out concretely in the unique circumstances of a particular time, place and culture."

<sup>73</sup>LG 36.

the false values and patterns of human relationship which are the result of sin and which mar the created order; they hasten both the deliverance of creation from futility and the revelation of the freedom of God's children for

in particular the lay faithful are called to restore to creation all its original value. In ordering creation to the authentic well-being of humanity in an activity governed by the life of grace, they share in the exercise of power with which the Risen Christ draws all things to himself and subjects them along with himself to the Father, so that God might be everything to everyone (cf. 1 Cor. 15:28; Jn. 12:32).<sup>74</sup>

*The scope of the lay faithful's mission.* One notes in these texts how the scope of Christian mission is distinguished by its twofold "direction", i.e. toward the Church (*ad intram ecclesiae*) and toward the world (*ad extram ecclesiae*). Balthasar speaks of this distinction between the upbuilding of the ecclesial community itself, by which the "world" is assimilated to the Church, and the going forth of the "Church" into the world for its transformation:

The osmosis between the Church and world takes place in two opposing movements that are, nevertheless, the two sides of a single process: in *systole* and *diastole*. One side is the progressive, transforming assimilation of the world into the realm of the Church; the other is the constantly recurring self-transcendence by which the Church goes to meet the world outside it. . . . What is assimilated from the world into the Church must, as Church, pass immediately into the self-transcendent mission of the inner realm to the outer one. . . . The Church must truly be itself in the first movement and must become even more itself in its assimilation of the world if, in the second movement, it is to proclaim and give itself as it truly is to that world outside.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>CL 14; cf. AA 7 and GS 43. See D. Knight, "A Practical Plan," 11: "A Christian community does not just nurture itself. It turns outward to bring the life and love of Christ to the world. . . . As the stewards of Christ's kingship on earth we commit ourselves to *take responsibility for bringing every area and activity of human life on earth under the life-giving reign of Christ.*"

<sup>75</sup>*Christian State*, 347-8 passim. Cf. *Explorations II*, 316: "For one thing, the material on which the Church works is present in the Church itself--nature, the world, with their ordered structures and regular patterns such as the family but also the social structures of society. For another, the material of secular society is not merely secular but also Christian (and thereby ecclesial), in that the members of the state are Christians, and more generally, are

There can be, in other words, no Christian life that looks only inward, preoccupied solely with issues of personal and ecclesial growth, without a correlative interest in the mission of the Church toward the world. So while the Church's mission to sanctify, evangelize and serve has an obvious "internal" aspect in which the laity have an undisputed part--whereby the communion of believers is continually being built into the one body of Christ--their mission must also have an "external" dynamism, one that is expansive and not simply cohesive.

With regard to the laity's sharing in the mission *ad intram ecclesiae*, where "every member of the lay faithful is seen in relation to the whole body and offers a totally unique contribution on behalf of the whole body,"<sup>76</sup> the Council speaks as follows:

Gathered together in the People of God and established in the one Body of Christ under one head, the laity--no matter who they are--have, as living members, the vocation of applying to the building up of the Church and to its continual sanctification all the powers which they have received from the goodness of the Creator and from the grace of the Redeemer.<sup>77</sup>

The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People teaches in a like vein:

In the organism of a living body no member plays a purely passive part, sharing in the life of the body it shares at the same time in its activity. The same is true for the Body of Christ, the Church. . . .Between the members of this body there exists, further, such a unity and solidarity. . . .that a member who does not work at the

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persons who stand within the realm of grace and redemption. The layperson moves in this border region as one truly at home in it, and this boundary is so fluid that it is impossible to make a sharp distinction between the situation in which the lay Christian is active as a member of the Church in the Church, and the situation in which he is active as a member and representative of the Church in the non-Christian world. This existence on the margin (between Church and world) is not a distance from the center but is a central ecclesial existence, because the Church herself is the place of the continued embodiment of God in the world, a reality that radiates forth and wells up beyond her own self."

<sup>76</sup>CL 20.

<sup>77</sup>LG 33.

growth of the body to the extent of his possibilities must be considered useless both to the Church and to himself.<sup>78</sup>

The characteristic direction the laity's mission takes, however, is the Church's movement "outward" from the sphere of its own life toward the world. The dynamism which identifies a "lay" spirituality is one that moves those who are simultaneously members of the Church, and of the earthly city, to prepare the world for the reign of God.<sup>79</sup> The laity in particular "are given this special vocation: to make the Church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that she can become the salt of the earth."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>AA 2. Speaking of the specific contribution of the laity to the "building up of a luminous and apostolic Church" Balthasar, *Christian State*, 353-4 outlines three areas in particular: 1) "to demonstrate visibly and practically in the body of the Church how the spiritual and material goods of a fallen world order can be placed at the service of a selfless Christian love"; 2) the *clarification of the relationship of eros and sex to Christian caritas*"; and 3) proof. . .that the Christian can incorporate himself into the Church's all-embracing *obedience* to the Lord, not just by surrendering his freedom of choice, but also *in the lasting autonomy* of retaining his right to choose."

Obviously, these contributions correspond to the evangelical counsels and therefore represent the specific ways in which the laity live their spirit, something already noted as essential in Balthasar's view of the lay state; as such they are the form which a "secular" poverty, chastity and obedience takes in his thought.

<sup>79</sup>This aspect of lay mission exists in close conjunction with the mission on behalf of ecclesial communion, for "Christian life can be effective in the world only if it has previously contributed to the interior building up and growth of the Church itself. To build up the Christian community as a fellowship of those who love one another in the spirit of Christ is to establish that ecclesial sun that alone can make Christ's message credible to the world." (Balthasar, *Christian State*, 352) Cf. *GS* 43: "The laity are called to participate actively in the whole life of the Church; not only are they to animate the world with the spirit of Christianity, but they are to be witnesses to Christ in all circumstances and at the very heart of the community of mankind."

<sup>80</sup>*LG* 33. Pope Paul VI, in his exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 70, identified this domain of accessibility open almost exclusively to the laity--"their own field of evangelizing activity"--as "the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, as well as the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts, of international life, of the mass media." Cf. *CL* 36-44, which takes its cue from this exhortation, by calling the laity to go into this

In working to orient the temporal order to God, animating it with the leaven of the gospel, and thereby renewing all things in Christ, the laity are called to respect the value and autonomy of this order itself—even though it has not attained perfection in Christ. In the words of *Lumen Gentium*,

the faithful must . . . recognize the inner nature, the value and the ordering of the whole of creation to the praise of God. . . .so that the world may be filled with the spirit of Christ and may the more effectively attain its destiny in justice, in love and in peace. The laity enjoy a principle role in the universal fulfillment of this task. Therefore, by their competence in secular disciplines and by their activity, interiorly raised up by grace, let them work earnestly in order that created goods through human labor, technical skill and civil culture may serve the utility of all men according to the plan of the creator and the light of his word.<sup>81</sup>

Developing this principle further, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* indicates how the mission of the Church, which the laity are competent to carry out above all in the secular domain, is one of taking

the whole world up again and mak[ing] of it a new creation, in an initial way here on earth, in full realization at the end of time.

. . . That men, working in harmony, should renew the temporal order and make it increasingly more perfect: such is God's design for the world. All that goes to make up the temporal order. . . are not merely helps to man's last end; they possess a value of their own, placed in them by God.

. . . It is the work of the entire Church to fashion men able to establish the proper scale of values on the temporal order and direct it towards God through Christ.

. . . Laymen ought to take on themselves as their distinctive task this renewal of the temporal order. Guided by the light of the gospel and the mind of the Church, they should act in this domain in a direct way and in their own specific manner. . .

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field with the following tasks as priorities: promoting the dignity of the human person; respecting the inviolable right to life; furthering human rights, especially freedom of conscience and religion; fostering married and family life as the place where the laity's duty to society primarily begins; the upholding of charity as the soul and sustenance of human solidarity; the pursuit of the common good by involvement in public life which is a service on behalf of social justice for everyone and by everyone; placing the individual at the center of socio-economic life; and the evangelization of human cultures.

<sup>81</sup>LG 36.

.The temporal order is to be renewed in such a way that, while its own principles are fully respected, it is harmonized with the principles of the Christian life. . . .<sup>82</sup>

This teaching reached an apex in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World which states:

Far from considering the conquests of man's genius and courage as opposed to God's power as if he set himself up as a rival to the creator, Christians ought to be convinced that the achievements of the human race are a sign of God's greatness and the fulfillment of his mysterious design. . . .[T]here is no question, then, of the Christian message inhibiting men from building up the world or making them disinterested in the good of their fellows: on the contrary it is an incentive to do these very things.<sup>83</sup>

*Charism and ministry in lay mission.* The mission of the laity *ad intram et extram ecclesiae* is enabled by particular charisms closely associated with those empowering the missions of the hierarchy and religious:

From the reception of these charisms, even the most ordinary ones, there arises for each of the faithful the right and duty of exercising them in the Church and in the world for the good of men and the development of the Church, of exercising them in the freedom of the Holy Spirit who `breathes where he wills' (Jn.3:8), and at the

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<sup>82</sup>AA 5-7 passim.

<sup>83</sup> GS 34. In all of this, there is no question of placing any kind of absolute value either on secular activity or on the temporal order itself, since all Christian action is undertaken with reference to the coming of God's reign in fullness--hence the so-called "eschatological reservation" of the Church toward the different forms of human progress. See *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 48: "The Church knows full well that *no temporal achievement* is to be identified with the Kingdom of God, but that all such achievements simply *reflect* and in a sense *anticipate* the glory of the Kingdom, the Kingdom which we await at the end of history, when the Lord will come again. But that expectation can never be an excuse for people in their concrete personal situations and in their social, national and international life, since the former is conditioned by the latter, especially today. However imperfect and temporary are all the things that can and ought to be done through the combined efforts of everyone and through divine grace, at a given moment of history, in order to make people's lives `more human', nothing will be *lost* or *will have been in vain*." Cf. GS 39 and the instruction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Christian Freedom and Liberation* 60.

same time in communion with his brothers in Christ, and with his pastors especially.<sup>84</sup>

As for the variety of charismatic gifts bestowed at will by the Spirit of God on the lay faithful, *Christifideles Laici* gladly affirms their presence and usefulness: "Whether they be exceptional and great or simple and ordinary, the charisms are *graces of the Holy Spirit that have, directly or indirectly, a usefulness for the ecclesial community*, ordered as they are to the building up of the Church, to the well-being of humanity and to the needs of the world."<sup>85</sup>

The magisterium is, however, at pains to point out the necessity of discerning the authenticity of charisms, a judgment that falls ultimately to the official ministers of the Church:

[The charisms] are in fact a singularly rich source of grace for the vitality of the apostolate and for the holiness of the whole Body of Christ, provided they be gifts that come truly from the Spirit and are exercised in full conformity with the authentic promptings of the Spirit. In this sense the discernment of spirits is always necessary . . . .For this reason no charism dispenses a person from reference and submission to the Pastors of the Church.<sup>86</sup>

Inseparable from the charisms are the ministries which they endow for the service of the Church and world. Balthasar, drawing from pauline doctrine, speaks of the close connection between mission, the charisms and those tasks flowing from them, as these affect the laity:

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<sup>84</sup>AA 3.

<sup>85</sup>CL 24.

<sup>86</sup>CL 24. Cf. *Balthasar, Explorations II*, 314: "A living analogy governs the relationship between office and charism. The layman, who does not belong to the hierarchy, is not in the least without his office in the Church, when he has his charisma, and those who belong to the hierarchy are under obligation to perceive, acknowledge, and develop with all their power these `offices' too, which lie in the commission given by God."

. . .the lay state in the Church is far from being an indistinguishable, formless mass whose sole function is to receive God's grace passively through the ministry of the hierarchy;. . .on the contrary, this grace always contains also a mission, a well-defined ecclesial task, and imparts a responsibility for the whole body of Christ...It is certainly not opposed to Paul's thinking to assign such a charism to each Christian in the Church, for it is in the nature of grace not only to bind one to the Church, but also to confer a personal mission. . . .Because grace always differentiates, is always personally oriented, always contains a personal challenge, [the Christian] also receives an unmistakable and inalienable task within the ecclesial community. . . .Paul's lists [of charisms] show that the difference between the states of life is not emphasized when the ministries are viewed charismatically.<sup>87</sup>

Such charismatically inspired tasks, or "ministries", thus give definite contour to the lay state. It would not, however, be accurate to limit the notion of "lay ministry" to service performed as the result of a charism's bestowal. For some ministries exist either in relation to ecclesial offices entrusted to the laity, or to vocations which specify the lay state, e.g. the ministries derived from the vocation to Christian marriage.

The expanded role of the laity stimulated by the Council has raised questions as to the correct usage of certain terminology, especially the complex relationship between ecclesial "office", lay "ministry", and "charisms".<sup>88</sup> The 1987 Synod dealt with some of these issues, and the postsynodal exhortation attempted to meet the delegates' concern to express with greater clarity, and with a more precise terminology, both *the unity of the Church's mission* in which all the baptized participate, and the substantial *diversity of the ministry* of pastors which is rooted in the Sacrament of Orders, all

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<sup>87</sup>*Christian State*, 331.

<sup>88</sup>On the distinction and relationship between *diakonia* and *charisma*, see A. Vanhoye, *I Carismi*, 53-7, as well as Balthasar, *Explorations II*, 301-14, on the dialectic between ministerial office and charism in the Church. The conciliar documents tend to speak of "charisms" in relation to the "apostolate" of the laity--a term gradually eclipsed in favor of "ministry" following the Council. In light of postconciliar experience, the synod delegates asked for, and *Christifideles Laici* provided, some clarification of the newer terminology's meaning. Hence, in this document, a fundamental distinction is made between the "ministries, offices, and roles" of the lay faithful on the one hand, and "charisms" on the other but without clearly specifying the difference (see *CL 22-24*).

the while respecting the other ministries, offices and roles in the Church, which are rooted in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.<sup>89</sup>

With regard to the meaning of lay "ministry", the general criterion laid down by John Paul II is that whatever ministries, offices, and roles the laity perform "ought to be exercised *in conformity to their specific lay vocation* which is different from that of the sacred ministry"<sup>90</sup>: that is to say, those ministries which have their foundation ultimately in the sacraments of initiation or, secondarily, in the sacrament of matrimony, rather than in ordination.

Even this precision remains, however, simply a point of reference given the fact that a commission, whose work is yet to be completed, was established by the same synod "to provide an in-depth study of the various theological, liturgical, juridical and pastoral considerations which are associated with the great increase today of the ministries entrusted to the lay faithful."<sup>91</sup> Until the results of this study are available it is difficult to speak of a

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<sup>89</sup>CL 23. Cf. *Lineamenta* 25-26; *Instrumentum laboris* 30-31; *Propositio* 18; CL 22. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to deal with the complex issue of the relationship between the priesthood of Christ in which all the faithful share by virtue of sacramental incorporation, and the hierarchical priesthood of those who have received sacramental ordination: what the Second Vatican Council describes as differing "essentially and not only in degree." (LG 10) For a discussion of the problem see Balthasar, *Christian State*, 251-329; Peter Drilling, "Common and Ministerial Priesthood: Lumen Gentium, Article Ten," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (1987): 81-99; Jan Kupka, "The chief points in the discussion about the apostolate of the laity in the Church of today," *CICR* 12 (Winter 1985): 408-24, and Wilhelm Zauner, "Laity and priests--one church," *Theology Digest* 36, no. 2 (Summer 1989): 127-31.

<sup>90</sup>CL 23. One wishes the term "state" had been used to differentiate it from a vocation derived, however immediately, from one's state.

<sup>91</sup>CL 23.

comprehensive magisterial position on the question of lay "ministry" apart from the principle of conformity mentioned in the exhortation.<sup>92</sup>

To conclude, the fifth element of lay spirituality foresees the inexorable missionary orientation and dynamism of Christian life; mission that is inextricably bound up with the demands of one's state, and fulfilled in accord with the vocations and situations that further determine that state. The contours of the grace of personal mission are verified in particular ways through ministerial and charismatic gifts that enable its accomplishment for the good of the Church and world. In the case of the lay faithful, the element of mission, which operates in both the spheres of the Church and world, has a particular character insofar as it is exercised primarily in the temporal and secular orders.

#### Sixth element: Formation

*To foster spiritual and apostolic growth, the lay faithful make use of suitable means and contexts for their formation in the Christian life.*

This element concerns the typical ways in which the Christian life of the lay faithful is deepened in accord with their ecclesial identity and mission; it comprises both the content and context in which the formation of the laity can most effectively take place.

The term "formation" has become something of a slogan in the postconciliar period, being called a "permanent demand of every Christian life and an urgent need of our times."<sup>93</sup> The 1987 Synod of Bishops viewed lay formation as a major concern, while

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<sup>92</sup>Certainly, in some local Churches this issue has taken on vital importance--not always without ambiguity--for ecclesial life, especially in view of the widespread decline in the number of ordained ministers. The matter is of direct relevance to this thesis since, as shown in Chapter 4, gasparian spirituality has an indispensable orientation to Christian mission. For this reason, further discussion of the meaning and scope of "lay ministry" in this context is deferred to that point.

<sup>93</sup>Pontifical Council for the Laity, *La formation des laïcs* (October 3, 1978) published,

offering the following definition: "a continual process in the individual of maturation in faith, and a likening to Christ according to the will of the Father, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."<sup>94</sup>

The postsynodal exhortation likewise devoted considerable attention to the topic of lay formation, being the overriding concern of the whole last chapter of *Christifideles Laici*. The document recognizes as the fundamental object of lay formation the ever more profound awareness of the dignity and responsibility of the lay state itself, so that each person may know and do God's will in that portion of the Lord's vineyard in which he or she has been placed: "This personal vocation and mission. . . makes up the focal point of the whole work of formation, whose purpose is the joyous and grateful recognition of this dignity and the faithful and generous living-out of this responsibility."<sup>95</sup>

The exhortation also stresses the necessity of achieving "a total integrated formation for living an integrated life."<sup>96</sup> Such integral formation includes a number of essential aspects, among which are spiritual, doctrinal, social, and ethical formation: the life of intimate union with Christ in the fullness of the Spirit occupying the dimension of primary importance.

*The content of lay formation.* A variety of means recognized by Christian tradition favors growth in the Christian life and thus form the content of a formation appropriate to those in the lay state.<sup>97</sup> The *Instrumentum laboris* made available to the delegates prior to

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with Italian translation, in *Enchiridion Vaticanum* 6 (Bologna: Centro Editoriale Dehoniane, 1980), 653.

<sup>94</sup>*Propositio* 40, cited in ed. Vittorio Leonizio, *La Missione del Laico*, 241.

<sup>95</sup>CL 58.

<sup>96</sup>CL 59.

<sup>97</sup>These means are not, however, exclusive to the laity. See AA 4: "[The] life of intimate

the synod on the laity provides a convenient summary of these means put forward by the Church's teaching office during the conciliar period. The document prefaces its summary by listing the fundamental demands of Christian discipleship accruing to the lay faithful; these include:

- "unity of life", meaning the Christian synthesis of faith and daily existence;
- the "universal call to holiness", meaning no aspect of daily life is extraneous to God's salvific design for the human person;
- the "*sequela Christi*", meaning the imitation of Jesus in his total dedication to the will of the Father in loving obedience;
- the "necessity of discernment", meaning Christian openness to the signs of the times to determine the best way of responding to the present needs of the world;
- and "a style of life according to the beatitudes", meaning the expression of evangelical values.<sup>98</sup>

The document then proceeds to name those means of holiness to which the laity are called in virtue of their baptismal profession of faith; these include:

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union with Christ in the Church is maintained by the spiritual helps common to all the faithful. . . . [But] laymen should make such a use of these helps that, while meeting their human obligations in the ordinary circumstances of life, they do not separate their union with Christ from their ordinary life." Cf. *Lineamenta* 44: "Lay spirituality, inasmuch as it is Christian spirituality, must be nourished at the sources common to all. . . ; at the same time these sources will inspire an appropriate evangelical attitude in the fulfillment of the duties which the laity have in the spheres of family, professional, social, political, cultural life, etc." These texts reinforce the constant emphasis in the magisterial documents on full respect for the secular character of the lay state. Thus, while the means mentioned below are common to the Christian spiritual life, they are employed by the laity in such a way so as not to compete with their secular commitments and character.

<sup>98</sup>See *Instrumentum laboris* 34-38, respectively.

- "continual conversion" whereby emphasis is placed on the progressive nature of Christian life requiring of the disciple continual cooperation with the gradual unfolding of the life of grace;

- "listening to the word of God" proclaimed in the liturgical assembly and meditating on it personally; emphasis is placed here on the growing familiarity of the laity with this perennial source of spiritual life for a correct sense and valuation of the created order and the place of material things in God's salvific plan;<sup>99</sup>

- "the central place of the eucharist" is then considered, in which the lay faithful are called to participate actively, allowing the Lord's gift of love and salvation to serve as the model of all Christian activity;<sup>100</sup>

- next the "indispensable place of communal and personal prayer" is mentioned so the Christian might more readily place the whole of his or her existence at the disposition of God's saving purpose after the pattern of Christ;

- the "frequent reception of sacramental reconciliation" is then recommended for the purification of the Christian conscience from the effects of sin so that the Lord's image might be transparent to the world in the person of his disciples;

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<sup>99</sup>Cf. AA 4: "Only the light of faith and meditation on the Word of God can enable us to . . . make sound judgments on the true meaning and values of temporal realities both in themselves and in relation to man's end."

<sup>100</sup>It would be difficult to overemphasize the centrality given the eucharist as "the source and summit of the Christian life" (LG 11) by the conciliar and postconciliar documents. For the laity in particular, it is "chiefly by active participation in the liturgy" (AA 4) that their spiritual and apostolic life is sustained: "by the sacraments, and especially by the Eucharist, that love of God and man which is the soul of the [lay] apostolate is communicated and nourished." (LG 33)

- the "Christian asceticism" of responding more positively to God's call from within the rigors of daily life is then listed, whereby the laity practice the theological and moral virtues in their personal and social life;<sup>101</sup>

- finally, the figure of Mary of Nazareth is presented as the model of the Christian spiritual and apostolic life in whom all these means of holiness have found their perfect realization, and to whose intercession the Christian faithful are invited to entrust themselves.<sup>102</sup>

*The context of lay formation.* These means, as "content" of Christian formation, have a corresponding "context" whose human locus is primarily the ecclesial community which collaborates with the principal agents of formation, Christ the teacher of humanity and his Spirit. Within this context, hierarchical ministers exercise a particular responsibility at the universal and local levels in the person of the pope, the local bishop and his presbyters; this does not, however, preclude lay formators called to collaborate in this wide-ranging ministry. Parochial, interparochial, family, scholastic and group settings further

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<sup>101</sup>Growth in charity is underscored elsewhere as the goal of every means to holiness "because love, as the bond of perfection and the fullness of the law. . .governs, gives meaning to, and perfects all the means of sanctification" (LG 42). The Council, in addition to the theological virtues, mentions those moral virtues which have a special relationship to the social and temporal order, and are therefore most necessary to lay Christian, "such as honesty, a sense of justice, sincerity, courtesy, moral courage; without them there is no true Christian life." (AA 4)

<sup>102</sup>See *Instrumentum laboris* 39-45, respectively for this summary. Cf. CL 16: "Life according to the Spirit, whose fruit is holiness. . .stirs up every baptized person and requires each to follow and imitate Jesus Christ in embracing the Beatitudes; in listening and meditating on the Word of God; in conscious and active participation in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church; in personal prayer; in family or in community; in the hunger and thirst for justice; in the practice of the commandment of love in all circumstances of life and service to the brethren, especially the least, the poor and the suffering."

situate this guidance at individual and communal levels, rendering it more effective and reciprocal.<sup>103</sup>

Given the thesis topic, the following statement from *Christifideles Laici* is especially pertinent regarding the context of formation: "*Groups, associations and movements* also have their place in the formation of the lay faithful. In fact, they have the possibility, each with its own method, of offering a formation through a deeply shared experience in the apostolic life, as well as having the opportunity to integrate, to make concrete and specific the formation that their members receive from other persons and communities."<sup>104</sup>

The document warmly recommends those associations of the faithful which have the formation of the laity as their specific end, encouraging the lay faithful to join them for this purpose while striving to make "their own the form of spirituality proper to these bodies."<sup>105</sup> Groups under the direction of a religious institute, like the *Unio Sanguis Christi* (USC), which hope to share something of its spirituality, are challenged to form the laity with conscious and scrupulous regard for the principles of a genuinely lay spirituality.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup>See *CL* 61-63.

<sup>104</sup>*CL* 62. The largely postconciliar phenomenon of burgeoning lay movements and associations was given much attention in the synodal deliberations; see *Instrumentum laboris* 58-60 and *Propositii* 12-17. Cf. L. Gerosa, "Secular Institutes, lay associations"; Gianfranco Ghirlanda, "I movimenti nella comunione ecclesiale e loro giusta autonomia," in *Christifideles laici: Spunti Per Uno Studio*, 33-40; Angelo Scola, "Associazioni e movimenti nella comunione e nella missione della Chiesa," in *ibid.*, 41-62; and R. Kevin Seasoltz, "Contemporary American lay movements in spirituality," *CICR* 6 (Winter 1979): 339-64.

<sup>105</sup>AA 4. The 1983 revision of the *Code of Canon Law*, Title V, Chapters I-IV, Canons 298-329, made some important changes in the status of such "associations of the faithful", according them new significance in the life of the Church congruent with the Council's vision of lay responsibility and initiative.

<sup>106</sup>Chapter 5 of the thesis treats at length the role the USC plays in gasparian ecclesiality,

Finally, the exhortation notes how formation is not something optional in the Christian life, as if to create a lay elite separate from the great body of laity in the Church; formation is "not the privilege of a few, but a right and duty of all. . . . [T]he more we are formed and the more we feel the need to pursue and deepen our formation, still more will we be formed and be rendered capable of forming others."<sup>107</sup>

Having come to the end of this foundational chapter, it remains to bring these elements of lay spirituality into concrete relationship with the specific elements of the gasparian charism, and to see how the latter might form the basis of a genuinely lay spirituality. This detailed exposition of the charism's constitutive elements is preceded, however, by a treatment of the sources of gasparian spirituality, to help situate the topic within a broader stream of the Catholic spiritual tradition, and hence more securely "at the heart of the Christian life."

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in particular how this association meets the so-called "criteria of ecclesiality" by which *CL* sums up the concerns expressed by the Synod of Bishops.

<sup>107</sup>*CL* 63. See the articles by Jesús Cervara, "Formazione cristiana e vita spirituale dei fedeli laici," and Egidio Viganò, "Formazione dei fedeli laici," in *Christifideles laici: Spunti Per Uno Studi (I Laici Oggi)*, 77-87 and 88-92 resp. On the problem of lay elitism see Jean Duchense, "The death of the laity and the birth of the people of God," *CICR* 6 (Winter 1979): 332-38.

# CHAPTER 2

## THE SOURCES OF GASPARIAN SPIRITUALITY

This chapter deals with the major influences on Gaspar Del Bufalo which contributed to his own spiritual development and his understanding, both theoretical and practical, of the Christian life. While these sources are mostly important for an appreciation of Gaspar's personal spirituality, they are of interest to the thesis also for, in some ways, they contribute to the contours of a spirituality that can be described as "gasparian". It is admittedly difficult here to distinguish completely between "Gaspar" and "gasparian"; one goal of this chapter, therefore, is to suggest what in the former has left an indelible imprint on the latter, such that the sources discussed below can be thought of as giving the gasparian charism a certain "flavor": without, however, constituting a separate component of the charism itself. In outlining these sources, their relationship to the elements of lay spirituality discussed in Chapter 1 is of particular importance, for by showing how the sources contribute to a lay embodiment of the gasparian charism and its corresponding spirituality the principal argument of the thesis is considerably advanced.

The Influence of Mons. Francis Albertini on St. Gaspar

In the several processes held prior to his beatification,<sup>1</sup> testimony abounds by those

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<sup>1</sup>**SACRA RITUUM CONGREGATIO.** *Romana seu Albanen. Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Canonici Gasparis Del Bufalo. Institutoris Congregationis Missionariorum a Pretioso Sanguine Domini Nostri Jesus Christi.* In fourteen handwritten volumes located in the General Archives of the Congregation of Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood (C.P.P.S.), Rome. The processes are divided as follows:

a) *Ordinary Process of Albano (Copia Publica Processus ordinaria auctoritate in Civitate et Diocesi Albanesi constructi super fama sanctitatis, vita, virtutibus, et miraculis dicti Servi Dei)*; June 11, 1840-May 19, 1847, five handwritten volumes, fol. 2708, [*Ord. Pr. Alb.*]. Vol. II, fol. 674-1082, Vol. III, fol. 1083-1494 and Vol. V, fol. 2235-2247, 2271-2381 have been published in Giovanni Merlini, *Gaspare Del Bufalo: un santo scruta un santo*, ed. Beniamino Conti, Collana "Testimonianze" 1 (Rome-Albano: Edizioni Pia Unione Preziosissimo Sangue, 1984). Vol. I, fol. 391-540, Vol. II, fol. 541-604 have been published in Vincenzo Pallotti, *Gaspare Del Bufalo: come l'ho conosciuto*, ed. Beniamino Conti, Collana "Testimonianze" 2 (Rome: EPUPS, 1989).

b) *Ordinary Process of Rome ("Copia Publica Processus ordinaria auctoritate hic in Urbe constructi super fama, sanctitatis, vita, virtutibus et miraculis dicti Servi Dei")*; February 27, 1843-February 24, 1848, two handwritten volumes, fol. 931, [*Ord. Pr. Rm.*]. Vol. I, fol. 162-180, 183-248 have been published in Paolina Del Bufalo, and Luigia Del Bufalo, *Gaspare Del Bufalo: il mio venerabile zio*, ed. Beniamino Conti, Collana "Testimonianze" 4, (Rome: Editrice "Vita Nostra", 1991), 3-13, 14-49 resp. Vol. I, fol. 441-468 and Vol II., fol. 469-840 have been published in Biagio Valentini, *Gaspare Del Bufalo: quasi un oracolo divino*, ed. Beniamino Conti, Collana "Testimonianze" 3 (Rome: EPUPS, 1990); Vol. I, fol. 87-159 has been published in Vincenzo Severini, et. al., *Gaspare Del Bufalo: conosciuto da vicino*, ed. Beniamino Conti, Collana "Testimonianze" 5 (Rome: EPUPS, 1992), 3-51. Vol. II, fol. 841-881 have been published in *Ep. IX*, no. 3785, to Maria Giuseppe Pitorri, 134-157;

c) *Ordinary Process of Ancona ("Copia Publica Processus ordinaria auctoritate in Civitate et Diocesi Anconitana constructi super fama, sanctitatis, vita, virtutibus et miraculis dicti Servi Dei")*; February 25, 1841-November 22, 1847, one handwritten volume, fol. 201, [*Ord. Pr. Anc.*];

d) *Apostolic Process of Albano concerning the Reputation of Sanctity ("Copia Publica Processus apostolica auctoritate in Civitate et Diocesi Albanesi constructi super fama sanctitatis, vitutum et miraculorum in genere dicti Venerabilis Servi Dei")*; February 14, 1856-September 23, 1856, one handwritten volume, fol. 469, [*Ap. Pr. Alb.*]. Vol. II, fol. 628-673 and Vol. V, fol. 2383-2479 have been published in V. Severini, et. al., *Gaspare Del Bufalo: conosciuto da vicino*, 52-79, 80-148 resp.;

closest to Gaspar of his great esteem for, and strict adherence to, the counsels given him by his spiritual director, Francis Albertini.<sup>2</sup> One of Gaspar's principal biographers, basing his

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e) *Apostolic Process of Albano concerning the Virtues ("Copia Publica Transumpti Processus Apostolici Albani constructi super virtutibus et miraculis in specie Venerabilis Servi Dei Gasparis Canonici Del Bufalo, Institutoris Congregationis Missionariorum Pretiosissimi Sanguinis D.N.J.C.")*; May 4, 1855-May 11, 1864, three handwritten volumes, fol. 2496, [Ap. Pr. Alb. Vir.];

f) *Apostolic Process of Rome concerning the Virtues ("Copia Publica Transumpti Processus Apostolici in Urbe confecti super virtutibus et miraculis in specie Venerabilis Servi Dei Gasparis Canonici Del Bufalo, Institutoris Congregationis Missionariorum a pretioso Sanguine D.N.J.C.")*; May 16, 1856-October 14, 1864, two handwritten volumes, fol. 1095, [Ap. Pr. Rm. Vir.]. Vol. I, fol. 87-271 and Vol. II, fol. 791-794 have been published in P. Del Bufalo, and L. Del Bufalo, *Gaspare Del Bufalo: il mio venerabile zio*, 50-115. Vol. I, fol. 286-408, 534-543 has been published in V. Severini, et. al., *Gaspare Del Bufalo: conosciuto da vicino*, 149-295.

<sup>2</sup>Mons. Francis Albertini (1770-1819) was born and educated in Rome and, like Gaspar Del Bufalo, his spiritual son, nurtured a lifelong desire to be a priest which was realized on May 25, 1793. Prior to his ordination, he earned a doctoral degree in theology from the Dominican faculty at S. Maria Sopra Minerva, Rome with a special interest in relating the principles of systematic theology to those of ascetico-mystical theology. This academic interest was translated into a pastoral approach that highly valued the ministry of spiritual direction. His direction of souls in the ways of Christian holiness emphasized the fundamental importance of the moral virtue of humility. Other priestly interests included concern for the poor and uninstructed who congregated around the Basilica of S. Nicola in Carcere where he was appointed canon in 1800. It was in this basilica that Albertini, assisted by the young cleric, Gaspar Del Bufalo, founded the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood in 1808. This lay association was envisioned by its founder to encompass both a clerical institute as well one for women dedicated to teaching girls. The Archconfraternity was established to foster devotion to the blood of Jesus, so highly regarded by both Albertini and Gaspar, as well as charitable endeavors in and around S. Nicola.

In 1810, accompanied by Del Bufalo, Albertini was exiled from the Papal States for refusing to swear the oath of fidelity to Napoleon; the two men were together for a year of their confinement, throughout which Albertini instructed Gaspar in moral and ascetical theology with special attention to the works of St. Francis de Sales. Upon his return to Rome, Albertini provided much of the inspiration for "the Work" undertaken by Gaspar who always referred to him as its "common father".

In 1819 Albertini was named bishop of the dioceses of Terracina-Sezze-Piperno and died after only seven months in the episcopal ministry on November 24, 1819. He left behind two ascetical works entitled *Introduzione alla Vita Umile*[Introduction to the

record of the founder's life on the canonical depositions, relates that "we have a detailed description of the method with which [Gaspar] ordered his life, the method prescribed by his spiritual director, Albertini, and which he observed with meticulous rigor, saying: 'I observe punctually what he has prescribed for me, and I never stray from his regulations'."<sup>3</sup>

Similar is the appraisal offered by Giovanni Merlini, Gaspar's confidant and second successor in the office of moderator general of the CPPS: "He was so subject to his director that he depended on him for everything; in all things he acted according to his rule. Even after [Albertini's] death, [Gaspar] conducted himself according to the direction he received from him, and in this he was like a child."<sup>4</sup>

During the time of their exile, the formative influence of Albertini on Gaspar seems most pronounced. For instance, while sharing accommodations in the city of Bologna, "Gaspar's whole day was regulated by Albertini, which included his morning prayers, Mass, breviary, meditation (usually on death or the passion of Christ), spiritual reading (usually the letters of St. Francis de Sales or his *Philothea*); every day Albertini gave him lessons in theology, especially moral and ascetical theology."<sup>5</sup>

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Humble Life] and *Gabinetto Mistico del Proprio Niente*[The Mystical Cottage of One's Nothingness], along with some letters of spiritual direction, all published posthumously in 1830 (see Bibliography). A brief biography by Giovanni Merlini, "Vita di Mons. Francesco Albertini" can be found in Achille Triacca ed., *Il Mistero del Sangue di Cristo e l'esperienza cristiana*, vol II, (Rome: EPUPS, 1987), 537-53.

<sup>3</sup>A. Rey, *Gaspare del Bufalo*, 2d ed., vol. II (Albano Laziale: Edizioni Primavera Missionaria, 1982), 249.

<sup>4</sup>Merlini, *Un Santo Scruta un Santo*, 347.

<sup>5</sup>Andrew Pollack, "I Protagonisti più vicini al Fondatore" in *La Congregazione dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue* (Rome: EPUPS, 1981), 81.

Nor was Albertini's influence confined to the Canon Del Bufalo. In the volume entitled *Notes on Albertini* found in the general archives of the CPPS, the following testimony is given by Mons. Vincenzo Annovazzi, a companion of Albertini after the latter's transfer from Bologna to Corsica; it bears the date October 18, 1829:

[The detainees] were more than a little heartened by the profound and fervid principles [given us by Albertini] in the areas of spiritual direction and sound morals, and knowing, moreover, how much he had studied in particular the works of the holy bishop of Geneva, Francis de Sales, he was earnestly asked to hold some conferences in that regard and thus to spend a few hours of the day in that place of imprisonment for the good of all.<sup>6</sup>

Gaspar's first biographer, Antonio Santelli, relates how, after their return from exile, Gaspar "established a congregation or school of ascetical theology in his own home under the direction of Canon Albertini; several priests belonged. . .but it did not last long because the master was elected bishop of Terracina, thus ending the congregation."<sup>7</sup>

Gaspar's continuing interest in seeing Albertini's doctrine disseminated, especially among his fellow missionaries and those he directed, can be seen in the following counsel given to Domenico Silvestri: "With regard to the direction given to me by God for your spirit, I must enjoin on you three things. . .the second [of which] is to hold in delight that precious book *Introduzione alla Vita Umile* by our holy Albertini."<sup>8</sup> Gaspar also advised the

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<sup>6</sup>Quoted in Merlini, "Vita di Mons. Francesco Albertini", n. 2, 548-9.

<sup>7</sup>Antonio Santelli, *Ord. Pr. Alb.*, fol. 1811. Luigi Contegiacomo notes how Gaspar even planned for Albertini to live with him, at least on occasion, after their return to Rome, choosing an apartment adequate to their needs. Albertini's episcopal appointment and premature death prevented this plan from being fulfilled. See *Lettere di San Gaspare Del Bufalo: Prigioniero di Cristo*, vol. III-2 (Rome: Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue, Italian Province, 1991), 364.

<sup>8</sup>*Ep.* IV, n. 1576, February 23, 1827, 312. Gaspar himself was instrumental in having the extant edition of this and Albertini's other works republished in 1830.

same person, both a missionary and spiritual client of the founder, to "meditate frequently on the thoughts contained in the maxims concerning humility."<sup>9</sup>

These textual witnesses make clear then how the founder's filial attachment to Albertini involved more than obedience to his practical directives; Gaspar also learned from his director the principles of spiritual theology, finding in Albertini an authority whose teaching provided both personal guidance, and which he warmly recommended to others.<sup>10</sup> The centerpiece of albertinian teaching--the place of humility in the Christian life--is now outlined with a view toward establishing another fundamental way in which Albertini determined Gaspar's own spiritual doctrine.

#### Humility in the Spiritual Doctrine of Mons. Francis Albertini

In the preface to the work *Introduzione alla Vita Umile*, Giuseppe Visconti, a great admirer of Albertini, observes that the author had produced a volume paralleling Francis de Sales' *Introduction to the Devout Life*.<sup>11</sup> For Albertini, the terms "devout life" and "humble life" are equivalent, both summarizing what a Christian spirituality lived by dedicated followers of Jesus Christ entails. Humility, for Albertini, is so fundamental to the Christian life that in his companion volume to the *Introduzione*, *Gabinetto Mistico del Proprio*

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<sup>9</sup>*Ep*, IV, n. 1642, June 25, 1827, 383. These maxims, called the "*Sentenze analoghe alla Virtù della Santa Umiltà*"["Verses Relative to the Virtue of Holy Humility"], were adapted by Gaspar from Albertini's writings and were posted in the missionaries' rooms and read, one daily, after the common meditation in the mission houses.

<sup>10</sup>Albertini's profound influence on Gaspar does not end here; of central importance was Albertini's decisive role in the founder's devotion to the precious blood, and the early collaboration and guidance of Albertini in the "Work" Gaspar would direct under aegis of this devotion. Because these themes are dealt with extensively in Chapters 3-5, these aspects of albertinian influence on gasparian spirituality are left to then.

<sup>11</sup>See *Introduzione*, 5.

*Niente*,<sup>12</sup> he declares it to be the virtue "upon which is built the edifice of Christian perfection. . . Whoever is truly humble cannot but quickly arrive at the state of perfection, and to the perfect knowledge and love of the All, who is God alone."<sup>13</sup>

In the second chapter of the *Introduzione*, the author summarizes his understanding of humility in the following maxim: "The human being without God is nothing, and with God is everything."<sup>14</sup> The possession of humility begins with knowledge of this truth, requiring in the first place an act of the intellect. The virtue, however, is never to be identified simply with knowledge, no matter how sublime; in addition to knowing the aforementioned truth, an exercise of both the memory and, above all, the will is necessary.

To the memory belongs the task of preserving this truth about God and the human person; it achieves this by continual meditation, leading a person to be ever aware of it. The principal possession and exercise of humility reside, however, in the will; for the will must freely embrace the truth, with all that such consent implies. This voluntary acceptance produces at least in the superior, if not the sensible, part of the spirit a certain pleasure or complacency regarding the idea of one's own nothingness apart from God.

For the spiritual faculties to possess the aspect of humility proper to them, they must first undergo, according to Albertini, a respective purification; he treats of these in Chapters

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<sup>12</sup>The second edition of the *Introduzione alla Vita Umile* (1830) included, in a second part, this and the other ascetical works of Mons. Albertini, namely forty-nine letters of spiritual direction written to various people over the course of his career. While the *Introduzione* is the more theoretical of the two main works, the *Gabinetto Mistico*, subtitled "A Practical Teaching on How to Exercise and Possess Holy Humility" contains some important theological considerations as well.

<sup>13</sup>*Gabinetto Mistico*, 7-8.

<sup>14</sup>*Introduzione*, 15. A similar summary is found in *Gabinetto Mistico*, 14: "*Deus est totum et totum sine Deo nihil est*" [God is everything and everything without God is nothing]. Such insights contain for the author "the loftiest truths of Christian philosophy." (p. 18).

7-10 of the first part of the *Introduzione*. Regarding the intellect, where humility blossoms, it is necessary for the subject to be detached from an inordinate estimation of self. This revised self-assessment, however, in no way diminishes positive regard for one's human dignity, stemming from the human person's creation in the image and likeness of God. So the humble person, while esteeming the good acknowledged in oneself, nevertheless attributes that good's origin to God. Conversely, whatever evils afflict the person are attributed to self, rather than God: thus, one's self-estimation "will be just, reasonable and not disordinate."<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the person whose intellect has been purified recognizes that, as a result of original sin, his or her intellectual powers have been limited, so that "up to a certain point, and not beyond, can human knowledge reach."<sup>16</sup>

Concerning the purification of the memory, where humility grows, it is necessary for the humble person to be detached from any disordinate remembrance of works done, whether good or bad, and from memories of praise or detraction experienced on their account. Thus, humility is equally opposed to taking pleasure in memories of good accomplished by the subject--whose merits are cause to glorify God--as to dwelling voluntarily on any displeasure arising from others' scorn or contempt. Hence, the humbled memory "will conserve a perfect equilibrium between consolation and displeasure, displeasure and consolation: the one will serve to correct the other."<sup>17</sup>

The purification of the will, where humility formally resides, results in a person's being detached from inordinate love, especially of oneself. Here again, Albertini's view of humility never forbids healthy regard for oneself; rather, he enjoins the following counsel:

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<sup>15</sup>*Introduzione*, 38.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 42.

"Love yourself well, but in an ordered fashion; be fond of your own person, but in such a way that the limits of reason are not exceeded. Remember the saying of St. Augustine: 'the one who loves wrongly hates, and the one who hates correctly loves'.<sup>18</sup> Authentic humility then, inclines the person to a love which delights in the genuine good of self and others.

After recommending in the second part of the *Introduzione* certain spiritual exercises useful for the acquisition of humility, Albertini proceeds to describe in the third part acts proper to this virtue. These acts, which deepen the virtue, also pertain to the respective faculties: for the intellect, they consist of reverential fear, trust, and love of God, reinforcing the knowledge of one's nothingness and God's greatness; for the memory, they involve a certain suffering brought about by recollection of one's sins, defects, and ingratitude toward God; for the will (whose acts always represent the crucial sign of the virtue's presence), an affective delight in one's creatureliness strengthens the virtue. This last acquisition gives evidence of significant growth in this virtue, which consists ultimately in the very love of one's nothingness in relation to God.

The fourth and fifth parts of the *Introduzione* treat respectively of temptations against humility and the reasons for encouraging its practice; since these do not add to the theoretical treatment of the subject, we will proceed to consider the reasons Albertini adduces for allotting the virtue of humility such a central place in Christian life.

#### *Justification for the Teaching*

After describing in the first part of the *Introduzione* the difference between genuine humility as opposed to its false manifestations, Albertini defends the excellence and necessity of this virtue in the third and fourth chapters of this part of the treatise.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>19</sup>See *Introduzione*, 9-14.

He begins by pointing out the numerous examples of humility found in the life of Christ, indicating the primary reason for the virtue's importance, for it is the most excellent way of imitating Christ. The author adds how this virtue "is distinctive in that it renders due homage to the principal attributes of God":<sup>20</sup> truth, by acknowledging the reality of one's creaturehood; justice, by referring to God all the good one possesses; mercy, by recognizing one's own neediness, and omnipotence, by highlighting one's own incapacities and weaknesses. For these reasons, Albertini believes humility is rightfully considered the principal Christian virtue and the most suitable means for uniting the soul to God. His position is such that, for him, humility is "the only [virtue] which gives rise to, and causes [other] virtues to grow."<sup>21</sup>

As for the "extreme necessity which we have of this beloved virtue, at least in some degree, to obtain eternal salvation,"<sup>22</sup> Albertini compares humility to baptism: whereas the sacrament confers on its recipients the grace of adoption, humility gives them the quality of children which, according to the gospel, is necessary, along with baptism, for entrance into

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<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 26. One might well wonder how such a view compares with the traditional understanding of the virtues, *i.e.*, that charity is sovereign among them since it most fully attains to God, being their "form", or principle, of perfection. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a.2ae. 6-8. Albertini, obviously aware of the scholastic doctrine--itself based on scripture--clearly states that charity is the "bond of perfection. . .and the greatest of all the virtues." (*Gabinetto Mistico*, 27) Moreover, he states that "the soul will be perfect when it arrives at having charitable humility and humble charity." (*ibid.*, 28) He is clear therefore that charity is the chief of all the virtues, including humility. The latter, however, always characterizes the former and the perfection of both is achieved, according to Albertini, simultaneously. There is thus an inexorable reciprocity between these virtues; this is clearest when, in the highest degree of humility, the soul experiences more and more the interaction of humble charity and charitable humility: "[The soul] raises itself from its own nothingness to God by means of love, and from God, it returns by means of humility, to its own nothingness." (*ibid.*, 47)

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 25.

the kingdom of God (cf. Mt. 18:3; Jn. 3:5). Noting the absolute need for grace to attain salvation, the author states, "the only means to obtain grace is precisely humility";<sup>23</sup> he cites as proof 1 Pt. 5:5: "And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for: `God opposes the proud but bestows favor on the humble'." Lastly, he observes that final victory in the spiritual struggle can be assured only if the weapon of humility is employed, since it is the exact contrary of pride, the chief source of temptation and sin.

One final note on this teaching: Albertini maintains that the spiritual life, which has humility as its root or foundation, is meant for all Christians to practice, no matter their state or vocation. In line with the first element of lay spirituality, the *Introduzione* emphasizes that the virtue of humility may be "well-exercised whatever the condition of a person."<sup>24</sup> This broad view of Christian spirituality--shown below to be Gaspar's too--promotes then the universal call to holiness, or in Albertini's words, that "every person seek greater perfection in his or her own state of life."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>24</sup>*Introduzione*, 30.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 33. Indeed, it seems that Albertini had some definite laypersons in mind--counterparts to de Sales' "Philothea" and "Theotima"--when he wrote the *Introduzione*, among whom were Paolina and Luigia Del Bufalo, Gaspar's sister-in-law and niece. According to Contegiacomo, *Lettere* III-2, n. 25, 363, Paolina was one of the "laywomen" and Luigia, the "young lady" under Albertini's direction, to whom a number of his extant spiritual letters were addressed. (See Albertini, *Lettere Spirituali*, which are included in the Second Part of the 1830 edition of the *Introduzione*, after the *Gabinetto Mistico*, 82-143. Letters 35, 36, 41, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48 are those to Paolina, and Letters 37, 38, 39, 40 to Luigia.)

### Humility in the Life and Teaching of St. Gaspar

This doctrine of his spiritual director had considerable impact on Gaspar's own understanding of the Christian life; there can be little doubt that the practice of humility was a fundamental characteristic of his spirituality. In testifying to the presence of this virtue in Gaspar's life, his close associate Giovanni Merlini notes, for example, how closely the founder's understanding of humility echoed that of Albertini:

He used to say that humility is the confession of the truth, and the truth is this: God is everything and we are but poverty itself. Because of this knowledge which he had of himself and God, he would occasionally say and write: *'Ego sum vir videns paupertatem meam; abyssus miseriae invocat abyssum misericordiae; cum haec omnia feceritis, dicite: servi inutiles sumus'* . . . Moreover, I never saw him thoughtless and insipid nor childish, vain or scattered; rather, everything in his manner, speech and actions pointed to that solid humility which was deeply rooted in his heart.<sup>26</sup>

Vincenzo Pallotti, the founder's confessor for the twenty years prior to Gaspar's death, testifies how Gaspar exercised the virtue of humility with "great perfection," describing in detail how he corresponded to the twelve degrees of humility defined by St. Bernard.<sup>27</sup> He maintains that, even in the highest degree, humility "formed one of the distinctive characteristics of [Gaspar's] life, one worthy to serve as a most edifying example to others." Pallotti concludes this portion of his testimony by noting how greatly Gaspar loved Albertini's work on humility and sought to make it known for the good of others, judging that Gaspar "lived by a deep commitment to form himself with great perfection in

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<sup>26</sup>Merlini, *Un Santo Scruta un Santo*, 601-10 passim. Cf. a letter of the founder to Merlini in which Gaspar expresses his desire to be "very much grounded in humility. . . [which], however, is a confession of the truth." (*Ep.* V, n. 1932, May 9, 1829, 302; other texts also cite this albertinian definition of humility, e.g. SF VIII, fol. 520; XVA, fol. 354).

<sup>27</sup>See Bernard of Clairvaux, *Selected Works*, trans. G.R. Evans (New York: Paulist Press; Classics of Western Spirituality, 1987), 99-143.

the humble life proposed by the work in question of Mons. Albertini, making every effort to reconcile his public life of apostolic ministry with one of hiddenness and humility."<sup>28</sup>

### *Humility in Gaspar's Writings*

Many references to humility in the *Writings of the Founder* can also be cited, both from his correspondence where he often counsels the way of humility to individuals and the community, and from his formal discourses destined for a more general audience. In an early text from the time of his exile, Gaspar writes for instance to a young cleric: "May charity, kindness, and humility be those virtues which for the most part render us pleasing to others and evermore contribute to our sanctification."<sup>29</sup> To one of his early confrères in the ministry, he likewise counsels: "Let us ground ourselves very much in holy humility as well as the other virtues, and let us be convinced that the substance of the spiritual life consists in equilibrium of spirit in God."<sup>30</sup>

Writing to his great friend and benefactor, Mons. Bellisario Cristaldi, in reference to a false charge made against himself, Gaspar writes: "What comes fixedly to mind is the following passage from de Sales: 'Let God do with my life, my reputation and my honor what is most pleasing to him.' If my abjection serves God's glory, I shall consider it glory to

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<sup>28</sup>V. Pallotti, *Gaspare Del Bufalo: come l'ho conosciuto*, 116-23 passim. Pallotti, 119-20, notes further that in the sixth and eighth degrees of humility--which forbid, on the one hand, speaking too highly of oneself out of arrogance and, on the other, belittling oneself out of false humility--Gaspar was following the maxim of Francis de Sales that, 'one should not speak either well or poorly of oneself'. Cf. Gaspar's words recorded in letters to Maria Giuseppa Pitorri, preserved by Antonio Santelli: : ". . . I feel myself permeated ever more completely by humility, a virtue I wish to possess in the highest degree. . . . Humility is [the virtue] most dear to me, but it is a school whose lessons take long to learn." (*Ep.* IX, 3785 [34SA and 35SA], 165).

<sup>29</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 21, to Filippo Giuliano, May 30, 1811, 55.

<sup>30</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 370, to Francesco Pierantonio, December 6, 1820, 503-4.

be thus scorned. I will boast, says the Apostle, in my weaknesses so that the virtue of Jesus Christ might dwell in me. Which virtue of Jesus Christ? Humility, which takes pleasure in abjection."<sup>31</sup>

In letters to Domenico Silvestri, Gaspar's fellow missionary and directee, further exhortations to humility are found:

The responsibility of a missionary is great; therefore knowledge and holiness is demanded of him. Our rule, when it is observed well, provides us with suitable means to this end. If we would but study holy humility at all times, God would provide even extraordinary assistance to us in special relation, and in proportion to, the humble life. *Humilia te in omnibus*. . . For God sees that the soul suffers and is in the crucible. Thus temptations to pride either do not present themselves to the mind or, if they come, are easily brushed aside. *Humiliatio tua in medio tui*. . . You will receive before long the *Introduzione* to the humble life.<sup>32</sup>

In the following, Gaspar notes the relation between humility and obedience, another virtue indispensable for his vision of Christian life: "In order to obtain an increase in gifts, it is urgent that we continually deepen our study of holy humility and ponder often the verses on this virtue which we hear day after day. Let the morning *examen* be on humility. . . Establish yourself firmly in obedience, the daughter of humility. Blindly, promptly, and joyfully obey and you will have a quick method for achieving much perfection."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>*Ep.* III, n. 1165, June 20, 1825, 334.

<sup>32</sup>*Ep.* IV, n. 1590, March 16, 1827, 328-29. Cf. a sermon of Gaspar for clergy on the importance of humility among those who are learned in *SF XVA*, fol. 339-40.

<sup>33</sup>*Ep.* V, n. 1735, to Domenico Silvestri, April 23, 1828, 58-9. Gaspar wrote a commentary for young clerics in formation on these previously mentioned "sentences" derived from the works of Albertini, one of which was read daily in the mission houses after the morning meditation; it is found in *SF XIVA*, fol. 354-5. This commentary is noteworthy for bringing out another aspect of the founder's teaching on humility, namely, its connection with various aspects of Christ's passion. For example, speaking about the consolations experienced by those who willingly practice this virtue, the founder writes in his comment on the fifth maxim: "Humiliation is cause for consolation inasmuch as it allows us to taste the mystical fruits of the holy cross. Let us observe the example Jesus has given us and make use of the prophet's words: *bonum mihi quia humiliasti me!*" In describing the

To a young man preparing for the ministry, Gaspar, always solicitous for the formation of his missionaries, writes in a similar vein: "In order to preserve and increase in us the holy gifts of God, we must not cease, my beloved in Jesus Christ, to cultivate holy humility. This virtue is the basis of every good; it is the source of every heavenly blessing; it is the ladder to paradise. We are nothing more than a composite of God's gifts."<sup>34</sup>

In the circular letters addressed to the entire Congregation on the occasion of the annual community retreat, Gaspar would frequently repeat similar counsels. The following passages are taken from his more extensive treatments of the subject:

. . .let us resolve this year upon an ever more perfect acquisition of the virtue of humility. May this virtue be the governor of our thoughts, affection, words and deeds that we may again find favor in the eyes of God. . . .[T]he wellspring of all holiness is a humble life. From it flow fraternal charity, docility in obedience and, above all, assiduous prayer before the throne of divine Majesty. Through it we obtain ever greater graces, courage and strength for the ministry.<sup>35</sup>

Similarly, he advises the community to let humility be not only the basis and support of every good work and holy affection; but let it also be the guardian of the merits which are acquired through divine grace.

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reaction of the humble person to offenses suffered, he writes in the comment on the eleventh sentence: "Whoever reaches a high level of perfection--to which we also must unceasingly aspire--takes mockery and contradictions for the honor of virtue. Rather than humble us, the insignia of the cross serve to glorify us before God." Finally, he notes in the comment on the twenty-third sentence that those who exercise authority should do so out of obedience, while preferring, out of humility, a "life hidden in the adorable wounds of Jesus Christ."

<sup>34</sup>*Ep.* III, n. 1206, to Antonio Loffredo, July 15, 1825, 386.

<sup>35</sup>*Circular Letters*, trans. Raymond Cera (Carthagen, Ohio, 1986), 37-8. This edition of the retreat correspondence is a translation of Gaspare Del Bufalo, *Metodo e Lettere Circolari di S. Gaspare del Bufalo per gli Esercizi Spirituali dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue: Chi è il Missionario?*, ed. Beniamino Conti (Rome: EPUPS, 1985). These letters were written by the founder each year from 1826-1837, with the exception of 1828; the above quotation is taken from the letter of 1832.

Let it be our guide, our counselor, our teacher. May it lead us to the knowledge of our duties and of our failings. May it lead us by the hand to the fulfillment of all that God asks of us. Let humility [confirm] charity. Let it lead to the union of hearts in the adorable heart of Jesus Christ and make us one day partake of his most blessed kingdom in heaven. Amen.<sup>36</sup>

In his public discourses, Gaspar gives further evidence of a thorough assimilation of albertinian doctrine and his desire to see it given wide dissemination. In an ample sermon outline on the subject of humility, the founder defines the virtue as [one] which, after the mind's discovery of God's greatness and humanity's want, brings us to suppress the disordered appetite for earthly honors and to be content with those things proportioned to our lowliness.<sup>37</sup>

He then proceeds to defend humility as the virtue which, more than any other, leads to our perfection, removing as it does impediments to perfection, and introducing the necessary dispositions for growth in perfection. . . . So it is said that humility is the foundation of all the virtues, not because it precedes the others--for none precedes faith--but because it removes the obstacles to making a person receptive to divine influence; thus can the other virtues be acquired, and especially can one acquire and grow in charity.

Lastly, he notes humility's effects on how a person

considers in his or her neighbor the good which is from God and those deficiencies in oneself which are from humanity alone. As a result, the humble person never despises anyone, despite seeming unworthiness, lack of goodness, or natural abilities. Rather, from the depths of the heart, the humble person considers everyone else superior, and outwardly shows to others the honor they merit according to their station in life.

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<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 42 (letter of 1833). For other references to humility in the circular letters, see pp. 8, 10, 18, 21, 22, 26, 27, 30, 33, 37, 41, 45, 51, 54, 60.

<sup>37</sup>This and the following citations are from *SF VII*, fol. 638-9 passim; cf. *SF XVB*, fol. 407ff. One sees in them, as with Albertini, the importance of humility's bringing about a right ordering first of the intellect, and then of the will (see *SF VII*, fol. 640-1; *XVB*, fol. 474-5). This in turn effects a right ordering of a person's relationships with God, self and finally, of one's neighbor (see *SF VIII*, fol. 520; *XVA*, fol. 353-4). Such a comprehensive understanding permits Gaspar to make such assertions about humility's being "the basis of Christianity's spirit." (*SF XVA*, fol. 142)

*Evaluation of Gasparian Teaching*

The views of both Albertini and Gaspar could easily appear exaggerated, requiring appeal to the broader spiritual traditions of the Church to be considered theologically viable. No doubt they realized this themselves; Gaspar, for instance, is at pains to support his views by numerous references to scripture, spiritual writers, and doctors of the Church, among whom Catherine of Siena receives special mention.<sup>38</sup>

She could, for good reason, be cited here as representative of the wider tradition. The following text from Catherine's *Dialogue* suffices to situate the albertinian/gasparian teaching within a more extensive context, embodying as it does the salient themes of that teaching:

Here is the way, if you would come to perfect knowledge and enjoyment of me, eternal Life: Never leave the knowledge of yourself. Then, put down as you are in the valley of humility you will know me in yourself, and from this knowledge you will draw all that you need.

No virtue can have life in it except from charity, and charity is nursed and mothered by humility. You will find humility in the knowledge of yourself when you see that even your own existence comes not from yourself but from me, for I loved you before you came into being.

. . .Charity, it is true, has many offshoots, like a tree with many branches. But what gives life to both the tree and its branches is its root, so long as the root is planted in the soil of humility. . . .Now the source of humility, as I have already told you, is the soul's true knowledge of herself and of my goodness.

. . .If you have this virtue, then whatever your state in life may be. . .all that you do for your neighbor will be done with discernment and loving charity. For discernment and charity are engrafted together and planted in the soil of that true humility which is born of self-knowledge.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>See *SF* VII, fol. 639; cf. fol. 636-41 passim for citations of Gregory, Augustine, Thomas and Bernard, as well as *XVB*, fol. 407ff. for additional references to Cyprian, Jerome and Cassian.

<sup>39</sup>Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, trans. Suzanne Noffke (New York: Paulist Press; The Classics of Western Spirituality, 1980), 29-41 passim.

In addition to the question of a broader theological context for Gaspar's teaching, another one of special relevance to the thesis needs to be asked about its accessibility to a contemporary audience, particularly a lay one. The problem, as I see it, is basically a language barrier raised by the teaching's formulation in the scholastic theology of the virtues and "faculties of the soul", as well as by the connotations surrounding the word "humility" itself which associate it with unhealthy subservience.

In a discussion of humility from the standpoint of contemporary psychology, Robert Furey addresses the problem; in calling for a reaffirmation of this virtue, he prefers the term "self-acceptance" as a legitimate alternative to "humility". Claiming that self-acceptance, viz. humility, is the "foundation of all emotional health and spiritual growth," the author insists on this virtue's importance in a way reminiscent of both Albertini and Gaspar, as well as Catherine. The following might serve as a paraphrase, in a modern idiom, of at least the substance of their teaching:

Humility is the bridge between our psychological and our spiritual dimensions. . . .The first stages in the development of humility are psychological processes. . . .Once humility has become a part of one's character, that individual will move toward becoming spiritual. Because humility begins in the psychological realm and moves into the spiritual dimension, we need two levels to our definition of humility.

Psychologically speaking, humility is the acceptance of our imperfection. It does not prohibit self-expression. Nor does it rule out pride in one's accomplishments. Humility in no way limits human potential. Rather humility allows us to accept the limitations of our potential. Psychologically, humility implies the acceptance of ourselves.

Spiritually, humility describes an acceptance of our place in the universe. With humility we open ourselves to the possibility that God exists. Humility does not point us to God and yet it allows us to receive God. We accept the fact that there is more to the universe than our imperfect eyes can see and we are not threatened by the existence of a more powerful being.

. . . .So much of our identity comes from our relationships....An illusion of self-sufficiency represses the awareness of our need for relationships and consequently we lose our grasp on who we are. Humility can replace this myth with a certain wisdom.

. . .If we do not understand our limitations, we do not understand our being. If we cannot accept our limitations, we cannot accept our being. Humility is a necessary virtue if we are to accept and to be honest with ourselves. It does not restrict us to a stoic acceptance of tragedy. Humility is quite compatible with feelings of pride, joy and self-respect.<sup>40</sup>

It appears the gasparian perspective on humility admits then of both a contextualization within the traditions of Catholic spirituality, and a contemporization in language designed to help people mature in the Christian life. As such, it provides a resource for lay spirituality consistent with the elements treated in the previous chapter, especially the element of formation.

#### The Influence of St. Francis de Sales on Gaspar Del Bufalo

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to a discussion of the major source of Gaspar's practical and theoretical understanding of the Christian life: the teaching and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622).<sup>41</sup> Our treatment includes the origin of the salesian influence on the founder; external evidence for it in the conduct of Gaspar's personal and priestly life, and the internal evidence of this influence in the *Writings of the Founder*; the chapter concludes with some comments on the significance of this salesian source for a lay expression of gasparian spirituality. Before approaching this task, however,

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<sup>40</sup>Robert J. Furey, *So I'm Not Perfect: A Psychology of Humility* (New York: Alba House, 1986), 7-21 passim.

<sup>41</sup>For biographical information on de Sales, see Maurice Henry-Couïannier, *Saint Francis de Sales and His Friends*, trans. Veronica Morrow (New York: Alba House, 1973) and André Ravier, *Francis de Sales Sage and Saint*, trans. Joseph Bowler (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988). For a summary of his doctrine and influence as a theologian of the spiritual life see Michael Müller, *Saint Francis de Sales* (Visaskapatnam, India: S.F.S. Publications, 1984) and the article by Pierre Serouet, "François de Sales (saint)," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Fascicules XXXV-XXXVI (Paris: Beauchesne, 1963): 1058-98.

it would be useful to outline the major principles of salesian spirituality according to those familiar with this school of Christian spirituality.

### *Principles of Salesian Spirituality*

Wendy Wright and Joseph Power describe six salesian themes they consider the "set of assumptions about God and humankind and about how they are related to each other"<sup>42</sup> characteristic of Francis de Sales' spirituality. These themes, which provide an orientation to salesian doctrine sufficient for our purposes, are:

*I* - a view of the divinity, inspired by Christian humanism, which portrays God above all in terms of love and merciful compassion, and who calls all people irrespective of their vocation to intimate communion; this Christian humanism takes a correspondingly optimistic view of the capacity of the human person to enter into loving relationship with God;

*II* - an emphasis on the goodness of God which permeates the created order; this goodness invites a human response of perfect conformity and submission to the divine will that must be continuously discerned by one seeking communion with God;

*III* - a recognition that the devout life can be lived authentically and deeply in a secular context and in the midst of one's daily occupations; this contextual aspect of salesian spirituality also values highly the cultivation of spiritual friendships and interpersonal relationships, especially the privileged rapport associated with spiritual direction;

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<sup>42</sup>Wendy Wright, and Joseph Powers, Introduction to *Francis de Sales, Jane de Chantal: Letters of Spiritual Direction*, trans. Pèronne Thibert (New York: Paulist Press; Classics of Western Spirituality, 1988), 34; the themes summarized here are treated on pp. 34-69. Different authors, of course, have slightly different perspectives, giving to one or the other theme more or less emphasis, while adding or combining others. Cf. A. Pedrini, *Le Grandi Scuole della Spiritualità Cristiana*, 530-542 and Joseph Baraniewicz, "Fundamentals of Salesian Spirituality," *Salesian Studies* (October 1963): 75-90.

IV - an emphasis on the liberty God bestows on the human person which is never violated; this freedom of the children of God is, however, fully realized when the human response to God's love is one of pure "indifference" to the divine good pleasure; growth in authentic liberty is one of the primary goals of spiritual direction in the salesian tradition;

V - an emphasis on the interior nature of a spiritual life that can never be wholly identified with exterior practices; these, rather, must spring from a prior and essential interiority of the heart;

VI - an appreciation for the ordinary ways of the spiritual life, especially those "little virtues" identified with the salesian spirit, i.e. humility, meekness, gentleness, and simplicity (salesian *douceur*).<sup>43</sup>

With these themes in mind, we turn to evidence of Gaspar's thoroughly salesian approach to Christian spirituality.

### *Origin of the Salesian Influence*

The founder's acquaintance with de Sales stems at least from the time of his exile when Albertini tutored him and other detainees in spiritual theology, paying special attention to the works of the bishop of Geneva; this is undoubtedly one of the major contributions made by Gaspar's mentor to his spiritual formation.

