The Science of Sanctity

The Teaching of Bruno Lanteri

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INTRODUCTION

"Why is it taking so long for Lanteri to be canonized a saint?" This question was raised among us as seminarians, while discussing the life and virtues of our beloved Founder. The region around Turin, Italy in the nineteenth century produced a great number of saints. Among these well-known are Don Bosco, Joseph Cottolengo, and Joseph Cafasso. In fact, there are over 150 persons from this region called Piedmont either canonized or beatified. At the source of this wellspring of sanctity there is this priest much less known, who undoubtably had substantial influence on those others. We believe that priest to be Bruno Lanteri.

But we were asking: Why is Lanteri still not called a saint? The canonical process is completed. All that is now needed is a miracle. So, if he is in Heaven, then why does he not intercede for someone for the needed miracle? One answer came back jokingly: "Because we are still not saints." What caused us at first to laugh is most likely the true reason. First and foremost, he wants us to become saints, us who are consecrated to God through the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary in order to carry out and continue the mission of his own life, which is none other than to help others to become saints. That means he will only then be glorified by Heaven here on earth when we his disciples take seriously his teaching and become saints ourselves, who then in turn by our lives and apostolate help all others to become saints. His teaching is the science of sanctity. Science must always prove itself to be science. Lanteri's proof must first be found in our lives and works. Before Lanteri can be canonized we too must become saints. That is the miracle he wants to accomplish. To do that we must first take seriously his teaching, learning it, studying it, putting it into practice, living it, so that we can then teach and help others to do likewise.

The answer as to why more of us in our short history have still not accomplished this can only be answered by an historical study for which I am not competent. My belief however is that his teaching is even among us, his disciples, very much unknown. The first generation of Oblates still had the example and words of Lanteri before them. Afterwards there were only few resources available, since most of his writings were inedited. Now that this obstacle has only recently been overcome,[1] the new difficulty of language arises, since most of his present disciples do not know the languages in which these writings are now accessible.

The Art and Science of Sanctity

Spiritual realities touch and act upon the physical world. Their influence is primary. Spiritual realities as such cannot be detected by the senses. Nevertheless, in as much as the spirit touches the flesh, it can be experienced, known, studied, understood, utilized and taught, thus becoming a science. Caution must however be placed on the words "in as much", for there are more things unknown than known, God being infinite. Sanctity is a spiritual reality, the gift of God, incarnating his grace within the human person. As such, it is at first an art.

The two words art and science are closely related and can easily be confused. My intention here is to attempt to understand and relate the science of sanctity as lived and taught by Bruno Lanteri. He, however,

[1] The four volumes of his writings (Scritti e Documenti d'Archivio) were published in 2002, whereas this present study was first written in1998, and now revised with additions.

always speaks of it, as well as the many elements connected to it, as an art: the art of sanctification[2], of thinking, of knowing one's self[3], of meditation[4], of continuous joy[5], and the art of dying well[6] as well as the art of God.[7] This introduction is simply my thought concerning the distinction between the two.

We might say, **Art** begins from above, divine and human inspiration, it then descends from there. **Science** begins from below, experience, and then ascends. Art resides in the heart and imparts love. Science resides in the intellect and imparts knowledge. Science is more about knowing. Art is more about doing, but what is done presumes the knowledge of how to do it. There is a saying in German: "Kunst kommt vom Können, Wissenschaft vom Wissen;" Art comes from ability, Science from knowledge. Or as it is related in religion: It is not enough to know the master's will; one must do it. (cf. Lk 12,47 and James 1,22) You can master the science and still be a Satanist. You need to master the art to become a Saint.

Before science became what it now is, that is, modern science, art was knowledge. The artist passed down his art, i.e., his knowledge to his apprentice by working with him. The intention was the final object, whatever he wished to accomplish: a painting, a house, the harvest, etc. With the arrival of the natural sciences, the object of study was no longer the end, but the means thereto. Science strives principally to understand the how, art is concerned with the why.

Lanteri begins his Directory of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius with this understanding. *"In every art the artist first of all conceives in his mind the idea of the work he wants to do, he examines the way to accomplish it according to the laws of the art, he then prepares the matter and instruments, he puts his hands to work and brings to a conclusion the work begun according to the idea that he had set out to do. St. Ignatius does not do otherwise in his great art of our sanctification."*[8]

The Saints are the ones who have mastered the art of sanctity by their faithfulness to divine inspiration. By studying their lives and works one can develop a science of sanctity, thus enabling disciples to become artists of their own accord. Every saint is a unique individual and ultimately must follow divine inspiration in his or her own life. Through cooperation with grace science becomes art. This art has been mastered by Bruno Lanteri in the school of the saints. He became an artist whose art in particular was to help others master this same art. Sanctity is above all the work of God, but with human cooperation. For this purpose, Bruno mastered the science of sanctity as well.

The theme of this research, **"The Human Dimension of the Apostolic Activity of Fr. Pio Bruno Pancrazio Lanteri - Founder of the Congregation of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary"**,[9] corresponds to this desire to come to know more closely the generous spirit of this priest. The research here concentrates on "the human dimension". His activity in fact is a result of his own personal spirituality, which in turn depends on basic anthropological conditions. I call it therefore "The Science of Sanctity".

We will therefore begin with a global overview of his life, turning then first to its anthropological foundations, followed by the human dimension of its spiritual elements and finally the activity resulting from these, as the external expression of his person. Once we know all these layers, we can come to

[2] GALLAGHER, Un **Esperienza** dello Spirito, 235.
[3] LANTERI, ***Manoscritti*** *del Fondatore Pio Brunone Lanteri*, vol. 11, pg. 149.
[4] ibid., vol. 11, pg. 64.
[5] ibid., vol. 9, pg. 215.
[6] *Manoscritti*, vol. 9, pg. 231.
[7] „The Son of God, not content to have descended from Heaven, to have sacrificed life itself for us, finally finds, in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, the most soave art of entering into ourselves, of introducing into our very heart His Body, His soul, His Divinity, all of Himself." OMV Calendar: "Laetifica nos pro diebus Domine, 2011", August 2.
[8] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 235. **Direttorio** e Altri Scritti, p. 129.
[9] The title of my License thesis in Theological Anthropology at the Theresianum, Rome written 1998 in Italian.

understand better his apostolic choices and who is this person Bruno Lanteri. We can then better judge his role in the lives of numerous other saints. Indeed, it was ever his goal to become himself a saint, a great saint and quickly, so as to help others do likewise. It is my hope and prayer that this short study, despite its shortcomings, of his science of sanctity, may contribute to a new Lanterian springtime.

I. A BRIEF SUMMARY OF HIS LIFE

History that makes an Apostle
An Apostle who makes History

Regarding the influence of our subject in history at large, the French Author Leon Cristiani titles his biography of Lanteri "A Cross for Napoleon". Indeed, he was considered a leader in the underground resistance to the French Revolution in Piedmont.

Pio Bruno Pancrazio Lanteri, called henceforth Bruno, was born on the feast of St. Pancratious, May 12,1759 in Cuneo, a city in Piedmont, northern Italy, known for its heroism and fidelity to religion.[10] His father, Pietro Lanteri, was a medical doctor, learned, pious and charitable. His mother died when he was barely four years old.

Bruno would only have as friends those approved by his father. He was gifted with a sharp, reflective and intelligent mind and a tenacious memory which he willingly put to use reading much and discussing his studies together with his father. He was faithful in keeping what was deemed to be good, and all that he found good will be found again and again throughout his life. Some of these elements were his love for books and study, reading even at dinner table, good habits and pious practices.

When his brother became a Franciscan, it was his father's wish that Bruno would take up a career as a professor of mathematics, his preferred subject of study. He decided however, following the example of his great patron, St. Bruno, to enter the austere order of the Carthusians. However, on account of weak health he was deemed after only one week to be unsuitable for such a life and was sent back home.

He then turned to the University of Turin to pursue a vocation as a diocesan priest. Being at first without a suitable guide, he was on account of his deep desire for Christian perfection very susceptible to the rigorous spirit of the Jansenist heresy prevalent there. Providence came to his aid in the person of Fr. Nicolaus von Diessbach, a priest from the then suppressed order of the Company of Jesus, the Jesuits. This zealous priest took to heart the many young men preparing for ordination. Bruno took him as his spiritual director and indeed as his spiritual Father.[11] At that time Diessbach was beginning a new initiative, named *Amicitia Christiana*, Christian Friendship, distributing literature in support of the Church and her teachings. Under the

[10] P. CALLIARI, *Servire la Chiesa, Il Venerabile Pio Bruno Lanteri (1759-1830) Pioniere del movimento laici cattolici, Fondatore delgi Oblati di Maria Vergine,* Palermo 1989, pp. 5-7. **(IF 1 = Italian Footnote Nr. 1)**

[11] This seems to have been a mutual relationship. The only daughter of Fr. Diessbach, a widower, had died just the year before. For his part, Bruno was with him very much at home for the two of them, "Fr. Diessbach and the student Lanteri, spent much of the night in discussion about the problems of the moment, about God, prayer, the errors of the time, about the doctrine of grace.…", L. CRISTIANI, A Cross for Napoleon, St. Paul Editions, 1981, translated by Keith Mayes and Madeleine Soudee, p. 20-22. (IF 2)

circumstances of the times this could only be done discreetly and not open to the eyes of the public. Bruno became immediately a part of this.

European society was now in upheaval, Church and state relations were in turmoil, the faith was endangered. The Holy Father, Pope Pius VI, planned to journey to Vienna to meet the Emperor Joseph II in an effort to stabilize these relations. To combat the negative propaganda the pontiff was receiving in advance of his trip, Fr. Diessbach decided to go to Vienna to his defense. He took Bruno with him, now a deacon and shortly before priestly ordination. Fr. Diessbach would then remain in Vienna, continuing his work there, while Lanteri was to return to Turin for ordination and finish his doctoral studies.

Back in Turin Bruno would eventually assume the leadership of the Christian Friendship. Now a young priest he became quickly a much sought-after confessor and spiritual director. He dedicated seven hours a day to his spirit, seven to the body and ten to his work.[12] Cristiani gives a summary of this last aspect:

"We know roughly what this work was: careful reading of good books, numerous notes taken while reading, preparation of instructions for retreat by small groups he gathered for the (Spiritual) Exercises, visits to bookstores, careful preparation of meetings of the Christian Friendship, confession at regular times in his parish and other churches open to his zeal, close study of the gazettes (newspapers and magazines) to keep up with events, among which in these first years of Bruno's priesthood were some of resounding import, in that they heralded or carried out the French 'Revolution.'"[13] (pp. 56-59) We need however to add to this list his work for the youth,[14] the poor,[15] the sick[16] and for those in prison.[17]

Immediately upon the French occupation of Piedmont there began movements of resistance. On the part of religion this was led by the *Amicitia* under the guidance of Lanteri.[18] One episode of historical importance was the help given to Pope Pius VII held prisoner in Savona.[19] He was able to smuggle documents to the Holy Father by which the pontiff was then able to respond adequately to the measures taken against the church by Napoleon regarding the appointment of bishops. Under suspicion, but without proof, the French authorities were only able to ban Lanteri to his country residence.

In due time the French were defeated, and Lanteri was free to return to Turin where he immediately took up his work with what was left of his Friendship groups. Meanwhile he undertook new initiatives opening a retreat center and a house of studies for new priests, furthering them in their spiritual formation, as well as the guidance of a group of priests which

[12] Such was his daily routine later. Cristiani believes it was about the same at this point. See CRISTIANI, p. 56. (IF3)
[13] Ibid., p. 56-59. (IF 4)
[14] P. GASTALDI, *Della Vita del Servo di Dio Pio Brunone Lanteri Fondatore della Congregazione degli Oblati di Maria Vergine*, Torino 1870, pp. 180-187. (IF5)
[15] ibid., p. 381. (IF6)
[16] ibid., p. 385. (IF 7)
[17] GALLAGHER, *Un'Esperienza Dello Spirito*, p. 65. (IF8)
[18] "Bruno Lanteri was its unquestioned leader." CRISTIANI, pg. 69. (IF9)
[19] GASTALDI, p. 200 e 203. (IF10)

would lead eventually to the beginning of a new religious congregation. Four years following its papal approval Bruno Lanteri died on August 5, 1830 in Pinerolo.

II. ELEMENTS OF LANTERI'S ANTHROPOLOGY

A. A MAN OF VISION

Reflecting on this brief biography one sees how vast and great was the enterprise of Bruno Lanteri. This includes associations, books and pamphlets, spiritual exercises, a retreat house, a house of studies, apologetics, spiritual direction, and finally a new religious congregation. He worked for priests, religious, laypersons, people of politics, academics, students, the needy. His involvement in such diverse activities and categories of persons would certainly influence church and society. Nevertheless, one cannot call him a workaholic, as one addicted to activity since he remained first and always a man of prayer. He never got lost in the details of these external works and still was able to utilize any such detail necessary to attain the goal he was seeking. Unceasingly he studied the signs of the times, seeking the greatest needs of the moment and an adequate remedy.

Looking at the theological themes that he considers, we see here too a vast field covered: dogma, morals, ecclesiology, spirituality, pastoral theology, Sacred Scripture and the humanities. Just as there is great diversity in his apostolic activity, so too he has a global vision of theology in as much it concerns human beings. Here again Bruno does not lose himself in details but makes well use of them as needed.

Looking more closely at his manner of activity, we see the importance he gives to both method and attention, certainly a result of his love for the logic of mathematics. In his system of planning, he had a certain and clear goal, precise aims, actions needing to be taken, as well as adequate flexibility according to historical contingencies. He would consider the human person in all his significant levels: spiritual, intellectual, emotional and Physical, his conduct as well as his whole story, past, present and future possibilities. This suggests the need to unite all the above at the level of thought and action. Reading the different biographies written about his person, we find a marvelous unity beginning from his youngest years: *"... after receiving the sacrament of confirmation the young man Bruno dedicated himself more fully to God. By frequent use of the Sacraments, prayer, and charity to his neighbor, through obedience and humility, he would*

prepare himself for all that God desired of him, a life neither ordinary nor common."[20] In preparation for ordination Bruno wrote a list of proposals filling twenty-one pages which formed a rule for his spiritual life.[21] This he synthesized into one page,[22] but then in his maturity he made it into a booklet of one hundred pages for the sake of the members of the new congregation.[23]

We come then to his final hour, when one's last words make his work, words and actions take on new meaning and summarizes a whole life. With his last words, Fr. Bruno Lanteri, did not only give testimony to a life lived in integrity, nor simply a last will and testament for his spiritual children gathered around his bed, nor were they just words of encouragement or deeply felt sentiments. In his last hour, as one who prepared all along for this moment, he speaks a word which reassumes his life from infancy to old age: *"Love one another, love one another profoundly, and always remain one at heart, whatever it may cost you."*[24] Precisely at this moment, speaking with great difficulty, but gathering all the powers of body and spirit, in agony and hardly able to breathe, he makes his last pronouncement, words, which costing him all his energy and proving his love, meant everything to him. His first biographer, Gastaldi, summarizes his life in this manner: *"Born to love his God and all souls, he loved them always, without considering sacrifice, pain or persecution, and as one living with a heart full of love, he died with words of love upon his lips."*[25]

We also see unity of life in the motto: *"Hermit at home, apostle in the world."* In writing *The Directory*, a rule of life for his disciples, he puts these words at the beginning of Part Two which is dedicated to *Practical Means for the Salvation of Souls*: "*The Oblates of the Virgin Mary will be hermits at home, loving solitude and silence in order to attend to prayer and study; away from home they will be just like so many apostles desiring to be numbered among those who 'have given their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' (Acts 15:26)" traderunt animas suas pro nomine Domini nostro Jesu Christi*."[26] The motto "Hermit… Apostle" tells us how, but not what.

We can now ask what is at the center of his life? What is it that unites the person of Bruno as well as his vision of man? What is his charism? What is it that helps us to understand his life and activity? What was his vocation and personal mission? What is the nucleus of his person? To better understand the task here, I give the following examples. I believe the focal point in the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola was "O.A.M.D.G." i.e., All to the greater glory of God. St. John Henry Newman shows his focus in the epithet which he wrote for himself: "Cor ad cor loquitur", Heart speaks to heart. St. Therese of the Child Jesus wrote: "In the heart of the Church I will be love." Finally, the coat of arms of St. John Paul II proclaims: "Totus tuus" - Mary, I am all yours. All these mottos present us a key of interpretation, a synthesis of both their interior and active life. All these mottos can be applied to Bruno too.

What is the key to the personality of Bruno Lanteri? Up to this point we have seen many elements of a possible answer. These are the notions of love, Friendship, Hermit-Apostle. His writings

[20] GASTALDI, p. 24. (IF11)
[21] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, pp. 63-81. (IF12)
[22] *Manoscritti del Fondatore Pio Brunone Lanteri*, Roma 1976-1980, vol. 1, pp. 38-40. (IF13)
[23] P.B. LANTERI, *Direttorio e Altri Scritti*, Siena 1975. (IF14)
[24] GASTALDI, p. 355. (IF 15)
[25] ibid., p. 357. (IF16)
[26] *Direttorio*, p. 107. (IF 17)

reveal other elements: "Cor unum et anima una" - One heart and one soul, "Deus meus et omnia" - My God and my all; in his spiritual directory we find him going from Italian to French to Latin: "*Il motto sarà Tout a Tout sans reserve. Vince teipsum*"[27] - My motto will be All to Him who is all without reserve. Conquer Thyself. According to Gallagher "at the heart of all for Lanteri, priest, religious and Oblate, is his relationship of profound communion with the person of Christ."[28] And close to Jesus Christ as not to be neglected is his and our Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary.[29] It is sufficient for now to simply be aware of these elements which all belong to the key of a universal vision of the person of our subject. It is God who reveals "a new name" if he so wishes.[30]

B. HIS VISION OF MAN

To be a man of vision presupposes the possession of his own particular vision of man. For his purpose this vision must be complete, universal, capable of explaining everything. It ought to include the big picture as well as the details, his macro and micro universe. The following description of St. John of the Cross summarizes much about Bruno Lanteri as well: "As 'Doctor Mysticus' of the Church he teaches what spiritual life is and what it is not. He is able to make all the connections, fitting the single pieces to the whole, opening one's eyes to what is essential and pointing out methods and ways to the last end."[31]

Who is man whom one approaches and with whom he deals? Darwin saw man as the latest stage in the development of animal species. For Marx man was the product of social-economic forces.[32] Freud reduced man to instinct, sex and the preservation of life in the face of death.[33] Does a doctor treat a body or a human being? Does the parish pastor care solely for souls or is there more to his ministry? Does a teacher educate only minds or the whole person?

Christian tradition even while possessing many nuances is based on its biblical foundation and leads to an integral vision of the human person: body, soul and spirit (1 Thes 5,23). "This is how we recognize the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit which does not thus acknowledge Jesus is not from God." (1Jn 4,2) Attention must be given to the fact that various authors may be using language differently. This can lead to confusion through the interpretation of the biblical tradition by certain schools of philosophy. Without the necessary distinctions, the results might not be conformable to Christian teaching.

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[27] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 77. (IF 18)
[28] T. GALLAGHER, "L'unico tesoro del loro cuore": Toward the heart of Lanteri, companion of Christ, in *Lanterianum*, 3.12.1996, p. 12. My translation. (IF19)
[29] ibid., p. 13. (IF20)
[30] cf. Is 62:2; 65:15; Rev 2:17 (IF21)
[31] Proprium des Teresianischen Karmel zum Studenbuch, Herder 1990, S. 308. (Approbierter Text, S. 346)
[32] J. GEVAERT, *Il problema dell'Uomo - Introduzione all'Antropologia Filosofica* , Torino 1973, pp. 99-100. (IF22)
[33] ibid., p. 103. (IF23)

Bruno Lanteri, being a catholic theologian, follows the Christian tradition in his vision of man. Just as the first question, "Who is the man, Lanteri?" has many diverse elements to be considered, so will it be with our present topic, "According to Lanteri, who is man?" So, we will now consider the following elements: The origin and destiny of man, man in the state of original innocence, his actual condition, the process leading to his destiny, the principles of this process, and finally the acts proceeding from these principles.

1. The Origin and Ultimate Destiny of Man Created in the Image of God

Bruno begins his course of spiritual exercises with the origin and end i.e., destiny of man.[34] We see this in the three points he gives for the first meditation: 1.) I am created by God; this shows the excellence of our origin. 2.) We are created to serve God in this world. 3.) Man is created in order to enjoy God in the world to come. Thus, we are not the origin of ourselves, neither are our parents or angels the source of our being.

