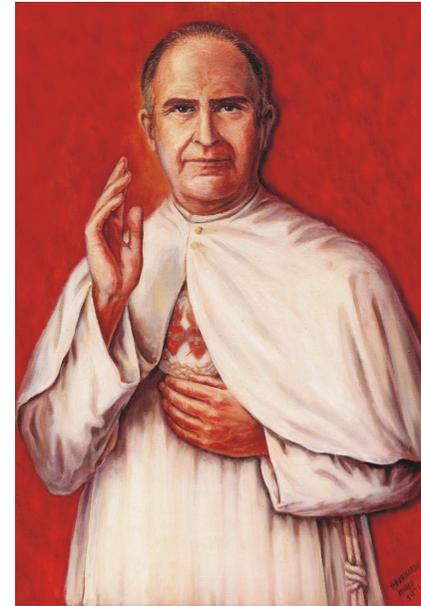


**NOTES ON THE SPIRITUALITY
OF THE SERVANT OF GOD**

**FATHER
EUSTAQUIO VAN LIESHOUT SS.CC.**



**Postulatio Generalis
Via Rivarone 85
Roma - 1998**

And lastly, here it is what we could call an "exaltation" of his soul:

*"Jesus, I want to follow your steps,
to speak your words,
to think your thoughts,
to carry your cross,
to drink your blood,
to eat your body,
to attain heaven,
and to hate sin. "*

Rome, February 2, 1998
Angel Lucas, ss.cc.
(Translated into English by
Fr. Patrick J. Crowley, ss.cc.)

CONCLUSION

From an attentive study of the life and writings of Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout, an extraordinary spiritual life clearly appears, which to our understanding can only come from a soul totally united with God, a very religious soul and a soul full of a true apostolic spirit: a soul of prayer, and of ascetic life practiced before it was preached to others. This union with God, this spirit of prayer are shown by him more clearly in his phrases, a true summary of his spiritual life, phrases which Fr. Eustaquio wrote and had continuously before his eyes in his breviary, as an expression of what he had within his heart:

"By the mercy of God may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.

Doce me orare (teach me to pray)

*Oh, my Jesus, by the blood you shed,
by the tears of your Mother,
by the intercession of Saint Joseph
and of all the saints,
help me and save me!*

*Dear Heart of Jesus, have mercy of my poor heart!
Jesus, save me!
In te Domine speravi non confundar in aeternum!
Sacris Cordibus honor et gloria.*

*St. Joseph, pray for us. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.
In your hands, oh my Jesus, I commend my spirit!
My Jesus, mercy
Let us praise the names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph night and day¹⁰⁰*

*To Lucio Dumont Prado, ss.cc.
Assistant Postulator for the Proceedings
Belo Horizonte*

When I passed by Belo Horizonte you asked me something about the Servant of God, Father Eustaquio, who was very well known in that city, and for whose cause you now must work. Perhaps this, which I gratefully dedicate to you, could serve as a starting point. It is my opinion, that Fr. Eustaquio is not very well known among us. Whatever has been said or written about him are some superficial biographies and articles that rather narrate some external events of his life. These events attract the attention but do not give an approximate, much less, an exact idea or sketch of his life. They deform his true image because they are not well focused and stress what he is not by looking and emphasizing the superficial and appealing events, perhaps because they do not have other sources. They have not tried, or have not succeeded, to reach the bottom of his heart, and look in it for the spirit which encourages and gives life to his soul, the complete surrender to God, his love for the Eucharist, for the Virgin Mary, for Saint Joseph, his intimate union with God, his strong and unshakable faith, his charity for the sick and the needy, his complete and humble obedience, his apostolic zeal, etc., etc.

Here is where we have to look for the embodiment of his image and personality, for the answers to why God uses him to pour out his graces in all his ministries, bring about conversions, peace, admiration, why a multitude of people seek him, why so many hearts pray and implore for his intercession, because they see in him a living instrument and a tangible sign of the presence of God in the mist of the poor, the sick, the needy who hunger and thirst for God.

Angel

¹⁰⁰ .- Proc. D, 4, 1

11. Program for the Spiritual Life

To advance in the ways of the Lord and to obtain abundant fruits in the salvation of the souls, the Servant of God made for himself a program for his spiritual life, to which he always tried to adapt his own life. Here it is: *How should I begin the day? How should I prepare myself for meditation? How should I celebrate holy mass? How should I behave in the confessional? with men, with the ladies, with the children with the retarded? How should I prepare my preaching, what will always be my conclusions? How should I talk and converse with the world: with men prudently; with the ladies with greater prudence still. What should I avoid in my conversations; not to speak without need of those who are not present; neither judge the neighbor; as much as possible to excuse the neighbor. How should I speak with my superiors? Simply, without affectation, without flattery, with respect.”*⁹⁸

Having in mind this program of this spiritual life we can understand well those expressions which came out of the heart of the Servant of God: *“There are two forces within me: One force pulls me down, the other rises me to heaven. One force is from the devil, the other from God. If I let myself be overcome by the devil force, I would have fallen to the greatest possible spiritual misery, and I would have broken the balance of the two forces. If in a moment of passion my soul should even for an instant part away from its creator, at once it feels that its heart is full of the greatest misery. Ah! If we could fly away from the small things! Oh if my eyes would always glance to what is pure, a glance directed directly to God. Ah! When will be the time when for me every thing of this world would be transparent for me! Ah! When will I cease to deceive God and the world, when will it be true, when will I be the truth (which: ‘non dolus sit in me’, ‘there is no fraud in me’), which will seek purely the glory of God. And that my body would be ignored -abused as a slave is abused- since my body with all its demands represents the greatest enemy of my life. We have to fight, then! And fight without respite!”*⁹⁹

⁹⁸.- Proc. E, 11

⁹⁹.- Ibidem 12

faith and his trust on the means which faith brings to our disposal grows constantly. He thought that we had to counterbalance with these means the influence of the spiritualism. He did not wonder at God making miracles with the holy water, according to the formulas from the ritual. He felt himself as instrument of God, for the salvation of mankind. On account of this, his natural, profound and without affectedness humility was in him an evident sign. The immense thirst for souls, the supernatural spirit of faith, and the humility always ready to sacrifice position and name made on me an impression which will last for ever. While being a guest at the Palace of his Excellency D. Antonio Cabral, Archbishop of Belo Horizonte, I heard more than once, that on one hand Fr. Eustaquio submitted himself perfectly to the rules established with respect to the sick and humbly accepted on that matter the dispositions of a Father, who was much younger than him, and on the other hand the results obtained by him, especially with his conferences organized for Easter, were really out of this world, that he (the archbishop) thought he had made a good acquisition for Belo Horizonte inviting the Father without considering the difficulties which arose in Poá and in Rio de Janeiro.”⁹⁴

10. Spirit of Prayer and Penance

As a true Servant of God Fr. Eustaquio knew perfectly that the glory of God and the salvation of the souls, to which his entire apostolic life and his entire life were consecrated, could not be obtained without a union with Christ on the Cross, Crucified, according to the apostle Paul to the Galatians: “I have been crucified with Christ”⁹⁵, and also “But for me, it is out of the question that I should boast at all, except of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world”⁹⁶. Thus why the Servant of God was a man of prayer and of penance, as it can also be proven from this his manuscript which we present as an example:

“In no way we must think that we can do only corporal penance, it can also be done spiritually. To keep silence when one wants to speak, is it not penance? To talk well when one wants to talk evil, is it not penance? To cut a thought that pleases us but displeases God, is it not penance? To forgive insults, offenses, scorns, and wrongs, is it not penance? To abstain oneself of something which does not harm us, is it not penance?”⁹⁷

⁹⁴ .- Doc. # . 24, 16-Jul-57.