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<sup>43</sup>For those virtues embodying the salesian "spirit" see also Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, 121-206; Jean Pierre Camus, *The Spirit of St. Francis de Sales*, trans. "J.S." (London: Burns & Oates, 1910); François Charnot, *Ignatius Loyola and Francis de Sales*, trans. M. Renelle (St. Louis: Herder and Herder, 1966), 231-49; William Marceau, *Optimism in the Works of St. Francis de Sales* (Visakhapatnam, India: S.F.S. Publications, 1983), 165-96; Thomas McHugh, "The Distinctive Salesian Virtues: Humility and Gentleness," *Salesian Studies* (October 1963): 45-74; Wendy Wright, and Joseph Powers, *Letters of Spiritual Direction*, 62-9.

In an incomplete manuscript entitled *Principia Morali ac Mysticae Theologiae*, written after Gaspar's death by Anselmo Basilici, who was present with Albertini in Corsica and a close friend of the founder, the following testimony to this early influence of de Sales is found:

*The Canon Gaspar Del Bufalo so revered the precious book of St. Francis de Sales called the "Philothea", that he often and emphatically impressed on me its importance and usefulness, so much so that I have decided to recommend the book not only by word but also in writing, having first studied it with the renowned Canon and later, on the island of Corsica, with Francis Albertini, Bishop of Terracina. The strength of friendship which united me to Bishop Albertini and Canon Gaspar while they were alive has moved me to offer the present analysis of moral principles. I have included, in the form of an appendix, an outline of the general principles which, together with the aforementioned and highly esteemed Albertini, I have considered important in the works of St. Francis de Sales.*<sup>44</sup>

That Albertini was imbued with a salesian spirituality is attested to elsewhere as well. A religious whom he directed at the Visitation in Rome, Matilde Datti, remarks that he was so thoroughly in possession of the salesian spirit that he was "in everything and to everyone like another St. Francis de Sales."<sup>45</sup> In the preface to Albertini's work on humility written by Giuseppe Visconti, another close friend of Gaspar and disciple of Albertini, he notes that "as St. Francis de Sales wrote an introduction to the devout life, so did Mons. Francis Albertini compose the *Introduzione alla Vita Umile*. . . In it one will recognize a very gentle style like that of the great spiritual master, St. Francis de Sales."<sup>46</sup> All of which

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<sup>44</sup>Anselmo Basilici, *Principia Moralia ac Mysticae Theologiae*, MS found under the heading "*Scritti di diversi autori su materie morali e ascetiche usati da S. Gaspare e da lui utilizzati per il ministero e per i suoi scritti*", Archives of the Italian Province, Congregation of Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood, Piazza dei Crociferi, Rome, Section "D. Luigi Contegiacomo". Cf. *Lettere di S. Gaspare del Bufalo*, vol. I, 145-6 and vol. III-I, 107.

<sup>45</sup>A. Rey, *Gaspare del Bufalo*, vol. I, 259.

<sup>46</sup>G. Visconti, preface to the *Introduzione*, 5-6. In fact, the work bears several seemingly deliberate external similarities to de Sales' own book, such as the dedication to "Filotapinosi" (the apparent counterpart of "Philothea"--thought to include Gaspar's sister-in-law and

makes clear how Gaspar's own appreciation of de Sales came, not surprisingly, via his spiritual director, Albertini. The salesian character of gasparian spirituality can be seen then as yet another instance of Gaspar's "having done nothing but carry out what Mons. Albertini had set forth."<sup>47</sup>

#### *External Evidence of Salesian Influence*

The influence of the bishop of Geneva on the personal spirituality and comportment of the founder is recorded in the depositions given at the processes for Gaspar's beatification and by his biographers; they provide external evidence of the salesian influence on the Canon Del Bufalo.

Gaspar's great personal devotion to de Sales is known from his first biographer and early companion, Antonio Santelli, who records that the founder belonged to a pious association called the "Congregation of St. Francis de Sales", wearing beneath his clothing a small silver cross which was the sign of membership in the sodality. Gaspar carefully guarded this cross and kept it on his person until death when, according to the association's

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niece), as well as the work's division into five parts. Within the *Introduzione* itself, as with its companion volume, *Gabinetto Mistico*, there are many citations which indicate Albertini's indebtedness to de Sales. (See *Introduzione*, 19, 107, 122, 130, 135; *Gabinetto Mistico*, 18, 23, 24, 25, 42 (n.), 48 and the appended *Lettere Spirituali*, no. 19, to a "laywoman", December 10, 1810, 112-3).

Moreover, in the *Gabinetto Mistico*, 29-51, Albertini engages in an extended discussion on the degrees of humility comparable to those developed by Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, trans. John Ryan (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1972), 132-51. It could therefore be suggested that Francis' insistence on humility being "honored and cherished. . . more than any other among all the moral virtues" (*Introduction*, 132) moved Albertini, and consequently Gaspar, to make humility the cornerstone of their own spirituality.

<sup>47</sup>Pietro Pellegrini, *Ord. Pr. Alb.*, fol. 1977.

rules, it was returned. The same witness notes how the founder celebrated the anniversary of de Sales' death on December 28 with special devotion and that, coincidentally, Gaspar himself died on the same day in 1837.<sup>48</sup> Merlini adds that among the images venerated in the apartment Gaspar maintained in Rome were those of Mary, Joseph, Francis Xavier and Francis de Sales.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>See Antonio Santelli, *Della Vita del Servo di Dio D. Gaspare del Bufalo Missionario Apostolico e Fondatore dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue di Gesù*, vol. I, unpublished MS (General Archives of the Congregation of Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood, Rome), fol. 32-3 and *Ord. Pr. Alb.* I, fol. 1712 and 1801; cf. *Ep.* IV, n. 1693, to Maria Nazzarena De Castris, December 27, 1827, 434: "Tomorrow is the anniversary of St. Francis de Sales' death, the great master and guide of souls. I will ask for guidance, both for you and for me." V. Pallotti, *Gaspare Del Bufalo, come l'ho conosciuto*, 178-9, also mentions Gaspar's membership in the salesian association and reports a miraculous healing of a priest after the founder's death connected with the cord on which the association's distinctive cross worn by Gaspar hung.

Gaspar seems to have been part of the flowering of interest in salesian spirituality that occurred in nineteenth century Italy, especially among the clergy. See Arnaldo Pedrini, "L'Umanesimo Devoto' di S. Francesco de Sales," in *Le Grandi Scuole della Spiritualità Cristiana*, ed. Ermanno Ancilli (Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Spiritualità del Teresianum, 1984), 546-8. Of particular interest is Pedrini's mention of a "salesian cenacle" located at "S. Galla" in Rome which consisted of 56 members (to commemorate de Sales' age at the time of his death) who met monthly for spiritual exercises and were required to read a passage from de Sales each day. Gaspar had revitalized a hospice for the infirm named "S. Galla" during his seminary days, and took an active interest in it throughout his priestly life. If, as seems possible, the cenacle described by Pedrini and the association to which Gaspar belonged are one and the same, both being identified with "S. Galla", then further evidence of an early, programmatic influence of de Sales on Gaspar, pre-dating his exile from Rome, could be shown. This supposition would require, however, the exact meaning to be known of a biographical note on Gaspar which indicates he belonged to a "Pious Union of St. Francis de Sales" erected in the church of the salesian nuns." (*SF* XIX, fol. 231)

<sup>49</sup>Merlini, *Un Santo Scruta un Santo*, 365. For the role of Mary in Gaspar's devotional life, see Winfried Wermter, *St. Gaspar and the Blessed Virgin Mary*, C.P.P.S. Resources 2 (Carthagen, Ohio: Messenger Press, 1988). De Sales' strong support for the doctrine of the immaculate conception might have something to do with Gaspar's own vehement defense of the same. In one of his many sermons on the subject, the founder refers to Book 2, Ch. 6 of De Sales' *Treatise on the Love of God* to bolster his argument in favor of the as yet undefined dogma (*SF* XV B, fol. 438).

As for Gaspar's devotion to St. Joseph, this seems to have developed over time, and

In his external comportment, the founder was noted for possessing the "spirit of gentle kindness"<sup>50</sup> characteristic of de Sales. This spirit was specially evident whenever Gaspar curbed his excitable temperament in the face of some insult or contradiction, for he saw in de Sales someone "much inclined to anger but who, mortifying himself, became an example of patience and mildness."<sup>51</sup>

Likewise, referring to de Sales, the founder counsels:

. . .never give yourself over to wrath, or open the doors to it under any pretext because, once given entrance, it is no longer in our hands should we wish to release or control it. The remedy is to reject it at once by turning your mind to something

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may have had a salesian connection also. Letters of Gaspar preserved by Santelli to Maria Giuseppa Pitorri testify to this:

"I feel myself growing in devotion to St. Joseph. . . I see in the superior part of my spirit the reasons for commending this devotion. I wish to be drawn, attracted and completely inspired by this person in whom I consider myself to have received a gift from God. I seek and implore such a gift, saying with St. Francis de Sales, 'I belong wholly to St. Joseph.' I like this devotion for reasons, over and beyond those inculcated by the Catholic faith, because it deepens the inner, hidden life so dear to me.

. . .I now invoke this saint often, and I hope to see in myself the wonderful effects of such devotion. I have therefore ordered things as follows: after Jesus and Mary, Joseph will be the special protector of my soul while St. Francis Xavier, whom I can never forget, is the special protector of my ministry." (*Ep.* IX, n. 3785 [3SA, 31SA], 157,164; cf. *SF* VII, fol. 162, XVA, fol. 114, XVB, fol. 436-8).

For Gaspar's life-long devotion to Xavier, whom he considered a model of missionary zeal, placing his Congregation under Francis' patronage, see *SF* XVA, fol. 090-2, fol. 136-7, fol. 322-5).

<sup>50</sup>A. Santelli, *Vita*, vol. I, fol. 32.

<sup>51</sup>*SF* XVA, fol. 290; according to Santelli, *Vita*, vol. I, fol. 32, Gaspar attributed his self-control in this regard to de Sales' intercession. Cf. Amilcare Rey, "Antimonie fra natura e grazia nel Beato Gaspare Del Bufalo," *SR* XXXIII, nos. 11-12 (novembre-dicembre 1947): 2-4; XXXIV, nos. 1-2 (gennaio-febbraio 1948): 4-7 and nos. 5-6 (maggio-giugno 1948): 4-9, for an interesting look at Gaspar's struggle with his temperament, making the acquisition of salesian gentleness all the more impressive.

else and, without saying a word, turning to God; if you find that anger has already set foot in your spirit, try in that case to calm yourself, and then strive to practice some acts of humility and kindness toward the person with whom you are upset. But do all of this meekly, and without harshness, because it is very important not to aggravate this wound. In this matter of controlling his temper, St. [Francis de Sales] had to struggle for 22 years of his life: "I have made a pact with my tongue," wrote de Sales, "not to speak when my heart is troubled. . . ." It is necessary to use kindness not only with reason, but also against it.

Be certain (de Sales again) all such thoughts that disturb us are not from God who is the source of peace, but from the devil, self-love, or else from the too great estimation we have of ourselves.<sup>52</sup>

So high was Gaspar's admiration for de Sales' well-tempered character that he claims, "[De Sales] owed more--and for this he also has greater merit before God--to his mild disposition than to the many successes his zeal produced among human beings. Francis de Sales was sanctified by his meekness [and] the Church is triumphant in him because of it."<sup>53</sup>

Gaspar's imitation of de Sales extended to matters of ecclesiastical decorum as well, especially eating and dressing habits; the Canon's appearance was always neat, and at table he partook of the available fare while often practicing some discrete mortification. Hence, Maria Giuseppa Pitorri testifies that Gaspar was "abstemious in matters of food and drink. . . . He was very meticulous about his appearance and loved cleanliness; in this way, he imitated St. Francis de Sales in everything relating to his station in life."<sup>54</sup>

Thus his attitude toward creature comforts was one of salesian moderation, which neither disdained reasonable provision for human well-being (especially to ease somewhat the difficult burdens of the ministry) nor sought after things that were superfluous or

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<sup>52</sup>*SF* XVB, fol. 440. Cf. *Ep.* IV, n. 1680, to Orazio Bracaglia, November 20, 1827, 421.

<sup>53</sup>*SF* XVB, fol. 454.

<sup>54</sup>*Ep.* IX, 3785, 152.

unbecoming to the priestly state. In matters of self-denial Santelli testifies, for instance, that "by suggestion of his director, Mons. Albertini, [Gaspar] followed the spirit of St. Francis de Sales. He observed interior mortification and did not care for external display."<sup>55</sup>

In short, Gaspar was regarded for his practice of those typically salesian virtues which include gentleness in one's dealings with others; external propriety and courtesy; moderation and simplicity in all things; cheerfulness of spirit, and that humility which neither shrinks from duty or the use of talents, nor strives after others' adulation or human respect. Gaspar's preference was always for a hidden life far from that notoriety or distinction which he bore only out of necessity in the course of fulfilling his legitimate responsibilities.<sup>56</sup>

#### *Internal Evidence of Salesian Influence*

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<sup>55</sup>A. Santelli, *Pr. Ord. Alb.*, vol. IV, fol. 1790; cf. *Ep.* III, n. 1187, to M. Maria Nazzarena, July 2, 1825, 367. This view may need modification since in fact Gaspar did not eschew harsher forms of penance. Santelli himself adds in the passage cited how the founder made public use of the discipline during popular missions. In an extensive sermon outline, Gaspar, *SF XVA*, fol. 290-1, writes of mortification and is quite explicit that penance, together with prayer, is the "principal means of attaining holiness. . . Humility of spirit and bodily mortification are the. . . indivisible, constitutive parts of perfect conversion." In the same document, he refers to de Sales' sayings: "As salt keeps meat from spoiling, penance preserves us from sin"; "What one does not see, one does not desire"; and "We should eat to live and not live to eat."

It seems, in keeping with the general picture we have of Gaspar, he would normally avoid drawing attention to himself in a matter such as penance, unless he judged it of spiritual benefit to others. Salesian moderation in this or any spiritual practice would better fit his desire to do all things possible for the love of God and neighbor without, at the same time, inviting either the admiration or reproach of others.

<sup>56</sup>For other references to Gaspar's imitation of de Sales and his adherence to a salesian spirit see: Innocenzo Betti, *Ord. Pr. Alb.*, vol. V, fol. 2219; V. Severini, et. al., *Gaspare Del Bufalo: conosciuto da vicino*, 126, 132; G. Merlini, *Un Santo Scruta un Santo*, 308, 352, 354, 369, 385, 388, 544, 603, 621, and A. Rey, *Gaspare Del Bufalo*, vol. I, 32; vol. II, 234, 237, 252, 256, 274.

Beyond this external testimony to Gaspar's assimilation of salesian teaching, there exist in his *Writings* numerous and varied references to the works of de Sales and the principles of spiritual theology and direction inculcated in them. There is little question that Francis de Sales was for St. Gaspar the principal guide in questions of spirituality whether in the realm of theory or practice, the founder having made "a constant study of the works of the same for many long years."<sup>57</sup>

Initial evidence of this is found in the enthusiastic comments Gaspar makes on his study of de Sales' works; the following words written from his prison cell in Imola to Lucrezia Ginnasi, a woman under his direction, show the importance he attached to these

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<sup>57</sup>A. Santelli, *Vita*, vol. I, fol. 32. This is not to minimize the importance of other authors whom Gaspar cites and obviously recognizes as authorities in ascetical theology. Special mention should be made of the *Practice of Christian Perfection* by Alphonsus Rodriguez SJ (+1616) which was read aloud daily in the mission houses and which the founder recommended to spiritual directors for its ascetical teaching, and often gave as a gift to seminarians (see Merlini, *Un Santo Scruta un Santo*, 338; A. Rey, *Gaspare del Bufalo*, vol. II, 53; *Ep.* I, 150; II, 112, 138, 228; III, 170, 194; V, 197). Rodriguez' contribution to spirituality is discussed by Manuel Ruiz Jurado, "Rodriguez, Alphonse," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Fascicules LXXXIX-XC (Paris: Beauchesne, 1988): 854-9.

Moreover, Gaspar's *predicabili*, or sermon material, is replete with biblical, patristic and theological citations indicating the founder's broad erudition in the sacred sciences; unfortunately, this material is still in the process of being edited with few of Gaspar's sermons in publication. Still, his correspondence alone suffices to demonstrate Gaspar's learning and the authorities on whom he relied. These include Teresa of Avila (see *Ep.* I, 47, 110, 112, 113, 119, 120, 123, 135, 136, 160, 163, 194, 217; II, 377, 436) and the other Carmelite masters, John of the Cross (see *Ep.* I, 119, 120, 137) and John of Avila (see *Ep.* I, 63, 98, 112, 113, 123, 133, 189). The letters of Francis Xavier also seem to have been an important source of spiritual guidance (see *Ep.* I, 82, 85, 187; II, 216, 409; III, 30, 38, 60). References may also be found to Bernard (see *Ep.* I, 95, 98, 105, 150, 159); Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi (see *Ep.* I, 120); Catherine of Genoa (see *Ep.* I, 124); John Tauler (see *Ep.* I, 137) and John Chrysostom (see *Ep.* I, 107, 134, 162). Most of these citations are from the formative period of the exile, in which, as noted earlier, he delved deeply into the writings of the spiritual masters under the direction of Albertini. None of these authors, however, was to have the long-term, comprehensive influence on Gaspar's spirituality that Francis de Sales would have.

works: "I am presently reading the *Theotima* of de Sales which I will soon return to you. . . .When I have delivered to you the volume in question, I shall then, if you please, gladly read next the rest of the works of so great a saint and which in so many ways are suited to my spirit."<sup>58</sup>

It remains to be seen, based on the textual evidence, which salesian principles are truly fundamental to gasparian spirituality. This requires further examination of the founder's *Writings*, in which reference to de Sales is either explicit, or else Gaspar's dependence on the Savoyard's thought is clearly implied.

#### Salesian themes in the *Writings of the Founder*

*Holiness of life according to one's state.* One major development in the history of Christian spirituality largely attributable to de Sales, and the reason he is considered by some to be the "originator of modern spirituality,"<sup>59</sup> is the insistence that the perfection of Christian life is to be sought by all people regardless of their vocation or state in life. His *Introduction to the Devout Life* is primarily a manual designed to assist the laity in their spiritual formation and to insure that laypeople exercise an authentic spirituality in the secular sphere. Thus he writes at the beginning of the work:

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<sup>58</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 61, April 29, 1813, 144. The reference, of course, is to the *Treatise on the Love of God*, trans. John Ryan, 2 vols. (Rockford, Illinois: TAN Books and Publishers, 1974). For other recommendations of de Sales' works by Gaspar see *Ep.* II, 75, 228 and III, 20, 440; see also Paolina Del Bufalo, and Luigia Del Bufalo, *Gaspare Del Bufalo: il mio venerabile zio*, 29, where Gaspar's sister-in-law, recalling the founder's devotion to de Sales, notes how sometimes after the evening meal in the apartment they shared, he would read some of de Sales' letters to her and her daughter.

<sup>59</sup>Jordan Aumann, *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 217.

When he created things God commanded plants to bring forth their fruits, each one according to its kind, and in like manner he commands Christians, the living plants of his Church, to bring forth the fruits of devotion, each according to his position and vocation. . . .Not only is this true, but the practice of devotion must be adapted to the strength, activities, and duties of each particular person. . . .When [devotion] goes contrary to a man's lawful vocation, it is undoubtedly false.<sup>60</sup>

Without always naming de Sales as his source, Gaspar clearly demonstrates his adherence to this fundamental salesian teaching. For instance, he writes to a priest friend that:

The business of our profit and perfection surely does not consist in doing great things, but rather in doing the will of God and sanctifying ourselves along that path by which he is pleased to lead us. Now what matters a great deal for success in so great an enterprise is the exact fulfillment of those ordinary and common actions which God wills us to perform in the state in which he has placed us in his mercy. This, in my opinion, constitutes the essence of a holy and virtuous life; on this depends our progress in good and the more abundant bestowal on us of sovereign benefits.<sup>61</sup>

In a letter of spiritual direction to the laywoman, Lucrezia Ginnasi, he likewise advises: "In the present life, God leads souls by various paths in order to make them more worthy of those singular favors by which he guides them to possess the most sublime virtues."<sup>62</sup> To his niece Luigia, whose spiritual progress greatly interested Gaspar, he writes: "[I trust] that you are every moment more perfectly in union with God in the study of perfection itself--to which we must all respectively aspire in accordance with our state in life and vocation."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, 43-4 passim. Cf. William Gallagher, "The Christian's Vocation to Perfection: Scriptural and Salesian Foundations," *Salesian Studies* (January 1964): 43-79, esp. 61ff.

<sup>61</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 43, to Annibale Ginnasi, February-March, 1813, 96.

<sup>62</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 51, February-April, 1813, 118.

<sup>63</sup>*Ep.* III, n. 881, to Luigia Del Bufalo, April 28, 1824, 70.

Similarly, in a discourse for newlywed couples, Gaspar writes,

Just as the great and all-powerful Lord has destined creatures without the faculty of reason to different ends, so also rational beings are destined for various purposes, always according to the wise plan of his admirable providence. Thus, there are vocations to different states, and the multiform grace of the Lord fashions those mysterious paths by which it pleases God to lead his beloved children to the same end; in this way the sovereign decrees of God's eternal wisdom may be fulfilled. . . .A soul that knows how to conduct itself according to the light of faith and religion, whatever the state chosen for it, must exult in the Lord's will and find fulfillment therein, remembering what the scriptures say. . . .For in both the Old and New Testaments we see illustrious personages who were led by God in different ways to the most eminent sanctity because each one was receptive to the respective action of grace in their own unique vocation. And how many couples are commemorated in Church history who, with the aroma of their virtue, were made models of evangelical perfection.<sup>64</sup>

In a lengthy sermon devoted entirely to the subject, Gaspar bemoans those who err concerning the universal call to perfection, "think[ing] holiness is only for contemplatives and say[ing] they are content with mediocrity: such would attend to both Christ and Baal. . . .[Yet], it is undeniable that the Christian is called by God to perfection. . . .[Nor] would I want you to form a false idea of holiness, namely, that sanctity consists in doing great or marvelous things. No, Christians, perfection is directed to the ordinary works that pertain to our state in life, and are willed by God. These make us holy."<sup>65</sup>

Similarly, conference notes prepared by the founder entitled *Perfection* are divided into two sections, one for religious the other for laymen; in the latter part, he speaks of the moral and spiritual difficulties encountered by those in the world and the means to combat

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<sup>64</sup>*SF* XVB, fol. 722. Cf. *SF* XVB, fol. 609-12, a sermon for All Saints Day: "The perfection of the saints is like the difference in faces. Just as natural physiognomy distinguishes us in the eyes of the world, the perfection wrought by grace distinguishes us in the eyes of God. . . .Holiness flowers in every state, and every state has its particular character." (609)

<sup>65</sup>*SF* XIX, fol. 13-4 passim.

them, concluding that "the affairs of life should be seen as occasions for virtue, the apostolate and for one's sanctification. . . ." <sup>66</sup>

Referring to the *Introduction to the Devout Life* explicitly, Gaspar makes clear his dependence on de Sales for this teaching on the perfection to be sought by all people in the ordinary things of daily life:

In Ch. 35 of his *Philothea*, St. Francis de Sales says, "The sacred Spouse in the Canticle of Canticles says that his bride has ravished his heart with one of her eyes and one of her hairs. Of all the outer parts of the human body none is nobler in structure or activity than the eye and none of less value than the hair. Hence the sacred Spouse implies that he is pleased to accept the great deeds of devout persons, that their least and lowest deeds are also acceptable to him, and that to serve him as he wishes we must have great care to serve him well both in great, lofty matters and in small, unimportant things. With love we can capture his heart by the one just as well as by the other." <sup>67</sup>

Like de Sales then, Gaspar places the way of devotion firmly within the context of fidelity to one's state and vocation, holding in particular that a secular ambience is not an impediment to a serious Christian life; on the contrary, daily occupations are occasion for growth in virtue and holiness. <sup>68</sup>

*Christian confidence and optimism.* A second feature of salesian doctrine evident in Gaspar's *Writings* is the confidence he displays in a person's ability to make progress in the Christian life. De Sales is known for this optimism concerning human nature, including the conviction that humanity, despite original sin, has retained a natural goodness as well as an inclination to good. <sup>69</sup> This salesian theme is intimately joined to the so-called "devout

<sup>66</sup>*SF* XVB, fol. 414.

<sup>67</sup>*SF* XVB, fol. 433-4; (translation of *Introduction* by J. Ryan, 213).

<sup>68</sup>See John Connolly, "The Union of Charity and Fidelity according to St. Francis de Sales," *Salesian Studies* (October 1963): 91-103.

<sup>69</sup>Typical of this view is de Sales' recounting of the conversion of the pagan Pachomius (*Treatise on the Love of God*, vol. I, 136-7) which Gaspar relates in a schema "on good

humanism" for which de Sales is also known and which provided a Christian response to the humanist currents prevalent during the renaissance. Salesian optimism also holds for the sufficiency of means provided by God for advancement in the spiritual life, human weakness and temptations notwithstanding.<sup>70</sup>

Nowhere in the founder's *Writings* does this confident approach to spirituality appear more clearly than in his letters to the noblewoman, Lucrezia Ginnasi. In the warm and extensive correspondence with her during the period of his exile, Gaspar can be observed applying the teaching of de Sales as if to his own "Philothea".<sup>71</sup> As her spiritual director, Gaspar constantly encourages her to have confidence in God's infinite goodness which makes him the most worthy object of her love. In the following selections from this correspondence, the fruits of Gaspar's study of de Sales are especially evident:

St. Francis de Sales, writing to a certain lady, tells her: "I beseech you, be courageous in that confidence you must have in our Lord who has loved you by inviting you so humbly into his service; who loves you even now for continuing in it, and who will love you by granting you perseverance. I surely do not understand why souls given to the divine goodness cannot always be cheerful. Is there any other happiness equal to this? Neither should the imperfections you commit disturb

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example" in *SF XVA*, fol. 294c.

<sup>70</sup>For a valuable discussion on the role of optimism in the spirituality of Francis de Sales as well as the confidence born from it, see W. Marceau, *Optimism in the Works of St. Francis de Sales*, esp. 34-39, 165-167. Cf. Antony Kolencherry, ed., *St. Francis de Sales and Humanism* (Bangalore, India: S.F.S. Publications, 1984) and M. Müller, *Saint Francis de Sales*, 45-75. The opposite tendency, identified with jansenism's pessimistic view of the human condition, was still prevalent in Gaspar's time; his adherence to salesian optimism no doubt served as an antidote for the lingering effects of this current in spirituality.

<sup>71</sup>See Wendy Wright, *Bond of Perfection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985) for a study of de Sales' approach to the relationship of spiritual direction. That similar relationships were important to Gaspar should become progressively clearer throughout this section of the thesis. Cf. Franco Molinari, "La spiritualità di Gaspare Del Bufalo attraverso la corrispondenza con la contessa Malaspina Caracciolo," in *S. Gaspare Del Bufalo e Piacenza Nell'Età Napoleonica* (Piacenza: Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano, 1987), 41-52.

you--provided that we do not wish to stay in them or ever shower on them our affections. Be very much at peace therefore, and live in gentleness and humility of heart."<sup>72</sup>

In several other letters of spiritual direction to the same Ginnasi, Gaspar continues to show his high regard for the well-known optimism of the bishop of Geneva:

St. Francis de Sales in one of his letters to a gentleman puts it thus: "Anyone who has a true desire to serve our Lord and flee from sin should not in any way afflict himself with thoughts of death, nor of God's judgments, since no matter how much one ought to fear both these things, such fear must never be so terrible that it oppresses the spirit's vigor; rather, such fear should be so mixed with confidence in God's kindness that on this account it becomes sweet."<sup>73</sup>

Once again, he encourages this woman who seems to have been easily given to discouragement:

St. Francis de Sales, in one of his letters, writes: "For the rest, it is always necessary to have courage and, if we should experience some faintheartedness, let us run to the foot of the Cross, placing ourselves among those holy fragrances--amidst those heavenly perfumes--and we shall surely be comforted." And elsewhere, speaking to a lady, he says: "My daughter, nourish your soul in the spirit of cordial confidence in God; to the extent that you find yourself surrounded by imperfections and miseries, stir up your courage to hope as well. . . .Preserve a spirit of holy cheer". . . . [He] concludes: "It is necessary that humility be courageous and brave in the confidence it must have in God's goodness."<sup>74</sup>

When his directee needed support in moments of trial, especially interior difficulties arising from temptations and scruples, Gaspar turns repeatedly to de Sales for the following advice on how to deal with such problems:

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<sup>72</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 62, April 29, 1813, 149; cf. *SF XVB*, fol. 654-5.

<sup>73</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 49, February-April, 1813, 112; cf. *SF XVB*, fol. 431. See *SF XVB*, fol. 517-8, where Gaspar encourages people to have "confident sorrow", referring to the following words of de Sales: "The sorrow of the truly contrite is full of peace and consolation, for the true penitent, the more he or she is sorry for having offended God, the more he or she trusts in having been forgiven, and the more consolation grows in the spirit."

<sup>74</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 52, February-April, 1813, 124.

St. Francis de Sales used to say that "temptations of whatever sort disturb us so because we worry about them and fear them too much. We are overly sensitive if, as soon as we have the slightest thought contrary to our resolutions, it seems to us everything is upset. Let the wind blow, and do not mistake the movement of leaves for the noise of weaponry." "The resolve (de Sales) not to consent to any sin whatever, however small, assures us we are in God's grace....It is right to hold as certain that all those thoughts which cause us to fret are not from God, who is the prince of peace". . . .De Sales further remarks: "Do not enter into discussion with the devil and he will tire of shouting, leaving you in peace. Do not become enamored of combating temptations with dialogue, or by disputing with them; simply return to Jesus with your heart. It is an excellent sign when the enemy storms the door with blows because it shows that he cannot obtain what he wants. . . .As long as the temptation is displeasing, there is nothing to fear since it would not be displeasing if it were not unwanted."<sup>75</sup>

Finally, Gaspar evidences this theme of confident optimism when citing a famous incident from the life of de Sales involving a youthful temptation to despair over his salvation, an experience that was decisive for Francis' own developing spirituality. The founder refers this episode to people faced with thoughts likely to produce a pessimistic outlook in spiritual matters. Gaspar counsels de Sales' example of someone who, through hope-filled prayer, recovered "tranquility, calm, and interior peace of spirit."<sup>76</sup> This detail

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<sup>75</sup>*Ep.*, I, n. 46, February-April, 1813, p. 104, to Lucrezia Ginnasi. Cf. *SF* XVB, fol. 431 where Gaspar repeats most of this patchwork of advice, referring specifically to de Sales' *Spiritual Directory*, his *Letters*, and a minor work of *Maxims Concerning the Virtues*.

<sup>76</sup>See *SF* XVA, fol. 367; cf. *SF* and XVB, fol. 715. Francis' own experience of temptation to despair ended, according to Michael Müller, *Saint Francis de Sales*, 7, with the realization that:

damnation was really a very unworthy glorification of God. No, God Who so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son to die for it, did not intend us for hell but for heaven. And so the frightful struggle ended in a triumphant optimism; and the end of the time of suffering was the birthday of that joyous outlook on life which was inseparable from him henceforward. From the theological point of view, Francis had turned to Molinism. That was the primary result of his experience. As a secondary result came his ascetical exhortation to a complete indifference to the values of this life--even to the extent of resigning one's own salvation. Through this acute tension which St. Francis himself calls an "impossible state," he gained yet a

from de Sales' life, which helped shape his own optimistic outlook, seems also to have helped Gaspar adopt a similarly positive view.

*Indifferent conformity to the divine will.* A third feature of Gaspar's spirituality characteristic of a salesian approach to the Christian life, is related to this unshaken belief in divine providence; for confident optimism in God's goodness is connected to salesian "indifference": the intention to conform oneself in all things to the dispositions of providence. In this view, progress in the spiritual life always parallels a person's increasing abandonment to the divine will; perfect conformity, or union, of the human and divine wills eventually entails for de Sales a total annihilation of the former in favor of the latter.<sup>77</sup>

This affinity between the two themes is seen in the following passage from de Sales reported by his close friend Jean Pierre Camus:

"Our Lord loves with a most tender love those who are so happy as to abandon themselves wholly to his fatherly care, letting themselves be governed by his divine Providence without any idle speculations as to whether the workings of this Providence will be useful to them, to their profit, or painful to them, to their loss, and this because they are well assured that nothing can be sent, nothing permitted by this paternal goodness and most loving heart, which will not be a source of good and profit to them. All that is required is that they should place all their confidence in him."<sup>78</sup>

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third life-value: a deep understanding of the tormenting nights of the soul, and a deep sympathy with them. Men acquire the gentleness with which to heal suffering in others, only by the personal experience of similar suffering.

<sup>77</sup>See Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, vol. II, Books 8 and 9, 57-140.

<sup>78</sup>J. P. Camus, *The Spirit of St. Francis de Sales*, 279. Cf. de Sales' sermon, "God's Spiritual Providence" in *The Sermons of St. Francis de Sales for Lent Given in 1622*, ed. Lewis Fiorelli, trans. Nuns of the Visitation, vol. 3 (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, 1987), 116-28, and his spiritual conference "On Confidence," in *The Spiritual Conferences of Francis de Sales* (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1962), 16-28.

A number of places in Gaspar's *Writings* indicate his dependence on de Sales' doctrine of abandonment to divine providence and indifferent conformity to God's will.

Thus, he writes to Lucrezia Ginnasi:

To the holy Mother Jane Frances de Chantal, who for forty-one years was afflicted by terrible interior trials including temptations, fears of being in disfavor with God, as well as being abandoned by him, de Sales wrote thus: 'You must serve your Savior only out of love for his will, with the privation of every consolation, and with this flood of sadness and fright.' He also wrote of her that her heart was like a deaf musician who, while singing beautifully could derive no pleasure from it.<sup>79</sup>

In a sermon entitled, "*Whoever loves Jesus suffers all things for him*," Gaspar repeats this advice of Francis to de Chantal and cites a number of other maxims along related lines:

It is a deception, says St. Francis de Sales, to want to measure devotion by the consolations we receive; true devotion in the ways of God consists in having a resolute will to accomplish whatever is pleasing to God.

St. Francis de Sales says that God is as worthy of our love when he sends us consolation as when he sends tribulation.

. . . [He also] says that the resolution not to consent even to the slightest sin assures us we are in the grace of God.

. . . [Likewise], the mortifications which come to us on God's part, and from human beings by his permission, are always more precious than ones that are children of our own will. This being a general rule: where there is less of our own choice in a matter, there is greater fervor for God, and greater profit to ourselves.

. . . [He] used to say that when a house is on fire people throw their things out the window, which means when a person is wholly given to God, he or she seeks detachment from every earthly affection.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 51, February-April, 1813, 119. Cf. *SF XVA*, fol. 337-8: "God is a good Father and does not abandon those who trust in him. St. Francis de Sales was the director of St. Jane Frances de Chantal, foundress of the Order of the Visitation. Once she had no chance to speak with him for three years, after which the opportunity came, but he spoke to her only of monasteries and said nothing of matters pertaining to conscience or her spirit. Learn then to conform yourselves to the will of God."

<sup>80</sup>*SF XVB*, fol. 439-40; cf. *Ep.* I, n. 80, to Annibale Ginnasi, September, 1813, 189.

In a letter to Ginnasi's relative, Bianca, which refers to de Sales indirectly by mention of the "devout life", Gaspar gives a similar exhortation:

Practice great confidence in the divine goodness and thus you will avoid all those worries with which the devil seeks to upset you. Pray a great deal about your vocation and abandon yourself to the always adorable will of the Lord; he will speak clearly to your heart. And since the beginning of, as well as progress in, the devout life depends entirely on interior renunciation, let this be especially dear to you. Be generous in overcoming those obstacles which you encounter on the way of perfection; be magnanimous in fulfilling your desires conformed to the divine good pleasure.<sup>81</sup>

To a religious, the founder recommends not being overly concerned when sickness, which is permitted by divine providence, makes one incapable of doing accustomed works of penance:

The suffering which comes from God is more valuable than that which we ourselves choose, inspired by the spirit of religion. The point being, says de Sales, when I am ill, I will not think about what I would do if well. . . I value highly this kind of virtue and liberty of spirit; one finds in them great lessons of perfection.

. . . Be calm and go forward. Do not be frightened by the warfare of the enemy. We have the standard of the cross and this is enough for us. What should we fear? We have Jesus with us. I love great courage, and trust, in souls."<sup>82</sup>

Nor was this doctrine something Gaspar merely recommended to others; for he faced many situations, beginning with the trying period of the exile, in which to practice what he preached. Many of these early texts, taken from this period of salesian formation, indicate an immediate translation of his study of de Sales into lived experience. The following passage, written some months after finishing the *Treatise on the Love of God*, is

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<sup>81</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 94, to Bianca Ginnasi, April 15, 1814, 212.

<sup>82</sup>*Ep.* III, n. 1187, to M. Maria Nazzarena, July 2, 1825, 367. Cf. *SF XVA*, fol. 135: "When St. Francis de Sales was in his final illness and at the point of death, he was just as happy as though he were still among the living."

especially clear about Gaspar's practical intention "to continue with the works of de Sales"

by adhering to his teaching in the trying circumstances of his detention:

. . . I continue to be well, and always conformed to the adorable, and exceedingly just, dispositions of God. Thank the giver of every good thing for me, for deigning to bestow on a creature as miserable and ungrateful as I, so many graces.

. . . You too strive to maintain yourself in the constant practice of Christian confidence in God, as befits one who serves Love itself. Inspired by this trust in divine goodness, let us also run with generous steps toward the sentinel of virtue, and exult devoutly in the silence of our heart. The wounds of Jesus are the garden of our delight, the fount of grace, and quarries of the purest gold. May these be our comfort and consolation, and let us make our mansion there in the brief days of our lives.<sup>83</sup>

From the same period, Gaspar writes to his friend Antonio Santelli: "St. Francis de Sales used to say that paradise is a mountain (I never tire of repeating it to everyone) which is more easily climbed with broken legs than sound ones--but cheerfully, *per multas tribulationes*, and [thus] shall we hope to arrive at the goal of our desires."<sup>84</sup>

Later in his life, when dealing with the misunderstanding and hostility he encountered in the foundation and consolidation of his institute, Gaspar once more had ample occasion to live the doctrine of conformity. This can be seen in the extensive correspondence with his trusted benefactor and advocate with the Holy See, Mons. Bellisario Cristaldi. The following selections, from a period when Gaspar's difficulties were particularly intense, reveal his salesian reaction to problems, showing at once the founder's optimism and conformity to God's providential will:

". . . the news which I have lately received concerning the Work have produced some human reactions which are not very pleasant. This does not, however, diminish the

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<sup>83</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 77, to Lucrezia Ginnasi, August 19, 1813, 183.

<sup>84</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 13, January 18, 1811, 38; cf. *Ep.* I, n. 14, to Maria Tamini, January 24, 1811, 41.

required spirit of resignation owed to the divine will: what religion and faith both want and expect."<sup>85</sup>

Or again, dealing with a humiliating rebuke from the pope who publicly called into question Gaspar's character and ministry, the founder writes:

Please do me the favor of telling the Holy Father he will perhaps one day see what he does not see now, and he will weep for having used a method so contrary to God in a public audience. I am speaking of the Work, and not of myself. God knows if I will survive in the midst of such bitterness. I have not lost, though, my conformity to the divine will; this will is worthy of love and is the object of my study. But I am not made of iron, nor of bronze. To have constant rebukes and invectives, without evidence or due process, concerning my and others' conduct, this is truly a bitter chalice. . . . Nevertheless, the spiritual good [of the Congregation's work] is immense. God is at work. It may even be his will that the Holy Father, basing his judgment on lies and misinformation, should be thus enlightened. . . . I am pained only for the loss of honor to God. . . . Let us, however, trust in God. . . . Mons. Albertini warned me not to fear even extreme trials for the Institute: signs that the Work is from God.<sup>86</sup>

Nowhere then is Gaspar's "salesian indifference" more in evidence than his attitude toward the project dearer to him than any other: the Congregation he founded with its apostolate. This is true to such a point that, while ardently promoting the "Work" because he was convinced it corresponded to God's will, Gaspar could nonetheless say with equal conviction: "I love the Institute beyond all believing, yet I still say to God: `If it were to cease glorifying you, I would love it no longer. . . . I am not so attached [to the Work] that I would not be ready to leave it if God should so will."<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>*Ep.* III, n. 1200, July 8, 1825, 379.

<sup>86</sup>*Ep.* III, n. 1207, to Mons. Bellisario Cristaldi, July 20, 1825, 387-8 passim. Cf. *SF* XVB, fol. 654: "De Sales says to repeat often in the face of contradictions: "This is the path to heaven; I see the gate; and I am sure that such storms cannot prevent me from getting there."

<sup>87</sup>*Ep.* IX, n. 3785, from the deposition of Maria Giuseppa Pitorri, 143.

Without explicitly mentioning de Sales, Gaspar gives additional evidence throughout his *Writings* of being profoundly influenced by this teaching on submission to the providential will of God. The following texts make one imagine de Sales as their (anonymous) source:

Let us always conform ourselves to the divine will which permits all for our good, and let us spend the few days of our pilgrimage serving our good Father with fervor.<sup>88</sup>

Similarly,

May the Lord be blessed in everything, and let us conform ourselves entirely to his divine wishes! Your sanctification, wrote the Apostle to the early Christians, consists above all in doing the will of the Most High: *Voluntas Dei sanctificatio vestra*. How happy we would be if we were to arrive at the complete abandoning of ourselves into the hands of our loving God and Father.<sup>89</sup>

Or again,

Let us place the victim of our own will upon the Altar of God's will, which is also the bed of the mystical spouse mentioned in the Canticle.<sup>90</sup>

And finally,

Let us comply in all things with the divine will; let us adore the always holy divine dispositions, and in the humility of our spirit let us repeat even boldly: *fiat voluntas tua*. Behold the beautiful comfort our religion provides us; behold the center of peace for our heart; behold the point of equilibrium which is the holy cross of Jesus!<sup>91</sup>

The founder also exhorts his fellow missionaries to understand:

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<sup>88</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 12, to Maria Tamini, December 12, 1810, 36.

<sup>89</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 17, to Virginia Malaspina Caracciolo, February 26, 1811, 46.

<sup>90</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 359, to Luigi Locatelli, November 1, 1820, 491.

<sup>91</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 78, to Lucrezia Ginnasi, September 3, 1813, 184-185.

One of the most difficult things to grasp is that simply doing God's will as manifested in his commandments is not such a difficult thing. Yet there is something more exacting: that is, the total abandonment of ourselves into the hands of God, to his divine dispositions, ready to resign ourselves to whatever the Lord would have us do, even though it appear harsh, costly, too much, or even unjust. God wills our sanctification, hence the total sacrifice of ourselves on the altar of love. Therefore, what does God do? He takes a soul, and says to it: "Yes, you are practiced in virtue, you have loved me as you should. But this is not enough; I want something more of you." The Lord then raises his sword and lets it fall; and behold how all the woes of this present life fall on that soul: persecution, disparagement, others' hatred, suffering, sickness, calumny, etc. . . .Happy the person with enough faith to withstand all this and remain strong.<sup>92</sup>

These citations, each in their own way, demonstrate Gaspar's integration of the salesian doctrine of conformity. The words of Wright and Power can be used to summarize Gaspar's commitment to this teaching:

Salesian teaching on indifference, that true liberty of the children of God, is summed up in Francis de Sales' oft-quoted maxim, "ask for nothing, refuse nothing." It is this kind of liberty, which neither seeks a specific result nor rejects what in fact is, that characterizes the free human response to God and God's world. Human liberty resides, *not* in not caring about what happens (were that possible) but in caring more that God's results be accomplished whatever the outcome.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>*SF* XIX, fol. 50. One final detail about Gaspar's employment of this theme is noteworthy. In an interesting section of some sermon outlines, in *SF* XVA, fol. 298, under the heading "*Thoughts for sermons by St. Francis de Sales*", the founder makes a clear connection between humility and conformity to the divine will. He lists the sermon points as follows: 1. Knowledge of one's own nothingness; 2. Acceptance of one's own nothingness; 3. Promptness of the will in referring all things to God; 4. Gift of one's will to God, and 5. Uniformity of one's will with God's. Obviously, the first three of these echo the teaching of Albertini, although their origin is attributed to de Sales; the last two, however, seem more directly salesian. By suggesting the inexorable progression from albertinian humility to salesian indifference, the schema indicates how Gaspar synthesized the teaching of his spiritual mentors, Albertini and de Sales.

<sup>93</sup>W. Wright and J. Power, *Letters of Spiritual Direction*, 52-3. Cf. William Marceau, *Stoicism and St. Francis de Sales* (Visakhapatnam, India: S.F.S. Publications, 1973), 54-5: "This attitude of acceptance, of loving dependence, abandon, was truly the fundamental attitude of soul of Saint Francis de Sales. This indifference is not the atony of the weak and irresolute character who cannot reject anything because he does not know how to choose, who is capable of loving nothing; it is the result of a noble and just appreciation by which

*The primacy of charity.* The fourth major area of Gaspar's indebtedness to salesian spirituality concerns his adherence to de Sales' teaching on the love of God as the principal perfection of the Christian life; this doctrine is expounded mainly in de Sales' famous *Treatise* on the subject. As with the relationship between the themes of confidence and indifference, this aspect of salesian teaching is intimately related to the preceding ones. William Marceau draws this connection when he comments on true abandon according to St. Francis de Sales:

In order to attach oneself to God, one must be completely unattached. The divine good pleasure sometimes appears absolute and irrevocable: we retain the right to form desires and prayers. But detachment, faith in providence and confidence in God are only the beginning of abandon. In order that it be complete, in order to give oneself unreservedly to God, love is requisite. . . . Love is indispensable by its very end--which is to unite us to God. . . . Abandon leads to the perfection of holy love, at the same time that it permits the soul to express its love. We can say with equal exactitude that man must love in order to abandon himself and abandon himself in order to love. Abandon is the most complete expression of holy love.<sup>94</sup>

Camus, recounting the following passage from a letter of de Sales to him, also clarifies how salesian doctrine on the love of God is intimately related to the principles already enunciated:

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not finding anything lovable other than God, the soul esteems only those things which proportionally can aid it to attain its essential end; the glory of its creator, and subsequently its own happiness. But in order that the divine will touch this human will constituted in the state of supernatural indifference, and by this act losing its neutrality, it sets with all energy in the direction indicated to it by the movement from on high. This admirable and sanctifying disposition is compatible with the human emotions and feelings, with the contradictions of the inferior part, and it is even in these contradictions that it attains its final perfection."

<sup>94</sup>W. Marceau, *ibid.*, 45-6. Cf. James Langelaan, "Ecstasy of Holy Indifference," *Review for Religious* 37 (March 1978), 409: "Holy indifference is the purest form of love of God. . . [the love of God being] `the end, the perfection, and the excellence of the universe.'" (quoting de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, vol. II, 141)

["]This morning, being alone for a few moments, I made an act of extraordinary resignation which I cannot put on paper, but reserve until God permits me to see you, when you will know it by word of mouth. Oh! how blessed are the souls who live on the will of God alone. Ah! if even to taste a little of that blessedness in a passing meditation is so sweet to the heart which accepts that holy will with all the crosses it offers, what must the happiness be of a soul all steeped in that will? Oh! my God, what a blessed thing is it not to bring all our affections into a humble and absolute subjection to the divine love? This we have said, this we have resolved to do, and our hearts have taken the greatest glory of the love of God for their sovereign law. Now the glory of his holy love consists in its power of burning and consuming all that is not itself, that all may be resolved and change into it. God exalts himself upon our annihilation of ourselves and reigns upon the throne of our voluntary servitude.["]<sup>95</sup>

Gaspar's adherence to this teaching on the love of God in relation to self-abandonment can be seen in the following citation from de Sales reflecting on one of the founder's favorite passages of scripture: *Caritas Christi urget nos* (2 Cor. 5:14):

Let us hear what St. Francis de Sales says about the text just cited: "Is not knowing that Jesus, true God, has loved us even to suffering death for us, death on a cross, like having our hearts beneath a press and feeling it grip them by force, squeezing them by a kind of violence that is sweeter the stronger it is?" He then remarks: "Why then do we not throw ourselves at Jesus Crucified in order to die on the Cross with him who desired to die out of love for us? I will cling to him--we ought to say--and never abandon him; I will die with him and be burned in the flames of his love. One single fire will consume this Divine Creator and his poor creature. My Jesus gives himself entirely to me and I will give all to him. I will live and die upon his breast; neither death nor life will ever separate me from him. O eternal love, my soul seeks you and chooses you forever. Come, Holy Spirit, and inflame our hearts with your love. O to love, to die: to die to every other love so as to live only for that of Jesus. O Savior of our souls, grant that we might sing eternally: Live Jesus, I love Jesus; live Jesus whom I love; I love Jesus who lives forever and ever."<sup>96</sup>

In another letter to Ginnasi on the dimensions of divine love, Gaspar has occasion to refer once again to de Sales, who sees the depths of love revealed in the redemption; as in

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<sup>95</sup>J. P. Camus, *The Spirit of St. Francis de Sales*, 270-1.

<sup>96</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 57, to Lucrezia Ginnasi, April 14, 1813, 132-3.

the previous passage, the only appropriate response to this love is unreserved giving of oneself to God. Gaspar's reference to de Sales is interesting here in that no clear break between his own and the bishop of Geneva's thought is discernible--there is a veritable blending of the two:

St. Francis de Sales used to say: "With what love should we not remain ablaze at the sight of the flames to be found in the Redeemer's breast! What fortune to be burned by that same fire which consumes our God! And what joy to be united to God by the chains of Love! Oh what loving darts spring from those Wounds, darts that wound the hardest hearts! Such flames coming forth from the burning Heart of Jesus Christ, that inflame the coldest spirits! How many darts are hurled from the wounded side, rousing the most hardened sinner! Such an abyss of mysteries worked by that most profound love, the same ardent furnace which consumed the very life of the Savior! Indeed, what great condescension it was for us to be ransomed from slavery to the devil, to be returned to the possession of grace, to the claim to glory, as children of God. Jesus could have obtained all this for us by some other means, without much suffering--I mean to say without the complete shedding of all his blood. Yet what would have sufficed for redemption, was not enough for Love. Jesus wished to be the prototype of confessors and martyrs, of apostles and virgins, of hermits and contemplatives: Jesus desired to feed us with himself; he wanted to die for us! Oh Love, Oh Love, Oh Love! Grant, my Redeemer that I might live only to love you. Amen."<sup>97</sup>

One sees then, how Gaspar resonates a spirituality in which "genuine, living devotion. . . is simply true love of God."<sup>98</sup> Moreover, this view of the spiritual life--

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<sup>97</sup>*Ep. I, n. 66, May 10, 1813, 166. Cf. Treatise on the Love of God, vol. I, 37: "[Sacred] love is of a red more brilliant than scarlet because it is inflamed by the blood of [the Church's] spouse. . . ." That de Sales, like Gaspar, viewed the blood of Jesus as a unique expression of God's love is of special relevance to this thesis; the literal blending of salesian and gasparian thought here suggests some influence of Francis on this feature of gasparian spirituality. On the blood of Christ in de Sales, see Arnaldo Pedrini, "Il Sangue di Cristo nel contesto e nella prassi ministeriale di San Francesco di Sales," *Sangue e antropologia nella teologia medievale*, ed. Francesco Vattioni, vol III (Rome: EPUPS, 1991): 1715-48 and Mario Spinelli, "Il Sangue di Cristo nelle 'Lettere' di S. Francesco di Sales a S. Giovanna Francesca di Chantal," *Sangue e antropologia nella teologia*, ed. Francesco Vattioni, vol. II (Rome: EPUPS, 1989): 1235-46.*

<sup>98</sup>Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, 40.

doctrinally "one of the most significant contributions of St. Francis de Sales to spiritual theology. . .[i.e.] to unify all Christian morality and holiness under the bond of charity--"<sup>99</sup> may also have influenced the founder's insistence on the members of his Congregation being bound not by vows but charity."<sup>100</sup>

At any rate, Gaspar would not permit anything to come before charity as the preeminent sign of devotion; he insists with de Sales that the perfection of the spiritual life does not consist in external practices of piety, but solely in a testimony of charity toward God and one's neighbor. Gaspar affirms this priority of pure love in several places, while claiming de Sales as his authority:

Oh how greatly are they deceived (de Sales) who consider holiness to consist in anything else but loving the Lord. Some place perfection (writes the saint) in austerity, others in almsgiving, still others in prayer or frequenting the sacraments. For myself, I know no other perfection than that of loving God with all one's heart, because without love all the other virtues are nothing more than a pile of stones. And if we do not perfectly enjoy this holy Love, the fault lies in us because we have not yet given ourselves completely to God.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>J. Aumann, *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition*, 217.

<sup>100</sup>See Article 4 of the *Regula Congregationis Missionis a Pretioso Sanguine D.N.J.C. cum Praxi Generali et Americana*, with English translation of the Latin (Carthagenia, Ohio: Messenger Press, 1923), 11: ". . .it is only fair that the members be consistent with themselves in all matters pertaining to this [common] life, since to abandon, without a just cause, the resolution undertaken would be full of risk; however, they are bound to the Congregation not by the bonds of any vow, but only by those of free charity." Cf. this to the following description of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary, in *Constitutions 1613*, quoted by W. Wright and J. Power, *Letters of Spiritual Direction*, 47: "Since this congregation does not have as many austerities or as indissoluble bonds as formal orders and regular congregations, the fervor of charity and the force of deep resolution must supply for all that and take the place of laws, vows, and jurisdiction; so that in this congregation might be realized the saying of the Apostle which affirms that charity is the perfect bond." While it cannot be proved Gaspar was influenced by de Sales' vision of the Visitation, these statements do bear a remarkable similarity.

<sup>101</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 57, to Lucrezia Ginnasi, April 14, 1813, 137. Cf. *SF* XVB, fol. 513: "Our Lord has destined [charity] to be the summation of every good for those who follow his law and his teaching. He declared to the apostles by this alone would they be known as his

Or again:

The cherubim who were placed at the gates of the earthly paradise with a flaming sword in hand, says de Sales, show us that nobody will enter the heavenly paradise unless they have been pierced through by the sword of love.<sup>102</sup>

And finally:

I wholeheartedly pray there will ever increase in you the holy fire of divine love, so that on your lips there will always resound the saying frequently uttered by de Sales: "If I knew that a single thought of my mind or work of my hands was not wholly from God, I would want neither mind, nor heart, nor hands."<sup>103</sup>

Gaspar, following de Sales, thus favors "[a] spirituality centered on love. . . expressed concretely by the search for the will of God, conformity inspired by a ceaseless love pure in its desire, and the `death' of one's own will realized in holy indifference and abandon."<sup>104</sup>

*The salesian spirit.* The fifth influence of Francis de Sales on gasparian spirituality concerns what is broadly termed the "salesian spirit"; this is associated with the so-called "little" virtues, especially humility and gentleness.<sup>105</sup> As with the other themes, this one flows from what precedes it, for there is a particular relationship between the primacy of charity and the distinctive salesian virtues since

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disciples. . . not by the grace of miracles, nor their knowledge of scripture, nor even their reputation for an austere, penitential life, for all these things could be attributed to others." See also the founder's sermon on charity in *SF XVB*, fol. 686-7.

<sup>102</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 66, to Lucrezia Ginnasi, May 10, 1813, 157.

<sup>103</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 250, to Francesco Galli, January 5, 1820, 380.

<sup>104</sup>W. Marceau, *Stoicism and St. Francis de Sales*, 64.

<sup>105</sup>See Thomas McHugh, "The Distinctive Salesian Virtues. . . Humility and Gentleness," *Salesian Studies* (October 1963): 45-74.

[t]he virtues themselves are modalities of charity. . . . In the acquisition of virtues, one must keep in mind the direction of the goal toward which they ought to help us, which is the perfection of charity. Francis de Sales rightly recommends the virtues which are in more direct relationship with charity. . . . When one knows the Salesian concept of perfection and humility, it is not difficult to find the most profound reason for which St. Francis de Sales has placed humility as the basis of our spiritual life: it is that which performs the work-necessary and indispensable—setting aside all obstacles to the reception of the gift of God: grace in giving to God the possibility of acting by charity.<sup>106</sup>

With this in mind, the following passages see Gaspar encouraging the salesian spirit through attitudes flowing from the prior and fundamental virtue of humility; the direct or implied references to de Sales are usually in the form of brief quotations where Gaspar exhorts his associates to cultivate this spirit.<sup>107</sup>

The first examples show the founder invoking the broad heading "salesian spirit" as worthy of emulation. Thus, to his advisor Bellisario Cristaldi, he writes "in temporal matters, salesian discretion is to be sought";<sup>108</sup> and to an overly zealous confrère, Luigi Locatelli, he counsels "you should want more of a salesian spirit in your affairs."<sup>109</sup> He likewise advises another missionary "one can deal with matters in a salesian spirit and

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<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>107</sup>Although Francis was evidently a model of priestly life in particular, the example of de Sales was not proposed by Gaspar just to other missionaries and fellow clergy. See e.g. *SF* XVB, fol. 653, a series of illustrations, apparently meant for young people, drawn from the lives of the saints, beginning with two incidents from Francis early life, and *SF* XVIII, fol. 106-7, a schema for lay people who participated in the monthly days of recollection sponsored by the missionaries, where each month is devoted to a particular saint and an associated virtue, December being dedicated to de Sales and the virtue of kindness.

<sup>108</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 355, October 25, 1820, 483. In a subsequent letter to the same, Gaspar notes that he learned this spirit "from the direction of holy Albertini." (*Ep.* II, n. 784, October 24, 1823, 423).

<sup>109</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 359, November 1, 1820, 490; cf. *Ep.* II, n. 422, to the same, May 12, 1821, 48.

become aware of those misunderstandings which can occur."<sup>110</sup> In seeking from a bishop the release of a priest to join his institute, Gaspar invites him to discern the matter "guided by the salesian spirit."<sup>111</sup>

As to the content of this spirit, the founder occasionally specifies what exactly he is urging fellow priests and missionaries to employ in their conduct and way of life. In an extended series of notes apparently prepared for a conference of clergy (perhaps the priests who belonged with Gaspar to the salesian association mentioned earlier) Gaspar quotes de Sales writing to de Chantal:

"Let us walk by way of the small and lowly valleys of humility, and of little virtues. . .of which I love these three most of all: gentleness of heart, poverty of spirit, and simplicity of life. . . .doing everything without hurry, and with true generosity. We do not have arms long enough to reach up to the cedars of Lebanon, so let us be content to lower them to the valley of hyssop."<sup>112</sup>

To his confrère, Adriano Tarulli, Gaspar comments on the human spirit's need for "equilibrium"--a term he seems to use as equivalent to "indifference"--an equilibrium that is not overly affected by the like or dislike of things, or by the unsettling events that come a

<sup>110</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 370, to Francesco Pierantonio, December 13, 1820, 503-4.

<sup>111</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 381, to Mons. Nicola Mattei, December 27, 1820, 515; cf. *Ep.* II, n. 671, to the same, January 10, 1823, 307.

<sup>112</sup>*SF* XVA, fol. 378. Prior to the passage quoted, Gaspar recounts the example of de Sales' humility in his dealings with servants, and his lack of regard for his own reputation, unless justice or charity demanded he defend himself. Gaspar also mentions how de Sales, when asked which of the beatitudes he preferred, responded: "Blessed are those persecuted for justice' sake." "Let us leave to others," he would say, "the eminence of great souls, for we do not deserve such a sublime place in God's service; if we are truly his stewards and valets, we will be only too happy to serve in the kitchen, and in the lowest ministries. It is up to God should he be pleased to lead us into his chambers, and his counsel." This document also contains other references to the salesian themes discussed previously with special application to priestly life.

person's way for, "[i]n the salesian school one knows neither antipathy nor sympathy. The spirit is in perfect order."<sup>113</sup>

To another missionary dealing with a difficult person, he writes: "With your salesian graciousness you can convince him."<sup>114</sup> Likewise, to another priest, with whose method in a particular case he disagreed, Gaspar confesses, "I would truly have preferred salesian deference."<sup>115</sup> In response to a letter from a confrère which he considered overly contentious in tone, Gaspar writes: "I will begin by telling you a great truth and it is this: I would like to see less guile in your writing and more salesian simplicity. . . moreover, genuine love between us leads to just such a salesian spirit."<sup>116</sup>

In a similar case, he writes to Tomasso Meloni: "I do not doubt your warnings arise from love for the Work. . . [Still], it seems to me your spirit might need to study the life of de Sales and imitate him in whatever way it is possible to do so."<sup>117</sup> Finally, to the missionary Giovanni Chiodi, Gaspar promises prayers on de Sales' anniversary for both of them to increase in the saint's "spirit of gentleness and holy cheer in God."<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>113</sup>*Ep.* II, n. 446, July 15, 1821, 71.

<sup>114</sup>*Ep.* II, n. 676, to Vincenzo Annovazzi, January 27, 1823, 312. Gaspar translates de Sales' "*douceur*" as "*dolcezza*" which is difficult to render in English, but is certainly richer in meaning than "sweetness". Following Wright and Power, our translation "graciousness" is meant to express what they consider the "chief among the Salesian virtues, and the one that belongs distinctively to this tradition. . . .Salesian *douceur* suggests a sense of being grace-filled, graceful in the broadest sense of the term. This gracefulness extends from external demeanor--polite manners and convivial disposition--to the very quality of a person's heart--the way in which a person is interiorly ordered and disposed." (*Letters of Spiritual Direction*, 63-4.)

<sup>115</sup>*Ep.* II, n. 737, to Filippo Ambrosio, July 7, 1823, 374.

<sup>116</sup>*Ep.* II, n. 785, to Francesco Pierantonio, October 24, 1823, 425.

<sup>117</sup>*Ep.* VII, n. 2854, 324, February 13, 1835, 190.

<sup>118</sup>*Ep.* V, n. 1864, December 27, 1828, 213. Such recommendations extend also to the

*Spiritual direction.* Evidently, Gaspar Del Bufalo took great interest in the spiritual progress of others. As mentioned earlier, a prominent salesian theme is the importance attached to spiritual friendship, especially in the privileged context of direction.<sup>119</sup> In his treatise on the subject, Gaspar shows how this ministry was also rooted in his assimilation of de Sales' teaching and practice.<sup>120</sup>

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various rules which ordered the communal life of Gaspar's institute and of those preparing to enter it. In the so-called *Transunto*, an early version of the Rule that was approved after the founder's death, Gaspar ordered during the daily periods of recreation that the missionaries engage in conversation useful to the ministry "according to the salesian spirit." (*Transunto di tutto ciò che riguarda il pio istituto delle case di missioni ed esercizi spirituali sotto il titolo del preziosissimo Sangue di nostro Signore Gesù Cristo, invocazione di Maria Santissima, Aiuto de' Cristiani, e protezione del grande apostolo dell'Indie S. Francesco Saverio*" (Fabriano, 1822), n. 12. In other legislative documents issued by the founder, the spirit of simplicity is enjoined even for the furnishing and decor of the mission houses. See Evaldo Biasini, "La storia della Regola di San Gaspare," in *La Congregazione dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue* (Rome: EPUPS, 1981), 225, 245.

<sup>119</sup>Gaspar was so concerned about the ministry of spiritual direction that he authored a brief instruction manual for priests engaged in this work, the *Direttore Diretto nella guida delle anime alla perfezione*[The Guided Director in Leading Souls to Perfection]; the original copy of the manuscript is found in *SF XIII*, fol. 85-108. Appended to the published edition (Rome: Presso Lino Contadini, 1825) is a short work by one of Gaspar's spiritual confidantes, Serafino Campano, entitled *Nozioni della Via Mistica, ossia Scala Mistica*[Notes on the Mystic Way, or Ladder].

Merlini relates how this treatise was based on outlines found in the manuscripts of the late Albertini, and that the founder learned his methods for direction from Albertini himself. (See *Un Santo Scruta un Santo*, 127, 270). Moreover, the subtitle of the work in question explicitly states it was "produced and compiled by the Missionaries of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, based on outlines found in the manuscripts of Mons. Albertini, founder of the aforesaid Archconfraternity." The *Direttore* itself recommends the first resources directors consult be "the complete works of the expert de Sales," along with the "work on holy humility" by Albertini and Rodriguez' *Practice of Christian Perfection*. (p. 55) Hence, Gaspar's understanding and practice of direction were clearly influenced by his principal sources, Albertini and de Sales; since the former was himself thoroughly salesian in his approach to the spiritual life, Gaspar's mutual dependence on them is thus displayed here in a special way.

<sup>120</sup>The *Direttore Diretto* either makes brief explicit references to the writings of de Sales, more general ones to the "salesian school", or simple mention of the "devout life" with its

In the first chapter of the *Direttore Diretto*, for instance, Gaspar demonstrates his indebtedness to a fundamental salesian principle of direction: adaptation to the subject and his or her temperament. József Strus, in his study of the "method" followed by the spiritual director according to the teaching and practice of St. Francis de Sales, cites this respect for the individuality of the directee as basic to a salesian approach.<sup>121</sup>

The second chapter deals with the various pitfalls a person might encounter in the spiritual journey due to the effects of imagination, misjudgment over one's spiritual state, scrupulosity, restlessness, or undue anxiety. According to Gaspar, helping the directee resolve these inner trials requires the director to encourage salesian confidence and optimism to the troubled person, whereby he or she can have restored that inner peace which renders the devout life sweet.<sup>122</sup>

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evident allusion to de Sales' *Introduction*. See pp. 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 30, 32, 33, 34, 39, 44, 45, and 55.

<sup>121</sup>J. Strus, "Il 'Metodo' del Direttore Spirituale nell'Insegnamento e nella Pratica di Francesco di Sales," *Salesianum* 42 (1980): 289-339. The author states that "as a spiritual director [Francis de Sales] respected the individuality of each person. Thus he imposed on himself the duty to change method, counsel and means from one person to another, in view of their temperament, state of life, degree of progress in Christian perfection and their capacity to confront the problems of life." (p. 306)

<sup>122</sup>See *ibid.*, 327ff. where Strus treats the salesian themes of confidence and optimism in de Sales' method of spiritual direction, whose goal is maintaining the directee in that spirit of equilibrium which favors perseverance in the spiritual life: "Thus Francis de Sales does not fail to underscore the positive results which the person in direction has obtained, encouraging him or her to persevere. Optimism disavows that despondency which clouds the intellect, and weakens the will. Formation in optimism cannot fail to take into account the reactions originating from pessimism in the face of each and every circumstance. Pessimism, for example, does not permit one to believe in his or her own personal worth; it produces sadness and leads to abandonment of the struggle before hardly beginning, anticipating defeat as inevitable. Training in optimism is aimed directly against pessimism." (p. 336) Cf. the founder's maxim in *SF XVA*, fol. 351: "To remove evil, encourage good; relax what is rigid, and make firm what is lax; elevate what is depressed, subdue what is overly-elated. And to do all in the correct manner: this is a true director of souls."