> "*The only sufficient reason for our existence*" is "*the infinite goodness of God*."[35] More precisely: *"... all three divine persons contribute in as much each says: Let us make man; God wants primarily to make the body through the work of his hands, not confiding him to others... and he continually breathes the breath of life within him. We observe here that it is not simply his voice applied as in the creation of the universe, nor his hand as in the formation of the body, but with his breath, or as the interpreters of Sacred Scripture say, with a sigh coming from the depths of God's heart. He created the soul by this means to prove to us that its immediate source is the very heart of God, as if being detached therefrom. Divine Love is its true, efficient and immediate cause, being as if the very substance of the heart of God...."*[36]

The manner of his creation points to man's being made in the image of God: *"... if the soul is the immediate product of divine love, and since it is proper for love to seek the object of love similar to itself, it follows that the soul need be created in the image and likeness of God."*[37] Lanteri then goes on to say that this impression of divinity in the soul *"consists in being similar to God in substance, similar in his perfections, in his being the image of the Most Blessed Trinity, and even to imitate the inscrutable internal operations of the three divine persons."*[38] This similarity is seen in the three powers of the soul: memory, intellect and will.

> *"Indeed, in the soul there is impressed a ray of divinity such that it now finds itself in the midst of spiritual entities being free, immortal and sublime like God. Further, we see carved in the soul the mark of the Most Holy Trinity, the three powers of the soul compared with three distinct Persons in one God such that the memory of the past resembles the Father, to whom eternity is especially attributed. With the intellect it resembles the Son to whom wisdom is attributed. With the will it resembles the Holy Spirit to whom love is especially attributed. Subsequently, he wishes that we call him our Father having established relationship with us."*[39]

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[34] *Manoscritti*, vol. 13, pp. 124-139. (IF 25)
[35] ibid., p. 125. (IF26)
[36] *Manoscritti*, vol. 13, pp. 127-128. (IF27)
[37] ibid., p. 129. (IF28)
[38] ibid., p. 129. See also vol. 14, p. 275. (IF 29)
[39] ibid., p. 128. (IF 30)

One may ask if Lanteri sees in man' body a similarity with God. Is the body image of God, or only the soul? To begin we find that he affirms a certain dependance of the soul on the body. *"Indeed, on account of the close bond between Body and soul, man is dependent on his senses, even in order to think, if he wishes to act and manifest his thoughts."*[40] Together with the soul the body participates in man's goal and purpose: *"Here is why we are created with body and soul; God gave us eyes to marvel at his works, ears to hear his greatness, a voice, hands and feet to carry out his commands. He gave us a soul, and with that our memory in order to think and remember him, an intellect to appreciate him, a will to love him. Behold the instruments of service which God requires of us, and is in fact the reason of our existence. God created us to adore and to serve him."*[41] This body will participate in the last end of man. Lanteri recommended that the Oblates *"be consoled considering that the Lord will one day restore to us a body glorious as his own."*[42]

Two short texts regarding charity also point to the body as image of God. *"He who loves God, will love his fellow men taking no regard of their talents or defects: faith suffices to teach us that he is the image of God."*[43] *And how ought one love? "with intellect and will, with words and works."*[44] Thus, one ought to love with body and soul his neighbor in his body and soul since both are images of God, the one who acts in love and the one who receives love. Another text from his course of spiritual exercises confirms this. Lanteri affirms that Jesus *"wants us to love our neighbor above all else because he is the image of God. That which is done for our neighbor, God considers to be done unto himself. He wants that we being an image of God should participate in his goodness, sharing all the good we have and acting as God would act."*[45]

Connecting the idea of man's divine image with the end and purpose of his being, Bruno writes in his study of the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius that man's *"image of God... does not consist in being similar to him in omnipotence, wisdom or immensity, but rather in* ***sanctity****, that is, becoming a model of his virtues."*[46] This connection he highlights since: *"according to the measure that one is convinced of the importance of his end, he will labor more or less to attain it."*[47]

Following St. Ignatius of Loyola and aware of the saying of St. Iraneus, "The glory of God is man fully alive", Lanteri considers both the objective end of man – the glory of God – and man's subjective end, his happiness and salvation. St. Ignatius defines the end of man as his principle and foundation: "Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul."[48] In order to impress its importance on one's heart, Bruno begins with its human aspect, the subjective end:

"- The summit of human happiness is to serve God perfectly.

- But now to serve God perfectly is to follow Christ, since Christ is the model of service, first in action, then in patience.

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[40] ibid., p. 155. (IF31)
[41] ibid., p. 133. (IF 32)
[42] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 135. cf. Phil. 3:21. (IF 33)
[43] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 162. (IF 34)
[44] ibid., p. 174. (IF 35)
[45] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 273. (IF 36)
[46] ibid., p. 60. (IF 37)
[47] *Manoscritti*, vol. 13, p. 152. (IF 38)
[48] Spiritual Exercises Nr. 23, Puhl. (IF39)

- *Therefore, the summit of human happiness in this life is to imitate Christ. Happiness has its beginning in the delightful hope of our resurrection with Christ, and hereafter we will possess it in the love of God, infinite Goodness himself, and on account of his benefits towards us."*[49]

Finally, there is the link between man's end and his actions. This is the practical aspect without which it would all remain at the speculative level. This begins with an act of the will called **the intention**. Bruno speaks of the right intention, one that leads to our true and supernatural end. *"The pure intention has three degrees:*

1st not seeking the created good
2nd nor ones' self or ones' welfare
3rd but only God and his glory."[50]

The intention also determines the person's status: *"If we fear punishment, we are in the state of slavery, if we observe the commandments only for the eternal benefits, then we are similar to mercenaries. If we act for God alone, then we are behaving as his children."*[51]

Thus, one's perfection as well as the determination of his true end correspond to an intention made perfect. This he explains further. *"The perfect intention requires that it be:*

1st universal in its whole and parts
2nd maximally objective and extensive, seeking the greatest glory of God,
3rd maximally appreciative, preferring even the least glory of God to that of any created good (maximum value),
4th most intensely fervent
5th continuous, always actual or virtual"[52]

We have according to Lanteri among the many elements of man's end the service of God, the imitation of Christ, man as the image of God, service to neighbor, human activity of body and soul, the perfection of one's intention, holiness, heavenly glory, happiness and divine Goodness.

2. THE INTERIOR STATE OF MAN

a. Man in the state of original innocence

In order to understand the interior state of man we must first consider his original state of innocence. Though treated only briefly, this is of fundamental importance.[53] We find Lanteri's thoughts in this regard when he writes about mortification.

> *"In the state of original innocence, such as in a large community or small kingdom, there reigns order, peace and tranquility.*
> *The appetites, being good servants and children, submit themselves voluntarily to the will. They make their needs known only moderately, without demand.*
> *The will, having reason at its side, listens calmly to their requests, considers them and determines what is suitable. Just as the appetites were interiorly subjected, so too were*

[49] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 233. (IF 40)
[50] ibid., vol. 14, p. 263. (IF 41)
[51] ibid., p. 264. (IF 42)
[52] ibid., p. 264. (IF 43)
[53] Pope John Paul II has 23 chapters on the state of original innocence in his Catechesis on the Theology of the Body in order to give an adequate anthropological explanation on the words of Jesus in Mt 19:3-8 in *Uomo e Donna lo Creò*, Roma 1987, pp. 31-108. (IF 44)

outside of man the beasts subject to him so that everything worked toward the common felicity. With neither fatigue nor conflict, there reigned well preserved order, virtue and happiness."[54]

Using this analogy in his course of spiritual exercises he describes the interior kingdom of man.

"The Queen: the will.
The counselors: Reason, Faith, Synderesis (the speculative conscience, first principles, the natural law), the (practical) conscience.
The Ministers: the intellect, the memory, the imagination.
The objects of consideration are the true and false goods of spirit and body.
The Governor is his love, i.e., the intellectual and sensitive appetites. Sensuality and desires.
The Leaders of the Town Square: the irascible and concupiscible faculties (powers)
The Prosecutor or soldiers: The appetites. (passions)
The Scouts: the senses.
The Enforcers (performers or workers): the limbs and members (parts) of the body."[55]

Lanteri speaks of a Kingdom. Who is the King? Here it is not mentioned, but is simply assumed as obvious to anyone with knowledge of the Bible or Christian teaching. In the context of the Spiritual Exercises the answer is given at the beginning of the second week (Nr. 91). Lanteri does give an answer elsewhere in his writings. There we find the "*Means to have Jesus Christ reign in our Hearts…. Means to have Jesus Christ reign in the hearts of others.*"[56]

In a letter we read the following:

"3. I will be solicitous to have always a grand idea of the Majesty and Goodness of God, which the Saints in heaven possess. I will take pride in always professing openly and freely the desire to live as a good Christian and to have God as my King, not the world nor its maxims. By this means I will overcome human respect and impede many evils."[57]

b. The Actual State of Man (Summa 26,2 Appetites: natural, sensitive, rational or intellectual- the will)

There is a radical change in the state of man on account of original sin. Continuing with the analogy of a kingdom, the will as Queen

"sees from this moment on her whole reign in revolt, the limbs, senses, faculties, the loves and differing appetites, all disturbed, restless, divided, turbid (murky), seditious. They preempt the reason, and against ***both reason and will(?)*** *they deceive and cause conflict. One draws it this way and another draws it that way. One desires this good, the other another good. What is good for one is bad for the other. They are like unruly children, serpents, dogs, horses on the loose. As with wild beasts, the more one yields, the more*

[54] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 135. See also vol. 9, p. 321. (IF 45)
[55] ibid., vol. 11, p. 141. (IF 46)
[56] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, pg. 111. See also A. BRUSTOLON, *L'Antropologia del P. Lanteri*, in *Lanterianum*, 3.12.1996, p. 65; *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 138, p. 70: "…in nome di Gesù Cristo nostro capitano e Re…". (IF 47)
[57] *Carteggio, Vol 2, pp 128-136)* cf. footnote 323 of Italian text. (x)

they challenge and attack. Likewise, they are almost always in civil war amongst themselves."[58]

The present situation of man is compared to a kingdom in a state of civil war. Peace will only come with a return to the order of the original state by the submission of all to God as King. The background for this submission is not that of tyranny or slavery, but rather of marriage, the relationship of the Queen with her King. By uniting our will to the divine will, our soul will be united to God. Sin by contrast separates us from God, giving ourselves to the devil as prostitutes,[59] making ourselves worse than beasts.[60] Our task is thus to reunite the bride with the groom bringing the kingdom intact to the state for which man was created.

3. The Process That Leads to the Goal.

Thus far we have only broadly traced the itinerary of man called to live accordingly as the image of God, so that the body, being the material and visible part of his humanity, may also participate in the heavenly glory of the children of God. Should this be neglected, the result would be the reverse; the soul on account of sin will fall to the level of the beasts. We will now retrace our steps determining in detail the recovery of the image of God in man - body and soul - or as Lanteri calls it, "the reformation of man."

"The more one falls, he disorderly attaches himself to created goods and becomes similar to the beasts.
If he regrets his disorderly conduct, he is then a penitent, if he detaches his disordered affections for creature goods solely not to oppose reason, then he is a reasonable man.
Should he replace his affection for creatures with God, living according to the Gospel, he is then a Christian.
If he should consecrate himself to God imitating Jesus Christ, he will be holy.
When he is totally detached from the created and thinks only of God, he is a heavenly being."[61]

We see here clearly the progression from beast to penitent, man of reason, Christian, saint, and heavenly being. Each stage is the result of a definite process. The passage from one stage to the next corresponds to the three ages of the interior life: purgation, enlightenment, union. Lanteri attempts to explain this process. From his study of St. Ignatius' spiritual exercises, he draws an outline that may be original to him. In this he explains the work of God in the soul and the itinerary to be followed in order to complete his reformation. This outline becomes his method for prayer and for teaching prayer, for giving and explaining the spiritual exercises. In "Praxis Meditationis" he summarizes his teaching:

deformata reformare
reformata conformare
conformata confirmare
confirmata trasformare

[58] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, pp. 135-6; see vol. 9, p. 324 for an analytical description. (IF 48)
[59] ibid., vol. 11, p. 149. (IF 49)
[60] ibid., vol. 13, p. 193. (IF 50)
[61] ibid., vol. 11, p. 239, my underlines; a Latin abbreviated text is found on p. 447. (IF 51)

"The conscience comes to know this deformity namely by examining the thoughts, words and works for God, neighbor and oneself. Hence the deformed Desire must be reformed.

Thus, to reform the will presently by conforming to the model of Jesus Christ…

the will after being conformed according to His actions, need then be confirmed therefore according to the serious commandment to always imitate Jesus in his sentiments in general, and in particular if called by God…. and, in imitation of Christ's patience, …to follow Him even in heroic acts.

Finally, to transform the confirmed for future heavenly glory."[62]

This follows the scheme of the three ages of the interior life. The first of these corresponds to the purgative way, the second to the illuminative way, the third furthers this, and the fourth then corresponds to the unitive life or stage.[63] As Lanteri introduces one to the spiritual exercises he states that:

"their goal is to effectively lead one to a total reform of one's self. In particular they dispose the soul[64] *first of all to remove every evil and disordered affection, then to seek, find and execute the will of God in the state of life in which God has placed him. Next there is need for an orderly chain of thought concerning truth, beginning with principles which are indisputably evident in order to convince the mind of its errors and uncover the heart of its vices, thus moving the will to destroy these and to combat the former, replacing them with the best maxims and excellent habits which are able to assure us of eternal salvation."*[65]

Regarding thought and judgement, we find that *"one's reform process is done by degrees by proving that:*

1. *one is in error regarding his state and mode of living, sinful, arrogant, tepid such that he deviates from his true ultimate goal and calling forth grave, evil guilt and punishment. The argument for the first week of the spiritual exercises.*
2. *his errors are to be corrected by following the actions of Christ. The matter for the second week.*
3. *difficulties are to be overcome by imitating the patience of Christ. The goal of the third week.*
4. *victory is achieved through spiritual joy in hope and charity. The fruit of the fourth week and the crowning of the spiritual exercises."*[66]

Within the above scheme concerning thought and judgment in general, there is an ascending scale of knowledge about God, creatures, and oneself.

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[62] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, pp. 88-90. (IF 52)
[63] ibid., pp. 468-474. See also p. 244-246. (IF 53)
[64] „animo" (x)
[65] *Manoscritti*, vol. 13, p. 123. (IF 54)
[66] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p.478. A variation of this is found on p. 421. (IF 55)

"The gradation of knowledge of God proceeds from a concept based upon His majesty and holiness, proceeding then to His dominion, passing next to His justice, followed then by His mercy, His humanity, His exemplariness, kindness, magnificence, goodness, and culminating in a concept of God based on His charity. Knowledge of creatures is first, that these are in and of themselves nothing, then in relation to us, they are either useful means or impediments. Finally, there is a gradation of knowledge about ourselves, that we too are nothing but beings capable of any sin."[67]

Regarding the heart we find the same process working through the four weeks of the spiritual exercises.

"The ultimate end is an enduring reformation of man.
The proximate end will accord with the week:
1. remorse of heart for one's evil life, tepidity and arrogance;
2. resolve to change;
3. overcoming difficulties;
4. confirming the soul in constancy."[68]

In like manner as with thought, the process of reforming the affections will be gradual, i.e., by steps.

"The gradation of affection for God will be to want

- *to consider Him great: who is like God*
- *to serve Him by submitting our will completely to His*
- *to imitate Jesus Christ and to unite oneself to Him in doing what pleases Him*
- *to follow Him closely even to Mount Calvary without rest except in union with God.*

The gradation of affection for created goods is rectified by:
- Indifference, 1st week: in as much as these are useful and not a hinderance to our end
- Contempt, 2nd week: considering all as dung
- Hate, 3rd week: to be crucified as to things of the world"[69]

On account of human sensitivity passing from the exterior inwards, the various levels will be as affections felt in stages of purgation, moderation, conversion, gaiety.[70] The whole process in its various members and levels Lanteri derives from the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius. With this summary he is able to reduce the work of the four weeks into his retreat for eight days. Each day has a specific affection as its goal proceeding with order:[71]

Day 1 desires
Day 2 remorse
Day 3 disillusion

[67] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 242. (IF 56)
[68] ibid., pp. 421-422. (IF 59)
[69] ibid., pp. 239-243. (IF 60)
[70] ibid., p. 478. (IF 61)
[71] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, pp. 488-490. See Also *Direttorio* pp. 132 ff. (x)

Day 4 fear
Day 5 fervor
Day 6 devotion (election)
Day 7 fortitude
Day 8 beatitude

The first four regard one's past and pertain to the purgative way. The next three concern one's present and pertains to the illuminative way. The last day concerns the future and the unitive way. Equipped and empowered with these affections one is then capable to resolve at each stage/week to act quickly by:[72]

1st week: *fleeing and escaping evil*
2nd *loving what is good*
3rd *overcoming obstacles*
4th *making permanent one's resolve*

Now with a firm resolve the process brings us finally to the level of behavior:[73]

turn from evil
do good
seek peace
attain peace

4. The Principles of the Process

There are three principles upon which the above process depends: our natural inclinations, the attraction of grace, and the temptations of the devil. We will now show how to distinguish and know them. For practical purposes Bruno considers under the category of natural inclinations only those which are evil. Those which are positive he includes in the category of the attraction of grace and then here more precisely as "natural dispositions". These "principles which cause us to act", united with the "acts which proceed from the principles", constitute together what Bruno calls the art of knowing oneself. This *"consists in knowing the good and evil dispositions of the heart, that is, that which we have good and bad, or where we are strong or weak."*[74]

a. Natural Inclinations[75]

Since we are considering here only evil natural inclinations, these will be recognized through one's sins. *"One who is lazy and uncaring is immediately discouraged - he believes that he is being rejected by God; he who is inclined to pleasures comforts himself readily with the hope of pardon which promises to be without penalty; one being self-conceited and presumptuous would be willing even to contest God Himself."* The principle of natural inclinations within the process of reforming one's life simply reflects one's actual state and the need for change in order to attain the desired end. In the state of original innocence man's natural inclinations were entirely good tending to his perfection. On account of original sin the fallen nature of man now inclines to comfort and to cede to his feelings, to love of sensible/sensual pleasure, vanity, conceitedness and ambition. He cares only for himself and seeks his own advantage in all things. With regards his

[72] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, pp. 421-422. (x)
[73] ibid., p. 246. (IF 64)
[74] ibid., pp. 149-160. (IF 65)
[75] ibid., pp. 150-151. (IF 66)

fellow man he tends accordingly to be cold, uncaring, suspicious and envious. In his behavior the tendency is to be proud, arrogant, impetuous, domineering, audacious, foolish, perfidious, traitorous, lying. Towards God he feels drawn to "*diffidence and fear which bears tepidness and discouragement; his reserve leads him to accommodate his piety to his passions*" which then leads to insincerity, presumption, activity and unduly concern rendering all devotion exaggerated and his fervor indiscreet.

b. Attraction of Grace[76]

"The attraction of grace is an affectionate light showing us that which is good and leading us to love it; it is a voice of the Lord, which makes itself heard; should one not follow it, he would be leaving his path." This voice of the Lord together with His continuous aid, draws one by an interior force superior to his evil inclinations, setting him on the road of reformation following the steps of the process already described. This movement of grace one can recognize at the beginning of one's conversion first on the part of his natural dispositions, since grace is laboring against nature, then too by the frequent and repeated return of pleasant feelings. This principle is the force within the process which invites, sustains, stimulates and strengthens us, drawing us forward.

> *"The beginning of conversion is that germ of life and impression of grace that contains in a small form all the perfection that develops in the measure that one is faithful to it, the predominant motive that has induced us to give ourselves to God."*[77]

c. Temptations of the Devil

"A temptation is a movement that draws us to evil or turns us away from the good."[78] The most ordinary ones are sensuality and pleasure; inclination, negligence, inertia; perplexity, restlessness. The more extraordinary ones include despair, hate for God, cursing. At his spiritual weak point, one will be attacked by temptation through deception and false maxims making evil to look good. The will is presented with temptation in such a way as to enflame the passions. The one attacked feels a repugnance towards the good and an inclination to something evil. Temptation is thus a principle acting like a brake in the process of spiritual growth, it is an obstacle, a deviation and a retreat from the kind of life which is most desirable in the depths of our humanity.

5. The Acts which Proceed from the Principles

a. The Affections of the Heart[79]

In the scholastic tradition which Lanteri follows there are eleven affections, also called passions. These are considered to be voluntary when they proceed from deliberation such as in meditation.