⁹⁵ .- Gal. 2, 19

⁹⁶ .- Ibidem, 6, 14

⁹⁷ .- Proc. B, III, 32

Father Eustaquio Van Lieshout's Spirituality

A A Historical Memoir

Childhood:

Education: Beginnings
Religious

Ministry: a) In Holland
- Maasluis
- Roelofarendsveen
b) In Brazil
- Parishpriest in Aqua Suja (Rumario)
- Parishpriest in Poá
- ‘Fazenda San José’ (Escondido)
- Patrocinio and Ibiá
- Parishpriest in Belo Horizonte

Servant's of God death

B Spirituality of the Servant of God

I. His Spirituality "in general"

- Authentic priest and religious
- Charity towards the sick and the suffering
- Spirit, zeal, and missionary activity
- His religious doctrine
- His main devotions

II. His Personal Spirituality

1. Love of God and neighbor
2. Strong and unshakable trust in God
3. His peace of mind
4. His love and strong trust in God
5. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament
6. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary
7. Devotion to St. Joseph
8. Devotion and obedience to ecclesiastical authorities and to the Holy Father
9. Devotion and obedience both to ecclesiastical and religious authorities.
10. Zeal for prayer and penance
11. Spiritual life program

Conclusion

*difficult it is to remain hiding in a foreign country and then be punished by the people! I would like that you would make a decision regarding me, if the circumstances do not change, to send me to a foreign country or to Portugal or any other place in order to be free from the people's persecution."*⁹²

And again on September 17 he writes to his Pro-provincial, Fr. Gil v/d Boogaart: *"In your letter of September 13 you are asking me an answer. In the first place I thank you for all your efforts to solve this case, even if it is still afar away. With God's help everything will go well. I hope that the solution would be according to your wishes and that you would find the consent of every one interested. 'Funda nos in pace...' With a great patience we are waiting for your arrival and meanwhile I continue praying: 'Accende lumen sensibus, infunde amorem cordibus'."*⁹³

The abbot of the Benedictine monastery in Río de Janeiro, Fr. Thomas Keller, O.S.B. writes this testimony about the obedience of the Servant of God:

"I met Fr. Eustaquio only three times, but from these meetings I have unforgettable impressions. Twice I met him in Río de Janeiro, during his fast visit on his way from Poá to the San José Plantation, and the other en Belo Horizonte. In São Paulo I had heard about him. Don Mamede told me in Río de Janeiro about the healing of a sister of Saint Vincent, - if I remember well, in São Paulo - with so many details and showing so much information that I could not doubt that it was a singular act. Besides I had interest, not to see a miracle, but to see the spiritual physiognomy of the Father and to see in him the repercussion of the necessary but severe ecclesiastical orders which for him were profoundly humiliating. As far as I know, when he came to the monastery, he knew already the order of his Eminence that he had to leave the capital. But all his attitude was one of simple humility, interior peace and tranquillity. The general impression he left with those with who he came in contact in the Monastery was that of a man of a profound supernatural interior life. Upon seeing this, twice I took advantage to meet him for the sacrament of penance. He showed a profound knowledge of spiritual matters, and it was strange to find it in a priest completely dedicated to the care of people's souls. His spirit of faith, his unchanging and limitless goodness could be seen. Thus his words were enlightening to the soul and gave a precious spiritual strength. These spiritual contacts gave me the certitude that Fr. Eustaquio was not seeking himself in his apostolate of the sick. I also understood him by means of the conversation with him. His charity fervently desired salvation for the human race. This anxious desire made his spirit of

⁹² .- Letter on September 14, 1941 to Fr. Provincial.

⁹³ .- Letter to Fr. Gil, on September 17, 1941.

conviction that he was something more than a priest and religious was reinforced.”⁹¹

On occasions obedience demanded from the Servant of God great sacrifices:

- On **his exit from Poá** as an answer to resolve the problem of thousands of faithful who every day came to the parish.
- On the **exit of the Servant of God from Río de Janeiro city**.
- **On his hiding in the "San José" Plantation**, imposed on him as a necessary means to calm down the pilgrimages of the people or the conglomerations of the crowds who were seeking him.
- On the **conditions and regulations**, imposed on him by his Superiors, restricting his movements and activities as a priest and as an apostle of charity to the poor and the sick.
- On the **doubts and hesitations of the Superiors**, from who the Servant of God was asking advice and guidance.
- On the **incomprehension and doubts of his brethren** regarding the mission of the Servant of God and the opportunity of his extraordinary activity.

Nevertheless on all these circumstances of his life, he followed humbly the commands received, manifesting always proof of recognizing in his superiors the Will of God.

He himself helped his Superiors on the on the judgment to be able to find solutions which were in accordance with the Will of God; he was helping them in prayer, with his total availability and concrete indications which he himself made, and which he facilitated and offered new possibilities in difficult moments. In this regard he writes to his Provincial Superior, Fr. Marie-Joseph Bishop, residing in Holland:

“I am hiding here in a "Plantation", where I celebrate Mass and take care of the souls of 800 persons. Why have I to hide? This is the will of the nuncio. Lately there had been some healing due to blessing which I gave to one or two unhappy sick persons, and now the people and also the clergy persecute me to obtain more healing. You must understand that this stirs up disturbances. But the greatest fear I had was that I could be suspended if I would not remain hiding, as I am doing it now as a provisional solution.

In the past I have proposed Fr. Gil to send me to Portugal, but to the Superior this does not seem a good solution. Now I would like to go to Argentina or Chile. But the Superior finds that this proposal is not good. How

⁹¹ .- I Witness: Fr. Gil v/d Boogaart, Proc. Río de Janeiro, ad 12, b

Spirituality Of Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout, ss.cc.

The purpose of this document is to offer help in the understanding of the true figure of the Servant of God, Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout. My intention is to present a synthesis of his spirituality, of his spiritual life during his fifty-two years, lived in close union with God, with love for God and neighbors. A synthesis of how he practiced the main virtues, his special devotion to the Sacred Hearts, the Blessed Sacrament and St. Joseph. All these he did in a spirit of prayer and with a true and tireless apostolic ministry always with a humble and loyal obedience to the ecclesiastical and religious authorities.

Historic Memoirs

Three are the periods, which we can consider in his life:

- Family life
- Religious life: years of religious formation
- Apostolic and missionary life

The **first period** includes the **childhood years** (he was born on 11/3/1890 to Aarla-Rixtel in Holland), **his primary education at the elementary schools**: 1. St. Joseph's School, 2. Latin School of Gemert (two years), 3. Minor Seminary of the Sacred Hearts Congregation (September 1905 to September 1913).

The **second period**, years of **religious formation**, starts with the Novitiate in Tremelo, 9/10/13; the taking of simple vows: 1/27/15; follow by the perpetual vows: 3/18/18; and higher studies in philosophy at Grave and Tilburg, and in theology at Bavel, his priestly ordination: 8/10/19 at Bavel.

The **third and last period** includes his apostolic ministry:

- First in **Holland** (1919 - 1924) as assistant to the novice master, as chaplain for the immigrants of Valonia in Maasluis, and as assistant pastor in the parish of Roelefarendsveen, diocese of Haarlem at that time.

- Then in **Brazil**, where he arrives on 5/12/25 in Río de Janeiro, till his death on 8/30/42

In Brazil

- 7/15/25** Together with three other companions begins his first missionary work in Brazil: At the **parish of Our Lady of Abadía in Romaria**, town, which at that time was, named "Água Suja" (dirty water).
- 3/2/26** He is name **pastor of Romaria and other two parishes:** São Miguel de Nova Ponte y Santa de Indianapolis.
- 2/15/35** He is named **pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Poá** (São Paulo State)
- 5/13/41 to 10/13/41** By obedience hiding in the "**Fazenda São José.**"
- 10/13/41** At Lustosa College, in **Patrocínio** (Minas Gerais)
- 2/12/42** Provisional work at the **Ibiá Parish.**
- 4/7/42** Named **pastor of the church of São Domingos**, a very poor parish in Belo Horizonte.
- 8/30/43** **Death of the Servant of God in Belo Horizonte.**

When one knows a little about the life history of Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout, he realizes in some way the greatness of the man, who finds meaning to his life in a complete dedication to the Kingdom causes, living the evangelical precepts, love of God and neighbor, with simplicity, generosity and forgetting himself. The following, I would say, has been the essence of the spiritual life of this Servant of God: A complete surrender to God in a life of prayer, in the performance of his priestly and religious duties, with great zeal for the good of the souls; a total and disinterested surrender to the will of God in his neighbors, specially the most needy, the poorest, "...because this man and this Father, with an exceptional soul, full of Christian charity, had the gift of gathering around himself, those who suffer and hope, those who wished to serve God and his Church, those who needed a comforting and guiding word, those who wanted to serve their neighbors for the love of God."¹

¹ .- Fr. Eustaquio's canonical process, Summary, Docs. pp. 661-662. "Folha de Minas" (Author Oscar Mendes)

youth, so dear to the Supreme Pontiff, till the hour of victory for the truth and for the Good."⁸⁸

9. Submission and obedience to the ecclesiastical authorities and Religious Superiors

The Servant of God loved the Church, felt with the Church, identified himself with its kind of presence, adopt as his the mission of the Church and of his Congregation. He had a great respect for the ecclesiastical and religious authorities. He surrendered himself, and strictly obeyed the precepts and wishes of the authorities. He observed faithfully the Rule and the Constitution of the Congregation, and the canonical laws of the Church.