The third chapter of Gaspar's treatise brings to direction salesian emphasis on abandonment to the disposition of providence, above in moments of suffering. When dealing with the ordinary ways by which God attracts the soul to holiness, i.e. the familiar experience of spiritual consolation alternating with periods of seeming abandonment, Gaspar asks the director to affirm directees in the former experience while preparing them to profit from the latter. By helping people recognize it is through tribulation that God purifies the spirit, afflicted souls will not lose equilibrium of spirit and peace of heart when facing the experience of darkness, aridity, or desolation. If, in the ways of providence, such trials are designed to bring the person to love the will of God purely and for its own sake, then salesian "indifference" will all the more serve to bring about the desired end.<sup>123</sup>

The fourth chapter of the *Direttore* broaches still other salesian themes, such as Gaspar's caution that directors always respect their clients' vocation and state in life, as well as their moral and physical condition. The director must neither recommend, nor forbid, anything not in full conformity with a directee's general circumstances or legitimate duties and obligations. Gaspar also adverts here to the supreme importance of humility, insisting the devout life does not require any affectation from its followers, but rather a very natural demeanor "which hides a treasure of virtue within the spirit."<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>See *ibid.*, 311: "Suffering is something natural for a human being, therefore Francis de Sales teaches his penitents that they must accept and know how to suffer with profit. . . . The Christian must see his or her afflictions in the light of faith, because faith alone can explain the motives for suffering. Faith allows us to understand that afflictions belong to the divine plan of salvation, and thus helps us to accept the dispositions of divine providence."

<sup>124</sup>*Direttore Diretto*, 36. Cf. J. Strus, "Il 'Metodo' del Direttore Spirituale," 300: "Since. . . Francis de Sales leaves his penitents in the midst of their worldly affairs, with the profound conviction that they can attain perfection there, we can note in his spiritual direction a lively sensibility for the duties of the state of a person in direction."

The fifth chapter of the treatise deals, from a salesian perspective, with defects in those who receive direction which hinder its effectiveness. The first of these is unwarranted dissatisfaction with direction itself manifested in a frequent change of directors. The second is reticence in revealing to the director things which may be embarrassing, especially moral difficulties or failures. Such a lack of openness offends against "sincerity of heart, which is the basis of our sanctification."<sup>125</sup> A third defect mentioned is reluctance to follow counsels given, and accompanying rationalizations for not embracing the measures recommended by the director for the soul's progress in virtue.<sup>126</sup>

The sixth and last chapter of the founder's treatise to show significant salesian influence deals with the gradual character of direction, leading people by distinct steps to union with God. This section of the *Direttore Diretto* gives the impression of a salesian quality to Gaspar's view of spiritual direction in its desire to foster progressively greater liberty of spirit in the directee resulting, among other things, in less dependence on the director.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>*Direttore Diretto*, 38.

<sup>126</sup>This is not to say Gaspar thought the director's approach should be overly intrusive. Merlini, for instance, describes the founder's gifted style as a director to be such that a person in his care "was unaware of being guided. [Gaspar] made the way of the spirit easy, according to salesian principles; he removed doubts, facilitated means, and rendered virtue pleasing. He detached the heart insensibly from its own will and elicited sacrifices as though they were made by choice. . . ." (*Un Santo Scruta un Santo*, 127) This method, described by Strus, "Il `Metodo' del Direttore Spirituale," 318-23 as "indirect" is designed to move the penitent to individual initiative and responsibility. John Connolly, "Basic Principles of Salesian Direction," *Salesian Studies* (January 1964), likewise notes de Sales "used the system of suggestion, of persuasion, or of inspiration, instead of a system of injunction."

<sup>127</sup>Cf. *Ep.* IV, n. 1693, to Maria Nazzarena De Castris, December 27, 1827, 434 where Gaspar, writing to a woman who wished to leave her director in favor of Gaspar, writes: "Reflect on whether. . . God illumines you regarding me, and you must respect freedom of spirit in such a choice, and I must be very clearly assured of God's will. . . . A good director is one in a thousand. Will I be among this number for you?" See J. Strus, "Il `Metodo' del

### Gasparian Sources and Lay Spirituality

It is now clear what Gaspar Del Bufalo learned from his study of the life and writings of Francis de Sales and how these influenced his understanding of Christian spirituality. The six features of a typically salesian approach to spirituality treated above represent the ways in which Gaspar, and consequently a gasparian spirituality, are deeply indebted to this school as a primary source. Luigi Contegiacomo, in an unpublished commentary on the founder's correspondence, sums up this influence as follows: "In the personal spirituality of St. Gaspar, the salesian component was of very substantial importance and, as a consequence, this element was mirrored in the character of the institute founded and led by him: an aspect of his spirituality evidenced especially in what pertained to the internal regimen of the mission houses and houses of formation."<sup>128</sup>

This does not minimize, of course, Francis Albertini's influence as a secondary source of Gaspar's spirituality though, as this chapter demonstrates, his major contributions to the founder was introducing and instructing him in the theoretical and practical grasp of de Sales' thought. Albertini thus mediated, by his teaching and example, this crucial aspect of Gaspar's spirituality while giving it, at least in terms of emphasis, a specific contour with respect to the virtue of humility.<sup>129</sup>

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Direttore Spirituale," 323-27, who considers the marks of such liberty to be greater stability in the spiritual life including greater generosity in adhering to the director's counsels yet, at the same time, less attachment to fixed forms and practices especially when circumstances do not permit them to be followed or the demands of love indicate a different course to be taken.

<sup>128</sup>L. Contegiacomo, *Lettere di S. Gaspare del Bufalo*, vol. III-3, unpublished MS, 501.

<sup>129</sup>Some might be surprised to find a third source, Ignatius Loyola, unnamed in this chapter as significant for gasparian spirituality. The existence of an ignatian influence on Gaspar is indisputable, as seen in by his devotion to Loyola himself, the other Jesuits Aloysius Gonzaga, and especially, Francis Xavier; panegyrics to this triad abound in the

These sources must, moreover, be taken into account when speaking of a "gasparian" spirituality corresponding to the charism bestowed on the Church in the person of Gaspar; for the salesian-albertinian aspect of the charism forms part of its distinctive character. As such, this aspect must admit of a lay expression if our thesis is a viable one. Fortunately, the suitability for the lay faithful of a salesian approach to Christian life is not difficult to establish.<sup>130</sup>

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*Writings* (see *SF XVA*, fol. 42-5, 60, 87-92, 136-7, 146-66, 322-5; *XVB*, fol. 389-90, 410, 424-5, 454). Mention could also be made of Gaspar's exclusive training by members of the Society of Jesus at the Roman College, no doubt influencing his desire to join the Society after his return from exile, something Pius VII dissuaded him from doing. The importance of the Jesuit author Alphonsus Rodriguez has already been noted to which the names of Jesuit preachers like Paolo Segneri (the elder and younger), Giampietro Pinamonti, Antonio Baldinucci, Fulvio Fontana and St. Francis of Geronimo could be added as missionaries Gaspar sought to emulate (see B. Conti, *Il metodo delle missioni al popolo secondo S. Gaspare Del Bufalo*, 13-15). Finally, the founder's insistence on using Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* and *Rules for Discernment* in the retreats conducted by his institute shows a further influence (see *Ep. III*, n. 947, to Mons. Bellisario Cristaldi, August 20, 1824, 131).

The question then as to whether these ignatian characteristics constitute a tertiary source of gasparian spirituality is both fair and obvious. The answer given here, however, is no for the following reason: the ignatian and salesian schools have been demonstrated to correspond in content, though not in style of expression. The study of François Charmot, *Ignatius Loyola and Francis de Sales: Two Masters--One Spirituality* (St. Louis and London: B. Herder Book Co., 1966) has detailed the convergences and fundamental agreement between these major figures of the Catholic spiritual tradition. Charmot considers de Sales--himself a product of Jesuit training--to be "much indebted to the great founder of the Society of Jesus for his thought in all domains of the spiritual life. . . .Indeed, he presents the spirituality of St. Ignatius in a fuller, more explicit manner, sometimes more profound, certainly more attractive, than has any other commentator or any Jesuit author." (p. 24)

Whatever Gaspar's admitted indebtedness to Ignatius and his followers is then (and it seems connected mostly with the apostolate of his Congregation) the textual evidence certainly shows an overwhelming preference for the salesian interpretation and expression of ignatian doctrine. Apart from the Jesuit ideals held up by Gaspar for the missionary work of his institute, and the inspiration they provided him, it does not seem warranted to maintain a specifically ignatian character to his spirituality, even while acknowledging the ignatian background to the teaching of Francis de Sales.

<sup>130</sup>See *CL 56* where John Paul II quotes at length from the *Introduction to the Devout*

From what has already been said, a relationship between the salesian themes evident in gasparian spirituality and the elements of lay spirituality described in Chapter 1 is apparent. For instance, a constant thread running through salesian and gasparian texts makes abundantly clear a conviction in them concerning the call of every Christian to holiness according to one's state in life. This delicate interplay between the elements of universality and specificity demonstrates a fundamental compatibility between salesian and lay spirituality.

The elements of secularity and integration likewise find a salesian resonance in de Sales' "devout humanism". As William Marceau has observed, "Humanism is for [de Sales] a manner of existing in the world, with his own kind and with God, a manner of being which colors everything that he is and everything that he writes. For him, the sentiment of nature, philosophy and culture, moral and religious life, his works intended for the public as well as his intimate letters of direction, are marked in an indelible fashion by this humanism which integrates the whole man."<sup>131</sup>

The bishop of Geneva's positive evaluation of humanity and the world could thus be seen as an early form of Christian secularity that permitted the laity in particular to engage the temporal order as a locus for the practice of devotion:

[Francis] knew what it was like to struggle toward sanctity in the world. His education had not taken him out of the world nor had his duties fenced him off from intimate contact with its people. . . . Since monasteries could not represent the natural mode of existence for the majority of God's people, it seemed quite obvious to him that there must be another path to sanctity, even though such was not readily

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*Life*, noting that Francis de Sales "promoted lay spirituality so well." See also the contributions in *St. Francis de Sales and Laity*, ed. Antony Kolencherry, Studies in Salesian Spirituality No. 6 (Visakh-Bangalore, India: S.F.S. Publications, 1987).

<sup>131</sup>William Marceau, "St. Francis de Sales--Spiritual Director," *Salesian Studies* (Summer, 1969), 90.

discernible in his generation. There must be a road to high holiness running through city streets, market place, across farms, and up over mountain roads.<sup>132</sup>

André Brix describes this as a "spirituality of intention" in which every human act, no matter the context in which it is performed, provides an occasion for sanctification. In the salesian school nothing interior or exterior to the person lies outside the realm of significance for Christian life. The secular context which is proper to the laity is therefore no less capable of Christian animation than any other; it is, rather, one that demands integration of faith and life:

In brief, St. Francis de Sales wants to lead us very specifically along a path of love where all our movements are gradually and increasingly clothed with charity and divine life.

. . .Salesian spirituality is concerned with all our acts. . . .They must all enter the domain proper to divine love that requires the use of our freedom.

. . .Consequently, our intention that orders our acts must be an act of love.

. . .Each of our acts reveals us to ourselves, to others, to God. The differences in degree, in truth, and in conformity between what we are and what we do should gradually weaken until they disappear.<sup>133</sup>

As for the element of mission, closely aligned with secularity and integration, salesian spirituality is one of openness to others. Without forcing de Sales into an anachronistic mold that would make him an advocate of "lay ministry", there is little doubt

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<sup>132</sup>Elsie Gibson, "St. Francis de Sales and the Layman," *Salesian Studies* (Summer 1968): 44-5. This is not to suggest that Francis was in any way naive about the difficulties the world itself poses for the Christian called to live in its midst. James Langelaan, "The Ecstasy of Action," *Review for Religious* 36, no. 2 (1977): 269, recalls de Sales' insistence that people live in the world contrary to its opinions and maxims; for him "the teachings of our Lord reverse, and totally abolish, the wisdom of the world, they are directly opposed to the maxims of this age, and ultimately lead us to embrace the folly of the cross."

<sup>133</sup>André Brix, "Salesian Spirituality: Spirituality of Intention," *Salesian Studies* (Autumn 1966), 16-8 passim. Cf. John Conmy, "Individualism and Authority in the Teaching of St. Francis de Sales," *Salesian Studies* (Spring 1967), 38: "St. Francis de Sales recognized fully the formative influence of the world in our personal development. For him everything, sin excepted, is an instrument for the carrying out of God's will on our behalf."

he saw the laity as called to apostolic service for the good of Church and society. Therese Luc sees in de Sales, for example, an early pioneer in the apostolic formation of women, noting how for him "apostolate is not separated from life; it is an activity among others. . . .It is an essential part of Christian life because it is an exigency of love. . . ." <sup>134</sup>

Antony Mookenthottam argues that de Sales was a precursor of contemporary sensibilities concerning social justice and the preferential option for the poor in which the laity have particular obligations arising from their secular commitments, <sup>135</sup> while Antony Kolencherry calls attention to de Sales' role in promoting the journalistic and literary apostolate where the laity have undisputed contributions to make. <sup>136</sup> Finally, Alexander Pocetto points out de Sales' forward-looking understanding of the laity's participation in the priesthood of Christ such that

"[w]hen man penetrates the innermost part of his being. . .he finds himself again and becomes capable of integrating all the facets of his existence. However this center of his existence is not intended to isolate him from others. Far from isolating him from others and from himself, it makes him more capable of unifying all his forces and faculties so that he can give himself in love to others and the world." <sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>Therese Luc, "St. Francis de Sales and the Formation of Lay-Women as Apostles," in *St. Francis de Sales and Laity*, ed. Antony Kolencherry, 92. She goes on to enumerate witness of life, making devotion attractive to others, attentiveness to spouse and family, and catechetical instruction as ways de Sales encouraged his clients to translate the love of benevolence into concrete situations attendant on their state in life. Cf. Paul Kunnumpuram, "Family Apostolate and St. Francis de Sales," in *Apostolate According to St. Francis de Sales*, ed. Antony Kolencherry, Studies in Salesian Spirituality No. 1 (Bangalore, India: S.F.S. Publications, 1983), 101-13.

<sup>135</sup>Antony Mookenthottam, "Preferential Option for the Poor, The Laity and Social Justice: A Salesian Approach," in *ibid.*, 130-61.

<sup>136</sup>Antony Kolencherry, "St. Francis de Sales and the Apostolate of the Press," in *Apostolate According to St. Francis de Sales*, ed. A. Kolencherry, 120-35.

<sup>137</sup>Alexander Pocetto, "An Introduction to Salesian Anthropology," *Salesian Studies* (Summer 1969): 60. Cf. A. Brix, "Salesian Spirituality: Spirituality of Intention," who quotes de Sales: "Everything must be referred to God: the whole world praises him through the instrument of man who is his representative; man praises him through Christ who is his

These observations collectively suggest the harmony existing between a salesian approach to Christian life and the laity's share in the Church's mission of sanctifying, evangelizing and serving after the pattern of Christ priest, prophet and king.

The last element of lay spirituality, formation, finds a salesian connection in the importance attached to spiritual direction, for deliberate efforts at fostering growth in the devout life are considered indispensable in Francis' and Gaspar's vision of ministry. Whether by correspondence, individually, or in group settings, these pastors of souls continually invited the lay faithful to embrace the fullness of Christian life through means appropriate to their state, vocation and situation. In doing so, they encouraged the laity to embrace a form of spirituality known by the features examined throughout this chapter: confident and optimistic trust in the goodness of a provident God who unfailingly provides sufficient means for salvation; the consequent need to conform the human will in all things to the dispositions of providence; the primacy of charity for Christian perfection over any exterior practice; a spirituality flavored by humble self-acceptance; particular regard for individual and communal life-styles characterized by simplicity and graciousness toward others; an emphasis on serving God in the ordinary events of daily life; and recognition of the importance spiritual direction and friendship play in Christian life: features which, in the gasparian variant of salesian spirituality, lie unquestionably "at the heart of the Christian life".

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mediator; and Christ praises God through God himself as through him who gives movement and supreme inspiration." (18)

## CHAPTER 3

# THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IN GASPARIAN SPIRITUALITY

This chapter treats the central role the christological devotion to the precious blood plays in gasparian spirituality. Although Gaspar exhibited from youth a basic attraction to this aspect of the redeemer's person and work, it was the influence of Francis Albertini that led to the devotion becoming the leitmotif of his whole spiritual life. Luigi Contegiacomo notes how this early encounter was for Gaspar "the decisive push along the path pointed out to him by providence. From that day the mystery of the blood began to acquire a central post in his interior and exterior life."<sup>1</sup> The formative sway of his spiritual director was not limited therefore to Gaspar's appreciation of the virtue of humility or to the salesian character of his spirituality, for Albertini here made yet another decisive contribution to the founder's development. It remains to see how this additional impact of Albertini finds expression in Gaspar's spirituality, making devotion to the blood of Christ a constitutive element of his charism.

Because the present work is a thesis in spiritual theology, however, the following discussion is focused on the ascetico-mystical meanings of the devotion in St. Gaspar, while subsequent chapters explore the devotion's relationship to the missionary and ecclesial

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<sup>1</sup>Luigi Contegiacomo, *Il Sangue di Cristo nella vita e nell'apostolato di S. Gaspare del Bufalo*, 2nd. ed. (Rome: Pia Unione del Preziosissimo Sangue, 1968), 17. The following may also be consulted for a general treatment of the blood of Christ in the founder's thought: Gaspar Del Bufalo, *Il Sangue di Gesù: Schemi di prediche*, Quaderni Sanguis Christi 7 (Rome: EPUPS, 1983); Michele Colagiovanni, "Il Sangue di Cristo in San Gaspare Del Bufalo, Fondatore dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue," in *Il Mistero del Sangue di Cristo e l'esperienza cristiana*, ed. A. Triacca, vol. II, 575-91; Beniamino Conti, *San Gaspare Apostolo del Sangue di Cristo (1786-1837)*, 2d. ed. (Rome: EPUPS, 1978), and Amilcare Rey, *Il Divin Sangue negli Scritti del Romano Beato Gaspare Del Bufalo*, 2d. ed. (Albano Laziale: Edizioni Primavera Missionaria, 1985).

elements of the gasparian charism. It is not our intention, therefore, to enter into a general exposition of the devotion's anthropological, biblical, patristic, liturgical and theological bases, all of which have been thoroughly treated elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> And while the findings of this scholarly research were obviously unavailable to the founder, they are nevertheless in line with, and inspired by, his basic insight that "in this devotion the faith itself is summarized. . .the other devotions being means of promoting Catholic piety while this one is its basis, support, and essence."<sup>3</sup>

### Orientation to the Theology, Devotion and Spirituality of the Precious Blood

Despite the restricted interests of the thesis, an initial orientation to the devotion in question is nevertheless desirable to situate the topic within a broader theological context. Those who have reflected on the precious blood as a particular facet of the humanity of Christ have seen in it a way by which the merciful love of God has been revealed, above all through the paschal mystery of the Lord's death and resurrection.

Thus, from his study of the rich background in Hebrew religion of the term "blood of Christ" appearing in the Christian scriptures, Caetano Da Cruz Fernandes concludes that the biblical meaning of the expression concerns the "integral, salvific power" of the incarnate Logos in his conscious and deliberate self-offering together with the corresponding acceptance of his sacrifice on the part of God. "Blood of Christ" means then

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<sup>2</sup>The most thorough attempts to explore these bases of the devotion are found in the *acta* of a series of study weeks sponsored by the Italian Province of the Congregation of Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood as well as other studies published under the auspices of the *Centro Studi Sanguis Christi*, Rome. See, in chronological order, *Sangue e antropologia biblica*, ed. Francesco Vattioni, 2 vols. (Rome: EPUPS, 1981); *Sangue e antropologia biblica nella Patristica*, ed. Francesco Vattioni, 2 vols. (Rome: EPUPS, 1982); *Sangue e antropologia nella letteratura cristiana*, ed. Francesco Vattioni, 3 vols. (Rome: EPUPS, 1983); *Sangue e antropologia nella Liturgia*, ed. Francesco Vattioni, 3 vols. (Rome: EPUPS, 1984); *Il Mistero del Sangue di Cristo e l'esperienza cristiana*, ed. Achille Triacca, 2 vols. (Rome: EPUPS, 1987); *Sangue e antropologia - Riti e culto*, ed. Francesco Vattioni, 3 vols. (Rome: EPUPS, 1987); *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo nella liturgia e nella pietà popolare*, ed. Achille Triacca, 2 vols. (Rome: EPUPS, 1989); *Sangue e antropologia nella teologia*, ed. Francesco Vattioni, 3 vols. (Rome: EPUPS, 1989); *Sangue e antropologia nella teologia medievale*, ed. Francesco Vattioni, 3 vols. (Rome: EPUPS, 1991); Albert Vanhoye, *Il Sangue dell'Alleanza: Corso di Esercizi Spirituali Biblici* (Rome: EPUPS, 1992). Recent publications dealing with the precious blood from the standpoint of Christian spirituality include: *Il Sangue che Rivela L'Amore*, ed. Figlie della Carità del Preziosissimo Sangue (Rome, 1987) and *Il Sangue dell'Agnello Pasquale: Fondamenti di una Spiritualità* (Rome: EPUPS, 1987).

<sup>3</sup>*Ep. III, n. 1215, to Pope Leo XII, July 29, 1825, 399-400 passim.*

the "*personality of Christ, the God-Man, in the saving act of his sacrifice on the cross which, by virtue of an intrinsic and necessary connection, demands fulfillment in the triumph of Christ, from the resurrection to the parousia.*"<sup>4</sup>

Along similar lines, Raimondo Spiazzi has spoken of Christ's blood as the "sacrament of our redemption", i.e. a visible-symbolic and efficacious-causal sign of the paschal mystery: at once the bearer of meanings associated with the redemptive work of Christ, and capable of transmitting the saving effects of the redemption to those who encounter it through the agency of the Church, especially in the sacraments.<sup>5</sup>

Speaking of the Church's mediation of the mystery of Christ, Gaspard Lefebvre notes further how the faithful participate in the paschal mystery of the blood of Christ through its liturgical representation, where the objective redemption wrought in the offering of Jesus' blood "once for all" is mediated "each time" the death of the Lord is proclaimed in the public, priestly prayer of the Church, head and members, above all the eucharist.<sup>6</sup>

For no small reason then does Robert Schreiter consider the blood of Christ one of "the great resources which the Tradition has given us for speaking about God's saving activity in our midst. . . . Our most powerful connection into the Tradition are not theological concepts, but the many images which the Scriptures present us in a special way. . . . Holding together within itself meanings of both life and death, the image of the blood embraces the full range of human bonding and alienation, of achievement and failure, of disappointment and hope."<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, Carlo Molari speaks of the precious blood as a particularly expressive

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<sup>4</sup>A.J. Caetano Da Cruz Fernandes, *Sanguis Christi* (Rome: Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue, 1971), 171. Cf. Patrick Sena, *A Biblical Theology of the Blood of Christ* (Carthagen, Ohio: Messenger Press, 1982). The relevant scripture references to the blood of Christ are given in due course as this chapter progresses.

<sup>5</sup>Raimondo Spiazzi, *Il Sangue di Cristo: Sacramento della Nostra Redenzione*, 3rd ed. (Albano Laziale-Rome: Edizioni Primavera Missionaria, 1983), esp. 40-57. Cf. Raymond Spiazzi, "Il Sangue di Cristo sintesi espressiva e realizzata del mistero pasquale nella Chiesa," in *Il Sangue che Rivela l'Amore*, ed. Figlie della Carità del Preziosissimo Sangue, 151-70.

<sup>6</sup>Gaspard Lefebvre, *La Devozione al Preziosissimo Sangue e il 'Mistero di Cristo': sua realizzazione nella Liturgia il cui centro è la Messa* (Rome: Pia Unione del Preziosissimo Sangue, 1967). Cf. from a doctrinal basis, Luigi Contegiacomo, *Il Culto al Preziosissimo Sangue di nostro Signore Gesù Cristo* (Rome: EPUPS, 1991) and *Documenti Pontifici sul culto del Preziosissimo Sangue di N.S.G.C.*, Quaderni Sanguis Christi 4 (Rome: EPUPS, 1982).

<sup>7</sup>Robert Schreiter, "The Message of Precious Spirituality Today," in Carlo Molari, et. al., *Precious Blood Spirituality* (Rome: Society of the Precious Blood, 1986), 20-1 passim. Cf. Robert Schreiter, *In Water and in Blood: A Spirituality of Solidarity and Hope* (New York: Crossroad, 1988). See also Dennis McCarthy, "Il simbolismo del sangue (timore reverenziale, vita, morte)," in *Sangue e antropologia biblica*, ed. F. Vattioni, vol. I, 19-35, and Francesco Vattioni, "Sangue: vita o morte nella Bibbia?," in *ibid.*, vol. II, 367-78.

theological symbol conveying

[God's] loving mercy by way of the fidelity of one man, capable of delivering himself over without reserve. God tried many times to reveal fully His design of love and His salvific power in human deeds. Finally, through the faithfulness of a people, come to flower in a sublime way in His son, God made real the supreme epiphany of his love, just when men were expressing their faithlessness in forms of corresponding violence.

From the Christological point of view, the blood of the cross is a symbol of faithfulness to the proclamation of the kingdom which has marked history; it is a sign of an experience of abandonment and aloneness which has tragic characteristics; it is a sign of a failure endured in such a way as to make of it a triumph of grace. . . . On that account, the shed blood becomes the symbol of a love which makes a failure victorious, a crime salvific, an injustice precious. . . . And so, from the anthropological point of view, the blood of Christ is the pledge that there is offered to every man the power to live in all situations, even the most unjust and violent, in such a way as to make of them a triumph for life.<sup>8</sup>

With this soteriologico-symbolic perspective in mind, the remainder of the thesis deals in different ways with the significance for spirituality of this expressive image: in other words, what a committed response (viz. "devotion") to Christ might be given the manifold meanings suggested by the word spoken in his blood.<sup>9</sup>

#### The Ascetico-Mystical Meanings of the Blood of Christ in Gaspar Del Bufalo

The principal source for the present investigation is the short treatise of the founder entitled *In omnibus divites factis in Illo*, a commentary on which constitutes the basis of our discussion.<sup>10</sup> Other relevant passages from the *Writings of the Founder* are also examined;

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<sup>8</sup>Carlo Molari, "Blood: The Human and Theological Experience," in C. Molari, et. al., *Precious Blood Spirituality*, 14-5 passim.

<sup>9</sup>Obviously, this is no more than the briefest introduction to a vast topic touching virtually every branch of theological science. Among the resources mentioned in n. 1 relevant to spirituality in particular, see Brovotto Costante, "Teologia della Spiritualità del Preziosissimo Sangue," in *Il Sangue che Rivela l'Amore*, 183-200; Vincenzo Lupo, "Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo nell'esperienza cristiana del popolo di Dio (Linee di una sintesi)," in *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo e l'esperienza cristiana*, ed. A. Triacca, vol. I, 447-62; Giulio Martelli, "Spiritualità e Sangue di Cristo," in *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo nella liturgia e nella pietà popolare*, ed. A. Triacca, vol. I, 483-92. See also Réginald Grégoire, "Sang," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Fascicule XCI (Paris: Beauchesne, 1988), 319-34.

<sup>10</sup>The schema, composed in 1822, is found in *SF XVB*, fol. 455-61; it is addressed in three installments to Gaspar's fellow missionary and directee, Luigi Mosconi. The document is reproduced in Gaspare Del Bufalo, *Il Sangue di Gesù Cristo: Schemi di prediche*, 26-36. A useful transcription, with all scriptural citations referenced and

these come mostly from the *Direttore Diretto nella Guida delle Anime alla Perfezione* and the *Lettere Circolari* issued annually for members of Gaspar's community gathered on retreat.

*The Doctrine of the Three Ways in St. Gaspar Del Bufalo*

Since the treatise *In omnibus divites factis in Illo* is framed around the traditional division of the spiritual life into three "ways", a preliminary look at how the founder understands these phases of spiritual growth is in order before proceeding to the treatise proper.<sup>11</sup> In doing so, we will place Gaspar's teaching within the context of a wider spiritual tradition by referring especially to the Dominican theologian Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange's classic exposition of the doctrine, as well as to other authors.<sup>12</sup>

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translated, is contained in A. Rey, *Il Divin Sangue*, 98-112; this work also contains a compendium of all references to the blood of Christ in the founder's *Writings* (pp. 93-226).

<sup>11</sup>It is important here, given the thesis' interest in lay spirituality, to reaffirm how the founder embraces the (salesian) principle that growth in holiness must always be seen in relation to one's state in life. Thus, Gaspar begins the Circular Letter of 1833 by stating that he and his missionaries are "called by God to the mystical mount of perfection which is proper to our state, our ministry and our relationship with souls redeemed by the inestimable price of the divine Blood." (*Circular Letters*, trans. R. Cera, 40)

As for the usefulness of the doctrine in addressing lay audiences, cf. *SF XVB*, fol. 580 where the founder tells missionaries they would do "well in applying the distinction of the three ways, purgative, illuminative, and unitive" when preaching generally on holiness of life. There also exists a very brief outline containing suggestions for preaching the month of July in honor of the precious blood (presumably to lay congregations) by dividing it according to the three ways; it is found in *SF*, *XVB*, fol. 441-2 and addressed to Nicola Santarelli bearing the date May 1, 1821. It is reproduced in the above-mentioned *Schemi di prediche*, 16-7.

These, of course, are critical observations since we are concerned with the relevance of gasparian teaching not only for those in the states of election, but above all the lay faithful. The elements of lay spirituality should therefore be kept in mind in all that follows—even where Gaspar himself may have the laity only tacitly in view.

<sup>12</sup>See Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Les Trois Ages de la Vie Intérieure; The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, trans. Sr. M. Timothea Doyle, 2 vols. (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1948). Cf. the synopsis of this and the author's *Perfection Chrétienne et contemplation* published under the title *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life* (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, 1977).

Other authors who have systematically treated the classic doctrine include Juan Arintero, *The Mystical Evolution in the Development and Vitality of the Church*, trans. Jordan Aumann (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, 1978), vol. II, 3-251; Louis Bouyer, *Introduction to Spirituality*, trans. Mary Perkins Ryan (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1961), 243-85; Joseph de Guibert, *The Theology of the Spiritual Life*, trans. P. Barrett (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1953), 258-91, and Adolphe Tanquerey, *The*

The purgative way<sup>13</sup>

Gaspar defines the first stage of the spiritual life as "*that state of soul in which obstacles are gradually removed so that those Christian virtues suitable to one's perfection might be pursued.*"<sup>14</sup> The attitudes proper to this state are contrition, alertness, and watchfulness for occasions of a relapse into sin. Those in the purgative way take great consolation, and find much strength, in the abundant graces which come their way in virtue of Christ's wounds: "By coming in contact with those mystical waters of eternal life, [the truly contrite soul] will once more find comfort and peace, while gathering new strength to

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*Spiritual Life*, trans. H. Branderis (Tournai, Belgium: Desclée & Co., 1930), 297ff.

For additional presentations of the doctrine which include the insights of modern psychology or the testimony of personal experience, see Ruth Burrows, *Guidelines for Mystical Prayer* (Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1976); Benedict Groeschel, *Spiritual Passages: The Psychology of Spiritual Development* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1988), 101-96 and Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (New York: New American Library, 1974).

<sup>13</sup>At the outset of this discussion, the cautionary stance of Jordan Aumann, *Spiritual Theology* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1980), 134, is noteworthy; he observes that, while it is typical of spiritual theology to treat the process of growth within some sort of framework relating to the three stages because "this method is closer to the experience and evolution of the spiritual life....it [also] has the disadvantage of making separate and isolated categories of the three stages. A person does not definitively leave the lower stages as he passes to the higher ones; the spiritual life is normally a complex pattern of purgation, illumination and union, a blending of mystical elements."

Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Prayer*, trans. A.V. Littledale (New York: Paulist Press; Deus Books, 1967), 187-8: ". . .the three classical stages of contemplation, the purgative, illuminative and unitive ways, are not successive but intermingled: the light of God's Word unifying himself with the soul is what purifies it--although we are not to rule out a kind of temporal succession or the predominance of one or the other element. Illumination is necessary for purification, just as the mystics teach that the 'dark nights' of the soul suppose a previous spiritual light. And union itself really comes about, not after, but in the course of purification; for it is God's purifying, crucifying word stamped on the soul that reveals itself at the end of the 'night', in the 'resurrection', as the Son who redeems."

<sup>14</sup>*Direttore Diretto*, 8. The Circular Letter of 1833 expands this somewhat when Gaspar exhorts the missionaries to use their annual retreat as an occasion for mourning over their and others' failings like "doves" who moan more than they sing. Such contrition is not, however, designed to "produce excessive sadness, but rather will moisten the heart with that holy unction which animates and directs the works that lead to eternal life." (*Circular Letters*, 41; this letter is mostly a commentary on the Vulgate translation of Ez. 7:16 [*Erunt in montibus quasi columbae convallium*] where the prophet compares those who would "escape and flee to the mountains" on the day of judgement to "the doves of the valleys").

conquer and rout the common tempter."<sup>15</sup>

Garrigou-Lagrange takes his cue for distinguishing the three ages from Thomas Aquinas who speaks of them as three "degrees of charity".<sup>16</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange notes that the first degree (proper to "beginners") is characterized by: evidence of incipient virtues, especially meekness, patience, chastity and humility; works of penance; the avoidance of deliberate sin and the gradual healing of tendencies to selfishness (the so-called "active purification" of the senses and spiritual faculties) and finally, by a life of vocal and mental prayer, including liturgical prayer and reception of the sacraments.<sup>17</sup>

#### The illuminative way

Gaspar defines the second way of the spiritual life in the *Direttore Diretto* as "*the state of soul in which, owing to the removal of obstacles, one is able to develop Christian virtues by repeated acts, such that the more the soul is purified the more it is disposed to pursue perfection.*"<sup>18</sup> The aforementioned circular letter makes specific mention of humility, patience, meekness, and love as becoming habitual in this stage. Once again employing Ezekiel's metaphor, Gaspar compares people in the illuminative way to "doves lacking gall," meaning that persons in this state, by mortifying their disordered passions, attain ever greater purity of intention and spiritual insight: "As the eyes of the dove are open and clear, so also will our intellectual vision of God and of heavenly things become open and clear. With a pure intention we shall seek nothing but God's glory and the true good of souls."<sup>19</sup>

Garrigou-Lagrange notes too how this second degree (proper to "proficients") is characterized by solid virtues, both moral and theological, as well as deeper knowledge of God and the mysteries of faith; illumination is also marked by a more radical ("passive") purification of the senses, an incipient manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the beginnings of the simpler, more passive, prayer of infused contemplation, along with greater

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<sup>15</sup>*Circular Letters.*, 41.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. *Summa Theologiae* IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 9. These degrees are distinguished by Thomas according to the typical pursuits which characterize them, i.e. the first, by the avoidance of sin; the second, by the consolidation and strengthening of virtue and the third, by union with God.

<sup>17</sup>See R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages*, vol. I, 267-470 and *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*, 82-8. Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of Christian Meditation*, October 15, 1989, n. 18: "The seeking of God through prayer has to be preceded by an ascetical struggle and a purification from one's own sins and errors. . . .The Gospel aims above all at a moral purification from the lack of truth and love and, on a deeper level, from all the selfish instincts which impede man from recognising and accepting the Will of God in its purity. . . .This is impossible without a radical self-denial. . . .Only this self-denial renders man free to carry out the will of God and to share in the freedom of the Holy Spirit."

<sup>18</sup>*Direttore Diretto*, 8-9.

<sup>19</sup>*Circular Letters*, 41.

profit from participation in the sacramental life of the Church.<sup>20</sup>

### The unitive way

The third way of the spiritual life is defined by the founder in the *Direttore Diretto* as "the state of soul in which, owing to the removal of obstacles and the habitual acquisition of virtue, one is more perfectly united to God by love, and the more divine love purifies the soul, the more it grows in the continual exercise of perfection."<sup>21</sup> Extending his metaphorical description to include this stage of growth, Gaspar notes in his circular letter how those in the unitive way continually advancing in virtue and the desire for perfection: they are like a dove "regularly seen along a 'pool of water'. . .spread[ing] its wings in flight. . . This refers to the perfections which we must acquire in degrees. . . Imitate the dove and let your brilliantly glistening wings open in flight."<sup>22</sup> People in the unitive way thus experience delight in virtue, disgust toward anything which leads them away from God, and a constant thirst for God alone.

For Garrigou-Lagrance, the third degree (proper to the "perfect") is characterized by the practice of heroic virtues, refined in the so-called "passive purification" of the spiritual faculties; striking evidence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, sometimes accompanied by extraordinary charisms; a deepening, quasi-experiential knowledge of God; the perfection of love, resulting in the mystical, transformative union; and the prayer of habitual, or infused contemplation.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>See R. Garrigou-Lagrance, *The Three Ages*, vol. II, 21-341 and *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*, 31-47, 88-93. Cf. Cong. for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Christian Meditation*, n. 21: "On the path of the Christian life, illumination follows on from purification, through the love which the Father bestows on us in the Son and the anointing which we receive from Him in the Holy Spirit. . . Ever since the early Christian period, writers have referred to the 'illumination' received in Baptism. After their initiation into the divine mysteries, this illumination brings the faithful to know Christ by means of the faith which works through love. . . The faithful, with the grace of Baptism, are called to progress in the knowledge and witness of the mysteries of the faith by 'the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience.' No light from God can render the truths of the faith redundant. Any subsequent graces of illumination which God may grant rather help to make clearer the depth of the mysteries confessed and celebrated by the Church, as we wait for the day when the Christian can contemplate God as He is in glory. . . ."

<sup>21</sup>*Direttore Diretto*, 9.

<sup>22</sup>*Circular Letters*, 42. Gaspar also notes that the pastoral ministry provides many opportunities for the gradual acquisition of such perfections, saying "these are the victories that holiness effects as a consequence of living on the mystical mountains of the sanctuary, as we imitate the qualities of the dove." (*ibid.*, 42) This observation is important for understanding the orientation to Christian mission in gasparian spirituality, something developed more fully in the next chapter of the thesis.

<sup>23</sup>See R. Garrigou-Lagrance, *The Three Ages*, vol. II, 353-572 and *The Three Ways of the*

With this brief overview of the principal features of the tripartite division of spiritual progress in mind, considered from both the standpoint of St. Gaspar who uses the language of image and metaphor to describe them, and from the standpoint of their classic theological articulation, we proceed to comment on the founder's treatise framed around this traditional doctrine.

Text, Commentary, and Evaluation of  
*In omnibus divites factis in Illo*

Gaspar's conviction that devotion to the precious blood provides a secure means for achieving personal sanctification is outlined in this short work which, to be accurate, should be considered a detailed schema of an ascetical treatise, rather than a fully developed study; nevertheless, it is arguably the most significant statement by the founder on the spirituality that this devotion inspires. Michele Colagiovanni thus speaks of this text, with its rich use of allusion, as having a "fullness that opens up depths difficult to probe" elsewhere in the founder's *Writings* on the precious blood.<sup>24</sup> Other references to the blood of Christ are neither as extensive nor sustained; hence they do not provide the systematic treatment necessary for a comprehensive exposition of this aspect of gasparian spirituality. To arrive then at a reasonably complete notion of the ascetical meaning of Jesus' blood for Gaspar, a thorough examination of this short work is appropriate.<sup>25</sup>

Our method will be to provide a new translation of the text together with a suitable commentary on it; this is followed by a theological evaluation. In presenting the text of the schema in sections, we are following Gaspar's own division of it into three installments, as these were sent by him to his confrère Luigi Mosconi; these parts correspond respectively to the three ways of the spiritual life. By evaluating the treatise in light of the spiritual and theological tradition, we hope to demonstrate how St. Gaspar's understanding of devotion to the precious blood compares with broader streams of Catholic spirituality of which it is part.

*In omnibus divites factis in Illo : Text and Commentary I*<sup>26</sup>

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*Spiritual Life*, 93-104. Cf. Cong. for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter on Christian Meditation*, n. 22: "Finally, the Christian who prays can, if God so wishes, come to a particular experience of *union*. The Sacraments, especially Baptism and the Eucharist, are the objective beginning of the union of the Christian with God. Upon this foundation, the person who prays can be called, by a special grace of the Spirit, to that specific type of union with God, which in Christian terms is called *mystical*."

<sup>24</sup>M. Colagiovanni, "*Il Sangue di Cristo in San Gaspare Del Bufalo*," 590.

<sup>25</sup>The text has been commented on previously, at least in its principal points, by L. Contegiacomo, "*Il Sangue di Gesù Cristo nella vita e nell'apostolato di S. Gaspare del Bufalo*", 35-45, and Beniamino Conti, *San Gaspare Apostolo del Sangue di Cristo*, 122-9.

<sup>26</sup>The treatise is based on the text of 1 Cor. 1:5: "In everything you have been enriched in him." (*Douay-Rheims* version) An attempt has been made here to complete clear references to passages of scripture where these are abbreviated in the original text; such completions

The blood of Christ as image of purification<sup>27</sup>

The schema begins with an allusion to its title, noting how devotion to the precious blood is a special means for conferring the riches of grace that adorn Christian life; there follows immediately the classic division of the spiritual life into three "ways":

**(fol. 455)** With what riches devotion to the most precious blood adorns the soul! We can distinguish three states in which the soul may find itself: the state of sin, the state of grace, and the state of perfection (the three ways: *purgative, illuminative, unitive*).

Gaspar intends then to outline the distinctive focus of his spirituality in light of the traditional view of spiritual growth; as the treatise progresses, the role of devotion to the precious blood in Christian life is considered relative to each of the three stages of the interior life, insofar as these characterize the unfolding and development of that life.

The text is replete with biblical references which are meant to illustrate and confirm the content of its teaching. The initial paragraphs of the treatise treat of the devotion for those in the purgative way, and are each headed by a scriptural allusion to the person and work of Christ; thus, the opening paragraph states "*He is expiation*":

*Ipse est propitiatio*<sup>28</sup> - Devotion to the blood of Jesus Christ is the foundation of *hope* in divine mercy:

1. Because Jesus is our *Advocate*: . . . *we have an Advocate with the Father, [Jesus Christ the righteous one]*.<sup>29</sup> *Look, he says, upon the face of your anointed.*<sup>30</sup> For if the

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are noted in brackets. Unless otherwise specified, translations of biblical texts are from *The New American Bible with Revised New Testament*; where necessary, however, the *Douay-Rheims* translation of the Latin Vulgate is used to preserve the sense of the original citations employed by the founder. The complete translation of the treatise is included in the *Appendix* to the thesis.

<sup>27</sup>Many of the explicit New Testament references to the blood of Christ, which total about 36, could be classified for our purposes according to the traditional division of the spiritual life. Thus, as an image of "purification" the following texts could be adduced: "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt.26:28; cf. Mk.14:24; Lk.22:20); "God set forth [Christ Jesus] as an expiation, through faith, by his blood" (Rm.3:25); "if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes can sanctify those who are defiled. . .how much more will the blood of Christ" (Hb.9:13-14); "the blood of [God's] Son Jesus cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn.1:7); "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood. . .be glory and power" (Rv.1:5).

<sup>28</sup>"He is an offering for our sins." (1 Jn. 2:2)

<sup>29</sup>1 Jn. 2:1.

<sup>30</sup>Ps. 84:10.

prayers of the Patriarchs obtained for the people such singular favors, then we may assume the same for ourselves. [Christ] presents his wounds together with his blood which *speaks more eloquently than that of Abel*.<sup>31</sup>

These statements evoke the pauline view of the redemption whereby God set forth Jesus as an "expiation" (*hilasterion* or "mercy seat"; cf. Rm. 3:25) by his blood. As such, devotion to the blood of Jesus Christ promotes utter confidence in the sinner who seeks reconciliation with God. This hope is intensified by the johannine image of Jesus as our *paraklitos* with the Father, upon whose face God is sure to gaze with compassion. With these references to the forgiveness assured those who place their hope in Jesus' atoning mediation, Gaspar indicates the motivation the sinner has for beginning the purgative way of repentance.

The treatise proceeds with a paragraph under the heading "*He is shepherd*":

*Ipsa est pastor.* - 2. Because Jesus while praying to the Father calls out to us with *inexpressible groanings*,<sup>32</sup> he is also the Shepherd who *lays down his life for his sheep*.<sup>33</sup> But in seeking his little flock, how reddened is the path of the good shepherd with blood. How costly we are to Jesus, oh [you his] faithful ones! He calls out to us with as many mouths as he has wounds. He shows us his opened heart: "Come," he says, to cleanse yourself in this blood. . . .Sin is a leprosy: *Wash and be clean*.<sup>34</sup>

This reflection on Christ as the shepherd who gave his life for the flock continues the theme of Jesus' intercession on behalf of sinners, while indicating how costly the sacrifice was whereby the good shepherd retrieved those who were lost. Christ's wounds, especially his opened side, invite and exhort the sinner to be cleansed from the leprosy of sin in the redeeming blood.

Gaspar then presents Christ our expiation and shepherd under the heading "*He is life*":

*Ipsa est vita* - 3. Because Jesus, while seeking and praying for us, allows us to know, if we are open, the efficacy of the means of reconciliation, his divine blood. [This blood] is the power of the sacrament of penance; it is the price of sanctifying grace; it brings about a revival of good works.

By searching and praying for the sinner, Christ our life makes known to those desiring it the efficacious means of reconciliation. Such reconciliation is achieved especially through the sacrament of penance which restores esteem for the state of sanctifying grace as well as motivating a revival of good works.

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<sup>31</sup>Hb. 12:24.

<sup>32</sup>Cf. Rm. 8:26.

<sup>33</sup>Cf. Jn. 10:15.

<sup>34</sup>2 Kgs. 5:13.

This teaching on the life-restoring efficacy of Jesus' blood is followed by a consideration of Christ as "*comforter*"; here the treatise takes the form of a dialogue between Christ and "the soul"<sup>35</sup> in which the latter is led to see the significance at various points along the soul's journey of Christ's blood, as well as its power to evoke ever more generous responses:

*Ipsa est solatium* - 4. The devil, seeing that a soul wants to return to God, seeks to discourage it with vain fears. But Jesus, our comfort, says to the soul: "How can you doubt that I am unwilling to pardon you, since I call and invite you to, give you room for, repentance, leading you by the hand? Look at me in the garden; I sweat blood from the pain of foreseeing that many would not be saved through their own fault: *What gain would there be then from my lifeblood?*<sup>36</sup> See me upon the cross: *I thirst.*<sup>37</sup>

Gaspar here notes how the repentant person is soon tempted with unnecessary fear concerning the reality of the forgiveness offered and received. Gaspar speaks of the soul's need to be reminded of the divine initiative which is the basis of its repentance, and of the hope for further progress along the way. Moreover, the thought of Jesus' passion should provide a powerful motive for the soul to overcome self-doubt and discouragement; for in the passion one sees the thirst of Christ for the soul's conversion, as well as the pain suffered by him at knowing his blood would be shed in vain for those lost through lack of faith and repentance. Such reflection should restore a sense of hope and purpose to the person troubled by early temptations.

This leads to another consideration of Jesus as the soul's repose under the heading, "*He is rest*":

*Ipsa est quies* - 5. [The soul protests]: "But more than once I have come near to repenting, yet. . . ." [Jesus responds] : "Well now, the purpose of life is one of amendment. It is true you deserved punishment, but just as the lintels of the Hebrews were marked with blood and thus passed over by the Angel, so [you too have been marked]." *No*, Jesus replied [to St. Peter], *not seven times but seventy-seven times.*<sup>38</sup> Jesus, therefore, is our repose. Observe how he is scourged, crowned with thorns, and crucified; notwithstanding even the repetition of so many sins, he still said: *Father, forgive them!*<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>The use of certain terminology in this and other *Writings of the Founder* is admittedly anachronistic and difficult for modern readers; the present chapter is not, however, a critique of the traditional language of spiritual theology. For some interesting insights into real or imagined problems associated with the word "soul" see Rémi Brague, "The Soul of Salvation"; Ysabel de Andia, "The Eyes of the Soul," and Heino Sonnemans, "Soul, Afterlife, Salvation," *CICR* 14 (Winter 1987): 215-28, 229-47 and 248-61 resp.

<sup>36</sup>Ps. 30:10.

<sup>37</sup>Jn. 19:28.

<sup>38</sup>Mt. 18:22.

<sup>39</sup>Lk. 23:34.

How true it is that those in the purgative way must depend on the riches of the blood of the Lamb. *[How much more then, since we are now] justified by his blood, will we be saved through [Christ] from the wrath.*<sup>40</sup>

At this point, Gaspar indicates the need "beginners" have for a firm purpose of amendment, the experience of recidivism notwithstanding; if one needed to approach the sacrament of penance often, this should never be an excuse for abandoning one's resolve. Even if punishment for past and present sins is merited, the blood of Christ, foreshadowed by the paschal lamb, gives promise of deliverance. Moreover, the evangelical call to forgive repeatedly should also give the soul sufficient courage to persevere.

Once again, the thought of Christ's passion, during which he asked forgiveness for his executioners, should quiet the soul's anxiety over sins and faults committed, even when they are repeated. Thus Jesus becomes a source of calm for the soul, as it considers the riches found in the blood of the Lamb: the soul's justification and deliverance from God's anger.

The remaining paragraphs dealing with the purgative way are each headed by reference to Christ as master, or "*teacher*":

*Ipsa est magister* - 6. Once converted, Jesus leads the soul to the wounds of his feet so that it might persevere, saying: "Flee, daughter, from the near occasions of sin, lest you reopen these wounds and trample this blood. Your sins would then serve as nails." [The soul responds]: *Lord, make my steps steadfast in your paths. . .*<sup>41</sup> *Make my foot stand on level ground. . .*<sup>42</sup> *Walk while you have the light.*<sup>43</sup>

The soul that has experienced initial conversion is now led to consider Christ's wounds as a source of instruction helping it to persevere. Gaspar here begins to use the image of Jesus crucified to represent the gradual ascent of the soul to perfection along the three ways. At this point, he places the beginner at the base of the cross to contemplate the wounds of Christ's feet; these are seen by Gaspar as providing the beginner with motivation to avoid the occasions of sin. A relapse is to be avoided lest these wounds be "reopened," their blood "trampled," and newly-committed sins become as "nails." The soul, encouraged by the contemplation of these wounds, prays in the spirit of the psalmist to be preserved from falling.

The soul is then drawn to consider the wounds of Christ's hands, the blood from which enriches it with merit, inspiring the person to seek heaven by the work of its own hands, all the while applying the merits of the "divine blood":

*Ipsa est magister* - 7. Jesus then leads the soul to the wounds of his hands, and says:

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<sup>40</sup>Rm. 5:9.

<sup>41</sup>Cf. Ps. 17:5.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. Ps. 26:12.

<sup>43</sup>Cf. Jn. 12:35.

"Observe, daughter, how I am wounded for you. The hand is the instrument of the deed. Blessed are you if you strive for heaven and apply to yourself my divine blood which flows from my hands, enriching the soul with merits." [The soul responds]: *As the eyes of a maid are on the hands of her mistress, [so are our eyes on the Lord, our God].*<sup>44</sup> In reflecting about [these] "eyes on the hands", [the soul] knows that what it sees with the mind's eye must be acted upon. *Rounded hands, full of hyacinths*<sup>45</sup> symbolize in their smoothness the perfection of one's works. But in order to act thus, *grace and the sacraments* [are needed]. And is not all this but a continuous application of the blood of Jesus Christ?

The beginner is thus taught to be like the maidservant of the psalms whose eyes are fixed on her mistress' hands, and like the beloved of the Song of Songs whose hands are rounded and set with jewels. Perseverance in the purgative way brings with it then a growing perfection of good works; works performed with the assistance of divine grace, whose special source is the sacraments, which Gaspar sees as privileged channels granting access to the blood of Christ's efficacy.

The wound of Christ's shoulder serves in due course to instruct the beginner in the reasons why he or she is called to share the burden of the cross:

*Ipsa est magister* - 8. To act well, however, it is necessary to carry the cross. And here Jesus shows us the wound of his shoulder: *Whoever wishes to come [after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me].*<sup>46</sup> Suffering is *necessary* for us, especially when obstinate sinners persecute the good; yielding to them is not necessary however. Moreover, [suffering] is *useful* since by it we detach ourselves from this miserable world. Let us not rely on ourselves. Let us have recourse to prayer. Thirdly, [suffering] is *glorious*, since the cross is the royal ladder to heaven: *Was it not necessary [that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?]*<sup>47</sup> How much should the example of Jesus inspire us! *What are these wounds?*<sup>48</sup>

Gaspar sees Christ's shoulder bruised by the cross as representing a form of suffering considered not only necessary, but even useful and glorious for the soul; this is true especially when suffering arises from the persecution of good inevitably experienced by those who set out on the spiritual journey, and to which they must not yield. Acceptance of such suffering teaches the beginner the value of detachment from worldly things, the necessity of prayerful confidence in God rather than self, and that the cross is the way leading to heaven.

The concluding paragraph under this heading, which brings to an end the section on

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<sup>44</sup>Ps. 123:4.

<sup>45</sup>Cf. Song 5:14, in Juan Arintero, *The Song of Songs: A Mystical Exposition*, trans. James Valender, and José Morales (Cincinnati: Dominican Nuns, 1974), 446.

<sup>46</sup>Mk. 8:34.

<sup>47</sup>Lk. 24:26.

<sup>48</sup>Zech. 13:6.

the purgative way, continues the theme of perseverance in times of trial:

*Ipsa est magister* - 9. Willingly bearing the cross, [the soul] must beware of weariness, and reflect on Jesus who *for the sake of the joy that lay before him . . . endured the cross, despising its shame.*<sup>49</sup> The soul thereby grows in knowledge, noticing how Jesus, though himself innocent, nevertheless did with a flood what he could have done with a drop. *He loves us and has washed away our sins (fol. 456) in his own blood.*<sup>50</sup> [The soul] thinks of its own sinfulness and *loves its sufferings in peace* (thereby marking an increase in repentance). *It does not complain* in the midst of suffering. It loves *the cup* the Father gave [Jesus].<sup>51</sup> It does not complain: *[For Jesus] was silent and answered nothing.*<sup>52</sup>

And behold how the soul already begins to participate in the illuminative life through its imitation of the Savior's example. It sees Jesus torn and each moment despises its base vices the more should the soul have been immoral. It sees Jesus crowned and dripping blood, despising its vanity should the soul have been proud. It sees Jesus crucified and does not give in to the wiles of the enemy who goes about saying: *Come down from the cross.*<sup>53</sup> Jesus proved he was the Son of God when, despite the darkening sky, he still did not come down from the cross, thus making himself our teacher, that we might never abandon the cross.

The soul is exhorted finally to imitate Christ who embraced the cross, heedless of its shame, and in view of the triumph of the resurrection. Moreover, the thought of the sheer abundance with which the innocent Christ shed his blood out of love should motivate the beginner to accept sufferings in peace and without complaint. The sight of Christ in the various moments of his passion calls the soul to imitate his silent perseverance, rejecting the temptation to abandon the path of virtue and return to its former way of life. The acquisition of this attitude toward the spiritual life and its accompanying trials signals for Gaspar the soul's entrance into the way of illumination.

#### *Theological Evaluation of the Text I*

Proceeding now to evaluate this portion of the text with the intention of showing how Gaspar's devotional view of the purgative way compares with a more theological articulation, a number of convergences appear. For instance, his introductory emphasis on the atoning and intercessory action of Christ situates the whole process of repentance and first conversion within the prior initiative of God; it is the grace of redemption, powerfully symbolized by the blood of Jesus, which opens the horizon out of which the response to God's invitation is elicited and enabled. Without the salvific activity of Christ--his priestly

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<sup>49</sup>Hb. 12:2.

<sup>50</sup>Rv. 1:5; (*Jerusalem Bible* translation).

<sup>51</sup>Cf. Jn. 18:11.

<sup>52</sup>Mk. 14:61.

<sup>53</sup>Mt. 27:42.

offering and mediation--the spiritual life of the believer would be impossible; the johannine and pauline texts referred to in the treatise make clear Gaspar's desire to base the life of grace in the mystery of Jesus' representative solidarity with the human race, in virtue of which the forgiveness of sins and the grace of the Spirit are communicated.

The infusion of justifying and sanctifying grace, whether received at baptism and never culpably forfeited or, if lost, restored by means of repentance and absolution, establishes a person in the first degree of charity; the grace mediated by the humanity of Christ in the paschal mystery constitutes the principle of the Christian spiritual life.

Moreover, the life of grace is one that progresses along the paths identified as the three stages of the spiritual life, a life which "ought continually to grow until it has reached its full development in the immediate vision of the divine essence and in a perfect love which will last for ever."<sup>54</sup> This development requires a person in the state of grace to cooperate knowingly and willingly with its dynamism, beginning with that moment Evelyn Underhill calls the "awakening of the transcendental consciousness"--an awakening often stimulated by considering truths of faith or spiritual realities heretofore unrecognized. This "realization of a splendour and adorable reality in the world--or sometimes its obverse, the divine sorrow at the heart of the world--never before perceived" is typically characterized by a "sense of liberation and victory, a conviction of the nearness of God, a sentiment of love toward God."<sup>55</sup>

For Gaspar, the Christian doctrine of the redemption, at the heart of which lies the blood of Christ as sign and instrument of God's saving action, serves as the stimulus whereby the soul is led to such heightened consciousness and longing for total surrender in response to the mystery of divine love.

This desire for greater perfection which generally characterizes those at the beginning of the spiritual journey--and which may exist in either an intense or attenuated form depending on the individual's degree of generosity in embracing the means of progress--is rooted in a self-knowledge that forms part of the awakening of religious consciousness. Garrigou-Lagrange notes such souls "begin to know themselves, to see their poverty and their neediness, and they have every day to examine their conscience to correct their faults. . . In this state there is a love of God proportionate to the soul's knowledge; beginners who are truly generous love God with a holy fear of sin, which causes them to avoid mortal sin and even deliberate venial sin, by dint of mortifying the senses and

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<sup>54</sup>R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*, 72. The author treats extensively of the sources, perfection and end of the spiritual life in *The Three Ages*, vol. I, 28-205.

<sup>55</sup>E. Underhill, *Mysticism*, 178-9. Underhill has added to the traditional doctrine of the three ways in that she posits a prelude to the purgative stage proper, i.e. the "awakening". This awakening, whether sudden or gradual, amounts largely to what is termed psychologically and theologically, "conversion." It would seem, however, that such heightened consciousness of spiritual realities is already part of the purification of self which constitutes the purgative way.

concupiscence in its various forms."<sup>56</sup>

For Gaspar, this self-knowledge (implying a new awareness of who one is relative to God) is derived primarily from considering the price of our redemption. Gaspar's preferred object of meditation, the sight of Jesus' blood, awakens a profound sorrow for sins committed and awareness of the soul's dignity before God. This contrition and renewed sense of self-worth motivate a person to undertake the progressive purification which lies at the heart of the purgative stage. Continual reflection on the passion is calculated to motivate an aversion toward past sin, avoidance of future sin, and a generous response of love, expressed in an ascetical program that helps realize the person's desire for spiritual progress.

As Underhill observes in a passage very much in line with Gaspar's view:

This "divine furnace of purifying love" demands from the ardent soul a complete self-surrender, and voluntary turning from all impurity, a humility of the most far-reaching kind; and this means the deliberate embrace of active suffering, a self-discipline in dreadful tasks. . . . Detachment may be a counsel of prudence, a practical result of seeing the true values of things; but in the pain of mortification is seized a splendid opportunity, a love token, timidly offered by the awakened spirit to that all-demanding Love.

. . . The mystics have a profound conviction that Creation, Becoming, Transcendence, is a painful process at the best. Those who are Christians point to the Passion of Christ as a proof that the cosmic journey to perfection, the path of the Eternal Wisdom, follows of necessity the Way of the Cross. That law of the inner life, which sounds so fantastic and yet is so bitterly true--"No progress without pain"--asserts itself. It declares that birth pangs must be endured in the spiritual as well as in the material world: that adequate training must always hurt the athlete. Hence the mystics' quest of the Absolute drives them to an eager and heroic union with the reality of suffering, as well as

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<sup>56</sup>R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*, 83-4. Cf. J. de Guibert, *The Theology of the Spiritual Life*, 268: "Most beginners are little accustomed to thinking about their spiritual state. Their knowledge of their own shortcomings is very faulty, since they judge them from a human point of view and pay little attention to the really fundamental and dangerous defects in their characters. But intimate self-knowledge is necessary for any serious reformation of life, for avoiding dangerous illusions, and for a solid grounding in humility. Therefore, from the very beginning, souls should set about acquiring a general knowledge of their character and their predominant passion. They should learn to recognize the more obvious manifestations of their main defects and in particular the external manifestations of these defects. Then, enlightened by grace, they will gradually deepen their knowledge of self. Finally, they should be helped to recognize their own good qualities and to use them in their pursuit of perfection."

This emphasis on self-acceptance leading to greater self-knowledge, all the while taking into consideration a person's personality type, limitations and talents, seems to correspond with Gaspar's understanding of humility and the role of individual temperament in spiritual growth and direction.

with the reality of joy.<sup>57</sup>

Perseverance in the life of incipient charity is the great challenge to a person in this stage of growth. Difficulties associated with the active purification of the senses tempt the person at this point to abandon the path, or at least to resist grace and avoid the efforts necessary for continued progress. The discouragement which arises especially from relapses is of particular concern, while the spiritual consolations given at the beginning of conversion are designed to encourage the soul in maintaining its resolve. Still, the eventual withdrawal of consolation and accompanying trials, show the person is genuinely following Christ in faith and love:

That will be a sign that he is on the way to Christ, and so a consolation, although it will have the form of a withdrawal of consolation. There is a kind of consolation generally meted out to beginners as a kind of advance payment, "sensible" consolation in which the senses and faculties of the soul rejoice at discovering a divine meaning and presence in the words and events of Scripture. It must, sooner or later, be withdrawn for an indefinite period from those who have made some progress; for God is found only on the road to his Son's death and resurrection.<sup>58</sup>

Here again, Gaspar maintains the contemplation of Jesus' blood provides special incentive for a person to persevere in the midst of such trials, whether interior or exterior. In his Circular Letter of 1834, the founder makes further reference to the blood of Christ as source of encouragement in the midst of difficulty:

The Lord never fails to support every creature in its needs, so he offers us the Red Sea, a symbol and type of his Precious Blood. It is in that Blood that we find provisions for our welfare. The mystical soil of souls, arid because of sin, is cultivated and watered. A way is prepared for the sinner by which he may go out of Egypt, image of this wicked and desert-like world. To the penitent person, as well as those souls burning with love for Jesus, he gives a spur, an incentive even to become shipwrecked in that mystic sea, thus spelling out another victory for the bountiful and divine Redeemer of all.<sup>59</sup>

What originally provoked repentance and the initial response of love continues then to serve as a stimulus for sharing in the Lord's own desolation on the cross. The instruction afforded by the wounds of the Crucified provides training in the ways of the Spirit and invites growing insight into the purpose of suffering the *via dolorosa* in union with Christ.

As Michele Colagiovanni describes it, the blood of Christ serves as "the word" by which Gaspar represents to his interlocutors the present reality of God's love for humanity, preventing the redemptive action of Christ which reveals this love from being rendered vain. Gaspar was convinced this representative word had an intrinsic efficacy which not

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<sup>57</sup>E. Underhill, *Mysticism*, 221-2.

<sup>58</sup>Balthasar, *Prayer*, 216.

<sup>59</sup>*Circular Letters*, 45.

only announces the fact of redemption but also motivates a response to it. There is for the founder an inseparable affinity between this word and the redeemer's person and work; the blood of Christ is an efficacious sign of the Word incarnate opening up a specific path to a comprehensive and totally engaging Christian life.<sup>60</sup>

To conclude, the blood of Christ serves as an image of purification for Gaspar Del Bufalo at the beginning of the spiritual journey in three distinct ways: as the blood of redemption purifying from sin and mediating the grace of justification; as the blood shed without reserve inspiring the soul to undertake the purification of self necessary to progress in the way of the Spirit; and finally, as the blood of patient suffering encouraging perseverance in the way of purification so that the hoped for goal of following Christ might be obtained.

### *In omnibus divites factis in Illo : Text and Commentary II*

The blood of Christ as image of enlightenment<sup>61</sup>

The next section of the treatise, like the previous one, discusses spiritual growth on the basis of a christological reflection; the following text serves as the point of reference for its treatment of the illuminative way: *Christus factus est nobis sapientia a Deo, justitia, sanctificatio, redemptio.*<sup>62</sup> Here Gaspar wishes to show the role of Christ in relation to the person who has entered the second age of the interior life:

**(fol. 457)** Having understood well the teaching explained above, we continue on to the illuminative way seeing how all the riches we possess are ours in the blood of the Lamb.

Here the well-known text comes to mind: *[Christ Jesus]. . . became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*<sup>63</sup>

The majority of paragraph headings in this section comment on the role of Christ

<sup>60</sup>See M. Colagiovanni, *"Il Sangue di Cristo in San Gaspare,"* 585-91.

<sup>61</sup>The scriptural texts referring to the blood of Christ in a noetic context wherein the image sheds light on the Christian mysteries of faith are: "Immediately blood and water flowed out. An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may [come to] believe" (Jn.19:34-35); "God proves his love for us in that. . .we are now justified by [Christ's] blood" (Rm.5:9); "In [Christ] we have redemption by his blood. . .In all wisdom he has made known to us the mystery of [God's] will" (Ep. 1:7-9); "Peter. . .in the foreknowledge of God the Father..for obedience and sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pt.1:1-2); "realize that you were ransomed from you futile conduct. . .with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pt.1:18-19); "there are three that testify, the Spirit, the water, and the blood" (1 Jn.5:8); "He had a name inscribed that no one knows except himself. He wore a cloak that had been dipped in blood, and his name was called the Word of God." (Rv.19:12-13).

<sup>62</sup>1 Cor. 1:30: ". . .you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. . ."

<sup>63</sup>1 Cor. 1:30.

our "wisdom":

1. *Sapientia*. In the illuminative way the converted soul begins to notice the greatness of *faith*. It sees faith's *unity* insofar as the sacrifice of Melchizedek, the blood of Abel, and the sacrifice of Isaac [all] allude to this Victim [who is Christ]. The soul meditates at the foot of the cross on how all were saved through faith in the future Messiah: *In you our fathers hoped" ...;*<sup>64</sup> *Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness". . .;*<sup>65</sup> *If the blood of goats [and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes can sanctify those who are defiled so that their flesh is cleansed], how much more will the blood of Christ.*<sup>66</sup> See how in the ancient priesthood and the sacrifices. . . different themes converge marking the harmony of the Old and New Testaments, and the glories of the unity of the faith. For these reasons, Jesus was thus called *the Lamb. . . known before the foundation of the world.*<sup>67</sup>

What a grand thought! Such a devotion to be revived in [our own] times.

Oh faith!

2. *Sapientia*. The soul proceeds to notice the glory of the faith in the inspiration of the Sacred Books of which our devotion reminds us. Were not [the following things] said of Jesus in times long past: *For I am ready for scourges;*<sup>68</sup> *Many bullocks surround me;*<sup>69</sup> *My bones all tremble;*<sup>70</sup> *There was in him no stately bearing... nor appearance [that would attract us to him].*<sup>71</sup> Oh my Lord, when I see you covered with blood how many of religion's thoughts do I remember! Oh great devotion of the precious blood! *From the sole of the foot to [the head there is no sound spot].*<sup>72</sup> *What are these wounds . . . ?*<sup>73</sup> How one laments the loss of respect for holy things.