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[76] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, pp. 152-153. (IF 67)
[77] Calendar OMV (Laetifica nos pro diebus Domine, 2011), *January 25*
[78] ibid., p. 153. (IF 68)
[79] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, pp. 143; 154-160. (IF 69)

If their movement precedes the use of one's reason, they are involuntary and point towards one's inclination as well as its object. If the object is good one feels desire or joy, if evil then fear or sadness. If you know its source, then you know the affection by comparing the objects with the disposition of the heart. The heart will necessarily be either calm and in peace, or disturbed and in agitation. There are four possible sources for this agitation:

1. dissipation coming from some joy
2. solicitude coming from some desire
3. anxiety coming from fear
4. sluggishness coming from some pain.

Affections which are accompanied by peace proceed from grace and are good. One is set to do all that God wants. Positive affections, such as spiritual joy,[80] will not deter us from the Lord while negative affections such as sadness which comes from the Lord will detach us from all that hinders our union with God. Affections reveal themselves in the ordinary occasions of life including play, dinner, conversation and even our thoughts.

b. The Distractions of the Spirit

"A distraction is a thought intruding in our spiritual exercises leading us away from the proposed subject and hindering us from doing them well."[81] There are three types: distractions of levity/flippancy proceeding from a lively imagination, or one's character or activity. Distractions of passion which proceed from a disordered affection, not in line with one's true end, but fixed to some extraneous object. Finally, there are distractions of trial permitted by God for the advancement of one in virtue.

c. Doubts in Practice[82]

"Doubts of this sort are due to some undetermined position of the spirit as to what one should do; in the pursuit of perfection it seeks, but finds not." These *"serve to know the dispositions of the heart, because one doubts according to such (dispositions)."*

d. Internal Words (spiritual soundbites)[83]

An interior word is one "*which moves the soul to decide in a combat between nature and grace about some doubt it is presented to resolve in order to follow either the good or the evil."* The two sides each present their reasons/motivations to the will which *"then takes the side of one or the other for the motive where its affection is greater."* There is an abundance of examples not only in the world of commercial advertising or news headlines. **In the face of an evil temptation**, one will attempt to justify himself with words such as: I cannot resist; Just this one time, then confession; Overcome the temptation by indulging in it; Who knows if there is such a thing as hell. When the matter is less grave then: It's not a big thing; Everybody does it; I'm not perfect; I could do worse. **In the process of reform**, one will use this tool to his advantage by doing the reverse. Beginners will think: Delay costs; Nunc Coepi - Begin again!; No pain, no gain; paradise

[80] cf. *Manoscritti*, vol. 14, pp. 282-295. (IF 70)
[81] ibid., vol., 11, p. 156. (IF 71)
[82] ibid., p. 158. (IF 72)
[83] ibid., pp. 159-160. (IF 73)

pays for it all; I will be happy to have done it; I won't regret it. **For those who are more advanced** help comes from such words as: It's better to do it; It's my duty; Whatever it takes; For the love of God; This is what God wants. One can find many such maxims in Sacred Scripture.

How important such thoughts are we see by their influence on the affections. Distractions and doubts on the other hand are secondary. We are now at the heart of the process of the formation of the spirit. We choose the thoughts we want to think in order to incite the affections we want to feel in order to lead us to the goal we want to achieve.[84]

> *"One might think that such objects of affection are so numerous as not being able to be counted, whereas in reality they are very few, perhaps two or three about which the heart completely occupies itself. Thus, by knowing how to control these, one can keep his whole heart under control."*[85]

> *"...these words* (internal thoughts) *which lead one to fall can be easily found and he will see that these can be reduced to three or four which decide everything."*[86]

Two or three objects of affection and three or four internal words lead to their logical conclusion. Lanteri utilizes these findings to help those under his guidance to reach that goal, for which God created us. One might ask: Which comes first, the chicken or the egg? Thought or affection? I do not know if Lanteri answers this question directly, but it seems to me from his statements thus far that there is an ongoing dynamic between the two. The ultimate answer may depend on the individual, some being led more by affection, being an emotive type while others are more intellectual. Or again it may depend on where one is in the spiritual life, just as in St. Ignatius rules of discernment of spirits for the first week (EE 314-315) we see a reversal of answers depending on whether one's goal is God or something else.

We now have a broad picture of Bruno's vision of man. This was necessary to come to know the person of Bruno Lanteri and his approach to apostolic activity. We have thus far looked at several outlines treating the reform of man under various aspects. His vision is wide, complex, analytical and detailed. We can ask if it is possible to reduce this vision in a few words without reducing man himself. What is it that unites his vision in its many aspects? What is its essence?

At this point we can affirm that within this vision of man there are many possibilities along a trajectory culminating in God. Looking at a human person, Bruno would behold these many possibilities and his vocation *"to become like God, not of nature, but of will, transforming us practically in the divine nature."*[87] To this end Lanteri proposes as the first disposition *"one needs to do the exercises"* of St. Ignatius a firm resolve to become a saint, a great saint, and quickly.

> *"The Lord has created us in His image and likeness. Sin destroyed this image in us.* ***Sanctity*** *consists in its restoration. It is thus necessary to wash the stains of sin. One needs to restore and reestablish the likeness, the image of God, which consists not in the similarity of*

[84] In my heart I store up your words, so I might not sin against you. (Ps 119,9-11, see also Mt 4.3-11)
[85] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 156. (IF 74)
[86] ibid., p. 160. (IF 75)
[87] ibid., vol. 14, p. 276. (IF 76)

omnipotence, wisdom, immensity, but in ***holiness/sanctity*** *i.e., in making oneself a model of His virtues....'*[88]

III. ELEMENTS OF LANTERI'S SPIRITUALITY

The guiding principle behind the apostolic activity of Pio Bruno Pancrazio Lanteri is sanctity: Let saints be your teacher that you yourself may become a teacher of saints. His apostolate was the formation of holy apostles, which means arousing in people their capacity for goodness, zeal and apostolic capabilities.[89] This requires close attention to the life and work of the Word Incarnate, allowing the word of God to become flesh in us. This anthropological aspect was the content of the previous chapter. But since the Incarnation itself is a work of the Holy Spirit, the apostolate requires attention also to the work of the Holy Spirit in us allowing this divine Spirit to become our own spirit. That is the theme of the present chapter.

A. Taught by Saints

Bruno Lanteri had a great desire to become a saint, quickly so, a great saint. He desired also to awake the same desire in others. What is the source of such desire and how can it be realized? Looking at his life and writings we see the influence of the All Holy One, and of all that participates in His holiness. We will now attempt to find the mediators of this divine influence and then in a general way its fruits. We ask four questions: 1) formed by whom? 2) by what means? 3) for whom? 4) to do what?

1. Formed by Whom?

To answer this first question we look to the home of his childhood and upbringing.

"... his father, a man of learned and irreproachable fame, was a doctor of medicine, who prided himself more for being a good catholic than a man of science. His charity toward the sick, especially those who were poor and abandoned, was so affectionate and sincere that he came to be called Father of the poor. Not content simply to cure illnesses of the body he sustained them also with alms, while adding to these the alms of a superior order, good Christian counsel for the good health of the soul.

"His wife, Bruno's mother, was a very pious woman of virtue, obliged to her husband, to the care of her children, and to living without complaint before God and man."[90]

Without doubt we find the primary source of all his personal traits of goodness, zeal and ability in his family. Bruno was only four years old when his mother died. Nevertheless, he was not left maternally orphan on account of an act in that sad moment on his father's part which will become the cornerstone of his interior life. His father brought him before the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary in their parish church and said to him: "*My little boy, from this moment on Our Lady will be your only mother/mommy; love her as her true son and always have recourse to her.*"[91]

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[88] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 60. (IF 77)
[89] cf. *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 201. (IF 78)
[90] GASTALDI, pp. 18-19. (IF 79)
[91] T. PIATTI, *Un Precursore dell'Azione Cattolica Il Servo di Dio Pio Brunone Lanteri Apostolo di Torino Fondatore degli Oblati di Maria Vergine*, 4. edizione, Torino 1954, p. 14. (IF 80)

The fruit of this fatherly act is not lacking since "the young lad Bruno after receiving this Sacrament (of Confirmation) would prepare himself with great ardor for that what God wanted from him by frequent reception of the Sacraments, prayer, the exercise of charity towards his neighbor, by obedience and humility…."[92]

In chronological order we find following his parents among those having the most influence on young Lanteri the Swiss Jesuit priest Nicolaus von Diessbach,[93] a convert from Calvinism. He established a religious group for laypersons with the name "Amicitia Christiana", Christian Friendship, first in Turin and later in Vienna, Austria where he died in the odor of sanctity. The later "Apostle of Vienna", St. Clement Mary Hofbauer, also a disciple of this apostolic priest in the Viennese Friendship group, wanted to be buried next to him.[94] Diessbach's influence on Bruno is such that it is difficult to say where the one ends and the other begins.

Above all Diessbach saved Bruno from the grips of the Jansenist heresy. It was not without struggle that the young student of theology, seeking highest perfection would see the light of Christian truth. By good theological arguments and examples of virtuous life, Fr. Diessbach knew how to redirect the energy of his disciple to combatting the true enemy of perfection. Both personally and through the group of "Friends" Diessbach saw to Bruno's entire spiritual and priestly formation, consistently feeding his initial capacities of goodness, zeal and apostolic ability.

Here begins the third circle of influence in the life of Lanteri, the two groups "Aa" and Christian Friendship. The first one, Aa, whose meaning lacks adequate explanation[95] perhaps meaning anonymous Friendship, is associated with names like St. Francis de Sales, St. Vincent de Paul, Olier, Bordone, Posnal, Lassere, Demeur, Proudon among others. The goal of this group was to bring together seminarians abandoned otherwise to a very secular environment in order to help them by means of a *"close and sincere union"* and *"escorted by the greatest secrecy to reach the heights of perfection."*[96] How far Diessbach was associated with the Aa we do not know. Nevertheless, the Christian Friendship group was founded by him. Both groups held in common "first the character of a secret society, then the identity of the aims - the sanctification of their members and the expansion of the reign of God - finally the identity of means: regular meetings on the one hand and the distribution of 'good books' on the other."[97] In the company of such friends who all seek holiness of life they experience in common:

> *"complete and absolute liberty among those who make up the group in the practices of the Aa, perfect equality among themselves, a pleasing, fraternal openness of heart, sincere concern to be of useful service when the occasion presents itself, and a firm persuasion of mutual correspondence."*[98]

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[92] GASTALDI, p. 24. (IF 81)
[93] Calliari retains that Diessbach was a personal friend of St. Alphonsus, see Lanterianum, 2. luglio 1995, p. 62. (IF 82)
[94] In the cemetary of Maria Enzersdorf outside of Vienna are other "Friends" whose graves are still marked. The remains of St. Clemens were transferred to the Church Maria am Gestade in Vienna after his canonization. (IF 83)
[95] Candido BONA I.M.C., Le "Amicizie" Societa' Segrete e Rinascita Religiosa (1770-1830), Deputazine Subalpina di Storia Patria, Torino, 1962, p. 91; CRISTIANI, p. 32. (IF 84)
[96] In "Tratto dell'a.a. degli studenti di Teologia…" by Lanteri in *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, pp. 169-172. (IF 85)
[97] CRISTIANI, p. 36. (IF 86)
[98] Manoscritti, vol. 6, p. 174. (IF 87)

Such correspondence was equally found between the members of these groups established in other cities, so that meeting a member from elsewhere he would be immediately recognized as a "friend" and treated as such.[99] We may add that Bruno sought such "pious acquaintances" desiring to make friends of them all. If after every possible effort one does not share the same sincere desire for holiness, he then saw no other recourse than to confide him to divine providence, and to disassociate himself from him, leaving him to go his own way.
Such was the case, with great grief, of one of his university companions.[100] Friends must necessarily have a common desire of virtue[101] as the foundation of their mutual relationship. Among Bruno's friends, the foundation was an effective desire for holiness. Just as in his native Cuneo his friends were only those pleasing to his Father Pietro, so now his friends were only those pleasing to his heavenly Father.

2. By What Means?

We are looking at Bruno's connection to "saints" and their influence on his formation. We saw already that his most immediate connections were saints in the general sense as used in the New Testament especially in The Acts of the Apostles and the letters of St. Paul. When we consider the influence of saints in the canonical sense on Lanteri, a vast world opens up to us. We can look now at the human aspect of their mediation with the second question: By what means was this formation by saints accomplished in Bruno Lanteri? Since it belongs to "God Our Lord alone to give consolation to the soul without preceding cause" (EE 330, Gallagher), the mediation of saints, as it is with angels, must have "some object, through which such a consolation comes." What is true for spiritual consolation is true for the mediations we are now considering.

To simplify a complex matter, keeping within the scope of the present study and in no particular order, we find in his treatise on the Aa these elements:[102] mental prayer, spiritual reading, study, conferences, the Eucharist, the solemn feasts of the Church, Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph and our holy guardian angels. How does he come to choose these means to his aspired goal of holiness? Simply by the fact that the saints are the ones who have succeeded in arriving.

> *"He who yearns will study the means, and ask the ones who know and are able to give. The best means are those which are immediate and direct, since these are certain and infallible. All others need to take second place. Therefore, human prudence must be restrained so that its talent does not give priority to means that are secondary and indirect over those cited above. The example of the saints and their choices ought to be our rule for determining what is most opportune and ready. In foreseen time many souls became great. Let us long for such great beauty."*[103]

For spiritual reading Bruno places the Holy Bible at the top of the list.[104] Then comes The Imitation of Christ, the works of St. Francis de Sales, St. Teresa of Avila among others. He

[99] *Carteggio*, vol. 2, pp. 72-76. (IF 88)
[100] See GASTALDI, pp. 53-54. (IF 89)
[101] Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 8
[102] See *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, pp. 178-188. He adds various "indirect practices" e.g., reciprocal visits and walks together. (IF 90)
[103] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 179, footnote. (IF 91)
[104] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 181. (IF 92)

emphasizes the priority of Authors whose names begin with St., i.e., Saint. Nevertheless, within these means his emphasis is always Christ centered.

> *"The pilgrim upon coming to a fork in the road, does not seek the way most comfortable but rather the way that leads to one's destination. One who writes will not choose a crown instead of a pen. Therefore, all honors, riches and pleasures not being the means to our end are worthy only to be rejected following the example of Jesus Christ and His saints."*[105]

Following the pilgrim's logic of beginning with the end i.e., with the goal in mind, Lanteri at the age of thirty explains that the reason behind the resolutions he made during spiritual exercises was *"to keep Jesus Christ always before his eyes."*[106]

1. *Holiness consists in ever seeking the greater glory of God.*
2. *note well, that we give greater glory to God by becoming ever more similar to Christ in intellect and will...*
3. *The virtues of Christ needing to be exercised are none other than those regarding God... oneself... and neighbor.*[107]
4. *...regarding God, more solitude and grace; regarding self, greater austerity of life; regarding neighbor, greater works of mercy*
5. *He however exercises all the greater in prayer, austerity and mercy who uses every occasion to counter more quickly, eagerly and firmly a will that is lazy, narrow and ill.*
6. *Thus, one is holy who more quickly, eagerly and firmly uses the occasions of prayer, austerity and mercy in imitation of Christ.*

Following this logic, he writes concerning the sanctity of the Mother of Jesus:

> *"The Virgin Mary was crowned in Heaven as daughter, as Mother and as spouse with the triple crown of wisdom, of power, of goodness. By attending to prayer, she participates in His wisdom; by conquering herself, she participates in His power; by charity, cordiality and condescendence to neighbor she imitates His Goodness."*[108]

Bruno's ideal in synthesis thus *"is to live like Jesus, with Jesus for Jesus."*[109] Since however *"the sanctity of Mary surpasses by far all other holiness and is that most similar to God's"*[110] he will at times, in addition to Christ, give special attention to His Blessed Mother. One example from the Spiritual Directory, he writes that the Oblates "*will attend seriously to their own salvation and sanctification by means of the most attentive imitation of Jesus Christ whom they take as their model in every action, together with Most Holy Mary, their dear mother."*[111] Lanteri will pass on to his disciples that what he not only received but practiced too. His own personal spiritual directory adapted and amplified will later become the Spiritual Directory of the Oblates.

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[105] *Manoscritti*, vol. 1. p. 42. (IF 93)
[106] ibid., p. 59. (IF 94)
[107] For Mary as an example see Paolo Calliari, Maria Vincitrice di Tutte le Eresie, Lanteriana, 1976, p. 23. (x)
[108] Gastaldi, p. 451 (x)
[109] *Manoscritti*, vol. 1. p. 110. (IF 95)
[110] Gastaldi, p. 450 (x)
[111] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 121. (IF 96)

We have seen already how at the age of four Bruno would receive the Blessed Virgin as his mother. Before ordination he would make an "Act of Slavery" to her, which he renews together with those at the beginning of his last undertaking: *"The Congregation of the Oblates of the virgin Mary is a pious union of ecclesiastics fully dedicated to the Most Holy Virgin and united among themselves by the pure bond of charity."*[112] He was always conscious of her influence. At the close of his life, he will say with tears in his eyes: *"I hardly knew any other mother than Mary Most Holy, and in all my life I have never received anything but caresses from such a good Mother."*[113]

Let us look now to the other saints who will influence the development of Pio Bruno Pancrazio beginning with his patron saints. St. Bruno, he wished so much to follow that he would one day apply to become a Carthusian, the Order founded by his patron. Not succeeding in this, he nevertheless kept the same spirit: *"The Oblates of Mary Most Holy will be at home such as many hermits, loving solitude and silence in order to attend to prayer and study."*[114] In imitation of St. Pius V, he proposes *"to defend the integrity of the Faith and propagate it as much as possible with all zeal."*[115] Finally, St. Pancratius was his model of fortitude in youth and love for the Blessed Sacrament.[116]

In preparation for ordination to the Subdiaconate Bruno makes an "*act of slavery*", in which he consecrates himself to the Blessed Virgin Mary. There we find the names of those saints important to him at that time. In this act he asks for the help of his "*guardian angel, St. Joseph, St. Teresa, St. John, St. Ignatius, St. Francis Xavier, St. Pius, St. Bruno...."*[117] Before priestly ordination we find two more details to be added. First, he makes a *"vow to God in the presence of the whole celestial assembly."*[118] Then too he resolves to read the works of *"St. Teresa from the beginning to the end."*[119] Afterwards he cites this saint often, in matters concerning mortification,[120] mental prayer,[121] humility,[122] accepting the will of God,[123] observing the rule,[124] difficulties to be overcome,[125] self-knowledge,[126] confidence in one's spiritual director,[127] the fear of hell[128] and interior peace.[129]

[112] Direttorio e Altri Scritti, p. 33. (x)
[113] GASTALDI, p. 21. (IF 97)
[114] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 149. (IF 98)
[115] GASTALDI, p. 18. (IF 99)
[116] ibid. (IF 100)
[117] *Manoscritti*, vol. 1, p. 6. (IF 101)
[118] ibid., vol. 1, p. 27. (IF 102)
[119] ibid. (IF 103)
[120] ibid., vol. 9, pp. 22 e 319. (IF 104)
[121] ibid., pp. 35 e 37 (IF 105)
[122] ibid., pp. 36 e 81. (IF 106)
[123] ibid., p. 39. (IF 107)
[124] ibid., p. 51. (IF 108)
[125] ibid., p. 66. (IF 109)
[126] ibid., p. 80. (IF 110)
[127] ibid., pp. 196 e 202. (IF 111)
[128] ibid., p. 301. (IF 112)
[129] ibid., p. 323. (IF 113)

Another saint cited often in Bruno's writings is St. Francis de Sales. We find these themes taken from him: indifference,[130] humility[131] and interior peace.[132] He wrote a brief explanation of one of the saint's novenas[133] as well as a fifty-page summary of "A Treatise on the Love of God".[134]

Further we find citations from St. Mary Magdalen de' Pazzi, a saint whom he recommended often to others, from St. Gertrude, St. Catharine of Sienna, St. Bernard, St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Catharine of Genoa, St. Thomas, St. Anselm and St. Ambrose.

