



Euntes Docete

[Mt 28:19, f.]

Go Forth and Teach



January 23, 2006
Feast of Holy Spouses

My dear friends,

This year [the actual date is July 1st] I am celebrating 50 years as a Stigmatine Priest. With the **Blessed Pope John 23rd Community, Weston MA**, please come to share with me in a Mass of Thanksgiving, on Monday Evening, **March 27 2006, about 4:30 p.m., followed by supper.**

The Stigmatine Seal [upper left-hand corner] was authorized in 1923 by our late Fr. General, Very Rev. Fr. John B. Zaupa, CSS. From 1949-1950, he was my much revered Novice Master. The seal may be 'read':

- The **stars** are a reminder of the heavens which bespeak, chant the glory of God [Ps 19] - like the apostles, for whose feasts this Psalm is so often used, '... their voice goes out through all the earth, and their message to the ends of the earth...!' [cf. v. 4]. This is the ideal of the Apostolic Missionary, **going anywhere in the diocese and the world, for any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever.** These are the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ, "by whose wounds ours are healed..." [cf. Is 53:5; 1 P. 2: 21, ff.] - 'I bear the marks of the Lord!' [cf. Ga 2:20], says St. Paul, 'it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives within me.' These are presented to us in the form of a **Cross**, our only hope! Luke speaks of the **Wounds** in the hands and the feet [cf. Lk 24:39] - John also mentions the Wound in the side, as it is stated twice that he had reclined there next to Jesus [cf. Jn 13:23, f.; 21:20]. The old Latin saying might indeed apply here: **through life's challenges to the stars**

- The bright **blue** is the color of the sky and the life beyond - the color of the sea, crossed by the Apostolic Missionaries to the far reaches of the globe - for about 190 years of our history as a Congregation. Blue is 'celestial' in several senses of the word: the appearance of 'the wide blue yonder' has long been an inspiration to pilots, cosmonauts, and also an invitation: if Christ has risen, let your thoughts be above! - this is the footstool of the most Holy God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the ICON of the OT meeting with the three Angels [cf. Gn 18:1, ff.], the Russian artist, Rublev, has used blue as the color in common with these three heavenly visitors - the OT Trinity is depicted in blue is the common color of their Trinitarian divinity.

- The bright **red** is the challenge of the Precious Blood, the Price of our Redemption, of faith, martyrdom, perseverance - a reminder of the presence of the Holy Spirit, in an ever renewed Pentecost for the New Millennium. This is the color of **total self-giving**, even to the shedding of one's own blood. OT Redemption was achieved through the divine intervention, allowing the chosen people to cross on a high-way through the waters on dry land - this Sea of Reeds would be represented in Jesus' trial, as they placed a reed in His hand cf. Mk 15:36] - or again, on the Cross, when they offered Him a sponge on a reed [cf. Jn 19:29]. Like John the Baptist, we are not meant to be 'reeds swayed by the wind' [cf. Lk

7:24] - but, with Mary, Spouse of Joseph, to stand by the Cross of Christ [cf. Jn 19:25]. This is the appeal of perseverance.

- The **silver** band is also the sign of some maturity - and a sad remember that Jesus was betrayed for a mere 30 pieces. It is the sign of humble value, and with gold is purified in the fires of trial and tribulation - as St. Gaspar Bertoni, presented in the words of Pope Paul VI, as one who suffered 'atrociously' in his service of God. While suffering can be Punishment for sin - it is also Pedagogical [the "School of God"]; it is mysteriously Redemptive; Eschatological, indicating that we do not have here a lasting home; as well as being Purifying, and Uniting one to Jesus Christ .

- The **white lilies** indicate our Heavenly Patrons, Mary and Joseph - who were committed to the development of the corporal life of Jesus - these are the Models of service, total commitment, self-giving to Christ. For the Stigmatine, these heavenly intercessors are an inspiration for our ***service of the Church through the Bishops***. White is the liturgical color for the Resurrection, the Eucharist, Pastors, Doctors and Doctresses of the Church, as well as for Holy Men and Women - rich symbols all, challenges for each! Canon Law 687 states: "... Religious life, as a consecration of the **whole** person, manifests in the Church the **marvelous marriage** established by God as a sign of the world to come. Religious thus consummate **a full gift of themselves** as a **sacrifice** offered to God so that their **whole** existence becomes **a continuous worship of God in charity...**"

The second holy card enclosed is a picture of **the Mystery of the Transfiguration** of a stained glass window in St. Teresa's Church in Beresford SD. My Grand-Uncle – Fr. John Joseph Henchey [called 'Fr. Joe' by the family] – was ordained in June of 1901, said his First Mass at St. Charles' in Woburn a week later – and died very suddenly in early December of that same year, 1901, while serving at St. Teresa's in South Dakota.

Furthermore, the Stigmatine Founder – **St. Gaspar Bertoni [1777-1853]** - was an invalid for nearly 25 years – he would often pray in a little Chapel of the Transfiguration, next to his room – and also gave directed Retreats there. Like ***Laetare Sunday***, a day of rejoicing in the midst of Lent – the **Transfiguration** was a day of joy to encourage the early Church in difficult times; and the **Sacred Stigmata** were inflicted on Good Friday in great sorrow – and retained in the glorious Resurrection of Easter, as the source of hope and of the Apostolic Mission [cf. Jn 20:21, ff.].

Please come to my **Golden Jubilee Mass of Thanksgiving, Monday, at Blessed Pope John 23rd National Seminary, Weston MA, Monday evening, March 27th, at 4:30 p.m.** – to rejoice in Seminary memories and hopes. God love you all – let us continue to pray for each other.

Sincerely in the Lord's Most Sacred Wounds,

Fr. Joe

Joseph C. Henchey, CSS

p.s. If you can stay for supper, please let us know by March 20th: 781-899-5500. Thanks!