One sees here an emphasis on growth in knowledge of the mysteries of faith, with the wisdom thus acquired focused on the mystery of redemption in Jesus' blood. The first effect of this deepened awareness is a vision of revelations's unity, specifically the unity existing between the biblical covenants. This harmony is perceived through reflection on the ancient sacrifices as allusions to the future victimhood of the Messiah. Gaspar provides abundant evidence of the foreshadowing of the passion of Christ in the pages of the Hebrew

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<sup>64</sup>Ps. 22:5.

<sup>65</sup>Hb. 9:22.

<sup>66</sup>Hb. 9:13.

<sup>67</sup>1 Pt. 1:20.

<sup>68</sup>Cf. Ps. 37(38):18; (*Douay-Rheims* version).

<sup>69</sup>Ps. 22:13.

<sup>70</sup>Jr. 23:9.

<sup>71</sup>Is. 53:2.

<sup>72</sup>Is. 1:6.

<sup>73</sup>Zech. 13:6.

scriptures. The key, however, to seeing the unity of revelation lies in the blood of Christ, toward which prior foreshadowings of the future dispensation all converge: Jesus, the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, reveals the "glories of the unity of the faith" and the concord between the covenants.

This wisdom of faith continues to grow as a person in the illuminative way comes to see how, in the Christian dispensation, the world is sanctified by the blood of the Lamb through preaching and the sacraments. The soul understands the prodigies of grace which accompany this ministry are so many triumphs of the God who reigns from the cross:

3. *Sapientia*. The soul proceeds in the illuminative way to have a stable faith whose glories are seen in the Apostles' spreading the gospel. They sanctified the world in the blood of the Lamb, applying it in the sacraments. The soul beholds the marvels of the cross reddened with blood; it sees how souls are regenerated: *You have had yourselves washed*. . .<sup>74</sup> It sees the prodigies which accompany apostolic undertakings. Truly "God has reigned from a tree." And yet how many are the enemies of the cross today.

The person in this way then comes deeper self-knowledge, recognizing how all the spiritual gifts he or she enjoys are derived from the merits of Jesus Christ. Aware of its own insufficiency and poverty, the soul looks in hope to the eucharistic chalice containing the blood of Christ, from which it derives strength and nourishment:

4. *Sapientia*. The soul proceeds to consider how it possesses the riches it has through the merits of Jesus. While delighting to render worship, the soul knows its own poverty. So it takes the chalice in hand: *The cup of salvation [I will take up]*.<sup>75</sup> *And [my] chalice which inebriates me, how good it is!*<sup>76</sup> In the Old Testament there was the cult of sacrifice, but what of the Mass during which [the same God incarnate offers and is sacrificed]. What respect and zeal therefore should everyone strive to attain while being thus nourished?

5. *Sapientia*. The soul sees how in the blood of the Lamb it gives thanks for favors received. *How shall I make a return [to the Lord]?<sup>77</sup>* (Eucharistic sacrifice). There is nothing more terrible than ingratitude as seen in our own day. *Forgetting the gifts one has received*. . .*repaying favors with evil*, at the same time abusing these *very* gifts: [all these things] constitute varying degrees of ingratitude.

This reflection stimulates a profound sense of gratitude for the spiritual benefits received in virtue of the blood of Christ; moreover, the soul, in seeking to render due thanks, realizes the eucharist itself is the perfect thanksgiving sacrifice:

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<sup>74</sup>1 Cor. 6:11.

<sup>75</sup>Ps. 116:3.

<sup>76</sup>Cf. Ps. 22(23):5 (*Douay-Rheims* version).

<sup>77</sup>Ps. 116:12.

6. *Sapientia*. The soul sees that to obtain grace there is nothing to do but offer the blood: *Look upon the face of your anointed.*<sup>78</sup> (Impetratory sacrifice). Oh love of our divine redeemer! *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one.*<sup>79</sup> *Thanks be to God who gives us [the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ].*<sup>80</sup> And this is how: *I am with you [always, until the end of the age.]*<sup>81</sup> In the Sacred Ciborium Jesus is there pleading. For this reason the unbloody Sacrifice is renewed every morning. The Church offers no prayer which does not conclude without a reference to Jesus' merits. (Cf. Pinamonti's *Tree of life*). Oh what need we have of Jesus! It is said in the ancient text that in order to obtain grace it is necessary to call on the God of Abraham: not because God is not the God of all people, but because of the merits of the patriarchs. But the merits of Jesus Christ are, in a special way, the foundation of all the saints' merits.

The person in the illuminative way thus becomes more acutely aware of the efficacy of the eucharistic action in which the blood of Christ is offered sacramentally, and by which Christ continues his priestly mediation on behalf of humanity. The expiatory power of the blood of Christ in the eucharistic sacrifice is recognized by Gaspar as a unique source of grace and merit for the soul, eliciting responses of adoration, gratitude for benefits received, petition for those it lacks, and a renewed desire to do penance.

In the last paragraph bearing reference to Christ as "wisdom", Gaspar notes as the soul deepens its appreciation of heavenly wisdom, it experiences a correspondingly profound contrition and confidence in God's merciful love, again seen in the image of Jesus' blood:

7. *Sapientia*. For the just expiation of its sins, the soul ponders its affection for heavenly wisdom, and thereby experiences greater sorrow for having sinned. It seeks to make satisfaction, aware that whatever good it does and suffering it endures, will be useful for the remission of sins. It knows that goodness, salutary works--indeed everything--stems from the continual application of the treasures of Jesus Christ and that the blood of the Savior gives comfort. The soul is fond of saying: "No, I will not fear, because *with you is forgiveness. . . [and] plenteous redemption*."<sup>82</sup> Behold how the soul is enlivened with another theological virtue, *hope*. *They who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which is immovable, [which stands forever].*<sup>83</sup> Seeing Jesus' wounds (**fol. 458**) opened by sins, the soul sighs with compassion; yet from these wounds it draws the mystic waters *welling up [to eternal life]*<sup>84</sup> in which it hopes to be saved. It knows the dangers, yet full of courage,

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<sup>78</sup>Ps. 84:10.

<sup>79</sup>1 Jn. 2:1.

<sup>80</sup>1 Cor. 15:57.

<sup>81</sup>Mt. 20:28.

<sup>82</sup>Ps. 130:4,7.

<sup>83</sup>Ps. 125:1.

<sup>84</sup>Jn. 4:14.

the soul exclaims: *I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me.*<sup>85</sup> It makes use, therefore, of the sacraments and sees how in the soul's own sanctification, Jesus *has been made our justice.*<sup>86</sup> In the word "justice" is understood every good work.

This deepened sorrow leads the soul to make amends for previous offenses, while never forgetting it is Jesus Christ who is our justice, and that good works are but a continuous application of the treasury of merit which is in him. The person's desire to atone for his or her sins rouses new acts of hope, whose special object is the sufficiency of redemption in Jesus' blood. The soul is given such hope to allay any fear it might experience from heightened sensitivity to human indebtedness to divine justice; this hope renews the soul's confidence in the Lord, making it "like Mount Zion which cannot be moved."

The soul likewise contemplates Christ's wounds in a new way: wounds not only opened by sin, but founts as well, from which the soul may draw the "mystic waters" springing up to eternal life. The person thus illumined, despite knowledge of the perils to which he or she is exposed along the way, is given new courage to proceed along the path of sanctification, trusting that all things are possible in Christ.<sup>87</sup>

The next paragraph considers the illuminative way in relation to Christ our "righteousness":

8. *Factus est justificatio.* In addition to this, the soul sees how the devil, even if not tempting it to leave all good behind, would nevertheless love to see the soul once again in sin, and thus afflicts it. But the soul, fixing its gaze on its beloved Good, sees what it means *to offend God*, and how much Jesus has suffered to make it holy. Therefore, the soul exclaims: "*What will separate me from the love of Christ?*"<sup>88</sup> For Jesus *'was offered because it was his own will'*<sup>89</sup> [and] *'by his stripes we were healed.'*<sup>90</sup> Who wishes to

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<sup>85</sup>Phil. 4:13.

<sup>86</sup>Cf. 1 Cor. 1:30.

<sup>87</sup>Much of this section is reminiscent of Chapter V of the *Direttore Diretto* where Gaspar counsels spiritual directors on the "steps of Jacob's ladder" upon which they are called to assist their directees' gradual ascent. At this point the soul truly begins to experience the fruits of direction which include peace of heart, pleasure in mental prayer, spiritual strength, and noble desires for greater growth. The soul, however, which has begun to know the interior joy of illumination will still:

weep out of love for its past life and grow in its displeasure at having offended a God so worthy of love; yet these tears will not shrink the heart, but cause it to expand marvelously. It is already raised to lofty thoughts of religion and while meditating, finds the means by which to unite itself ever more closely to God. Yet all this is not realized except by practice of the virtues, study of the Crucified and through the palms of victory (*Direttore Diretto*, 46).

<sup>88</sup>Cf. Rm. 8:35.

<sup>89</sup>Is. 53:7 (*Douay-Rheims* version).

crown him anew with thorns? Who seeks to reopen his wounds? All this compels us to return love for love: his bowed head, outstretched hands, his opened side.

Gaspar had already indicated at the end of the previous paragraph that by righteousness (*justitia*) he understands "every good work" the person performs under the influence of Christ. For Christ is the source of the soul's meritorious works such that someone making progress in the spiritual life is but sharing in the righteousness of Christ. As if to prevent a person from imagining the performance of good works is due to self-righteousness, Gaspar now reminds the soul of its own inherent weakness and dependence on Christ.

He indicates how, even at this stage in the life of grace, the soul is susceptible to the influence of the evil one who seeks its relapse into sin through temptations to abandon its good works. Rather than being a cause for discouragement, however, such temptations should bring the soul to fix its gaze anew on God, and ponder the seriousness of sin. Once more, consideration of the passion is seen by Gaspar as a powerful motivation for not allowing temptation to separate a person from the love of Christ.

In the final two paragraphs of this section, persons in the illuminative way, beset with new trials, are urged to look upon Christ, our "redemption":

9. *Factus est redemptio*. In order to establish better [the soul's] attachment to good, it sets itself to thinking, point by point, of the pains suffered by Jesus. It sees him at prayer in the garden, and what pain it feels in seeing him sweat blood! It ponders the scourging, asking who would not pity him? Thinking of Jesus crucified, the soul asks, "*What are these wounds?*"<sup>91</sup> It visits in spirit the holy places and follows the bloody way to Golgotha. Observing the Mother of Sorrows, [it thinks], "*My heart has become like wax melting away within my bosom.*"<sup>92</sup>

10. *Factus est redemptio*. Finally, the soul comes to behold the opened side. Oh ark of salvation! Oh furnace of charity! *Blood and water flowed out*,<sup>93</sup> which recall the gift of the sacraments and at the same time the tender love of Jesus *who loves us and has washed away our sins in his blood*.<sup>94</sup> Jesus has given us his blood to the last drop. Therefore, the soul begins to taste the way of Love, saying: *My beloved is mine and I am his*.<sup>95</sup> *Man shall come to a deep heart*.<sup>96</sup> O Heart of my Lord! *I have come to set the earth on fire*.<sup>97</sup> How one should speak out against the indifference of our age.

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<sup>90</sup>Is. 53:5.

<sup>91</sup>Zech. 13:6.

<sup>92</sup>Ps. 22:15.

<sup>93</sup>Jn. 19:4.

<sup>94</sup>Rv. 1:5 (*Jerusalem Bible* translation).

<sup>95</sup>Song 2:16.

<sup>96</sup>Ps. 64(63):7 (*Douay-Rheims* version).

<sup>97</sup>Lk. 12:49.

This renewed reflection on the various scenes of the passion is once more enjoined on the soul for the resolution of crises in the spiritual journey. At the summit of this meditation lies the contemplation of Christ's opened side, the "center of consolation." Vision of the pierced side brings the soul to the threshold of what Gaspar calls the "ways of love" in the unitive stage. The sight of this "furnace of charity" from which blood and water flowed (signs of the grace of redemption received in the sacraments) inspires tender love for Jesus Christ. According to Gaspar, the pierced heart of the savior becomes the sign of his love which the soul, approaching the unitive way, begins to taste; contemplation of it moves a person to understand what the beloved of the Song of Songs means when she speaks of possessing the object of her love totally.

### *Theological Evaluation of the Text II*

An evaluation of Gaspar's understanding of the illuminative way once again reveals clear affinities to a more theological formulation; the predominant one--responsible for the very designation of this stage as "illuminative"--concerns heightened knowledge of self and of the mysteries of faith, characteristic of persons at this point on the spiritual journey.

According to Garrigou-Lagrange, enlightenment in this sense means a "quasi-experimental knowledge of God" mediated by the revealed truths of faith, especially the doctrines of the incarnation and redemption: "In this contemplation, which is more or less frequent, the proficient receive an abundance of light--in proportion to their fidelity and generosity--through the gift of understanding, which enables them to penetrate more and more deeply into these mysteries, and to appreciate their beauty, at once so simple and so sublime."<sup>98</sup>

As for Gaspar, this deepened knowledge is identified with Christ as "wisdom", the mystery of whose blood is seen as a unique point of reference for enlightened contemplation of the incarnate redemption. In her treatment of the "illumination of the self," Evelyn Underhill agrees with the founder's view of the blood of Christ's special significance for those graced with mystical consciousness:

When the Christian mystic, eager for his birthright, says "Sanguis Christi, inebria me!" he is asking for just such a gift of supernal vitality, a draught of that Wine of Absolute Life which runs in the arteries of the world. Those to whom that cup is given attain to an intenser degree of vitality, a more vivid consciousness, than that which is enjoyed by other men."<sup>99</sup>

With reference to the extensive moral integration which occurs in the illuminative

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<sup>98</sup>R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*, 89.

<sup>99</sup>E. Underhill, *Mysticism*, 235. The author stresses not only the legitimacy, but the necessity, of symbolically representating the mysteries apprehended by the "enlightened". She notes that symbols "play a major part, not only in the description, but also in the machinery of illumination: the intuitions of many mystics presenting themselves directly to the surface-mind in a symbolic form. We must therefore be prepared for a great variety and fluidity of expression, a constant and not always conscious recourse to symbol and image, in those who try to communicate the secret state of consciousness." (*ibid.*, 239)

way, Joseph de Guibert speaks of a "special cultivation of the virtue of religion"<sup>100</sup> as being of great value for the "proficient", including acts of prayer, sacrifice, and liturgical worship. He views a posture of reverence as necessary for fostering an interior life and the union of intellect and will with God. He notes in particular that "acts of religion not only remove the opposition of the senses and the imagination to union with God but actually make use of them to cement that union. Again, the exercise of this virtue greatly assists recollection of mind and custody of the heart, since it keeps before us our true relationship to God insofar as it marks out the relations of the creature to the Creator, and imbues our whole lives with reverence for His Supreme Majesty."<sup>101</sup>

Beniamino Conti, in his brief commentary on Gaspar's treatise, cites a similar emphasis in it on the virtue of religion for those in the illuminative way; he specifically identifies four acts of this virtue which the founder speaks of in relation to the eucharistic chalice: adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and expiation.<sup>102</sup> These four acts, which Gaspar places in the context of liturgical worship, effectively interiorize the "sensible" aspect of devotion to the precious blood and promote that reverence which de Guibert holds to be an essential sign of proficient's progress.

Together with religion, de Guibert holds for a growing "self-abnegation and humility" which also characterize the proficient.<sup>103</sup> Gaspar also considers this essential to people whom God has led farther on the path of Christian perfection; his interest that the soul recognize its complete dependence on God, reinforced through the experience of temptation, indicates an awareness that the dangers of pride and self-righteousness need to be checked by deepened humility. In fact, his treatment of the illuminative way on the basis of the pauline text seems designed to remind proficient's their spiritual progress is always and everywhere dependent on the grace of Christ, our "wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption."

Moreover, Gaspar's concomitant emphasis on the virtue of hope can only arise from a recognition that growth and perseverance are not automatically guaranteed, i.e. they are not sustained by effort alone, but are a gift that cannot be manipulated or determined at will: one's salvation always remains an object of hope. Since the blood of Christ represents for Gaspar both the source of grace and a constant reminder of the soul's need for humble trust in the mercy of God--that the soul's justice is not attributable to self but comes through faith in the blood--this image serves to overcome the dangers and trials of the illuminative way.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>See J. de Guibert, *The Theology of the Spiritual Life*, 277-8.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>102</sup>B. Conti, *San Gaspare Apostolo del Sangue di Cristo*, 126. Cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages*, vol. II, 249ff. for a similar discussion on the Mass in the spiritual life of the proficient.

<sup>103</sup>See de Guibert, *Theology of the Spiritual Life*, 278-82.

<sup>104</sup>For a discussion of the dangers of "driven self-righteousness" as well as other difficulties associated with the second stage of the spiritual life, see B. Groeschel, *Spiritual Passages*, 151-9.

Hence, Gaspar concludes his discussion of this stage of development by referring to the dangers of self-reliance and the soul's need for reinvigoration; here contemplation of Christ's blood is designed to reacquaint the soul with the source of its strength and consolation, as well as motivate it to persevere in the midst of trials. Garrigou-Lagrange notes in this regard how complacency over one's spiritual progress often provokes a crisis where "the soul [is] deprived, not only of sensible consolations, but of the supernatural lights on the mysteries of salvation, of its ardent desires, of that facility in action. . .in which it had felt a secret pride and complacency. . . .This crisis. . .is not without its dangers; it calls for great courage and vigilance, for a faith sometimes reaching to heroism, a hope against all hope, transforming itself into perfect abandonment."<sup>105</sup>

In the midst of such a crisis, Gaspar draws the soul to consider the full significance of Christ's wounds, especially his pierced side. The opened heart of Jesus serves to convince the person in the midst of temptations against faith and hope, that it will yet savor the ways of love. Such reflection on the piercing of Christ is common to the mystical traditions; by placing it at a crucial point in the spiritual life where a person might feel abandoned by God, Gaspar's view converges with those, such as Balthasar, who see this event of the passion as a sign of Christ's own experience of abandonment in which the soul now participates:

The apparently indifferent piercing of the dead Jesus' side becomes a concrete symbol of what has happened [on the cross], in all its inscrutable mystery. The apparently inaccessible substance of him (who took all that is ours into himself and bore it) is now released and made available to the redeemed; it becomes their hidden dwelling-place: *in tua vulnera absconde me*. Thomas, putting his hand into the marks of the Wounds, is the first to seek out this dwelling, only he must do so in faith and not want to see and experience it. . . .Having passed through the Dark Night, [Jesus' humanity] now has room for everything; it can embrace the world. Not until all this is complete--life, death and Resurrection--is the open Heart of the God-Man the place where we are given the gift of God's completely open Heart.<sup>106</sup>

In conclusion, the blood of Christ, together with the cluster of symbols surrounding it (e.g. cross, wounds, heart, chalice) serves as a refractory image of enlightenment for those in the illuminative way, shedding a particular light on the whole vista of revealed truth. The truths of faith, now appreciated in new ways, are translated from creedal propositions into

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<sup>105</sup>R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*, 91-3 passim.

<sup>106</sup>H. Balthasar, "The Work and Suffering of Jesus: Discontinuity and Continuity," in Hans Urs von Balthasar, et. al., *Faith in Christ and the Worship of Christ*, ed. Leo Scheffczyk, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 20-1. The series of articles in this work treats the importance of Christ's humanity in Christian spirituality, along with suggestions for a renewed theological perspective on the devotions traditionally associated with it. Although the work deals specifically with the theology of devotion to the heart of Christ, its perspectives can be applied analogously to devotion to the precious blood.

lived experience. This is especially true of the incarnate redemption, the mystery irradiated by the image of Jesus' blood in which the soul participates: a light that continues to shine even in the darkness of suffering and abandonment, when the soul passes through the "dark nights" of faith and hope.

For Gaspar refuses at any point in the spiritual journey to leave this image behind, one that serves as a concrete manifestation of the call to deeper knowledge and love of God. His is not, therefore, a spirituality seeking release from the Lord's (or, for that matter, one's own) humanity in favor of a wholly immaterial encounter with the Absolute. Indeed, the emphasis on Jesus' blood running throughout his treatise could be considered Gaspar's principal contribution to an incarnational spirituality. His view agrees, in other words, with the insistence that:

Everything is concrete and must be represented with the senses and the imagination, without which a mere intellect would not even be human and would not at all correspond to the Word made flesh; with the senses and imagination of a believer, which as such become of themselves "spiritual" senses and a "spiritual" imagination, since they are at the service of faith, and together with their "object"--the man, Jesus Christ, who is open to God and reveals God--they in turn open up to the divine. To want to abstract finite concepts from the senses and the imagination in order to touch God can only lead away from him who called himself "the way" and "the door". . . .If we consider that the believer's closest approach to God takes place in the eucharistic mystery of the surrendered flesh and blood of Jesus, we shall reject as incongruous with the Christian way any attempt to "elevate" ourselves in meditation from what is physical to what is "purely spiritual".<sup>107</sup>

The founder's teaching is thereby eminently christocentric, with his doctrine firmly rooted in the insistence of the soundest mystical traditions, namely that "the return to the divine Substance, the Absolute, which is the end of the soul's ascent, can only be made through the humanity of Christ."<sup>108</sup> Once again, Gaspar's particular contribution is his emphasis on the blood of Jesus as a uniquely efficacious sign of the Lord's humanity, which serves to move a person to ever greater generosity in conformity with the image of incarnate love.

### ***In omnibus divites factis in Illo : Text and Commentary III***

The blood of Christ as image of union<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Christian Meditation*, trans. Mary Theresilde Skerry (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 23-4.

<sup>108</sup>E. Underhill, *Mysticism*, 120. Cf. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle* VI: 7, 5-15 in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, and Otilio Rodriguez, vol. 2 (Washington: ICS Publications, 1980), 399-404.

<sup>109</sup>The biblical references to the blood of Christ which can be understood in a unitive sense, whether divine or ecclesial, are the following: "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him." (Jn. 6:56); "Keep watch over yourselves and over the

Gaspar's treatment of the unitive way is presented in relation to three characteristic traits of those in this stage of spiritual development, what he calls the love, study, and practice of perfection:

**(fol. 459)** The illumined soul, admirably found at the foot of the cross, seeks the way in which to unite itself in an intimate relationship of love with its beloved Lord who speaks to the soul saying: *'I am faint with love.'*<sup>110</sup>

The soul *loves* perfection; it *studies* perfection; it *practices* the way of perfection.

Regarding the first trait, love of perfection, Gaspar notes how the soul at this point is deeply convinced that God alone is its happiness and alone merits fidelity; this awareness results in a complete detachment from anything which would impede the soul's "intimate relationship of love with its beloved Lord":

1. *The soul loves perfection* and sees that God alone brings it happiness and merits fidelity: *My God and my all*. It sees that those who do not love God are unhappy: *Vanity of vanities*.<sup>111</sup> It knows that it must repudiate every form of vile mire in order to acquire the love of God: *I look on everything as so much rubbish if only I can have Christ*.<sup>112</sup> It concludes: *'The world has been crucified to me and I to the world.'*<sup>113</sup> The soul grows in repentance for the past, saying: *'Late have I loved you, Lord.'*<sup>114</sup> It loves God because it sees how he has loved the soul from all eternity: *He first loved us*.<sup>115</sup> It reconsiders especially the themes concerning redemption and exclaims: *The love of Christ impels us*.<sup>116</sup>

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whole flock that [God] acquired with his own blood." (Acts 20:28); "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation (*koinonia*) in the blood of Christ? (1 Cor. 10:16); "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (1 Cor.11:25); "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ." (Ep.2:13); "through him to reconcile all things for him, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col.1:20); "you have approached . . .the assembly of the firstborn enrolled in heaven. . .and Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and the sprinkled blood that speaks more eloquently than that of Abel" (Hb.12:22-24); "Jesus also suffered outside the gate, to consecrate the people by his own blood" (Hb.13:20; cf. 13:20); "with your blood you purchased for God those from every tribe and tongue, people and nation" (Rv.5:9); "I had a vision of a great multitude . . . .They stood before the throne and before the Lamb. . .they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rv.7:6,14)

<sup>110</sup>Song 2:5.

<sup>111</sup>Eccl. 1:2.

<sup>112</sup>Phil. 3:8 (*Jerusalem Bible* translation).

<sup>113</sup>Gal. 6:14.

<sup>114</sup>Cf. St. Augustine, *Confessions* 10, 28.

<sup>115</sup>1 Jn. 4:19.

<sup>116</sup>2 Cor. 5:14.

It does so especially when seeing how far that love went when in his capacity as redeemer, [Christ] shed his blood to the last drop: *He loves us and has washed away our sins in his blood.*<sup>117</sup> Faint with love, the soul exclaims, "Oh wounds, oh precious blood of my Lord, that I might praise you in eternity!" What a great thing it is that the blood of Jesus is even our drink in the eucharist and how, finally, through the merits of the blood of Jesus Christ we shall arrive in paradise. *With your blood you purchased for God [those from every tribe and tongue, people and nation]. You made them a kingdom. . . .*<sup>118</sup>

All of which brings together in the soul such thoughts of love that it concludes: *'What will separate me from the love of Christ?'*<sup>119</sup> Thus does the soul become strong like death: *'For strong as death is love.'*<sup>120</sup>

This detachment yields a greater likeness in the soul to Christ crucified and a deeper love for God. This is stimulated as usual by a renewed consideration of the mystery of redemption in Jesus' blood; this reflection is all-embracing inasmuch as it looks back to the historical shedding of Christ's blood, to its present reality and reception in the eucharist, and to the future, when the soul's hope of salvation will be realized through its merits. Not even death is able to dissolve the soul's rapture.

The second trait of those in the unitive way, the study of perfection, is centered on learning ever new ways to grow in holiness, after the pattern of crucified love:

2. The soul *studies* perfection, seeking each day the ways in which to draw from the Crucified new motives for growing in perfection and in holiness. It meditates on the image of the pierced Lamb: *a Lamb that seemed to have been slain.*<sup>121</sup> What ingratitude was shown by the Lord's own people, so blessed by God, yet who could still demand his crucifixion. And what meekness was shown by Jesus, especially in the scourging, when he gave his persecutors the most glorious proofs of his charity. *He suffers and is silent; is silent and prays; prays and forgives.* What a great example of unsurpassed constancy!

The soul sees what occurs today as well on the part of sinners, and full of love for Jesus seeks to defend him with an opposing zeal, which is the ardor of charity, so that its Lord might be glorified. And if in doing good to others, one encounters pain or even martyrdom, then it is enough to think, *My lover is radiant and ruddy.*<sup>122</sup> My beloved, though white as a lily is reddened with blood. How then could I not suffer willingly for the truth? *I am overflowing with joy all the more because of all our affliction.*<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>117</sup>Rv. 1:5 (*Jerusalem Bible* translation).

<sup>118</sup>Rv. 5:9-10.

<sup>119</sup>Cf. Rm. 8:35.

<sup>120</sup>Song 8:6 (*Jerusalem Bible* translation).

<sup>121</sup>Rv. 5:6.

<sup>122</sup>Song 5:10.

<sup>123</sup>2 Cor. 7:4.

Jesus is the *shepherd, the good shepherd [who] lays down his life for the sheep*.<sup>124</sup> "Lord," says the soul in the way of union, "if necessary, behold me ready for any sacrifice: *My heart is ready*."<sup>125</sup> Jesus is the *victim*. "Now, my God," the soul exclaims, "behold me ready to be a victim of love too." Such sentiments are acquired in the study of the Crucified.

The charity exhibited by Jesus toward his enemies during the passion inspires the soul to imitate the Lord's example of love. The person's growth in charity includes the ardor of zeal which seeks the glory of God in all things and a willingness to endure suffering and persecution others' sake. All this conforms the soul more completely to the image of Christ, its beloved spouse and shepherd. The study of love's perfection revealed in Christ makes those in the way of union ready for any sacrifice, a readiness to be themselves victims of love. Such desire represents the highest fruit of their study of the Crucified.

Thirdly, a person in the unitive stage attains the practice of perfection through liberty of spirit, which frees the soul from excessive concern about committing grave faults and sins, while bestowing a new awareness of its lesser imperfections:

3. The soul *practices* perfection, which gives [it] a delicacy of conscience that seeks gradually to wage war against venial sins and imperfections. These are merely displeasing to Jesus (thus distinguishing grave from light matter). "But, my Lord," [the soul says], "you merit nothing but love." Therefore it frequents the sacraments, gains indulgences, promotes works of piety, purifies its intention and is exacting in patience. It recognizes, however, that all this good is due to the efficacy of the redemption, and sees that in all things the mysteries of the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ are being applied to it. In fact, should the soul approach the tribunal of penance: "Behold," it says, "the merits of this divine blood are being applied to me." If assisting at Mass: "Behold, the blood of Jesus is being offered." If [the soul] adores the blessed sacrament in the sacred ciborium: "Behold," it says, "my beloved Jesus is offering his blood."

The soul thus climbs the mountain of perfection: "Behold, the ways of Calvary (**fol. 460**) are reddened with blood." It is willingly trained to travel the paths of virtue, neither abandoning the cross nor wearied by suffering: "In everything you have been enriched in him." What virtues, what surgings of love are seen resulting from the practice of good, which is nothing but a continual application of the merits of the divine blood.

With the assistance of divine grace, especially the sacraments of penance and the eucharist, the soul thus comes to purity of intention and solid virtue. Ever mindful of the spiritual good it has received, the soul is renewed in the knowledge that all its progress is due to the efficacy and merits of Jesus' blood. As a person proceeds steadily along the

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<sup>124</sup>Jn. 10:11.

<sup>125</sup>Ps. 108:2.

"mountain of perfection", he or she has an ever greater awareness that the path followed is that of the cross, one that must never be abandoned.

Gaspar goes on to highlight the importance of prayer for those in the way of union, introducing new imagery associated with the precious blood, imagery that shows the devotion's relevance even in the mystical state:

4. The soul, therefore, loves the life of prayer. [*The king*] brought me into the cellar of wine.<sup>126</sup> The love of God is symbolized by wine. Just as wine when drunk in moderation takes away sadness, so [with prayer]. But as for this wine cellar, happy the person who becomes inebriated! [The soul] ardently seeks God in moments of conversation pondering the extent of his love in becoming our teacher, father and redeemer. How the soul seeks to please him by extending its own ardent longings. It hears from the cross: *'Sitio'*: "I thirst."<sup>127</sup> And what it would not do in response. It weeps for those who do not weep, prays for those who do not pray. It seeks in some way to compensate for the many injustices directed at the Lord, and for his despised honor. It knows too that souls have cost him blood and it meditates on the reasons for divine forbearance. The soul prays for those who labor in the Lord's vineyard, hurrying to do what good it can, never ceasing to pray. "My people," it hears the Lord say, "what damage has been brought forth in the world due to a lack of prayer." Meanwhile, to appease the Father the soul offers the blood of Jesus Christ: *Look upon the face of your anointed.*<sup>128</sup>

The soul now ardently seeks God through encounters of prayerful union, recognizing in Jesus' thirst on the cross his desire for such intimacy. The soul becomes preoccupied with satisfying the divine lover's thirst by whatever means necessary. The soul's eager desire to correspond to the initiatives of divine love sensitizes it, moreover, to the indifference of others. It seeks to compensate in some way for those who fail to weep

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<sup>126</sup>Song 2:4 (*Douay-Rheims* version). This text was known to Gaspar from the Vulgate translation as *Introduxit me rex in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem*. Modern translations render "wine cellar" in the text as "banquet hall", although the original if translated literally would read "house of wine"; see the note on the text in *The Jerusalem Bible* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company 1966), 995. Other biblical allusions to this image include Is. 35:1 and Hos. 14:6. The text is often commented on in spiritual literature and is always associated with the perfection of charity in the highest stages of the spiritual life, a perfection whose subjective experience is likened to "intoxication". See Bernard of Clairvaux, *Serm.* 49; Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle* V, 1; John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle*, stanza 26; cf. J. Arintero, *The Song of Songs: A Mystical Exposition*, 207-25 passim, and Blaise Arminjon, *The Song of Songs: A Verse by Verse Reading of the Song of Songs*, trans. Nelly Marans (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 151-4. Not surprisingly, Gaspar's use of the text relates the wine of divine love to the precious blood of Jesus.

<sup>127</sup>Jn. 19:28.

<sup>128</sup>Ps. 84:10.

for their sins and seek God in prayer; the spiritual offering of the blood of Christ is seen as an effective way of making such atonement.

The newly-introduced images of wine and the wine cellar are among Gaspar's favorites; the former symbolizes "divine love which takes such possession of a heart that it dwells there so as to make it forget all created things,"<sup>129</sup> while the latter is identified with the sacred heart of Jesus, the "furnace of love".<sup>130</sup> And while he does refer to the "mystical wine of repentance", it is the wine of "holy and divine love" which is the choicest: a wine reserved for those who desire to be "inebriated with the celestial and holy love" symbolized by the "vineyards of Engeddi" (cf. Song 1:14).<sup>131</sup>

Gaspar goes on to say "these wines, however, require the soul to cultivate the mystical vineyard of the heart and, moreover, to cultivate only such vines therein which will yield them." Such "cultivation" is undertaken in a special way through trials and suffering for "the wine cellar is fitted with a wine press to squeeze out the juice of the grapes in order to obtain from them those precious wines which we have been speaking of. . . ."

These trials should not discourage the soul undergoing them, but rather stimulate it to remember "that the nuptial bed of the peace-loving King is the Cross, and, that our souls upon this nuptial bed yearn for the most tender embraces of affection toward Jesus"; it is "the love of Jesus, represented by the wine, [which] will take away our lethargy, will provide against our dejection, and will give us strength and comfort for the journey to our dear home in heaven, where we shall rejoice triumphantly without end."<sup>132</sup>

The treatise at hand proceeds along similar lines to speak of souls in the unitive way seeking God continually with a thirst for love that intensifies the more they encounter the divinity:

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<sup>129</sup>*SF XVB*, fol. 439; cf. *XVB*, fol. 426.

<sup>130</sup>*Circular Letters*, 32; the entire letter of 1831 is a commentary on Song 2:4 dealing with wine symbolism. Gaspar views these images as most suitable for describing the experience of those who have made great progress in the love of God. In the last chapter of the *Direttore Diretto*, for example, he provides spiritual directors with a practical method by which to examine directees on their conduct before God and to encourage them in making further progress in love's perfection, "to the point of holy inebriation" (*Direttore*, 49). In doing so, he makes extensive use of the "wine cellar" metaphor to describe the advanced ways of love, and of the symbol of "heavenly wine" which, like its natural counterpart, is designed to counteract dejection in the devout life and to strengthen the soul in vigorous adherence to good works.

<sup>131</sup>See *ibid.*, 32-35 passim for these and the following citations.

<sup>132</sup>Clearly, this complex of symbols (wine, wine cellar, wine press, cultivation, vineyards, grapes, inebriation) harmonizes with Gaspar's central image of the blood of Christ. They, and it, have special meaning for those in the unitive way due to their ability to represent the heights of sanctity to which the "perfect" have ascended, which is to say their ecstatic love of God.

5. The soul seeks God *continually*, and the more it encounters its Lord the greater its thirst to love Him. *I sought him whom my heart loves. . . I took hold of him and would not let him go.*<sup>133</sup> Temporal things become distasteful. The soul attends only to following the royal way of the cross in order one day to kiss the radiant wounds of Jesus and sing forever the glories of that blood which cancels the roster of death: *With your blood you purchased [us] for God.*<sup>134</sup>

The soul proceeds with caution and vigilance careful not to lose what has been gained or to stray from the Savior's school. It not only finds earthly things repulsive but detaches itself from every other thing as well. The soul is uniquely ready for that exacting obedience to the Lord who became *obedient to death, even death on a cross.*<sup>135</sup> Thus the soul *continually* seeks the Lord so as to possess him forever in heaven. And we, on the contrary, are so fickle and indecisive.

Here the person in the way of union experiences a distaste for temporal as well as spiritual attachments, and grows in a desire to behold the glorious wounds of Christ and sing eternally the praises of his precious blood. This desire is accompanied by great vigilance not to forfeit any of the gains thus far acquired on "the royal way of the cross."

As intimated earlier, the experience of unitive love is not free from trial; the soul is still subject to difficulties associated with spiritual languor, anxiety, and despondency:

6. Having come so far in the ways of love, the soul will find itself subject to disturbances by the enemy, or by weariness, excessive fears, or inexpressible dejection. But one glance directed at the blood of Jesus Christ flowing from his wounds encourages the soul not to abandon its good resolve. "My daughter, do you not see," says Jesus, "how greatly my own spirit was troubled in the garden even to the point of sweating blood? When you are sad, hope. Who does not know that the disciple must conform himself to the Master, and the bride to the groom? Do you not remember the three hours of terrible agony I endured for you? Is it not precisely here, my daughter, that you must come to imitate such a great example? A new degree of glory results from every act of patience. Do you not see how I am preparing you for the greatest heights of blessed glory? Look at the interior martyrdom which even my own mother had to endure."

Behold, oh listeners, how resigned to suffering we must be in this life. In this way we experience purgatory here, for virtue can only be refined and tested in the crucible of tribulation.

As usual, Gaspar recommends as remedy for spiritual trials a glance at the wounds of Christ, the blood from which encourages the soul to remain constant; he goes on to speak of suffering in imitation of Christ as the prelude to sharing a new experience of joy in union

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<sup>133</sup>Song 3:1,4.

<sup>134</sup>Rv. 5:9.

<sup>135</sup>Cf. Phil. 2:8.

with him:

8. *My lover is to me a sachet of myrrh.*<sup>136</sup> The soul tried by love sees that, just as Jesus was *tested in every way*,<sup>137</sup> so it too must be tested. The soul realizes that, just as Jesus was able to say all was consummated, so it too must have reason one day to repeat in like manner, *It is finished.*<sup>138</sup> From the grotto of Bethlehem to the consummation of the sacrifice, he was always a victim of suffering. Moreover, since the cross is the indispensable ladder to heaven, the soul no longer need fear the word *suffer* but instead suffers *with gladness*. Thus it seeks the God of consolations and not the consolations of God, thereby adoring the divine dispositions. The soul knows that God tries it each time more severely in order to see if there is any obstacle impeding its love: *As gold in the furnace, he proved [the souls of the just].*<sup>139</sup>

At last the soul comes to suffer *with joy*, just as we read of the savior who *for the sake of the joy that lay before him. . . endured the cross, despising its shame.*<sup>140</sup> Thus derision, calumnies, adversities--whatever the disturbance--do not cause [the soul] to falter. It thinks how, despite Jesus' having given sight to the blind and healing the lame, still *they crucified him.*<sup>141</sup> "How," it asks, "could they have the heart to pierce those hands which dispensed nothing but heavenly favors, those feet which walked the streets of Jerusalem *'doing good and healing all?'*<sup>142</sup> How is it that even the blood which flowed from those same hands and feet did not move them to pity, their even having the courage to insult him on the cross by saying, *'Hail, King of the Jews!'*<sup>143</sup> and *'If you are the Son of God. . . come down from the cross.'*<sup>144</sup>

Oh wounded love of my Lord! How far we are from conforming our lives to yours and how much we must still be trained to follow this generous path!

Now I understand how love empowered by faith worked such marvels in the world. The saints *by faith conquered kingdoms. . . obtained the promises; [they closed the mouths of lions], put out [raging fires]. . .*<sup>145</sup> Oh champions of religion, what made you so generous? The sight of Jesus shedding his blood for humanity.

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<sup>136</sup>Song 1:13. (N.B. No. 7 does not exist in the manuscript of St. Gaspar).

<sup>137</sup>Hb. 4:15.

<sup>138</sup>Jn. 19:30.

<sup>139</sup>Wis. 3:6.

<sup>140</sup>Hb. 12:2.

<sup>141</sup>Lk. 23:33.

<sup>142</sup>Acts 10:38.

<sup>143</sup>Mt. 27:29.

<sup>144</sup>Mt. 27:40.

<sup>145</sup>Hb. 11:33-34.

In all of this the soul is more intimately united to the experience of desolation suffered by the Lord in the passion. This radical purgation undergone in patience, resignation, hope, and ultimately joy, is necessary since the genuineness of a person's virtue is tested and purified only in the crucible of such trials; this suffering also serves as a preparation for the soul's elevation to glory.

This is not, moreover, meaningless suffering, for the soul comes to understand the purpose of its trials: that they are embraced for the sake of love; the soul's share in the mystery of the cross has as its goal the removal of any bond that might inhibit love. Eventually, this suffering even becomes sweet; the soul's generosity in adversity no longer permits it to be downcast by others' derision or calumny, nor by any other distress. The soul, which does not merit such ill treatment, comes to identify with the savior who suffered crucifixion though innocent of any wrongdoing. Once again, the contemplation of the wounds and blood of Christ provide a person with renewed incentive for imitating the abundance of divine forbearance, endured ever more willingly for the sake of love.

The treatise concludes with a description of the soul's destiny, the reason for which it has persevered along the ways of the spiritual life:

**(fol. 461)** 9. *Who are these [wearing white robes] and where did they come from? . . . These are the ones who have [survived the time of great distress]; they have washed their robes [and made them white] in the blood of the Lamb.*<sup>146</sup> What comfort we will have one day when in the great valley of Jehosaphat, the elect with palms in hand, will sing the praises of the divine blood through which we possess the nuptial garment and the robe of exultation and happiness. *They washed their robes. . . in the blood of the Lamb.*<sup>147</sup> We shall realize then how baptism, confirmation, penance, the eucharist, and prayer had been nothing but the perennial springs which applied this divine blood. And what blessings there will be especially at the appearance of the cross.

But what will those poor souls say who trampled this blood with sacrilege and blasphemies? Oh God! But I wish to speak instead of the just to you; nor do I wish to sadden you this day; this, my people, is my hope.

Gaspar here invokes the apocalyptic vision from the Book of Revelation where the faithful who have suffered persecution for the faith receive the reward of victory. This scene of the triumph of the elect has at its center the blood of the Lamb, the soul's source of grace in earthly life, its inspiration and consolation along the arduous way of perfection, and now its reason for joy and exultation:

10. Happy the person who is more and more enriched with the treasures we have in the application of the blood of Jesus Christ. To the extent that we apply it we shall advance in the ranks of heavenly glory. Observe then the industry of the saints in this heavenly

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<sup>146</sup>Rv. 7:13-14.

<sup>147</sup>Rv. 7:14.

commerce. And what of us? We who perhaps have not yet begun to atone for the past or provide for the future. What shall we resolve? Jesus shows us his precious homeland. "Behold," he says, "at what price I have won it for you: *'You have been bought at a great price'*."<sup>148</sup>

Let it therefore be our duty to make known its glories by offering it continually to the eternal Father. Oh balsam of our souls! Oh font of every mercy, grant that my tongue reddened with this blood in the daily celebration of Mass might praise you now and forever. For this purpose I am a priest: to apply the merits of the divine blood. What a great thought this is for me! What a great incentive to propose its veneration to the people, and on divine authority: *You have redeemed us for God [with your blood]. . .and have made us a kingdom and priests.*<sup>149</sup>

In the end the soul sees clearly how all its spiritual life had been sustained by the blood of Christ and how its ultimate triumph will be yet another victory of the Lamb who was slain. Gaspar calls blessed those who enrich themselves with the treasures of grace found in the blood of Jesus Christ: those whose glory in heaven will be proportionately greater the more they were devoted to it on earth. His last reference, undoubtedly a personal testimony to his own priestly commitment, and to the spirituality outlined in the treatise, provides a glimpse of the profound influence on Gaspar's life and ministry of the devotion he so zealously promoted.

### *Theological Evaluation of the Text III*

An evaluation of Gaspar's treatment of the unitive way must first of all acknowledge something not adverted to, except obliquely, in our examination of the treatise so far: the absence of any explicit reference to the "passive purgation of the senses" (which signals the transition from the purgative to the illuminative stage), or the "passive purgation of the spirit" (which signals the transition from the illuminative to the unitive stage). These "dark nights" of the soul also presage the transition from acquired to infused contemplation in the classic formulation of the doctrine of the three ways.<sup>150</sup>

Although Gaspar does not deal professedly with the terminology of the passive purifications nor with the distinction between acquired and infused contemplation,<sup>151</sup> one

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<sup>148</sup>1 Cor. 6: 20 (*Douay-Rheims* version).

<sup>149</sup>Rv. 5: 9-10 (cf. *Douay-Rheims* version).

<sup>150</sup>For a full discussion of the passive purifications see R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages*, vol. I, 332-78; vol. II, 21-64, 353-421 and *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*, 72-80. As for the debate surrounding the question of infused contemplation as a *sine qua non* of the mystical state, i.e. a virtually necessary means to attain the degree of the perfect, see n. 161 below where Gaspar's possible view of this disputed question, and its ramifications for his spirituality, are also discussed.

<sup>151</sup>Gaspar's view of contemplation and (by implication) mysticism is, not surprisingly, salesian in nature, as seen in *SF XVA*, fol. 345: "Contemplation is a fixed gaze of the

can nevertheless discern behind his treatment of the doctrine of the three ways some oblique allusion to both. There is, for instance, reference to the radical detachment from all disordered affections, both temporal and spiritual, which a person's soul must arrive at before entering the higher realms of spiritual development; there is like emphasis on seeking God in continuous, ardent prayer, which in its higher grades also benefits from the vision of Christ's blood.<sup>152</sup> There is also a description of the purificatory suffering which the soul endures in this latter stage of spiritual growth in order to perfect its virtue and desire for loving union with God.

The major point, however, in which Gaspar's description of the unitive way harmonizes with a more theological exposition is the pervasive stress on the soul's attaining the goal of its striving, viz. spousal union with its Lord. This union occurs by means of a gradual purification of love which, for Gaspar, means an ever deeper identification of the person with Christ who has revealed the meaning of love in the mystery of his blood.

Without using the classic terms for the experience of passive purgation, it seems Gaspar's description of the soul's trials in the unitive stage is precisely what constitutes the "deifying transforming union". This ultimate goal of the spiritual life, on account of which the soul traverses the different stages of development with their accompanying purifications, is described by Juan Arintero as being "made a living image and faithful reproduction of [the divine Spouse], so that in his name and by his power the soul will carry on the mission which he himself had on this earth."<sup>153</sup> Arintero proceeds to describe the process by which God brings the soul to union through the various experiences of the third age:

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intellect on a divine truth. In meditation, by contrast, the intellect is discursive, but in contemplation it is absorbed, as it were, in God. The kind of contemplation called *dry* is when the intellect is fixed on the divine object without the will or the affections being very active. *Simple* contemplation so-called is when not only the intellect but also the will remains fixed on a truth, with an accompanying outpouring of affections.

At times the intellect is fixed on truth while the inferior part is in tumult, at other times all is at peace. St. Francis de Sales compares the state of a contemplative soul to the four seasons of the year. By spring is meant fervor and desire for good; by summer the ardent fervor of charity; by autumn the fruits of good works, and finally, by winter, the time of aridity, temptations, etc."

Cf. William Gallagher, *The Nature of Contemplation According to St. Francis de Sales* (Hyattsville, Maryland: Institute of Salesian Studies, 1979) and Mani Panthalany, "Contemplation and Mysticism According to St. Francis de Sales," in *Praying with St. Francis de Sales*, ed. Antony Kolencherry, Studies in Salesian Spirituality 5 (Visakh-Bangalore, India: S.F.S. Publications, 1986), 124-35.

<sup>152</sup>Cf. St. Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, trans. Ewert Cousins (New York: Paulist Press; Classics of Western Spirituality), 55 who, like Gaspar's quoting the Book of Revelation, observes: "It is as if John were saying that no one can enter the heavenly Jerusalem by contemplation unless he enter through the blood of the Lamb as through a door."

<sup>153</sup>J. Arintero, *The Mystical Evolution*, vol. II, 170.

God is accustomed many times to manifest himself to the soul in all the splendour of his glorified humanity. He does this to impress the soul with his goodness and beauty so that, knowing the good which is promised, it will be inflamed with an ardent desire to possess him as soon as possible. These manifestations are sometimes repeated at frequent intervals and over a long period of time until the soul is properly prepared for the espousal. Thus also the soul is comforted in the midst of the terrible trials by which its fidelity must yet be tried before it can enter fully into that grade of prayer which is so eminent that it is actually the beginning of a life which is totally divine.<sup>154</sup>

This overview of the dynamic orientation of the unitive way seems then to correspond well with Gaspar's more diffuse description, especially in terms of the Lord's glorified humanity, i.e. the glory of the risen Lord and apocalyptic Lamb who still bears the signs of his passion, contemplation of whom Gaspar considers crucial to the soul's preparation for union.

Commenting on the Song of Songs, from which much of the founder's descriptive imagery is derived, Arintero speaks here very much in a gasparian vein: "After savoring the mysteries of the passion by suffering with the suffering Christ, the soul comes to drink the new wine of His Precious Blood pressed on Calvary. . . [which] fills her with ineffable delights, causes her to faint, leaving her as though drunk and sick with love, while at the same time becoming the object of God's wonderful love and of His divine pleasure."<sup>155</sup>

For Gaspar, moreover, the language of the "nights" as presage of the soul's nuptial union with the beloved, is replaced with the language of "participation" in the mystery of Jesus' passion, including his experience of abandonment in death as prelude to the glory of the resurrection. His is the language of the paschal mystery, the manifest sign of which is the blood of Christ. What classical authors describe with different imagery is placed by Gaspar in the explicit context of redemption: one might say that for him, union is achieved only by the mingling of blood with blood:

One thing can be gathered from this: there is no Christian way to God, whether it be a "mystical" or any other way, that does not bear the stamp of what happened on the Cross. . . . The "dark nights" of the mystics, if they are genuine and Christian, are by no means mere anthropological purifications of the ground of the soul in order to share better in the divine light; they are participations in Christ's Passion. . . . Not the light of Tabor but the total darkness and the cry of abandonment on the Cross is the summit of Jesus' earthly existence.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup>*Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>155</sup>J. Arintero, *The Song of Songs: A Mystical Exposition*, 208.

<sup>156</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar, *New Elucidations*, trans. Mary Theresilde Skerry (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), 165-6. This statement brings out another aspect of the discretion which must be employed when speaking of "stages" of spiritual growth for "[a] Christian who has been led in advanced unitive ways and has experienced a beatific, nuptial union

In conclusion, it appears the devotional treatise *In omnibus divites factis in Illo* compares favorably with a more strictly theological presentation. At the very least, the broad movements of the spiritual life articulated by the traditional doctrine of the three ways are discernible behind Gaspar's admittedly skeletal treatment. While one might have hoped for a more systematic approach, such is clearly not the purpose of the work. Rather, Gaspar's primary objective is to indicate how central a role devotion to the precious blood can play at every step of the spiritual journey.

### *Gasparian "Devotion" and Lay Spirituality*

Before entering into a brief excursus on whether Gaspar's vision of spiritual progress is in some way restricted to those who by vocation are called to a more strictly contemplative style of Christian life, or whether his vision is more inclusive and hence one that active Christians, including the lay faithful, can apply to their own situation, a comment is in order on the place "devotion" as advocated by Gaspar might play in a lay form of gasparian spirituality.

The word "devotion" (which must be carefully distinguished from exercises of piety known as "devotions") is admittedly out of favor in contemporary approaches to Christian spirituality. At times, devotion is presented as an inferior, or at least attenuated, form of Christian response, something superceded by "spirituality" which is seen as more representative than the former of a mature Christian life. For some, the word evokes a preconiliar "devotionalism" that has been supplanted by the reform of liturgical worship prompted by the Council. And while it would be relatively easy to defend "devotion" to the blood of Christ against the charge often leveled at traditional forms of piety, i.e. that they are incompatible with the biblical, liturgical, theological and pastoral renewal of contemporary Catholic life, a problem remains which is both terminological and christological.<sup>157</sup>

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with God, may conceivably at death feel himself abandoned by God. This may, indeed, be a form of the highest union with the Lord, who ended his earthly existence in a night of the senses and spirit." (Balthasar, *Prayer*, 217-8) For good reason then does Gaspar place the final scenes of his treatise within the eschatological victory of the faithful over all intramundane struggles.

<sup>157</sup>To answer such a charge, one need only consult the massive amount of material compiled by the *Centro Studi Sanguis Christi* cited in n. 2. Moreover, there are those who yet insist on the value of traditional forms. See for example Karl G. Schmude, "Towards a lay spirituality," *CICR* 6 (Winter 1987): 365-77, who comments with perceptiveness on the perennial value of devotional practices. Among other things, he notes how, for the laity in particular, such forms help stem "the disturbance of the traditional constellation of images [that] has had profound effects on the Catholic psyche which will not easily be reversed" (p. 375). Schmude believes that devotions help Catholic spirituality remain embodied and accessible to everyone, part of "[t]he Church's spiritual resources [which] are. . . within the orbit of the ordinary life, to be invoked at times of need or opportunity" (p. 376).

He cites in particular how devotional forms can respond to situations when "people feel. . . profound temptations to moral exhaustion, and that these militate against the normal

An alternative could certainly be found to "devotion" that would express its original meaning as "a form of worship of God in which the powers of the soul deliberately focus on some particular mystery."<sup>158</sup> Such a word might be "commitment", which catches something of the etymological nuance of *devotio*, implying as it does total dedication to some person or cause on the order of a "vow".<sup>159</sup> In this sense, "devotion" to the blood of Christ might be translated in terms more accessible to contemporary sensibilities as *profound commitment to contemplate and imitate Christ in the mystery of incarnate redemption signified by the outpouring of his lifeblood*.

Such commitment to focus on this aspect of Christ's person and work is, as Leo Scheffczyk points out, a medium for experiencing Christ in ways that stimulate responses of both contemplative adoration and a reordering of human relationships in the direction of Christian action:

Such focusing is basically an act of faith, which seeks to make sure of its goal by employing all the powers of the soul intensively. The goal itself, however, is that of a higher union with the Lord present in faith. The attention of spirit and heart to this goal acquires the character of inward prayer, in which contemplation of the mystery of Christ passes over into the spiritual motions of yearning, joy and love.

Furthermore, in a spiritual environment where devotion to Christ and a contemplative attitude are cultivated, the experience of Christ can also thrive. Contemplation is a spiritual receptivity for the experience of the pneumatic Christ. This experience. . . will also embrace the human Christ, and indeed the whole Christ. Once human relations are seen in the context of the whole Christ, their incomparable meaning shines forth. . . . To the extent that contemplative life is allowed to fertilize the active life and Christian *praxis*, the God-Man experienced in

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capacity to maintain an openness to God. The weariness of trying to be good and failing so often, the unending lapses into the same weaknesses, the inability to undo things which have happened and represent a continuing burden, the frustration of seeing others ostensibly avoiding the consequences of evil they produce--such instances of moral distress or defeat in the ordinary round of life account for the Church's characteristic approach to lay spirituality" (p. 370). It goes without saying that Gaspar's vision of "popular" devotion to the precious blood as expressed in his treatise seems to meet precisely these concerns of laypersons in search of a spirituality.

<sup>158</sup>Leo Scheffczyk, "Devotion to Christ as a Way of Experiencing Him," in *Faith in Christ and the Worship of Christ*, 212.

<sup>159</sup>This is the traditional theological emphasis surrounding the word, e.g. in Thomas Aquinas, who understands "devotion" as "the principal act of the virtue of religion, by which people fittingly conduct themselves, orient themselves appropriately toward God, and freely dedicate themselves to divine worship. . . . [The word] is derived from *devovere*, which means to vow oneself, to give oneself completely. . . even unto death." (*Summa Theologiae* IIa IIae, q. 82, a. 1)

contemplation will also exert his shaping influence on the active life. . . .<sup>160</sup>

It seems to me this terminological and christological context faithfully reflects what "devotion" to the blood of Christ might mean for latter day practitioners of gasparian spirituality, while conveying the substance of Gaspar's understanding of this form of Christian commitment.

In addition, this "devotional" experience of Christ, as seen in Scheffczyk's comments, is always twofold: contemplative and active. In treating the ascetico-mystical meanings of the blood of Christ in St. Gaspar, the present chapter has focused on the contemplative dimension of this component of the gasparian charism, while the implications held by the blood of Christ for the missionary component of the charism are treated in the next.

Which leads to a final note on commitment to the blood of Christ and the elements of lay spirituality. It seems that among the elements discussed in Chapter 1, the kind of devotion envisioned in the present chapter can be accommodated most fully by the element of formation. In other words, the attention and response to the blood of Christ outlined in Gaspar's treatise is a particular means of holiness requiring, moreover, a formative context in which to flourish.

As such, commitment to the blood of Christ provides a specific form of the *sequela Christi*, requiring imitation of Jesus in his total dedication to the will of the Father, even unto the shedding of blood. Moreover, the treatise examined in this chapter serves as a guide for that "continual conversion" by which the progressive nature of Christian maturity, and the disciple's ongoing cooperation with the gradual development of the life of grace, are affirmed. The treatise also presents commitment to the blood of Christ as a way of embracing a "Christian asceticism" whereby the laity can respond more positively to God's call within the rigors of daily life through the practice of the theological and moral virtues in personal and social life.

Finally, given that prayer (both vocal/liturgical and meditative/contemplative) is counted among the principal means of Christian holiness, including its lay expressions, then a formation in prayer focused on the mystery of Christ's blood, as advocated throughout Gaspar's treatise, is both appropriate and necessary to a lay form of gasparian spirituality--however much this prayer is adapted to the exigencies of the lay state.

As for the context of such formation, the gasparian charism has given rise to lay associations designed to enable people to make and grow in a commitment to the blood of Christ. The forms of such association are treated extensively in the last chapter of the thesis. Hence, the formation demanded by devotion to the blood of Christ as envisioned by Gaspar Del Bufalo is assimilable within specifically lay expressions of a gasparian spirituality. The following excursus develops some additional ways of understanding Gaspar's doctrine appropriate to the thesis topic.

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<sup>160</sup>L. Scheffczyk, "Devotion to Christ," 212-3 passim.

### Excursus: Gaspar Del Bufalo and a Disputed Question of Spiritual Theology

An impression might easily be given by Gaspar's treatise *In omnibus divites factis in Illo* that the spirituality it describes is best suited for those living a contemplative life, or that the attainment Christian "perfection", at least in its higher degrees, is not to be expected for most people. In other words, Gaspar's view might at times appear elitist and therefore without much relevance for those called to the active life, whether in the clerical or religious state, or in the case of the laity, to live in a secular ambience.

This issue has also surfaced as a disputed question in spiritual theology, though in slightly different terms: Are all Christians, or only some, invited by the Lord to the "mystical" life? Is there, in other words, a universal vocation only to the so-called ordinary ("ascetical") way of the spiritual life, with the call to the "mystical" way being extraordinary, such that the ways of illumination and union are reserved only to a few? Such questions obviously go to the heart of our first element of lay spirituality; indeed, they touch upon the first principle of any postconciliar approach to Christian life, namely the universal call to holiness.

Although it would be tempting to resolve the matter for Gaspar simply by pointing out that his treatise is addressed to a fellow missionary and not to a contemplative, and that it concludes with Gaspar's own testimony on how he incorporated its teaching into his extraordinarily active ministry, it seems important for the purposes of this thesis to ask the question more pointedly. To do so, we must place the founder's teaching in the context of a larger debate surrounding these questions, above all as this dispute affects Gaspar's own theological perspective.

In addition to his systematic description of the doctrine of the three ways, Garrigou-Lagrange also enters into a spirited discussion of what he considers the authentic tradition that forms the basis for his exposition.<sup>161</sup> He does so in opposition to what he judges a betrayal of this tradition by developments occurring in the eighteenth century, owing largely to the Jesuit John Baptist Scaramelli (1687-1752) in his two works, *Direttorio ascetico* (1752) and *Direttorio mistico* (1754).

The Dominican theologian believes these works introduced an artificial division of spiritual theology into distinct branches, ascetical and mystical. This theoretical division, moreover, had serious pastoral consequences in that it sanctions the notion that the mystical state, experienced incipiently in the illuminative way and fully in the unitive, is not part of the normal development of the interior life.

Jordan Aumann, a contemporary writer and disciple of Garrigou-Lagrange, describes the consequences of Scaramelli's division of spiritual theology as follows:

Postulating as he did a gratuitous and extraordinary character for all infused contemplation and mystical acts, and asserting that the attainment of mystical contemplation is not at all common among fervent Christians, but very rare, he logically concluded that the ascetical state does not lead to the mystical state. Rather, asceticism and mysticism are two distinct paths to Christian perfection and there is, moreover, a distinct type of perfection proper to each state. The majority of Christians are called

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<sup>161</sup>Cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages*, vol. II, 628-51.

to ascetical perfection, which is the life of the virtues; a small minority are called to mystical perfection, which is a life in which the gifts of the Holy Spirit operate in the soul.<sup>162</sup>

It appears Gaspar tended to agree with Scaramelli's position. For instance, the brief descriptions mentioned earlier of the three ways of the spiritual life from the *Direttore Diretto* are noteworthy for the absence of any mention in them of the gifts of the Spirit or of infused contemplation; the almost exclusive focus of interest is the virtues, i.e. what pertains to "ascetical perfection". Likewise in the same work, Gaspar offers a number of succinct definitions useful for seeing his basic approach to spirituality. Thus, he defines ascetical theology as "that study which is oriented to the formation of the soul in Christian practices and virtues, from a gradual beginning in their way and proceeding to their perfection, with the necessary help of God and the cooperation of the soul itself, with the spiritual director providing specific incentives appropriate to this goal."<sup>163</sup>

Regarding his principal subject, spiritual direction, the founder notes that the director "is the sacred minister of God, appointed by legitimate authority, who gradually cultivates the soul in Christian practices and virtues, at first healing, and later insuring their

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<sup>162</sup>J. Aumann, *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition*, 247-8; cf. pp. 272-5 of the same work as well as Aumann's *Spiritual Theology*, 127-35. Aumann has inherited the position argued persuasively by his Dominican predecessors, Garrigou-Lagrange (*The Three Ages*, vol. II, 307-26) and Juan Arintero (*The Mystical Evolution*, vol. II, 383-444). These claim to represent the genuine tradition formulated above all by the Carmelites John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila, in contrast to what they consider a misrepresentation of their teaching by the Jesuits in particular. The Dominican position, generally accepted by spiritual theologians today at least in its basic orientation, holds for the organic unity of the spiritual life such that the "mystical evolution" is seen to be an entirely normal process flowing from the ascetical life, which is but a (necessary) preparation for it. Hence, there exists a universal, remote and sufficient call to the perfection of charity, which perfection constitutes the full development of the initial grace of baptism until it reaches the heights of sanctity verified in the transforming union.

This view is distinct from others such as de Guibert who, while rejecting the thesis that infused contemplation pertains only to an extraordinary, viz. mystical experience, hold a middle position: "The way or state of infused contemplation is not the only normal way to perfect love although, apparently, generous souls do not ordinarily arrive at perfection unless God gives them some touches or brief participation in those graces which constitute strictly infused contemplation. Therefore souls can ascend to any degree of sanctity without habitually walking in the way of infused contemplation" (*The Theology of the Spiritual Life*, 346). The positions on both sides of the controversy are outlined by A. Tanqueray, *The Spiritual Life*, 731-37 and J. V. Bainvel in his *Introduction to the Tenth Edition* of A. Poulain's, *The Grace of Interior Prayer: A Treatise on Mystical Theology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), xlvi-xcv.

<sup>163</sup>*Direttore Diretto.*, 6.

regular exercise and constant perfecting, with the use of specific means proportioned to this end."<sup>164</sup> Direction itself is described as "the formation of the soul in Christian practices and virtues so that, having removed obstacles, the soul may acquire the sound habit of judging and acting uprightly, and once having acquired this habit, be strengthened by constant application of said practices and virtues."<sup>165</sup>

Finally, Gaspar concludes this section of his treatise with a statement of what he considers the goal of spiritual direction, viz. "perfection", as "the tendency of the soul to be in harmony with God, and by continual struggle to acquire the habit of virtue whose source is divine charity which growing from day to day, brings with it the right ordering, and equilibrium of every human affection."<sup>166</sup> In all of this, the emphasis is clearly on the "ascetical" perfection associated with the virtues, with no suggestion that spiritual directors should be looking for a subsequent flowering of the "mystical" life.

Nevertheless, the Appendix to the *Direttore Diretto* includes the short piece by Gaspar's confidante, the Capuchin Serafino Campano, entitled *Nozioni della Via Mistica, ossia Scala Mistica*[Notes on the Mystic Way, or Mystical Ladder]. The presence of this brief treatise indicates the principles of direction outlined earlier in the *Direttore* were destined for those in the more common ways of Christian holiness, traditionally identified as "beginners". Campano's contribution, on the other hand, is evidently designed to assist directors in the guidance of the "proficient" and "perfect", i.e., those in the mystical, as distinct from the ascetical, way of Christian holiness. Thus, his work opens with the following words: "Having been directed in the way of asceticism, and practiced in meditation and mortification of the senses, along with the exercise of the virtues--which mortification is called the *active* purification of the senses--the Lord seeks to introduce the soul to the unitive way by means of passive and infused contemplation."<sup>167</sup>

At the very end of the published version of the *Direttore*, however, there appears a short word of caution (apparently from the pen of Gaspar) reiterating the importance of "what we have said above in the ascetical part," where the founder again recommends certain authors spiritual directors should consult, among whom are Alphonsus Rodriguez and Scaramelli.<sup>168</sup> Gaspar notes, moreover, how these (mostly Jesuit) authors are distinguished by their knowledge of the teachings of John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila; hence, he seems to favor their interpretation of the Carmelite tradition, something Campano himself claims to have followed.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>164</sup>*Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>165</sup>*Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>166</sup>*Direttore Diretto*, 9; cf. *SFXVA*, fol. 349, 351.

<sup>167</sup>*Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>168</sup>*Ibid.*, 66-7. J. Aumann, *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition*, 205, describes the former as "almost exclusively ascetical and moral in tone. . . [he] seems to make too wide a distinction between ascetical or discursive prayer and mystical prayer, to the point that he seems to see mystical contemplation as something extraordinary, and he does not make allowance for any kind of transitional prayer between discursive and mystical prayer."

<sup>169</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, 58-9, 67.

One might interpret all this as an ambivalence on the founder's part toward the ways in which Christian life might be expected to develop. On the one hand, he seems open to the mystical way as a normal development of the spiritual life (hence, the inclusion of Campano's work in the *Direttore Diretto*) while on the other hand, he insists on Scaramelli's sharp division of this life (hence the cautionary note added to the Appendix). This diffidence is admittedly difficult to reconcile. One could suppose Gaspar's Jesuit training at the Roman College, the popularity of Scaramelli's treatises and his renown as a preacher of popular missions (which would endear him further to Gaspar), together with the founder's appreciation of Rodriguez, all predisposed him to accept uncritically the "modern" innovation over the authentic tradition the Dominicans claim to have retrieved. At the same time, the inclusion in the Appendix to Gaspar's work on spiritual direction of a treatise on mysticism makes one suspect an implicit recognition of the organic unity of the interior life: what has been defended by the Dominican school in this century.

A way out of the dilemma, one which the next chapter shows to be wholly in accord with a gasparian perspective, is opened up by Garrigou-Lagrange, who acknowledges that the full flowering of Christian life (including its organic evolution into a properly mystical state) takes a variety of *ordinary* forms and degrees. Moreover, the differences between these forms and degrees in no way implies a deficiency with respect to the perfection of Christian life they manifest. For him, every authentic form of Christian life is capable of bringing a person to a degree of perfection congruent with his or her state, a perfection that is attenuated or plenary depending on the dispositions and circumstances of the individual concerned. This relative degree of perfection includes the habitual presence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith, and that union with God flowing from contemplation, i.e. those things identified with the mystical state as such.