For spiritual formation he looked more to St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross[135] and St. Francis de Sales. Obviously, St. Ignatius of Loyola and his Spiritual Exercises is a prime source as well, even if Bruno does not always name him directly. Regarding dogmatic Theology Lanteri writes for the Oblates: *"Their teachers in this subject will be the two Doctors of the Church: St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure."*[136] During his exile at his summer estate, he would pray and study

> "besides the subjects of Sacred Scripture and polemics (today we would say apologetics), in which he was most excellent, one could say that the works of the angelic St. Thomas and the seraphic doctor St. Bonaventure were always open on his desk. The former he would use as necessary as a summary of many other pamphlets especially in regards to the Most Holy Eucharist. He labored over the works of the latter and as a busy bee he knew how to draw from them an abundance of honey which beyond his own use he summarized a large portion of the works of this very holy doctor and has said that by studying these he advanced greatly in knowledge of God. For this reason, from those manuscripts we still have, we see him with great frequency citing the words and authority of these two great saints."[137]

For Moral Theology he recommended those "authors canonized or praised by the Church."[138] Treating the sacrament of reconciliation, he indeed uses this criterion: *"Their guides for the practice of confessor will be: St. Antoninus (of Florence), the Bl. Leonard of Port Maurice,*[139] *St. Francis de Sales, the Blessed Alphonsus Liguori, and to that end they will make themselves familiar with all their writings."*[140]

In combatting the heresy of Jansenism raging at the time Bruno gave special attention to St. Alphonsus: "From this saint he drew much compassion for souls, zeal for their salvation, unlimited devotion to the supreme Pontiff and an ardent love for our Mother Church." [141] Contrary to these, Jansenism was "disfiguring the idea of God, of our Lord Jesus, of divine

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[130] ibid., p. 46. (IF 114)
[131] ibid., p. 313. (IF 115)
[132] ibid., p. 323. (IF 116)
[133] *Manoscritti*, vol. 9, pp. 95-96. (IF 117)
[134] ibid., pp. 333-382. This is in French. (IF 118)
[135] "Among his favorite saints he names St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila." CRISTIANI, p. 181. (IF 119)
[136] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito,* p. 142. (IF 120)
[137] GASTALDI, pp. 208-9. (IF 121)
[138] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 142. (IF 122)
[139] Both Leonard and Alphonsus were afterwards canonized saints. (x)
[140] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 151. (IF 123)
[141] GASTALDI, p. 193. (IF 124)

compassion, of the gentleness of the divine Son of God, our Savior, of his love for sinners, of his indulgence towards them. But also... for their opposition to the Pope's authority, the center of Christian unity."[142] For this reason, Lanteri would say to confessors and pastors of souls: *"If you want to do well, adhere to the doctrine of Liguori pure and simple."*[143] His words were followed by deeds. He obtained and distributed the works of Liguori especially among priests. During the French occupation of Piedmont, he anonymously wrote, first in French then in Italian, a small book of 176 pages in defense of this holy **(page 29)** pastor who would shortly thereafter be beatified (September, 1816). This book entitled *'Reflections on the sanctity and doctrine of Msgr. Alphonsus Liguori'* together with a second he authored entitled *'Answer to the question as to whether the doctrine of Liguori is sound and approved by the Holy See'* were to have much influence in France.

We cannot omit the fundamental contribution of St. Ignatius in the formation of Bruno Lanteri. His mentor, Fr. Diessbach, formed him accordingly especially through the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. Bruno would soon himself become a master bringing its teaching to all that he will do. One could say that his apostolate is a commentary on the book of the Exercises.

We now have if not exhaustive at least a well-rounded idea of the means Lanteri used in his own formation and then in his apostolate to form saints. The emphasis on one or other saint depended on the historical circumstances. The main outline however is clear: Jesus, most uniquely, Mary most particularly, followed by Joseph, the Holy Angels, Bruno, Teresa, John of the Cross, Francis de Sales, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, Maria Magdalena de Pazzi, Alphonsus Liguori, Chrysostomus, Augustine, Bernhard and Ignatius of Loyola. These are the names most influential in the life of Lanteri. These saints having arrived at the goal of the journey upon which Bruno was embarking were actively sought to become his teachers and motivation: *"I have no less reason than the saints had to live each and every moment as a saint."*[144] The Saints were the ones who gave Bruno valid reasons for his own journey, examples of faith to be imitated, words of instruction and works opening up new personal and apostolic possibilities. In considering other influences on Bruno's formation, we can affirm in general that these all either were derived from or in conformity with the positive influence of the holy ones. It is thus no exaggeration to say that Bruno Lanteri was formed by saints, by means of Saints for the work of forming new saints.

3. For Whom?

Lanteri was taught by saints, but now we ask for whom? We have already almost answered this question, for whom was the formation of Lanteri directed, and to what purpose. In his synthesis of holiness Lanteri gives us an answer in three parts:[145]

For God - for the greater glory of the divine majesty. This is the Ignatian sense. For God means also to love and serve Him,[146] seeking always and exclusively to carry out His will. Bruno writes:

[142] CRISTIANI, p. 106. (IF 125)
[143] GASTALDI, p. 193. (IF 126)
[144] *Manoscritti*, vol. 1, p. 41. (IF 127)
[145] ibid., p. 59. (IF 128)
[146] "To love God is the most important and necessary thing for me to do." ibid., p. 41. (IF 129)

"To love God is my most important and necessary business." This is best done imitating the One who has shown us the most perfect way to do this, Jesus Christ.

For Oneself - to be formed by saints for oneself means seeking one's true good through self-knowledge and self-control as expressed in the words: *"to love whether by fasting or austerity of life."*

For Neighbor - Zeal for God will express itself above all in one's concern for the salvation of his neighbor, but also includes care for his spiritual and bodily wellbeing. Since the end of man, of every human being, is holiness, and having mercy to his fellow man is essential to this end, it follows that the greatest mercy we can show our neighbor is to help him to become holy. And who is this neighbor? For whom? For those who want and are willing to become saints. This means everyone, for whether they realize it or not, they do want this. This is an innate desire, which because of circumstances may be deeply buried and hidden. We have seen that the process of conversion to holiness includes even the man in the state of beast. Therefore no one is excluded, even those who might be at the moment his enemy, like the one who was sent to spy on Lanteri during one of the retreats he was giving and ended up converting.

4. To Do What?

Lanteri was taught by saints, but to do what? This is the last question and again we see how it has already begun to be answered by the previous one. We need only to complete and round out the picture with what elements we can find, keeping in mind that these were chosen by Bruno according to specific historical conditions.

Bruno understood his formation to be "for God" and thus for love of solitude and prayer[147] keeping himself continually with open ears before God. Thus, he expressed the necessity and possibility to pray without ceasing by means of the practice of the presence of God. His recommendation was thus to have always before one's eyes the examples of Christ. To be for God meant to Lanteri being decisive and ready to openly declare oneself for Christ.[148] There is no room for human respect, this being contrary to our human dignity. Moreover, one cannot serve two masters. To be "for God" gives one an unlimited confidence in His Goodness, because He is first of all for us. This gives us confidence too in Divine Providence. His own glory leads Him to seek only what is good for us. *"God seeks solely what is most fitting for us, better yet He seeks His own greatest glory which consists precisely in seeking that which is most fitting for us i.e., the maximum benevolence and favor towards us."*[149] It is then up to us to seek His glory and His will, which is none other than the rectification of our intention, seeing to it that our motive in acting come neither from passion nor human reason alone, but from faith.[150] The help to attain this is the examination of conscience. Further means are love for the Holy Eucharist as the personal

[147] *Manoscritti*, vol. 1, p. 59. (IF 130)
[148] *Manoscritti*, vol. 9, pp. 3-7. (IF 131)
[149] "God seeks solely our upmost benefit in as much as his greatest glory consists in seeking our greatest profit, that is, in the greatest benevolence and beneficence towards us." ibid., vol. 6, p. 214. (IF 132)
[150] *Manoscritti*, vol. 1, p. 61. (IF 133)

presence of Divine Goodness, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in contrast to rigid attitude of the Jansenists[151] and complete confidence in God in the sacrament of reconciliation.

Regarding himself, his formation by the saints includes the importance of thinking and of much reflection, mortification, order, method and attention, the good use of time and the desire for virtue and sanctity.

In regard to one's neighbor, he was taught to promote in their hearts the reign of *"The three virtues which most honor God and which are necessary for eternal salvation: faith, hope and charity."*[152] Further means are the works of mercy, doing good, stopping and combatting evil: *"One does not otherwise promote the glory of God except by impeding sins, illuminating minds with knowledge of God, moving their wills to love God and leading them to give Him glory with good works."*[153]
The saints themselves are the ones who while still on earth taught us to honor the saints in Heaven, above all, the Blessed Virgin Mary and Mother of God. They teach us to love the Body of Christ, the Church, respecting her representatives especially the Holy Father.

There is a vast variety of mediations from man to saint and from saint to man. Bruno Lanteri was taught by saints to use as means these mediations and many more similar to these. Seeing how effective each of these were in his own life, he learned how to help others to apply these in measure to their personal need and capacity. Having been taught by saints, he could now become himself a teacher of saints.

B. Teacher of Saints

Piedmont had long been a fertile soil of sanctity[154], but the social and political climate changes during the eighteenth century threatened this dramatically. The following two centuries however saw instead a tremendous flowering of holiness both lay and clerical. Among those better known are the saints John Bosco, Joseph Cottolengo, and Joseph Cafasso.[155] The list of saints, blessed or servants of God from this region includes more than a hundred names. Undoubtedly Lanteri had no small role in this. Many consider him to be at the source of this wellspring of holiness. We will see later when considering his various activities, the mediations between Bruno and these new saints. First however we will look at the content of theses mediations, the human dimension of his spiritual activity. We will begin and close with general notes and seek between these their essential nucleus.

In analyzing further his spirituality we must bring to light:
1. its catechetical and pedagogical characteristics

[151] "Let us not forget His Most Sacred Heart. This devotion is most pleasing to Heaven, especially for our times in order to move the Heart of Our Eternal Father in his anger against the many heretical enemies of his infinite mercy, and to repay the humanity of Our Lord for his affection for us seeing so many ungrateful." *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 180. (IF 134)
[152] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 1. (IF 135)
[153] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 219. (IF 136)
[154] Andrea BRUSTOLON, (Indice dei Santi Piemontesi), see also CALLIARI, in *Lanterianum*, luglio 1995, pp. 58-9. (IF 137)
[155] Others include B. Leondardo Murialdo, Giovanni Maria Boccardo and his brother Luigi, don Luigi Orione, B. Francesco Faà di Bruno, B. Timoteo Giaccardo, B. Allamano, B. Filippo Rinaldi, B. Pier Giorgio Frassati, and B. Luigi Rosaz. (IF 138)

2. its heart - communion with Jesus which is man's end
3. its message of humble confidence in God's merciful love, the motor for progress on our journey
4. its principal theme of spiritual combat, on account of the actual state of man.
5.

We note first of all that while these elements of his spirituality are permeated with anthropological values, they are equally interconnected among each other.

1. The Catechetical and Pedagogical Characteristics of Lanteri's Spiritualty

Bruno used all that he found to be good from wherever it came, as we have seen considering the saints. We can say that his spirituality is syncretistic. He has drawn from all the various springs of spirituality within the Church of Christ: Benedictine, Franciscan, Dominican, Carmelite, Ignatian, Devotio Moderna (Thomas a Kempis) and the French school of spirituality. Within Lanteri's own spirituality, derived from so many others, we discover its character to be profoundly catechetical and pedagogical.

Lanteri was not one to be satisfied with speculation, abstract theories or ideas, but being practical he sought the means to obtain an end - to become and to help others become saints, great saints, and quickly so. For this reason, his work, being pragmatic, is based on the underlying foundation of human behavior i.e., thought and affection, nurturing these with devotions and practices. Thus, for him the exterior aspect of preaching and conferences was also important and his reason for the study of rhetoric[156] and literature.[157]

a. Practical: desirable, easy, efficacious, durable

Bruno would leave nothing undone to demonstrate that the end is most desirable, the means easy and efficacious, and the results long lasting. He wanted to present his material in an attractive manner, showing first of all that the object sought was indeed most **desirable** as well as necessary. We treated the end of man in the last chapter. We need to recall that *"according to the measure that one is convinced of the importance of his end, he will labor more or less to attain it."*[158] It was thus necessary to see the link between what we desire and what ought to be desired in view of the goal. It is not possible to attain to happiness apart from God and neighbor. We need now to order the various elements of this one end so as not to neglect the one or the other. In order to resolve conflicts arriving momentarily among these, it is necessary to have an hierarchy of aims, which is then capable of retaining what is essential to each. This is found in the Ignatian Principle and Foundation. It is then possible in attaining these mediate goals to obtain the perfection of intention.

Lanteri wanted to show that it is **easy** to become a saint. It is not beyond our reach, not because of our own capabilities, but on account of God's will to provide us with all we need. It is easy, because God wants us to become saints.

> *"...having made a religion for men, He cannot and does not require them to be angels, but gave it a human form, easily adapted to the capacities of men. It is proper to*

[156] He has written an entire tract on this theme. cf. *Manoscritti*, vol. 13, pp.1-45. (IF 139)
[157] ibid., pp. 45-75. (IF 140)
[158] ibid., p. 152. (IF 141)

> *Charity/Love to facilitate as much as possible, thus God would not be Love/Charity if He did not make Religion to be easy.... a religion for men cannot be difficult, arduous. Therefore, it must be divine, but human, adapted to men, easy."*[159]

It is easy to become a saint, because if one is not in the state of mortal sin, then he has the grace of God and for this

> *"he is not only dear to God, a friend of God, but he is already a son of God, so that God dwells in him and he dwells in God.... The Lord gives to his friend and precious son his graces that he may attain heavenly beatitude more safely and easily. On account of his affection, He all the more infuses an abundance of great light in his mind and pious affections in his heart and with most careful assistance He directs him in carrying out his good proposals, He protects him in many dangers, both spiritual and corporal, not to speak of all the exterior graces deriving from listening to the word of God, receiving the holy sacraments and the many good examples in which he participates in greater measure as is just in the Communion of Saints."*[160]

It is easy to become a saint because the means that God provides are **efficacious**, on condition one is faithful in making use of them. *"You say that these precepts are difficult, in fact they are easy, provided that you carve in your heart this great truth:* ***No goods or evils are great except those which are eternal.****"*[161] It is easy "provided that" we think of eternity, which is an *"invincible weapon against all enemies."*[162] Upon Reflection affections will arise in the heart that give thrust to behavior.

The efficacy of these means is a result of their origin in God. Knowing with certainty that God is faithful, one can rest assured that if *"he remains attentive to the internal voice of his celestial Father, and prompt to comply to His Spirit, it is not possible otherwise than to grow in virtue and holiness."*[163] The efficacy is such that by using sure means you will have sure results. The means that are sure are those which are based on the truth of both faith and that which concerns man. In studying the anthropological dimension, we saw the important role that both thought and affection have in one's behavior and spiritual development, and among the affections especially desire and fear.[164] All this would be instilled in those under the guidance of Lanteri. They unite themselves in prayer to their heavenly Father seeking the grace *"to increasingly* ***comprehend and taste*** *those truths revealed to us in order to acquire and inspire in others great and consoling ideas about God and thus to gain as many souls as possible for the Lord."*[165]

Behavior is a result of resolutions made which in turn result from the interaction of thought and affection. Rationalism cannot explain human behavior because knowledge alone does not suffice to explain any change in it. Sentimentalism too is insufficient since the will is blind, and if it is not guided by the intellect, and especially by an intellect illuminated by the truth of faith, it will

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[159] *Manoscritti*, vol. 9, p. 398. (IF 142)
[160] ibid., vol. 11, p. 14. (IF 143)
[161] ibid., vol 9, p. 22. (IF 144)
[162] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 49. (IF 145)
[163] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 14. (IF 146)
[164] ibid., vol. 9, pp. 21-22. (IF 147)
[165] Gallagher, *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, 121. (IF 148)

follow the lead of the impressions of the senses and passions. Nor do we speak here of voluntarism because man alone is not capable of changing himself, but only by humbly recognizing his misery will he be able to receive as a gift the possibility to change for the better.

In the end it will be a matter of whether this mutual relationship is guided by faith or the senses. *"If you fill yourself with temporal goods, you become smaller and similar to these. If you fill yourself with eternal goods you grow and will become similar to God."*[166] One is filled by either temporal or eternal goods by means of thoughts and affections. If one thinks of temporal things i.e., by being inordinately occupied with the thoughts of such things, then his heart will be moved by these. By neglecting thought, one allows himself to be dragged by his senses and imagination and thus will be filled up with temporal things. "*The cause of dissipation and the door to perdition is inconsideration."*[167]

A useful thought is one that is capable of having influence on his act. It is an interior word that will decide the fate of his soul, giving it sufficient motive to move the will and then the judgment which in turn determines the action. Reflection and meditation mean thinking, which is a fundamental human act. If and how one does this will determine the direction he takes. If this is true for everyone in general, then it is especially so for priests. Many lack zeal because they do not comprehend the end, the means and practices, or in other words because they are unreflective.[168]

The power of thought is linked to the affection which it produces. The thought will be effective to determine an act if it finds an object for which one already possesses affection, otherwise one must first find the necessary connections. That is the duty of our reflection and meditation. Those objects already possessed will be found in an examination of conscience. Once found, one then possesses the key to the heart. *"take this rule as a summary of all perfection, to keep our heart in a loving inclination raised to God with a great desire to love Him ever increasingly, aspiring to do this with brief and burning affections."*[169]
The last note of the practical aspect of a pedagogy is its **durability**. Its efficacy to the end is only valid if the results remain till the goal is reached. Lanteri's aim is not only to obtain *"the grace of every virtue, but above all, the grace of final perseverance."*[170]
Lanteri shows us that the higher one rises following the dynamics of reform, the more reason one has to hope. Such he sees to be the aim presented in the spiritual Exercises: *"The last end is the reformation of man which endures."*[171]

b. Methods, Practices and Devotions

With the heart of an artist, but the mind of a mathematician, Bruno would learn easily the science of sanctity. For science method is required. He was well equipped to teach others this science. Learning from the greatest artists, the Saints, it came natural for him to use method in his

[166] *Manoscritti*, vol. 9, p. 322. (IF 149)
[167] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 63. (IF 150)
[168] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 209. (IF 151)
[169] *Manoscritti* , vol. 9, p. 117. (IF 152)
[170] Gallagher, *Un* Esperienza dello spirito, 122. (IF 153)
[171] ibid., vol. l1, pp. 421-422.

approach to achieving the goal, first for himself and then for others. He made the mind serve the heart. Using methods would become an important tool.

Method is "a plan or system of action, inquiry, analysis etc." It is "order or system in one's actions."[172] (The Random House College Dictionary). Principles being related directly to the end or goal are fix. Methods however referring to the means must be adapted to persons and circumstances. This teaching is found in the Spiritual Exercises #18-20 and would certainly be applied by Lanteri.

Already as subdeacon Bruno had a method of life in his initial spiritual directory, which would in time be adapted and grow, and eventually be handed on to the Oblates as the bearers of his charism. For nuns under his care, he wrote an *"Advice for a Religious Sister."*[173] And for the youth he wrote a *"Method of Christian Life - a Daily Program of Action"*.[174] He wrote out methods for the principal acts of religion.[175] There is something for each step along the way to sanctity, methods for fighting temptations, overcoming shortcomings, inciting holy affections, for remembering and executing resolutions, methods for entering the way of perfection, doing the will of God,[176] growth in love for God,[177] discovering the blemishes in one's own affections,[178] healing of passions,[179] and for arriving at perfection.[180] All of life is included, *"every exercise of religion"* and even *"all their other daily actions."*[181] It is simply a matter of "*order*" of action which consists in: *"1) not wasting time, 2) doing each thing at the proper time, 3) doing all with method."*[182]

In one document he lists five different methods for meditation. At the end of the fifth, he gives a summary of it:[183] (Scritti e Documenti die Archivio, IV. 3651)

Compendium

I. What is proposed for me to do?
II. I must do it, Faith obliges me.
III. I can do it, Hope convinces me.
IV. I want to do it, Love gives me the strength.[184]

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[172] The Random House College Dictionary, 1975.
[173] *Manoscritti*, vol. 9, pp. 25-147. (IF 161)
[174] ibid., pp. 11-24. Themes treated are: upon rising, Mass, ejaculatory prayers, the visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament, study, eating, conversation, recreation, mortification, evening examination.
[175] For this and the following methods cf. *Un Esperienza dello Spirito* , o.c., pp. 65-81.
[176] *Manoscritti*, vol., 9, pp. 38-40; 170-172.
[177] ibid., p. 78.
[178] ibid., p. 79.
[179] ibid., p. 328.
[180] ibid., vol. 6, pp. 178-180.
[181] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito,* p.124, vd. anche p. 126. (IF 159)
[182] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito,* p. 140. (IF 170)
[183] Scritti e Documenti die Archivio, IV. 3651
[184] At this point a short excursion is necessary. In point IV. *"I want to do it, Love gives me the strength"*, literally Lanteri writes: *"Love forces me to do it."* To the reader today this sounds like a contradiction on account of our understanding of freedom. To do something out of love or to do it out of constraint are complete opposites, because love presupposes free will, but free will and constraint are opposed to each other. For Lanteri and the Christians of his time freedom was in relation to a desired end. That which enables me to achieve my goal makes me free. Whereas today the idea of freedom is more akin to the temptation in the garden of Eden, the power to do anything you want, to be a

V. Colloquy

Practices make the method/means practical. In order to arrive at one's desired goal, the method needs added to it specific and concrete details. This might be something as simple as a sign, for example one made in his handkerchief.[185] It could be an action such as striking the breast, praying with the face on the ground, reading a chapter of the gospel each day. It could be an interior word whose meaning has already been assimilated e.g., following a fault committed one says to himself, Begin again, "Nunc coepi!"[186] The use of maxims is of great importance, as we have already seen in the last section. A useful practice would therefore be to carry on one's person a small book of such maxims and one's resolutions. Thus, we see that Lanteri makes conscious use of practices involving the whole person, his whole life, in every aspect and for every moment. He was so sure of its success that he could promise:

> "*by doing this you will become saints, great saints and quickly so: and may God so wish it (God permitting).*"[187]

One useful practice that Bruno would recommend was to change temptations into virtue by *"considering these as so many inspirations and wakeup calls to activate some act of the opposite virtue."*[188] *"Ambition for example would be raised for glory higher than that of this world, avarice would then lead us to seek to accumulate heavenly treasures, envy should lead us to emulate more perfect virtue, anger for seeking solely the glory of God and so on with the rest. And how can you do this without practices?"*[189] For him this is a mortification to which he adds three maxims:

> *"1) first pause, rest 2) change the object, neither fearing nor desiring but what is eternal 3) act to the contrary and conquer yourself."*

What Bruno experienced in his own spiritual formation to be effective, he noted carefully. Afterwards he could then recommend to others what he found to be helpful.