It could be said that the success of his mission consisted in the faithful and extraordinary obedience to the ecclesiastical and religious authorities and to the prescriptions of the Church. **His Excellency Monsignor Ernesto de Paula**, then Vicar General of the Archdiocese of São Paulo, writes: "*From the beginning I started to admire in him the spirit of obedience and poverty, since the parish of Poá was devoid of everything, therefore poor to the extremes, Fr. Eustaquio showed to be satisfied and ready for hard labor. As time went on the Curia of São Paulo would realized that in reality Fr. Eustaquio was a model priest, an authentic man of God, full of zeal for the souls, lord of an endless charity, of an extraordinary meekness, and above all of an obedience without reservations.*"⁸⁹

The Cardinal Archbishop of São Paulo, His Excellency Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcellos Mola, has declared: "*The Apostolic Archbishop of Belo Horizonte confided in me, that he had a good opinion of the priestly spirit of Fr. Eustaquio, especially for his complete and humble obedience, with which he complied the decisions of the ecclesiastical authorities.*"⁹⁰

And **his Provincial; Fr. Gil van den Boogaart**, talking about the forced seclusion of Fr. Eustaquio at the Plantation of "San José" declares: "*It would be a good idea to add that Fr. Eustaquio went by obedience to his superiors to the Plantation, even though he was upset because he could not be longer time in Rio; he did not show this annoyance verbally, but I could notice it in his countenance which seemed to be telling: "What a pity", because he could not do the good he wanted to do. In spite of the disgust of the man, the religious obeyed; he won by overcoming himself, without making any objection to the voice of the Superior. I can say that in this occasion my*

⁸⁸ .- Proc. A, IV,5

⁸⁹ .- Fr. Elfrink Alfredo, "Artigos e Posições", Art. 131

⁹⁰ .- Ibidem

they securely and safely fled and safely came back. Saint Joseph, if there were in me things disagreeable to Jesus and his Mother, help me to take them away, since I want to be a saint like you, Jesus and Mary. I would like to dwell with them under the same roof and I do not want to keep anything which would upset you. Oh, Saint Joseph, ask for my spirit light, for my eyes light, for my heart courage, a greater fear of sin. Oh, Saint Joseph, I ask from you to grant peace among those who hate and persecute each other, peace in the hearts, peace for families, peace in all countries... Saint Joseph, help me to suffer, help me to endure, help me to forgive, help me to trust, help me to save. Amen. Saint Joseph, solace of the afflicted, pray for us. Hope of the sick, pray for us. Patron of the dying, pray for us.”⁸⁴

8. Devotion and filial submission to ecclesiastical authorities in general and to the Roman Pontiff in particular

The Servant of God, on account of his ministry among Protestants, spiritualists and atheists, had opportunities to show his personal devotion to the Roman Pontiff, as it can, by the way, expressly be seen in the Association, "Antispiritualism League", which he founded: "The Antispiritualism League professes an absolute support of the Holy See and the legitimate representative, the prelate of each diocese where this League works."⁸⁵ During his time the Church was often persecuted, for this reason the true Catholic people prayed to God for the Church and the Pope. The Servant of God used to say: "Oh, may God give strength and light to all those who rule the Church, so that the wolves would not enter in the fold and steal the sheep. Jesus, Mary and Joseph protect the Church; protect and enlighten the shepherds."⁸⁶ "Let us pray for the Pope so that God will enlighten the control of his ship in the turbulent waters of our days."⁸⁷ And when the Church had problems with the fascist government, The Servant of God thought thus, as he manifested in some homilies: "Let us Catholics remember, during these painful and suffering moments which our Mother the Church is undergoing, the words with which the Pope ends his encyclical about fascism: The Holy Father hopes a lot from all parts of the world for his intentions, because prayer is everything premeditated and, although prayer will not give us the material tranquillity, it would provide Christian patience, holy courage and inexpressible satisfaction to suffer for Jesus and for the

We have to look for the sources of this spirituality in the family environment, where the Servant of God lived during his childhood years, in the years of his Christian education, and in those of his religious formation. In other words, in the family environment, and in the environment of his religious life during the years of formation.

1. His family

His family lived on a farm. The family was very religious, faithful and obedient to the Catholic Church. They lived in the South of Holland, in Brabante. His father was a farmer; he was tenacious, hard, persevering and religious. Something special emanated from his mother: she was dedicated to her children, full of kindness, and identifying herself with the suffering of others. "Work and pray were the two things done at home ... We were 11 children, 8 girls and 3 boys, one of the boys would enter the priesthood as a religious and three of the daughters would enter the religious life as "Sisters of Schijndel." ² The parents "were respected and loved by all their children." ³ "In this way they created a pleasant and healthy environment for the family, uniting parents and children with trusting and loving bonds and fomenting the fraternal love among their children." ⁴

Thus we find in the family environment the foundation for the virtues of the Servant of God: Deep and strong faith, endless trust in the Divine Providence; supernatural love towards God and his commandments; blind obedience to the precepts of the Holy Church; Christian love towards his neighbor practicing the acts of mercy.

It must be noted that this model piety and religiosity are not exclusive of the Van Lieshout family, the entire catholic town of Brabante is known for these qualities.

Thus, living in this environment, it is not strange that the Servant of God during his early age manifested an inclination to pray, liked to go to church, as his sister Faustina states: "He went very willingly to church, and in the attic he used to celebrate mass. He was 8 or 9 years old when he said to a seminarian, "I will also be a priest." He was not very much interested in the work at the farm because his mind was in the priesthood." ⁵

⁸⁴ .- "Padre EUSTAQUIO", author José Vicente ANDRADE, ss.cc. 1990, p. 151.

⁸⁵ .- Proc. E, 2, Art. 2.

⁸⁶ .- Proc. C, VI, 1.

⁸⁷ .- Proc. Ibidem 10.

² .- Witness III: Proc. Rog. before the Curia Buscad., Adriana van Lieshout, ad 5.

³ .- Ibidem

⁴ .- Document 10, Sister Faustina van Lieshout.

⁵ .- Sister Faustina v. Lieshout: VI Witness, Proc. Rog. before the Curia (court) Buscad. ad 5.

His teacher, Hamelinck, used to say: "This boy has the will of iron", and his parents to send him to study in Gemert "because may be he could not tackle the studies."⁶

The assistant pastor of the parish, Rev. Janssen, was the one who saw in him the beginnings of a vocation to the priesthood, and convinced the father of the Servant of God to send him to the Latin School of Gemert, where he went to and from every day walking for one hour during one year and a half.

"In Gemert, Huub (his nickname on account of his baptismal name, Hubert) found a small book about Fr. Damien De Veuster, and was impressed by his life."⁷

It is interesting and it must be noted, how all the witnesses and classmates, when talking about the possible vocation of the Servant of God, they refer only to his reading of the life of Fr. Damien.

When he was 11 years old he made his first Holy Communion in Beck, in 1901.

His father had planned for him to be his help on the farm, which later on he would inherit. But he could see that his son was not inclined to the job, one day told him: "I dearly hoped that one day you would be my helper." But he answered: "Oh, daddy, I wish so much to be a priest."⁸

2. At the SS.CC. Seminary:

"On September 1905, he begins his studies at the minor seminary of the SS. Hearts fathers, in Grave. He was 15 years old He had to study hard in order to pass the tests. He certainly was not the best of the class... But his efforts, together with his exemplar piety and his mindful prayer, were revealing."⁹ "The Superior used to say: He is not doing well in his studies, but his zeal compensates for everything."¹⁰ And he suffered a lot, not because he could not endure the humiliation, but because he was afraid he would not be able to be a priest.

⁶ .- Ibidem.

⁷ .- V witness: Wilhelmina, Proc. Rog. before the Curia Buscad., ad 6

⁸ .- VI witness: Sister Faustina, ad 6 (Pro. fol. tr. 53).

⁹ .- II witness, Fr. Cyrillus Grondhuis, Proc. Rog. before the court Buscad. ad 6, a

¹⁰ .- Sister Faustina, Doc. n. 10, page 86

7. Servant's devotion to Saint Joseph

The devotion to St. Joseph, the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Patron of those souls dedicated to the interior life, has always flourished among holy people. St Joseph, Patron of the Church, has also been always Patron of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts. But it was in Brazil where the Servant of God showed his devotion to Saint Joseph, among his apostolic activities and especially in that one against the doctrine and practice of spiritualism, which was very much spread out in Brazil. With this in mind he founded the Association, named "Antispiritualism League" which he put under the protection of Saint Joseph.⁷⁹ But the love of the Servant of God for Saint Joseph is made obvious from the fact that in almost all his letters he speaks about the Blessed Spouse of the Virgin Mary. Let us see some of his writings: "May Saint Joseph protect and guide you always... Saint Joseph, guide us. Saint Joseph protect us. Saint Joseph guide us always in the way to His holy will."⁸⁰ "St. Joseph protect me, guide me, free me from evil!"⁸¹ "Saint Joseph, in you I trust. Saint Joseph, in you I hope. Saint Joseph, in you I believe."⁸²

Writing to his Excellency, the Metropolitan Archbishop of São Paulo, on June 24, 1941, is convinced of the need to turn to this saint for all the needs of the world: "It is also convenient that among all saints we should especially turn to Saint Joseph whose intercession is powerful and infallible in our days... I have the holy desire to build a sanctuary in honor of this glorious saint in order that the world will learn that the day of poverty has arrived, but salvation is at hand to those who believe in the two persons whom Saint Joseph pointed to us: Jesus and Mary."⁸³

This especial devotion to Saint Joseph was personal in his life and he tried to pass it to all those who were seeking a blessing from him. He has written, with ecclesiastical approval, several prayers to Mary's Spouse, publishing them for evangelization and people's devotion. Here is one of them:

"Saint Joseph, self denied Spouse of Mary, tender provider of the Child Jesus, protector and refuge of the Holy Family, obtain for me and my family, that which I ask from thee. I come entirely under your powerful protection, at the side of Jesus and Mary, who under your holy protection,

⁷⁹ .- Proc. E. 2 a, b, c

⁸⁰ .- Proc. C, VI, 16

⁸¹ .- Proc. ibidem, 27

⁸² .- Ibidem 38.- Cfr. Proc. D. 3a, 1, 30, 50, 3b, 10, 14, 17; 4b, etc.