Among the forms of Christian life in which mysticism can appear and flourish, Garrigou-Lagrange identifies two typical ones: the apostolic and contemplative. According to him, the apostolic life "unites contemplation and apostolic action, which consists in the teaching of sacred doctrine, preaching and the direction of souls."<sup>170</sup> Thomas Aquinas' view of teaching and preaching which proceeds from contemplation is the inspiration for this vision of the "perfect" apostolic life. His famous principle *contemplari et contemplata aliis tradere*<sup>171</sup> preserves both the integrity of the apostolic life and establishes a certain priority of contemplation over action, such that "there is a profound value in apostolic action only in so far as it proceeds from this source, which, far from being a subordinate means, is an eminent cause.... Therefore we must say that the apostolic life tends principally to contemplation which fructifies in the apostolate."<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup>R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages*, vol. II, 489.

<sup>171</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, IIa IIae, q. 188, a. 6.

<sup>172</sup>R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages*, 492. The same author notes in *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*, 52, how the perfect apostolic life is in many ways the result of a particular contemplation of the blood of Christ. Speaking of the apostles' preaching after entering into the "unitive way" as a result of their experience on Pentecost, and of their subsequent courage in the face of persecution, Garrigou-Lagrange writes: ". . .the Apostles

It has already been amply demonstrated how Gaspar, following de Sales, recognized the importance of individual differences, including one's state in life and vocation, for determining how a life of faith should be lived concretely. One result of this appreciation of diversity concerns his view of those advanced in the Christian life: by replacing the language of the dark nights (associated with the contemplative form of the mystical life) with that of participation in the paschal mystery, Gaspar adjusted his vision to include among the "perfect" those who made progress in other than strictly contemplative settings: in Gaspar's case, by exercising the apostolic ministry. His evident caution about mystical language might have been due in part, therefore, to a fear that those not called to contemplative life might thereby believe themselves excluded, or exempt, from seeking the fullness of Christian perfection.

Gaspar's other concern for seeking perfection in the "ordinary" ways of daily life might also be responsible for his caution, lest noncontemplatives seek out means of sanctification inappropriate to their state, thereby distracting them from the form of perfection to which they are called. Somewhat ironically then, the founder's ostensible embrace of the Jesuit position might very well have been another way of affirming the universal call to holiness, something the previous chapter showed him to do with salesian insistence; here, though, he can be seen to be dealing more with the dialectic between the elements of universality and specificity at work in any spirituality.

So although Gaspar's theoretical treatment of the spiritual life seems to respect the division between asceticism and mysticism proposed by Scaramelli, indications are that he did not accept the practical ramifications of this view. His insistence, for example, on a life of study and prayer for his missionaries, in addition to their preaching apostolate betrays--as shown in the next chapter--an attitude toward Christian spirituality very much in line with the one developed by the Dominican school.

It seems safe, therefore, to attribute any diffidence on the question of whether those not following a contemplative way of life can ordinarily anticipate the full flowering of mystical experience, more to the theological limitations of Gaspar's time than to any *a priori* prejudice to the contrary. Moreover, Gaspar can once more be seen to have anticipated the theological developments of a later time, advances compatible with the view that all Christians, including clerics and religious engaged in the apostolate, as well as the lay faithful, are called to the perfection of charity in ways and forms suitable to their state, vocation and situation. All of which bolsters the argument that his is a spirituality "at the heart of the Christian life."

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received a much greater enlightenment from the Holy Spirit regarding the price of the Blood of the Savior, regarding the mystery of Redemption, foretold in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New. They received the fullness of the contemplation of this mystery which they were now to preach to humanity for the salvation of men."

# CHAPTER 4

## GASPARIAN SPIRITUALITY AND CHRISTIAN MISSION

In his work on the essential elements of the gasparian charism, Luigi Contegiacomo speaks of the missionary and apostolic component as the "operative dimension which shows forth the charism in action."<sup>1</sup> Gaspar, who typically referred to himself by the title "apostolic missionary" conferred on him by Pius VII, describes the "Work" entrusted to him as being essentially the ministry of the word exercised principally through "missions and retreats, whether in public preaching to the people, or [as with retreats] in private."<sup>2</sup> This chapter treats this second component of the gasparian charism as an orientation to Christian mission giving the spirituality inspired by it a characteristic dynamism.

In keeping, moreover, with the focus of the thesis, the content of this chapter is ultimately placed in the context of lay spirituality, in particular the element of mission outlined in Chapter 1. Hence, the broad term "Christian mission" is used in the chapter's title to avoid restricting the missionary and apostolic dynamism of the gasparian charism to its priestly expression, however fundamental this is to the charism's historical and ecclesial development in the person of the founder and his companions.

Specifically, the ways in which the missionary orientation of gasparian spirituality can find a lay expression are demonstrated by recourse to the doctrine of the *tria munera Christi* discussed in Chapter 1; this is done to indicate further how the blood of Christ relates to the second component of the charism, acquiring additional significance in view of the laity's share in the mission of the Church. An eye is thereby kept open throughout the chapter to the eventual transposition of the charism's priestly countenance to a lay form.

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<sup>1</sup>L. Contegiacomo, *S. Gaspare del Bufalo, Vita, Personalità, Carisma*, 118.

<sup>2</sup>*Ep. III*, n. 1214, to Pope Leo XII, July 29, 1825, 395. For an idea of the nineteenth century context of such a ministry (in which the gasparian mission played a significant part in the environs of the papal states) see Carmelo Guglia, *Il Vangelo agli ultimi: Metodi, problemi proposte delle missioni popolari* (Rome: Edizioni Dehoniane, 1990) and, more specifically, B. Conti, *Il metodo delle missioni al popolo secondo S. Gaspare del Bufalo*. Collana "Sangue e Vita" 8 (Rome: Edizioni PUPS, 1991).

### The Gasparian Mission and Commitment to the Blood of Christ

In the final paragraph of his treatise *In omnibus divites factis in Illo* Gaspar had placed his teaching on devotion to the precious blood within the context of his vocation, saying, "For this purpose I am a priest: to apply the merits of the divine blood!" thus making clear the relevance of this devotion for the pastoral ministry. Indeed, the missionary component of Gaspar's spirituality received its principal stimulus from his contemplation of the blood of Jesus, resulting in the founder's deep commitment to Christ and the Church in light of this mystery.

Luigi Contegiacomo, speaking of the unity which exists in Gaspar's thought between the first and second elements of the charism bearing his name, notes:

We [Missionaries of the Precious Blood], a society of secular priests dedicated to the apostolate of the word, just as we have drawn our communitarian and apostolic style of life not from some particular source, but from our being priests of the Church and for the Church, so we do not seek refuge in any particular or restricted source of our spiritual life and vigor. Rather, we immerse ourselves in the limitless spirituality of the Church itself, where the center of light and attraction is the person of Christ, who by means of the paschal sacrifice of his death and resurrection redeems and saves the human race in his blood. . . . Viewed in this way, devotion to the most precious blood is offered by our founder as the dynamic (*idea-forza*) to put into effect our common vocation in the bond of charity and to quicken our apostolic zeal for our own sanctification and that of others.<sup>3</sup>

Having considered in the last chapter the devotion's being a sure means of holiness, this observation now opens the way for considering its importance for Christian mission. What follows is an appraisal of the relationship between these related aspects of gasparian spirituality, devotion and mission, a relationship Gaspar describes as "the efficacious means to obtain zeal in accomplishing all that we propose to do."<sup>4</sup>

In one of the *Memoriali* referred to earlier, in which Gaspar explains to Pope Leo XII the scope of this mission, he notes the connection between his congregation's title and its ministry:

We members of the clergy are imprinted with the priestly character in order

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<sup>3</sup>L. Contegiacomo, *The Spirituality of Our Society According to the Charism of Our Founder*, trans. Andrew Pollack and William Volk (Cathagen, Ohio: Mission Press, 1976), 37. Cf. the author's statement in *S. Gaspare del Bufalo: Vita, Personalità, Carisma*, 117: "The apostolate thus constitutes the second dimension of the charism of St. Gaspar; and it is united to the first--that is, the great devotion--not in an accidental fashion, as if in juxtaposition, but in a substantial way, by compenetration, such that in the concept itself which the saint had of devotion to the blood of Christ is included the commitment to announce it, spread it, make it practiced, so that it might produce its precious fruit in souls and in the Church."

<sup>4</sup>*Circular Letters*, trans. R. Cera, 62.

to bring souls into contact with the divine blood. This blood is offered in the holy sacrifice and applied in the other sacraments; it is the price of redemption, what can be offered to God the Father for the reconciliation of sinners. . . .And while the devil would prefer us all to be subject to divine justice, we ministers of the sanctuary must reveal instead the source of mercy, so that "having been justified by [Christ's] blood, we shall be saved by him from God's wrath."<sup>5</sup>

These words of Gaspar show how the missionaries were to exercise their normal priestly ministry of reconciliation with a special awareness of the efficacy of Christ's redeeming blood above all in the sacraments of penance and the eucharist. This ministry, however, had a further delineation: it was to be intimately associated with the extraordinary exercise of the ministry of the word through preaching popular missions and retreats. Thus, a further connection is to be sought between devotion to the precious blood and the particular apostolate of Gaspar's congregation.

This connection is seen in a letter to Gaetano Bonanni written shortly before the congregation's founding, at a time when the precise nature of the community was still under advisement; in it the founder approves a suggestion made to him by his benefactor, Mons. Bellisario Cristaldi: namely, that the institute be placed under the title of the "most precious blood of Jesus". The document shows the intimate link between this proposed title and the intended apostolate of the society:

Those who work for the spreading of the gospel do so that the blood of Jesus may be applied for the salvation of souls and hence these workers must offer it unceasingly, begging pardon for sinners. Therefore, if other institutes undertake to propagate one or the other devotion, this missionary institute must be understood as spreading that devotion which contains all the others, that is, the price of our redemption. *Per Sanguinem salvi facti sumus*. I cannot but praise the intentions of this prelate [i.e. Cristaldi], and making his principles my own, entrust our work from now on to the merits of the blood of Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>*Ep.* III, n. 1214, to Pope Leo XII, July 29, 1825, 395.

<sup>6</sup>*Ep.* I, n. 105, March 1, 1815, 230. The term "application" was favored by Gaspar for describing the relationship between the blood of Christ *in se* and its saving efficacy as an *instrumentum gratiae* encountered through the media of preaching and, especially, the sacraments. The term admittedly poses some difficulty today due to a different theological language expressing the mystery of grace, with its desire to avoid any mechanistic formulation of the mystery. Nevertheless, it seems possible to understand the term "application" of the merits of Jesus' blood in a way congruent with several contemporary articulations of the theology of grace: translations of the traditional terminology employed to express the relationship between the historical act of redemption and its present efficacy.

Thus Edward Schillebeeckx in *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*

The "application" of the blood of Jesus is made in a particular way through preaching the mystery, as the following fervorino "for the month of the divine blood" indicates:

Thanks to the application of this inestimable price by which we are redeemed, the sinful soul should find holy and religious motives by which to hope for mercy and pardon; the repentant soul should find an incentive to grow in virtue and holiness; and the just person should draw ardent zeal to save souls for the Lord.

. . .May reminding people of such an important devotion rouse them from the fatal sleep of spiritual death which oppresses them.

. . .May our minds be occupied then, [my Jesus], in contemplating the mysteries of your love; may our hearts desire to see them applied, and our bodies show forth their triumph, for our own and others' sanctification.<sup>7</sup>

These goals provide in the mind of the founder the primary reason for inculcating devotion to the blood of Christ not only in preaching, but also in the celebration of the sacraments:

The object for which the devotion to the most precious blood is propagated

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(New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963) prefers to use the language of interpersonal encounter to describe the (sacramental) presence of the ongoing mystery of redemption: "The essence of sacramental saving efficacy is identical with the historical sacrifice of the Cross in its character as mystery; and consequently it is identical with the actual saving activity of the risen Lord too. . . .The sacraments always include a reference to the historical event, because it was upon the historical Cross, and there alone at that moment of history, that God really sacrificed his human life for us. . . .[The sacraments] are a visible affirmation and bestowal of the actual gift of grace inasmuch as the recipient becomes concerned in the enduring redemptive act by which the *Kyrios* is reaching out to him here and now." (60-2 passim)

Gaspar's recognition that the "application" of the merits of Christ's blood by means of the ministry of word has a quasi-sacramental efficacy is also sustained by Schilebeeckx: "Christ is our High Priest in his sacramental manifestation of salvation and through his preaching of the word. . . .In the word this saving reality is manifested as revealed and given to us. In this way the word belongs to the intrinsic constitution of the presence of a supernatural reality among us." (*ibid.*, 99)

For another way of expressing the mystery of grace in relation to the historical act of redemption, one developed from the theology of mystery proposed by Odo Casel, cf. G. Lefebvre, "*La Devozione al Preziosissimo Sangue e il Mistero di Cristo*" *sua realizzazione nella Liturgia il cui centro è la Messa*", esp. 36-40.

<sup>7</sup>*SF XVI*, fol. 403 in Gaspare Del Bufalo, *Schemi di prediche*, 8-9 passim.

is to reawaken fervor in people. Today it is necessary to announce anew to people at what price their souls were repurchased: *Empti sumus*. It behooves us to make known the ways in which the blood of Jesus cleanses souls and sanctifies them, principally by means of the sacraments.<sup>8</sup>

For Gaspar the ministry of word and sacrament, with explicit reference to the mystery of the blood of Christ announced and celebrated, provides the minister with the purpose and goal of the apostolate: to bring people into living contact with the source of pardon and mercy, leading them ultimately to love of Jesus Christ. As the first step in the process of conversion and coming to faith (cf. Rm. 10:17), preaching is given special emphasis by Gaspar, who claims for it a unique efficacy when presented with the great stimulus to repentance and love which the blood of Jesus Christ provides.

Finally, the founder makes known to his confrères the value of this devotion for their own apostolic formation: the blood of Christ is not only a means of holiness for them and a powerful resource for the ministry, but also a motive for missionary zeal, inspiring them to seek the perfection of apostolic life. Thus, Gaspar identifies the potential of this devotion for his missionaries to acquire fervor and spiritual thirst for souls. But who will discover it if not he who stands at the mystical fountain of the wounds of Jesus Christ? Meditating, then, on the mysteries of the divine Blood, we will feel a great zeal for the salvation of people. . . So, let us be resolved not only to walk, but to run along the way of the apostolate.<sup>9</sup>

Here again Gaspar encourages contemplation of the blood of Christ to inspire both missionaries and the beneficiaries of their ministry, to grow in Christian life and service. The following passage summarizes the threefold aspect of devotion to the precious blood as source of holiness, efficacious resource for the ministry, and stimulus for apostolic zeal:

Through the Cross we enjoy the abundance of those mystic waters, which symbolize the graces issuing from the merits of the divine Blood so as to be able to promote purity of life in ourselves and in our neighbor. Let us, then, listen to the convincing voice of the Savior who shows us his sufferings as an incentive to be zealous for souls, for they have been purchased at an inestimable price. "You have been bought and paid for."

The apostolic labors, the perseverance in the duties of the priesthood, the suffering in defense of the work of salvation, rather than depress us should stimulate us to imitate our divine Master and Exemplar.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>SF X, fol. 370; quoted in B. Conti, *San Gaspare Apostolo del Sangue di Cristo*, 102-3.

<sup>9</sup>*Circular Letters*, trans. R. Cera, 28-9.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 45-6.

Without having exhausted by any means the rich doctrine of Gaspar Del Bufalo on the legitimacy, centrality and finality of committed reflection on the blood of Christ, this brief section has given some indication of the missionary dynamism of a spirituality inspired by this devotion. Our discussion here and in Chapter 3 has hopefully shown how Gaspar's teaching in no way represents the kind of "devotionalism" which has been criticized for being superficially sentimental, or narrow and individualistic--usually at the expense of the authentic sources of Christian spirituality and theology: Scripture, the sacraments and the liturgy.

It is precisely the "social" aspect of the founder's teaching which motivates his followers to go outside themselves in service to others, announcing to them the liberating message of salvation, that rescues Gaspar's teaching from such charges. When for instance Contegiacomo summarizes the founder's devotion as directed to the Person of the incarnate Word who "in his heroic love for the Father and for us, desired to shed his blood in redeeming sacrifice,"<sup>11</sup> he immediately refers to the corresponding obligation the devotion imposes on its adherents to be likewise disposed to oblation love. The spirituality of the blood of Christ can never remain a private affair between God and the "soul", its practitioners remaining indifferent to the urgent needs of the time and place in which they find themselves. In short, the theological and spiritual aspects of this devotion can never be separated from its social and ministerial ones while hoping to remain faithful to the vision of Gaspar Del Bufalo.<sup>12</sup>

#### The Mission, Apostolate, and Ministry of the Laity in a Gasparian Perspective

The second essential component of the gasparian charism has been characterized in this chapter under the heading "Christian mission". In keeping with the purpose of this thesis, the question must now be asked as to how this

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<sup>11</sup>L. Contegiacomo, *Il Sangue di Cristo in S. Gaspare del Bufalo*, 23.

<sup>12</sup>It is interesting to note as an aside how another aspect of gasparian spirituality has implications for Christian mission: the cultivation of the humble life taught by Albertini and de Sales, which for Gaspar has definite implications in this regard. The founder notes, for instance, how "through [humility] we obtain ever greater graces, courage and strength for the ministry." (*Circular Letters*, trans. R. Cera, 37) Humility is the virtue which enables the minister to "acquire compassion on behalf of his fellow human beings" (*ibid.*, 8); in humility the missionary realizes he must "give an account for the gifts that God bestows upon him" (*ibid.*, 10) and becomes more open to "receiving special gifts from God for the renewal of his life" (*ibid.*, 18); humility, finally, bestows "unalterable patience and unwearied zeal in response to . . . heavenly gifts" (*ibid.*, 26) given to the missionary.

component can legitimately be transposed to a lay key. Given the fact, in other words, that the related terms "mission," "apostolate," and "ministry" possessed for Gaspar himself an undeniably clerical frame of reference, how can they be spoken of in a way that is, at one and the same time, both "lay" and "gasparian" in character? This question, whose answer must also specify more precisely the meaning of these terms in a lay context can be approached from two directions, one historical and the other theological.

### *Historical Perspectives*

From an historical perspective a definite feature of the gasparian mission can be discerned which allows for a broader interpretation of its scope, one that need not be limited exclusively to the ministry of priests. Indeed, the gasparian mission--historically identified with an immense project of Christian renewal in the papal states and other parts of Italy after the napoleonic occupation--always included in its scope the spiritual and apostolic formation of the laity as well as their involvement, even if minimal, in the mission itself.

Thus, in his study of the method employed by Del Bufalo in the conduct of the popular missions, Beniamino Conti notes how, along with two members of the clergy, a specified number of laypersons from the locale "collaborated with the missionaries in certain ministries indicated to them by the mission director after the opening ceremony and throughout the mission as the need arose."<sup>13</sup>

These lay assistants sought prayers for the success of the mission in the outlying districts; accompanied the missionaries on certain ministries such as hearing the confessions of the sick; attended to practical matters for certain liturgical functions that took place during the mission; found lodging for visiting priests who came to assist the missionaries; and collected the offerings of the faithful whether monetary or in the form of "moral" relinquishments such as weapons. Four of these collaborators, two laymen and two laywomen called "peacemakers", received a special public appointment to assist the missionaries in the important task of seeking the reconciliation of known enemies, something considered of great importance for a society where violence was often rife.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>B. Conti, *Il metodo delle missioni*, 134. This work, in Appendix I, 199-234, reproduces from SF XII, fol. 124-38, the document published by the founder in 1818 (later revised in 1835) which outlines his method: *Metodo delle Sante Missioni fatto Stampare dalla Ven. Archconfraternita del Preziosissimo Sangue del N.S. Gesù Cristo per uso dei Suoi Missionari e di tutti quei che Vorranno Approfittarsene Si Aggiungono le Brevi Regole delle Opere Pie che Sogliono Stabilirsi in Tempo di Missione*. For the role of lay assistants, see *Metodo* nos. 11-12, 17-18, 29, 34, 40, 42, 54 and 59.

<sup>14</sup>See G. Guglia, *Il Vangelo agli ultimi*, 109-10: "[These] 'peacemakers' were always of particular importance: outstanding men and women of exemplary life and social influence who were chosen at the start of the mission to disclose situations of conflict and collaborate with the missionaries in restoring peace. One

In addition to these assistants, other lay collaborators called "brothers" aided the missionaries; these men were members of a confraternity appointed by the bishop of the diocese where the mission was held who, outfitted in penitential dress customary at the time, provided certain liturgical and practical services designed to maintain good order in the conduct of the mission. For instance, they accompanied the missionaries in different processions, especially the ones leading to the platform from which the principal sermons were given; they were also charged with maintaining a certain decorum among the large crowds which often attended these functions.<sup>15</sup>

Another significant group of collaborators chosen from among the different lay confraternities of the place were the "cantors" responsible for providing devotional music for the mission's various services and for leading the people in song. The hymns were provided to these cantors in a libretto prepared for the occasion; these songs were coordinated with the themes of the various sermons and designed to assist the people's comprehension and reinforce the message.<sup>16</sup>

The so-called "works of perseverance" are perhaps the best indication the gasparian mission had relative to the formation of the laity.<sup>17</sup> No popular mission was undertaken that did not envision as an essential part of its program of renewal, the establishment of these lay associations called *ristretti*: groups intended to preserve and deepen the fruits of the missionaries' activity.<sup>18</sup> While these

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can imagine the depths of hatred and the frequency of vendettas which existed between relatives, neighbors, rival families and even among the clergy. The missionaries for their part considered such reconciliations to be an indispensable condition for genuine personal conversion, as well as for the renewal of the ecclesial community. In this area the missions performed an undeniable service to society."

<sup>15</sup>See *ibid.*, 135-7 and *Metodo*, nos. 16-17, 20-21, 25-26, 28-29, 32, 37-38, 45, 50.

<sup>16</sup>See *ibid.*, 137-9 and *Metodo*, nos. 19, 21, 23, 25-26, 27-28, 49, 51, 54.

<sup>17</sup>These are treated in *ibid.*, 143-9; Appendix II, 235-53, reproduces the document normally appended to the *Metodo* published by St. Gaspar outlining in detail the purposes and rules governing these lay associations. When the document was on occasion printed separately it bore the title: *Opere che Sogliono Stabilirsi dai Missionari dell' Archconfraternita del Preziosissimo Sangue di Gesù Cristo in Occasione delle SS. Missioni che da Essi Si Fanno nei Diversi Luoghi, Ove dalla Legittima Autorità Sono Chiamati.*

<sup>18</sup>Today these various groups would be given the canonical designation "private associations of the faithful." In addition to the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood which Gaspar considered the most important and which is treated at length in the next chapter, the other major groups included the "Association of the Twelve Apostles" for priests; the "Evening Oratory" and "Association of Brothers of St. Francis Xavier" for laymen; the "Sisters of Charity of the Most Precious Blood" for laywomen; the "Association of the Immaculate Conception and

associations were primarily spiritual in nature, they often had definite apostolic goals as well.

Thus one purpose of the "Congregations" for the upper classes was "to promote visits to the hospitals of both sexes for the edification of the people."<sup>19</sup> Likewise two members of the "Evening Oratory" (chosen from among the twelve laymen who formed the "Association of Brothers of St. Francis Xavier"—considered the "pillars" of the Oratory) were charged with the special care of their sick brethren; the director of the Oratory was required to recommend those who frequented it "the manner of Christian life, the reception of the sacraments, and visiting the mens' hospitals and prisons, all along exhorting them to those works which are salutary for eternal life."<sup>20</sup>

Similar instructions for visiting the sick were also given to the directors of the two organizations for young people.<sup>21</sup> As for the work of the "Monthly Retreat, the Brothers of St. Francis Xavier were called upon to act as ushers, and in the catechetical "Work of Christian Doctrine," lay people were allowed to serve as presidents of the respective groups for men and women, as well as secretaries and "silenziari" for the maintenance of good order; laywomen were also allowed to teach at least other women and girls.<sup>22</sup>

In all these associations, moreover, devotion to the blood of Christ was promoted and, as shown above, St. Gaspar always stipulated a close connection between it and Christian ministry such that "all the devotees of the precious blood must be considered as so many apostles destined to sanctify their neighbor."<sup>23</sup> Hence, the founder understood how Christian mission, including its lay forms, derived fundamental meaning from this devotion as well as providing its practitioners motivation to persevere in service with ever-greater generosity.

The role allotted to the laity in the gasparian mission also shows Gaspar's typical concern for a Christian life where action and contemplation, service and

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of St. Aloysius Gonzaga" for young men and boys; the "Daughters of Mary" for young women and girls; and two "congregations" one for men and the other for women of the noble class. (These latter seem to have been absorbed into the other associations by the time the revision of the *Metodo* and the *Opere* was made in 1835; this revision does, however, mention another "confraternity" for people who lived and worked in the countryside). In addition to these groups the founder also wished to see instituted two other works: one catechetical in nature, the "Work of Christian Doctrine" for both children and adults, and the other spiritual, the "Monthly Retreat" whose theme was preparation for death.

<sup>19</sup>*Opere*, no. 80.

<sup>20</sup>See *Opere*, no. 85.

<sup>21</sup>See *Opere*, nos. 88-89, 91, 94.

<sup>22</sup>See *Opere*, nos. 95, 99-100.

<sup>23</sup>SF XII, fol. 80 (*Regulations for the Association of Brothers of St. Francis Xavier and the Sisters of Charity of the Most Precious Blood*).

prayer, find a balanced and reciprocal harmony. At this point, however, if one is to avoid falling into an inevitable anachronism, the historical context of the question posed above must be broadened to include a properly theological aspect as well.

### *Theological Perspectives*

Even if Gaspar Del Bufalo has been acknowledged as a pioneer of what in this century became full-blown movements in the form of Catholic Action and later the "lay apostolate" sanctioned by the Council,<sup>24</sup> he still remains a man of his time--a time in which the very terminology "lay mission-apostolate-ministry" would have been incomprehensible.<sup>25</sup> The virtual exclusion of the laity in Gaspar's time from realms of ecclesial life which are taken for granted today (apart from the traditional works of mercy always enjoined on all Christians) requires a contemporization of our question which, though consonant with the historical appearance of the gasparian charism, would certainly represent a considerable development of it; hence the need for a theological perspective to complement the historical one.

### Some terminological precisions

Before proceeding, some clarification of terms is in order. One finds, for example, the terms "mission," "apostolate," and "ministry" distinguished in the documents of the Council:

The Church's mission is concerned with the salvation of men; and men win salvation through the grace of Christ and faith in him. The apostolate of the

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<sup>24</sup>See Luigi Contegiacomo, "Universalità e Attualità di San Gaspare," 35-6 who, referring to an article by A. Faller, "Due Santi Preti Romani e Fondatori: Pallotti e del Bufalo," *Osservatore Romano*, June 24, 1954: 3, records an opinion that ". . .if [Vincent] Pallotti has been called the precursor of Catholic Action, the Canon del Bufalo in giving popular missions sought nothing more than to initiate an apostolically active and well organized life on everyone's part, no one excluded."

Contegiacomo also notes how John XXIII held the same view, quoting the pope's statement to members of Catholic Action in Rome that Gaspar "can well be numbered among the precursors of your Movement." ("Discourse of His Holiness John XXIII to the Roman Branch of Catholic Action," AAS LII [1960]: 88). Cf. Luciano Bugnola, "S. Gaspare pioniere dell'Azione Cattolica," *SR XLVII*, no. 1 (gennaio-marzo 1961): 59-70.

<sup>25</sup>The remarks of C. Guglia, *Il Vangelo agli ultimi*, 109, are also applicable in this regard to the gasparian mission: "In past centuries clericalism was so deeply rooted as to render inconceivable the prophetic and priestly promotion of the laity as it is accepted today. . . .The laity were valued collaborators [of the mission] but only at a certain managerial level: in publicity, in preparing certain necessary equipment and materials, and in the organization of processions and other public services."

Church therefore, and of each of its members, aims primarily at announcing to the world by word and action the message of Christ and communicating to it the grace of Christ. The principal means of bringing this about is the ministry of the word and of the sacraments.<sup>26</sup>

This passage suggests a progressive narrowing in the meaning of these terms with "mission" being the most comprehensive, "apostolate" (the favored word of the conciliar documents for the laity's share in the Church's mission) being more restrictive, and "ministry" the most limited in scope, normally used to describe clerical activity.

Jordan Aumann, in his analysis of postconciliar developments, notes, however, that the last term has been officially broadened to include those non-ordained ministries opened to the laity by the apostolic letter of Paul VI *Ministeriam Quaedam* as well as by the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*.<sup>27</sup> He further observes how all official lay ministries "must in some way or other be subject to the governance and authority of the Church in whose name they are exercised."<sup>28</sup> In saying this he wishes to draw a distinction between ministries and other forms of Christian service stemming from personal gifts and charisms for which a specific ecclesiastical authorization is not necessary. He favors therefore the following definition of "ministry": "those public activities or services performed by Christians with approval or mandate from ecclesiastical authority and directed to the extension of God's kingdom and the upbuilding of the Christian community which is the Church."<sup>29</sup> Other forms of lay activity and service, which are also a share in the mission of the whole people of God, fall under the less restrictive category "apostolate": these may, and often do, have a strictly lay provenance.<sup>30</sup>

While not entirely without validity, this view does not close the issue.

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<sup>26</sup>AA 6.

<sup>27</sup>See J. Aumann, "Non-ordained Ministry and Lay Apostolate after Vatican Council II," *Angelicum* 63, no. 3 (1986): 403-18.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 411.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 412.

<sup>30</sup>Cf. Jordan Aumann, "The Role of the Laity in the Church and in the World," *Angelicum* 65, no. 2 (1988): 157-69; Tullio Citrini, "La questione teologica dei ministri," in *I Laici nella Chiesa*, 57-72; Paul Cordes, "I ministri non ordinati" and Albert Vanhoye, "La partecipazione dei fedeli laici alla comunione ecclesiale con particolare riferimento ai ministri," in *Christifideles laici: spunti per uno studio*, 65-9 and 70-4 resp.; Louis Ligier, "'Lay Ministries' and Their Foundations in the Documents of Vatican II," in *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives Twenty-five Years After (1962-1987)*, ed. René Latourelle, vol. 2 (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 160-76 and Lucas Moreira Neves, "I laici cristiani: essere e agire alla luce del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II," *Angelicum* 64, no. 4 (1987): 547-61 for further elaborations of the question.

Already in Chapter 1, when speaking of the element of mission, the ferment over the question of lay ministry was mentioned, something frequently referred to at the 1987 Synod of Bishops and later acknowledged by *Christifideles Laici* as requiring further study by the ecclesiastical magisterium.<sup>31</sup>

The present situation should not, therefore, be seen as having reached the desirable level of theological or pastoral maturity; in the words of Jan Kupka, the impetus given by the Council to the lay apostolate encountered new problems that to date have not been solved because the theological interpretation and the practical realization of the conciliar doctrine continue to develop. It would be premature to expect a synthetic presentation of the theology of the apostolate at this time. . . .there is not yet a synthesis of postconciliar theology and. . .therefore it is impossible to draw far-reaching conclusions for the apostolate....A theology of the apostolate that would be worthy of the conciliar doctrine. . .still finds itself in a preparatory stage.<sup>32</sup>

#### Overture to conciliar developments in a gasparian context

Given the tentative stage of the theological discussion, it is nevertheless possible to trace some conciliar and postconciliar developments that are relevant to a gasparian view of Christian mission. The first, as noted by Kupka, concerns a cornerstone of conciliar theology, namely the universal character of the Church's mission in which the entire people of God is called to participate. *Lumen Gentium*, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, and *Ad Gentes Divinitus* each contributed to a new understanding of the coresponsibility of all the faithful in the mission of the Church to announce the reign of God; both *Christifideles Laici* and, more recently, the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, have reinforced and amplified the doctrine of the Council.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>See Vittorio Leonizio, ed., *La Missione del Laico*, for the relevant synodal interventions, especially those of Card. Hyacinthe Thiandoum (16-7); Mons. Roger Michael Mahoney (47-8); P. José Maria Salaverri Aranegui (73-4); P. Enrico Heekeren (91-2); Mons. Alberto Giraldo Jaramillo (108) and *Propositio* 18 (234). Cf. also *CL* 21-23 for the response to these synodal concerns, and the commentary by Antonio Miralles, "Prospettive ministeriale della posizione attiva dei fedeli laici nella vita della chiesa," *Annales theologici* 3 (1989): 53-70.

<sup>32</sup>Jan Kupka, "The chief points in the discussion about the apostolate of the laity in the Church of today," *CICR* 12, no. 4 (Winter 1985): 408-9. Cf. Walter Kasper, "The mission of the laity," *Theology Digest* 35, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 133-8 and Kenan Osborne, "The meaning of lay, laity and lay ministry," *Theology Digest* 36, no. 2 (Summer, 1989): 113-9.

<sup>33</sup>See *LG* 33: "The apostolate of the laity is a sharing in the salvific mission of the Church. . . .All the laity, then, have the exalted duty of working for the ever greater spread of the divine plan of salvation to all men, of every epoch and over all the earth"; *AA* 2: "The Church was founded to spread the kingdom of Christ over all

This renewed emphasis on the laity's distinctive role in the mission of the Church, treated in Chapter 1 as a fundamental element of lay spirituality, can not only be placed in a gasparian context, but the missionary component of the gasparian charism, as shown in the next section, receives new vigor in light of the theological and pastoral principles evoked by the Council and recent magisterium: a revitalization that is continuous with the charism's historical appearance and yet at the same time a significant evolution of it.

A second fruit of conciliar teaching, especially relevant to the thesis, is apparent in the texts cited in the previous footnote: the centrality of evangelization to the Church's mission. The apostolic exhortation of Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, did much to sensitize the Church after the Council to the essential task of preaching--so much so that the terms "mission," "apostolate," and "ministry" can hardly be employed without reference to the proclamation of the gospel of salvation;<sup>34</sup> moreover, the phrase "reevangelization" ("new evangelization") has recently

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the earth for the glory of God the Father, to make all men partakers in redemption and salvation, and through them to establish the right relationship of the entire world to Christ. Every activity of the Mystical Body with this in view goes by the name of 'apostolate'; the Church exercises it through all its members, though in various ways. In fact, the Christian vocation is, of its nature, a vocation to the apostolate as well. . . .In the Church there is diversity of ministry but unity of mission. . . .In the concrete, [the apostolate of the laity] is exercised when they work at the evangelization and sanctification of men"; AG 35-36: "Since the whole Church is missionary, and the work of evangelization the fundamental task of the people of God, this sacred Synod invites all to undertake a profound interior renewal so that being vitally conscious of their responsibility for the spread of the Gospel they might play their part in missionary work among the nations. As members of the living Christ. . .all the faithful have an obligation to collaborate in the expansion and spread of his Body, so that they might bring it to fullness as soon as possible"; CL 33: "The lay faithful, precisely because they are members of the Church, have the vocation and mission of proclaiming the Gospel: they are prepared for this work by the sacraments of Christian initiation and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit"; and RM 71: "The need for all the faithful to share in this responsibility is not merely a matter of making the apostolate more effective; it is a right and duty based on their baptismal dignity. . . ."

<sup>34</sup>See EN 14 where Paul VI repeats the words of the Third General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops held in 1974 on the topic of evangelization: "We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church. . . .Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of his death and glorious Resurrection."

become a slogan of sorts in the attempt to galvanize the faithful into taking an active role in announcing the gospel anew in places where the faith has been virtually abandoned.<sup>35</sup> In all of this, the coresponsibility of the laity is repeatedly emphasized whether evangelizing activity is directed to one's immediate surroundings or is part of the wider mission of the Church *ad gentes*.<sup>36</sup>

The manifold witness to Christian beliefs and values implied by the laity's participation in the evangelical mission of the Church is undertaken, moreover, in accordance with the element of integration outlined in Chapter 1: the congruence between faith and life being considered the most powerful evidence of the truth of Christian preaching, a "vital synthesis. . . achieved when the lay faithful know how to put the Gospel and their daily lives into a shining and convincing testimony."<sup>37</sup>

That this development in postconciliar Catholicism has direct relevance to gasparian spirituality is obvious. The gasparian mission in its original context was precisely one of evangelization, the ministry of the word in the form of popular missions and retreats being the purpose for which Gaspar's congregation was founded. This work of renewal, as shown above, envisioned some collaboration on the part of the laity according to the possibilities afforded by the time and place. Broadening the scope of this collaboration to include present-day understandings and possibilities of the lay faithful's share in the Church's proclamation, is wholly in line with the gasparian ideal.

A third theme prominent in Catholic teaching since the Second Vatican Council which is germane to our discussion concerns the call for Christian

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Of special interest is how the document includes the Church's sacramental ministry under the general rubric of "evangelization". The exhortation proceeds to affirm in no. 24 how "[e]vangelization is. . . a complex process made up of varied elements: the renewal of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence, entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative. These elements may appear to be contradictory, indeed mutually exclusive. In fact they are complementary and mutually enriching. Each one must always be seen in relationship with the others. . . in order to reach a full understanding of the Church's evangelizing activity." Commenting on these passages, Kupka, "Chief points," 414, observes how since 1975 there has been a tendency in official statements to prefer the term "evangelization" (but also "mission" and "ministry") to the more traditional "apostolate" in reference to the laity's role in the Church's activity.

<sup>35</sup>See CL 34.

<sup>36</sup>See CL 34: "At this moment the lay faithful, in virtue of their participation in the prophetic mission of Christ, are fully part of this work of the Church. Their responsibility, in particular, is to testify how the Christian faith constitutes the only fully valid response--consciously perceived and stated by all in varying degrees--to the problems and hopes that life poses to every person and society."

<sup>37</sup>CL 34.

solidarity with all of humanity, especially those on the margins of society. Taking its cue from the opening words of *Gaudium et Spes*,<sup>38</sup> the Church has attained a heightened awareness of the common bonds uniting the human race, and the Christian obligation to promote the absolute dignity of the human person; this concern over the inherent value and fundamental rights of human beings is reflected above all in the social teaching of the Church, including its repeated emphasis on the "preferential option for the poor".<sup>39</sup>

In accordance with the element of secularity treated in Chapter 1, the laity have a distinctive share in the Church's mission of bringing the liberating effects of the gospel to all sectors of human society:

In this work of contributing to the human family, for which the whole Church is responsible, a particular place falls to the lay faithful, by reason of their 'secular character,' obliging them, in their proper and irreplaceable way, to work towards the Christian animation of the temporal order.

*To rediscover and make others rediscover the inviolable dignity of every human person makes up an essential task, in a certain sense, the central and unifying task of the service which the Church and the lay faithful in her are called to render to the human family.*

*. . . Just as personal dignity is the foundation of equality of all people among themselves, so it is also the foundation of participation and solidarity of all people among themselves. . . .*<sup>40</sup>

At first sight these sensibilities of the contemporary Church could seem to have little in common with the gasparian mission given its apparent preoccupation with the cultic aspects of the priestly ministry; if true, this would certainly make transposing this aspect of lay mission into a gasparian key difficult if not impossible. The impression, however, that the founder's interests were so narrowly conceived is false.

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<sup>38</sup>GS 1: "The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men, of men who, united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, press onwards towards the kingdom of the Father and are bearers of a message of salvation intended for all men. That is why Christians cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history."

<sup>39</sup>It is impossible even to summarize this development here. The following citations from the social encyclicals of the current pontificate may be consulted for typical affirmations regarding the themes of solidarity, the dignity of the person, and the "option for the poor": *LE* 8-9; *SRS*, esp. Chapters V and VI; *CA* 11, 49 and esp. Chapter VI. See also *CL* 37-39, 41.

<sup>40</sup>*CL* 36-37.

The gasparian mission in its historical context did in fact possess an undeniable concern for the welfare of the human person over and beyond a strictly religious or moral perspective, albeit never disassociated from that perspective. This can be seen in his lifelong service of the poor, whom he counseled his companions "never to abandon for they are the image of Jesus Christ"<sup>41</sup> and, in a special way, his involvement in one of the principal social problems of his time and place, the phenomenon of brigandage.<sup>42</sup>

Without using the language and certainly not the concepts available in the social doctrine of the Church since the publication of *Rerum Novarum*, Del Bufalo is still recognized as one who possessed in himself the practical experience of the first impact of the French storm as well as the tragic disputes over the Concordat. He knew firsthand the crumbling of the papal system and the explosion of brigandage on Roman soil...; he knew what it meant for people suddenly to lose their accustomed support from the different charitable confraternities which existed to provide social assistance,

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<sup>41</sup>*Ep. I, n. 9, to Gaetano Bonanni, August 28, 1910, 32.* Gaspar's active concern for the poor is instanced by his revival of the hospice of Santa Galla while still a seminarian, a project that continued to occupy him despite his later commitments to the ministry and the institute. (See V. Pallotti, *Gaspare Del Bufalo: Come l'ho conosciuto*, 67-8).

<sup>42</sup>Brigandage was one of the more tragic legacies of the napoleonic upheaval which continued to afflict the papal states after the restoration. Gaspar's social analysis of the problem is especially interesting, of which he writes: "It cannot be denied that brigandage is due in large part to a certain hatred between the poor and the well-off, especially where selfish interests are involved. It cannot be said how much the ruinous system of wheat contracts that has been introduced based on so-called promissory notes--which are nothing of the sort--exasperates these poor unfortunates contributing to their thoughts of vendetta and murder. The rich use these oppressive measures with the poor, while knowing how to direct their ill-begotten revenues to games, dances, and excesses of every sort. To remove this cause [of brigandage]. . .one should eliminate this kind of free market, and business should be conducted by prudent people who, governed by moral principles and appropriate laws, will put an end to these abuses so the desired social order among the people can be maintained." (*Ep. III, n. 1168, to Bellisario Cristaldi, June 20, 1825, 339-40*)

For Gaspar's concrete response to brigandage and his role in putting an end to the problem in some areas--responses frequently at odds with the harsh political and ecclesiastical measures of the day--see Michele Colagiovanni, *Il Brigantaggio nel Lazio meridionale e l'opera di Gaspare del Bufalo* (Rome: EPUPS, 1986); Nicola Storti, *Gli inizi della missione di S. Gaspare del Bufalo nel Lazio meridionale infestato dai briganti* (Rome: EPUPS, 1990) and Gianni Vergineo, *Gaspare del Bufalo e la Restaurazione Beneventana* (Benevento: Gennaro Ricolo Editore, 1988).

but were so brutally suppressed, without being replaced by equivalent organizations along modern lines. He possessed the capacity to adapt to current situations and to make present the ancient Christian message of love through his missionary activity, the apostolate, and the evangelization of the humble by the humble, above all among the poor peasants, the most abandoned and the most exposed to the temptation to brigandage. These works, whether to relieve moral wounds, or to satisfy more basic needs, were all accomplished within a thicket of skirmishes, confrontations and conflicts, not only with the French authorities but also with the governors and pontifical magistrates who were more often interested in applying measures of force than with human and social development.<sup>43</sup>

In light of this social dimension of the gasparian mission it is not difficult to imagine how the call of the laity to animate the temporal order with gospel values of peace, justice and love, in a spirit of solidarity with all of humanity, and with the desire to promote human dignity, can be set within a consciously gasparian context. Rooted in the general call to Christian mission which as we have seen is closely identified with the task of evangelization, the call to solidarity is one essential facet of the imperative to announce a faith that seeks peace, does justice, and brings love. As with the developments previously discussed, the embodiment of this aspect of the gasparian mission in a lay form would also represent an evolution of its original historical form, yet be entirely consistent with it. What remains is to show specific ways in which all these developments in Catholic thought and practice can be situated within a consciously gasparian framework. To do so, we turn to the doctrine of the *tria munera Christi* in view of Gaspar's focal commitment to the blood of Christ.

#### The Blood of Christ and the Doctrine of the *Munus Christi*

The unifying center of the gasparian charism, devotion to the blood of Christ, seems the most legitimate path to making explicit the ways in which the missionary component of the charism can be adapted to a lay form in the Church and world today. By referring, moreover, to the doctrine of the threefold office of Christ given such prominence in recent magisterial and theological reflection--especially regarding the element of mission as fundamental to lay spirituality--we can readily illustrate how the image "blood of Christ" provides particular meaning to the priestly, prophetic and royal dimensions of the laity's mission; thus, the argument in favor of a distinctively "gasparian" quality to this mission is further enhanced.

In drawing these connections between the center of gasparian spirituality and the doctrine of the *munus Christi* relative to the facets of mission-evangelization-solidarity treated above, the following observations of Fernando Ocariz are kept in mind:

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<sup>43</sup>G. Vergineo, *Restaurazione Beneventana*, 30.

[while] it is without doubt opportune to distinguish between the priestly, prophetic, and royal function since the concepts . . . are considerably different.... [o]ne should not, however, lose sight of the fact that, in Jesus Christ, these three concepts are intimately united. . . . even if to us one aspect appears more present in certain [of his works] than another.

. . . Consequently, by analogy. . . this same union would have to be affirmed for the prophetic, priestly and royal function of Christians. In fact, these three functions have been and frequently are assumed into one.<sup>44</sup>

In addition to this principle, the same author emphasizes a point made earlier in Chapter 1 under the heading "element of mission" concerning the mission of the laity having a twofold sphere of influence, i.e. "in the Church and in the world," something, however, which must not be understood in a disjointed manner, as if the laity had *one* mission in the Church and *another* mission in the world, much less as if they exercised their single mission at times in the Church and at times in the world. On the contrary, by fulfilling their mission in the world they fulfill their mission in the Church, not because world and Church are identical, but because the Church lives in the world, is formed by people in the world--even if they should not be worldly--and because the place they occupy in this world is the one in which the laity must exercise the participation that is properly their own in the *tria munera Christi*, being in every circumstance, Church and world together, just as leaven is one, or at least becomes one, with the mass of dough.<sup>45</sup>

#### *The Blood of Christ and the Priestly Mission of the Laity*

The blood of Jesus is mentioned in 13 books of the New Testament, often in direct or indirect relation to his priestly office and ministry (cf. Hb. 9:12,14,25; 10:19; 13:12; also Rm. 3:25); it is likewise mentioned in relation to the priesthood of the faithful (cf. Rv. 1:5b; 5:9) who have received a new status before God, variously expressed as being justified-sanctified-consecrated (cf. Rm. 5:9, 7:14-15; 1 Pt. 1:2; Hb. 10:29, 13:12).<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Fernando Ocariz, "La partecipazione dei laici alla missione della Chiesa," *Annales theologici* 1 (1987): 12-4 passim.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>46</sup>For biblical studies on the relation between the priesthood and blood of Christ, see Emilio Rasco, "Il `sangue prezioso' di Cristo nella prima lettera di Pietro," *Sangue e Antropologia Biblica*, vol. II, 851-64; the following by Albert Vanhoye: "Il sangue di Cristo nell'Epistola agli Ebrei," *Sangue e antropologia biblica*, vol. II, 819-29; "Sangue di Cristo e sacerdozio dei fedeli nel Nuovo Testamento," *Sangue e antropologia nella teologia*, vol. II, 771-85; "Sangue e sacerdozio di Cristo nel Nuovo Testamento," *Sangue e antropologia nella Liturgia*, vol. II, 823-33; "Sangue e Spirito nell'Epistola agli Ebrei," *Sangue e antropologia nella letteratura cristiana*, vol. II, 829-41; *Il Sangue*

These texts are normally soteriological in character dealing with the great themes of redemption and reconciliation which express the covenant relationship of God with humanity and human beings with each other through the priestly mediation and intercession of Christ; they are also cultic and sacrificial in nature, expressing the manner in which salvation has come about through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Of special relevance to our discussion are those texts in which the blood of Christ is seen as conferring on Jesus' followers a similar role in the Church and world.

The biblical scholar Albert Vanhoye, who has given special attention to these texts, notes how their fundamental meaning concerns the intentional and active self-giving of Jesus "through the eternal Spirit" (Hb. 9:14) in the mysteries of his passion and the eucharist: a total offering symbolized in the shedding of his blood "for many" (Mt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24) by which the new covenant of God with humanity is brought about. This self-donation has both God (to whom Jesus "offers" himself) and the disciples (to whom he "gives" himself) as its object: . . .the blood given to the disciples is the `blood of a covenant'. . .that it should lack the aspect of an offering to God is impossible. To make of his blood a "blood of the covenant," Jesus had to offer himself to God, that is open the entirety of his human being, his life, his death, to the divine action of reconciliation. . . .this synthesis [of giving his blood to the disciples and offering himself to God] reveals the priesthood of Christ more fully, showing the dual dimension of the gift he made of himself: an offering to the Father and a gift to his brothers. This dual dimension was indispensable for the foundation of a covenant and for the institution of the priesthood of Christ, since the essential task of a priest consists in the exercise of mediation between God and people."<sup>47</sup>

The priestly mediation of Christ arises, then, out of the bond of solidarity which unites Jesus to the human race and, through him, humanity to God; by his sharing "blood and flesh" (Hb. 2:14) in common with us, the fundamental unity of all people is assured through him who "had to become like his brothers in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God" (Hb. 2:17). The communion of the faithful "in the blood of Christ" (1 Cor. 10:16), realized and expressed in the eucharistic cup, makes Jesus' followers a priestly people (cf. 1 Pt. 2:9; Rv. 5:9-10): "Now, to become priests with Christ, the faithful must accept [this] new kinship founded in the blood of Christ."<sup>48</sup>

The exercise of his oblativ-covenantal priesthood by Jesus occurs above all in the "mediated immediacy" of the faithful's relationship with God through his

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*dell'Alleanza: Corso di esercizi spirituali biblici*, passim, and Ugo Vanni, "Il sacerdozio dei cristiani e il sangue di Cristo nell'Apocalisse," *Sangue e antropologia Riti e culto*, vol. II, 835-62.

<sup>47</sup>A. Vanhoye, "Sangue e sacerdozio di Cristo nel Nuovo Testamento," 830.

<sup>48</sup>A. Vanhoye, "Sangue di Cristo e sacerdozio dei fedeli," 773.

blood. The "once for all" (Hb. 9:26,28) sacrifice of Christ has an ongoing effect in that it continually provides access to God, enjoyed by the faithful "in the blood of Jesus" (Hb. 10:19) especially through the eucharistic offering:

. . .this blood remains even today the indispensable means to enter into an authentic relationship with God. . . .Christians [however] cannot content themselves with only a liturgical approach to the blood of Jesus. They must live their union with God through a generous life which, after the example of Jesus, likewise includes a struggle against sin, a struggle that continues "to the point of shedding blood" (Heb. 12:4).<sup>49</sup>

The participation of the faithful in the unique priesthood of Christ, which "finds its source in the anointing of Baptism, its further development in Confirmation and its realization and dynamic sustenance in the Holy Eucharist,"<sup>50</sup> is based then on a strict correlation between the priestly self-offering of Jesus and the self-giving that ought to characterize his disciples. In this way, their own share in Christ's priesthood is more and more verified in the relational bonds of ecclesial communion.

In accordance with the element of integration, the priesthood of the lay faithful is not exercised therefore simply through participation in the liturgy, however important that is. The "sacral" function by which the royal priesthood offers worship to God in spirit and in truth together with the hierarchical priesthood, each in their distinctive way, is complemented by an exercise which extends into every facet of their lives.<sup>51</sup>

This "existential" function alluded to above by Vanhoye in which the self-donation of Jesus in the paschal and eucharistic mystery is extended and applied

<sup>49</sup>A. Vanhoye, "Sangue e sacerdozio di Cristo nel Nuovo Testamento, 832.

<sup>50</sup>CL 14.

<sup>51</sup>See LG 10: "The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated to be a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, that through all the works of Christian men they may offer spiritual sacrifices. . . .Therefore all the disciples of Christ, persevering in prayer and praising God. . . .should present themselves as a sacrifice, living, holy and pleasing to God. . . ."

The section of the Constitution immediately preceding, which introduces Chapter II ("On `the People of God'") makes two mentions of the blood of Christ, one covenantal and the other ecclesiological, which indicate the foundation of the Church as the new messianic-priestly people precisely in the mystery of Jesus' blood.

For a more complete treatment of the blood of Christ in the conciliar documents see Tullio Veglianti, "Catechesi sul sangue di Cristo nel Concilio Vaticano II," in *Il Mistero del sangue di Cristo e la catechesi*, 145-74, and with reference to the magisterium of John Paul II, Romano Altobelli, "Il sangue di Cristo nella catechesi di Giovanni Paolo II," in *ibid.*, 175-236.

by the faithful to the full context of their lives, establishes a congruence with its more immediate sacramental exercise: "The priestly people shares with Christ in exercising a mediatorial and salvific function by participation in the eucharist and the other sacraments, and by the extension of the meaning and power of all these into Christian living."<sup>52</sup> An examination of both these modes, liturgical and existential, is therefore necessary.

The priestly mission *ad intram ecclesiae*

Regarding the extent of the priestly function of the laity in connection with the eucharist especially (the "sacral" aspect of the lay faithful's participation in the priesthood of Christ) the Second Vatican Council brought to fruition an appreciation for what was a source of theological contention in the preconciliar period.<sup>53</sup> Hence, in its first document, on the liturgy, the Council did not hesitate to affirm the laity's true priestly role in the Church's official worship.<sup>54</sup>

Such teaching was reconfirmed by the Constitution on the Church where, in Chapter IV of *Lumen Gentium*, the significant point is made about the whole life of the lay faithful, in all its aspects, being fitting material for their priestly oblation, and that spiritual sacrifices "accomplished in the Spirit" have an intimate part in

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<sup>52</sup>Peter Drilling, "Common and Ministerial Priesthood: *Lumen Gentium*, Article Ten," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (1987): 88. Apropos of the much-debated meaning of the Council's statement that the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood "differ in essence and not only in degree" (LG 10), the author of this article maintains that the priesthood of all the baptized is a "real priesthood, analogically understood" (89) with respect to the hierarchy, collaboration between both being the corollary of the conciliar teaching since "[a]ll the baptized, including the ordained, are involved in one mission: to join with Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit in the transformation of the world by the Gospel." (97)

<sup>53</sup>Congar's study for instance, written in 1952, often sounds apologetic in tone with a need to defend the position that the priesthood of the laity is more than something "spiritual," that it is a "real", many-faceted priesthood. Thus, he argues for ". . . a moral priesthood, which consists in living and doing with a priestly soul, in a spirit of religion; there is a real but wholly inward and spiritual priesthood, that of prayer and ascetical life; there is a priesthood with a sacramental reference and import, associated not only with righteous life but with baptismal consecration, whose supreme activity is participation in the eucharistic offering. All these are authentic aspects of the tradition's deposit." (*Lay People in the Church*, 138)

<sup>54</sup>See SC 48: "Offering the immaculate victim, not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him, they [viz. the laity] should learn to offer themselves. Through Christ, the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and each other, so that finally God may be all in all."

the liturgy: "In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord. And so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God."<sup>55</sup>

Among the lay "existentials" that form part of this Christian oblation, two merit particular mention as especially amenable to a spirituality of the blood of Christ for the laity: the vocation to Christian marriage and family life, and situations of human suffering. As to the former, John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* on "the role of the Christian family in the modern world", teaches that "the marriage of baptized persons. . . becomes a real symbol of that new and eternal covenant sanctioned in the blood of Christ";<sup>56</sup> for the Church is

a priestly people invested with the dignity and sharing in the power of Christ the High Priest of the New and Eternal Covenant. The Christian family too is part of this priestly people which is the Church. By means of the sacrament of marriage, in which it is rooted and from which it draws its nourishment, the Christian family is continuously vivified by the Lord Jesus and called and engaged by Him in a dialogue with God through the sacraments, through the offering of one's life, and through prayer. This is the *priestly role* which the Christian family can and ought to exercise with the whole Church, through the daily realities of married and family life. In this way the Christian family *is called to be sanctified and to sanctify the ecclesial community and the world.*<sup>57</sup>

The pope goes on to draw a specific connection between marriage and the blood of Christ in the eucharistic liturgy: "The Eucharist is the very source of Christian marriage. The Eucharistic Sacrifice, in fact, represents Christ's covenant of love with the Church, sealed with His blood on the Cross. In this sacrifice of the New and Eternal Covenant, Christian spouses encounter the source from which their own marriage covenant flows, is interiorly structured and continuously renewed."<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, Achille Triacca develops a rich theology and spirituality of marriage around the meanings inherent in the blood of Christ, observing how the covenant relationship which makes sacramental marriage a sign of the oblation of love of Christ for the Church is rooted in the shedding of Jesus' blood, the ultimate proof of his indissoluble love for humanity: "As Christ stretched upon the cross unites the Church to himself in the supreme act of his sacrifice, so the union of

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<sup>55</sup>LG 34. Cf. LG 10: "The faithful indeed, by virtue of their royal priesthood, participate in the offering of the Eucharist. They exercise that priesthood, too, by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, abnegation and active charity."

<sup>56</sup>FC 13.

<sup>57</sup>FC 55.

<sup>58</sup>FC 57.

married life must discover itself in its prototype: Christ who loves the Church in the painful shedding of his blood, and through which he begets it.<sup>59</sup>

Later in the same article Triacca links this explicitly to the priesthood of Jesus and by implication that of the lay faithful: "From the prototype of Christ the Groom who loves his beloved Spouse in the shedding of the blood of the cross, at the moment his priesthood reaches its high point, are derived further possibilities for Christian married life bearing its potential fruit."<sup>60</sup> The oblation and relational force of the priestly blood of Jesus thus offers to Christian spouses a resource for deepening their understanding and embracing more fully their share in the mission of Christ and the Church.

As for the existential of suffering seen in the light of Christ's blood as a way for lay Christians to share in the priestly oblation of Jesus, John Paul II again provides an opening in his apostolic letter "on the meaning of human suffering", *Salvifici Doloris*:

One can say that with the Passion of Christ all human suffering has found itself in a new situation. . . .In the Cross of Christ not only is the Redemption accomplished through suffering, but *also human suffering itself has been redeemed*. Christ--without any fault of his own--took on himself 'the total evil of sin.' The experience of this evil determined the incomparable extent of Christ's suffering, which became *the price of the Redemption*. . . .In later times, the witnesses of the New Covenant, sealed in the Blood of Christ, will speak of this. . . .greatness of the Redemption, accomplished through the suffering of Christ. . . .Every man has *his own share in the Redemption*. Each one is also *called to share in that suffering* through which the Redemption was accomplished. He is called to share in that suffering through which all human suffering has been redeemed. In bringing about the Redemption through suffering, Christ *has also raised human suffering to the level of the Redemption*. Thus each man, in his suffering, can also become a sharer in the redemptive suffering of Christ.<sup>61</sup>

Robert Schreiter likewise cites the role the blood of Christ can play in helping people cope with, and find meaning in, suffering:

An adequate Christian spirituality must offer some resources for coping with suffering. . . .The theme of suffering is certainly a central one in a spirituality of the blood of Christ. . . .Christ's shedding of his blood on the cross marked the end of his earthly ministry. It represented an endpoint beyond which he could not go in his preaching and healing activity. But it also came to represent a beginning: a redemptive act that would make the suffering of those who followed after Christ healing and redemptive as well. Suffering no longer meant certain destruction;

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<sup>59</sup>Achille Triacca, "Il Sangue di Cristo: mistero di alleanza nella vita coniugale," in *Il Sangue di Cristo e l'esperienza cristiana*, vol. I, 399-400.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 415.

<sup>61</sup>SD 19.

another side was revealed. . . .[A] spirituality of the blood of Christ. . . helps establish how we, in our suffering, can participate in the ministry and saving activity of Christ.<sup>62</sup>

It is, moreover, in the co-offering of the eucharistic cup containing the sacramental blood of the Lord that such a priestly spirituality of the laity is given further impetus. Here especially the royal priesthood is intimately joined to the sacrifice of the whole Christ, head and members; the meanings surrounding the cup include not only the sacrificial dimensions of the eucharistic offering discussed above but refer as well to the "mission on behalf of communion" considered so important in *Christifideles Laici*.<sup>63</sup>

This mission has obvious relevance to a spirituality of the blood of Christ given the (deutero)-pauline texts in which ecclesial communion (*koinonia*) is spoken of in direct relationship to the "blessing-cup" of Christ's blood (1 Cor. 10:15) and where the effective cause of the Church's unity, in which Jew and Gentile are "brought near," is said to be "the blood of Christ." (Ep. 2:13)<sup>64</sup>

As such the promotion of communion can be considered a distinctive feature of a spirituality of the blood of Christ intimately joined to the oblation dimension of the laity's priestly and liturgical office; thus Jesus Castellano Cervera observes:

In the chalice of the Lord's blood, the Church, a eucharistic community, symbolically learns, supernaturally receives, and vitally commits itself to the mystery of communion. The blood of the chalice signifies this mystery as the mystery of giving oneself for others, along with the reciprocal gift of each one for the other. Communion, modelled after the eucharistic mystery, is lived in fact when life is given for others and to others through the gift of self. The gift [too] of

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<sup>62</sup>R. Schreiter, *In Water and in Blood: A Spirituality of Solidarity and Hope*, 84-93 passim. Cf. Piergiorgio Nesti, "Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo e il mistero della sofferenza umana," in *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo e l'esperienza cristiana*, vol. I, 419-33.

<sup>63</sup>CL 32. Cf. Mario Lessi-Ariosto, "Il significato del rito del bere al calice a partire dai testi e riti, fin dai primi secoli," *Sangue e antropologia nella Liturgia*, vol. III, 1295-1312, who notes how, in addition to the remission of sins, patristic texts especially (e.g. *Didaché*, the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, *Apostolic Tradition*) saw in the rite of drinking from the cup the realization of ecclesial communion.

<sup>64</sup>See Romano Penna, "Il sangue di Cristo nelle lettere paoline," *Sangue e antropologia biblica*, vol. II, 789-813; Giovanni Deiana, "Il sangue in alcuni testi paolini," *Sangue e antropologia nella letteratura cristiana*, vol. II, 767-98; Ugo Vanni, "Il sangue di Cristo in Paolo: realtà, simbolo, teologia," *Sangue e antropologia nella Liturgia*, vol. II, 689-736 and Patrick Sena, "Il Sangue di Cristo nel Nuovo Testamento (Ef 2,13)," in *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo e l'esperienza cristiana*, vol. I, 119-26.

the Holy Spirit of Christ with which the mystery of divine love is lived, is drawn each day from the cup of union. In the Eucharist one participates in the same communion of love which is in the Trinity, the source, model and goal of every life of communion in the Church.<sup>65</sup>

Finally, the priestly mission of the laity *ad intram ecclesiae* in the context of gasparian spirituality has an intercessory role, readily coordinated with the oblation and relational ones outlined above. Here the biblical image of "Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and the sprinkled blood that speaks more eloquently than that of Abel" (Hb. 12:24) is richly evocative. The prayer of the royal priesthood offered in the Church's sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving is joined to the priestly intercession of Christ whose blood guarantees access to the throne of mercy; the co-mediation of Christ's members which they exercise in the liturgy enables the faithful to fulfill this aspect of their priestly mission on behalf of the Church and world.<sup>66</sup>

Within a spirituality whose center is the blood of Christ the Priest, it is not difficult then to see how the "sacral" aspect of the laity's priestly mission can find particular meaning and expression. Insofar as the liturgy is the memorial of redemption in the paschal mystery--of which the blood of Christ is an expressive sign--any liturgical celebration finds an immediate reference to this spirituality; indeed, active and conscious participation in the liturgy is the fundamental, indispensable locus of its concrete manifestation.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>J. Cervera, "Sangue di Cristo e vita di comunione," *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo e l'esperienza cristiana*, vol. I, 38. Cf. Dalmizion Mongillo, "Il sangue di Cristo e la crescita della comunità cristiana" and Vincenzo Lupo, "Il mistero del sangue di Cristo nella esperienza cristiana del popolo di Dio (Linee di una sintesi)," in *ibid.*, 265-76, 447-62, resp.

Although the ecumenical import, surprisingly, does not often appear in the literature as of special significance to this spirituality, it evidently is. The theme of "consanguinity in Christ" arising from membership in the people of the New Covenant, even when communion among them lacks the desired fullness, is clearly applicable in the context of interconfessional relationships.

<sup>66</sup>The intercessory role of the Christian laity is mentioned by SC 53 in relation to the prayer of the faithful during the eucharistic liturgy, and especially in no. 83 with reference to the liturgy of the hours. For the latter as a means to express this aspect of a spirituality of the blood of Christ see Giulio Martelli, "Il Sangue di Cristo nelle 'Preces' della 'Liturgia Horarum'," *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo e l'esperienza cristiana*, vol. I, 339-60.

<sup>67</sup>See the contributions of Manlio Sodi, "Eucaristia e Sangue di Cristo"; Armando Cuva, "Sangue di Cristo e liturgia delle ore"; Achille Triacca, "Sangue di Cristo e anno liturgico," and Giulio Martelli, "Valore esemplare del Sangue di Cristo nella liturgia," in *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo nella liturgia e nella pietà popolare*, vol. I, 51-

The priestly mission *ad extram ecclesiae*

As noted previously, the mission of the laity is not only directed inward toward the realm of the Church but has a distinctive orientation to the temporal order in conformity with the elements of integration and secularity. Antonio Mirrales observes how this inward-outward aspect of lay mission represents a dialectic respecting both the ecclesial commitments of the laity as well as their specific vocation to be present in the world:

. . .the exercise of the triple office [of Christ] by the lay faithful is not something which terminates in external activity, but represents life, within the Church, of the Christian who dwells in the world. Still, [this exercise] does not remain confined to the interior of the ecclesial community, within the limits of intraecclesial service, but is extended toward temporal activities and the multiple relationships of human society. Nor is it something which simply flows into a Christian's individual works that leaven civil society, but it also find a field of action in service within the ecclesial community.<sup>68</sup>

It could never be sufficient then to speak of the priestly mission of the laity only in terms of liturgical and intraecclesial roles; the mission on behalf of the Church is but one side of a reality that must be reciprocated by a priestly service in which the lay faithful extend to their proper sphere of influence a "worldly" significance to their sacrifice, communion, and intercession. In the words of the Council, "worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God."<sup>69</sup>

As Fernando Ocáriz further states:

This "consecration of the world to God" affirmed as the priestly mission of the laity does not mean a "sacralization of the world" leading to the denial of the substance and autonomy of temporal realities: nothing is further from the conciliar doctrine. It means--due to the essential connection between priesthood and sacrifice--that the world, through the activity of the lay faithful, becomes "material" offered *efficaciously* to God in adoration, expiation, thanksgiving and petition, such that earthly realities are ordered to the proper perfection of their nature according to the divine design. Yet it is theologically undeniable that this activity of the faithful is efficacious--for the sanctification and for the ordering of the world to God--to the extent of its effective union with the sacrifice of Christ.<sup>70</sup>

It is not difficult to see how the priestly mission of the laity can readily attain such worldly efficacy when it is inspired by Christ's sacrifice symbolized in

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68, 85-98, 99-140, 163-8, resp.

<sup>68</sup>A. Mirrales, "Prospettiva ministeriale," 63-4.

<sup>69</sup>LG 34.

<sup>70</sup>F. Ocáriz, "La partecipazione dei laici," 16.

the outpouring of his blood for the life of the world. Evoking as it does Christ's work of mediation which has brought about the reconciliation of all things "by the blood of his cross" (Cl. 1:20), a spirituality centered on this symbol would naturally be drawn to whatever activity favors and promotes human solidarity; thus engaged, its practitioners would find ample scope for the exercise of their priestly service on behalf of the world's consecration and ordering to God.