The very title of his spiritual directory states this clearly: *"Directory containing the motives and practices in order to attain more efficaciously their own sanctification and that of others".*[190] There he lists practices for each day, week, month and year.[191] Among these he includes meditation, Mass, confession, retreat, and for these he gives practical advice, especially for the principal acts of faith, for Communion and thanksgiving,[192] for Meditation[193] and for feasts.[194] There are also interior practices facilitating continual prayer e.g., the practice of the presence of

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god. It is the duel between traditional Christian anthropology and modern philosophy. In Lanteri's time the battlefront lay elsewhere. But the theme of spiritual combat and warfare will be significant, as we shall soon see.

[185] *Manoscritti*, vol. 9, p. 22. (IF 171)

[186] Gallagher entitles his biography of Lanteri and summarizes his whole life with this motto "Begin Again". (x)

[187] *Manoscritti*, vol. 9, p. 24. (IF 172)

[188] *Carteggio del Venerabile Padre Pio Bruno Lanteri (1759-1830) Fondatore della Congregazione degli Oblati di Maria Vergine,* 5 voll., edited by P. Calliari, Torino 1975-76, vol. 2, p. 135. see also p. 127. Instead in *Manoscritti* , vol. 9, p. 325 Lanteri speaks of the first emotion arising from nature and not from the will as an advance guard. (IF 173)

[189] *Manoscritti*, vol. 9, pp. 327-328. (IF 174)

[190] Gallagher, Un Esperienza dello spirito, 121

[191] ibid., pp. 122-8.

[192] ibid., p. 63 and p. 78. (IF 154)

[193] ibid., p. 64. (IF 155)

[194] *Manoscritti*, vol. 9, pp. 64-69. (IF 156)

God,[195] confidence in Divine Providence,[196] ejaculatory prayers[197] and seasonal practices following the liturgical calendar.[198] For continual nourishment of pious thoughts and holy affections one needs only to occupy and fill himself with "eternal things". This is the task of the various practices of devotion.[199]

Devotions are a particular type of practice, pious practices done for one's own sake. Lanteri in speaking of devotions, considers them as a means for "devotion" in the Thomistic sense of professing devotion to someone. With reference to a divine person, devotions are a help leading to adoration. Such is his novena to the Holy Spirit.[200] The devotions most often encountered in his writings are to the Most Blessed Sacrament, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to Most Holy Mary, to the Guardian Angels, St. Joseph and St. Teresa of Avila.[201] Here again it is not a matter of voluntarism, being content and remaining *"simply in the exterior practices"*,[202] nor sentimentalism, because true devotion does not end in an emotion.[203] For this reason, it is necessary

> *"to consider carefully and value all those tender devotions which help to love the Lord, and avoid the spirit of presumption, which would only persuade one to believe that devotion does not consist in these (devotional practices) nor in solid virtue. They who despise these on account of their arrogance, are not capable of receiving those caresses which the children of God taste. The Saints made use of these and they esteemed them highly, knowing that leaves protect the principal fruit, and tender motives feed solid virtue."*[204]

With love for the Lord ever growing and virtue becoming ever more solid, the practices of Christian life and authentic devotions lead us to the heart of Bruno's spirituality, the next step in our itinerary.

2. The heart of Lanteri's spirituality - communion with Jesus

There is no doubt that Jesus Christ is at the center of Lanteri's mind and heart. His apostolic activity was aimed at forming persons capable of saying: *"I sincerely recognize no desire within me stronger, or even as strong as to have Jesus Christ reign in my heart and in the hearts of everyone in the world."*[205] How often Bruno would insist in relating Jesus to whatever he was doing! This he made easy, for example, with the use of conjunctive words as we find in his spiritual directory: *"in imitation of the Divine Teacher", "as Jesus", "according to the heart of Jesus", "let them ask Jesus...", "in union with Jesus",* with the mind *"fixed on Jesus", "According to Jesus", "keeping in mind the words of Jesus", "in example of the same Divine Teacher", "characteristic of Jesus",* with a *"glance at Christ crucified",* or *"at Jesus glorified", "that which the*

[195] ibid., pp. 32-33; 61-63. (IF 157)
[196] ibid., pp. 110; 219-229. (IF 158)
[197] Un Esperienza dello Spirito, p. 124. vd. anche Manoscritti , vol. 9, p. 16.
[198] *Manoscritti*, vol. 9, pp. 275-307. (IF 160)
[199] e.g. *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 72. (x)
[200] ibid., pp. 106-119. (IF 175)
[201] see *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 124; *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, pp. 111; 180. (IF 176)
[202] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 170. (IF 177)
[203] Against the „false devotees" Lanteri writes: "In vain do they believe to be filled with divine love, because either they pray often or in heated zeal for the honor of God they berate the habits of others; - they do not know of which spirit they are – said Jesus Christ to his disciples; the same he would say of those filled with zeal…." ibid., vol. 11, p. 166. (IF 178)
[204] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 76. (IF 179)
[205] *Manoscrtti*, vol. 6, p. 113. (IF 180)

Divine Teacher has recommended", "remembering Jesus' commandment", "keeping before me the invitations and designs Jesus Christ has in regard to..." and the list goes on. This is his spiritual directory, his rule of life, the center of his spirituality.

Our communion with Jesus is the bridge to our communion with the Most Blessed Trinity, with the Church and with our fellow man - trinitarian, ecclesial and fraternal communion. At the center of the mind and heart of Jesus Christ is his heavenly Father, who in turn wants "to sum, up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth." (Eph 1:10) Jesus identified himself with his Father, with the Church and with his fellow man, especially the least among these. Jesus is our link to the Trinity, the Church and to all men. In the mind of Lanteri we see how communion with Jesus develops all these links in us and establishes a threefold communion which is at once trinitarian, ecclesial and fraternal. Not always explicitly stated but well established is Lanteri's maternal communion with the Blessed Virgin Mary, which perhaps was his link to communion with Jesus. The unity of all these aspects is essential and at the foundation of his entire spirituality. This unity cannot remain static or sterile, but requires dynamic, continuous growth involving the whole person at all levels in mutual participation of being and action, in other words in communion of life with "one heart and mind". (Acts 4:32)

a. Trinitarian Communion

Communion with the Triune God can be expressed in the following words of Lanteri: *"man is all from God, all for God, and God is all for him."*[206] To underscore this, he cites two texts from St. John: "Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." (1Jn 1:3 The New American Bible); "that all may be one, even as thou, Father, in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." (Jn 17:21)[207]. It is not possible to esteem too greatly while *"on earth"* to live in this fellowship and *"to aspire indeed to union with so great and good a God in order to possess him completely in heaven."*[208] For this reason, prayer should become a *"continual exercise"* and our *"principal delight."*[209]

Union with God will be expressed also by a repeated renewal of intention throughout the day in order *"to seek only God and his will in all things."*[210] This means it will be necessary to renounce all other loves contrary to God, because not only does God solicit our affection and union, but so do all other creatures.

> *"Just as much a soul approaches one extreme, it withdraws itself from the other, that is to say, if the soul approaches and unites itself to the superior good, which is God, it becomes perfected and joyful, conversely so with the inferior good, like the creature, it stains itself, deteriorates and becomes sorrowful."*[211]

Communion with God is the end for which we exist, and in as much this goal is reached or not realized, it will influence our behavior accordingly.

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[206] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito,* p. 237. (IF 181)
[207] Confraternity Edition, which is closer to the Latin text cited.
[208] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito,* pp. 121-122. (IF 182)
[209] ibid., p. 122. (IF 183)
[210] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito,* p. 126. (IF 184)
[211] ibid., p. 129. (IF 185)

"We know how much God loves order since he wants to do everything, and does indeed do everything with order, whether in the order of nature, of grace or glory.

Order is found in God, it descends from God, and leads back to God, if only we ourselves practice it, according to St. Augustine.

Disorder, on the contrary, descends from Lucifer, it displeases God and man, as much it is found wherever and in proportion to how much it reigns in its subject.

For this reason, the total disorder that reigns in hell makes up the maximum punishment revealed to us by God: where there is no order, and which is inhabited by eternal horror (Job, 10,22)."[212]

Which communion one has will be reflected in his interior life and reveals the end toward which one is heading.

b. Ecclesial Communion

The Church herself as a communion with the body and blood of Jesus Christ, is also a communion of saints, those in heaven, in purgatory and on earth. Ecclesial communion thus has both visible and invisible aspects to it. We saw while treating devotions one expression at the invisible level. There is another one very lively and prominent in the consciousness of Lanteri bearing on all his activities. All that we do will be seen by God, the angels and men.[213]

The historical situation gave rise to the emphasis that Lanteri then gave to the truth concerning the visible composition of ecclesial communion. *"Just as at the time of the Arians one was obligated to defend the dogma of the Most Blessed Trinity (the same can be said of all heresies), so it is that in our present situation one is obligated to defend the dogma of grace, and that of the supremacy of the Head of the Church."*[214] This obligation regards especially *"the union of doctrine" in catholic faith, "the word of God as proposed, interpreted, defined and determined by the Church of Jesus Christ <u>the pillar and foundation of truth.</u>"*[215] In this regard he speaks also of union of hope[216] and union of love,[217] towards the head and its members.

c. Fraternal Communion

Fraternal communion is the new commandment of Jesus because it is required for communion with Him, forming us in reciprocal love, *"one heart and one soul."*[218] This is the foundation of true friendship and will become the principle guiding the apostolic associations which we will later treat. Fraternal communion is not something enclosed in on itself, not an exclusive club, but is open and welcome to all, indeed desiring and zealous to embrace truly everyone. Jesus wants that our heart becomes similar to His own.

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[212] ibid., p. 140, my translation of his Latin citation. (IF 186)
[213] ibid., p. 64, also p. 68. (IF 187)
[214] ibid., p. 221. (IF 188)
[215] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 220. (IF 189)
[216] ibid., vol. 9, pp. 392-392. (IF 190)
[217] ibid., vol. 11, p.178. (IF 191)
[218] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 178. (IF 192)

"His heart with no limits is general, that is, it extends to all men and to all miseries; such he wants ours to be... Charity thus gives us many brothers and sisters, so many friends as there are people in the world."[219]

If it is not universal, it is not charity:

"it must extend to everyone; by excluding even one you lose charity, just as you lose faith by denying any single article," because *"everyone is a work of God; everyone an image of God, everyone united on account of their humanity to the person of Jesus Christ, everyone supremely loved and finally because He expressly commands us to love one another."*[220]

d. Maternal Communion

There is still another level which underlies this threefold communion, that with the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother. Mary appears in the biography of Lanteri at the beginning and again at the end, with brief encounters in between. As with the Gospel of John, it is not the amount of attention given her in his writings, but the kind which reveals her importance. Due to his devotion to her from his earliest memories, the Blessed Virgin was truly Bruno's way to the heart of Jesus. He took Jesus together with Mary as the model of all his actions. The consecration that his father made for him to the Blessed Virgin he renewed himself then personally, if not earlier, with his "Act of Slavery" at the time of his ordination to the subdiaconate. In every retreat given by him or those under his instructions there would be a meditation on Mary. For if all else fails, she would see to its success. The founding of a new religious community, which contains a summary of his life's work, would be named for her, with her even being called its mother and foundress. Finally, in his last illness Br. Pietro reports him having the consolation of a visit from his heavenly mother. He summed up his relation to her by saying:

"I hardly knew any other mother than Mary Most Holy, and in all my life I have never received anything but caresses from such a good Mother."[221]

3. His Principal Message: Humble Confidence in the Merciful Love of God

We already have within our heart the desire for holiness and happiness. God wants us to be holy and happy, he even demands it of us. It seems that we can formulate the message of Lanteri's spirituality in these words: Be not afraid of your desire, nor of God's will, not even for your sin. But have humble confidence in the merciful love of God, who wants to see you happy and therefore holy.

Again, the historical circumstances gave Bruno the occasion to delve deeper into the message of mercy as a remedy to the then prevailing Jansenist heresy. Bruno learned well how to communicate this "Gospel" which became the heart of his life and soon afterwards the heart of his apostolate. To a person afflicted with temptations and discouragement Bruno wrote: *"On account of our disordered nature, one will be committing many, yes indeed many sins... therefore it is only needed to be marveled, if we do not fall, nor indeed should we presuppose anything except that we are bound to fall often, but like little children keep getting up back on their feet... seeing their mother coming quickly to their aid, ready to help them up."*[222] Nevertheless, it will be necessary to be on guard against the kind of pride that *"causes useless sadness in the soul,*

[219] ibid., p. 169. (IF 193)
[220] ibid., p. 171. (IF 194)
[221] GASTALDI, p. 21. (IF 97)
[222] Carteggio, vol. 2, p. 288. (IF 195)

which is neither born of God, nor for God"[223], putting our communion with God in danger. Finally, it is necessary *"to suppose most certain that one gives God great pleasure and honor by asking for forgiveness of faults each time he commits one, because it is by so doing that he thinks rightly about God, who is a bottomless abyss of goodness…."* To think otherwise of God would be to consider him *"unjustly in the same manner as our own miserable and hard heart".*

It is easy then to understand why Bruno would promote devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. *"This devotion is most pleasing to heaven, suited especially for our times to awaken the compassion of our Eternal Father enraged by those heretical enemies of his infinite mercy as well as to repay the humanity of our Lord for his affection for us while finding us so ungrateful."*[224] In poetic fashion we see what we do in contrast to what God wants to do for us:

> *"I am on the road to perdition, and he wants to put me back on the good path.*
> *I am blind, and he wants to guide me with his light.*
> *I am ignorant, and he wants to share with me his wisdom.*
> *I am little, and he wants to see me big, raising me up to the supernatural state of a child of God, he wants me to participate in his nature, his perfections, his holiness.*
> *He wants to grant me peace in this life, and admit me to his own Beatitude in the next life."*[225]

It follows naturally to think that the message of God's merciful goodness and love received into our hearts with humble confidence will have a preeminent role in Bruno's apostolic ministry.[226]

4. His Principle Theme: Spiritual Combat

a. War and Peace

Lanteri's message of divine mercy was occasioned not only by his opposition to a particular heresy, but also by historical circumstances not exclusive to his times. Bruno would witness the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, including the occupation of his own native land. Being formed in the school of the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius would also influence him greatly. Ignatius was a soldier, who knew combat and became keenly aware of its spiritual dimension. Every human being coming into the world will be inevitably confronted, at least in its spiritual aspect, with animosity and war.

The theme and *leit motiv* that is always present in his writings, his advice and his works is the war that surrounds us, in fact permeates our very being. We have already seen the upheaval occurring at the beginning of human history, changing our condition from a state of peace and harmony to one of war and disorder. This is "the actual state of man," a theme of obvious negative dimension. It is that aspect that punches us in the nose, it is impossible to not feel it, even if one were blind. It does however possess a positive side, seemingly secondary, but nevertheless needing to be understood and utilized, and for Lanteri would become an important part of his

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[223] ibid. (IF 196)
[224] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 180. We should take care to note that God's anger is not against man, but against an attitude inimical to his mercy, such was the heresy of Jansenism. (IF 197)
[225] ibid., vol. 14, p. 581. (IF 198)
[226] See for example the meditation on the public life of Jesus and that of the prodigal son in his course of Spiritual Exercises in *Manoscritti*, vol. 13, pp. 299-313; 375-394. (IF 199)

teaching. Contrary to war is peace, which makes no commotion and does not immediately draw attention to itself. Peace is not simply the absence of war. In fact, it is linked to our happiness and to our end.[227] Therefore, it is not war but peace, that becomes the primary and integral aspect of his spirituality.

> *"Since the Holy Spirit dwells only there where there is peace, as it is written He makes his abode in peace, therefore the first disposition is to prepare for the Divine Guest of our souls a calm heart that remains firmly in God amid the many incidents of this miserable life, never permitting the slightest disturbance, not even in the face of one's own defects. One cannot paint on a moving canvass, so too a disturbed soul is not disposed to live by the divine operations. We should also guard against disturbing our neighbor by lack of charity, but to imitate the holy Apostles and Disciples, who as it is said were unanimous."*[228]

Peace is therefore the primary disposition of communion with God in the Holy Spirit. Only after this precision is made does the tone change. *"The second (disposition) will be to wage a relentless war against one's own will, conceding to neither its designs nor desires, but having them die off in the most holy, most lovable and most sweet Will of God…."*[229] In all the negativity surrounding war and death, Bruno does not leave out words of encouragement, by describing the divine will in such terms of endearment, that would otherwise remain hidden.

"Is not the life of man a military service?"[230] Bruno cites this passage from Job 7:1 in a letter referring to temptations. The language of war pervades his comprehension of the spiritual life. This too is well illustrated in his Spiritual Directory: *"My life is a declared battle",*[231] *"declared to be on God's side",*[232] *"Speaking about God as soldiers speak about war",*[233] *"giving myself to God with no surrender",*[234] *"with arms against temptations",*[235] *attacking in the name of Jesus Christ, our captain and King",*[236] *there being "two irreconcilable enemies"*[237] *"in battle".*[238]

In this war one person has a key role: *"Devotion to Mary is a pledge of predestination and catholicity, not in vain did she crush the head of the infernal serpent… nor is the war between him and this great Lady over, so there is much she can do for those faithful to her for their faith and their salvation."*[239] Nor does he forget the Archangel St. Michael, "Protector against self-love."[240]

For priests Bruno writes:

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[227] *Manoscritti*, vol. 9, pp. 134-137; vol. 13, p.150. (IF 200)
[228] ibid., vol. 9, p. 106. (IF 201)
[229] ibid. (IF 202)
[230] Carteggio, vol. 2, p. 126. (IF 203)
[231] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 64. (IF 204)
[232] ibid., p. 66. (IF 205)
[233] ibid. (IF 206)
[234] ibid., p. 68. (IF 207)
[235] ibid., p. 69. (IF 208)
[236] ibid., p. 70. (IF 209)
[237] ibid., p. 71. (IF 210)
[238] ibid., p. 75. (IF 211)
[239] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 179. (IF 212)
[240] ibid., vol. 9, p. 383; 390. (IF 213)

"1) The end for which Jesus instituted (the sacrament of) Holy Orders was to make you: an intrepid soldier in his army, a most vigilant minister of his altar, a tireless worker in his Church.
2) The priesthood is therefore a public office, directed to the common good and common welfare. Therefore, the priest is called a Lieutenant of God."[241]

b. Interior Arms

We now come to the last object of our research concerning the anthropological elements of Lanterian spirituality: the arms for battle. Here I will treat interior arms, meaning those arms necessary for the battle of our own soul. To win souls for God, and to help them in their own personal battle, exterior arms are needed. Those that Lanteri will employ in his apostolate is the subject of the next chapter.

We can glean from his Spiritual Directory under the heading "*Concerning arms against temptations"* the two interior weapons Bruno considers most important for one's own sanctification: *"The general weapon is prayer and mortification."*[242] On these two he writes abundantly.

i. Prayer

"Prayer is the weapon of salvation"[243] and therefore concerns the last end of man, a point that he emphasizes.