⁸³ .- Doc. # . 2, (Proc. Ord. fol. 647)

words: *"We are here and Jesus is there, very close to us. Ah! yes. I am convinced that you all are convinced that Jesus is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. I believe that you are ready to give your life as a profession of your faith in the true presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar (...) And that after the words "Do this in memory of me" we believe in the institution of the Blessed Sacrament and in the real presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. We believe it as if we could see it with our own eyes and we would like to give our life to prove this dogma of faith."*⁷⁴

6. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

A filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, has been another characteristic of true sanctity in the Church. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Servant of God, a member of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, should have a true and filial devotion to the Virgin. This began already in the family environment where he showed a filial devotion: *"He had a especial devotion to the Virgin. Many times he used to go to pray in the chapel of the Virgin of Graces in Aarle-Rixtel, and also went walking with her younger sisters to Haandel, where there is another Chapel of the Virgin, on they way there he was inviting us to sing and he also sang..."*⁷⁵ He has many writings about the Virgin, **especially under the advocating of the Holy Rosary** like: *"May God permit that the Catholic people of our time would rejoice on Earth like a heavenly echo of her prayers, especially of her rosary praying it fervently every day in honor of that holy and good Mother, of whom we talk well, preach well, but never to excess, never enough because she is the Queen of the rosary, the Queen of grace, the inexhaustible fountain of goodness and help."*⁷⁶ He appealed to the Virgin of the Holy Rosary as **Mediator between God and the souls**: *"Let us trust very much in God - our worries - our anxieties, will become lighter. Our Lady of the Rosary will help us in order that we may suffer everything for the greater glory of God."*⁷⁷

In his private letters the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary can be found, associated to the name of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and that of St. Joseph. For instance: *"Let the Sacred Heart of Jesus, our good Mother Mary, and our beloved Saint Joseph protect you always."*⁷⁸

⁷⁴ .- Proc. E, 6

⁷⁵ .- Adriana, Doc. page 83

⁷⁶ .- Proc. B. III, 13

⁷⁷ .- Proc. C. VI, 44

⁷⁸ .- Proc. C. VI, 84; cfr. ibidem 85, 86, etc.

He maintained this desire for the priesthood amidst the difficulties and in spite the opinion of his father, who nevertheless, did not hinder his son to be a priest, but he knew that his son was not good at his studies necessary for this end. Thus one day he told his son: *"My son, you can not tackle the studies."* His answer was: *"I will do my best, but we must have more confidence in the Lord and things will go better. "... "This trust in the Lord was characteristic of him. Even during his youth he lived in intimate union with the Lord."*¹¹

At that time the devotion to the Blessed Virgin was visible and he showed it by building in the garden of his house a small grotto in honor of the Blessed Virgin of Lourdes. There he prayed in front of the statue and made his sisters pray and sing.

Once he entered the novitiate *"he was a model novice and wholly dedicated to the work of his congregation, in the service of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in the Congregation."* *The master of novices and his co-novices admired him as a model and generous novice. His gravity and seclusion were known.*

Due to the German invasion the novitiate was interrupted and the novices were sent to their families. Brother Eustaquio on this occasion preferred to live in a cloistered environment, rather than in his home. Thus he asked and was granted lodgings in the religious convent in Beck, where one of his three religious sisters was residing. The Servant of God knew that in the convent he could follow better his spiritual life, and at the same time he would do something good for the elderly and the sick, who were hospitalized at the Institute closed to the convent, this he used to do some times before during his vacations. *"He used his time praying, studying, and visiting the sick at the hospital, in order to fortify and prepare himself for his future life as a missionary, as he used to say. When he arrived from Grave, the news that the novitiate had been opened filled him with joy, because he could go back to his convent."*¹²

*"I lived in the novitiate with Fr. Eustaquio, and I had the impression that in the novitiate he felt at home. I believe he did not need to change much in his personal orientation. He, as always, was very serious and with great piety. For him the novitiate was not something completely new and different. He faithfully fulfilled his temporal and spiritual duties."*¹³

¹¹ .- VI witness: Sister Faustina, ad 6, (Pro. fol. tr. 53)

¹² .- Sister Faustina van Lieshout, Doc. n. 101, page 86(tr.)

¹³ .- II witness: Fr. Cyrillus Grondhuis, Proc. Rog. before the court Buscad. ad 7 b-c

After the novitiate the Servant of God made his simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, as a religious candidate for the priesthood, in the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, *In whose service I would like to live and die*", as he stated in the ritual of the Religious Profession of the Congregation.

In a letter to his parents, brothers and sisters, he wrote about his Religious Profession: *"I will never forget that day. It could be compared to the day of my first Holy Communion, in some aspects, it was better, since in the first communion we receive, now on the other hand we give ourselves to our Lord."*¹⁴

*"Eustaquio engaged seriously in his religious life. This could be seen clearly in his faithful observance of the precepts of the Rule and the regulations. From this point of view he was a model for all of us. The greatest thing that I admired more in him was his profound piety. It was also noticeable exteriorly... We knew that his behavior was a natural expression of his interior estate of mind. During recreation he was a kind companion. In my opinion he was by nature shy, he stated his opinion with determination, but he avoided any heated discussions."*¹⁵

*"Regarding his character I could say that he was truly a good companion, a cheerful companion, and he knew how to accept a joke. He was lively, and sometimes he could react sly. He was very much liked by his brethren... Without any doubt he was a good young man and, with a healthy piety, and without any bigotry..."*¹⁶

On February 1916 he went to Ginneken, where he studied Theology till 1919. *"At the beginning Brother Eustaquio was a deficient student. He had little memory and little intelligence for metaphysical questions. But little by little he acquired a theological intuition. His approach to practical pastoral questions was more than adequate... His professors did not have any problem in admitting him for ordination on account of his intellectual capacity. The Servant of God was a pious and zealous religious... What everybody admired in him was his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. It was praiseworthy his behavior at the chapel: He made pious genuflections, he knelt down for long time without leaning on his elbows. He gave the impression that he was a brother who knew how to pray. He often made the way of the cross, manifesting also in this pious exercise a peaceful and devout*

¹⁴ - VI witness: Sister Faustina, Proc. Rog. before the court Buscad., ad 7 f-g

¹⁵ - Fr. Edgardo De Coster, Doc. n. 81, p. 638, (tr. p. 82)

¹⁶ - II witness: Fr. Cyrillus Grondhuis, ad 5 & 6. (Pro.fol.tr.18)

*served as a model.*⁷⁰ *"He had a great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and when he was young in Gemert and during his vacations, he was attending Mass every day and he always received Holy Communion."*⁷¹ Frequently his homilies and conferences dealt about the Blessed Sacrament in the Eucharist, so much so, that it can be said that for Fr. Eustaquio, the Eucharist was the center of his heart, as it can be concluded from the following expressions: *"Oh, he saw so many empty tabernacles. He saw churches deserted during the week. He saw how early in the morning a priest was coming to celebrate Mass, how few were the people present and afterwards, during the remaining part of the day, Jesus was left alone and grieved. He saw the unworthy hearts who received him sacrilegiously (...)* Priests like us are very much related with Jesus - every day we offer ourselves in the divine sacrifice (to the divine Savior). *Open and close the tabernacle. Let us examine - our faith - our love for the Blessed Sacrament. How do I celebrate the Holy sacrifice of the altar! How do I give Holy Communion to the faithful! What do I do when I pass by a church, when I visit the Blessed Sacrament! How do I give thanks to Jesus after the Holy Mass!"*⁷² He loved very much to expose the Blessed Sacrament, especially the first Thursday of the month in order that the faithful could make their visits of adoration to the Blessed Sacrament.⁷³