Robert Schreiter has identified this aspect of a spirituality of the blood of Christ as being especially important today, rooting his thesis in the profoundly relational quality of "redemption by the blood of Christ" (Ep. 1:7). He sees this as something which impels Christians to work for the healing of the human community fractured by conflict and division. We conclude this section with his reflection on the biblical images surrounding the blood of Jesus--covenant, cross, and cup--in which he believes the faithful who take seriously their commitment to act as leaven in the world can find special meaning:

In the Blood of the New and Everlasting Covenant, we find the strength to build up and restore the many broken covenants which scar the human family. In that Blood. . .we work to establish communication and dialogue where isolation and hatred have taken root. In the Blood of that Covenant which will only be fully revealed in the Kingdom of Heaven, we struggle now for the justice that marks the presence of God among us.

In the Blood of the Cross, we search for the redemptive moment in the sufferings of the world, and pledge ourselves to walk with those who suffer through the dark valley of their affliction. We seek, too, beneath the cross, to learn of the power and wisdom of God among the poor and the weak. And in accepting the paradox of redemptive suffering through the Blood of the Cross, we grow in our obedience to the ways of God in our world.

In the Blood of the Chalice, we commit ourselves to solidarity [with] those who suffer and hope for a better world. In our celebration of the Eucharist and sharing in the Eucharistic Chalice, we build up the body of Christ for the work of the coming of the Reign of God and its justice.<sup>71</sup>

#### *The Blood of Christ and the Prophetic Mission of the Laity*

The Christian scriptures also speak of the blood of Christ in a kerygmatic context in which themes of proclamation or witness are prominent (cf. Jn. 19:34-35; 1 Cor. 11:26; 1 Jn. 5:7-8; Rv. 12:11, 19:13); other texts speak of the blood of Christian martyrs shed for their witness to Jesus (cf. Rv. 16:6, 17:6, 18:24, 19:2).<sup>72</sup> These texts

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<sup>71</sup>Robert Schreiter, "The Message of Precious Blood of Spirituality Today," in *Precious Blood Spirituality*, 32; cf. his previously cited contribution to the contemporization of this spirituality, *In Water and in Blood*.

<sup>72</sup>See for example the exegesis of the relevant johannine texts in Stanislas Lyonnet, "Il sangue nella trafittura di Gesù: Gv 19,31ss," *Sangue e antropologia*

indicate how the blood of Christ plays a significant part in the Church's preaching; they have an evidential character in particular wherein the blood of Jesus is announced as a "word" witnessing to the truth of Christian assertions about God's saving power at work in the death and resurrection of the redeemer, a power extending into the lives of the faithful.

Closely associated with this testimony to Jesus is the witness of believers who, in the ultimate proof of their conviction, mix their own blood with the blood of the Lamb in hope of final vindication at the eschatological consummation of all things. The Christian is thus a prophet sharing in the witness of Jesus to the Father's love, a love that is stronger than death and which is ultimately victorious over the forces at work in the world hostile to the gospel.

It was noted above how the urgent call by ecclesiastical leadership for a "new (re)-evangelization" has been directed to the laity in a singular way; the point stressed in this section is how the evangelical mission of the lay faithful can derive a powerful resource for both the content of their proclamation, and for their formation in giving testimony, from a spirituality of the blood of Christ: whether they exercise an official ministry of the word *ad intram ecclesiae*, or whether they go about their task of prophetic witness in their daily lives, that is, in the secular environment *ad extram ecclesiae* which is the laity's proper sphere of activity and influence.

The prophetic mission *ad intram ecclesiae*

Among the intraecclesial ministries of evangelization, for instance, the work of catechesis can be enhanced by teachers of the faith sensitized to meanings surrounding "blood of Christ" and who attempt to present the Christian mystery in its light. That the catechetical ministry is worthy of special consideration is indicated by John Paul II in his *Catechesi Tradendae* where he speaks of this service as "an eminent form of the lay apostolate."<sup>73</sup> Likewise in *Christifideles Laici* the pope invites the lay faithful to "offer the very valuable contribution, more necessary than ever, of a systematic work in catechesis."<sup>74</sup> What follows in our treatment of "catechesis" is, in my opinion, applicable to laypersons entrusted with any genuine ministry of evangelization, including parents as the first teachers of

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*biblica*, vol. II, 739-43; Ugo Vanni, "Il Sangue nell'Apocalisse," *Sangue e antropologia biblica*, vol. II, 865-84; Ignace De La Potterie, "Il costato trafitto di Gesù (Gv 19,34): senso rivelatorio e senso sacrificale del suo sangue," *Sangue e antropologia nella Liturgia*, vol. II, 625-49; Carlo Buzzetti, "'Sangue' nell'Apocalisse: semantica e traduzione," *Sangue e antropologia nella teologia medievale*, vol. I, 313-26, as well as the reflections of Francesco Uricchio, "Gesù venuto col sangue rivela l'amore del Padre ed esige, purifica e perfeziona l'amore del cristiano. Riflessioni sulla Ia Lettera di Giovanni," in *Il Sangue che rivela l'amore*, 81-102.

<sup>73</sup>CT 66.

<sup>74</sup>CL 34.

their children, lay missionaries commissioned by the Church, lectors, lay preachers, and the growing number of lay theologians--all of whom are engaged in different ways and at different levels in the prophetic mission of the Church.

Groundbreaking work has been done in this area by the Salesian theologian Cesare Bissoli who initiated the investigation into the historical precedents and contemporary possibilities for such catechesis; he and others have outlined models for a catechesis on the blood of Christ from biblical, liturgical, theological and pedagogical perspectives.<sup>75</sup> Bissoli concludes that, since the blood of Christ occupies a recognizedly central place in the Christian economy in reference to the reality of the person of Christ himself in one of the supreme moments of revelation. . . [it occasions a] motivational centrality. . . reinforced in a certain way by complementary reasons--which may be called the "history of its effects"--that is, the whole patrimony of lived faith and religious culture surrounding "blood of Christ" which throughout twenty centuries has profoundly touched Christian existence and which is therefore impossible to ignore.<sup>76</sup>

Speaking of the training of catechists themselves, Bissoli calls for a formation which strives to convince teachers of the faith that making "blood of Christ" a central feature of the Christian kerygma would restore to it an important yet forgotten content crucial for the new evangelization; he warns, however, that the presentation of this theme must "connect" to the lived experience of people today:

From a lived standpoint "blood shed" comprises a felt experience, a potent symbol which recalls the most fundamental values of life and love (as well as hatred). . . . Whoever is taught to be (or to become once more) deeply human, ought to grasp the disturbing meaning of the figure of Jesus from his "shed blood". On the other hand, one who is exposed to the kerygma of the "blood of Christ" according to the path suggested by the biblical authors, may rediscover and save his or her humanity so exposed to alienation, that is, to the "loss of blood," of truth and of values: something that happens to people even without realizing it.

Thus does the mystery of the "blood of Christ" appear so vital, yet so disturbing--and for this reason so fully congruent with God's purpose and at the same time so consistent with the mystery of humanity.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Cesare Bissoli, "Catechesi e Sangue di Cristo," *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo nella liturgia e nella piet  popolare*, vol. I, 305-34. This preliminary study was followed up by a pastoral convention devotedly entirely to this theme held at the *Centro Studi Sanguis Christi*, December 27-30, 1990 whose *acta* are published in Achille Triacca, ed., *Il Mistero del sangue di Cristo e la catechesi* (Rome: EPUPS, 1991).

<sup>76</sup>C. Bissoli, "Catechesi e Sangue di Cristo," 327-8.

<sup>77</sup>Cesare Bissoli, "Il Sangue di Cristo nella catechesi: Un modello di presentazione ai catechisti," in *Il Mistero del sangue di Cristo e la catechesi*, 493-4. This is not to suggest that presenting the "gospel of the blood of Christ" does not pose

Another relevant area of lay evangelical ministry where the blood of Christ can serve to enhance the content of proclamation and the formation of witnesses concerns the Christian family; as the "domestic Church" the family seems, moreover, to bridge two poles of evangelization: the one seeking to build up the Christian community itself, and the other taking place in the midst of the earthly city to prepare for the coming of the city of God.

Thus the Council, speaking of the evangelical mission of the laity in the ordinary circumstances of daily life, treats first of marriage and family life as "being of special importance in this prophetic office [of the laity]"<sup>78</sup> where "Christian couples are, for each other, for their children and for their relatives, cooperators of grace and witnesses of the faith."<sup>79</sup>

The exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* also draws attention to the Christian family as a believing and evangelizing community whose prophetic ministry contributes to the life and communion of the ecclesial body, and extends its scope to the whole world as well.<sup>80</sup> One comment in particular from this document opens a way to seeing this aspect of the prophetic mission of the laity in light of the spirituality of the blood of Christ: "Particularly today, the Christian family has a special vocation to witness to the paschal covenant of Christ by constantly radiating the joy of love and the certainty of the hope for which it must give an account."<sup>81</sup>

We have seen how from the standpoint of their priestly mission, the sacramental quality of marriage and family life confers on spouses a capacity for mutual sanctification and the offering of existential worship in conjunction with the Church's liturgy; to this is now added a specifically prophetic mission wherein the blood of Christ serves as a compelling sign of the marital covenant in its character as witness to a love that announces the inbreaking of the reign of God.<sup>82</sup>

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serious obstacles. Potential resistances to the image for any number of theological or psychological reasons are not to be underestimated and certainly not ignored. For a treatment of the problem of finding the appropriate language for such a catechesis, see the contribution of Anna Maria Vissani, "Il linguaggio del sangue di Cristo nella catechesi oggi," in *ibid.*, 495-518.

<sup>78</sup>LG 34.

<sup>79</sup>AA 11.

<sup>80</sup>See FC 51-54.

<sup>81</sup>FC 52.

<sup>82</sup>In addition to the study of A. Triacca, "Il Sangue di Cristo: Mistero di alleanza nella vita coniugale," cited above, see also the contribution of Norma Mancini Badiali, "Il Sangue di Cristo nella catechesi della famiglia," in *Il Mistero del Sangue di Cristo e la catechesi*, 551-60 who notes that Christian spouses and families have been encouraged from the earliest centuries to be living witnesses of gospel values as an "expression of the *logos* of God." (551)

The prophetic mission *ad extram ecclesiae*

Christians witness has always found its supreme point of reference in the *martirium Christi*, the ultimate testimony of divine love and mercy accomplished in the paschal mystery of the Lord. From the beginning of the Church's mission, the Christian martyr who sheds his or her blood in testimony to the truth has been seen to exercise the prophetic ministry in the maximum degree; the witness and veneration of the martyrs has possessed, moreover, a constant association with the mystery of the blood of Christ.<sup>83</sup> It would not be anachronistic or extremist to consider this aspect of participation in the prophetic office of Christ something still vital to the Church's proclamation; indeed, a spirituality open to martyrdom continues to have relevance as noted by the Council:

Some Christians have been called from the beginning, and will always be called, to give this greatest testimony of love to all, especially to persecutors. Martyrdom makes the disciple like his master, who willingly accepted death for the salvation of the world, and through it he is conformed to him by the shedding of blood. Therefore the Church considers it the highest gift and supreme test of love. And while it is given to few, all however must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him along the way of the cross amidst the persecutions which the Church never lacks.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>On this aspect of the spirituality of the blood of Christ see Mario Spinelli, "Sangue, martirio e redenzione in Pier Crisologo," in *Sangue e antropologia nella Patristica*, vol. I, 529-46 and the four contributions of Philippe Rukamba, "Il sangue dei martiri in Cipriano di Cartagine"; Ugo Fasola, "Il culto del sangue dei martiri nella chiesa primitiva e deviazioni devozionistiche nell'epoca della riscoperta delle catacombe"; Danilo Mazzoleni, "Il sangue di Cristo nell'epigrafia cristiana greca e latina" and Marcella Patrucco Forlin, "Sangue e martirio nella letteratura del primo monachesimo orientale," in *Sangue e antropologia nella letteratura cristiana*, vol. II, 1083-9; vol. III, 1473-89; vol. III, 1493-1504, and vol. III, 1541-60 resp. See also Lorenzo De Lorenzi, "Sangue dei martiri e remissione dei peccati in Origene" and Ottorino Pasquato, "Il culto al sangue dei martiri e di Cristo nelle omelie sui martiri di Giovanni Crisostomo" in *Sangue e antropologia nella Liturgia*, vol. II, 1101-23 and vol. III, 1197-1229 resp.; Antonio Quacquarelli, "Il battesimo di sangue," in *Sangue e antropologia riti e culto*, vol. II, 1263-75 and Rosario Pacillo, "Il sangue dei martiri e la Chiesa," in *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo e l'esperienza cristiana*, vol. I, 149-220.

<sup>84</sup>LG 42. Cf. *Relatio finalis* of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, B2.: "Evangelization is made by means of witnesses; but a witness testifies, not just by words but by his own life too. We must not forget that the Greek for witness is 'martyrdom' (*martyrion*). In this respect, the older Churches can learn a great deal from the new Churches, from their dynamism, their life, and their witness even to shedding of blood."

It is not difficult to see how a spirituality inspired by the blood of Christ would envision the possibility of martyrdom as the highest form of response to this way of Christian life. In fact, the image of Jesus' blood has found a particular resonance today precisely in those areas of the world where Christians are exposed to mortal danger for their faith, especially when this faith calls them to speak out and work actively for the liberation of those oppressed by systems of political and economic injustice.

A recent document issued by the Holy See acknowledges in this regard the resources of popular piety, linking them with the lay faithful's *sensus fidei*, considered by the Council to be a sign of their share in the prophetic mission of the Church.<sup>85</sup>

The same sense of faith, possessed by the people of God in its hope-filled devotion to the Cross of Jesus, perceives the power contained in the mystery of Christ the Redeemer. Therefore, far from despising or wishing to suppress the forms of popular piety which this devotion assumes, one should take and deepen all its meaning and implications. Here we have a fact of fundamental theological and pastoral significance: it is the poor, the object of God's special love, who understand best and as it were instinctively that the most radical liberation, which is liberation from sin and death, is the liberation accomplished by the Death and Resurrection of Christ.<sup>86</sup>

In addition to the blood of Jesus providing a powerful means for the poor to identify with the God who suffers in solidarity with the weak and marginalized, the same sign provides a strong motive to struggle on behalf of the dignity of the human person wherever this dignity is compromised. Speaking of an experience of inculturation in a Chilean context of this spirituality, which he describes as the "challenge of an incarnational spirituality," Barry Fischer observes that

Going along with the poor in their daily struggle for survival involves accepting the same risks as they and taking the same chances: misunderstanding, harassment, threats, being on the fringe of society, arrests, torture, exile, and even death.

Thus, in the world of the poor the Church "fills up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ." (Col. 1:24). Both the witness and remembrance of today's martyrs generates hope and is the fount of a great spiritual force. It is the blood of hope. As in the primitive Church, "the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians."

But physical martyrdom is not the only sort there is. The Lord calls all to "drink of the chalice," to share daily in the paschal mystery. And, in fact, living our spirituality involves a daily sharing of that cup.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>See LG 35.

<sup>86</sup>Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation*, 22.

<sup>87</sup>Barry Fischer, "Precious Blood Spirituality in a Third World Country," in

Obviously such commitment to the blood of Christ takes its inspiration directly from the "theology of liberation"; Luis Gallo notes the congruence of such a translation of this theology into spirituality precisely because martyrdom lies at the heart of liberationist reflection with its corresponding christology.

The christological approach of liberation theology, for instance, interprets the suffering and death of Jesus of Nazareth as "the result of an unjust decision on the part of those who governed his people. . .the blood of Jesus shed on the cross is the ultimate and highest expression of his commitment on behalf of God's kingdom and, being the same thing, the concrete salvation of human beings, especially of the poor and marginalized."<sup>88</sup>

Such an hermeneutic is readily correlated with a praxis of Christian witness which foresees martyrdom as a real possibility; the blood shed by martyrs for the liberation and full life of the poor expresses in a concrete situation the following of Jesus and through [that blood] a further historical concretization is brought about. What Jesus did in his time, that is, his total and radical self-offering in the cause of the kingdom of God, of which the poor of his day were the privileged destinaries, these men and women do today so that the kingdom might come and they do so with the same sense of priority on behalf of the poor of our era. These people thus give transparent witness to the seriousness with which they have accepted the example given by the "faithful witness" par excellence, Jesus Christ. (Rv. 1:5)<sup>89</sup>

#### *The Blood of Christ and the Royal Mission of the Laity*

Closely related to the priestly and prophetic forms of lay mission which find meaning and impetus from a spirituality centered on the blood of Jesus, is the participation of the laity in the royal office of Christ. Once again, several scriptural texts can be adduced which associate the reign of God which Jesus has inherited, whose authority his disciples share, with the image of his blood (cf. Mt. 26:29; Mk. 14:25; Lk. 22:18; Acts 20:28; Rv. 1:5-6; 5:9-10; 12:11).

These texts, like those previously mentioned, indicate how the action of Christ in the paschal mystery, an action anticipated in the eucharistic cup as a foretaste of the eschatological banquet, has established the reign of God; the "acquisition" of a new priestly and royal people who reign with Jesus in this kingdom has likewise been effected through the redemptive efficacy of the paschal

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*Precious Blood Spirituality*, 54; cf. Anton Loipfinger, "Being Witnesses of the Blood of Christ," *ibid.*, 117-28 and Barry Fischer, *Along the Road Marked by Blood*, C.P.P.S. Resources 9 (Carthagena, Ohio: Messenger Press, 1992).

<sup>88</sup>Luis Gallo, "Il sangue di Cristo nella teologia della liberazione," in *Il Mistero del sangue di Cristo nella catechesi*, 138.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, 143.

event.

Through the blood of the cross the authority of God, and his Anointed over all things has been restored. The faithful obedience of Christians, above all in the face of persecution, makes them sharers in the redeemer's saving work, a sign to a hostile world of the restoration of all things in him; Jesus' followers are promised a share in his victory over the powers of this world when they appear before the throne of God and of the Lamb as co-inheritors of a universal reign. Every intrawordly and intrahistorical triumph over the "world rulers of this present darkness" (Ep. 6:12) through the agency of Christ at work in his mystical body represents an advance of God's reign which is present, yet still to come in its fullness.<sup>90</sup>

The regal mission of the laity, one with their sacerdotal and prophetic role, calls forth a service on behalf of the Church and the world: a service that makes the Church ever more clearly a sign of "the kingdom of Christ already present in mystery,"<sup>91</sup> a sign that "prepares the way for the kingdom of heaven"<sup>92</sup> to be revealed fully at the eschaton.

The Son of Man, who "did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (cf. Mt. 20:28) requires like service from his disciples (cf. Jn. 13:15): one that is rendered not only within the confines of the "royal priesthood" (cf. 1 Pt. 2:9) of the redeemed community, but also in the realm of temporal realities not yet subject to the freedom of the children of God: the "world" which groans in labor pains to be set free from slavery to corruption (cf. Rm. 8:20-22).

Here especially, the laity, in accord with the element of secularity, are called to undertake a mission of service for the good of all humanity redeemed by the blood of Christ: "It could not be otherwise: those who, during the time of the Church, make the regality of Christ visible, sharing [his royal office] in different ways, must do as he did: a reign, though, which truly means to serve. . . a service not derived from a condition of servitude, but of liberty: the liberty of charity

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<sup>90</sup>See the articles of U. Vanni, "Il sangue nell'Apocalisse," and especially "Il sacerdozio dei cristiani e il sangue di Cristo nell'Apocalisse" where he observes: "The priesthood, as it appears in the Book of Revelation, is an active role in the kingdom which Christians must exercise in history, having been once and for all liberated by the action of Christ who has made them a kingdom. . . .The influence of the blood of Christ on this priesthood appears not only as something that removes obstacles [e.g. of sin], but above all as a dynamic potential in a positive sense. . . .Inspired and enabled by the vital dynamic found precisely in the blood of Christ, Christians already bring the kingdom of God about on earth. They mediate thus between the plan of God and the reality of history." (861)

<sup>91</sup>LG 3.

<sup>92</sup>GS 38.

itself."<sup>93</sup>

For the lay faithful, as for all Christians, this royal mission demands that they engage in a struggle for interior freedom whereby, in the power communicated by Christ to his disciples, "they may be constituted in royal liberty and, by self-abnegation of a holy life, overcome the reign of sin in themselves."<sup>94</sup> As shown in Chapter 3, the spirituality of the blood of Christ taught by Gaspar Del Bufalo provides a very strong impetus to the acquisition of such freedom. As an image and agent of purification, the blood of Jesus calls forth an asceticism whose aim is the spiritual liberty of those who find their righteousness in the blood which justifies and cleanses from all sin (cf. Rm. 3:23-26; 1 Jn. 1:7).

The royal mission *ad intram ecclesiae*

In terms of the ecclesial community, the royal ministry of the laity is exercised wherever they contribute to the upbuilding of the Church as a servant community; it is a fundamental principle of ecclesial life that the various ministries, offices and charisms operative in the Church--whether originating from the sacraments of initiation, from sacramental marriage, or from sacramental ordination--are a "participation in Jesus Christ's own ministry as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. . .the humble servant who gives himself without reserve for the salvation of all. . . ."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>F. Ocariz, "La partecipazione dei laici alla missione della Chiesa," 24.

<sup>94</sup>LG 36. When referring to the "kingly function of the laity", Congar, *Lay People*, 226, speaks of "kingship over self" by which the faithful follower of Jesus "shares in the kingship and holiness of his Head. . .by submission to and union with God's will, by adjusting himself to the divine purpose for us, for our brethren and for the world."

In the same place, Congar also speaks of a "kingship over the world" whereby the Christian adopts a dual stance of "engagement" in the work of the world as a right and duty inherent in the human condition, and of "refusal" to place all hope in the present order, which remains in many ways under the influence of the "prince of this world," and therefore cannot be approached in an entirely positive fashion by the Christian.

This constitutes the Christian's "transcendence and immanence to the world, his life lived in accordance with the absolute value of eschatology but in conditions relative to history. He is bound to avoid becoming a slave to the world; but he has a duty to make use of the world, for the accomplishment of God's will therein, to serve it....Accordingly, transcendence and engagement together make up the Christian's condition. . .they are two aspects of his kingly position, and give rise to the two attitudes that conscience prompts him to adopt--engagement and refusal." (*ibid.*, 237)

<sup>95</sup>CL 21.

Those intraecclesial ministries of service which after the Council have been more and more acknowledged as belonging rightfully to the laity, tasks not exclusively reserved to the ordained, include broader liturgical roles (where the regal function of the laity is seen relative to priestly service); evangelical ministries (where the regal function is seen relative to prophetic service); and pastoral ministries (where the regal function has a distinctive character of its own). This progression from "effective involvement of the lay faithful in the liturgical action to that of announcing the word of God [to] pastoral care" has been defined by *Christi-fideles Laici* as "natural".<sup>96</sup>

Whereas the question about pastoral roles properly speaking for the laity remains a subject of debate, especially regarding their precise share in the "power of governance" within the Church vis a vis hierarchical authority,<sup>97</sup> it seems that the accent, in light of conciliar theology, should always remain on service: the only "power" operative in "the church of God that he acquired with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

This lucan text is sufficient to see how a spirituality of the blood of Christ can inform any exercise of pastoral service in the Church, clerical or lay, indicating in striking language the standard by which any genuine authority among the people of God is to be judged. Moreover, since the "origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of the crucified Jesus,"<sup>98</sup> any service rendered in virtue of the royal office of Christ necessarily finds its meaning and vitality in relation to this image of life outpoured for others.

The royal mission *ad extram ecclesiae*

As with priestly and prophetic exercises of lay mission that are placed more immediately at the service of the body of Christ, there exist others which open out onto the world, in which the Church exists as "the seed and the beginning"<sup>99</sup> of the

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<sup>96</sup>CL 23. A. Miralles, "Prospettiva ministeriale," 66-9 outlines the offices and ministries which current ecclesiastical legislation opens to the laity including ones strictly pastoral in nature, e.g. judge on a diocesan marriage tribunal, and not primarily liturgical (e.g. the lectorate) or evangelical (e.g. catechist) in scope.

<sup>97</sup>See Congar's discussion of "kingship of power" in *Lay People*, 243-70, which though outdated in some ways, is still relevant in others. For example, the preconiliar debate--of which Congar's study is perhaps the best example--seemed to focus exclusively on questions about lay "authority" in the Church, resulting in the need, evident in Congar, to consider the "kingly function of the laity" separately from their "apostolic function". The current debate does not always seem to have overcome this preoccupation, at the expense of disallowing the laity to exercise pastoral roles which there is no sound theological reason to prohibit.

<sup>98</sup>LG 3.

<sup>99</sup>LG 5.

reign of God.

Openness to the world was a hallmark of the Council whose ethos stimulated a renewed sense of creation's value and of human efforts to reclaim every sector of God's handiwork for the coming kingdom. As repeatedly emphasized in the magisterial and theological texts examined by this thesis: One can never think that the different ministries, offices, and functions entrusted to the laity in the liturgy, the transmission of the faith, and the pastoral structures of the Church exhaust the essential core of responsible acceptance of their proper role in the mission of the Church, nor of realizing their availability to serve after the example of the redemptive self-giving of Christ. Much vaster is the field outside these intraecclesial functions in which the lay faithful can fulfill their active role in the one mission of the Church.<sup>100</sup>

Among the tasks which the laity in their secular character perform by way of participation in the royal office of Christ, a number are specifically receptive to inspiration by a spirituality of the blood of Christ: the great variety of examples listed in a certain priority by ecclesiastical documents are often, explicitly or implicitly, linked to the image of the blood of Christ and its attendant themes.

The first among these, the one from which the others seems to be derived, is any effort on behalf of the dignity of the human person, a dignity manifested in all its radiance when the person's origin and destiny are considered: created by God's image and likeness as well as redeemed by the most precious blood of Christ, the person is called to be a "child in the Son" and a living temple of the Spirit, destined for the eternal life of blessed communion with God. For this reason every violation of the personal dignity of the human being cries out in vengeance to God and is an offense against the Creator of the individual.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>A. Miralles, "Prospettiva ministeriale," 67.

<sup>101</sup>CL 37. When Hb. 12:24 compares Jesus' blood with that of Abel, the first victim of a "violation of the personal dignity of the human being" whose blood cried out to God from the earth for "vengeance" (cf. Gn. 4:10), this should, in keeping with the tenor of the epistle, not to mention the papal document, be understood more as redress than revenge. That is to say, the restoration of an order violated, a remedy consonant with our justification by Jesus' blood in which we are saved from God's "wrath" (cf. Rm. 5:9). This is "reparation" in the original sense of the word: a "repairing" motivated by the merciful compassion of God whose righteousness is proved apart from the strict requirements of justice. In putting Jesus forth as an expiation for all people "by his blood" (Rm. 3:25), an expiation that includes both victim and oppressor since "all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God" (Rm. 3:23), vengeance now has meaning in terms of restoring broken relationships.

The traditional practice of "making expiation" for human sinfulness associated with the devotions to the precious blood and the sacred heart might

A Christian mission in defense of human dignity, a dignity whose value is seen in "the great price" (1 Cor. 6:20) by which the Lamb of God renewed the divine image in humanity (cf. 1 Pt. 1:19) finds then in gasparian spirituality a strong motivation to pursue this mission's many avenues.

These paths of concern to which reflection on the blood of Christ leads include:

--any action in defense of human life: life held sacred in light of the scriptural injunction "blood is life" (Deut. 12:23) and in view of the "blood of the Son of Man" (cf. Jn. 6:53)--a title expressing Jesus' utter solidarity with the human family, a "consanguinity" that makes all human blood "precious" in his own;<sup>102</sup>

--the promotion of human equality and an inclusive community where no one is discriminated against on any basis, service which points toward the coming reign of God: a universal kingdom which Jesus has purchased for God with his blood and that will include "those from every tribe and tongue, people and nation. [Whom the Lamb has] made a kingdom and priests for our God, and [who] will reign on the earth" (Rv. 5:9; cf. also Rv. 7:9 with its vision of a great multitude "from every nation, race, people and tongue");<sup>103</sup>

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find here a more sound theological and pastoral basis. The image of Jesus' blood, often associated in the past with themes of divine "appeasement" and "satisfaction" (cf. the concluding prayer of the official Litany of the Precious Blood where God is spoken of as wishing to be placated by the blood of his Son: *eius Sanguine placari voluisti*) might be understood today in light of the call to work for justice, the reordering of human society to reflect the reordered relationship of humanity with God achieved in the mystery of Jesus' blood. Cf. R. Schreiter, *In Water and in Blood*, 71-3.

<sup>102</sup>The Council, in GS 27, laid before the Church the immense field wherein the dignity of human life is degraded: "The varieties of crime are numerous: all offenses against life itself, such as murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia and wilful suicide; all violations of the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, physical and mental torture, undue psychological pressures; all offenses against human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, degrading working conditions where men are treated as mere tools for profit rather than free and responsible persons: all these and the like are criminal: they poison civilization; and they debase the perpetrators more than the victims and militate against the honor of the creator." CL 38, under the rubric "respecting the inviolable right to life", notes new areas of concern that have arisen since the Council mentioning, among others, the questions raised by developments in technology, especially biological and medical science.

<sup>103</sup>Cf. SRS 40: "One's neighbor is then not only a human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with everyone else, but becomes the living

--the defense of human conscience whether in terms of its inviolability or its authentic formation, for the human conscience as the person's "most secret core, and his sanctuary,"<sup>104</sup> finds in the blood of Christ the source of that cleansing "from dead works to worship the living God" made possible by his unblemished self-offering (cf. Hb. 9:14);<sup>105</sup>

--related efforts on behalf of human freedom, efforts that find conviction and motivation in the belief that Christ "has freed us from our sins by his blood" (Rv. 1:5) thereby bringing about a new relationship with God while having a corresponding effect on interpersonal and social relationships. The biblical designation of this new relationship as "justice"--mentioned by Paul in connection with the blood of Jesus--is at the same time the basis for right relationships among people; this insight gives rise to the "social commitment" which emerges from a spirituality of the blood of Christ, intent on hastening the day of triumph over the forces of oppression when those who have shared in the persecution of the Lamb and "washed their robes in [his] blood. . . will not hunger or thirst anymore, nor will the sun or any heat strike them." (Rv. 7:14; cf. Rv. 18:11ff. which in a similar context speaks of the victory of the faithful over those intent only on their own wealth and profit at others' expense);<sup>106</sup>

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image of God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit. One's neighbor must therefore be loved, even if an enemy, with the same love with which the Lord loves him or her. . . ." and *CL* 37: "The dignity of the human person constitutes the foundation of the equality of all people among themselves. As a result, all forms of discrimination are totally unacceptable especially those forms which unfortunately continue to divide and degrade the human family: from those based on race or economics to those social and cultural, from political to geographic, etc."

<sup>104</sup>GS 16.

<sup>105</sup>Cf. the encyclical letter of John Paul II, *Dominum et vivificantem*, 42, which speaks of conscience as a fundamental determinant of the dignity of the human person, and of the blood of Jesus as the purifying agent of conscience which "opens to the Holy Spirit the door into man's inmost being. . . ."

<sup>106</sup>Cf. Giulio Martelli, "Spiritualità e Sangue di Cristo," *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo nella liturgia e nella pietà popolare*, 490: "In the blood shed by Christ, a man rejected by humanity and put to death, sin is revealed in its reality: evil in relationships, attacks on the human being, and thus on God. But precisely because of this spilled blood salvation paradoxically comes about, as a 'new' capacity to live in relationships of justice and love.

On the cross Christ endures injustice for the coming of justice; he takes sin upon himself to make love abound, following the logic of forgiveness. He, the totally 'just,' renounces justice to enter with us into a relationship of love and restore to us the ability to love freely as God himself loves. Forgiving us, Christ recreates us in justice, in our dignity as the image of God, and makes us attain the

--activity on behalf of peace, the fruit of justice, which invites people to be "transferred" from a hostile world subject to the "dominions, principalities, or powers" of the present age into "the kingdom of God's beloved Son" who has made "peace by the blood of his cross (Cl. 1:13,16,20): Christ who "is our peace," breaking down "the dividing wall of enmity" between estranged people by his blood (cf. Ep. 2:13-14);<sup>107</sup>

--charitable service, especially to the marginalized and those on the fringes of society who suffer from the neglect and scorn of others, as a sign of solidarity with Jesus who "suffered outside the camp, to consecrate the people by his own blood" (Hb. 13:12);<sup>108</sup>

--finally, participation in the Church's mission *ad gentes* is given impetus by this spirituality acknowledging as it does that Jesus' blood was "shed for many" (Mk. 14:24), a spirituality that cannot remain, therefore, indifferent to those who "like us have been redeemed by the blood of Christ but who live in ignorance of the love of God."<sup>109</sup>

All such royal service undertaken by the lay faithful as a sign of the coming reign of God receives a specific impulse from the biblical meanings surrounding the blood of Christ. And although "the Church well knows that no temporal achievement is to be identified with the Kingdom of God, but that all such achievements simply reflect and in a sense anticipate the glory of the Kingdom,"<sup>110</sup> participation in the royal office of Christ nevertheless imposes an obligation to prepare the way for the kingdom's coming--however imperfect and limited such efforts are bound to be.

It is precisely this "eschatological reservation" which acknowledges the provisional nature of any intraworldly undertaking to which the spirituality of the blood of Christ lends particular conviction. For the sign of Jesus' blood, shed in weakness and limitation, is a constant reminder that Christian service will become

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love for which we were created.

--The 'spiritual' person today is one who has a sense of history. . . .He or she explains the present in terms of the future like the prophet intent on the plan of God--which will be fulfilled at the wedding banquet of the Lamb: . . .the moment at which history arrives at the decisive and definitive stage of the 'new and eternal covenant' in the blood of Jesus."

<sup>107</sup>Cf. GS, Chapter V; SRS 39; CL 42.

<sup>108</sup>Cf. AA 8 and CL 41: "Through charity toward's one neighbor, the lay faithful exercise and manifest their participation in the kingship of Christ, that is, in the power of the Son of Man who 'came not to be served but to serve' (Mk. 10:45). They live and manifest such a kingship in a most simple yet exalted manner, possible for everyone at all times. . . ."

<sup>109</sup>RM 86; see nos. 71-74 for an insistent appeal that the lay faithful take an active part in the universal mission of the Church.

<sup>110</sup>SRS 48.

"fruit that will remain" (Jn. 15:16) only if it is subject to the transforming power of God.

The Christian who contemplates the victorious Lamb who even in glory appears "to have been slain" (Rv. 5:6), knows that the imperfect works done here for the sake of the kingdom must likewise await a perfection that lies outside this present age, and even then will bear the marks of earthly struggle. He or she is subject to the same "law" of the paschal mystery as the One who first passed over from death to life, so that "the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning" and "no human being might boast before God" (1 Cor. 1:17,29).<sup>111</sup> Like the blood poured out in the poverty of Jesus' humanity, now signified in the "poverty" of the eucharist, Christian *diakonia*, when moved to action by this blood, can never be more than "eucharistic" service which in its many forms proclaims the Lord's death "until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26).<sup>112</sup>

Thus the royal mission of the laity, inseparable from its priestly and prophetic expressions as a share in the one mission of the Church, is essentially a task of mediation: occurring between the fullness of the kingdom present in the person of Jesus in virtue of the paschal mystery, and the extension of that fullness to all of creation at the consummation of history; a co-mediation with "the one mediator between God and the human race" (1 Tm. 2:5) which the Church exercises in union with its Head as the "fullness of him who fills all things" (Ep. 1:23).

This mediation often takes place in an atmosphere of resistance and hostility on the part of those "powers" at work in the members of the Church still subject to

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<sup>111</sup>Cf. GS 39: "When we have spread on earth the fruits of our nature and our enterprise--human dignity, brotherly communion, and freedom--according to the command of the Lord and in his Spirit, we will find them once again, cleansed this time from the stain of sin, illuminated and transfigured, when Christ presents to his Father an eternal and universal kingdom 'of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace.' Here on earth the kingdom is mysteriously present; when the Lord comes it will enter into its perfection."

From all that has been said in this chapter and elsewhere in this thesis, it is not hard to imagine the agency of the blood of Christ in this final process of cleansing, illuminating, and transfiguring--hence, giving this spirituality an undeniably eschatological orientation in line with the whole of Christian life and faith.

<sup>112</sup>Cf. SRS 48: "The goods of this world and the work of our hands--the bread and wine--serve for the coming of the *definitive Kingdom*, since the Lord, through his Spirit, takes them up into himself to the Father and to offer us with himself in the renewal of his one Sacrifice, which anticipates God's Kingdom and proclaims its final coming....All of us who take part in the Eucharist are called to discover, through this Sacrament, the profound *meaning* of our actions in the world. . . ."

the "law of sin" (Rm. 7:25) and in the world yet subject to "the rulers of this present darkness" (Eh. 6:12)--powers that militate against the kingdom's arrival but which are threatened with defeat by its imminence.

A spirituality of the blood of Christ inspires active resistance to such powers both in the struggle against evil lying in one's heart, and in the struggle against the evil at work in human society: a struggle against sin and the structures of sin which if necessary resists "to the point of blood" (Hb. 12:4). All in imitation of the One who laid waste sin's power by his victorious death and resurrection.

It appears then that the forms of Christian mission to which the gasparian charism gave birth in the last century though bound to the historical and cultural context in which Gaspar Del Bufalo lived, admit of a wide-ranging contemporization fully in line with the conciliar renewal. This chapter has indicated the directions such an *aggiornamento* might take in a specifically lay adaptation of the charism. It has done so in accordance with the elements of lay spirituality treated in the first chapter of the thesis, above all the element of mission, but secularity and integration as well.

In emphasizing, moreover, the shape of this adaptation in terms of gasparian spirituality's center, viz. commitment to the blood of Christ, Gaspar's immediate influence on the clerical state with its particular call to Christian mission need not be considered the only possible way for his charism to contribute to the life of the Church and world today. By portraying the relevance of the charism's unifying center relative to lay forms of Christian mission, this chapter has hopefully advanced considerably the thesis that the spirituality of Gaspar Del Bufalo truly lies "at the heart of the Christian life." Before treating the gasparian charism's third constitutive element however, an excursus to this chapter's treatment of gasparian mission is called for, an excursus which helps further an appreciation of Gaspar's balanced spirituality, one that is thoroughly apostolic in character, but no less rooted on that account in contemplation.

### Excursus: Contemplation and Action in St. Gaspar Del Bufalo

This excursus treats of a persistent theme in the *Writings of the Founder*: the relationship between action and contemplation in the Christian life. An appreciation of this theme is indispensable for seeing a Christian mission inspired by the gasparian charism not as a form of mere "activism" but as deeply rooted in the contemplative aspect of Christian life--a dimension which for Gaspar always has the blood of Christ in view. What follows, therefore, serves to bring the points raised in the excursus at the end of the previous chapter concerning the perfection of the apostolic life into concrete relationship with this chapter's discussion of Christian mission. As before, the excursus again corroborates gasparian teaching with magisterial and theological reflection on the topic. Hans Urs von Balthasar serves once more as guide owing to his characteristic insistence on the centrality of contemplation for Christian existence.<sup>113</sup>

The principal witnesses at the founder's beatification processes, among whom are Biagio Valentini, Gaspar's spiritual director after the death of Albertini and Gaspar's first successor as moderator general of the CPPS; Giovanni Merlini, Gaspar's confidante, secretary general, and second successor; and St. Vincent Pallotti, founder of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, longstanding friend and confessor of St. Gaspar who, like Merlini, was present at the founder's death. Each of these witnesses testify to the place of prayer and contemplation in Gaspar's personal spirituality.

To begin with, Valentini notes how, especially "when [Gaspar] considered the mystery of the most precious blood, his mind seemed completely absorbed in God as though ecstatic in contemplation."<sup>114</sup> To this observation Gaspar's spiritual director--himself considered at the time to be the most learned man in Rome in matters of ascetical theology--<sup>115</sup> adds the opinion that the founder was endowed

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<sup>113</sup>This is not to give undue emphasis to the antinomies which are often placed between Christian action and contemplation: ". . .the antithesis between action and contemplation does not belong to the deeper levels of philosophical or theological speculation. . .The antithesis is, in fact, on a more superficial level, that of daily life, in which the two forms, that of external activity and that of the spiritual attitude which it, at its best, presupposes, can be clearly distinguished. On this level, action means simply external activity, in fact activity restricted to meeting the needs of the present life, where the spirit has to serve external aims and purposes that will not be present in the life to come. Contemplation, on the other hand, is occupation with the truth for its own sake, and insofar as it is beyond time; ultimately divine truth and everything that stands in relation to it." (Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology I*, 227).

<sup>114</sup>B. Valentini, *Gaspare del Bufalo: Quasi un oracolo divino*, 232.

<sup>115</sup>See Enrico Rizzoli, *Brevi cenni sulla vita e le virtù di alcuni membri della Congregazione del Prezioso Sangue* (Frosinone, 1880), 61.

with the gift of infused contemplation "at least in some degree"<sup>116</sup> even from childhood. As evidence Valentini cites a number of occasions in which Gaspar was seen so rapt in prayer, often in the presence of the blessed sacrament, that he was oblivious to his surroundings with even his external appearance changed. He frequently had to be roused from such prayer by others, which he always left willingly and with "indifference,"<sup>117</sup> especially if some ministerial commitment was pending, while others believed his ministry to have been notably enhanced by his previous experience in prayer.

Merlini, whose judgment is especially weighty given his studied observation of the founder's way of life from the time of his first encounter with Gaspar in 1820, reports that Gaspar "applied himself continually to prayer"<sup>118</sup> such that his life could be considered a "life of prayer."<sup>119</sup> In addition to frequent vocal prayer, including a strict observance of the liturgy of the hours, Merlini attests that

. . . [Gaspar] applied himself moreover to meditation. He attended as much as possible the meditation prescribed by our rule whenever he was in one of our houses. If he found himself occupied by something else, he would say to me that he would have to make it up, since he had to look after business matters. He wrote one time to Cristaldi: "I go about stealing time in order to make my usual meditation." I noticed how he spent the night in meditation, given that he slept very little; he told me once how he spent entire nights without being able to close an eye. I, as well as some of my companions, saw how at times he would withdraw either to the choir stalls or to the chapel; I surprised him once in front of the altar of our Lady in Albano. In Giano one day, during the time of retreat, I saw him praying before the blessed sacrament. He told me he was unhappy that I discovered him even though that was not my intention. Such was his way: to seek hiddenness as much as possible. When travelling we would be going along from time to time saying our prayers, yet he would not allow himself or us to omit the prescribed meditation, over and beyond the thoughts of God in which he was already engaged.

. . . You could tell how much his mind was raised to God by his external recollection and personal demeanor. From this alone you could argue not only on behalf of his perseverance in prayer but also his fervor in applying himself to it. He wished to have even more time for prayer and he used to say to those who would inquire how great was his desire to communicate with God in prayer.<sup>120</sup>

On this last point about Gaspar's desire to devote himself even more to

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<sup>116</sup>B. Valentini, *Gaspare Del Bufalo: Quasi un Oracolo*, 270.

<sup>117</sup>*Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>118</sup>G. Merlini, *Gaspare del Bufalo: un santo scruta un santo*, 429.

<sup>119</sup>*Ibid.*, 451.

<sup>120</sup>*Ibid.*, 452-3.

prayer--a desire often impeded by his apostolic and community commitments--Merlini adds how

. . .since [Gaspar] was dedicated to an active life he could not have a determined time for prayer; he did, however, make up for this as best he could, especially at night, as I have said elsewhere. He sacrificed to God the desire he had for prayer when he could not attend to it as he wished.

. . .He sometimes let me know of his desire to give himself to prayer, indicating how God kept him occupied with other matters and did not give him the leisure for it. To Maria Nazzarena, a Poor Clare of Piperno, he wrote on December 18, 1830: "I need special prayers for a retreat that I have to give for Christmas as well as for some business at my desk, that God might give me physical and moral strength; also so that, in worrying about others, I might not neglect myself. God gives me a great desire for prayer, but then I cannot devote the time to it that I would like. You make it up for me."<sup>121</sup>

Finally, the testimony of Vincent Pallotti is relevant not only because of his cordial friendship with the founder but also for his reputation as a master of spirituality, something which gives his deposition, according to Beniamino Conti, the character of "a profound and systematic analysis of Gaspar's holiness. . .almost an ascetic treatise."<sup>122</sup>

Regarding the founder's dedication to prayer, Pallotti tells how

. . .in the virtue of practicing meditation the Servant of God was so filled by God and so profited from what came to him, whether as a gift or from habitual practice, that his life in its distinctive characteristic was a life of meditation. Since, as I knew him, he was always zealous in thorough dedication to the missions and retreats he gave. I also knew him to be full of true zeal whereby he was moved to preach and have people meditate on eternal truths not for appearance's sake but out of commitment to the evangelical ministry and out of a genuine and heartfelt religious sentiment. He sought nothing else in preaching these truths but the greater glory of God--something which cannot be done, or better yet, cannot exist, in an evangelist if he is not disposed to such preaching both through private

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<sup>121</sup>*Ibid.*, 610-11. Cf. the following complaint to the religious Maria Giuseppa Pitorri: "My [duties] are so many and varied, so insistent and regular, so imposing and pressing, that they require special strength of body and spirit. I feel within myself a constant battle, so to speak, between Martha and Magdalene (sic); I try to unite them, but God knows how! What I mean is that I have to steal time for prayer, yet my spirit desires more; and in such wise that I wish my burdens were lighter so as to have a more ordered, quiet, and routine life. Still, if God wishes to lead me along this path lined with thorns, I am ready." (*Ep. IX*, undated, n. 27SA, 162-3; cf. nos. 36 SA, 39SA and 40SA, 165-6.)

<sup>122</sup>In V. Pallotti, *Gaspare del Bufalo: come l'ho conosciuto*, vii.

meditation and the use of every other means which orders and facilitates the soul to a life of meditation. All of which makes me say that his life was, by way of a distinctive characteristic, a life of meditation.<sup>123</sup>

Knowing the opinion of Valentini that Gaspar at least occasionally had "some degree of infused contemplation," Pallotti, lacking the privileged insight of the founder's director, held for his part that

. . . [Gaspar] had at times the exercise of at least acquired contemplation, a judgment I formed on the basis of knowing him to be carefully enlightened in the knowledge of Sacred Scripture; from knowing his life to be composed in God even in the midst of tribulations; how he persevered with love and strength in his evangelical endeavors, in the face of persecutions and the many difficulties he encountered--something which is uniformly and consistently found in this life only by reason of the consolation meditation brings, and when one is sustained moreover by the benefits of acquired contemplation.<sup>124</sup>

These statements make it clear that, despite the prodigious activity in which Gaspar was continually involved--both in terms of ministerial commitments and in matters concerning the welfare of his nascent community--his regard for a life of intense prayer was in no way diminished.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, he and others attributed the success of these undertakings directly to the maintenance of a regular life of prayer. When through no fault of his own, the opportunity for such was thwarted, at least the desire for prayer remained if not the actual practice, together with regret over the inability to satisfy his longing.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*, 31-2.

<sup>124</sup>*Ibid.*, 34. Cf. also 175: ". . . the kind of life he led was such that I can rightly say the time he had free from the works of the ministry he spent as much as possible in mental and vocal prayer, since I saw him as a man always disposed to pray with his heart and mind raised to God."

<sup>125</sup>We referred in the Introduction to the lists of ministries from the years 1808-1837 compiled by B. Conti in *Il metodo delle missioni*, xiii-xxvii, where 312 distinct preaching engagements undertaken by the founder are reported, ranging from a day's duration to several weeks'. In addition to his apostolic works, evidence of Gaspar's indefatigable activity is found in his voluminous correspondence much of which was occasioned by the demands made on him as founder of a religious institute: all of which give evidence of his being a man of extraordinary practical and organizational ability.

<sup>126</sup>Cf. Balthasar, *Explorations I*, 237-8: "While the Christian life ostensibly consists in alternate periods of action and contemplation, its aim should be to make the two interpenetrate more and more. With the saints they were no longer distinguishable. The saint in his activities can be in a perfect state of contempla-

This insistence on a well-regulated and consistent prayer life was not, however, something the founder demanded only of himself or of his confrères in the institute. While he certainly urged the latter to find in the midst of activity moments for prayerful recollection, he was no less concerned for others' commitment to a life of prayer. So in addition to ensuring the missionaries' spiritual development through the practices outlined in the rule (which included daily periods of private and communal meditation, a monthly day of recollection, and the annual community retreat) Gaspar also sought

. . .to call people of every class to meditation on the eternal truths: the diocesan clergy along with seminarians, noblemen and women, consecrated virgins in the various convents, young people of both sexes in their different locales, common people, prisoners, even university students with their challenging disposition. Such was the esteem in which the Servant of God held the privilege of meditating on, and having others meditate on, the eternal truths and the ineffable treasures of the mysteries of infinite love. . . .<sup>127</sup>

It comes as no surprise then that one finds in the *Writings of the Founder* numerous and emphatic statements concerning the reciprocity between the interior life of prayer and the exterior activity of the Christian. Especially in the circular letters prepared for the annual community retreat, Gaspar repeatedly stresses the point that personal prayer and the other means of holiness are oriented toward mission, with the former serving as the indispensable stimulus and foundation for the latter.

Typical is the following affirmation:<sup>128</sup>

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tion. . . .Furthermore he does not himself decide the extent of his action and of his contemplation, so as not to incur the risk of losing his contemplation in an excess of action; nor does he consider that intensification of action always assures him a corresponding advance in contemplation. He is always conscious that the [ignatian] formula *in actione contemplativus* itself presupposes the ancient patristic and thomistic *ex abundantia contemplationis activus*." See SF XVB, fol. 410 where Gaspar refers to the ignatian maxim that "to leave God for God, which is to say, our contemplation of him for the sake of our neighbor's conversion, is a loss that means great gain; one can attend to others without leaving one's focus on God."

<sup>127</sup>V. Pallotti, *Gaspare Del Bufalo: Come l'ho conosciuto*, 33. Merlini notes how the founder also wished the clerical members of the community "to teach the lay brothers a practical method of meditation. Having himself adopted the life of prayer he desired it for others as well." (*Gaspare Del Bufalo: Un santo scruta in santo*, 453.) The role of these members of the community as the original protagonists of a lay gasparian spirituality is described further in the next chapter.

<sup>128</sup>Even if the following statements are directed mostly to the members of his community, given Pallotti's observation above, it can safely be maintained that

A missionary must be a mystic in his own room, and a vigorous laborer in the field. Let him unite the interior life with the exterior and live in harmony with God. In other words, the interior life is the basis upon which the exterior life builds. Lack of interior life deprives the edifice of its foundation. If the foundation is not firm, the exterior edifice cannot be erected in keeping with the divine Will.<sup>129</sup>

In another place he writes:

It cannot be denied that the exterior life, to be regulated and maintained, requires the cultivation of the interior life. The resulting zeal and fire of charity for the welfare of souls will be in proportion to the effort that we expend in submerging ourselves in that work of renewal.<sup>130</sup>

In the letter written for the retreat of 1829 Gaspar speaks of obstacles to his missionaries' walking in "the ways of the Lord," the last being

. . .lack of prayer, by which God bestows his light on us and the soul acquires heavenly wisdom. . . .in meditating on divine things our hearts will remain like

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Gaspar's views are readily applied to the laity as well.

<sup>129</sup>*Circular Letters*, trans. R. Cera, 55. Cf. RM 90-91: "The call to mission derives, of its nature, from the call to holiness. A missionary is really such only if he commits himself to the way of holiness. . . .*The universal call to holiness* is closely linked to the *universal call to mission*. Every member of the faithful is called to holiness and to mission. . . .The Church's missionary spirituality is a journey towards holiness. . . .The missionary must be a 'contemplative in action.' He finds answers to problems in the light of God's word and in personal and community prayer. . . .the future of mission depends to a great extent on contemplation. Unless the missionary is a contemplative he cannot proclaim Christ in a credible way."

<sup>130</sup>*Ibid.*, 48. Cf. also the Italian edition of the circular letters, *Chi è il Missionario?: Lettere per gli Esercizi Spirituali*, 28-9, 45, 71-2. See also SF XVB, fol. 476 where Gaspar cites the example of Christ and the saints in attributing the fruitfulness of the ministry to a life of prayer: "The eternal divine priest gives us the example of prayer; he left the crowds behind who pressed upon him, in order to give himself over to prayer. The saints are insistent on the maxim of mental prayer. St. Francis de Sales did not neglect to occupy himself in this holy exercise. . . .Why? Because prayer is the source of light and zeal, causing us to grow. . . .The soul in mental prayer grows in the practice of every virtue: faith becomes more living, hope more confident, love more tender; one acquires prudence, counsel, fortitude, and the grace the soul needs. How much then does prayer enable the soul to perform its good works well. . . ."

ships which, when buffeted by wind and storm's fury, are saved and their precious cargo safely reaches port. That is to say, a soul whose mind's eye is fixed on God in prayer will never be shipwrecked in the tempestuous sea of this world.<sup>131</sup>

Finally, the founder in the following characteristic formula notes how the structure of his congregation is designed specifically to promote reciprocity between the spiritual life and the apostolate:

For us the rule is to abide by the Rule, in order that, being joined to the Society and to one another by the bond of free charity, we may be able to sanctify ourselves, for the purpose of sanctifying others, through the apostolate of the word.<sup>132</sup>

A question might arise here as to Gaspar's precise view of the relationship between the spiritual life and ministry, i.e. whether the former is a primary or secondary end of the apostolate. At times, an impression might be given that his concept of the inner life is somehow subordinated to its apostolic orientation, not being clearly presented as an essential value in itself for the apostolic minister. Such a view could have serious practical consequences for those called to the active life, viz. seeing acts of the ministry as qualitatively identical with those which pertain to the cultivation of an inner life.

Against such a view, Garrigou-Lagrange and the thomist school in general, insist that the latter can never be considered, either theoretically or practically, as a means subordinated to the former. On the contrary,

. . .the contemplation of divine things and the union with God which it implies cannot be conceived as a means subordinated to action, for they are superior to it. It is indisputable that there is nothing more sublime on earth than union with God through contemplation and love, and, consequently, there is profound value in apostolic action only so far as it proceeds from this source, which, far from being a subordinate means, is an eminent cause.

Even more, it is apostolic action itself that is a means subordinated to the union with God to which the apostle wishes to lead souls, as he himself has been led thereto. Therefore we must say that the apostolic life tends principally to contemplation which fructifies in the apostolate.<sup>133</sup>

This view is not without its problems. It is criticized for instance by Balthasar for its attachment to the hellenic belief in "the superiority of what is inner and personal to what is external and social. . .of the act directed to what is above

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<sup>131</sup>*Chi è il Missionario*, 36.

<sup>132</sup>*Pr. Ord. Alb.*, III, fol. 1555.

<sup>133</sup>R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages*, vol. II, 492.

man, the divine and external, to that concerned with the earthly and human, even for the relief of misery and want."<sup>134</sup>

Balthasar does recognize however the advance made by Thomas over much of the patristic tradition by his drawing an explicit connection between contemplation and action, as well as for the novel position that action derived from the fullness of contemplation is to be preferred to contemplation alone; Balthasar also attributes to Aquinas the crucial insight that contemplation is itself activity and not something purely passive such that

the more [the creature] is receptive to God, the more it participates in his activity, so that, as the power of contemplation increases, so does that of action. . . . They condition each other mutually. . . .contemplation being a prerequisite of true action, and action the indispensable condition of true contemplation. The highest point of attainment is a unity wherein action occurs not--as is often the danger--to the detriment of contemplation, but as its fulfillment.<sup>135</sup>

Balthasar notes elsewhere how, although

[t]his change in the relationship between contemplation and action is accompanied by a more conscious realization of the antithesis between contemplation as an end in itself and as related to life on earth. . . .[i]n modern times, there is a... tendency to subordinate contemplation to action, to see it as a means to recollection, to a fuller awareness of the mysteries of faith, which would bring greater calmness, clarity and more abundant grace to the work of the apostolate. Hence our concern to give each exercise of contemplation a definite practical application. The true conception lies between these extremes.<sup>136</sup>

This balanced perspective seems to be wholly consonant with the gasparian view presented here. So while Gaspar's statements emphasize the reciprocity of action and contemplation, there is no reason to think he diminishes in any way the importance of loving union by making it a merely secondary means for enhancing the ministry; hence, "the first duty to which the Almighty calls us is to contemplate his immense goodness in having chosen us as instruments of his glory and having raised us to the heavenly and divine ministry."<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>Balthasar, *Explorations I*, 229.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.*, 232-4 passim.

<sup>136</sup>Balthasar, *Prayer*, 228.

<sup>137</sup>*Circular Letters*, trans. R. Cera, 36. Cf. Balthasar, *Christian State*, 80-2 passim: "Man's calling is to *action* because the grace of God always charges him with a mandate or task to be carried out by his own efforts. . . .But man's calling to action is likewise a calling to contemplation because the recipient of grace can understand and complete the task assigned to him only by holding all the more closely and

In conclusion, it can be said that Gaspar Del Bufalo models the fruitful relationship between Christian contemplation and action. Despite the practical difficulties he encountered in maintaining an intense interior life in the face of all-consuming demands on his time, he succeeded in avoiding the trap of a mere "activism" unrelated to the transcendent dimension of Christian life; neither did he succumb to the opposite tendency of escaping from the concrete demands of his epoch, whether social or ecclesial, in favor of a more "detached" experience of the Christian mystery.

Even if he might have preferred the serenity of his beloved Giano--the monastic setting in which his Congregation was founded--to the duties he believed imposed on him by providence, this was never a viable option. Still, it was precisely his commitment to maintaining a profound and conscious awareness of the transcendent that enabled his perseverance in ministry, along with the notable achievements that accompanied his work. Those who would embrace a spirituality based on the gasparian charism must then, in ways appropriate to their state, likewise resolve for themselves the inherent tensions raised by these two aspects of Christian life: aspects which, for the lay Christian especially, pose anew the challenge of living "in," but not being "of" the world.<sup>138</sup>

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exclusively to the thought of God in gratitude for the trust God has shown him, by undertaking no deed independently of God or that might run counter to God's plan, and by seeking, with his gaze fixed unwaveringly on God, to understand and accomplish the divine will in all things. . . .If he understands his calling, he will pray always, whether he finds himself in the state of action or contemplation. If he does not understand his calling, then whatever he does and however much he prays, he will always be outside the world of prayer. For prayer is genuine only when one is fulfilling one's calling."

<sup>138</sup>Balthasar, *Prayer*, 225-7 passim: "The resulting tension enters into the whole Christian life, and particularly into the life of contemplation. . . .The Platonic misconception [of contemplation] consists, not so much in the exaggerated estimate of contemplation as the vision of the eternal ideas, as in the depreciation and contempt of action, of work on earth, which educated Greeks regarded as beneath their dignity. Christianity overthrew that view by teaching the humility of the carpenter's son who, even in his own spiritual mission, dwelt with us as 'one who serves.' Our own times have emphasized the Christian conception of work. Even more than the Fathers, we look upon action as sharing in the spirit and value of contemplation, convinced that the earthly life of the Christian, whether in ordinary family life or in politics or culture, contributes, in hidden fashion, to the building of the eternal cathedral, the heavenly Jerusalem. For all that, the value of contemplation is neither diminished nor reversed, but enhanced and deepened. It means that the burning desire for heaven felt in prayer extends into our ordinary time and kindles our actions with the fire of eternal love."

## CHAPTER 5

### ECCLESIAL EXPRESSIONS OF THE GASPARIAN CHARISM

Authentic Christian spirituality is incarnated not only individually, but also communally, in the concrete relationship of persons to other members of the body of Christ. This chapter therefore examines the third constitutive element of the gasparian charism: the ecclesial contexts in which it has been embodied. When identifying this component, Luigi Contegiacomo observes how Gaspar's mission in the blood of Christ "never meant the action of an individual, isolated from others, stemming from a personal initiative, but rather a collective undertaking, with others' participation and in concert with them."<sup>1</sup>

From this desire of Gaspar to collaborate with others, joining them to the "Work" he believed was of God, three distinct ecclesial communities corresponding to the different states of Christian life have emerged which in different ways bear the stamp of the gasparian charism: the Congregation of Missionaries [Society] of the Precious Blood (CPPS); the Adorers of the Blood of Christ (ASC) and the Archconfraternity [Pious Union] of the Most Precious Blood (USC).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>L. Contegiacomo, *Gaspare Del Bufalo: Vita, Personalità, Carisma* (Albano Laziale [Rome]: Edizioni Primavera Missionaria, 1984), 146.

<sup>2</sup>As seen from these titles, just as devotion to the blood of Christ was inseparable from Gaspar's concept of mission, so this third constitutive element is intimately associated with the charism's unifying center; indeed, the charism's several elements form such a comprehensive whole that the absence or attenuation of any one of them in relation to the others would falsify the charism, ultimately bringing about its disintegration. As John Klopke, speaking specifically of the CPPS, has put it, "there is no single element of apostolic

This chapter begins by treating each of these ecclesial communities which have inherited the gasparian charism in distinctive ways; this includes a brief outline of the priestly (CPPS) and religious (ASC) expressions of the charism and, in keeping with the main focus of the thesis, a more extensive look at how the charism has manifested itself, past and present, in ways applicable to those in the lay state (USC). Having argued throughout this thesis on behalf of a lay adaption of the charism, it is crucial to demonstrate how the third constitutive element of the charism can be expressed ecclesially in lay form, thus showing the truly comprehensive character of gasparian spirituality.

There follows a theological reflection on the significance of the diverse expressions of the charism, both in terms of the interrelationship they manifest between the Christian states of life, and between male and female configurations of a given spirituality. This reflection is guided once again by the thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar who has dealt extensively with the interplay of state and gender in the Church.

Finally, a major theme running throughout the chapter is what constitutes "gasparian ecclesiality": those features of a Christian community shaped by the gasparian charism and inspired by its spirituality. Such ecclesiality is sought in light of some prominent features of postconciliar ecclesiology relevant to our topic.

#### The Inheritors of the Gasparian Charism

As noted in the introduction to the thesis, the gasparian charism and the spirituality to which it gives rise have found their unique and unrepeatable synthesis in the person of Gaspar Del Bufalo himself. However much, therefore, his charism may have "passed" into

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spirituality which distinguished the Society of the Precious Blood over and against other communities: it is the *constellation* of elements which does so." ("Gaspar Del Bufalo's Idea of Community as Found in the Circular Letters on the Occasion of the Annual Retreat," unpublished essay, [photocopy], 16)

the Congregation he founded (and likewise into other ecclesial bodies shaped by it), there exists a real distinction between Gaspar's "personal" charism and spirituality, and what can be considered their legitimate appropriation by other members of Christ's faithful.<sup>3</sup> This distinction requires those who "inherit" a particular share in the charism and spirituality, whether individually or comunally, to make all necessary adaptations demanded by their state, vocation and situation, in keeping with the element of specificity.

Such adaptations have been made principally by those who, beyond Gaspar himself, may be considered the outstanding representatives of gasparian spirituality; these include Maria De Mattias, the foundress of the charism's religious form, and Giovanni Merlini, under whose leadership the lay form of the charism was given renewed impetus in continuity with its founder, Francis Albertini. What is essential though in any type of accommodation is that, while taking full account of the signs and demands of time and place, those elements of the charism and spirituality deemed essential be carefully safeguarded.

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<sup>3</sup>L. Contegiacomo, *San Gaspare Del Bufalo: Vita, Personalità, Carisma*, 166, in quoting the founder's words, notes how Gaspar considered himself "identified with" the institute such that "in all sincerity he must have felt that the Institute was like a broadening of his own person, a larger version of himself, more extensive in time and space, more capable of realizing the task entrusted to him by the Lord."

Contegiacomo is aware of the theological problems that arise should such an "identification" be taken too literally, confusing the personal charism accorded Gaspar with its possible "transmission" to others. Yet, he feels safe concluding that, because the communitarian dimension is a constitutive element of the gasparian charism, it "was not given by God so that it should remain in [Gaspar] and be extinguished in him, but so that, under God's action itself, it might be extended to others, united in a spiritual family" (*ibid.*, 170). He adds, moreover, perhaps the most convincing argument of all for the charism's permanence, namely the central importance for the Church at large of the mystery of Christ's blood. This chapter, while adopting a similar perspective, wishes to determine more fully than Contegiacomo the exact dimensions of the "spiritual family" shaped by the gasparian charism.

*The Priestly State: Congregation of Missionaries of the Precious Blood*

Those called to immediate participation in the gasparian charism are clearly the members of the Congregation founded by Gaspar Del Bufalo. By reason of their priestly state of life and mission--which are given a characteristic shape within this institute--they lay special (but by no means exclusive) claim to the ongoing ecclesial expression of the gasparian charism in the Church.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>It would be a serious omission, given the thesis topic, to neglect at this point the non-ordained members of the CPPS who, despite their membership in a society of the apostolic life, remain members of the lay state. Since, as indicated below, the members of the Congregation make no vowed profession of the evangelical counsels (though their spirit is enjoined on all its members), the ecclesial state of the non-ordained in the community is unchanged by their incorporation into it.

Moreover, by defining the CPPS as the embodiment of the gasparian charism in the "priestly" state, no attempt is made to minimize the presence or contribution of its nonclerical membership. Indeed, precisely as laymen (albeit laymen who have more fully manifested their baptismal consecration by an act of special dedication) they could be considered the foremost members of the Church for whom the spirituality presented in this thesis is destined.

Although this is not the place for a historical treatment of the role of the so-called *fratres inservienti* ("brothers-in-service") in the life of the Congregation, suffice it to say that if St. Gaspar, as shown in the previous chapter, allowed a place for the laity in his apostolic mission, this openness is all the more verified by his admitting lay members to the institute. The founder's estimation of their importance was, moreover, quite high. He writes, for instance, to Luigi Gonnelli: "In the history of the Church, not a few people can be found who, though laymen, have dedicated themselves through virtue to tasks judged menial by the world, but which, according to religion and the spirit, are singular and great before God" (*Ep.* III, n. 1157, June 17, 1825, 326). Or again to Andrea Butirroni: ". . .the selection of the brothers-in-service, in general, *est opus maximum*, for they are, ordinarily, the heralds of the Work" (*Ep.* II, n. 488, November 7, 1821, 113). The brothers are also frequently addressed by the founder in the annual retreat letters with specific counsels and words of encouragement.

Certainly, the role of the lay members of the Congregation has undergone significant change since the Council, as with most clerical institutes in their renewal efforts; hence, the possibility of their having a fuller role in the life and ministry of the community has been greatly enhanced--as with the laity generally. In this way, the identity of the CPPS brother as the "chief protagonist" of a lay spirituality based on the gasparian charism has attained a notable development.