"1. Without prayer no one is saved.
2. With ordinary prayer, one may be saved, but it is not certain.
3. With frequent and fervent prayer one will certainly be saved on account of its efficaciousness.
4. It is thus inexcusable for us not to pray frequently and with fervor, it being so easy."[244]

Prayer *"unites us indeed to our ultimate end, and it makes us participants of the goods of God which we so need in order to be happy in this life as well as the next."*[245] Prayer is a truly human act, what comes to us naturally as an impulse towards the goal for which we were created. *"Is it perhaps necessary to teach one who is sick to ask for a doctor, or one who is famished to ask for bread, or to someone in danger to ask for help?"*[246] But our most profound needs are not so easily recognized.

Prayer was a necessity for man even in the state of original innocence. *"His very origin requires it."*[247] Just as it is with all of creation, man is subject in all things to the superior will of God the Creator. *"Even Adam, innocent, endowed with all his gifts, and being in a place of no temptations, nevertheless did sin, according to St. Thomas, because he did not pray."*[248] All the more then is prayer necessary in the actual state of man: *"what then will become of man in his fallen state, infused knowledge substituted with ignorance, good habits by evil inclinations, besides human*

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[241] *Manoscritti*, vol. 9, p. 311. (IF 214)
[242] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 70. (IF 215)
[243] *Manoscritti*, vol. 14, p. 257. (IF 216)
[244] ibid., p. 230. (IF 217)
[245] Ibid. (IF 218)
[246] ibid., p. 240. (IF 219)
[247] ibid., p. 229. (IF 220)
[248] ibid., p. 231. (IF 221)

respect, evil works, creaturely incentives and the devil."[249] To fight this the Lord supplies us with what we need: *"Prayer is just as powerful as the word of God."*[250]

The acts of the intellect and the heart are intimately linked to the last end of man. *"The cause of dissipation and the door to perdition is inconsideration."*[251] Therefore, Bruno resolves: *"never to neglect meditation, doing it always with method and fidelity."*[252] The connection of prayer to man's end is found also in its many fruits.

> *"Let us pray, therefore, for prayer will remove from prosperity the poison of seduction, from adversity the displeasure of bitterness, from the world its imposture, from the flesh the wickedness of its lures, and from piety it will remove any boredom, repugnance, dryness, from the spirit doubts, from the imagination illusions, from reason its errors and indocility, from the heart inconstancy, from the temperament its impetuousness, from various situations their dangers; he who knows how to pray knows all and obtains all."*[253]

Prayer is not simply an exercise for some given amount of time each day, but rather a way of living, keeping our minds and hearts united to God, who loves and guides us. It is a continual act all day and all night even in sleep just as breathing air. This continuous prayer and the perfection of the person in all his daily actions depend in large part on his thoughts and affections. Thus, upon arising in the morning one should raise their *"first thoughts and affections to God."*[254]

At Mass Bruno recommends: *"One should celebrate with particular attention given to its principal actions to awaken those affections that are proper to each of them, for example:"*[255]

> *"When I enter the church, I will imagine that I see Simeon, who went in the Spirit to the Temple for the presentation and circumcision of Jesus, or I will imagine seeing some other fervent saint.*
> *In the Mass, at the penitential rite I will seek the sentiments and the heart of the tax collector. At the Gloria, those of the Angels. At the prayers, those of an ambassador sent by the Church. At the Readings and Gospel, those of a disciple. At the Profession of Faith, those of the martyrs. At the Preparation of the Gifts, those of Melchezedek. At the Preface, those of the Heavenly Court. At the Consecration, those of Christ. At the Our Father, those of one who asks for what he needs. At the Lamb of God, those of one who is guilty and in need of forgiveness. At Communion, those of one in love. At the words 'Go forth, the Mass is ended', those of an apostle. I will go forth from the altar as if breathing fire."*[256]

In meditation Bruno wants to see one *"principally ignite the will with holy affections that leads him to make opportune resolutions and practices to amend their defects and to dispose himself to practicing virtue; since meditation according to St. Teresa that does not produce these effects*

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[249] ibid. (IF 222)
[250] *Manoscritti*, vol. 14, p. 242. (x)
[251] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 63. (IF 223)
[252] ibid., p.63. (IF 224)
[253] *Manoscritti*, vol. 14, p. 246. (IF 225)
[254] *Manoscritti* , vol. 9, p. 13. (IF 226)
[255] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 124. (IF 227)
[256] Gallagher, A Biblical Way of Praying the Mass, p.7; *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 124; *Direttorio*, p. 44. (x)

(no matter how beautiful those sentiments appear to be) ought not to be considered good."[257] Indeed, this is the very goal of meditation, and in finding this he should remain there, since *"to meditate on other points, would amount to abandoning the goal already attained in order to look for means apt to bring one there, or to leave the Lord in order to look for him."*[258]

During spiritual reading: *"It is also necessary upon feeling an interior motion to pause and give place for consideration and affection."*[259]

So that **every act** that one does becomes prayer, he writes in his Spiritual Directory for the Oblates:

> *"They will see to begin not hurrying but out of faith i.e., tranquilly reflecting on Jesus (with a tranquil glance to JX), present as God, and as man our model; continuing not languidly but with affection, meaning from time to time quietly lifting one's heart to Jesus; finishing not abruptly but reflectively, that is with a quick glance to see if the act was done well or not, in order to either thank the Lord or to make an act of contrition."*[260]

The words underlined were in Latin, a way he uses to emphasize the essential in order to memorize and utilize at the proper time. Thus, this teaching is a useful tool to the end we seek. The Latin words alone suffice, but with English the short version would be:

Begin **ex fide**
Continue **cum affectu**
Finish **reflexe**

Before going to bed, one should make an examination of conscience in which he would do well *"to investigate the roots of his defects: from which both affection and disposition proceed. Be truly sorry and ask God for forgiveness, consider if you want to continue this way, promise to never respond to him in this manner again, and ask him for the grace to carry this out."*[261] Whether going to sleep or waking during the night, one should see these as opportunities for *"devout thoughts and pious affections."*[262]

All bodily functions[263] and all the powers of the soul[264] should be engaged. All will become prayer,[265] all will be accepted in a spirit of love,[266] and all will become a means to perfection.[267]

ii. Mortification

Prayer is not the only weapon that Lanteri employs and passes on, for he speaks of another *"general weapon"* in the war for the salvation of man: mortification. The negative aspect of this

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[257] *Manoscritti*, vol., 9, p. 37. (IF 228)
[258] ibid., p. 38. (IF 229)
[259] ibid., p. 49. (IF 230)
[260] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 125. (IF 231)
[261] *Manoscritti*, vol., 9, p. 23. (IF 232)
[262] ibid., p. 24 and 57-58. (IF 233)
[263] ibid., p. 57. (IF 234)
[264] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, pp. 64-65. (IF 235)
[265] *Manoscritti*, vol., 9, p. 157. (IF 236)
[266] ibid., p. 58. (IF 237)
[267] ibid., p. 117. (IF 238)

word is all too easily seen in our present day. Unfortunately, its positive side is not registered with the same impact. Nevertheless, it is the positive aspect again that is primary, as it always has been in authentic Christian tradition. Beginning a treatise on mortification Bruno emphasizes first the necessity of being in communion with Jesus. His life, his interior and exterior actions must be for us *"the form of our intellect and will."*[268] One ought to pray frequently *"to be united and animated by the spirit of Jesus, aided by the grace of Jesus in order to do the works of Jesus, in the same manner as Jesus."*[269] But the spirit of Jesus cannot remain invisible, it needs to take some concrete form: *"The spirit of Jesus is a spirit of humiliation, of poverty, of sufferings; under the head of one so humble, gentle, poor, patient, how is it possible for a member of it be choleric, proud, attached to things and comforts?"*[270] As a consequence, in order to safeguard a superior good, which is our communion with Jesu, it will be necessary to rage "*war on one's own will, to one's preferences, even in respect to doing good."*[271] St. John of the Cross expressed especially well the way and motive of this virtue. Bruno cites him: *"To reach satisfaction in all, desire its possession in nothing. To come to the knowledge of all, desire the knowledge of nothing. To come to possess all, desire the possession of nothing. To arrive at being all, desire to be nothing."*[272] To desire, know, possess, and be all is none other than another expression of our ultimate end. In order not to be misunderstood, Bruno repeats and adds to what he already stated: *"For each action we need to make sure we remain united to God, who works in us."*[273] *"The means"* to realize this *"are: contempt of the world and of self" i.e., mortification, "and prayer."*[274] He follows this first premise regarding the end with a second one concerning the interior state of man, which we have already seen, in order to show the necessity of this virtue. With these two premises in place, he proceeds to the *"Practice of Mortification".*[275] In a second treatise on this same subject Bruno puts in relief its positive aspect in contrast to its practice by the Jansenists. We find here, as well as in all that Bruno considers a true hierarchy.

> *"The first exercise of mortification will always be doing the most Lovable Will of God; renouncing therefore one's own insight and sense, suffering, losing. etc.*
> *Second, the matter of mortification will be obedience, and going along in all things with the community.*
> *Third, to do well and with love the ordinary things of one's vocation. In these three things mortification is all holy and dear to God and truly safe from deceit.*
>
> *Regarding matters of free choice, the most admissible act of mortification is Charity, that is to serve and help others, thus renouncing one's own comfort, consolation etc. suffering for them etc.*
> *Secondly humility, felt and repugnant, is very good matter of mortification. Victory here is most pleasing to God.*

[268] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 135. (IF 239)
[269] ibid., p. 134. (IF 240)
[270] ibid. (IF, footnote missing, but the text is between 240 and 241)
[271] ibid. (IF 241)
[272] Ibid.; English translation taken from The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross, translated by Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D., p. 67. (IF 242)
[273] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 134. (IF 243)
[274] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 135. (IF 244)
[275] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 143-145. (IF 245)

Third, a good exercise of mortification is about those small passions or affections or inclinations that particularly retard union with God. Nevertheless, great caution is to be used in these three matters.

Regarding mortification in other matters of indifference, such as at table, bed, clothes, the senses etc. one should practice as many as possible in order to exercise penance, as well as to imitate the life and doctrine of our Savior, provided that one be sure, first, that it is the love of God that initiates and moderates the mortification, and that it also be the efficient and final cause. Second, that mortification be totally subject in all things to Obedience. Third, that it does not prejudice one's health keeping with one's state and office. Fourth, that singularity be completely avoided, abandoning such an act rather that doing something peculiar...."[276]

One can only marvel here at this very balanced view of Christian mortification which demonstrates and realizes a spiritual person who is capable to see, hear, taste, smell and touch and yet become what for others are only abstract ideals. This all belongs to the primary and positive perspective of the gospel message.

This is the teaching of Lanteri as found in his writings. It might seem that something here is missing. The well know catholic triad for Christian living is prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Bruno treats prayer extensively, mortification includes fasting. But where is almsgiving? Here is where Lanteri is all practice: His whole life was a life of good works, which includes almsgiving. Beginning with the example of his father, Dr. Pietro, then his activity of charity with his spiritual father, Diessbach, he will continue this all his life. He realized however, that the spiritual works of mercy are the greatest and most important. Here is where he wanted to dedicate his life. Nevertheless, he himself, as well as his recommendation to his followers, was to use time free from prayer and study for these corporal works of mercy as needed. We have seen till now the background of Lanteri's life as one being taught by saints and becoming a teacher of saints. How he does that will be our next subject.

IV. The Apostolic Activity of Lanteri

A. The Apostolic Associations and the Congregation OMV

Having treated two of the three arms in the battle for souls on the side of Jesus and the Kingdom of God against Satan and the forces of hell, we see how Bruno Lanteri implements through his mission the third arm, which is almsgiving or works of charity. As the Apostle Peter could only say to the blind man at the gate of the Temple: "I have neither gold nor silver, but what I do have, I give to you...", (Acts 3:6) so too Lanteri would give that what he has, and do so whole heartedly and in abundance. His work of charity is found preeminently among the spiritual works of mercy. The corporal works are necessary, as the Lord vividly shows us in his description of the Last Judgment in Mt 25, but just as the body is dead

[276] *Manoscritti*, vol. 9, pp. 52-53. (IF 246)

without the soul, so too must these be animated by the spiritual works. This would be the domain of Bruno's ministry.

Having been formed by saints, Bruno became a teacher of saints. He will do this with the most effective means that he has available. The ones most prominent and here now to be treated are apostolic groups, good use of the media, which meant in his day principally good books, the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius, the formation of the clergy, apologetics, and spiritual direction.

His apostolate is concentrated in the ministry of the Word of God. The sacraments in his mind are certainly not secondary. They have in his life's work second place only in the sense that in action the former precedes the latter, total communion with God and the saints in heavenly bliss being the ultimate goal. We begin with, what seems to be for Bruno personally most important and foundational, the apostolic associations, Aa, Christian Friendship, Priestly Friendship and the Congregation of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary.

Bruno Lanteri came to know about the same time both the association known as the Aa, for the Christian formation of university students, as well as the Christian Friendship circle founded by Fr. Diessbach. Afterwards he would dedicate his whole life and priestly ministry to various apostolic associations.

Saved from the bonds of Jansenism, Bruno experienced personally the fierce war raging for the souls of men, while at the same time the efficacy of mutual aid received within a group of zealous persons. Writing a tract about the Aa, Bruno begins in this tone:

> *"Among the aids given to the Church by divine Providence to bolster her against one of the most powerful forces of hell, and the heresy of the last (the 18th) century, one was undoubtedly the great number of saints and fervent Ecclesiastics; alone their zeal and fatigue were sufficient to console her for her past losses."*[277]

The language of war is found in the rule for the Christian Friendship: *"Our only arms will be books."*[278] Even though in this document such language is rare, one who understands the context, knows well that the reason of its existence is to fight the forces of darkness,[279] which at that time in particular was Jansenism.

This language is found also at the front of the rule for the group known as the Priestly Friendship: *"An invincible weapon against all enemies (is the thought of) Eternity."*[280] Following his forced exile, Bruno revived this group of friends for priests with this motivation:

> *"Contemplating the loss of so many souls, how few there are that oppose it, and how easy it is to prevent their perdition, we come together attempting to make ourselves apt instruments to promote in the best manner possible the glory of God, which is the salvation of souls, the goal of our ecclesiastic state."*[281]

[277] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 169. (IF 247)
[278] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 44. (IF 248)
[279] cf. Letter from Diessbach to the King of Hungary and Bohemia Leopold II in *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 15. (IF 249)
[280] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 49. (IF 250)
[281] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 199. (IF 251)

The warlike situation proves the urgency of the undertaking. The underlying motivation for establishing such groups is totally positive and it is good to see that this is put out front. The motive for an "apostolic association" can be none other than what corresponds to the end of man. All the more is this true for a group of ecclesiastics, the goal being defined as "the glory of God" and "the salvation of souls."

This one goal is stated in the various documents regarding these groups in different and detailed terms: one seeks *"the highest perfection"*,[282] and endeavors to *"make reign in our hearts and as much as possible, in the hearts of others, the three virtues which most honor God and which are necessary for eternal salvation, faith, hope and charity".*[283] *They will* do all *"to subdue the whole earth for Jesus Christ",*[284] and seek "*their own sanctification by way of the most attentive imitation of Christ, whom they propose as the model for every action, united with the examples of Most Holy Mary."*[285]

In order to accomplish the two aspects of this one goal, combatting evil, the negative aspect, and to serve God, the positive aspect, it is certainly most useful if not necessary in view of the social dimension of the human person, to unite oneself together with others who share the same holy aspirations. Especially among young persons would such a union help much in overcoming three obstacles:

> *"The violent inclination felt at this age for world and pleasure (a); being content with and not going beyond simple exterior practices (b); but still more, an aversion towards all that has the appearance of restriction and constraint."*[286]

Just as bad friends further vice, good friends further virtue. Among friends, who are good, it becomes easy to do good, willingly, with pleasure and good intentions.

> *"Virtue disguises itself with sweetness of friendship; the Holy Spirit slips into their hearts through this pious device, filling them with most ardent zeal, carrying a great number of them across the seas."*[287]

The second obstacle, called a dangerous hindrance, which true friendship can overcome is that of doing spiritual practices only exteriorly, as a work without faith. *"Without internal spirit one will do nothing. It takes spirit to move the waters. It takes fire to burn wood and provide heat, the candle needs a flame to give light, the vase must be full before it can overflow."*[288] A holy friendship stimulates in each other love for God.

The third obstacle is the aversion of what comes to us under the appearance of constraint. Without an opportunity for free choice, one can develop a distaste towards even something good, if it has not been appropriated and appreciated as a good "for me". Otherwise, one is imprisoned

[282] ibid., p. 172. (IF 252)
[283] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 35. (IF 253)
[284] ibid., p. 51. (IF 254)
[285] ibid., p. 121. (IF 255)
[286] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 170. (IF 256)
[287] ibid., p. 171. (IF 257)
[288] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 170, in the footnote. (IF 258)

in the situation of "must do" without "wanting to do". Here again true friends can help by giving each other the personal space needed that the flame of love be ignited and desire instilled. This can be explained in the terms of the interior process of reform. Since "the actual state" or level of spiritual development of each person is different, so too will the good sought not always be the same. Friendship stimulates the search, discovery, knowledge, appreciation and assimilation of ever more new and higher values, not by imposition by one on the other, but through the interior power of felt attraction.

It is interesting to note that the ideals of the French Revolution, "liberty, fraternity, equality", ideals stemming from our Christian patrimony, find their way in Bruno's writings in regard to these organizations.

> *"This union among themselves has always been considered to be that which is most essential to sustain the aa. Besides union, the principal effects have always been an absolute liberty among those in the group regarding the practices of the aa, and a perfect equality among themselves, and a pleasing openness of heart as among the brothers, a sincere care to render effective service, when the occasion presents itself, and finally a firm persuasion of mutual correspondence."*[289]

Let us now look at a text fundamental to the Christian Friendship, rich in anthropological elements evident in Lanteri's life. It is titled: "*Analysis of the sentiments wanted by us"*.[290] These same sentiments are found in each group associated with Bruno. It begins with the theological virtue of charity: *"He loves God ardently."* This is not simply a sentiment, but an infused virtue as well, which is a power operating in us and in this case seeks *"the most convenient means."* Bruno, being pragmatic, does not want to exclude anything capable of achieving that what he wants, the attainment of the end for which he aims - the greater glory of God.

A "friend", having considered the mysteries of the life of Christ, which means pondering, contemplating, and reflecting on these, will *"have perceived"* and therefore knows the personal care God gives to us through his *"Providence"*. In the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, the contemplation of the mystery of the Incarnation is first and foremost trinitarian. The action of the Blessed Trinity reflects the profound communion existing among the divine persons in which we are called to participate and for which we are sent in all the *"universe"* to make all participants of this *"Holy Love".* Contemplating the *"most painful death"* of Jesus strengthens us and enables us to do anything, *"even at the cost of a thousand lives"* precisely because love demands love.

This friend will feel in his heart all the emotions that arise on account of these mysteries: *"he is filled with amazement, trembles out of indignation, and cries out in pain",* because seldom does one take his destiny seriously. Notwithstanding the errors and vices of the nations and the indolent lethargy of the majority of men - one senses here again the tone of war - they do not lose courage, because with faithful friends united together and with the weapon of God's Word, explained or applied in many good books, they succeed in giving testimony to all, *"who are docile*

[289] ibid., p. 174, my underlines. (IF 259)
[290] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, pp. 47-48, also for the following citations. This document, written by Diessbach, was translated by Lanteri and reflects his own thinking. It was the spirit in which he was formed. (IF 260)

to the grace of God", about true happiness, which one will have by means of the *"Christian virtues according to the Spirit of the Holy Church"* of God.

With this description of the sentiment of a Christian friend we see in synthesis Bruno's vision of man and his spirituality. At the same time, we see an apostolic awareness which shares the divine solidarity.[291] We will now look at the differences between the various groups of Bruno's apostolic activity.
Previous to the French Revolution and the French occupation of Piedmont Bruno was involved in three associations: Aa, Christian Friendship and Priestly Friendship. All three share the same ideals and often the same members. All three were characterized by secrecy on account of the political climate of the moment. This secrecy was relative, for the respective religious authorities knew and approved these groups. Later when the political situation changed, the secrecy was dropped altogether.