He had so much devotion in his heart to the Blessed Sacrament that **he was ready to sacrifice his life for this truth**, as we can deduct from his own

⁷⁰ - I witness: Fr. Petrus Ceelen, Proc. ad 8 (Proc. fol. tr. 6-7)

⁷¹ - Adriana, Doc. p. 83

⁷² - Proc. A, V, 1-2

⁷³ - With respect to this, and as a unique anecdote, I want to offer here an event to which Mrs. Maria das Dolores Damasceno, journalist and native of Romaria, refers in her book, *"Do diamante ao Milagre da fé, Romaria-Agua Suja"*, 1997, page 161. Speaking of Fr. Eustaquio who lived there for ten years as pastor, she recounts the following episode, which was known by the people of Romaria. It had been told by Dona Abigail, wife of José da Motte Leite, and a fervent devotee of Our Lady of Abadia and of the Blessed Sacrament. She was known as a kind and patient woman, still remembered for her wise counsel and for her dedication to and love for children. She was faithful churchgoer. She recounted, "Every first Thursday of the month, at 3:00 in the afternoon, he (Father Eustaquio) exposed the Blessed Sacrament for the faithful. Few people participated or attended adoration. Fr. Eustaquio in the sermon of the following Sunday said, 'The faithful are not paying attention to the Blessed Sacrament exposed, but the animals will come to adore him.' The following first Thursday, at 3:00 in the afternoon, he exposed the Blessed Sacrament for adoration. Some faithful were praying. An hour later, the trot of an animal aroused peoples' attention. A horse that was passing by in the plaza, came inside the church, stopping in the middle of the aisle in front of the Blessed Sacrament. For more than fifteen minutes the animal remained motionless, giving time for a few of the faithful to call people to see what was happening. There were many who saw it. Finally the horse quietly left and returned to the plaza...Everyone who heard Fr. Eustaquio's sermon that Sunday, understood what happened!"

comfort; let us also love Jesus with our cross. Jesus, Mary and Joseph. I wish very much to remember the lady. O my Jesus, I love you. I love you because of my cross, because of my sufferings. Oh Jesus be for me the man from Cyrene to help me carry the cross.”⁶⁶

His love of Christ was frequently manifested in the devotion to the **Sacred Heart of Jesus** as it can be seen in these expressions: "Sacred Heart of Jesus let your kingdom come to us. Sacred Heart of Jesus be merciful on us and on our countries and on our families, but above all on our souls.”⁶⁷ "Oh my Jesus, let your heart be for me a sanctuary, a hiding place, against the storms of the world. I do not desire anything but You. With you I want to live and die.”⁶⁸

And that ardent love of God, that endless trust in the Lord and that peace, which reigned in his soul brought about a great desire to sing the divine mercies: "Oh how could I sing the God's mercies for me during my life? Ah, If I had one thousand lives, I could easily give them to sing his goodness, his mercy... You raise me up from the ground, You brought me out of the dirt, You set me free from sin, You conquered me from sadness - Oh mercy of God! My heart was heavy with sins and You, oh Jesus, have forgiven me, you embraced me, made me happy. Put me at your side and gave me to drink from the chalice of your happiness. Blessed be God, who was so good with me. Oh Jesus, let my heart glorify you for ever, let my eyes look always for you, let my hands be raised towards you, and let my feet move always towards you, let my body and my soul hide in you. Oh Jesus, sweet friend of my heart, my salvation, guardian of my eternity, the sun of heaven, glory of the Earth, book of goodness, music from heaven, rest of my soul, comfort in all miseries, delight of all eternity.”⁶⁹

5. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament in the Eucharist.

The love of God and concretely the love of Christ, it was best manifested in the devotion to the Eucharistic Blessed Sacrament. Fr. Eustaquio, when he was still young, distinguished himself in this devotion, spending hour after hour kneeling down before the Blessed Sacrament: ... "What above all called the attention of others in the Servant of God was his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. His constant behavior at the chapel, also his devout genuflections, his long kneeling without leaning on his elbows

⁶⁶ .- Ibidem, 73

⁶⁷ .- Proc. C, VI, 21

⁶⁸ .- Proc. D, 3a, 6

⁶⁹ .- Document # 3

mind.”¹⁷ Fr. Gil van Boogaart narrates a little incident with reference to his difficulty in the studies, which shows in whom he trusted and where he laid his confidence: "during the three days prior to the exams he dedicated himself fully, but in the face of the difficulty he experienced, he was about to give up; **closing the books he went out to pray.**"¹⁸

"He was considered by the professors and the brethren of the Major Seminary as a good brother. His piety was extraordinary. His most liked devotions, as it was told to me, were the Holy Eucharist and the Rosary.”¹⁹ "He was pleasant, a good and lively companion. His emotional stability was unchanging, you could not notice ups and downs.”²⁰ "As a young man Berto was serene and calm, and later on when he was a student, he was very serious. When I met him already a priest I admired in him the zeal for the souls.”²¹

"Brother Eustaquio was always very faithful to his devotions and he always spread among us the devotion to Mary. He put a statue of Mary in the garden at Ginneken, and he often in the afternoons brought us there, to sing to the Virgin, or to pray two or three Hail Marys. This was accepted from him.”²²

He consciously prepares himself for the priesthood. "He aspired for his ordination without fear.”²³ "He approached the ordination with an ardent desire, serenely and without hesitation. When the day of our brother's ordination finally arrived, that day was for him and for us unforgettable... this can be seen in the letters which before and after the ordination we received. He prayed and he was counting on our prayers.”²⁴

A month before his ordination he wrote to his sister Faustina: "I feel very happy and I also see you happy to know that you have obtained the grace for which you so ardently prayed. And the happiness of our parents must also be great! I ask from you, my dear religious sisters, to be during my priestly life, my Moses on the mountain. So doing you give your lives and your work for the happy success of my priestly ministry. Remember, dear sisters, that this will be a useful work for you, for me and for all. All of you will be apostles together, apostles of prayer and of love."

¹⁷ .- I witness: Fr. Petrus Ceelen, Proc. before the court Buscad., ad 8

¹⁸ .- I witness: Fr. Gil v/d Boogaart, Proc. Rio de Janeiro, ad 8

¹⁹ .- XIV witness: Fr. Gerardus Thiessen, Proc. Ord. B. Hor., ad 8

²⁰ .- I witness: Fr. Gil v/d Boogaart, ad 8 (Proc. fol. tr. 27)

²¹ .- VI witness: Sister Faustina, Proc. Before the court Buscad., ad 5

²² .- II witness: Fr. Cyrillus Grondhuis, Proc. before the court Buscad. ad 8

²³ .- Ibidem

²⁴ .- Sister Faustina, Doc. 11

On August 10, 1919, in the chapel of the Theological Scholasticate, The Servant of God, together with other seven classmates, was ordained a priest. *"His first solemn mass was celebrated in his baptismal parish of Beck and Donk, on August 15. All his joyful and happy family were present, as well as the entire town... He dedicated a long time to celebrate the mass, especially at the beginning, and the people use to say so, but they added: "He is not boring." He stayed home for a few days helping and assisting the parish priest, he went often to visit the sick and he stay for one week in the convent of our sister."*²⁵

Thus came to an end the preparation for an apostolic life, during the years of formation his life was characterized by his generosity, his great spirit of prayer, his penance, and his great love for the Sacred Hearts, the sick and suffering neighbors. He was able to understand and live intensely the values of piety, humility and charity.

Once the Servant of God, Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout, ended this period of his life, i. e. his religious and priestly formation, we must understand that during his time the Congregations of the Sacred Hearts emphasized the devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and a profound devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, as is evident by the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which in the big communities, as the formation houses, was a continuous exercise. The devotion to St. Joseph, Patron of the Congregation, was also common in our Communities.

We can say of the Servant of God, Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout, that during his years of Christian and religious-priestly formation he was able to personify the ideals of his Congregation, eminently and recognized in him: his superiors, professors, classmates and religious and family brethren:

- Love of God, directed towards Christ humanity in the devotion of the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Sacrament, before which he stayed for hours with a profound devotion.

- Love of God which he manifested in the exact performance of his spiritual, religious, and priestly duties.

- Love of God and neighbor which he manifested by his generous dedication to the neighbor, specially the weak, the sick and the suffering in his visits to the hospitals.