Classified canonically as a "society of the apostolic life," the present Constitution of the Congregation notes how impelled by the love of Christ, manifested especially in the shedding of his Blood, and sensitive to the needs of the Church, St. Gaspar del Bufalo founded a priestly Institute. He attracted from the diocesan clergy a group of like-minded priests and united them by a bond of charity only, instead of by vows. Living together in mission houses they were a source of continual renewal for the priests and the people, mainly by preaching missions and retreats.<sup>5</sup>

In terms of the Congregation's present understanding of its mission, this same legislation states further how it "dedicates itself to the service of the Church through the apostolic and missionary activity of the ministry of the word," and "[w]hereas all the people of God are made one in the Blood of the New Covenant, our Society gives living testimony of this special unity through its community life according to the spirit of St. Gaspar."<sup>6</sup>

#### The CPPS and gasparian ecclesiality

Given this chapter's interest in "gasparian ecclesiality", one sees how these texts define the Missionaries' distinctive way of appropriating this aspect of the gasparian charism; for in these defining texts the *vinculum caritatis*, grounded in the mystery of the blood of Christ, emerges as the indispensable means by which the Congregation expresses itself as a sign of the Church.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>*Normative Texts of the Society of the Precious Blood* (Rome: 1986), C1.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, C3 and C6 resp.

<sup>7</sup>Contegiacomo observes how this bond represents the heart of the charism's communal dimension as visible in the institute Gaspar founded. Gaspar's insistence that his community be one where the ties created by religious vows be replaced by a free "bond of charity" forms the basis of his charism's contribution to a Christian community inspired and shaped by it, the first recipient of which is the CPPS itself. See L. Contegiacomo, *S. Gaspare del Bufalo, Vita, Personalità, Carisma*, 186ff.; cf. the author's *The Spirituality of Our Society*, trans. A. Pollack and W. Volk (Carthagen, Ohio: Messenger Press), 13-21)

Thus, a fundamental trait of the charism's ecclesiality is already evident, one wholly in line with the "ecclesiology of communion" stemming from the Second Vatican Council.<sup>8</sup> *Lumen Gentium* presented this way of expressing the mystery of the Church by describing its being "in the nature of a sacrament--a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men";<sup>9</sup> this comparison of the Church to a sacrament--where what is signified and what is effected are inseparable--implies the strict unity between what the Church is in its deepest reality ("sign of communion") and what the Church does ("instrument of communion") in its mission to sanctify, evangelize, and serve.

This unity of being and action which constitutes the essence of the Church, something *Christifideles Laici* calls the lay faithful to in particular, is described by that document in the following words: "Communion and mission are profoundly connected with each other, they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other to the point *that communion represents both the source and the fruit of mission: communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion.*"<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>The extraordinary session of the Synod of Bishops convoked in 1985 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Vatican II's conclusion, defined this understanding of the Church as "a central and fundamental idea in the documents of the Council. . . . [meaning fundamentally] a matter of our communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. This communion exists through the Word of God and the Sacraments. Baptism is the door and foundation of the Church's communion. . . . Communion with the Body of Christ in the Eucharist signifies and brings about, or builds up, the intimate union of all the faithful in the Body of Christ, which is the Church. . ." (*Relatio finalis*, IIC, 1).

Cf. Peter Walter, "The Church as Communio: The German Bishops on the Role of the Laity in the Church and in the World," *CICR* 14 (Spring 1987): 203, who remarks that this teaching on communion "is not a question of one idea among many, but a guiding principle which provided the dynamism of the Council and which characterized the work of renewal in the 1960s." See the most recent declaration of this ecclesiology's value in Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*, May 28, 1992.

<sup>9</sup>LG 1.

<sup>10</sup>CL 32.

In terms of gasparian ecclesiality, since ecclesial communion, viz. the *vinculum caritatis in sanguine Christi*, has an inexorable orientation to mission, the "interpenetration" of the charism's several elements admirably reflects this ecclesiology of "Communion-Mission" which emerged from the Council and has been reaffirmed repeatedly by subsequent ecclesial assemblies. The Missionaries of the Blood of Christ thus offer to those inspired by the gasparian charism, whatever their state, this characteristic note.

*The State of the Counsels: Adorers of the Blood of Christ*

The extension of the gasparian charism into the religious state of Christian life was occasioned by an encounter between Gaspar Del Bufalo and the woman destined to serve as foundress of a new institute of consecrated life for women, Maria De Mattias (1805-1866).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>This encounter occurred in the latter's home town of Vallecorsa during a mission sermon preached by the Canon Del Bufalo in Lent of 1822. The inspiration she received from this sermon on the love of God, and from a subsequent encounter with the founder the following year, created in Maria a desire to share in Gaspar's "Work", what would orient the future direction of her life and spirituality. In 1824 Gaspar entrusted the spiritual direction of Maria to his companion Giovanni Merlini, a relationship that would last for some 42 years. Merlini was soon convinced that Maria possessed the requisite qualities to carry forward a project dating from the time of Albertini's and Gaspar's exile, i.e. to establish an institute of women devoted to the precious blood and a ministry of teaching, especially of women who would otherwise have no opportunity for an education. After many uncertainties, difficulties and opposition--including a failed attempt in 1831 to establish a foundation--the congregation of Adorers of the Blood of Christ was finally born with the opening of its first school in 1834 at Acuto. The venture was accompanied by Gaspar's blessing, and during the consolidation of the institute and the development of its incipient rule, the foundress likewise sought Gaspar's approval. Because he sensed his impending death, however, Gaspar left to Merlini the practical guidance of the nascent community, always though with the desire to see the original plan conceived in exile followed as closely as possible.

Without entering into a discussion of the historical vicissitudes surrounding the foundation of this community, nor of the limited but vital connection of Gaspar to Maria (Merlini being the one who, for the most part, mediated contact with Del Bufalo)<sup>12</sup> two

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For further information of an historical-biographical nature see Maria De Mattias, *Lettere della Venerabile Maria De Mattias*, 3 vols. (Rome: Adoratrici del Sangue di Cristo, 1944, 1947, 1991 resp.); Giovanni Merlini, *Compendio della vita della Serva di Dio Maria De Mattias, Fondatrice della Congregazione delle Adoratrici del Preziosissimo Sangue in Beata Maria De Mattias Fondatrice delle Suore Adoratrici del Preziosissimo Sangue: Centenario del Transito 1866-1966* (Rome: Pia Unione del Preziosissimo Sangue, 1966), 5-37; Michele Colagiovanni, *Maria De Mattias: La ribelle obbediente* (Rome: EPUPS, 1984); Di Spirito, Angela, and Spezzati, Nicla, *Maria De Mattias fondatrice: alle origini: riflessioni e documenti* (Bari: Adoratrici del Sangue di Cristo, 1992); Antonietta Maraone, *Le Adoratrici del Sangue di Cristo nella Chiesa e nel Mondo (1834-1984)* (Rome: Pia Unione del Preziosissimo Sangue, 1984; English edition by M. Pauline Grady [Steelton, PA: Huggins Printing, 1983]), and M. Eugenia Pietromarchi, *La Beata Maria De Mattias, Fondatrice dell'Istituto delle Suore Adoratrici del Preziosissimo Sangue* (Rome: Adoratrici del Sangue di Cristo, 1950).

Concerning the spirituality of Maria De Mattias see Amato Ceccarelli, *Spiritualità della Beata Maria De Mattias* (Rome: Adoratrici del Sangue di Cristo, 1957); Angela Di Spirito, *Maria De Mattias, Mistica* (Rome: Edizioni Sanguis, 1974); M. Catherine Gerrins, et. al., *The Apostolic Spirituality of Maria De Mattias* (Rome: Adorers of the Blood of Christ, 1992); Maria Paniccia, *La Spiritualità e l'opera di Maria De Mattias: Le origini e gli sviluppi della Comunità di Acuto* (Rome: Adoratrici del Sangue di Cristo, 1983); Maria Paniccia, "Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo nell'esperienza cristiana della Beata Maria De Mattias," in *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo e l'esperienza cristiana*, II, 625-46; Nicola Spezzati, "Charity in Maria De Mattias as an Experience of the Blood of Christ," in *Precious Blood Spirituality*, 97-116; Eligio Vespaziani, *Sulle orme di Maria De Mattias nella via dell'umiltà* (Casamari, 1983) and Anna Maria Vissani, *Il Sangue dell'Agnello Pasquale: Fondamenti di una Spiritualità* (Rome: EPUPS, 1987).

<sup>12</sup>Maria spoke with Gaspar personally on only one occasion: on a second visit of the founder to Vallecorsa during which she sought counsel from him concerning her vocation. Her first encounter the previous Lent was simply as a member of the congregation gathered for a mission sermon. For a careful study of the relationship between the two founders, see Beniamino Conti, "San Gaspare Del Bufalo e la Beata Maria De Mattias," in *Beata Maria De Mattias: Centenario del Transito*, 38-79.

As for Merlini's part in the evolution of the gasparian charism, in addition to the works cited in the previous note which invariably treat of his relationship to Maria, see: Michele Colagiovanni, *Giovanni Merlini (1795-1873)* (Rome: Edizioni Sanguis, 1977); *Giovanni Merlini, Twenty-four Hours a Day*, trans. Andrew Pollack, C.P.P.S. Resources 12

questions are essential for the thesis in general and for this chapter in particular: The first concerns the sense in which the "gasparian" charism can be considered the original inspiration of the ASC. The second asks what the embodiment of the charism in a new form by Maria De Mattias contributes to gasparian ecclesiality.

The first question is understandably delicate and there is no desire here to engage in any sort of polemic; much less is there any interest in minimizing the unique contribution of Mattias to the evolution of the gasparian charism--about which more is said below in the theological reflection on the charism's differentiation. What is sought at this point is simply an adequate way to speak of the "mattian" dimension of the gasparian charism.

The words of the founders themselves provide a point of departure for this attempt. From Gaspar's side, it is clear in a letter to Merlini that a common basis exists for the two foundations; advising Merlini on the way to proceed in adapting earlier outlines of what would eventually become under Maria's direction the first rule for the Adorers, Gaspar writes:

As far as the vows are concerned, it is good to abide with what the [*Fundamental Articles* of Mons. Albertini] state. They are like the rule. . . it is good to reflect well on them, and as far as practical matters go (except for what the *Fundamental Articles* prescribe) bring things into line with our own methods, since *the spirit is the same*. Even if we do not have vows, we nevertheless practice the respective virtues. The food should be like ours and likewise the rooms. . . The lifestyle should be moderate because the institute is an active one.<sup>13</sup>

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(Carthagen, Ohio: Messenger Press, 1992), and Beniamino Conti, "Il Sangue di Cristo nel servo di Dio D. Giovanni Merlini," in *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo e l'esperienza cristiana*, vol. II, 607-24.

<sup>13</sup>*Ep.* IX, n. 3723, undated, 79 (italics mine); cf. *SF* XII, fol. 174 where Gaspar remarks that the internal regimen of the sisters' community houses should be modeled, with appropriate adaptations, after "the directory governing the [Missionaries'] own." This letter of Gaspar was written on the same folio sent to the founder by Merlini, on which the latter had written: "Instead of the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, I would have chastity and obedience alone, should [the Adorers] have to take vows to be faithful to the religious life envisioned for them by Albertini; in any case, the matter of vows would make

This text highlights two things: the correspondence between Gaspar's Congregation and Maria's fledgling community, and the indebtedness of the latter, like the former, to Albertini's vision which he shared with Gaspar during the formative period of their exile when in many ways both institutes were conceived--although Gaspar gave Merlini and Maria great discretion for adaptation and experimentation vis a vis the *Fundamental Articles* drawn up by Albertini during the deportation, in conjunction with Del Bufalo.<sup>14</sup>

As for Maria's own estimate of Gaspar's role in her foundation, a letter to Bishop Pier Paolo Trucchi written 12 years after Gaspar's death can be cited where she speaks of Merlini's assuming "the role which *our Founder* left to him, and that is what regards the spirit of *the Work*."<sup>15</sup> To the same prelate she would also write that the *Fundamental Articles* which formed the basis of her rule, showed forth "the great and beautiful Work which the good God deigned to inspire in his servant Gaspar Del Bufalo."<sup>16</sup>

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them different from us. I really don't know" (*SF XII*, fol. 176).

Gaspar's response to Merlini's query indicates a problem that proved troublesome for Maria's congregation. According to Albertini, the two congregations of Missionaries and Adorers, while having "the same spirit", differed in respect to the vows: the former were not to profess them, while the latter were. In fact, (due no doubt to Merlini's hesitation), the ASC made no collective profession of vows until an intervention of the Holy See in 1878 required novices to make simple vows after the completion of their novitiate; individuals, however, had done so previously, including Maria who professed them and wanted all her sisters to do so after a period of ten years in the congregation (see A. Maraone, *Le Adoratrici del Sangue di Cristo nella Chiesa e nel mondo*, 197-203). The implications of this controversy for the gasparian charism are dealt with later in the theological reflection. At this point, we wish only to underscore the affinity between the two institutes.

<sup>14</sup>See B. Conti, "S. Gaspare e la B. Maria De Mattias," 76-8. Immediately following this article by Conti, the *Fundamental Articles* (*Articoli Fondamentali Sopra dei Quali Resterà Basato il Nuovo Istituto delle Devote del Prez.mo Sangue del N.S.G.C.*) containing the earliest design for the womens' congregation are reproduced, pp. 80-3.

<sup>15</sup>*Lettere* I, n. 260, May 17, 1850, 330 (italics mine).

<sup>16</sup>*Lettere* I, n. 179, April 13, 1847, 231. Cf. *Lettere* I, n. 185, addressee uncertain, July 1,

Beniamino Conti concludes from this that "Gaspar and De Mattias are therefore inseparable from each other as are their congregations, for both are born with the same spirit."<sup>17</sup>

Members of Maria's own community share similar views:

The project of Gaspar and Francis Albertini is part of a much larger context which on the one hand includes schools with teachers, and on the other, popular missions conducted by priests. The scope of both institutes is to reawaken faith in people through devotion to the blood of Christ. These two ideas--the schools of the "Devout Teachers" and the missions of the priests--went forward simultaneously, as elements of a single design.<sup>18</sup>

Even stronger is the following affirmation of Anna Maria Vissani:

St. Gaspar Del Bufalo, as the person in whom God's gift resided, animated by a charism that came from above, was the one through whom the Lord transmitted and planted in Maria's soul what would become a fruitful life and mission: to be an adorer of the divine blood. Thus she became the bearer of the same charism: a flourishing root enriched through her with new applications, ramifications, and shades of meaning, all stemming from her femininity and from her particular human and spiritual sensibilities."<sup>19</sup>

Such statements lead one to think that behind the respective foundations of Gaspar and Maria there lies what can only be termed an "original charism" which neither alone embodies completely; the founders and their communities appear, in other words, to be encompassed by something which transcends them individually and their institutes corporately.

The founders felt, moreover, a great responsibility to preserve as faithfully as possible the essential contours of this original inspiration even though, as its eminent

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1847, 238; I, n. 188, to Giovanni Merlini, August 12, 1847, 242; and *Lettere* II, n. 677, to the Adorers of Gurtwell (Germany), November 19, 1860, 332.

<sup>17</sup>B. Conti, "S. Gaspare e la B. Maria De Mattias," 79.

<sup>18</sup>Di Spirito, Angela, and Spezzati, Nicla, *Maria De Mattias fondatrice: alle origini*, 20.

<sup>19</sup>A. Vissani, *Il Sangue dell'Agnello Pasquale*, 40.

stewards, they provided the charism with distinctive configurations in both their persons and in their foundations. The fact that they were given the task of incarnating the charism in different forms does not, however, diminish its fundamental unity: a unity which, for reasons explored later in this chapter, accounts for designating the charism by the single term "gasparian". At this point in the discussion, though, we are concerned with the mattian contribution to gasparian ecclesiality.

#### The ASC and gasparian ecclesiality

Whereas the ecclesiality of the gasparian charism relative to the CPPS was seen above to lie in the *vinculum caritatis in sanguine Christi*, the ASC places special emphasis on the *adoratio sanguinis Christi*, with both institutes' emphases being intimately joined to their respective missions. As Caterina Ronci puts it,

. . . Maria's intuition is consistent with Gaspar's charism, and derives its texture from contact with it. Still, Gaspar is the founder of the Missionaries, and Maria of the Adorers. They can appear to be poles apart only if we fail to specify the *object* first of mission, and then of adoration: the *blood of Christ*.

Our religious families are identified with each other, recognize each other as complementary precisely in the *blood of the Lord Jesus*. Gaspar and Maria look to the blood of Jesus, hence, their *Adoration*, and from this contemplation is born their *Mission*.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Caterina Ronci, "Adorazione del Sangue di Cristo nel culto esistenziale," in *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo nella liturgia e nella pietà popolare*, vol. I, 395-6. Nothing is implied, therefore, by which "adoration" would be seen as something exclusively mattian, any more than "missionary" is a designation pertaining only to Gaspar's assimilation of the charism. Our purpose here is not to establish antimonies, but relative emphases.

To pursue a metaphor, the blood of Christ as unifying center of the gasparian charism serves as the fulcrum preserving the balance between two sides of a single scale: the CPPS and the ASC. By giving more "weight" to one ingredient (in what amounts to the same mixture) an equilibrium is achieved: with the CPPS emphasizing the "missionary" aspect of the charism and the ASC the "contemplative" but never to the exclusion of the other.

For the place of adoration in the ministry of St. Gaspar who, as we have seen, gave considerable attention to contemplation of the blood of Christ (often associated, like Maria's, with the eucharistic piety of the time) see John Colacino, "Culto eucaristico fuori

Maria's adoration of the blood of Christ can be described as "contemplating the Crucified One, [whereby she] entered into, and perceived, in her daily, mystic experience of the paschal mystery, the demands of immolated love. . . .In Maria De Mattias apostolic mission and contemplation were lived in their fullness, joined and ordered to a unique center: Christ Crucified."<sup>21</sup>

The special object then of mattian contemplation is redemptive charity whose visible sign is the outpoured blood of the passion and the eucharist, "seen" by Maria in the opened side of Christ. Her vision of divine *agape* fueled her own impassioned love of God, passing into the community she founded: "The spirit of this holy work. . .is all charity. We have carved this word on our minds and our hearts; I mean, charity, charity for God and for our dear neighbor."<sup>22</sup>

This balanced view of adoration taking place in privileged moments of personal and liturgical prayer, is extended "existentially" in service to others; there is no dichotomy here between love of God and love of neighbor:

We do not adore Jesus in the sacrament of the eucharist alone, but also in the "monstrance" where he is present in other people: in each person insofar as he or she is destined to be the "repository" of Jesus' *love* as seen in his blood.

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della Messa: adorazione del Sangue prezioso," in *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo nella liturgia e nella pietà popolare*, vol. I, esp. 77-80.

<sup>21</sup>A. Di Spirito. and N. Spezzati, *Maria De Mattias: alle origini*, 33-5. Cf. Angela Di Spirito, "The Prayer of Maria De Mattias," in *The Apostolic Spirituality of Maria De Mattias*, 30-53.

<sup>22</sup>*Lettere*, I, n. 93, to Biagio Valentini, June 28, 1841, 123. See also N. Spezzati, "Charity in Maria De Mattias as an Experience of the Blood of Christ," and Angelita Myerscough, "The Spirit of Our Congregation is all Charity," in *The Apostolic Spirituality of Maria De Mattias*, 11-29.

We are Adorers in virtue of a specific vocation that embraces the whole expanse of our lives. We are called not only to make 'time for prayer of adoration' but to make adoration a way of life. . . .<sup>23</sup>

On an expressly ecclesial note, the symmetry brought by the ASC to the gasparian charism seems focused not only on the contemplative side of an equation whose terms are "mission" and "adoration", but also on one whose terms are those of the *vinculum caritatis* which, as noted above, is central to gasparian ecclesiality. What distinguishes, in my opinion, the mattian contribution to gasparian ecclesiality from that of the CPPS is its emphasis on charity, inseparably bound to the ASC's other distinctive characteristic, adoration.

In other words, the *vinculum* which unites the members of the respective congregations to each other (whether arising from a "free promise of fidelity" as with the CPPS or from vows as with the ASC)<sup>24</sup> can only remain a purely formal bond if not animated by charity: the "soul and sustenance of solidarity" to borrow an expression from John Paul II.<sup>25</sup> It is Maria's genius relative to the charism to ground the *vinculum in sanguine Christi* more explicitly in adoring charity: the blood of Jesus being the source not only of communion, but also the love which bonds those in Christ to one another.

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<sup>23</sup>C. Ronci, "Adorazione del Sangue di Cristo nel culto esistenziale," 396. Cf. A. Vissani, *Il Sangue dell'Agnello Pasquale*, 89ff.

<sup>24</sup>For an understanding of the meaning of this "promise of fidelity" (as distinct from vows) by which the Missionaries pledge their bond of charity see the articles of Romano Altobelli, "Prete secolari in vita comune," in *La Congregazione dei Missionari del Preziosissimo Sangue*, 7-54 and "Common Life in Our Society According to the Charism of Our Founder," in *The Charism of Saint Gaspar*, trans. Andrew Pollack, and William Volk (Carthage, Ohio: Messenger Press, 1977), 43-75.

<sup>25</sup>CL 41.

When one looks, for example, at the first full-fledged codification of the mattian "intuition" of the gasparian charism, the accent invariably falls on charity as the soul of the proposed rule: "Now this our lowly Congregation that lives and labors under the title of the most precious blood of Jesus Christ, must be patterned and shaped into a living image of that divine charity with which this divine blood was shed and of which it is the sign, expression, measure and pledge."<sup>26</sup> The current Constitution of the ASC preserves this typical emphasis with its major subdivisions referring to the Congregation as a "community of consecrated love"; a "community of adoring, redeeming love," and a "community of faithful love."<sup>27</sup>

By rooting community life so consciously in charity, the mattian contribution to gasparian ecclesiality looks then to a particular facet of the Church understood as "Communion-Mission"; Maria's resonance of conciliar ecclesiology lies in her forceful reminder that the faithful typically show themselves "as one body around Christ united by the bond of charity... love [being their] characteristic mark."<sup>28</sup>

*The Lay State: Union of the Blood of Christ*

Antedating both the CPPS (founded on August 15, 1815) and the ASC (founded on March 4, 1834) is the original ecclesial expression of the gasparian charism: the Assembly

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<sup>26</sup>From the preface to the 1857 *Rules and Constitution*, published in *Maria De Mattias fondatrice: alle origini*, 61; translation from *Constitution of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ* (Rome, 1980), 51.

<sup>27</sup>*Constitution*, i.

<sup>28</sup>AA 8.

(*Adunanza*) or "Confraternity" dedicated to the precious blood, the marian rosary, and the holy souls founded on December 8, 1808 by the chapter of canons of the Roman Basilica of San Nicola in Carcere Tulliano under the leadership of Canon Francis Albertini, with the assistance of the Canon Gaspar Del Bufalo of the neighboring Basilica of St. Mark.

This assembly, whose "cornerstone" consisted of 15 laymen and 15 laywomen, gradually evolved into an archconfraternity (1815), and was the root of an offshoot which, by a separate foundation, inherited an ample share of the gasparian charism, the "Pious Union of the Most Precious Blood (1851)--in its contemporary incarnation a private association of the faithful known as the Union of the Blood of Christ (1983).<sup>29</sup>

The involvement of Gaspar and his Congregation with this association was extensive, as shown in the previous chapter.<sup>30</sup> In demonstrating how gasparian ecclesiality

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<sup>29</sup>The history of this evolution is traced by Mario Dariozzi, "L'Arciconfraternita del Preziosissimo Sangue in San Nicola in Carcere Tulliano," in *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo nella liturgia e nella pietà popolare*, vol. II, 471-502. The author defines confraternities as "ecclesiastical organizations composed largely of lay faithful, canonically erected and governed by competent superiors with the assistance of counselors, whose scope is to promote the Christian life with special efforts directed to divine worship or works of charity toward one's neighbor" (471).

Similarly, the current code of canon law defines associations of Christ's faithful as "distinct from institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life. In these associations, Christ's faithful, whether clerics or laity, or clerics and laity together, strive with a common effort to foster a more perfect life, or to promote public worship or christian teaching. They may also devote themselves to other works of the apostolate, such as initiatives for evangelization, works of piety or charity, and those which animate the temporal order with the christian spirit." (*The Code of Canon Law: in English translation*, London: Collins, 1983): Title V, Chapter 1, Common Norms, Canon 298, p. 51. Cf. Canons 299-311; Chapter III, Canons 321-326, and Chapter IV, Canons 327-329 for the relevant legislation presently in effect.

<sup>30</sup>Indeed, from the founding of Gaspar's own institute in 1815, the ties between the two entities were so close that the founder's companions were known as "priest missionaries of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood." Gaspar occasionally referred to himself as "director general of the missions of the venerable Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ"--a position to which he was elected in 1817 by that same body. The Adorers were likewise known for some time as being "of the Archconfraternity

includes a lay form, there can be no doubt the Archconfraternity formed part of the "spiritual family" which grew up around Albertini's "firstborn son".<sup>31</sup> This association, together with its legitimate descendants, must therefore be acknowledged as rightful heirs to the gasparian charism. Thus, not only may one speak of an "albertinian" contribution to the charism's ecclesiality, one is obliged to do so, and no less than with the mattian enrichment. Moreover, because the Archconfraternity, like its latterday counterpart, exhibited in its origin the other essential elements of the charism (i.e. commitment to the blood of Christ and orientation to Christian mission) its "gasparian" pedigree is further, and decisively, proved.<sup>32</sup>

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of the Most Precious Blood", and in their early expansion outside of Italy were able to gain recognition and acceptance on that basis.

It was not until 1833 that the Missionaries dropped their official designation as part of the Archconfraternity; the approval of a distinct rule for the CPPS in 1841 led to a canonical separation from the Archconfraternity in 1851. But even then the Missionaries were considered responsible for its promotion until 1869, the date of what may be regarded the definitive separation. Thus, for some 54 years the two bodies grew apace together, with a gradual parting of the ways coming about largely for practical reasons. The same process of separation from the Archconfraternity occurred with the ASC.

This parting contributed to the desuetude of the original Archconfraternity established by Albertini, something that unfortunately persists to this day. Thus, the "Pious Union of the Most Precious Blood" established by the CPPS in 1851 (presently the USC)--although a different entity than the Archconfraternity--should rightfully be considered, for reasons given below, the legitimate heir of the albertinian foundation, faithful to Gaspar's desire "always to maintain intact what Albertini had instituted." (M. Dariozzi, "L'Arciconfraternita," 480)

<sup>31</sup>See L. Contegiacomo, *Lettere*, vol. III-2, 363, n. 25; this designation for Gaspar by Albertini is one whose implications form part of the conclusion to this thesis.

<sup>32</sup>The introduction to the *Constitution* of the Archconfraternity (reproduced as an Appendix to Francis Albertini, "La Confraternita del Preziosissimo Sangue," in *Il mistero del Sangue di Cristo e l'esperienza cristiana*, vol. II, 521-35) states how this lay assembly was "commissioned with the weighty task of performing many devout works designed to serve the spiritual good of the numerous population of the neighborhood and surrounding area, especially the poor peasants and day laborers who abound in the vast parish [of S. Nicola in Carcere]. . .to the greater glory of God and the greater advantage of one's neighbor" (521). The devotional practices outlined in Chapter II of the document (524-5), including the veneration of the precious blood, had then not only spiritual but apostolic

As with the Missionaries and Adorers, the Union of the Blood of Christ is considered here in light of its current self-understanding; this is done by examining the General Statutes that presently govern it and which were definitively approved by the Pontifical Council for the Laity on May 24, 1988.<sup>33</sup> Our study is placed, moreover, in the wider context of issues raised by the 1987 Synod of Bishops and later by the postsynodal exhortation *Christifideles Laici* concerning the widespread phenomenon of new lay movements and associations in the postconciliar period.

The presynodal documentation had already indicated how this phenomenon would generate considerable discussion by the synod delegates. The *Lineamenta* had signaled a need for a "more intense *sensus Ecclesiae*" leading lay organization to love the Church first, and more than, any association, movement or group; it also pointed out "the continual

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purposes as well. The latter were expressly directed to the welfare of the indigent, works "that promoted the well-being and betterment of the people being judged most useful" (Art. IV).

For Albertini's own understanding of devotion to the blood of Christ, see A. Santonato, "Il Sangue di Cristo negli scritti di Mons. Francesco Albertini," in *ibid.*, 555-73. Other documentation relative to the Archconfraternity can be found in the *Spiritual Letters* included in the 1830 edition of the *Introduzione alla Vita Umile*, nos. 8 and 27, pp. 90-4 and 121-4 resp.

<sup>33</sup>In addition to the General Statutes, each regional division of the USC is asked to develop its own guidelines that reflect the particular gifts, needs, and creativity which a local branch of the Union brings to the association. The discussion which follows is limited for the most part to an examination of the general regulations. For a thorough documentation of the history of these statutes from the time of Albertini's Archconfraternity, to the birth of the CPPS-directed "Pious Union" down to the present-day "Union of the Blood of Christ" see M. Dariozzi, "L'Arciconfraternita del Preziosissimo Sangue": the statutes contained in the original *Libretto istruzioni* of the Pious Union are reproduced in n. 21, pp. 487-9; those approved in 1945 in n. 22, pp. 489-92; the revision approved in 1951 in n. 25, pp. 494-5 and the current General Statutes of the USC in n. 28, pp. 497-501. A comparison of the original *Constitution* of the Archconfraternity with those of the USC indicates, in my opinion, how the present design of this association corresponds most fully to the original spirit of the albertinian foundation, showing once more how the USC should be considered the rightful successor to the Archconfraternity.

necessity" these groups have for confirming their fidelity to the Church of which they must be an expression, and finally the need for "discernment concerning specific forms" lay association might take.<sup>34</sup>

Somewhat more positively, the *Instrumentum Laboris* pointed out that associations and movements "constitute valuable ecclesial methods for the promotion and realization of the baptismal dignity and apostolic responsibility of the lay faithful. . . [for] they are places of conversion and Christian formation."<sup>35</sup> The document nevertheless sounded an urgent call to specify the criteria which should govern the development of associations, and at the same time permit pastors to make the necessary judgments about their value and relevance for the life and mission of the Church today.<sup>36</sup>

At the Synod itself, numerous interventions brought the phenomenon of new lay associations and movements to the attention of the delegates, culminating in no less than 6 of the 54 *Propositii* submitted to the pope being devoted to them.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the postsynodal exhortation in its summary of this long process of consultation and deliberation had an extensive amount of experience and reflection on which to base its collegial teaching.

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<sup>34</sup>*Lineamenta* 37.

<sup>35</sup>*Instrumentum Laboris* 59.

<sup>36</sup>See the article of R. Kevin Seasoltz, "Contemporary American lay movements in spirituality," for an overview of the phenomenon in an American context and his own method for discerning and evaluating their authenticity.

<sup>37</sup>See *Propositii* nos. 12-17 in *La Missione del Laico*, ed. V. Leonizion (Rome: Edizioni Logos, 1987), 231-4. These proposals deal with a number of matters, including the usefulness of associations for helping the laity live fully Christians lives in secularized and pluralistic environments; their need to collaborate with the hierarchy in the Church's mission of evangelization and sanctification; their need for space to grow and develop; and their canonical rights and responsibilities, especially the right of the laity to found, lead and join such associations.

In point of fact, *Christifideles Laici* goes out of its way to affirm the positive nature of the postconciliar development. Hence, after considering the typical ways in which the laity participate in the life and mission of the Church through diocesan and parochial structures, the pope turns his attention to group forms of participation, mentioning

the phenomenon of lay people associating among themselves [which] has taken on a character of particular variety and vitality. . . .[I]n modern times such lay groups have received a special stimulus, resulting in the birth and spread of a multiplicity of group forms.... We can speak of *a new era of group endeavors of the lay faithful*. In fact, `alongside the traditional forming of associations, and at times coming from their very roots, movements and new sodalities have sprouted with a specific feature and purpose, so great is the richness and versatility that the Holy Spirit nourishes in the ecclesial community. . . .<sup>38</sup>

#### The USC and gasparian ecclesiality

What follows is an attempt to determine what the USC contributes to gasparian ecclesiality; to frame the discussion within the broader context of reflection on lay associations outlined above, our method will be to compare the so-called "criteria of ecclesiality" for such groups listed in *Christifideles Laici* with the self-understanding of the USC expressed in its General Statutes.

To introduce this section, we note how the papal exhortation sees the value of lay associations to lie precisely in their contribution to ecclesial communion and mission. As evident from previous references to this document, "communion" and "mission" are inseparable from each other in its ecclesiology; indeed, any positive assessment given to groups and movements, what would justify and perhaps demand their presence in the

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<sup>38</sup>CL 29. Cf. the articles by A. Scola, "Associazioni e movimenti nella comunione e nella missione della Chiesa," and G. Ghirlanda, "I movimenti nella comunione ecclesiale e loro giusta autonomia," in J. Farnleitner, et. al., *Christifideles Laici: Spunti per uno Studio in I Laici Oggi*, Journal of the Pontifical Council for the Laity (1989-90), 33-40 and 41-62, resp.

Church, must come according to the document, "from a theology *based on ecclesiology*. . .  
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In other words, the reasons adduced to defend and promote lay associations must rest on sound principles stemming from disciplined reflection on the faith, reflection that discloses the profound motivation for establishing such Christian communities as particularized expressions of the Church's mystery. These principles likewise must form the basis for discerning whether or not associations of the faithful respond adequately to the fundamental requirements of a Church that understands itself as "Communion-Mission".

*Criteria of ecclesiality.* The first criterion according to *Christifideles Laici* that must be verified in any association of the lay faithful is "*the primacy given to the call of every Christian to holiness.*"<sup>40</sup> This fundamental requirement of a lay organization envisions its members' growth in an integral Christianity which unites the realms of faith and everyday life; here the elements of universality and specificity, together with integration, are the primary ones to be fostered by these ecclesial groups.

In this regard, the *General Statutes* of the USC make clear their intention to invite members "to commit themselves to live and promote the spirituality of the blood of Christ,"<sup>41</sup> making this aspect of the Redeemer's person and work "the unifying center of their following of Christ in the service of God and their brethren."<sup>42</sup> The spirituality proposed by the Union looks to Jesus, the Son of God, who "manifested his love by giving

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<sup>39</sup>CL 29.

<sup>40</sup>This, and the following criteria, are all given in *CL 30*.

<sup>41</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 3.

<sup>42</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 2.

his blood" so that its members "guided by the Holy Spirit, [might] commit themselves to love, to the point of giving [their] own life for God and for [their] brethren."<sup>43</sup> As a "rule of life",<sup>44</sup> the statutes thus encourage radical discipleship after the pattern of the paschal mystery, the heart of the *imitatio Christi*. In this way, the association expressly presents its members with an "ideal of holiness" for carrying "to maturity. . .[their] baptismal grace"<sup>45</sup>-- the basis of the universal call to sanctity

All of this is proposed, moreover, in accordance with the element of specificity in its dialectical relationship with that of universality, whereby members of the USC unite themselves to Jesus' "sacrificial offering with hope, love and joy, fulfilling faithfully the commitments of [their] state and uniting [their] cross with that of the Redeemer."<sup>46</sup> The statutes, in other words, do not attempt to impose a way of life on the laity which is foreign to their state, vocation or situation; the spirituality of the blood of Christ is proposed here as fully assimilable in a specifically lay context. Thus, it seems the first "criterion of ecclesiality" is fully met by this association which seeks to be "an instrument leading to holiness in the Church."<sup>47</sup>

The second criterion posited by the exhortation is "*the responsibility of professing the Catholic faith*." This norm, compatible with the element of mission in its prophetic aspect, asks associations to serve as meeting places where the fullness of faith is proclaimed and taught in accord with the mind of the Church.

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<sup>43</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 4.

<sup>44</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 5.

<sup>45</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 6.

<sup>46</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 9.

<sup>47</sup>*CL* 30.

In this regard, the *General Statutes* of the USC speak of members' first response to the ideal of life they propose as being a dedicated and assiduous listening to the word of God "which finds in the paschal mystery of the blood of Christ the summit of revelation."<sup>48</sup> The fullness of faith is always refracted then through the prism of Jesus' blood, according to the gasparian insight that in this *mysterium fidei* is found the compendium of all others. By delving "deeply into the understanding of this mystery in the living tradition of the Church, especially in the sacred liturgy and the magisterium,"<sup>49</sup> members of the USC have the opportunity to develop their supernatural appreciation of the faith (*sensus fidei*) in a particularly rich and suggestive fashion.

To this end USC gatherings are destined to be meeting places where members "deepen their knowledge of the spirituality of the Union through study, discussion, days of recollection, etc."<sup>50</sup> It seems therefore that the second "criterion of ecclesiality" is adequately satisfied by the statutes' theological perspective on the faith and the means suggested by them for its deepening.

Thirdly, *Christifideles Laici* calls lay associations "*to witness to a strong and authentic communion*": identified by the document with their manifesting hierarchical union with the pope as pastor of the universal Church and the bishop as pastor of the local Church; adherence to the doctrinal and pastoral initiatives of these "visible principles" of ecclesial communion ensures that groups remain within the one fold of the Church, avoiding a divisive spirit in their relationships with the broader ecclesial community, thus favoring a readiness on their part to collaborate with other Christians.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 5.

<sup>49</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 5.

<sup>50</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 20.

<sup>51</sup>See *CL* 31: "To be responsible for the gift of communion means, first of all, to be

This thesis has shown how the theology and spirituality of the blood of Christ is profoundly oriented to the promotion of solidarity and communion among people, both within and outside the visible boundaries of the body of Christ. The *General Statutes* of the USC likewise reflect this important dimension of the gasparian charism, in harmony with the element of mission, especially its priestly and royal aspects.

Thus, one finds in them explicit concern to preserve and advance the cause of unity: "Mindful that 'God has acquired the Church with his own blood' (Acts 20:28), we commit ourselves to live in full ecclesial communion with respect to the various ministries established in the Church. We offer the blood of Christ and collaborate with the building up and the unifying of the Church and in the diffusing of the reign of God in the world."<sup>52</sup> This comprehensive statement of something flowing directly from the spirituality presented in this thesis appears as practically a paraphrase of the third "criterion of ecclesiality", thereby indicating how the USC meets its expectations in a thorough fashion.

The fourth criterion, which looks to "*conformity and participation in the Church's apostolic goals*" as a sign of a lay association's authenticity, emerges from the conciliar emphasis on the laity's sharing in the Church's mission of evangelization and sanctification, in accord with the elements of mission and secularity.

As demonstrated in Chapter 4, gasparian spirituality gives considerable impetus to the missionary and apostolic imperatives of Christian life. A similar orientation is evidenced by the *General Statutes*: "Highly recommended to the members of the Union is

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committed to overcoming each temptation to division and opposition that works against the Christian life with its responsibility in the apostolate."

<sup>52</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 10. Cf. n. 6 where eucharistic communion, above all "from the chalice of the blood of the New Testament" is stated to be "the most expressive sign of our spirituality."

their engaging in some type of apostolic work in collaboration with the congregations of the Precious Blood, where this is possible and in accord with the needs of the local Church."<sup>53</sup>

Closely aligned to this fourth criterion is the fifth and final one, which calls for lay associations to manifest "*a commitment to a presence in human society*" as put forward in the social teaching of the Church. Here the exhortation makes a forceful appeal to lay associations to demonstrate in practical ways their ability to serve as leaven in the temporal order, calling them "outlets for participation and solidarity in bringing about conditions that are more just and loving within society." There follows a lengthy enumeration of the many areas in which this is possible both in society at large and in the sphere of the Christian community, again in ways congruent with the elements of mission and secularity.

A number of comparisons can be made between the kinds of presence listed by the exhortation under this fifth criterion of ecclesiality and similar ones mentioned in the *General Statutes* of the USC. Hence, the first form of presence stipulated by *Christifideles Laici* is also the fundamental one inspired by the Church's social doctrine, namely the dignity of the human person, which the statutes address as follows:

Jesus has reconciled humanity "through the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:20), "creating in himself one new man from us" (Eph. 2:15).

According to the possibilities of each one, we commit ourselves to bring about a better social order of peace, justice and love among peoples. With a spirit of availability and openness we collaborate, individually and as a group, in every initiative that is taken, in the Church or in civil society, in favor of life and the dignity of the human person, redeemed by Jesus "and at a price" (I Cor. 6:20).

Especially loudly will the blood of the poor cry out to our hearts (cf. Gen. 4:10; Ps. 72:12-14), until the authentic image of God is reflected in them (cf. Gen. 1:26-27).<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 21. Cf. n. 22 which specifies a particular apostolate of the Union, namely one of prayer "in the spirituality of the precious blood." This apostolate is especially aimed at forging spiritual bonds among members of the Union who for a variety of reasons cannot be engaged in its other activities.

<sup>54</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 11.

In addition to this pivotal article, other areas specified by *Christifideles Laici* under the fifth criterion of ecclesiality are shared by the *General Statutes*; these include, in the former, "renewed appreciation for prayer, contemplation, liturgical and sacramental life," to which correspond the following recommendations in the latter:

- "frequent participation in the eucharist, the memorial of the redeeming sacrifice";
- "frequent use of the sacrament of reconciliation, where we experience in a special way the saving power of the blood which Jesus poured forth for the remission of sins";
- joining in the "public cult of the church in the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, which prepares for and prolongs, in the various hours of the day, the praise, the thanksgiving and the memorial of the mysteries of salvation, which are found in the eucharistic mystery";
- holding in esteem "the popular devotions in honor of the blood of Christ that are in harmony with the liturgy";
- "the celebration of liturgical feasts and specific devotional practices and prayers, such as portions of the Liturgy of the Hours, mental prayer, etc.";
- devotion to Mary who "stood near the cross" (cf. Jn. 19:25), suffering profoundly with her only Son and associating herself with maternal heart in his sacrifice, lovingly consenting to the immolation of the victim to whom she gave birth, and offering herself to the eternal Father", as well as to the martyrs and saints "who found in the blood of Christ the strength and light for their heroic service to God and their brethren."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>See *Gen. Stat.* nos. 6, 7, 8 and 13. There are notable echoes in these recommendations of the previous chapter's emphasis on the balanced approach to Christian life that gasparian spirituality fosters, especially regarding the relationship between contemplation and action, for the *General Statutes* are likewise insistent that its members "find in prayer the light and strength to fulfill [their] mission." (n. 8)

Another point of comparison between the exhortation and the statutes is the former's mention of "the spirit of detachment and evangelical poverty leading to greater generosity in charity towards all," to which the statutes correspond by calling USC members to be

[m]indful that with his precious blood Jesus has obtained the imperishable goods of the kingdom of heaven, [so] we, living in the spirit of the beatitudes, seek to accumulate "treasure in heaven, where neither moths nor rust corrode" (Mt. 6:20). By the witness of our evangelical life we try to be a sign and an invitation for the correct use of worldly goods, without indulging in consumerism, but living in simplicity and frugality, sharing what we have with others less fortunate.<sup>56</sup>

This comparative study has clarified how the USC offers the laity a way to embrace a form of gasparian spirituality appropriate to their state, one that is attentive to both the constitutive elements of the gasparian charism as well as the elements of a lay spirituality: which is to say the USC can be considered an optimum locus of lay formation.

As outlined in the opening chapter of the thesis, formation is concerned first of all with the "means of holiness" that favor growth in the spiritual life. That the USC pays thorough attention to such means was verified under the fifth criterion of ecclesiality, where an almost exact correspondence between the means recommended in Chapter 1 under the "element of formation" (taken from the presynodal *Instrumentum Laboris*) and the ones suggested in the *General Statutes*, is evident.

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<sup>56</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 12. Other connections with areas mentioned in *CL*, but not specifically referred to in the statutes, could be made in view of the suggestions offered in Chapter 4 under the heading "The Blood of Christ and the Doctrine of the *Munus Christi*". These include, for example, the exhortation's call under the fifth criterion of ecclesiality for "the reawakening of vocations to Christian marriage"; "a commitment to catechesis and a capacity for teaching and forming Christians"; "the creation and awakening of charitable, cultural and spiritual works"; and "conversion to the Christian life or the return to Church communion of those baptized members who have fallen away from the faith." All of these were mentioned in the previous chapter as areas to which a lay form of gasparian spirituality can be particularly responsive.

The element of formation is concerned, moreover, with the "context" as well as the "content" of formation--something the 1987 Synod, and later *Christifideles Laici*, saw as one of the great benefits lay associations bring to the task of a "totally integrated formation."<sup>57</sup> That the USC is serious about serving as a context for such formation can be seen once more in the *General Statutes* which state unequivocally that, before a person is admitted to membership, "an appropriate period during which the future members undergo formation into the nature and spirituality of the Union, under the direction of persons designated. . .for this purpose"<sup>58</sup> must take place.

In my opinion, the sum of these comparisons provides more than sufficient evidence to conclude the USC is a viable association of the faithful, and well-grounded in a sound ecclesiology based on the above criteria. By extending, moreover, the gasparian charism's ecclesiality to the lay state, the USC opens a new avenue for "communion and adoring mission in the bond of charity through the blood of Christ": the synthesis of what this ecclesiality represents for communities shaped and inspired by the gasparian charism.

*Current status of the USC.* A number of recent developments can be cited which indicate how the formation of the lay faithful is actually taking place in different parts of the world under the aegis of the USC. These developments can be said to exist in three distinct levels of commitment relative to the ideals contained in the *General Statutes*. Anton Loipfinger describes these levels as being related "concentrically" to each other, where each

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<sup>57</sup>See *CL* 60; cf. the *Propositii*, esp. nos. 40-43, and the synthesis of the relevant synodal discussion in *CL*, Chapter V, nos. 57-63.

<sup>58</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 19.

successive level embraces the previous one(s) while at the same time signifying a greater degree of commitment.<sup>59</sup>

The first level might be described as "devotional". At this level of commitment, the USC promotes a devotional spirituality often, but not necessarily, in groups that meet regularly, and whose members engage in spiritual and, occasionally, apostolic activities. Such groups are prevalent especially in Italy where they enjoy significant collaboration with both the Missionaries and Adorers of the Blood of Christ; they are, more or less, the direct descendants of the historical Archconfraternity initiated by Albertini and expanded by Gaspar, as well as the Pious Union born later during Merlini's tenure. A regular chronicle of the history, present status and activities of these groups is published in the monthly magazine of the Pious Union, *Nel Segno del Sangue*.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Anton Loipfinger CPPS, Central Director of the USC, personal notes from interview with author, May 14, 1992, Rome. It should be pointed out that "levels of commitment" are nothing new in the history of this association. As noted previously, the *Constitution* of the original Archconfraternity called for 15 men and women ("representatives") to form the core of the association, and who were charged with particular liturgical and administrative duties (see F. Albertini, "La Confraternita del Preziosissimo Sangue," 522ff.) The *Statutes* of the Pious Union approved in 1945 also distinguished between "simple membership," "adorers" and "the fervent." According to Mario Dariozzi, although these distinctions were never substantial (such that they were dropped altogether in the 1951 revision), they nevertheless remained in effect, and thanks to the *fervent* "the Pious Union would continue the course of its development" ("L'Arciconfraternita del Preziosissimo Sangue," 496).

<sup>60</sup>See e.g. vol. XLII, n. 8-9 (agosto-settembre 1992), 242, which lists the present membership in Italy of the Pious Union (exclusive of what remains of the Archconfraternity) as 598 "centers" with varying amounts of active members. A monthly brochure published jointly by the Missionaries and Adorers in Italy to encourage regular prayer meetings in honor of the blood of Christ notes: "As Jesus drew light and strength from prayer to drink from the cup the Father had given him, so do we find in prayer the light and strength for the fulfillment of our mission." There follows a proposed schema for a liturgy of the word which includes an opening song, optional eucharistic exposition, reading of a selected meditation, silent reflection or sharing, prayers of offering the blood of Jesus with the litany of the precious blood, and conclusion. (see *Adoratori e Adoratrici nel Mondo*, n. 6, Anno 2, June, 1990) The USC in Italy also enjoys the distinction of having under its auspices the *Centro Studi Sanguis Christi* which, in close collaboration with the Italian

The second level of commitment might be described as "formative." At this level, considerably more demands are made on members, and groups tend to operate more consciously on the model outlined in the *General Statutes*. Regular involvement in both spiritual and apostolic activities, often in conjunction with the CPPS or ASC, is expected. Deliberate efforts are made on the part of leadership to ensure that the spirituality of the blood of Christ is promoted so as to influence the everyday lives of the members. Meetings devote time to reflection on concrete ways this can be done in both personal and social contexts. Such groups, with various shades of difference in approach, have appeared in Canada, the United States (New York State), Chile, Germany and Poland.<sup>61</sup>

The third, and most recent, level of commitment to develop might be described as "integral". At this level, a formal relationship between lay "associates" and the CPPS (or ASC) is established. This relationship envisions significant collaboration between these lay affiliates and the day to day life and ministry of the respective congregations, including limited participation in their government at provincial level.

In some provinces of the CPPS, for example, the preparatory formation ("inquiry stage") required prior to formalizing such a commitment ("covenant stage") is extensive and, once admitted to "companionship", in a rite similar to that of incorporation into the Congregation itself, such lay associates become people who "share bread" with the Missionaries.<sup>62</sup>

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Province of the CPPS, is responsible for the many publications cited throughout this thesis under "Edizioni Pia Unione Preziosissimo Sangue."

<sup>61</sup>See e.g. the articles of Winfried Wermter, "The Blood of Christ as *Leitmotif* of the Christian Life--An Experiential Account," in *Precious Blood Spirituality*, 85-96 and "Collaboration with the Laity in Poland," in *Notes from Rome*, internal publication of the general direction of the CPPS, no. 32, June, 1992. Cf. also *Regional Statutes*, Atlantic Region of the Union of the Blood of Christ (Toronto, 1983).

<sup>62</sup>The formation process is outlined in nine Modules with Sponsor's Guide whose

This level of commitment, being promoted mostly in the United States, is not juridically identified at the moment with the *General Statutes* of the USC; it nevertheless represents a concrete form of gasparian ecclesiality in a lay context which, moreover, has many affinities with the original model of associative collaboration between the Archconfraternity, Gaspar's Missionaries, and Maria's Adorers.<sup>63</sup>

Needless to say, this form of associate membership is still in an experimental stage and raises a number of wide-ranging issues that will have to be faced and resolved in light of ongoing experience and discernment. This kind of commitment has, however, much in common with the perspectives adopted in this thesis and, perhaps, contains the seeds of a

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respective topics include: 1. the life and charism of St. Gaspar; 2. the life of Francis de Sales Brunner, founder of the CPPS in the United States; 3. the Society of the Precious Blood; 4. the blood of Christ and a spirituality of covenant; 5. the blood of Christ and a spirituality of the cross; 6. the blood of Christ and a spirituality of the cup; 7. the role of the laity in the Church; 8. developing a personal and apostolic spirituality, and 9. discernment prior to the writing of a covenant.

<sup>63</sup>See William Nordenbrock, private letter to Rev. Philip Smith, Secretary General of the CPPS, May 14, 1992: ". . . Companions are *associate members of the community*. That is the main distinction between the Companions program and the Pious Union. This is *not* a lay association, in the canonical sense. Companions are lay ministers that bond with the Society through Covenant so that they can share in the support of being a member of a community and can minister from an orientation of Precious Blood spirituality. The motivation for welcoming lay ministers into the community at this time is the desire to create a model of Religious Life that reflects a Vatican II ecclesiology, as put forth in the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* and the *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*. Their membership is relatively undefined in the traditional sense of having the rights and responsibilities of membership determined and defined by Constitution or Statute. . . . Detailed definitions of this type of membership, while it would be comforting to have, must be allowed to evolve over the next several years. It is likely that there will be fluid definitions for the next decade, or longer. These definitions must be developed in a collaborative fashion with those in the program. . . . make no mistake about it, this is an effort to expand the apostolic involvement in the name of St. Gaspar and the Society of the Precious Blood, and the result will be a radically different way of being an Apostolic Institute."

comprehensive renewal of the gasparian charism faithful to the theological and pastoral direction of the Church after the Second Vatican Council.

While the norms contained in the *General Statutes* will undoubtedly have to be revised in view of these ongoing developments, in the meantime the regional statutes called for by the general legislation seem, in my opinion, to be the place where specifics can be determined by which the laity "commit themselves to live and promote the spirituality of the blood of Christ." The general legislation foresees just such diversity through local expressions of the USC: "[t]hus the unity of the Union is demonstrated in its plurality--the creativity of the various regions in expressing their implementation of the general statutes."<sup>64</sup> This appears to be a further challenge to the realization of "gasparian ecclesiality" as communion-mission in the blood of Christ.

#### Theological and Spiritual Significance of Gasparian Ecclesiality

Having delineated the forms in which the gasparian charism has manifested itself ecclesially, it remains to be seen what theological significance this differentiation might possess for gasparian spirituality. The following theological reflection examines gasparian ecclesiality in light of its diversity corresponding to the states of Christian life and to gender. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, this reflection is undertaken from a balthasarian perspective, drawing from von Balthasar's analysis of these aspects of diversity as they appear in Christian life generally, the dogmatic and spiritual implications of the gasparian charism's own "communion-in-diversity".

#### *The Communion-in-Diversity of the Gasparian Charism*

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<sup>64</sup>*Gen. Stat.* n. 18.

As indicated earlier, the gasparian charism evolved historically and ecclesially from its origin in a lay association, leading to an eventual concretization in priestly and religious forms as well. It was also suggested that the latter differentiations were in some way already envisioned in the original unity of the charism's undifferentiated state.

In fact, the conception and to some extent, the gestation, of both the CPPS and the ASC occurred during the crucial discussions that took place between Albertini and Del Bufalo during their exile together: the Archconfraternity already being in existence by that time. The following text summarizes the historical genesis of the albertinian project and, like all the historical material adduced in this chapter, is presented for the sake of the theological arguments it supports:

To reconstruct the history of the Archconfraternity. . . means going to the roots of two congregations: the Missionaries and the Adorers, both of whom bear the same name as the Archconfraternity itself [i.e. *of the Precious Blood*]. It also entails, obviously enough, identifying the spirituality in whose soil these roots were sunk. Later, the two congregations would have a rather complex history and, in the case of the Adorers. . . numerous offshoots.

. . . During the years of deportation (but especially 1811 while in Bologna) D. Francesco Albertini and D. Gaspare del Bufalo studied closely all the developments which the Confraternity of the Precious Blood might take once the crisis was over. In Albertini's mind it was foreseen that the Confraternity would branch out into two Congregations: one of teachers and the other of missionaries--to expand the good it was meant to accomplish in the parish of S. Nicola in Carcere.

. . . The overall vision of the plan contemplated by Albertini was the following: the Confraternity of the Precious Blood. . . would promote two apostolic activities. . . Each of these branches would be entrusted to a "deputy".

The exile over, D. Gaspare del Bufalo was named deputy of the missions and Mons. Gianfranco Falzacappa, of the schools. Both submitted to the directives of Albertini, president of the Confraternity.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>M. Colagiovanni, *Maria De Mattias: la ribelle obbediente*, 11-16 passim. As mentioned earlier, Albertini's plan for the ASC was not realized until 1834 by Maria De Mattias after a number of unsuccessful attempts, including one by Maria herself. The missionary institute, on the other hand, was realized relatively soon after the deportation as a modification of an already existing group of secular clergy dedicated to the ministry of preaching, the so-called "Evangelical Workers" (*Opera degli Operai Evangelici*) instituted by Gaetano Bonnani in 1813, and under his direction. Gaspar himself had accepted an

These historical details underscore the good reason for which Gaspar always referred to Albertini as "our common father": reasons not based on sentimentality or worse, false humility; this way of referring to Albertini represents, rather, the literal truth. The same could be said for Maria's similar acknowledgement of Gaspar, who would no doubt immediately refer her calling him "founder" back to Albertini.

For the "Work" which Gaspar and Maria were called to shape and direct--and here they are unequivocally the "founders" of their respective congregations--was essentially one, springing from an original inspiration given to the founder of the Confraternity. One could argue for the integral unity of this charism, therefore, on the basis of its historical genesis: the lay (albertinian), priestly (gasparian) and religious (mattian) manifestations of the charism belonging equally, though distinctly, to the one ecclesial reality this chapter has designated by the comprehensive term "gasparian."<sup>66</sup>

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invitation to join this group while still in exile; upon his return, this association was "transformed" into the CPPS in 1815 by the adoption of community life and the dedication to the precious blood: all through the agency of Gaspar who founded the first mission house of the new institute in Giano, appointing Bonnani as first superior.

Cf. A. Santonato, "Il Sangue di Cristo negli scritti di Mons. Francesco Albertini", 555, for the observation that Albertini's Confraternity "lies at the origin of the vast movement of devotion/spirituality of the precious blood in the 19th Century" from which he estimates at least 15 surviving religious institutes owe their beginnings, directly or indirectly, to the same Confraternity.

<sup>66</sup>The legitimacy of this appellation, the full import of which remains to be seen, might at first appear an usurpation, whether of Albertini's primacy or of De Mattias' unique contribution, to the charism. At this point, it suffices to point out the numerous parallels in other charismatic spiritualities whose names are derived from the ones through whom a movement was principally, if not originally, propagated. Hence, "franciscan" spirituality is not an inaccurate designation, though it cannot be properly thought of without reference to its "claretian" aspect; nor is "dominican" spirituality a misnomer, though it should never be considered apart from its "thomist" and "catherinian" enrichments.

In terms of "gasparian" spirituality, one could say that, since providence ordained Gaspar to be the one chiefly responsible for promoting Albertini's inspiration (given the latter's promotion to the episcopacy and his untimely death), he can rightfully be seen as the

*The Gasparian Charism and Original Inspiration*

The notion of "original inspiration" is found in von Balthasar, and has been examined by Libero Gerosa from a balthasarian perspective, particularly in relation to what the Council and the Code of Canon Law call *incepta*, or "new forms of association inspired by the Holy Spirit in the Church."<sup>67</sup>

While Balthasar himself has devoted considerable theological attention to the ecclesial innovation made by secular institutes, he has also offered some important insights concerning the postconciliar phenomena of lay movements and associations. Taking his cue from the Swiss theologian's principles, Gerosa develops a theology of these phenomena in conformity with an ecclesiological vision of the interconnectedness of the three states of Christian life, whose mutual relations can be "broadened and intensified by following an original charism, [and] whose gathering power always realizes in a concrete fraternity the ecclesial logic of communion."<sup>68</sup>

To seek the "originality" of a charism in this sense means then to determine its full ecclesial import from a specific act or acts of foundation.

Gerosa proceeds to identify the essential features of original charisms which--however much they are identified with particular foundations--always have wider ecclesial

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"prism" through which the several rays of a single charism passed. That this charism should bear his name in no way prejudices the distinctions legitimately made in its regard, but should rather be seen as a testimony to their essential unity.

<sup>67</sup>Libero Gerosa, "Secular institutes, lay associations, and ecclesial movements in the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar," *CICR* 17 (Fall 1990): 345. Cf. the author's *Carisma e Diritto nella Chiesa: riflessioni canonistiche sul 'carisma originario' dei movimenti ecclesiali* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1989), esp. 79-89. The use of *incepta* is found in AA 24 and Canon 298, par. 1.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, 352.

significance. He lists four characteristics of such an original charism: the first being the opening up of a new way of following Christ in the obedience of faith, whereby the original charismatic figure appears "ready to build up the Church, enabling him to give life to a communion or ecclesial organism which lives in a particular form the whole of the Church. . . ." <sup>69</sup>

In terms of the gasparian charism, Francis Albertini, the figure in whom the charism originally appeared, was intent on giving those in each state of Christian life a new form of the *sequela Christi*, rooted in a spirituality that derived its specific contour from devotion to the blood of Christ, and at the same time was the source of new ecclesial associations with a radical ethos of communion rooted in this spirituality. <sup>70</sup>

Gerosa's second characteristic of an original charism is the ability of the initiating figure to act as a spiritual "progenitor" toward others in view of bringing them to mature faith. Here too, Albertini bequeathed to his "firstborn son in Jesus Christ" the patrimony of a spirituality first shared in by members of the Confraternity; Gaspar in his stead, by generating a new institute, divided this inheritance among many brothers, one of whom, Giovanni Merlini, would be entrusted with the guardianship of another heir to this legacy, Maria De Mattias, destined to exercise a spiritual maternity of her own, giving birth to numerous daughters in the Spirit.

Gerosa's third trait is the ability of associations born from an original charism to demonstrate a missionary vigor identical with the general apostolic mission of the Church.

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 353.

<sup>70</sup> Albertini himself describes the impetus to communion deriving from devotion to the blood of Christ in the following text: ". . .with this letter I gladly take the opportunity to grasp and embrace you in the most precious blood of Jesus, in which, as always, I meet you immersed and joined to your, and my, dearest confreres. . ." (*Lettera* n. 8, to the prior of the Archconfraternity, August 10, 1810 in A. Santonato, "Il Sangue di Cristo negli scritti," 568).

In this regard, the missionary power of the albertinian inspiration, which hardly bears repeating, represents the whole thrust of *the Work* that was to bring many people, especially those who were far off, near to the source of divine mercy for their renewal in faith and charity. Each ecclesial form of the gasparian charism had its respective share in this mission according to the possibilities of time and place; whatever limitations were imposed on the "origins" as such did not, however, stifle the Spirit from working to overcome restrictions of pure convention, thus doing something "new" in the Church of that era.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>This innovative quality of the gasparian missionary charism has already been noted in regard to the lay state when, in the previous chapter, St. Gaspar was seen to anticipate by almost a century developments in the areas of lay spirituality and apostolate. He could also be viewed as an innovator concerning the priestly state in that Gaspar's revival of something known in the past (though in diverse forms) as the *vita canonica* was something relatively new for his time and place. It would take the Church some time, for instance, to distinguish this way of life in relation to traditional religious institutes. In the first codification of canon law (1917), the heading "societies of the common life without vows" was given official, though hesitant, recognition, something redressed in the present code (1983) where full title is given to "societies of the apostolic life." The role of Gaspar's institute in this gradual broadening of what constitutes a distinct vocation within the priestly state has been well-attested. See *A Handbook on Canons 573-746*, ed. Jordan Hite, et. al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1983), 287-306.

The mattian contribution to the missionary charism was also notably innovative, for it contemplate a womens' community--not unlike the original vision of the salesian Visitation--that did not readily fit into the usual categories of religious life. Both the absence of mandatory vows and the intention to perform ministries not foreseen for women of the time constituted novelties, for which Maria and the ASC would meet with suspicion from members of the hierarchy and, in the case of the vows, eventually be suppressed. Moreover, in addition to the teaching apostolate, the ASC was also to exercise a ministry of the word parallel to the missionaries', whereby each house of the institute was to take in female retreatants under the sisters' direction (cf. 1857 *Rules and Constitution*, Part III, Ch. III, Art 1. in *Maria De Mattias fondatrice: alle origini*, 66 and *Fundamental Articles*, no. 3). Maria herself exercised a veritable preaching ministry that would also provoke occasional hostility from clerics, making even Merlini marvel, "This is something new in the world." (Quoted in *ibid.*, 38; see pp. 35-40 for a fuller treatment of Maria's prophetic gifts and activity making her and her institute an integral part of the missionary dynamism of the gasparian charism).

The fourth characteristic is the advancement of the personal in relation to the ecclesial, by which the charism fosters resolution of potential conflicts between the individual and the community, so that "the right to exercise one's own charism. . . coincides with the duty to follow the 'method of spiritual life' implied by the pneumatic gift, which, because of its theological specificity, is completely directed toward realizing ecclesial communion."<sup>72</sup>

This person-community dialectic also received a new way to resolution through the albertinian inspiration. The emphasis, for instance, on the ecclesial forms of the gasparian charism being free associations without vows (something always the case with the CPPS and initially true of the ASC) highlighted the nature of Christian bonding as rooted in the Spirit of charity more than the force of law. Still, those who freely entered and remained in these communities, bound themselves with equal freedom to observance of their "method of spiritual life"--not as a new legalism that restricts the personal, but which serves to ensure the communion of "one heart and soul" (a favorite expression of Maria) essential to any Christian *comunitas*: all the more to one that is especially conscious of a call to communion "in the blood of Christ".<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>L. Gerosa, "Secular institutes, lay associations", 356. More simply put, this implies a resolution of the individual-community dialectic in favor of communion, since the person with his or her individual talents and interests, develops "personally" only in relation to the communal embodiment of the original charism, usually expressed in a "rule of life". The person-in-communion is the goal of any ecclesial association, fully in line with an ecclesiology that judges false any dichotomy between the body and its individual members (cf. 1 Cor. 12:27).

<sup>73</sup>No disparagement is intended here of the vowed life which, of course, springs from love, and is oriented toward the perfection of charity (cf. Vatican II, *Perfectae Caritatis* 1). Rather, Gaspar's emphasis is, in part, on the freedom with which his missionaries ought to observe the Rule, without any "constraint" arising from appeal to a vow; beyond this, the "bond" of charity is itself ordered to communion. See e.g. the retreat letter of 1837: ". . . 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

By manifesting these identifying features set out by Gerosa, the gasparian charism seems to qualify precisely as an "original inspiration", behind which lies the various forms of association to which it gave rise in the Church. Moreover, in applying this notion to the gasparian charism, it becomes necessary to maintain a comprehensive view of the charism in its full ecclesial breadth, while still recognizing in its albertinian origins the source of its essential unity. It now remains for this reflection to seek the significance of the charism's diversity: the theological and spiritual meanings arising from the charism's differentiation by state and gender.

#### *Significance of the Gasparian Charism's Differentiation by State*

In conformity with its being an original inspiration, and its subsequent evolution, the gasparian charism has demonstrated an ability to promote an "existentially more efficacious interaction of the states of Christian life."<sup>74</sup> What this means is crucial for determining the theological and spiritual significance of the charism not only in its origin, but above all for the Church today.

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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" (*Circular Letters*, 60-1; cf. L. Contegiacomo, *S. Gaspare Del Bufalo: Vita, Personalità, Carisma*, 188-91).

Maria was also convinced of the necessary relationship between observance of the rule and the preservation of communion. See the 1857 *Rules and Constitution*, Preface and Part I, Ch. XVIII, Art. 1: "By faithfully maintaining among us the highest regard, respect and love for the rule, and its exact observance, is the surest way to become a perfect Adorer of the divine blood, and beneficial daughter of the Institute. . . .which [rule], although not binding under pain even of venial sin, is still the expression of God's will for us, the path along which the Lord wishes to lead us to himself and make us instruments of others' well-being. . . .Therefore all its members must be of one heart and soul, intent on their own and others' sanctification" (*Maria De Mattias fondatrice: alle origini*, 62-3).

On how original charisms are "translated" into juridical-institutional form, see L. Gerosa, *Carisma e Diritto nella Chiesa*, 180-97.

<sup>74</sup>L. Gerosa, "Secular institutes, lay associations, " 353.

We begin this part of the reflection then by highlighting the importance of the particular way in which the gasparian charism is differentiated by state. With von Balthasar as guide, we note first of all that

the lay state is to be designated as the primary, and, at the same time, *the fundamental state in the Church*. Since this is so, and *since the other two states* are formed by specific differentiations of this first state, they may be regarded as classifications, emphases, and *concretizations* of this state, to which they stand in a relationship of service.

This applies to the priestly state, which is essentially a function--that of representing Christ--and is, therefore, ordered to the universal Church. It applies even more strongly to the state of the counsels, whose "highest" ideal is the realization of the general Christian ideal, and which, therefore, must in a special way represent for all Christians the evangelical perfection toward which all must strive. It may be compared to the raising of a number to a higher power, which nevertheless contains the base number; to the meeting of a challenge that is made to all; to the setting up of a model that all are to imitate; to the delineation of a type with which all are to be identified.<sup>75</sup>

This passage contains a central balthasarian insight, namely that what the states of election "add" to those called out of the common state of Christians is a sacramental-representational status serving as an efficacious sign to the Church of what every single member of the faithful already "possesses" in virtue of their baptismal profession: the absolute and universal call to the perfection of charity in the *communio sanctorum*. In view of this call, the priestly and evangelical states "lose" their distinctiveness in the unity of the definitive, inner form of Christian holiness, rooted in the *renuntio* of the baptismal vow.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>H. Balthasar, *The Christian State of Life*, trans. Mary Francis McCarthy (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 333-4.