> *"The Aa according to the idea received from God by those who founded it, is none other than the most intimate and sincere union among many persons accompanied by the greatest secrecy seeking to reach the highest perfection: it is a fervent multitude, which the love of Jesus Christ gathers together, it is a school of virtues, where alone charity exercises the office of teacher; this is an holy alliance, which holds Jesus Christ to be its Head, their defenders being the Bl. Virgin and the holy Angels, their bond being liberty, their goal the glory of God and the honor of the Blessed Virgin."*[292]

The Christian Friendship was a group of lay men and women of *"cultivated spirit"*.[293] To preserve its secrecy, it was limited to twelve members, six of each sex. Founded in Turin by Fr. Nicolas von Diessbach, further groups were then established in Milan, Freiburg, Paris, Vienna and later in Augsburg, Florence, Rome and Warsaw.[294] The Priestly Friendship being composed of priests had the added aim of giving the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.[295]

In the period following the French occupation, called the age of restoration, much needed to be adapted to the new situation. We no longer hear of the Aa. The Priestly Friendship cast off its secrecy and gave birth to a boarding school for ecclesiastics in Turin. The Christian Friendship also discards its secrecy and arises with the new name of The Catholic Friendship, an organization that paves the way for the future Catholic Action. The Pious Union of St. Paul, a group founded in Rome, was also introduced in Turin by Lanteri.[296] Finally, out of the many difficulties surrounding these initiatives is born the Congregation of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary, heir of the ever fruitful patrimony of all these associations and the life and work of Bruno Lanteri.

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[291] This is an apostolic attitude, but one also of solidarity. Concerning this Hans Ur von Balthasar has written: "The immense transformation in Christian consciousness that must come about on the basis of this insight is a transformation from possessor to giver, from usufructuary to apostle, from privileged person to responsible person. In the middle ages, and still in the Baroque period, the former attitude was the essential one; the latter followed as a possible derivative at best. Things could not be otherwise as long as the Augustinian view of predestination - two classes of men from the very outset, one chosen and the other rejected - was seriously taken as basic. One cannot say that the medieval Christian felt himself, fundamentally, and in his very identity as a Christian, responsible for the non-Christian. Such a feeling presupposes a new stage of Christian awareness, at which the *purpose* of election becomes clear." *Razing the Bastions*, San Francisco 1990, pg. 58. (IF 261)
[292] *Manoscritti* , o.c., vol. 6, p. 172. (IF 262)
[293] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 44. (IF 263)
[294] CRISTIANI, p. 45. (IF 264)
[295] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 200. (IF 265)
[296] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 227-229. (IF 266)

That time of tribulation revealed itself to be a call of the Holy Spirit to unite together, not simply for defense, but to transform evil into good, learning even from the methods of the "enemies" in order to do good even for them, in imitation of Jesus Christ,[297] transforming, by means of the dynamics of reform, a brute man into an heavenly man, an enemy into a friend of God and for us as well. Thus, charity was learned together in order to spread it together so that in the end all become "*one heart and one soul*".[298]

B. The Promotion of Good Literature

In all the associations of Lanteri's apostolate books play an eminent role. This was not by coincidence but by a choice well considered. With eyes fixed on our august end to which God freely calls him who receives His revelation in faith, and taking account of the state of spiritual war in which he finds himself, the "good book" was for Bruno not simply a means among others to actuate the process to attain that goal, but a particular participation in the prophetic mission of Christ, who came to reveal to us our exalted end and open the way thereto. Jesus Christ, the way, the truth and the life, is the Word of God incarnate for us by the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father.

A good book is for Lanteri a participation in the eternal truth, it is a word of God, not strictly speaking, but as an explanation or application of it.[299] In order to be in this sense a word of God, its determination as a "good" book depends on its conformity to the faith of the Church. At that time there was in use an Index of prohibited books compiled by the Holy See, which were judged to be a danger to the faith and morals of faithful Catholics. We could call it an index of "bad books". It was not sufficient for Bruno to be considered good by not being listed therein. It had to be taken into account that a book merited the adjective good only in as much as it was quasi the word of God and as such, beneficial in view of the end. Thus, to be accepted in the catalogue of "good books" for the apostolate of the Christian Friendship, a stricter judgement was necessary.

> *"In the judgement to be made, the book of any author will be rejected who is not obedient to the Holy See, even if only suspected, or which contains anything contrary to the decisions of the Church, or even its spirit, or her practices... Furthermore, all books written to tear down rather than to build up, i.e., by which reading one will be discouraged from, rather than encouraged to practice the virtues, since such books are not only useless for our goal, but harmful. (On the other hand) those books will be especially praised and admitted that encourage and are written in affected earnestness, and most especially if they are well written."*[300]

How do good books facilitate the attainment of the goal? What role do they play in the dynamic process leading one to his end? Bruno would certainly think of the example of St. Ignatius. Diessbach himself was a convert from Calvinism due to good books. There are many who experienced their beneficial influence, since

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[297] ibid., vol. 11, p. 178. See also *Manoscritti*, Vol. 6, pp. 59-60 *"It is useful to oppose Satan with the same weapon that he prides himself in taking away from us."*. (IF 267)
[298] ibid., vol. 6, pp. 176; 196; *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 153. (IF 268)
[299] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 48. (IF 269)
[300] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6. pp. 205-206. (IF 270)

> *"with their use, many are the souls who have been freed from error, many who have triumphed over their passions, and entered the road to salvation, many others were preserved from the perils of seduction, and many made immense progress in virtue."*[301]

All this is in harmony to the dynamic: *"reform the deformed, conform the reformed and confirm the conformed."*

Books were the preeminent means of assisting man in the process of his conversion and progress towards sanctity. This was true both for the members of the Friendship as well as for others. The initial formation of a "friend" in probation required of him one hour each day for one year for "*spiritual lesson*" and one hour for meditation, "*using for both, exclusively those books provided to him for this purpose by the instructor."*[302] Afterwards as a full member one would endeavor each day to have an half hour for spiritual lesson and half an hour for meditation.[303] As in all else, we see the great care taken to be efficient as possible. "*The art of circulating good books fruitfully depends on the art on how to know good books, people, their circumstances in which they find themselves."*[304] They sought to give the right book to the right person at the right time.[305]

To know books the Christian Friendship had two means: the catalogue and a library. There are four different catalogues, one general containing a complete list alphabetically according to author, another one divided according to eight classes of persons, and two shorter catalogues, one for "*the strong*" containing mostly matters of controversy, and one of pious content for "*the exquisite*". The library contained books for use there, others to lend, and still others to give away. They did not content themselves with the catalogue but made every effort to get to know

> *"even new books as they come out and unknown old ones, suggesting to the friends to visit every week the bookstores, examining their catalogues, and remaining in correspondence in as much as possible to thus enrich and perfect our own."*[306]

At the meetings of the Priestly Friendship, and probably those of the Christian Friendship also, judgement was pronounced upon some book, expounding on *"its subject and premise, its parts and different chapters, which it treats, whether the reasoning is good, convincing and encouraging, or the contrary; whether it observes clarity, order, style, for the type of person it is useful and similar criteria."*[307] They could do together, what would be impossible for each one individually i.e.,

> *"to know very well all the best books, whether dogma, apologetics, ascetics, moral, history, and literature that exist in the usual languages of Europe, or that come to light, becoming familiar with these and perfecting the catalogue made for this purpose."*[308]

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[301] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6. p. 206. (IF 271)
[302] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 36. (IF 272)
[303] ibid., p. 38. (IF 273)
[304] ibid., pp. 46-47. (IF 274)
[305] Vol 6 pg. 9. Under the heading of the character of the members making up the AC the first point states: *"Only one with a cultivated spirit will be proposed as a new member. Our sole arms will be books."* (x)
[306] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 115. (IF 275)
[307] ibid., pp. 200-201. (IF 276)
[308] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 52. (IF 277)

The eight classes of persons for which different books are recommended are: *1) the unlearned 2) those in error 3) those fighting the lures of the world or the passions 4) the scrupulous and discouraged 5) those who aspire to Christian perfection 6) those needing to be gradually given a taste for good books 7) those one does not know well 8) those dedicated to study.*[309]

Finally, Bruno contributed to the foreign missions with the contribution of books. To the Bishop of Louisiana in the USA "he sent books to be distributed among Catholics, especially a large number of New Testaments".[310]

C. The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius

There are many ways to give spiritual exercises. Lanteri insisted exclusively on those of St. Ignatius of Loyola for three reasons.[311] First, both personal and ecclesial experience demonstrates their efficacy. Therefore, the Church has recommended these in particular; this is the second reason. Finally, according to tradition it is believed that these spiritual exercises were inspired directly by Jesus and Mary. All three reasons Bruno considered valid.

There are again various ways of giving Ignatian spiritual exercises. Bruno was involved in giving them in private, to individuals, and preached in public to groups. On account of unsound health and weak voice, his participation in the latter would at times be limited. Nevertheless, he did all in his power to promote them and prepare preachers for these.

The apostolate of good books is a means available to many. To preach a retreat, however, requires much more formation and ability, something presupposed of priests. We saw that the special importance of a good book derives from its participation in eternal truth and as such qualified quasi as word of God. The same is true for the sermon. This is the motive and guarantee of its efficacy as a means of sanctification. The aim of this word corresponds to our human end: the glory of God and the salvation of man. The means used by the Christian Friendship were good books. For the Priestly Friendship was added to this the work of the spiritual exercises. This was emphasized by Bruno at the first meeting of its reconstitution following the withdrawal of the French administration in Piedmont. To the priests then assembled he stated their first occupation would be

> *"to attend solely to the preparation of a course of meditations according to the method proposed by St. Ignatius in his book of Spiritual Exercises",*[312]

to which he then adds,

> *"to attend to knowing good books in order to promote them, communicating with one another the lights and knowledge received, that the word of God might be most effectively spread by tongue and pen."*[313]

[309] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, pp. 47, 204. (IF 278)
[310] GASTALDI, p. 179. (IF 279)
[311] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 150. (IF 280)
[312] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, pp. 199-200. (IF 281)
[313] ibid., p. 200. (IF 282)

Here again, since it is a matter of the word of God, maximum fidelity to the magisterium of the Church will be required of him. The

> *"minister of the word of God must with the divine Teacher always be able to say to his listeners: My doctrine is not mine, but his who sent me."*[314]

Referring to the end of man Lanteri affirms that the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius contain the *"great art of our sanctification",*[315] being as they are *"a reformation of man, global, entire, perfect, constant"*;[316] an *"invincible weapon",*[317] *"in general a most powerful instrument of Divine Grace for the universal reform of the world, and in particular, a sure method for each and every one to become a saint, a great saint, and quickly so."*[318] It is here where the dynamic process is in its entirety carried out from the state of sinner to saint. Here we have organically connected all the elements, which we have analyzed, in function. This completes the reason why Lanteri insists on solely "Ignatian" spiritual exercises.

Again, during the period of French occupation Lanteri, together with Luigi Guala, Don Reynaudi and others, while "*overcoming no light difficulty, because the Emperor Napolean I had formed a terrible idea of the piemontese clergy, and considered them a fierce enemy,"*[319] succeeded in obtaining the necessary permissions in order to preach a retreat to the priests of the Diocese of Turin at the Shrine of Lanzo. It so happened that one member close to the government, *"had asked and obtained access to the retreat, not with the same intentions, however, of all the others."*[320] He, supposing there to be an attempt at sedition, returned instead from it a new and converted man.

Returning to the anthropological elements involved, the end of man is presented in Ignatian exercises not only as an initial meditation, but as the driving force present at all times. Although man in the state of original innocence is not necessarily presented in each course of exercises, it always remains a theological presupposition in its whole. On the other hand, the actual state of man is evident, and the exercises are presented to the one on retreat in a manner that through reflection light be shed upon his personal situation of sin. Contrasting one's glorious destiny with his present sinful condition, his desire of a revealed good with his fears on account of actual failure, one can begin a dynamic of personal conversion moving him along the path of perfection. Lanteri calls it the grace of conversion in which there is *"that germ of life... which contains in a shell all of perfection",* and is the *"predominant motive that has prompted us to give ourselves to God."*[321] In this process through numerous exercises all three principles of action are at work, together with their fruit, the acts proceeding from these. Bruno calls this knowledge *"The art of knowing oneself".*[322]

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[314] ibid., p. 204. (IF 283)
[315] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 235. (IF 284)
[316] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 237. (IF 285)
[317] ibid., p. 233. (IF 286)
[318] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 248. (IF 287)
[319] M. MAROCCO, *Il Santuario di S. Ignazio di Lojola Presso Lanzo* , Torino 1870, p. 79. (IF 288)
[320] GASTALDI, p. 150. (IF 289)
[321] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 152. Also, in Calendar OMV, January 25 (Laetifica nos pro diebus Domine, 2011). (IF 291)
[322] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 149. (IF 290)

The three principles reflect the state of war in man's interior, both because his natural inclinations tend to be negative, and on account of the antagonism between the attraction of grace and the temptations of the devil. The dynamic can therefore work in either direction, going up or down the steps of the process, for better or for worse. The ongoing development of this dynamic will be positive in as much as one is faithful to it. Once one experiences in himself the gifts of the Holy Spirit *"he should assist these, foster these and reflect upon them."*[323] The fruit of this is peace. In contrast, the experience of temptation disturbs the peace, and the belligerent condition of his soul is exposed.[324] In this war the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius are a remedy for the intellect, disengaging him from error and fancy, and convincing him of the truth of his situation in which he lives and to what he can rightfully aspire. Consequently, they are also a *"heavy assault on the heart inducing it to convert and be holy"*,[325] purifying us of evil affections, turning our heart to our true good.

During the first stage with the task of reforming what is deformed, one will be convinced of his errors and led to feel compunction for a life that is wicked or tepid caused by his acts of arrogance and pride, so that he resolves to flee evil.

During the second stage with the task conforming what has been reformed, one resolves to correct his past errors conforming his actions to the maxims of the gospel, and reproducing Jesus internally and exteriorly regarding all the daily virtues and common acts.

During the third stage with the task of confirming the conformed,

> *"one resolves to overcome whatever difficulty he may face in difficult situations or arduous tasks, and to act in a perfect manner, to serve God with heroic acts, and to model his affections on the examples of Jesus most patient, the model of heroic virtues, in extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances."*[326]

Finally, during the fourth stage with the task of transforming the confirmed, one seeks ways to further strengthen his resolutions by considering the reasons for hope, as well as the love of God

> *"from which is born joy, interior peace and union with God, the optimum means for perseverance, being at the same time the apex of perfection and the purpose of the Exercises of St. Ignatius."*[327]

Among the characteristics of "Lanterian" spirituality, the element we first encounter within the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius is that of being catechetical in a broad sense. In fact, these exercises contain

> *"an entire instruction of what one principally needs to believe and do within the community of believers, because in the meditations the principal articles of the Creed are expounded upon with affection, and in the additional catechetical instructions, the Commandments and the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist are explained."*[328]

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[323] ibid., p. 153. (IF 292)
[324] Ibid. (IF 293)
[325] ibid., p. 231. (IF 294)
[326] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 247. (IF 295)
[327] ibid. (IF 296)
[328] ibid., p. 219. (IF 297)

Their pedagogical character is manifest besides in the strict adherence to the rules of pedagogy in their simplicity and efficaciousness, and in the abundance of small but specific practices. All this Bruno sought to preserve in keeping with the dynamics of the Ignatian month, in a retreat of eight days, or ten days including the days of arrival and departure. This makes an "Ignatian" retreat feasible to the multitudes not having the liberty of thirty days. *"One employs ordinarily ten days, a length of time approved by many Holy Pontiffs, sufficient to propose the necessary material, and easy to utilize by those burdened by affairs, and even for farm workers."*[329] We see in these words Bruno's ecclesial sense and the interest he gives to pontifical approbation not only in matters of faith, morals and discipline, but those purely practical. *"Efficacy is the fruit of these Exercises, so says the lauded Benedict XIV, which is inevitable, if these are given and done as required."*[330]

One gives the Exercises well if the order proposed by their holy author is kept, since these *"consist in meditating a series of truths, not simply one after another, but one in consequence of another."*[331] The form of the meditation needs also be followed, being divided in prelude, exposition and colloquy. It must be simple, clear with precise and reasoned points, proven by the authority of Sacred Scripture and the Fathers, applied to customs, descending to the level of practice with pious and affectionate aspirations, although in moderation, leading to opportune resolutions and ending in the colloquy requesting through the Blessed Virgin and Jesus Christ the necessary graces from our Eternal Father in order to carry out what has been resolved.[332]

One does the Exercises well if he does so with esteem, affection and a serious, calm application,[333] with *"fidelity, generosity, and tranquility"*,[334] with *"effort and order"*,[335] with "attention and exactness",[336] because God in granting us so many graces expects *"that one corresponds in order to be disposed for receiving such graces, which means exteriorly that one must practice the custody of the senses with mortification, exactness in practicing what is prescribed; interiorly in the practice of quiet, humility, generosity of soul."*[337] Other external factors include a tranquil, solitary place, order and books to be used.[338]

A course of Exercises are practices in order to unite all the powers of body and soul to the three Divine Persons, modeling our actions on the actions of Jesus. In his teaching concerning the spiritual exercises Bruno affirms that the Christian is another Christ, and must unite himself

> *"so intimately with Jesus whereby one effects his continuous prayer: I pray Father, that they be one in us as we are one."*[339]

Trinitarian communion becomes ecclesial and fraternal communion. And fraternal communion becomes trinitarian communion.

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[329] ibid. (IF 298)
[330] ibid. (IF 299)
[331] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 248. (IF 300)
[332] ibid. (IF 301)
[333] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, pp. 69, 71. (IF 302)
[334] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p 58. (IF 303)
[335] ibid. p. 231. (IF 304)
[336] ibid. p. 246. (IF 305)
[337] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, pp. 14 and 17. (IF 306)
[338] ibid., vol. 11, p. 233. See also p. 63. (IF 307)
[339] ibid., p. 52. (IF 308)

"We must keep before us the saying of the Holy Spirit, Taste and see the goodness of the Lord, we need to raise up in ourselves sentiments worthy of God in order to inspire these in others and so attain to the end of loving Him and helping all others to love Him."[340]

Closely linked to this is what we defined to be the message of Lanterian spirituality (pg. 35) since it is necessary at times

"to speak hard and frightening truths, we must never forget to suggest at the opportune time sentiments of confidence, so as not to risk insinuating some false notion of God, or lead someone to desperation."[341]

D. The Formation of the Clergy

Again, regarding priests we find the same method of apostolate: associations, books, spiritual exercises. We could even say that Bruno was always involved in the formation of priests from the time of his own priestly formation. Each association in which he was involved had this as one of its goals.

The Aa sought to help complete the intellectual formation of students of theology in a climate of mutual friendship and a spirit of freedom and equality.

The Christian Friendship aided pastors by providing them books which would help them not only in their ministry, but also in refuting current errors. For those priests in this group composed mostly of lay persons, it was an indirect kind of continuous formation. Both here and in the group for priests they would get to know many good books and how to use them in their apostolate.

It was the Priestly Friendship where continuous formation of clergy became the principal interest of its activity. Each week one of the members would be given the task of presenting a meditation for a course of spiritual exercises. Following its reading

"everyone with total politeness and liberty would make known how he felt about it, making appropriate observations, suggesting what needed to be changed, omitted or added, but always without quarrel or excitement, or a partisan spirit (spirit of taking sides)."[342]

This remark in respect of the Exercises was true also for books, the second work of apostolate, which we have already seen.

Finally the Congregation of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary, founded by Lanteri in his maturity, had after the Spiritual Exercises the aim *"of contributing to forming good pastors, Evangelical Workers; therefore they admit* ***(into their house/give a home to ?)*** *those ecclesiastics, who yearn to do their Holy Exercises, or compose them, or enabling them for parish work and other*

[340] ibid., vol. 6, p. 203. (IF 309)
[341] ibid. (IF 310)
[342] *Manoscritti.* vol. 6, p. 200. (IF 311)

Ecclesiastical duties according to the disposition of their respective bishops, providing them all the appropriate means."[343] This seems to refer to Bruno's idea of an ecclesiastical boarding house for newly ordained priests preparing for pastoral or other duties. Those words were written after papal but before civil approval. On account of political difficulties, it was necessary at that time to separate the two.[344] The aim however, remains part of Lanteri's patrimony for the Congregation, and its fruit was not lacking since out of that house in Turin came many holy priests.

The Spiritual Exercises for Lanteri played an essential role in the formation of priests. These arouse *"vocations to the ecclesiastic or religious state".*[345] By this means *"the interior spirit will be awakened in them, and zeal for souls."*[346] For this purpose, Lanteri worked and succeeded in opening a retreat house at the shrine of St. Ignatius in Lanzo. Bruno was not satisfied with only giving Exercises to the clergy, but encouraged them as well to learn how to do so and would help them in composing and giving them to others.[347] Out of such an effort for a group of priests gathered in Carignano would then be born the Congregation OMV with Lanteri as its head.