²⁵ .- V witness: Adriano van Lieshout, ad 9 (Proc. fol. tr. 35)

This trust was not only placed in God 'in the abstract', but also without doubt in Jesus, as shown by the following expressions: *"In you, oh Jesus, I trust; in you, oh Jesus, I hope; to you, oh Jesus; I commend my self, and my family, all my affairs, and especially our eternal salvation."*⁶⁰

3. His peace of mind, because of his trust in God

This trust in God, this surrender into God's hands filled his soul with an extraordinary peace. Peace which he wished and recommended to everyone:

«If you want peace in your heart:

- 1) 1) do not complain about anything, not even about the weather.
- 2) 2) do not judge the things you don't know.
- 3) 3) do not compare your condition with that of others
- 4) 4) do not wish that this or that be different from what it is
- 5) 5) do not think about tomorrow things, neither on the things which sometimes are painful; think always: God will provide."⁶¹

4. Love and strong trust in Christ.

The love of God which burns the soul of Fr. Eustaquio certainly was not a speculative or abstract love, it was a true and concrete love towards Christ and to his Holy Cross. His words are in this case a true and good mystical doctrine. He writes: *"Jesus in You I trust, in You I hope, in You I believe. At the foot of the Holy Cross, remembering the cries of our divine Savior let us meditate on our own crosses and ask for the strength to be able to carry our own cross with joy and satisfaction."*⁶² *"Oh my Jesus, I love you with your cross, with your suffering with your great love."*⁶³

In practice his love for Christ was reduced to the love of his brethren, of his neighbor. From this came **his desire to carry on his shoulders the suffering of his neighbor in the name of Jesus**: *"I would like to be the spokesman of all who suffer."*⁶⁴ *"My friend, Mister J. Severino de Aguilar may God bless you and help you to be the spokesman of all those who suffer."*⁶⁵ *Let us unite ourselves in the Cross of our Lord whose Cross was very heavy, very hard and was for us. Jesus loved me with his cross. Oh, what a*

⁶⁰ .- Proc. C, VI, 59

⁶¹ .- Proc. D. 3a, 21

⁶² .- Proc. VI, 37

⁶³ .- Ibidem 54

⁶⁴ .- Proc. C, VI, 70

⁶⁵ .- Ibidem, 71

but fervent... To love and to make others love God... God always, God is all...
„⁵³

b) Love of neighbor. We can also say that his soul was full of love for his neighbor. Many are the texts which can be cited as proof *"Although God has not allowed that I will stay with you, nevertheless, who knows if he will permit it from now on. I would not like that any should suffer any more, that there should not be any crying - oh, I would like to run through the war fields without distinction of nationalities to help those who suffer, those who die. Oh my God, let your will always be done (...) The poor that suffer, they suffer without consolation - without relieve because many don't have religion, faith, true faith. Oh good Jesus, have mercy on our people."*⁵⁴ And in another place he says: *"Oh Jesus, grant me the grace to do everything for everyone and to win all for Christ."*⁵⁵

2. A strong and unshakable trust in God.

The Servant of God, Eustaquio van Lieshout, as a man who lived from the faith, based all his life in God's omnipotence and in Christ's charity. Very often there are paragraph in his writings where he shows this confidence in God. His sister, Sister Faustina, says in her declaration, that this trust in God *"was characteristic in him";* when he was still young. Thus when one day his father told him: *"Lad, you can not tackle your studies"*, his answer was: *"I will do whatever I can and we must have more trust in our Lord. Things will go better."* *"This trust in the Lord was characteristic of him. When still young he was in intimate relation with our Lord."*⁵⁶ And things will turn for the best, as he said.

The reason for this trust is given by Fr. Eustaquio himself when he says: *"Our trust could be vast as vast as God's goodness."*⁵⁷ His trust in God was such that habitually expressions like this came out of his mouth: *"Let nothing frighten you, let nothing affect you, let nothing disturb you. Everything passes, happiness and pain, sorrow and joy. Only God stays. Only God remains for ever."*⁵⁸ Expressions originated from Saint Teresa of Avila, but he appropriated them. And another one: *"Trust, trust without limits in God and we will not be disappointed in our faith."*⁵⁹

⁵³ .- Proc. E, 19; cfr. D, 3c, 19

⁵⁴ .- Proc. C, VI, 7 b

⁵⁵ .- Proc. E, 7 a

⁵⁶ .- Sister Faustina, ad 6, Proc. fol. tr. 53

⁵⁷ .- Proc. C, VI, 75

⁵⁸ .- Proc. E, 16; cf. E, 3a, 7; C, VI, 55, etc

⁵⁹ .- Letter on September 1, 1941, Series C, V, n. 5

- Love of God and neighbor with his great zeal for the good of the souls.

- Love of Mary, the Mother of God, in his personal devotion to her Immaculate Heart, devotion which he propagated and encouraged I the hearts and souls of others.

The Servant of God knew how to live and embody all these in his own life during his formation and later on he will live it extensively and intensively during his apostolic and ministerial life: with a great fidelity to his priestly and religious duties; with great submission and exemplar obedience to all religious and ecclesiastical authorities, and with great simplicity and humility, as we will see in the testimonies, documents, and writings of the Servant of God.

3. Apostolic Ministry

In Holland: 1919-1925

1. - During the first months of his priesthood he was named assistant to the Master of Novices, but a short time after he was named chaplain of the immigrants of Valonia, Belgium, who were working in a glass factory in Maasluis, Holland. It was an environment of extreme poverty, working people, where vice was rampant everywhere. He, with great courage, was able to win the esteem and respect of the workers, harvesting, with the grace of God, abundant and extraordinary fruits among them, so many that the King of Belgium, Leopold III, granted him a medal of merit. According to Fr. Gil van Boogaart, his Provincial in Brazil, *"it happened precisely here that he decided not to drink any alcoholic drink, a decision that he kept during his entire life."*²⁶

2. - In 1922, when the factory was closed, he was transferred to the parish of Roelofarendveen as assistant to the parish priest. There he dedicates his time in a true apostolate among the Christian families of the parish. He visited the families, spreading the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus by enthroning His Image in their homes and consecrating them to the service of God and Holy Mother the Church. The poor and the sick were the one who specially were able to win the understanding heart of the Servant of God, for this reason he was sought by the sick and the suffering people. He successfully organized pilgrimages and meetings of the Catholic Social Action. He was very well liked and loved by the town people leaving a very

²⁶ .- I witness: Fr. Gil v/d Boogaart, Proc. Rio Janeiro, ad 9, n

deep spiritual influence among them. On account of his ardent zeal the parish priest gave him the tittle of "*raptor animarum*" (Souls' thief).

*"In his fervent sermons he showed his ardent love for Mary, and he encouraged those who listen to him to honor and to invoke her help and intercession."*²⁷

But he felt the calling of the missions and one day he was sent to Brazil, where he arrived in 1925, "*obtaining in this way his missionary dream.*"²⁸ "*Father Provincial proposed to his counsel to send also Fr. Eustaquio, because due to his priestly zeal and the results he had obtained he was offering a good guarantee could work there. I was present at this deliberation, as member of the Provincial Council. We were in agreement that we had chosen wisely.*"²⁹

In Brazil: 1925 -1935

He arrived in Brazil together with two other companions, Fr. Mattias and Fr. Gil van Boogaart, who was going to be his Provincial there, they were entrusted with:

1. The Parish of Agua Suja, as the first mission in Brazil.

This is a small town, in the interior of the Minas Gerais State. A very poor region, which lacked most of the materials resources. The people lived almost exclusively on the luck of the "garimpos", gold prospectors. They were suspicious and reticent people, who did not trust any foreigners especially the priests coming from foreign countries. The town was especially distrustful due to the negative experience they had with the previous priest. The Servant of God very quickly understood that the first thing to be done was to win the confidence of the people in order to be able to carry on with his ministry. His method will be: to visit the poor, and those suffering, to console the souls encouraging them, to be present in the family problems. Like the Good Shepherd, he was to know his sheep and that the sheep know him, he was ready to give himself fully in order to change that reality. He did not spare any effort or sacrifice to educate and evangelize his poor flock. He was clear and demanding regarding the Christian duties, and the faithfulness to the Church precepts. He organized at all levels the participation of the

²⁷ . - Bert van der Meer, Doc. 1 (page 72)

²⁸ . - I witness: Petrus Ceelen, Proc. before the court Buscad. ad 10 (Pro. fol. tr.7)

²⁹ . - Ibidem

publications, deals with almost all Christian virtues and of our love and devotion to God, especially to the person of Christ, the Virgin and the Saints. But the 'spirit' which gives life to his entire apostolic work can originate only from a soul truly immersed in the divine life. For instance we read: "*The means which our Lord, in a special way, inspires me to conquer our enemy are the ministerial priesthood, the preaching and the visits to the sick and to all who suffer. And I humbly ask all my clerical, religious and civil superiors to help me in my holy mission so that the grace of God will come not only to so many who suffer and who are lost.*"⁴⁷

In another place with a truly apostolic inspiration he says, "*Life is in the hands of God. How sad to see many who think that life is in their hands. Oh my God, send your light upon all hearts, those of the poor as well as those of the rich, those who live in the city as well as those who struggle in the countryside. Oh my God, how sad to still see so many who embrace false religions that offer no consolation or relief to poor souls. Oh my God, I weep when I see the shipwreck of so many souls, when I see so many, whose tears never cease, but who in spite of that, continue seeking the confusion of a sect that already perished long ago.*"⁴⁸

But the best source of the spirituality of Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout can truly be found in the treasure which consist of his private letters.