<sup>76</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, 344-5: "In this relationship of the states of life to and in one another is perfected to the fullest extent the 'general priesthood' of the Church as a whole. . . .The special functional priesthood of the clerical state and the special existential priesthood of the state of the counsels are henceforth no longer distinguishable from the comprehensive priesthood of all Christians (just as the special priesthood of those in the states of election in no way separates or dispenses them from participation in the general priesthood).

In terms of the "originality" of the gasparian charism, it seems that the differentiation of the two states of election (CPPS and ASC) from the lay state (USC) is a verification of this theological truth, and speaks in favor of the charism's being deeply rooted in the mystery of the Church. Moreover, the two ecclesial concretizations of the charism, precisely because they encouraged secular priests and lay women to embrace voluntarily the evangelical counsels, seem to affirm the belief that the universal call to holiness is ultimately rooted in the baptismal consecration; by realizing the Christian ideal without recourse to vows, these communities reminded the Church at large of the radical commitment to Christ incumbent on all the baptized.

In this way, the charism is particularly illustrative of the balthasarian (and conciliar) insight on the unicity of Christian holiness, something the differentiation of the states of election does not shatter, but typifies. Thus, the charism's profoundly secular basis proves in its own way that "[t]he mysteries of the priestly and religious states do not form a higher, esoteric level above the modest ground level of 'ordinary Christian life'. Their purpose is rather to increase and reveal in all Christians 'the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God' (Rom. 11:33)."<sup>77</sup>

In terms of the elements of lay spirituality, one sees here the dialectic between universality and specificity at work once again, a dialectic whose tension cannot be satisfactorily resolved by making rigid oppositions between the spiritualities arising from the distinct states of life, for

[a]lthough there is a sense in which we can speak of a spirituality of the counsels, of the married state, of the priestly state, it is in practice impossible to contrast these forms of spirituality as distinct and precisely demarcated.... [M]uch of what has been done in this line is quite superficial and trite, since the ecclesiastical states are treated as though they were separate departments of a secular association, without

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<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 338.

due attention to the profound mysteries of the ontology of the Church and the resultant circumincession of the various states.<sup>78</sup>

The evolution of the gasparian charism seems then to militate against any such demarcations, firstly by respecting the ecclesial origin and process of differentiation of the states themselves, and secondly by continually proposing to the states of election the fact of their origin in the undifferentiated state of the laity: specifically, by asking them to retain something concrete from their secular derivation.

What emerges from this charism then is a catholic, ecclesial spirituality, to which any sectarian or elitist tendency is utterly foreign: a spirituality that shows itself to be one and plural at the same time, not admitting diversity at the expense of unity nor forbidding variety of expression for the sake of uniformity. In short, gasparian ecclesiality highlights the similar rather than the dissimilar features of the differentiation of states; and by pointing to the states' analogical relationship, the gasparian way of life calls for a realization that "the whole Church as such, before any specific vocation within it, has a `secular' dimension."<sup>79</sup> Without wishing to anticipate the now imminent conclusion to this thesis, it is becoming clear how close gasparian ecclesiality is to this theology of the states, a theology which in turn is rooted in Balthasar's theology of the secular institute.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>H. Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology I: The Word Made Flesh*, trans. trans. A.V. Littledale with Alexander Dru (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 221-2.

<sup>79</sup>L. Gerosa, "Secular institutes, lay associations," 351.

<sup>80</sup>Among their earliest, most articulate, and ardent proponents, Balthasar saw the emergence of this new form of Christian life as a potential means of bridging what in the Church are often effectively distant from each other, i.e. the states of life and the spheres of Church and world. See Balthasar, *Christian State*, 359: "In the way of life adopted by the secular institutes. . .there is no compromise between `Church' and `world' or between the `evangelical state' and `lay state'; there is only an attempt to extend the spectrum of mission to its fullest span." Cf. the article "Toward a Theology of the Secular Institute," in *Explorations in Theology II: Spouse of the Word*, trans. A.V. Littledale, et.al. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 457, where Balthasar exhibits sympathy for those institutes which

At the time of his major writings on the subject of secular institutes, the phenomenon of lay movements had not emerged with the visibility and favor they have enjoyed since the Council. The appearance, though, of professedly "lay" associations (some of which include priest members ordained for service of the association as well as members who profess the evangelical counsels) has somewhat changed the ecclesial equation. Balthasar recognized this, eventually turning his attention (though less extensively) to a consideration of the ecclesial significance of these movements; he did so as an extension of his theological reflection on secular institutes and, of course, within his broader theology of the states.

His general conclusion is that these more recent phenomena offer a convincing proof of the conciliar teaching on the universal call to holiness:

The purely hypothetical idea that Christian perfection is reserved to the religious state, while the laymen in the world should be content with living a second-rate Christian life, has failed: now it is understood, in accord with the Gospel, that all Christians. . .are called to holiness in the same way. One might suppose that this principle of Christian life owes something to the evolution of practice: Christians aspiring to perfection no longer bind themselves as frequently to a third order, with a view to receiving something of the charism of the religious order at its origin; rather, they establish themselves in autonomous structures of the Church, even when they make reference to the spirituality of a given order. Sometimes one sees the inverse of what used to happen: the new lay movements decisively influence religious communities and rejuvenate their spirit.<sup>81</sup>

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"persistently refuse being considered a part of any other but the lay secular state." While his concern to defend institutes' identity from being swallowed up by traditional structures is admirable--hence his emphasis on their "lay" character--Balthasar falls into an imprecision here that is addressed more fully below.

<sup>81</sup>H. von Balthasar, "Riflessioni per un lavoro sui movimenti laicali nella Chiesa," in *I Laici e la Missione della Chiesa* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1986), 89-90; quoted by L. Gerosa, "Secular institutes, lay associations," 358.

The equation has changed then in terms of direction of influence, where the lay state, in full conformity with its being the fundamental state of the Church, has now become for many committed faithful the unambiguous source of their ecclesial life and association: without recourse to traditional "validations" of their commitment through alliance with forms or spiritualities derived from the states of election and dependent on them. Here the element of specificity, so often violated in the past, acquires its full force and importance, not in contradiction with the element of universality, but as a clear affirmation of it.<sup>82</sup>

Indeed, the ecclesial evolution of the gasparian charism, in many ways a precursor of the recent phenomena of secular institutes/lay associations (in an era when such innovations possessed few ecclesiastical, much less theological, precedents by which to

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<sup>82</sup>We recall here the imprecision which rests fundamentally on the failure to distinguish between "canonical status" (which membership, e.g. in a secular institute, does not affect) and "ecclesiastical state" (which would be affected by members of a secular institute professing the evangelical counsels); this imprecision is found, for example, in *Christifideles Laici* 56, which speaks of the faithful who belong to a secular institute as "fully maintaining [their] lay or clerical state." In fact, what they retain is their canonical status, but not their ecclesial state.

A similar imprecision arises in popular parlance, with reference to the clerical state, when one hears those ordained to the permanent diaconate referred to as "lay deacons". And as the solemn consecration to virginity of women living in the world gradually alters the ecclesiastical landscape, the misnomer "lay nun" will undoubtedly emerge as well. Such confusion is understandable given the recent vintage of these new forms within the states of election; only experience and the passage of time will help clarify their role, both juridical and pastoral, in the life of the Church.

What is important for our purposes, is to note how these imprecisions arise from what Balthasar calls the " *manifold ambiguity of the concept 'laity'*" (*Christian State*, 360); this is something the secular institute, permanent diaconate and consecration of women bring to the fore in striking ways since each operates outside the traditional structures of the evangelical and clerical states--except for their determining features, viz. the counsels and ordination. The present state of development does not, however, seem ripe either for a thoroughgoing theology of these new institutions (including, by extension, the new lay movements), much less a rigid jurisprudence, for what may eventually be seen as a particular fruit of the Second Vatican Council akin to the proliferation of religious "congregations" (distinct from "orders") that flourished as a result of the tridentine reform.

identify themselves), could be seen as the exact reverse of what has frequently marked the relationship between the states of life. That is to say, instead of the USC being a "third order" emanating from the prior foundation of a priestly/male "first order" that later gave rise to a religious/female "second order", the CPPS and the ASC both emerged from a lay association. What is more, the ASC may very well have been intentionally prior to the CPPS, adding to the inversion: a reversal which is also thoroughly congruent, as shown below, with Balthasar's understanding of the interrelationship between the states of life.

In any case, the states of election which grew from the albertinian inspiration (like secular institutes and the lay movements prevalent in the Church today) were derived from, and retained, a deliberately "secular" aspect: an aspect rooted ultimately in the original, lay, form of the charism. So while still recognizing the place of the counsels, by imposing their "spirit", the Missionaries and (at first) the Adorers, embraced them only in ways "analogous" to the evangelical state, which is to say, outside their traditionally monastic setting.<sup>83</sup> Herein lies, in my opinion, the core of the gasparian charism's deeply held appreciation of the universal call to holiness lived "in the world," hence a charism with a definite orientation to embodiment in a lay form.

We leave to the conclusion of the thesis the implications of all this for contemporary and future perspectives on the gasparian charism and its spirituality. At this point, though,

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<sup>83</sup>Along these lines, it is worth noting that from the time of Maria's second encounter with Gaspar he counseled her not to enter a monastery but to remain in the world, telling her she could find the holiness she desired "anywhere." Maria would later interpret this counsel to mean that Del Bufalo intuited her future role as foundress of the ASC, a decidedly "secular" foundation relative to a monastic setting. (See *Lettere* I, n. 188, to Giovanni Merlini, August 12, 1847, 242-3) Also of note is Maria's early spiritual and apostolic formation, dating from the same time, which took place in one of the *ristretti* (the "Daughters of Mary") or lay associations, which the missionaries established in Vallecorsa as one of the "works of perseverance" according to their customary method.

some further specifications, relevant to the thesis topic, on the interrelationship of the states of life are called for.

#### Interrelationship of the states of life

For von Balthasar, the complex relationship of the states of Christian life cannot be described with a fixed formula; indeed, his exposition of them at times seems to be primarily linear in nature, and at other times, circular. Thus he describes, at first, a relationship of "increasing intensity" whereby the movement from lay to priestly to evangelical state is a linear progression from "lower to higher". The states of election, whether in virtue of an official or personal call to follow Christ more closely, are, in familiar balthasarian terminology, calls to a "qualitatively higher state" vis-a-vis the lay state.<sup>84</sup>

This is, however, only one way to view the relationship, for in a more "circular" reflection Balthasar posits the priestly state in a rank superior to the other two, since the priestly office serves the whole Church as an efficacious sign of Jesus Christ's ongoing presence to the ecclesial community, above all in the priestly ministry of sanctifying, teaching and shepherding.

Given the fact, moreover, that this office is conferred on a person who must respond to the call and its demands, the priestly office acquires an ordering to the evangelical state which is, according to Balthasar, fundamentally a personal form of discipleship--not however, without an "official" status in the Church, as evidenced by those religious who are also priests and by members of religious institutes who exercise within their communities a recognized ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

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<sup>84</sup>See Balthasar, *Christian State*, 364ff., with accompanying diagrams.

The states of election then "complement each other as the objective and subjective forms of the Christian grace of mission"<sup>85</sup>; this interrelationship of office and person in the states of election becomes, for the laity also, "the determining factor of their Christian life in the world,"<sup>86</sup> since the union of objective holiness and subjective response is, for Balthasar, the challenge posed by the gospel to every Christian.

At the next point along this "circular" way of viewing the interrelationship of the states, Balthasar moves from the preceding observation on the ability of the evangelical state to embrace the demands of office together with the personal call to holiness, by giving the state of the counsels a certain "ascendancy" over the other two states. Here the often referred to position of Balthasar is confirmed anew: "Holiness coincides so closely with that which gives form to the evangelical state that every vocation is also a vocation to live according to the spirit (if not necessarily according to the outward form) of the counsels."<sup>87</sup> The total surrender of the person implied in professing the vows represents for him the radicalized love which is the inner form of Christian holiness.

It is the last stage of his reflection, though, which is especially relevant to this thesis, for it has a direct bearing on the theological significance of the differentiation of the gasparian charism. At this point, Balthasar holds for a complete inversion of the previously posited ascendancy of the priestly over the lay state, and of the evangelical over the priestly and lay states,

once the functional character and outward orientation of the official ministry and, more especially, of the personal commitment proper to the evangelical state have

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<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, 371.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, 375.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, 377.

been clearly revealed. For it appears then that the two special ways of life are in the service of the principal state in the Church, which is the lay state.<sup>88</sup>

This service is basically instrumental, meaning the states of election are placed at the disposal of the lay faithful for their edification and empowerment, fostering in them the pure love of God and neighbor which is the common vocation of all Christians:

. . .[the states of election] have no other *raison d'être* than this service. It is their task unceasingly and in every possible way to procure, explain and transmit to the fundamental state in the Church the fullness of divine grace. The wealth that seems to be theirs belongs to them only for the sake of the whole Church, which possesses it only when it possesses Christ. They are a treasure on which the laity can depend, that it can justly claim as its possession in Christ. In the name of Christ, the priesthood shows and gives this Church what belongs to it by right; by its very nature and example, the state of the counsels shows it the possibilities of development that are inherent in its own Christian life and makes them accessible to it. All that happens to these two states, even their most intimate, most personal and most God-oriented experiences, happens to them for the sake of the community.

. . .For this contrast has for its premise the unity of love and for its goal the increase of love. In pouring out the whole fullness of Christian life upon the community, objectively in the sacraments and in the traditional teaching of the Church and subjectively by their example, by the richness of their Christian experiences in joy and in suffering, in ecstasy and in persecution, those in the state of election want only to give the whole community a share in their riches.<sup>89</sup>

In this sense, the laity must be viewed in "ascendance" over the states of election since, in the Church whose Founder came to serve and not to be served. A reversal of value has taken place in the Church of Christ, evident in its very constitution, such that the greatest are counted among the least, and the first, among the last. There can be no true "superiority" then in such a Church, but only a relative importance in relation to the call of each member to love and serve the entire household of faith.

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<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, 381-2.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, 334-5.

Here too the gasparian charism demonstrates a profound resonance with such an understanding of the states of life: both in terms of the inversion noted earlier in the charism's ecclesial evolution, and in its differentiation by state whose motive was loving service of the Church. In its distinctive way then, the gasparian charism proves the balthasarian thesis that, in the final analysis, the relationship between the states, more than being a linear or pyramidal progression from lower to higher, is a circular one in which there is a constant interplay and a certain equidistance from the center, who is Christ: "Because of love, all forms of the states of life achieve their final meaning only in pure altruism and in a kind of mutual indwelling [*circumincessio*] whereby love becomes the ultimate form of ecclesial life."<sup>90</sup>

It is our contention, therefore, that when the gasparian charism is considered comprehensively, with each of its constitutive elements intact, and in the different ways they are present in the charism's several ecclesial expressions, it can model the fruitful interrelationship of the diverse forms of ecclesial life arising from state. Before making our conclusive statement in this regard, however, the other differentiation of the charism--according to gender--must be examined for its theological and spiritual significance, as another instance of the communion-in-diversity that has marked gasparian ecclesiality from the beginning.

#### *Significance of the Charism's Differentiation by Gender*

The second differentiation of the gasparian charism concerns its concrete existence in persons who have been created "male and female, in the image and likeness of God" (cf. Gn. 1:27); because this aspect of gasparian communion-in-diversity involves the most

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<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, 385.

fundamental difference among human beings, it requires careful reflection as to its meaning.<sup>91</sup> The point of departure for this reflection is the perception in balthasarian theology that the relationship of the sexes is analogous to that of the inner life of the divine Persons in the mystery of the Trinity. This similarity (which one hastens to point out admits of an ever greater dissimilarity as posited by the *analogia fidei*) of the sexual differentiation of the human person to the hypostatic differentiation within the Trinity--a distinction of person which in no way diminishes unity of substance--is central to Balthasar's theological anthropology and, by extension, his ecclesiology. Our reflection on the male-female axis of the gasparian charism in light of this theology, along with parallels to it in contemporary ecclesiastical statements, serves then to enrich this chapter's presentation of gasparian ecclesiality.<sup>92</sup>

The apostolic letter of John Paul II *Mulieris Dignitatem* "on the dignity and vocation of women" is one such statement that betrays an unmistakable balthasarian influence, as do other documents of the current pontificate.<sup>93</sup> The heart of this self-described "biblical-

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<sup>91</sup>Nor are the differentiations according to state and gender unrelated. From a balthasarian perspective, the one casts light on the other such that the complementary relationship of the states traced above also possesses a meaning "in the supernatural order of the Church. . . *analogous to that of the relationship of the sexes in the natural order*" (*Christian State*, 180).

<sup>92</sup>I am indebted for the following insights to the doctoral dissertation of Claudio Giuliodori, *Intelligenza Teologica del Maschile e del Femminile: problemi e prospettive nella rilettura di von Balthasar e P. Evdokimov* (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1991) who, basing himself on the theology of von Balthasar and the Orthodox theologian Pàvel Evdokimov, explores the meaning of the sexual differentiation of the human person in light of Christian faith in the Trinity, and the spousal relationship of Christ and the Church. Especially important is his careful analysis of the analogical nature of theological discourse and how a correct understanding of the relationship between the *analogia entis* and *analogia fidei* is necessary for an accurate, and not merely projective, theological understanding of the masculine and feminine (see pp. 81-112).

<sup>93</sup>See the explicit acknowledgement of dependence in *MD 27*, n. 55. Cf. *CL 55* in which Gerosa, "Secular institutes, lay associations" 351, sees a clear balthasarian imprint. It is

theological meditation" lies in the affirmation that the interpersonal character of the human being is a particular reflection of humanity's being made in the image of God. This existing-in-relationship, above all in the "unity of the two" (male and female), which unity bears an analogous likeness to the trinitarian communion of love.<sup>94</sup> This "unity of the two" represents then the basis for his consideration of the anthropological and theological foundations of an adequate discourse on masculinity and femininity, viewed in their diverse yet mutual complementarity.

One item in the apostolic letter of interest to this thesis is the observation that scripture--owing to the anthropomorphic and therefore limited quality of biblical language--speaks of God having both "masculine" and "feminine" traits. In addition to confirming the doctrine that the human being, male and female, is created in the divine image, this way of speaking posits within God an analogous "masculinity" and "femininity" which, according to the letter, refers to the generation within the Trinity of the second from the first Person.

Hence, human generation, in which both man and woman share, bears a likeness to the eternal begetting of the Word: "God from God, light from light, true God from true God." This human analogy to the trinitarian mystery also grounds the essential equality of

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interesting from the perspective of this chapter that both these texts have to do with the states of life and the implications of human sexuality for ecclesiology.

<sup>94</sup>Cf. *MD* 7. The bishop of Rome in this document offers what he calls elsewhere an "incentive. . .to pursue on the basis of the personal dignity of man and woman and their mutual relationship, a critical study to better and more deeply understand their mutual relationship. . .[and] the values and specific gifts of femininity and masculinity" (*CL* 50). As such, the document apparently intends to be neither an exhaustive nor definitive treatment of an extraordinarily complex topic, but rather a contribution, albeit authoritative, to a continuing discussion. It should be read, moreover, in conjunction with his catechesis on the "theology of the body" given at his Wednesday general audiences beginning on September 5, 1979; this orients the theologico-anthropological perspectives of the apostolic letter. (See *Uomo e donna lo creò. Catechesi sull'amore umano*, Rome, 1987).

the sexes, while at the same time indicating their distinction one from the other. The crucial text is the following:

[B]iblical language. . . *points indirectly to the mystery of the eternal "generating" which belongs to the inner life of God. Nevertheless, in itself this "generating" has neither "masculine" nor "feminine" qualities. It is by nature totally divine. . . Thus, even "fatherhood" in God is completely divine and free of the masculine bodily characteristics proper to human fatherhood.*

. . . Although it is not possible to attribute human qualities to the eternal generation of the Word of God, and although the divine fatherhood does not possess "masculine" characteristics in a physical sense, we must nevertheless seek in God the absolute *model* of all "generation" among human beings. . . All "generating" among creatures finds its primary model in that generating which in God is completely divine, that is, spiritual. All "generating" in the created world is to be likened to this absolute and uncreated model. Thus every element of human generation which is proper to man, and every element which is proper to woman, namely human "fatherhood" and "motherhood", bears within itself a likeness to, or analogy with the divine "generating" and with that "fatherhood" which in God is "totally different", that is, completely spiritual and divine in essence; whereas in the human order, generation is proper to the "unity of the two": both are "parents", the man and the woman alike.<sup>95</sup>

In addition to depatriarchalizing Christian belief in the trinitarian God (without at the same time "matriarchalizing" the deity), this arguably revolutionary text liberates Christian discourse on the Trinity, and by extension, on the sexes, from rigidly attributing to males and females exclusive functions, much less "identities" in relation to the other.

Balthasar himself takes the papal meditation further, seeing both "masculine" and "feminine" ways in which the first and second Persons of the Trinity relate to one another in the mystery of eternal generation. Holding the view (opposed to others such as Evdokimov and some feminist theologians) that the male-female analogue in the Trinity is not to be sought in the distinction between the second and third Persons but in the distinction between the first and second Persons, Balthasar liberates this kind of analogical reflection

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<sup>95</sup>MD 8.

on the Trinity from its tendency to project anthropomorphically a gnostic-mythic view of God, which assigns to the second and third Persons respective male and female identities.<sup>96</sup>

Summarizing Balthasar's thesis, Giuliiodori notes a basic trinitarian position of the Swiss theologian which makes a surprising attribution of "femininity" in the second Person of the Trinity relative to the first Person's "masculinity":

We can say that God creates in virtue of the internal structure of his being and therefore as the Father generates the Son (intra-trinitarily) so the Trinity creates the human being male and female (extra-trinitarily).

. . . We can recognize in this relationship a spousal dynamic since the Father is the one who generates the Son in a masculine fashion and brings forth an eternal flow of love to which the Son in a feminine fashion responds with absolute self-dedication. This inexhaustible love is held, confirmed and continually enriched by the bond of the Holy Spirit, who issues forth from the Father and the Son. Their superabundant love generates the Holy Spirit and from the Holy Spirit the same love between Father and Son is continually regenerated and intensified.<sup>97</sup>

This attribution, however, is not the whole of Balthasar's reflection, for at another level he overcomes a strictly assigned attribution of the sexual analogue to the intra-trinitarian relationships by viewing the generation-reception of the first and second Persons in reverse, where the second Person is seen as actively returning to the first what is received, while the first Person in turn receives from the second; hence, when viewed from another angle, "masculinity" is attributable to the second Person with a corresponding "femininity"

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<sup>96</sup>Typical of an Orthodox approach to trinitarian theology, which ascribes the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone, is the view that, since the "masculine" principle is found in the relation of the Father to the Son, any "feminine-maternal" principle must be sought in the second trinitarian procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father. Catholic theology, on the other hand, looking to the opposed doctrine of the *filioque* (and therefore simultaneously to the relations of the second and third Persons to the first) is able to assign the Holy Spirit a synthetic role which unites the mutual "masculine-feminine" turning one to the other and back again, of the Father and the Son. Cf. Giuliiodori, *Intelligenza Teologica*, 124ff., and Matthias Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, trans. Cyril Vollert (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1946), 136-48.

<sup>97</sup>C. Giuliiodori, *Intelligenza Teologica*, 119-20.

in the first--all in virtue of the third Person's mediating, or "surmounting", activity which constitutes the superabundant, fecund communion of the first and second Persons: the personification of their mutual self-giving.

This reciprocity of the first and second Persons in the unity of the third is described by Balthasar as a "doing and letting be done"; his thought on this point is developed in the second part--the *Theodramatic*-- of his trilogy:

In trinitarian terms, it is clear that the Father, inasmuch as he is the unoriginated generator, appears primarily as (super-)masculine; the Son, insofar as he is the one who "allows to be done," appears initially to be wholly (super-)feminine, but later, insofar as he actively spirates with the Father, appears anew as (super-) masculine; the Spirit as (super-)feminine. And while the Father, as already indicated, allows himself in his generating and spirating to be co-determined eternally by those who proceed from him, there is even something in him of the (super-)feminine, without this touching his primacy of origin. . . .One must always be content in seeing this ever new reciprocity of doing and allowing to be done (which is for its part a form of activity and of fecundity) as the unmeasured origin of what will be translated in the world of created life as the form and possibility of love and its fecundity on the sexual plane.<sup>98</sup>

This way of viewing the intratrinitarian relations, wherein "[t]he masculine and the feminine are assumed from time to time, according to the type of interrelationship, by the Father, or by the Son as well as the Spirit,"<sup>99</sup> permits a theological understanding of the relationship between men and women which avoids assigning rigidly conceived roles to one or the other gender, for instance, activity to males, and passivity to females.

Such a view affirms that each gender must somehow locate itself and its characteristics in the other, especially when these traits have a tendency to appear "typical";

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<sup>98</sup>H. Balthasar, *Teodrammatica, Vol. 5: L'Ultimo Atto*, trans. Guido Somnavilla (Milan: Jaca Book, 1986), 78. An English translation of this part of Balthasar's masterwork is unfortunately unavailable at this writing; the complete trilogy has, however, been translated into Italian, which version being followed here.

<sup>99</sup>C. Giuliadori, *Intelligenza Teologica*, 131-2.

for in fact the sexes (both in the order of being and of action) are "consubstantial" with respect to each other, yet without a fusion of identities: their distinction-in-relation to the other remains, despite their substantial unity: "From the fact that `Eve was taken from Adam'. . . [s]omething of the feminine was already in him, and he recognizes it when God brings him to the woman. . . [S]he is feminine together with the man, having in common with him the active power to respond in relation to God."<sup>100</sup>

Giuliodori highlights how this mutual integration of the masculine and feminine is typified for Balthasar above all in the Person of Christ, the second Adam who, like the first, contains in himself both masculinity and femininity:

In [Christ] the masculine and the feminine express themselves, in accord with [Balthasar's] approach to the Trinity, in his being feminine through accepting the Father's will and in fulfilling it in masculine fashion through his creative and redemptive mission.

. . . [I]n [Christ] there does not exist only the masculine component, but also the feminine one. If the human and divine coexist in full harmony in him. . . the masculine and feminine also compenetrates one another in such harmony that in him there is neither male nor female (Gal. 3:28), because in the singular and unifying synthesis of his Person there no longer exist any antitheses and oppositions, but all is in accord with the trinitarian communion.<sup>101</sup>

This integral christology extends, moreover, to balthasarian ecclesiology where the image of the Church as the "feminine" complement of Christ (i.e. his "bride") must be balanced by another image of the Church which is masculine in nature (i.e. the "body" of

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<sup>100</sup>Balthasar, *Il Tutto nel Frammento: Aspetti di teologia della storia*, Sezione settima: "Preghiera e mistica." Vol. XXVII delle Opere, ed. Elio Guerriero (Milan: Jaca Book, 1970), 244. The "active power" of each gender is seen above all in the production of a child where, at a biological level at least, each sex contributes equally to the genetic complement of the new person. At another level, one is reminded of the depth psychological perspectives of C.G. Jung who maintained that psychological and spiritual wholeness can only be attained in one who has integrated the contrasexual aspect of his or her being represented by the so-called "shadow".

<sup>101</sup>C. Giuliodori, *Intelligenza Teologica*, 169-9 passim.

Christ). This plurisexual nature of the Church is evidenced by Balthasar in his well-known observation that both the petrine-hierarchical ("masculine") and the marian-spousal ("feminine") principles together ground the ecclesiological mystery. But, as Giuliiodori notes:

This distinction of significance and thus of roles, which in no way implies a difference in value or dignity, is grounded by the analogy to the human being's sexual structure and on the basis of the relationship between masculine-feminine, where the feminine is derived from the masculine but always on the basis of a preexisting feminine. The feminine hidden in the heart of the masculine constitutes the very condition of the latter's possibility and for this reason in the former alone can the masculine recognize itself.<sup>102</sup>

A balthasarian understanding of sexual differentiation is careful then to integrate elements arising from "unity of substance" with those emerging from "distinction of person" in the male-female analogue to the trinitarian mystery. Nor, as noted above, does Balthasar limit his understanding to the level of being--at what "distinguishes" a person relative to another--but extends it to the level of function as well--what "signifies" the quality of an interpersonal relation. For just as the divine Persons assume fluid attitudes or activities toward one another in virtue of their interrelationship, signifying their particular way of being in relationship to another Person, so do, by analogy, the sexes: as with the trinitarian Persons' being-in-relationship, attitudes and activities between the genders are not rigidly or exclusively construed.

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<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.*, 185. Cf. *MD* 26-27 where divergent roles arising from the distinction of gender in the sexually differentiated person--symbolized by the respective differences in ecclesial "function" between Peter and Mary--are invoked to defend the exclusion of women from ordained ministry. It is well beyond the scope of this thesis to enter into the theological questions raised by this tendentious issue; it is nevertheless my belief that the questions, which are fundamentally those of theological anthropology, can be framed within this kind of reflection, where sexual differentiation is seen in the bright light of the central Christian mysteries: beginning with the mystery of the triune God and its analogous reflection in human relationships.

Giuliodori, speaking in balthasarian terms, identifies these responses of the trinitarian Persons to each other, arising from their distinctive interrelationships as follows:

In effect, the perfect and harmonious figure of love [in trinitarian life] is achieved only through the reciprocal exchange of the three Persons in which each Person seeks the fulfillment of the other, and precisely in such *loss of self* do they find one another. The characteristics of love, even if at different levels, remain the same: *adoration and mission*, and the greater the look of astonishment in one contemplating the other, the stronger is the desire to be devoted to and serve the other in love.<sup>103</sup>

These attitudes are translated in the analogy to sexual differentiation "in the encounter with the other sex. . .[where] the created being discovers his or her destiny to a love that expresses itself as *adoration* (contemplation) and as *mission* (service)."<sup>104</sup>

Here we find ourselves once more at the heart of the dialectic between action and contemplation discussed in the previous chapter, which Balthasar considers in light of humanity's sharing

in the intimate mystery of the divine love of the Blessed Trinity, [in which humanity] is also invested with the *twofold gift of action and contemplation*, which are as inseparable as inhalation and exhalation, as the contraction and expansion of man's heart. Man's calling is to *action* because the grace of God always charges him with a mandate or task to be carried out by his own efforts. . . .But man's calling to action is likewise a calling to contemplation because the recipient of grace can understand and complete the task assigned to him only by holding all the more closely and exclusively to the thought of God in gratitude for the trust God has shown him, by undertaking no deed independently of God or that might run counter to God's plan, and by seeking, with his gaze fixed unwaveringly on God, to understand and accomplish the divine will in all things.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup>Giuliodori, *Intelligenza Teologica*, 122.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*, 142. I hasten to emphasize the analogous sense of this statement: human spouses "contemplate" one another in a way that, while similar, is obviously even more dissimilar to the mutual adoration of the trinitarian Persons; perhaps a better expression for the human analogue is "behold" or "gaze lovingly". The same holds for the "mission" of loving service to which their beholding leads, a similar-yet-even more-dissimilar analogue to the trinitarian missions *ad intram* and *ad extram*.

<sup>105</sup>Balthasar, *Christian State*, 80.

Clearly, the human vocation to "adoring service" and "missionary contemplation" is no more the prerogative of one sex than of the other: no more than one Person of the Trinity is exclusively in a posture of adoration or mission before another.<sup>106</sup> Each Person goes out to the other (mission) and beholds the other (contemplation) in the mystery of trinitarian life and love; this is reflected creaturely in the triune God's image and likeness: man-woman in their spousal encounter of mutual recognition (adoration/contemplation), realized in loving service (mission/action).

#### Implications for gasparian ecclesiality

After what may seem like a long digression from the theme of gasparian ecclesiality, this reflection on a theological understanding of sexual differentiation can now be placed directly in the context of our topic. For the mystery of the Church as *communio et missio sanctorum* can only be understood in light of the trinitarian *communio et missio Personarum*, of which the Church is the fundamental sacrament.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup>While it is true that the term "mission" has been used by the theological tradition to speak of the activity of the Son and Holy Spirit, there is a sense in which "the love that is, in the Son, a mission received `by way of. . .generation'. . .is the expression of a love that is, in the Father, a mission to generate. In the Third Person of God, the Holy Spirit, this reciprocity of mission becomes the final and fulfilling unity of love whereby the Spirit, in his unique personhood, combines in himself the features of both Father and Son, from whom he proceeds. He is the personification of self-giving, selflessness and mission; of pure and dynamic transparency; of love as service to the love of the Father and Son" (Balthasar, *ibid.*, 79). As for the mutual adoration-contemplation of the divine Persons, it is clear that the Father and the Son behold each other with an eternal, contemplative gaze, issuing forth in an act of mutual glorification, whereby one reveals the other in the Spirit who knows what pertains to the depths of God (cf. Jn. 14:9, 17:1,5; 1 Cor. 2:10).

<sup>107</sup>Cf. *LG* 4: ". . .the universal Church is seen to be `a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.'"

Within the Church, however, there exist particular expressions of this sacramentality, to which the spousal union of Christian man and woman lays specific claim (cf. Eph. 5:32), as well as particular expressions of ecclesial communion within the diverse forms of Christian association.<sup>108</sup> Since, as we have seen, the ecclesial manifestations of the gasparian charism each exhibit a strong ethos of communion-mission *in sanguine Christi*, they seem capable of representing in a particular way the mystery of the Church, seen in the light of conciliar ecclesiology.

In addition, the male and female forms of the charism (including the "mixed" form of the USC) serve to enrich the charism's ecclesiality beyond its differentiation according to state, by including that reference to communion-mission which is uniquely present in the encounter of the sexes, in light of the analogy to trinitarian communion-mission.<sup>109</sup> Without such a reference there would be a serious impoverishment of this ecclesiality, for the communion-in-diversity of the two sexes opens an essential window onto the meaning of

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<sup>108</sup>Cf. *MD* 23 on the spousal quality of ecclesial communion; *Perfectae Caritatis* 15 on how religious orders reflect the mystery of the Church; and *CL* 25-29 on how the relations between the universal Church and particular Churches express the mystery of ecclesial communion. Theological reflection on ecclesial communion as signifying trinitarian communion is extensive; see for instance the somewhat different perspectives taken by Balthasar in his article "Who is the Church?" in *Explorations in Theology II*, 143-91 and Heribert Mühlen, *Una Mystica Persona* (Rome: Edizioni Città Nuova, 1968), esp. 237ff.

<sup>109</sup>Because the trinitarian communion finds a created analogue in the sexually differentiated human being--exemplified in the spousal-sacramental communion of man and woman as a sign of the perfected relationship existing between Christ and the Church--the USC as a mixed gender association, presumably including married members, could make another distinctive contribution to gasparian ecclesiality by the witness of their own *vinculum caritatis*. This does not exclude, of course, a similar witness to the fruitful relationship possible between men and women called to celibacy, whether among themselves or in relationship with those called to marriage.

the Church as "icon of the Trinity",<sup>110</sup> and therefore onto any ecclesial representation of the Church's mystery, including the one posed by gasparian ecclesiality.

By applying specific insights from a balthasarian perspective to the gasparian charism, one notes immediately how in its evolution, the male form of the charism "generated" the female, yet the feminine form was already contained ("preexisting") in the masculine. Moreover, both forms emerged from a prior one--the "plurisexual" Confraternity--in which sexual communion-in-diversity was constitutional and could thus (in line with the balthasarian analogy) be viewed as an even more basic sign of the Church's mystery, a mystery which, like its trinitarian-christological paradigms, is neither male nor female, but both at once.

Moreover, the structural similarities between the male and female forms of the charism (their having "the same spirit") further enhances its ecclesiality by highlighting the fundamental equality of the Church's members, reflecting the essential parity of the sexes where distinction in no way implies loss of value or dignity, nor union a loss of identity--analogous with the unity of "substance" and distinction of "person" in the trinitarian communion.

These observations at the level of "being" are even more readily applied at the corresponding level of "function". As we have seen, the original inspiration of the charism intended both its masculine and feminine forms to have an apostolic and missionary function, along with a concomitant vocation to contemplation and adoration. Even if the (male) CPPS has been identified titularly with the former, and the (female) ASC with the latter, in truth both communities are active and contemplative.

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<sup>110</sup>This phrase is used by John Navone, *Self-giving and Sharing: The Trinity and Human Fulfillment* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1989), 120ff.

In line, therefore, with the whole tenor of our reflection, the differentiation of the charism cannot be invoked to assign exclusive roles to one or the other form, but rather demonstrates the theological and spiritual ground of their shared vocation to mission and adoration. In short, each form, at one and the same time, is an expression of *missio adorante* and *contemplatio ministrante*. Should an emphasis be noted in one or the other form with respect to function, this should be seen in the same light as the theological understanding of the sexes: as analogous to the trinitarian mystery where, in different respects, one or the other Person is seen to act distinctively (in "masculine" or "feminine" fashion, in "mission" or in "adoration") only in relation to each other, and always for the sake of communion. As with the differentiation according to state (itself analogous to the one by gender), one aspect can appear in the "ascendancy" only in a relation of service toward the others, service being the expression of that love which is the heart of communion.

In summary, the whole of this reflection on the central Christian mystery is directed toward the reconciliation of opposites: male-female, masculine-feminine, action-contemplation, mission-adoration, activity-passivity, generativity-receptivity. By positing within each opposite the presence of the other, a way is opened to overcoming their mutual exclusion, thereby affirming a potential for communion-in-diversity. The supreme paradigm of this uniplural reconciliation of opposites is found in the mystery of God One-in-Three. It is seen, derivatively, in the creation of male and female in the trinitarian image, and is further reflected archetypically in the mystery of Christ and the Church--of which gasparian ecclesiality is a particularized instance.

Thus, the gasparian charism's differentiation according to gender (as well as state) is seen to respect the mutual inherence (*circumincessio*) of what is ecclesially diverse, while at

the same time promoting a strong ethos of ecclesial communion. As emphasized repeatedly, this communion-in-diversity lies at the heart of the Christian mystery.<sup>111</sup>

To conclude this chapter, it can be said that the gasparian charism, as an original inspiration, needs to be comprehended inclusively, with full regard for the mutual inherence of the intraecclesial and interpersonal realities that constitute it: above all the reciprocity that should exist between state and gender within a Church patterned after the mystery of the triune God. The differentiation of the charism thus serves as a model of the Church understood as Communion-Mission, fully consonant with the ecclesial meanings surrounding the blood of Christ, the focal point of the charism. All of which confirms the thesis that the spirituality that emerges in response to the gasparian charism truly lies at the "heart of the Christian life."

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<sup>111</sup>This inherence also reflects how the mysteries of faith--trinity, creation, christology, ecclesiology--must also be seen in their interrelatedness in order to perceive the comprehensive form of revelation.

# CONCLUSION

By examining the figure of Gaspar Del Bufalo for the purpose of determining what the constitutive elements of the charism bearing his name are (without neglecting other figures who have contributed distinct contours to the same), this thesis has sought to distill what is essential from what is contingent in this figure. Our concern, therefore, has been to disclose not so much the spiritual "physiognomy" of the man Gaspar Del Bufalo as the "composite" of what belongs essentially to the charismatic spirituality termed "gasparian".

In other words, the charism described here as the basis for a lay spirituality has not been proposed in a "fundamentalist" fashion, unmindful of the context in which it first appeared. On the contrary, this has been a work of interpretation, employing historical data to support the hermeneutical process, thus enabling the theological content of what is called "gasparian spirituality" to become gradually clear.

While the thesis title, which asserts that the charism's spirituality lies "at the heart of the Christian life," required proof principally in respect to the laity--given the unquestioned role the charism has played for those in the priestly and religious states--it became increasingly clear in the course of the thesis that neither the charism's constitutive elements nor its diverse expressions (including its lay form), can be treated in isolation from each other. Our concluding observations are therefore synthetic in nature, in that they are always mindful of the charism in its entirety, without thereby obscuring the main focus of the thesis.

The following conclusions are based on the evidence presented in the thesis; they indicate, moreover, a direction for those in the Church who have particular responsibilities toward the gasparian charism. In making these concluding statements, a perspective is adopted which, in some respects, is "revisionist". This perspective is adopted with the intention of ensuring not only the viability of the thesis' fundamental hypothesis, but also to indicate ways of providing for the charism's vitality now and in the future.

#### Precise Meaning of "Gasparian Charism"

A distinction has emerged in the thesis which strives to clarify the difference between Gaspar's personal charism(s) and spirituality, which were uniquely his own, and the charism and spirituality which can be termed "gasparian". Because the latter is derived from an original inspiration distinct from Gaspar and his work, an inspiration which cannot therefore be exclusively identified either with his person or his activity, it is necessary to distinguish between the gasparian charism as such and its particular expressions, whether individual or corporate. For if the charism were restricted to Gaspar alone (or for that matter his Congregation), this would immediately disallow any conclusion that its corresponding spirituality lies "at the heart of the Christian life." Herein lies a fundamental precision, one that has perhaps not been fully recognized in previous studies.

Fabio Ciardi, in his contribution to a theology of charism, specifies this difference between what he calls a "charism *of the* founder" and "charism *of* founder":

With the first expression is generally indicated the content of the founder's experience which, originating in a supernatural inspiration and guided by an existential understanding of the mystery of Christ and his gospel, leads to the delineation of the physiognomy of a work that expresses itself in service of the Church and society in response to a determined historical situation--an experience that must be transmitted to his own disciples.

With the second expression is indicated that particular gift conferred by the Holy Spirit on a person such that he or she should be at the origin of a religious

family in the Church, prescinding from concrete methods of realization and from specific contents.<sup>1</sup>

While acknowledging with Ciardi that this distinction is conceptual, and not always necessary to make in ordinary parlance about a given charism (if for no other reason than the practical difficulty in sorting out realities that are intimately bound to each other), it is nonetheless necessary for purposes of theological and pastoral precision to make the distinction. In the case of the gasparian charism in particular, lack of such precision has not always allowed, in my opinion, for an appreciation of its full extension.

When, however, this distinction is carefully maintained in theological reflection on the gasparian charism (and here we include Gerosa's "original" charism outlined in Chapter 5 which is apparently the same as Ciardi's "supernatural inspiration" comprising a "charism of the founder"), allowance can be made for the following precisions:

a) As an "original" inspiration ("charism of the founder"), the gasparian charism must in all honesty be attributed to Albertini, who conceived the basic contours of the "Work" whose configuration includes the three distinct ecclesial forms described in Chapter 5.<sup>2</sup>

As noted in that chapter, one can justify designating this "charism of the founder" as "gasparian" rather than "albertinian" because of Gaspar's crucial role whereby he served as a

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<sup>1</sup>Fabio Ciardi, *I Fondatori Uomini dello Spirito: per una teologia del carisma di fondatore* (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1982), 16.

<sup>2</sup>The biographical material on Albertini speaks of this original inspiration as a "strong, supernatural impetus to awaken in souls devotion to the most precious blood of Jesus" which came to him one day in prayer (Giuseppe De Libero, *S. Gaspare Del Bufalo Romano*, 108, following Antonio Santelli, Gaspar's first biographer; cf. the testimony of Merlini in his life of Albertini, *Vita*, 544). While it is not possible to date this experience of Albertini, it occurred sometime between his appointment as coadjutor to S. Nicola in Carcere and the foundation of the Archconfraternity in that basilica. This is the same period in which Albertini's decisive encounter with Del Bufalo took place.

sort of plenipotentiary of Albertini, due to the latter's subsequent elevation to the episcopacy and his premature death. For these reasons, Gaspar exercised a critical role on behalf of both the Archconfraternity (being appointed its "first promoter") and, less directly, the ASC. This stewardship of the original inspiration has, in my opinion, earned Gaspar the right to have his name associated with the "charism *of the founder*": not without a conscious acknowledgement, however, of the one whom Gaspar always considered to be "our beloved Founder."<sup>3</sup>

b) As a "particular gift conferred by the Holy Spirit" for the founding of new ecclesial associations ("charism *of founder*") the charism is also Albertini's, but with respect to its lay form only. This distinctive aspect of the gasparian charism also belongs *mutatis mutandis* to Gaspar Del Bufalo and Maria De Mattias with regard to its priestly and religious forms respectively. In this sense, the charism should be viewed comprehensively as albertinian-gasparian-mattian, where each member of the triad possesses a true "charism *of founder*" relative to its three forms, with each founder contributing something distinctive to the charism's ecclesiality. Here one may speak legitimately of the "transmission" of the charism to these associations by which the figures at their origin gave them distinctive shape and purpose.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>*Ep.* III, n. 913, to Gregorio Muccioli, June 29, 1824, 98.

<sup>4</sup>This way of distinguishing will hopefully prove satisfactory to those who, quite understandably, wish to preserve without equivocation the status of Gaspar and Maria as the rightful founders of their communities. In fact, there always seems to have been some sensitivity on the matter at least with regard to Gaspar (cf. L. Contegiacomo, *Lettere*, vol. I, 127-8, note). And while it is true there were some very practical reasons for the initial association of the Missionaries and the Adorers with the Archconfraternity--not the least of which was the early dispute over the title of the CPPS where some felt nomination of the precious blood to be disrespectful. Albertini's prior foundation bearing that title, together with his excellent reputation, gave the nascent institutes some needed shelter in this regard. Beyond this, the canonical difficulties surrounding the "identity" of secular priests in community, and women without vows or enclosure, were eased somewhat by their

The thesis has sought then to determine the constitutive elements of the (original) charism *of the founder*, in comprehensive relation to each other: elements that must be verified in those seeking to live the spirituality derived from the gasparian charism today.

As we have seen, these elements include:

- a) their source in salesian doctrine which through Albertini's influence acquired a characteristic emphasis on the "little virtue" of humility;
- b) the central role of devotion ("commitment") to the blood of Christ;
- c) the orientation to Christian mission, and
- d) embodiment in ecclesial associations where diversity of state and gender is embraced in the unity of their concrete interrelationship.

No matter the particular conditions affecting those desiring to embrace this way of Christian life, these elements are so fundamental to gasparian spirituality that they could never be abandoned, and remain faithful to the "charism *of the founder*."

These elements can, moreover, be given a precise articulation in a synthetic statement of the gasparian charism's theological content. Based on our research, it seems the charism's essential meaning can be condensed in the following descriptive summary: *communio et missio in sanguine Christi*.

Under *communio*, the elements of gasparian ecclesiality treated in Chapter 5 are included, with full recognition of the unity-in-diversity arising from the charism's differentiation by state and gender. Under *missio*, gasparian ways of sharing in the *tria munera Christi* discussed in Chapter 4 are included, with full recognition of the role *adoratio* plays in all forms of Christian mission undertaken by each state and gender. Under

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association with a recognized ecclesiastical body. This notwithstanding, I believe the evidence betrays more than expediency for Gaspar's considered acknowledgement of Albertini's foundational role relative to the charism, the deeper theological and spiritual reasons for which were treated in Chapter 5.

*in sanguine Christi*, the unifying center of the gasparian charism is included, with full recognition of communion-mission as inseparable categories defining the Church, both of which find in the blood of Christ particular cohesion: above all in the eucharist, where communion is signified and effected, and mission is nourished and directed.

In addition, *communio et missio in sanguine Christi* has an implicit reference to the salesian themes outlined in Chapter 2: the universal call to holiness, Christian optimism, the primacy of charity, "indifference" to the dispositions of providence, and the little virtues; each of which gives a distinctive flavor to the way in which gasparian communion and mission in the blood of Christ is lived by the faithful of whatever state.

#### Gasparian Spirituality and the Catholic Spiritual Tradition

Our seeking the distinctive quality of gasparian spirituality has not meant to obscure its relation to broader spiritual traditions. The purpose in outlining the contours of a particular spirituality is not to overdetermine a given form so it appears idiosyncratic relative to Christian spirituality generally. To exaggerate the particular at the expense of the universal would be as foolhardy and dangerous as denying the one spirituality of the Church its pluriform idiom.

Any tension between the one and the many within Christian experience can find a resolution only in the direction of catholicity as opposed to uniformity, where unity-in-diversity is considered not only possible, but desirable and necessary. In terms of spirituality,

[n]o small part of what the word is intended to convey comes from comparing and contrasting different aspects and standpoints. It is not merely that we gain thereby a general sense of an infinity of perspectives, but precise notions of the nature of the Church, for example, of life in the Christian community, of the

irreducibility of Christian ways of life; *spiritualia spiritualibus comparantes*, we come to sense new *spiritualia*.<sup>5</sup>

Such a positive evaluation of diversity in no way frees a particular form from locating itself, consciously and deliberately, within the great current of the *catholica* along which it is carried together with the rest. This obligation to situate a specific charism *cum* spirituality within the *una sancta ecclesia* rests ultimately on their being given by the one Spirit not for their own sake, but for the one body of Christ. Indeed, a truly charismatic origin of a given spirituality can be discerned precisely on the basis of its ecclesial openness; hence,

anyone who tries to compensate an institution or way of life for any lack of special charismatic distinctiveness to its origins, by reflecting on its spirituality, and not only formulating but exaggerating it, stylizing it, making good the lacunae and, when necessary, embroidering a bit here and there--much as one invents a foundation-myth--is not only guilty of a piece of appalling theological bad taste. . .but sins against the essential structure of the Church, and diffuses an atmosphere of sectarianism and heresy. . . Time and effort spent in pushing the merits of a particular spirituality are stolen from the service of the one thing necessary; and it is not difficult to see that the particular form becomes, unconsciously, the central concern, while the thing itself is relegated to the status of a means serving *ad majorem gloriam* of the order, the congregation, or some other group or movement.<sup>6</sup>

The need to counterbalance the particular by linking it to the universal must then be met in our case as with any other in order to prove the statement that the particular in question--gasparian spirituality--is truly "at the heart of the Christian life." Else the hazards of compensation and exaggeration will have rendered this thesis indefensible. To avoid the danger, it seems to me that, given the central place of the blood of Christ as the element which bonds the other components of the gasparian charism to each other (while giving

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<sup>5</sup>Balthasar, *Explorations I*, 216.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 220-1 passim.

them at the same time a particularity of their own), this *sine qua non* of gasparian spirituality is what must yield the requisite access to the whole.

In fact, it is precisely the all-encompassing emphasis on the blood of Christ which links this spirituality to the broader spiritual tradition, especially the strand identified as "kataphatic": the one characterized as incarnational and christocentric. The graphic underscoring of the humanity of Christ conveyed by the dominant symbol of his blood confirms, in the words of Harvey Egan, the express contribution of this so-called *via affirmativa*, namely that:

God himself has had a history and that the way to Him is through history. The great Christian mysteries, therefore, embody, incarnate, contain, and reveal the history of God Himself. More than images, they are the real symbols, the icons which contain what they symbolize. The kataphatic way stresses the incarnational dimension of mysticism, that Christian mysticism is inextricably bound to the Jesus of history and the very special events in his history.<sup>7</sup>

Gaspar's understanding of the precious blood as the historic-symbolic expression of "the Mystery of the infinite *love* of God and of Christ, the Mystery of the precious *life* of Christ offered and sacrificed for us, the Mystery of the divine life and love *transmitted* and *applied* to souls,"<sup>8</sup> is designed to lead a person to encounter Mystery itself, that is, the living One symbolized by the image of his paschal and eucharistic blood.

Gaspar is confident that contemplation and reception of the blood of Christ can bring about a relationship with the personal and corporate reality of Christ, and through Christ, God. Gaspar's approach to God serves then as a corrective to the tendency of the opposite, "apophatic", tradition of Christian spirituality with its corresponding deemphasis

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<sup>7</sup>Harvey Egan, "Christian Apophatic and Kataphatic Mysticism," *Theological Studies* 39 (1978): 424.

<sup>8</sup>L. Contegiacomo, *Il Sangue di Cristo in S. Gaspare del Bufalo*, 23.

on the symbolic. As an exponent of the kataphatic tradition, Gaspar would second its insistence that

the only safe way to advance into the dark, silent love which pierces the cloud of unknowing is through meditation, especially on Christ's passion. His humanity remains the correct passageway to the higher levels of apophatic contemplation. . . . The humanity of Christ is the door to contemplation. One must, therefore, pass through it. It must not be cast aside or forgotten. Moreover, permeating the silent, dark, apophatic mysticism. . . is a powerful Christocentrism and a very warm, intimate, personal love of Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup>

The centrality of the blood of Christ in gasparian spirituality may be said therefore to enhance the particular strength of the *via affirmativa* which is, fundamentally, its christocentrism and as a consequence, its ecclesiality and sacramentality.

At the same time, however, because this image as shown in Chapter 3 calls forth the most radical processes of purification, enlightenment, and transformation (what the *via negativa* repeatedly affirms as essential to the full development of Christian life), gasparian spirituality is not thereby exclusive of this other approach to God. The image of the blood serves rather to situate the truth of negative theology "in the cross which carried it to its furthest limit."<sup>10</sup> By calling people to share in the mystery of redemptive abandonment, gasparian spirituality has an affinity to what the mystical tradition terms the way of negation.

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<sup>9</sup>H. Egan, "Christian Apophatic and Kataphatic Mysticism", 412-13 *passim*.

<sup>10</sup>Balthasar, *Prayer*, 214. Cf. 215-6: "It is not in by-passing or soaring above [Christ] that Christian contemplation strives to reach the *speculatio majestatis*. This would be a form of gnosis, a vain clutching at the void. And when it dies to all sensible and intelligible forms, renouncing seeing, hearing and touching, in order to attain the divine reality that transcends all form, that too is to follow the Son. For if the Son ceases to be a subject of contemplation, it is only to incorporate the contemplative more fully in Christ's own inward state and allow him an active participation in Christ's death and resurrection. Indeed, the mystical night of the senses and the spirit, however solitary the person experiencing them, is always something that bears on the Church, something deeply embedded in the order of the Incarnation."

Moreover, since Gaspar replaces the language of the "nights" (associated with the advanced stages of spiritual growth) with the language of "participation" in the paschal mystery (something present in all Christian experience), the blood of Christ retains its value at any point on the spiritual journey: as the living sign of Love that is both kenotic-incarnate (hence encountered "kataphatically" in the world of sense) and transcendent-spiritual (hence encountered "apophatically" beyond the world of sense).

A further linkage of the gasparian particular to the Christian totality can be secured, again on the basis of its center in the blood of Christ; a linkage having to do with the consonance of this center with the principal Christian mysteries. Since a basic requirement of any Christian spirituality is its ability to translate the objective truths of faith into meaningful referents for lived experience, this thesis has attempted to show how gasparian spirituality, with its center in the blood of Christ, is related to the mysteries of faith (trinity, creation, incarnation, redemption, church, sacraments, eschatology). In effect, this has been an effort to bring to the fore of consciousness one aspect of revealed truth without falling prey to the dangers mentioned above: the "risk of so distorting the basic relations of the various parts of revelation that they are hardly recognizable."<sup>11</sup>

It is essential in this regard to recall once more the insight of Gaspar that the mysteries of faith are "compenetrated" in the single mystery of the blood of Christ as the lines of a circle converge on a common center: something hinted at in the liturgy by its

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<sup>11</sup>Balthasar, *Prayer*, 170. Apart from a strictly theological defense against such risk of the gasparian emphasis on the blood of Christ, one could appeal to the presumed authenticity of his charism, which has been subject to the rigors of ecclesiastical discernment in the canonization process. In that context, the legitimacy of his focused reflection "may well be due to an illumination by the Holy Spirit, who gives it an emphasis it does not possess in the literal sense of Scripture (or at least is not discernible at first sight). But the intention of the Spirit is that this prominence to details should serve the better understanding of the whole." (*ibid.*, 170)

referring to the *mysterium fidei* in close conjunction with the consecratory formula for the eucharistic cup. As "a summary of the faith itself," the whole of revelation can be refracted through the particular mystery of the blood of Christ.

Balthasar, commenting on the interplay between word ("revelation") and sacrament ("image") in the Christian dispensation, also seems to sense something of this when, speaking of the patristic authors' reflection on the "blood of the Logos", he observes:

At the outstart there is the connection, the reciprocal compenetration of word and sacrament, especially in the eucharist: the blood and water that flow from the wounded side and fill the chalice are the substance of the Logos; he gives himself in this outpouring as the word which we in the Church receive in the sacrament, in preaching, in the scripture. "The bread, which the word of God affirms to be his body, is the word that nourishes souls, the word coming from God the Word; it is the word derived from the heavenly Bread. And the drink which God the Word affirms to be his blood, is the word that marvelously slakes and inebriates the souls of those who drink. It is the blood of that shoot which, placed in the winepress of pain, has produced this drink; just as the word of Christ is the bread, prepared with that grain of wheat which had to fall to the ground, to bear much fruit." So we receive the word as the sacrament of the wounded side of the Lord.<sup>12</sup>

A theological contextualization of gasparian spirituality like this tends to confirm its link to wider streams of Christian reflection. By uncovering such relationships of the gasparian particular to the whole, showing its deeply rooted bases in revelation and the traditions of response to the word of God, the conclusion that the gasparian charism touches the "heart of the Christian life" appears well-founded.

### Gasparian Spirituality and the Elements of Lay Spirituality

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<sup>12</sup>Balthasar, *Il Tutto nel Frammento*, 244; quotation from Origen. The title of this work--"The Whole Present in the Portion"--also captures the gasparian appreciation of the blood of Christ. Cf. Balthasar, *Parola e Mistero in Origene*, trans. Marco Martini (Milan: Jaca Book, 1991), 63-86 esp.

This study of the gasparian charism has focused principally on its ability to form the basis of a lay spirituality; therefore, the correctness of the thesis can be ascertained only when the elements of lay spirituality outlined in Chapter 1 are corroborated in relation to the charism. Evidence of this has been offered where appropriate throughout the present work; the following synthesis of the elements of lay spirituality and the elements of the gasparian charism serves to summarize these findings.

a) *Universality*: Despite the specific elements without which the gasparian charism loses its distinctiveness, as an "original inspiration" this charism possesses a broad correspondence to the different states, vocations and situations which encompass Christian life: such that whatever is particular about the charism has a universal reference. This diffuse character is seen principally in the charism's threefold allocation to the Christian states of life and its applicability to both men and women.

Moreover, the thesis has presented evidence showing how the constitutive elements of gasparian spirituality can be embodied by lay Christians in virtue of their baptismal consecration: the basis of the universal call to holiness and mission in the Church. In addition, the salesian source of this spirituality verifies in a particular way its adherence to the element of universality, given Francis de Sales' recognition as someone who anticipated this central tenet of the Second Vatican Council.

b) *Specificity*: This second element stems directly from the first, for what has universal significance in Christian experience admits at the same time of particular expressions. The dialectical relationship between the unity and plurality of Christian forms of life mutually conditions the elements of universality and specificity. Since the gasparian charism possesses an inherent adaptability in virtue of its being an original inspiration (shown in its ability to produce new forms of ecclesial association), the element of specificity is verified.

The thesis has shown what this adaptability entails for lay forms of expression relative to the charism's essential components: in other words, how the lay state, with its variety of vocations and situations, can find in gasparian spirituality ways to live the Christian life in full conformity with the exigencies arising therefrom. This spirituality is demonstrably "catholic" in scope: able to express itself in a unidiversity that is neither conformist (because pluralistic) nor indiscriminate (because distinctive). In its capacity for accommodation, gasparian spirituality challenges its potential followers to adapt this way of life to the particular demands that confront individuals and communities in their concrete circumstances, while at the same time respecting its essential contours.

c) *Secularity*: Nothing about gasparian spirituality excludes a conscious relationship to the secular ambience in which the laity are called to live their Christian life. Indeed, the original inspiration which gave birth to this spirituality was decidedly secular in character, even in its priestly and evangelical forms, insofar as these were designed for people not in the "state of election"--whether by not professing the counsels (always the case with the Missionaries and, initially, the Adorers as well) or by eschewing monastic trappings such as choir and cloister (something always the case for both the Missionaries and the Adorers.)

If this "secularity" of the Missionaries and Adorers is characteristic of gasparian spirituality, all the more does it pertain to the laity who are called to live "in" the world while not being "of" it. No area of secular existence is untouched by this radically incarnational spirituality designed to further the recapitulation of all things in Christ: through whom they exist, by whom they are redeemed, and in whom they are ordered to God.

d) *Integration*: Precisely because this spirituality is so broadly conceived, leaving nothing outside the ambit of its influence, it supports that profound integration of faith and life which the laity are called to achieve through their secular commitments in particular. A serious approach to gasparian forms of Christian discipleship inevitably leads to a holistic

view of human and Christian experience that does not tolerate well any compartmentalizing of spheres of life--for no other reason than the blood of Christ, an image at once inclusive and expansive, because shed "for many": a sign of unreserved self-giving where nothing is held in reservation as if it were "out of bounds". This is a spirituality that knows few limits or worse, walls, to barricade areas where the gospel is supposedly out of place.

e) *Mission*: The detailed description of the gasparian charism's orientation to Christian praxis provided in Chapter 4, gave ample proof of its responsiveness to this element of lay spirituality. Our treatment showed how the laity can find in the gasparian charism specific meaning and motivation for their share in the mission of the Church, both inside and outside the confines of the ecclesial community: the latter domain pertaining in particular to lay competence. The participation of the lay faithful in the threefold office of Christ was also shown to find in the charism's center, the blood of Christ, a potent stimulus and coherence.

f) *Formation*: The ecclesial manifestations of the charism were shown in Chapter 5 to provide a number of loci for the content and context of Christian formation. In their own way, these associations seek to introduce and deepen, by suitable means, the members' experience and understanding of the paschal mystery imaged by the blood of Jesus. The Union of the Blood of Christ, in its historical and contemporary forms, has served as the principal place for the formation of the lay faithful in gasparian spirituality. Recent measures designed to renew this association, together with other efforts compatible with the Union's general aim, speak of the potential for the gasparian charism to offer the means and context for lay Christian formation at a variety of levels.

Viewed then in their totality, the elements of lay spirituality have been verified by the thesis in relation to the constitutive elements of the gasparian charism. Thus, a sound basis is laid for a spirituality rooted in the demands made by Christian life on people

seeking holiness in the midst of temporal realities: a spirituality lying not only "at the heart of the Christian life," but also of the world, which the Spirit moves God's children to reclaim.

### Some Implications of the Thesis Findings

In my opinion, the implications of the thesis findings for the ongoing vitality of the gasparian charism in the Church and world today, lie mostly in recovering its origin within a lay association, from which both its priestly and evangelical forms emerged. Such a recovery is made all the more urgent by two phenomena of postconciliar experience: declining membership in religious institutes, and the increasing involvement of the lay faithful in all sectors of ecclesial life and activity.

As a response to these not unrelated developments, a careful review of the charism's origin (i.e. the Council's "constant return to the sources of the whole of Christian life and to the primitive inspirations of [religious] institutes"<sup>13</sup>) would imply a recovery of the albertinian "charism *of the founder*" advocated above. This would mark a step "backward" in order to proceed with confidence into the future: a direction beginning to be traced with enthusiasm. If anything, the thesis findings imply the necessity of carefully considering the charism's origins in all such endeavors, especially as these affect the laity.

This process of revisioning is not suggested, however, merely out of practical concern for the charism's survival--which by itself is an inadequate motive for engaging the charism so radically. On the contrary, a return to the origin is proposed here primarily for theological and pastoral reasons: from the standpoint of the unity-in-diversity of the gasparian charism which, as we have seen, bears analogies to the Christian doctrine of God,

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<sup>13</sup>*Perfectae Caritatis* 2.

reflects the theologico-anthropological doctrine of the gendered human person's creation in the trinitarian likeness, and speaks to prominent themes of the conciliar reform and its ecclesiology. Our investigation has hopefully demonstrated the theological depth and contemporary relevance which the gasparian charism contains when viewed comprehensively, thus giving the charism a well-deserved place in the life of the Church and world today.

In other words, when the charism is seen in relation to the Christian mysteries of trinitarian communion, of Christ and the Church, its corresponding spirituality possesses a singular capacity to reflect Christian truth and life. The historical evolution of the charism, together with the theological and spiritual significance of its differentiation by state and gender, permit this way of life to model the unity-in-diversity which traverses the whole of Christian revelation and experience. So in fidelity to its origins, the deeply inclusive character of the charism and its spirituality must be attended to in earnest by those responsible for it.

Such efforts could also imply a considerable reassessment of the canonical status of the charism's ecclesial forms, in light of their interrelationship. What calls for additional research, in line with ecclesiological and canonical developments scarcely conceivable when the charism made its first appearance, is the exact juridical form the charism might have taken if current possibilities and understandings were available to the founders.

This further attempt to contemporize the charism by means of a thorough "radicalization," would help ensure that the charism's institutional expressions are fully congruent with its ecclesiality as developed in Chapter 5. Such research would not only substantiate further the implications of the thesis, broadening the charism's contribution to the phenomena of new forms of ecclesial association prevalent today, but also help clarify

what can only be called a state of ambiguity with respect to the Church's actual jurisprudence.

The observations of Gerosa could serve here as guide, especially his insights into the necessity of an adequate coordination between the ecclesiology of diverse associations in the Church and their canonical status:

In such diversity of charismatic origin, the distinction made by canon law between the fundamental associative category (religious or secular institutes of consecrated life) and that of associations of the faithful or ecclesial movements (also fundamental) finds its theological place. In fact, groups in the latter category *are born of a specific original charism, eminently communitarian and missionary in nature which, as such, can involve not only married and single laymen, but also priests and religious, if only in diverse ways.*

The specific difference between two fundamental types of charisms: prophetic-personal (that of the evangelical counsels) and communitarian-missionary (what is at the origin of ecclesial movements and associations, and often responsible for the plurality of forms of consecrated life) should be the main determinant in the way norms are formalized for them in the two corresponding sections of canon law.

Unfortunately, the ecclesiastical legislator effected this formalization while *prescinding from the charism, partially in the first case, and completely in the second.* Consequently, of these two parts of the new code of canon law, the one concerning consecrated life is the more conciliar. Indeed, it represents a true "ferment for ecclesial renewal" and since these different institutes, whether secular or religious, live above all by their own particular law, "there seems to be no reason why other ecclesial institutions, diocesan or regional, could not enjoy the same right to construct their own law, *truly adequate to what they are and what they live according to the Spirit in the Church.*"<sup>14</sup>

If our finding is correct which posits an original charism distinct from the "charism of founder" at the root of the gasparian movement, and if further research based on the present data concluded that a radical contemporizing of the charism would locate this movement in the second rather than the first associative category described by Gerosa (the second having been unavailable to the founders except in the restricted

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<sup>14</sup>L. Gerosa, "Secular institutes, lay associations," 359 (italics mine throughout). Cf. the author's parallel discussion in *Carisma e Diritto nella Chiesa*, esp. 198ff.

form of an "archconfraternity"), then this would imply a further revisioning of the charism in the direction of some form of organic unity-in-diversity that would respect the charism's elements in their full extension.

As efforts in this regard are contemplated, and initial steps taken, it seems that these can serve to verify once and for all the Bishop of Rome's assertion, which the present thesis has attempted to prove: namely that the charism entrusted to Gaspar Del Bufalo as principal steward is deeply planted in the mystery of faith and Christian existence, for its source is the same as that of the Church itself, the blood mixed with water flowing from the side of Christ, the sign and motive for ecclesial communion and mission: a spirituality truly "at the heart of the Christian life."

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