E. Apologetics, fighting current errors, (ecclesiastical controversies)

Bruno Lanteri learned from personal experience the horrors and adverse consequences of heresy and afterwards the joy and security derived from truth. The fact that one of the aims of all of the above associations was to "combat error" should not be understood as a war against men or parties. Rather it is war against the spirits of darkness, against every falsehood and all wickedness, against error and vice. One witness of his balanced approach we see in the above related conversion of the spy at the retreat in Lanzo. His was an attitude of compassion, feeling sorrow to the point of tears even ahead of his listeners on account of his greater education.

This attitude of compassion must be for both those who spread error as well as their victims. It is an attitude he learned from God:

> *"those persons who most reject us are the ones we need to work at loving all the more, for so we imitate more closely (Jesus Christ), who loved us even while we were enemies, and also because there is here no danger of self-love, nor any human motive, but purely divine love, therefore most acceptable to God."*[348]

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[343] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 220. (IF 312)
[344] CRISTIANI, pp. 108-111. (IF 313)
[345] *Un Esperienza dello Spirito*, p. 220. (IF 314)
[346] ibid. (IF 315)
[347] T. GALLAGHER, *Gli Esercizi di S. Ignazio nella Spiritualità e Carisma di Fondatore di Pio Bruno Lanteri* , Roma 1983, p. 71. (IF 316)
[348] *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 170. (IF 317)

This attitude of Jesus, so important for one who will be an apostle, Bruno describes precisely and beautifully in his meditation summarizing the public life of Jesus as the Lamb of God.

> *"We see the Scribes and Pharisees who were unable to obscure and discredit Jesus' miracles... they are all intent on destroying the works of Jesus, and Jesus knows all, sees all, and still, he disregards all of that and continues to work miracles in order to convert them...*
>
> *Jesus was reading their hearts, he knew the animosity they held against him, and still did not disdain their company, accepting their invitations, eating with them, even when under false pretenses they invited him, he conversed with them with gentleness as with friends; his entire revenge was to desire only their advantage, always seeking to bring good out of evil.*
>
> *(Afterwards when their calumny, detraction and persecution became open) his revenge was... to persecute them with benefits and to bother them with grace, every day extending his hand out to such an incredulous and contradictious folk; his revenge was finally to sacrifice himself for them, and in agony on the cross praying for them that their eyes be open, to yet save their souls."*[349]

Such was the Teacher, so too must be the disciple.

F. Spiritual Direction

Spiritual Direction for Lanteri was not limited to the confessional or the pulpit where the heirs of his charism were ready to die. In order to have a more complete picture of his apostolic activity we must include his work among the needy, the poor, prisoners, the sick. There was no lack of corporal works of mercy in his ministry, but at the sight of the deeper human needs which when neglected become the source of many material needs and evils, Bruno could not remain still but engaging in these corporal works as Providence dictated, helping those who ask for his aid, and according to the time available free from other responsibilities, he would in imitation of both his father, Dr. Pietro and his spiritual father, Diessbach, add to the corporal works those spiritual as well. For example, in giving bread to the hungry he would give the person food for the soul also by talking with him about the things of God. From Jesus he learned the hierarchy of love so that his charity would be perfect, universal and sincere.[350] In this way his works of mercy were a simple means of spiritual direction for those not necessarily seeking it and where other methods could never succeed. Bruno was always seeking opportunities and the best means to evangelize, whether that be done with books or with bread, with the distinction however that aid to our neighbor in need is not a means to an end, but is an end in itself and an obligation of charity.

[349] ibid., vol. 13, pp. 309-312. (IF 318)
[350] cf. *Manoscritti*, vol. 11, p. 171. (IF 319)

Spiritual direction thus need not be sought out by the person for Bruno to turn his attention to him in accord with the words of St. Paul to Timothy, to announce the Word, "whether it is convenient or inconvenient." (2Tim 4,2) An example of this is told by the Marquise Julia Falletti di Barolo about herself.[351] She "arrived from France young, rich, full of life," loving the enticements of the world. Now being at home she heard and saw Bruno, "who was directing her mother-in-law in matters of the soul." The changes she saw in her relative gave her respect for Lanteri, but at the same time fear, knowing what desires he had for her own perfection and how he disposed himself to detaching her entirely from those things we consider innocent, but which in any case hindered her from becoming like one Bruno desired and which to her great advantage and that of others he eventually succeeded."

At first, she had no such desire and indeed would flee him if at all possible. But in the end, it happened to her as with St. Augustine, "who speaking about the glorious St. Ambrose relates that in the beginning of his conversion it was not his teaching or eloquence that captured him but his goodness and gentleness." The result was not only her gratitude for the good done unto her, but for the good that she had done in Turin through "a vast and lasting heredity of Christian charity, for which she is held even to this day in blessed memory."[352]

If that happened to one who attempted to flee him, then how much more for those who sought him. And many among the people did seek him out as their confessor, as well as convents for their spiritual director and by those tyrannized by the rigors of Jansenism as their liberator.[353] Much direction would be done by way of letter. Many of his letters can be considered small personalized spiritual treatises. We give here two samples. Already at the beginning of his apostolic activity he writes to a lady about the obligations of her state, *"Maxims aimed at forming a firm felicity in yourself, your husband and all your family"*.[354] It treats at first in various terms the end - to praise and serve God, salvation, the will of God, holiness and happiness. It continues then with the obligations of state regarding her heart towards God, husband, home-peace and affection for one's country. Then it considers the means, first those general and then those concrete, as aids to fulfilling one's obligations. It treats of frequenting the sacraments, constancy in meditation and spiritual reading in order to nourish true piety not neglecting reflection, the thought of Jesus, devotion to His Heart, to the Blessed Virgin, to St. Teresa and her Guardian Angel. It finishes with a list of 15 Maxims. Here a few examples:

> *"3. I will be solicitous to have always a grand idea of the Majesty and Goodness of God, which the Saints in heaven possess. I will take pride in always professing openly and freely the desire to live as a good Christian and to have God as my King, not the world nor its maxims. By this means I will overcome human respect and impede many evils.*
>
> *4. I will be careful as to who lends me books, whom I do not know, even if he were to appear as an Angel. Needing to read some book, I will make sure not to do so before consulting someone who can truly give good advice in this regard. I must be convinced that doing otherwise has been this century's most terrible hinderance and here we find*

[351] For the following citations see GASTALDI, p. 172. (IF 320)
[352] PIATTI, pp. 92-93. (IF 321)
[353] cf. GASTALDI, pp. 165, 173 and CRISTIANI, p. 53. (IF 322)
[354] *Carteggio*, vol. 2, pp. 128-136. (IF 323)

those diabolical arts generally used to pervert the unwary youth. The same will be true for books of devotion, since many of these appear to be good, but turn piety cold and contain rotten poison."[355]

We see his great concern regarding spiritual reading, for many books circulating were perilous to faith and good morals, and even those written in good faith often overdid their piety. Further comment is unnecessary, which is true for the next example from near the close of his life.

"I see however that you fear for your constancy, and certainly not without reason on your part, since we can never fear enough and despair of ourselves. This is precisely why we need to flee the occasions (of sin) and perils. But for this fear to be proper, and not degenerate into discouragement and despondency of spirit, we must keep it inseparably united to a most firm hope in God, our most loving Heavenly Father, who can and only wants to help us and infallibly does so if we remain constant in adopting the salutary means his fatherly heart suggests to us.... You know that all this is not so difficult, it is a method that can also contribute to forming a stable practice. I courteously request that you provide me from time to time a detailed account of both the practice and the result of such exercises."[356]

Summarizing we can affirm that there is great consistency in Lanteri's spiritual direction from beginning to end. And then too there is the same consistency between what he taught and what he himself practiced. We could even say that all his other activities were branches of this one. In the apostolic associations he directed their members by means of conferences. Giving the right book to the right person at the right time could change the direction someone's life would take. *"Another advantage then is with these books the minister of God continues even when absent to exercise his ministry with those souls, that they be converted, or guiding to confirm them in the good already begun, or to have them run swiftly to perfection".*[357]
Finally, in the Spiritual Exercises, personal direction is an integral part. Here is the heart of the apostolic activity of Bruno Lanteri - his upmost personal and wholistic attention, with a profound knowledge of the human person in the various stages of development, and the most suitable means for each one in all levels, corporal, intellectual, affective, moral, social and spiritual in order to direct him to the only end capable of satisfying his desire for greatest and everlasting happiness. The French historian, Cristiani, summarizes this in these words: "It would be in this domain - that is to say, in the depths of the soul, so to speak - that he would attain his greatest successes, and it would be there that he would exercise the greatest influence."[358]

The following footnotes in Chapter V. are all new and have no corresponding notes in the original Italian text.

[355] *Carteggio*, vol. 2, pp. 128-136. (IF 323)
[356] ibid., pp. 321-322. (IF 324)
[357] *Manoscritti*, vol. 6, p. 206. (IF 325)
[358] CRISTIANI, p. 53. (IF 326)

V. The Science of Sanctity (Conclusion)

My conclusion upon reading the writings of Bruno Lanteri is that he first of all mastered the art of sanctity. That he is now a saint in heaven is my own belief and that of my fellow Oblate brothers. However, it was his charism to formulate the science of sanctity. This he developed in order to help others not only to love and therefore to desire the goal of our sanctification, which is our transformation in Christ, but to understand the process as well. He combined art with science, love with knowledge so that one might become a saint, a great saint, and quickly so. As stated above, Bruno calls sanctity in its whole an art, the art of sanctification, as well as in its parts. Those of his writings he considered more important he revised continually, his directory for example was a work of his whole life. He did not write books, but we might say he wrote with the Spirit in the hearts of his listeners. As we have seen, his treatise is complete, even though not assembled together. That was my attempt here, which I am sure there is much to be improved and added to it.

Method is essential to science. We have seen the importance of method for Lanteri in all his teaching. "The scientific method"[359] as developed over time is formulated as "a process for experimentation that is used to explore observations and answer questions." To understand how Lanteri did this, let us first look at the steps of the scientific method.

"The six steps of the scientific method include: 1) asking a question about something you observe, 2) doing background research to learn what is already known about the topic, 3) constructing a hypothesis, 4) experimenting to test the hypothesis, 5) analyzing the data from the experiment and drawing conclusions, and 6) Communicate Your Results."

If Lanteri's teaching can be called a science, then do we find within it this scientific method? He calls meditation "*the school of union of soul with God*".[360] We find in his summary of the art of meditation, which we have already seen (III.B.1.b), the scientific method expressed in religious terms.

I. What is proposed for me to do?
II. I must do it, Faith obliges me.
III. I can do it, Hope convinces me.
IV. I want to do it, Love gives me the strength.
V. Colloquy

Comparing the scientific method with Bruno's summary we can say that number 1) asking a question about something you observe, is similar to I., What is proposed for me to do? Numbers 2) & 3) doing background research and constructing a hypothesis are related to II. I must do it, Faith obliges me.

[359] https://www.sciencebuddies.org/science-fair-projects/science-fair/steps-of-the-scientific-method

[360] Direttorio pg. 37

Numbers 4) and 5) experimenting to test the hypothesis, analyzing and drawing conclusions are related to III. I can do it, Hope convinces me. Finally, number 6), communicating the results is related to IV. and V. Love and Colloquy. The result is communicated in action, what for Lanteri meant also communicating his science of sanctity. According to St. Ignatius, in the colloquy "I shall also reflect upon myself and ask: 'What have I done for Christ?' 'What am I doing for Christ?' 'What ought I do for Christ?'" (Puhl, EE 53) There is this difference however, for Bruno faith is not a hypothesis, but only what we personally derive from it.

With respect to the whole of his writings we can make these further comparisons:

1) asking a question about something you observe, Lanteri asks what is the ultimate purpose of life, for therein lies happiness.
2) doing background research to learn what is already known about the topic, Lanteri goes to those who have succeeded, the saints.
3) constructing a hypothesis, he ultimately finds this in the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.
4) experimenting to test the hypothesis, Lanteri considers his own experience in trying out what he learned, but also requested from those he advised to relate to him the results for them.
5) analyzing the data from the experiment and drawing conclusions, Lanteri in analyzing the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises is able to understand the daily spiritual exercises of those under his care; his conclusions we find in the aims and means he had in all of his apostolate.
6) Communicate Your Results. This was his apostolate.

Again, in religious terms but succinct he applies the same method in his explanation as how to carry out individual acts, deeds and works[361]:

ex fide
cum affectu
reflexe

To begin an act "ex fide", we mentally observe Jesus and consider from his teaching and example how he would do the same thing. With our hypothesis as to how this should be done, we continue "cum affectu" by occasionally lifting the heart to Jesus, seeing how he watches us with love, if he approves, encourages, corrects, advises, or remonstrates the act. The affections here can vary and communicate to us our progress. We finish the act "reflexe". Still in the presence of Jesus we know then whether it is proper to be thankful for his help or sorrowful for our faults.

Finally, we find the method applied to the whole of life, physical and spiritual, in biological terms in his treatise "*Method of Christian Life*"[362] where he again summarizes his teaching as a science. I relate it first in the original Latin of the text, which is hard adequately to translate with the same force. **"Qui bene ingerit, digerit, exigit, sanus erit."** "*He who ingests, digests and egests well,*

[361] Direttorio, pg. 48 *"They will see to begin not hurrying but out of faith i.e., tranquilly reflecting on Jesus (with a tranquil glance to JX), present as God, and as man our model; continuing not languidly but with affection, meaning from time to time quietly lifting one's heart to Jesus; finishing not abruptly but reflectively, that is with a quick glance to see if the act was done well or not, in order to either thank the Lord or to make an act of contrition."*
[362] Manoscritti, Vol. 9, pg. 19.

will be well." He lists three steps to good health. Each of these can be related to his own spiritual life and to his apostolate, for the good health of their souls.

"Qui bene ingerit" (*He who ingests well)* pertains to all that one takes in to feed his soul. You are what you eat.[363] This includes people: the company he keeps, family, friends, neigbors,[364] acquaintances. Special attention is given to friends, since these are the company one chooses and after family are most influential. Books and literature are next being food for the mind. All that one reads, watches, listens to or takes in by any of the five senses is to be considered here. With the rise of pornography there have been many neurological studies on the harm of its consumption on the brain and behavior. Its affects are similar to the intake of deadly drugs.[365] The same will be true to some degree from the viewing of violence or other activities of vice. Instead, we should seek to receive into our minds and hearts the example of Jesus, Mary, the Saints and all that is good, true and beautiful.

"Qui bene …digerit" (*He who … digests well)* pertains specially to thinking, reflection and meditation. Discernment is necessary to distinguish what is good and useful from what is harmful or useless, the good being accepted and assimilated. "All harm comes about through lack of reflection"

"Qui bene … exigit" (*He who … egests well)* refers then both to what is discarded as harmful, but more importantly to what becomes of the energy received, the good works that one accomplishes. Whatever harmful that is consumed must be in some manner eliminated. Whatever harmful that is present in the mind or heart, must be transformed or eliminated. Vice is to be purged. Charity is to be exercised.

"… sanus erit." (*will be well.)* If all three steps are done well, then one will be spiritually healthy, holy and therefore a saint. We can thus say that what he states about the Spiritual Exercises was the aim of his life and apostolate:

> "*Summing up, the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius are in general are a most powerful instrument of Divine Grace for the universal reform of the world, and in particular a sure method for each one to become a saint, a great saint, quickly*."[366]

To this end we have been seeking here to understand the human foundation of the apostolic activity of Bruno Lanteri. His biography shows us a vast, general, many faceted work and at the same time an extraordinary unity in meaning, direction and personal coherence.

After this broad view we sought to understand how Bruno considered the human person beginning with the question of who is man? and What is the end of man? The immediate answer

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[363] What originally meant that the human being is nothing but matter, applies all the more to his soul.

[364] A tool called the Opportunity Atlas (https://www.opportunityatlas.org/) shows that choosing where children will grow up might be one of the most important indicators of their earning potential and stability. By breaking down large swathes of IRS and US Census data, the Opportunity Atlas project was able to identify how individual neighborhoods have a huge influence on the long-term stability and success of children. Said another way, the neighborhood they are raised in, and the *people they grow up around*, are a strong indicator of adult outcomes, who kids grow up to believe they can, and should, be. (Source: Axis, The Culture Translator Vol. 8, Issue 19, May 13,2022)

[365] Gary WILSON, Your Brain on Porn, 2017

[366] Scritti 2654-5, Diretorio, pg. 154.

is that man is created by God in the image of God in order to be in communion with God. We could not remain satisfied with this answer until this unique, supreme and ultimate end be related to all the underlying ends of man in his various levels. Man having been taken prisoner of some inferior end, finds himself in a state of war. The process of liberation and attainment of his true end in eternal beatitude can only be achieved in a journey, which at first may seem arduous and even impossible, but seen in its true light is actually quite easy. In order to shed light on this topic it is necessary to be aware of the interior condition of man. With this knowledge he can begin the dynamic process of climbing the hierarchical mountain of human ends effecting changes in his person at all human levels - intellectual, affective, moral, social and spiritual - which he carries within himself passing from one goal to the next until the last goal, the summit of sanctity in communion with our triune Creator is achieved in becoming a celestial person, a saint.

The keys to this dynamic process of reform from prisoner to freedom, from beast to celestial being, are thoughts and affections mutually engaged. On this journey the pilgrim carries in his backpack three or four maxims which determine two or three objects of affection. In as much his desire corresponds to his ultimate end, and as much as he fears all that would hinder achieving it, he will then form resolutions conformable to this end and behave in a coherent manner.

Next, we entered into Lanteri's spirituality in order to see how these anthropological elements were utilized in his personal life and active ministry. We found in the spiritual elements permeated with human values an interpenetration that is strong and deep.

The heart of his spirituality is communion with Jesus. For Bruno the Christian is another Christ. This was the ideal that he saw and tried to realize in all others. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. There are however, other ways that lead neither to truth nor life, ways of error, lies and death. Just as with life, death is realized in man's various levels and parts. So, it is also with the different spiritual levels, i.e., those levels whose parts are invisible to us, must be reanimated, they need nourishment to secure an integral life. Christ is the Way, because he leads us on the path to eternal life.

It is now clear that in the modern age "we are richer as far as analytical method is concerned, but far poorer when it comes to an understanding of the essential whole."[367] Bruno Lanteri, mastering the art of sanctity as well as its science, put the science to the service of the art, the means to the goal. That is why I together with many of my fellow brother Oblates believe that he was not only taught by saints, becoming a teacher of saints, but most important, became himself a saint.

As another Christ, Lanteri attempted to lead others on this path. His apostolic activity is characterized by a sharp attention and integral knowledge of the human person and of the means to further him along Christ's path. In looking at the whole of his work we see unavoidably the negative aspects of human living, from which no one is excluded. At the same time Bruno attempted to help those under his care to understand the positive and indeed primary aspect of all things. Only in this way is it possible to have a true vision of reality, just and worthy thoughts, ordered and holy affections such that we are enabled to receive as a gift that end for which God our Creator has prepared for us since the beginning of the world. Thus, we see how Bruno Lanteri

[367] Franz Werfel, my translation of the German text from the postscript to the historical novel: Jeremias, Benno Verlag, p. 571.

through his apostolic activity became another Christ, teacher, warrior and good shepherd. We see how he helps others with this science, enabling them to receive the art to become Christlike, to become saints, great saints, quickly.

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Appendix

To be added will be translations of various documents meantioned in the text (e.g., methods) Should anyone know of such translations already completed, or who wish to do so themselves, let me know, so that I can add these as they arrive.

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(Scritti e Documenti die Archivio, IV. 3651)

Compendio

I.	Cosa mi è proposto di fare?
II.	Lo debbo fare, la Fede mi obbliga.
III.	Lo posso fare, la Speranza mi convince.
IV.	Lo voglio fare, la Carità' mi forza.
V.	Colloqui.

Summary

I.	What is proposed for me to do?
II.	I must do it, Faith obliges me.
III.	I can do it, Hope convinces me.
IV.	I want to do it, Love gives me the strength.
V.	Colloquy

Stadio	**Dinamica**	**Intelletto**	**Cuore**	**Comportamento**	**Effetto**	**Affetto**
I. Via Purgativa	Deformata Reformare *homo rationalis*	erratum esse	compunctio cordis de vita male, tepide, superbe acte	ut fugias mala *diverte a malo*	Purgatio	Desiderii Compunctionis Timoris
II.	Reformata Conformare	errorem	resolutio	ut ames bonum	Moderatio	Fervoris

Via Illuminativa	*christianus*	corrigi	mutationis	*fac bonum*	Devotionis
III.	Conformata Confirmare *sanctus*	difficultates vinci	victoria difficultatum	ut vincas obstacula *inquire pacem*	Conversio. Electionis Fortitudinis
IV. Via Unitiva	Confirmata Trasformare *homo coelestis*	victoriam sequi	confirmatio animi ad constantium	ut resolutionem stabilias *persequere pacem*	Hilaritas Laetitiae