1. Charity, the love of God and of neighbor.

The love of God and neighbor, first commandment of the Decalogue, and "New" according to Christ's words⁴⁹, are the true fountain of all sanctity. "*God is charity*"⁵⁰ and "*above all have charity, which is the fountain of perfection.*"⁵¹ Charity then must be present in the union with God, charity's and love's fruit. "*Caritas est quae unit nos Deo.*"⁵² (*Charity is the one which unites us with God*).

a) Charity and love of God. Fr. Eustaquio was full of charity and of love of God as it is revealed in almost all his letters. Here as examples, we transcribe some paragraphs which he has written: "*Everything to thank you, oh my God! All my actions for you! Let us have only one thought: One only*

⁴⁷ . - Proc. C. II, 19, c

⁴⁸ . - Proc. D, 3 d

⁴⁹ . - Jn 13:34

⁵⁰ . - I Jn 4: 7

⁵¹ . - Col 3:14

⁵² . - St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, II-II, 184, 1

clergy, fearing something serious could come from Rome, advise me to go into seclusion till further orders would come from above ..."⁴⁶

It must also be emphasized the spirit, the zeal and the apostolic activity, developed in all his priestly work: in the visits to the sick, in the confessional, where he used to sit for long hours, even at night, in his innumerable sermons and written publications; sermons and publications written in Portuguese, completely different from his native language, Dutch. And even though he did not speak Portuguese fluently he had a way with people, even the refined and learned liked to listen to him.

The doctrine which he preached was solid and orthodox; it was not profound but it is the expression of the common faith of the faithful at that time. His sermons were more moralizing than dogmatic. In his preaching there is an abundance of texts from the New and Old Testaments about the normal and actual duties of the Catholics at that time. Quotations from the Church Fathers, especially the most known, are also numerous. He does not feel to be an interpreter of the faith but rather a shepherd of souls, encouraging his flock about the life and Christian asceticism with sacred texts, proclaiming with the authority of God's minister.

The main devotions, the Servant of God practiced, were the devotion to the Sacred Heart, to the Immaculate Conception, and the Blessed Sacrament, characteristic of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts and also practiced during his time and in his Dutch region. To all of these the devotion to Saint Joseph, special Patron of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts and the universal Church, must be added; this devotion was lived and developed by him in Brazil among the simple and humble people.

Therefore it must be said that, in general, the Servant of God was an authentic religious priest, with a simple but genuine faith, with an apostolic ardent and tireless zeal; and with extraordinary and exquisite charity; a man of prayer and ascetic life, practiced before he preached it to others.

His personal spirituality

When one wants to talk about the personal life of the Servant of God, or of his spiritual experiences in the ways of the Lord, I believe it must be pointed out, in the first place, that in his life and in his private writings, Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout appears as a soul highly united to God, especially by prayer, by his theological virtues, his charity and by his total submission to God's will. His doctrine, revealed in his preaching and in his written

⁴⁶ .- Proc. C, II, 1

people: Catechesis, youth, pilgrimages, fiestas, associations, etc. He put to use all means and resources to attract the attention of the people and to establish structure for the evangelization. The people responded gradually, they saw in the Servant of God a gifted, helpful man, always conscious of the spiritual and material needs of the people. There were oppositions from those who did not understand or did not want to understand in order not to change their comfortable situation.

In his ministry he had a especial affection for the poor. He took pity on the suffering, he identify himself with the suffering of the people. His compassion was not limited to a feeling, but rather to share the suffering and to transform it. He is convinced of God's power to change. He is the one who heals men through men. He looked for the signs of the times and tried to embody the Gospel and his personal charisma -his identification with the charisma of the founder- in this concrete situation.

The reaction of the people, when he told them that he had to leave because the superiors were sending him to another mission, was remarkable. The people used all the means, public manifestations, blocking the streets, to avoid the Father's departure. This behavior is the reaction to the presence of the man who brings about life in the celebrations, in the different welcoming services, in the help to people, in the giving of freedom to those who suffer, and comfort to the sick. They do not want to loose this God's tool, who is performing among them true "miracles", in the acceptance of the word of God, of the Church spirit, in community participation, which little by little has transformed the life of the town.

2. Parish priest at Poá: 1936 - 1941

"You are the light for the world. A city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the people's sight, so that, seeing your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven." (Mt. 5, 13-16)

He begins his new mission with the same dedication and humility, in a cold religious environment, where Protestants are many and there is a continuous increase of spiritualism.

The ways of the Lord are unknown and his spirit blows when and where He wants Nobody could imagine that this light which manifested itself in the lands of Minas Gerais, would increase its brightness and be a focus of penetration and great irradiation. Because of his dedication to the people, especially his blessings and visits to the sick, his courage in the defense of the

evangelical principles and the Church tradition, his radical opposition to spiritualism, he is the instrument of conversions, of growth in the participation of the Church's life, and the flow of pilgrims from everywhere to receive one of his blessings. This man totally given to his mission comes accepted by the people as a "saint." The people thirsts for God, the living God, who would partake of their problems, would liberate them from oppressions, would cure them from sicknesses. As we read in the Gospel: *"That evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils. The whole town came crowding round the door, and he cured many who were sick with diseases of one kind or another; he also drove out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who he was."*³⁰ Because he felt sorry for their sufferings: *"A man suffering from a virulent skin disease came to him and pleaded on his knees saying: 'If you are willing, you can cleanse me'. Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him and said to him, 'I am willing. Be cleansed'."*³¹ Something similar happened with Fr. Eustaquio. And the number of people who came to the Servant of God was so great, that caused social problems. It was impossible to welcome so many people without causing disturbances, for the civil authorities as well as to the running of the parish.

And again: *"When he returned to Capernaum, sometime later word went round that he was in the house; and so many people collected that there was no room left, even in front of the door."*³² *He was preaching the word to them. Jesus went again to the shore of the lake; and all the people came to him, and he taught them."*³³ Jesus goes proclaiming and doing the will of the Father, at the same time he manifests that he is the Messiah, it is an act of faith in a prophet, in a Messiah which makes the people follow him, and trust in his power of liberator. Others follow him because they are curious or to create disturbances against him, to put him to the test, to attack some aspects of his doctrine. But Jesus follows faithfully the will of the Father, to proclaim the Good News.

And about Fr. Eustaquio we read:

"The extraordinary movement, activity and reputation of saintliness of the Servant of God, in Poá and São Paulo was well known in the area and was the object of some exaggerated articles in the newspapers. It also caused arguments between the secular and the regular clergy, and attracted the

³⁰ .- I witness: Petrus Ceelen, Proc. before the court Buscad. ad 10 (Proc. fol. tr.7)

³¹ .- Mk 1:40-42

³² .- Mk 2:1-2

³³ .- Mk 2:13

Eustaquio van Lieshout has given all his life to God, and on account of God he has given it to the souls and to his superiors, especially with apostolic works and with a generous and fatherly service for the sick and the suffering.

On account of his charity towards the sick and those who suffer:

Encouraging their souls, healing their bodies, laying his hands and blessing them with love and with the blessing of the Roma Ritual, going to such a point that the people started to say he was making miraculous healing. Let us hear what he himself wrote to the Archbishop of the Diocese of São Paulo: *"...today however, I see myself pushed in every direction to help the human race on account of my priesthood, who by his blessings is seen as an instrument of the Divine Providence to alleviate the sufferings of the neighbor. But as always, material things are only a way to the spiritual, the bodily healing which we see are only the means to obtain a second healing which is much more important: the healing of the soul and not only the souls of those souls who were healed, but also those of hundreds and hundreds who were witnesses of the healing and whose souls were suffering from a spiritual indifference or from a very deep lukewarmness towards God's and the soul's things. **This is the holy vocation that I feel in myself: to relieve the corporal sufferings in order to arouse the faith of our times.** For this great work I saw myself particularly called. I never was so conscious as today of how much, with God's grace, I can obtain for those who suffer... The good God visibly showed me the way to follow. If, today I see myself pushed, If one may say that, **to go to all those who suffer and labor.** Even to the point of healing some sickness or defect which science thinks is incurable, God gave it to me. But in this I do not glorify myself. This is not done by natural means, very many persons understood it, that as a proof of what they felt they sought in their souls an immediate conversion and the spiritual indifference which for many years they had turned to an ardent faith and confidence in God without limit. What can I say about God's gift which through his mercy was granted to me, poor sinner."*⁴⁵

After this testimony, humbly presented by Fr. Eustaquio himself, let us see what he himself writes to one of his religious brothers: *"During along time, but especially during last year, a lot of people have sought me to be healed in body and soul. And with God's grace many souls have been converted and also many sick people, including blind and paralytic people, with a simple blessing have been cured. And although we have tried our best to hide any extraordinary event, the news papers have taken advantage to make a lot of noise regarding my person; so much so that my superiors, including the*

⁴⁵ .- Proc. C, III, 1a - 1b

SPIRITUALITY OF THE SERVANT OF GOD

After this historical preamble about the Servant of God, let us go directly into his spirituality, to his intimate life with God, to his relation with the Lord, and to the intimate experiences of this union with God in his priestly and religious ministry, in his apostolic life.

His spirituality in general:

After a careful inquiry of the works and writings of the Servant of God,³⁹ and also the testimonies collected, Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout appears as **a very good religious and diligent priest. "Religious"**, according to the sound theological-ascetic doctrine, is he who *"Deo summe dilecto totaliter mancipatur, ita ut ipse ad Dei servitium Eiusque honorem novo et peculiari titulo referatur."*⁴⁰ And St. Thomas says religious are those who dedicate themselves to the service of God (*"qui se totaliter mancipant divino servitio"*⁴¹) From the documents collected for the Process about the heroism of the virtues one can easily see that the Servant of God had consecrated his life to the service of God, as it will be proven later. At this moment, let it be allowed to bring out an argument, which as one of the consultants, who has reviewed his writings, it could be considered equal to those called *"elevationes mysticae in Deum"* (mystical elevations in God) of holy souls: *"Everything to please you, my God! All my actions for you! Let us have one only thought: one only, but fervent... To love and make others love God.. God always God is everything."*⁴²

The Servant of God was not only a very good religious, he was **also an extraordinarily diligent priest**. "Priest", *"taken from among human beings and is appointed to act on their behalf in relationships with God to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins."*⁴³ And St. Thomas commenting on these words of Saint Paul says: *"proprium officium sacerdotis est esse mediatorem inter Deum et populum: in quantum scilicet divina populo tradit, unde 'sacerdos dicitur quasi 'sacra dans'."*⁴⁴ (The proper work of the priest is to be the mediator between God and the people: in as much as he brings God's things to the people, from this, priest means he who gives sacred things). Fr.

³⁹ .- We are guided by someone who worked as official writings' censor.

⁴⁰ .- Constit. "Lumen Gentium", 44

⁴¹ .- Summa Theologica, II-II, 186, 1

⁴² .- Proc. E. 19.- Const. III p. 3

⁴³ .- Heb 5:1

⁴⁴ .- Summa Theologiae, III, 22, 1

*interest of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities. Many priests visited the Servant of God who showed to them honor and preference. Other priests including bishops sent sick persons from their lands, with letters of recommendation to the Servant of God."*³⁴

Both the civil and ecclesiastical authorities made investigations, but they could not find any cause for censorship in the person or the methods of the Servant of God. The very same Archbishop of São Paulo, José Gaspar de Afonseca e Silva, declared that: *"The Servant of God Fr. Eustaquio was not doing any censurable thing, on the contrary everything that he did was in accordance with the laws of Holy Mother the Church, s giving liturgical blessings according to the Roman Ritual and apply the Sacraments of the Church. Preaching against the spiritualism heresies, the Servant of God converted sinners, and sometimes, he was able to return to the Church apostates and indifferent people."*³⁵

In spite of this, the ecclesiastical and civil authorities, in agreement, decided to move Fr. Eustaquio away from Poá. His religious Superior considering him "tired" suggested him to take a vacation. The Servant of God leaves Poá in order to avoid the disturbances that happened in Agua Suja.

He travels through several cities where he is recognized and besieged by the people who solicit his blessing and cures for their sick.

Some friends invite him and he goes to Río de Janeiro. The cardinal Archbishop Sebastião Lema grants him full powers to exercise the ministry, but with one warning: *"The moment the news papers start giving news, the moment the people started to go down from the mountains, in this case anything could happen, and, then, Fr. Eustaquio should leave immediately."*³⁶ The Servant of God exercises his ministry trying to avoid any publicity of his presence in Rio, but putting the gifts given to him by the Lord to the disposal of the people. But altogether the people start to move, and due to the mass media, which gave emphasis to the events, it happened, that a short time afterwards, The Servant of God had to leave the city of Río de Janeiro quickly.

3. At the "Fazenda San José":

Fr. Gil, his Provincial, finds a way to take him away from the masses, hiding him at a plantation of a friend, in the interior of São Paulo

³⁴ .- Fr. Elfrink Alfredo, "Artigos e Posições", Art. 45, p. 30

³⁵ .- Ibidem Art. 46, p. 31

³⁶ .- "Artigos e Posições", Art. 50

State. This time of solitude, when he is not able to exercise the ministry, his apostolic and missionary ideal, to which God had called him, disturbs him and makes him suffer. He was there around five months. He writes to his Provincial in Holland, asking him for a transfer to another country, like Argentine, Chile, Portugal, where the Congregation was present and where there was no danger of being recognized by his reputation. That solitude made him suffer and he could not exercise the mission to which he was convinced he was called and chosen. He writes in this way to his superior on 7/25/41: *"He heard and felt God's voice within his soul, speaking and ordering him to fight spiritualism with prayer, preaching, the ministerial priesthood and with the practice of Christian charity, especially towards the poor, the sick and the suffering in this world."*³⁷ In this distressing situation he shows a complete confidence in his superiors orders. He shows a great sense of obedience, convinced that God talks through the superiors, and that they with their discerning gift, can see what is best for the Church mission. His charismatic gift helps him see and read the signs of the times the danger of the spread of spiritualism, which he sees as a current danger, which could become worse in the future. He denounces this problem and wants to fight it proclaiming without fear the Kingdom of God and its demands.

The bishop of Campinas, Mons. Francisco Barreto, invites him to work in his diocese, but the people recognize him again attributing to him cures perform by his blessings. Again the great crowds start to come, and again he must go into the solitude of the "Fazenda San José." Before he retires he writes to the authorities, who were unhappy on account of his return: *"I did not ask to go to Campinas. They called me with my superior's permission. Are you not satisfied? ... If you refer to the circumstances, the uproar and the publicity, I agree with you, because anything like that must be avoided at any cost... But if you refer to the facts, ... these are in God's hands and the authorities do not need to be happy or unhappy with them."*³⁸

During this time (five months: 5/13/41 - 10/13/41) the Servant of God, a man with a deep spirituality, dedicates himself to the interior life, to increase his union with God, to seek for that which is God's will for him, and to fulfill his will, which is manifested through the superiors, for the good of the Church and of the people. Invited by the owner of the Plantation he looks after some sick persons in the plantation and celebrates Mass for the plantation workers.

4. In the Minas Gerais State:

On October 1941 the superiors transfer him to *Patrocínio*, where they allow him again to begin his ministry in that city, and afterwards in a close by city, *Ibiá*, but in both cities with some cautions, and conditions, like to exercise his ministry only in church and at some fixed hours, and to give blessings only in the confessional, which he observes with extraordinary obedience.

5. Parish of Santo Domingos: Belo Horizonte.

Finally, the Archbishop of Belo Horizonte, Mons. Antonio dos Santos Cabral, offers to the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts and expressly for Fr. Eustaquio, a parish at the outskirts of Belo Horizonte. On April 2, 1942 he takes possession of the parish, named "San Domingos." There he begins again his work with the help of Fr. Hermenegildo. Little by little and with the permission of the Archbishop who follows the work of Fr. Eustaquio closely and with admiration, his services spread to other parishes of the city. The Servant of God is a tool of conversions, of spiritual enrichment, and of the strengthening of the faith: His evangelical work, profound spirituality, his complete confidence in the presence of God, who gives him encouragement and new strengths, and inspires him and grant him special gifts, making his ministry always more effective. Extraordinary events, like healing, foment this reputation as a saint. He begins the construction of a large church, dedicated to the Sacred Hearts. He is always ready to help the people and the sick. He does not care for his health. And on a certain day he gets the spotted fever, which makes him suffer very much and carried him to a premature death, on August 30, 1943. It was hardly a year and a half after his arrival.

When public media gave the news of his death, a large crowd of people filled to bursting the surroundings of the nursing home where he died. His funeral was accompanied by a large number of people, who came from every corner of the region to give the last farewell to him who for them had been the presence of God in the midst of the people. That pilgrimage to his grave continues even today because the people keeps in their mind the virtues of the Servant of God and his reputation of sanctity.

³⁷.- Ibidem, Art. 53

³⁸.- Ibidem, Art. 54.