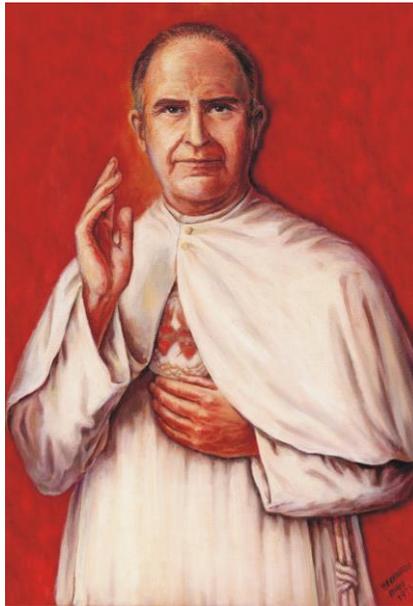


**BLESSED
EUSTAQUIO VAN LIESHOUT SS.CC.**

by

Father Angel Lucas Martínez ss.cc.



**Postulatio Generalis
Via Rivarone 85
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A Note on the Revision

The work of a Postulator is to ask the Congregation for the Cause of the Saints to accept the cause of a man or woman esteemed in life and after death to have lived in a heroic way a virtuous life. As a Postulator in the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts (1968-97), Father Angel Lucas Martínez ss.cc. worked assiduously on the cause of Father Eustaquio. He named this work “Notes” on the spirituality of Father Eustaquio. If on the one hand, he intended by using the word “Notes” not to anticipate the judgment of the Holy See on the heroic character of Father Eustaquio’s virtues, on the other hand, Father Angel could not hide his obvious enthusiasm for the spirituality of the Servant of God whom he surely found to be a great model for his own life. I am blessed to have lived in community with Father Angel and I recall his enthusiastic embrace of life in the most ordinary circumstances.

All are called by baptism to holiness, some are called to canonizable holiness, meaning that the story of their lives gives a norm, in Latin, a canon, by which to live. The final presentation to the Congregation for the Cause of the saint is called *Positio* meaning dossier. This dossier treats the virtues of faith, hope and charity, fortitude, prudence, temperance and justice lived out within the social and historical context of a person’s life. How did they affect the world in which they lived, how do they affect our world today? Father Angel’s work on “Notes” preceded therefore the Beatification and so, as often as he writes of the Servant of God, the reader can supply “Blessed.” This we did often in revising his text. I made some additions to Father Angel’s footnotes which reference the documentation presented to the Holy See. The additions indicate that many of the quotations used by Fr. Angel were taken up into the final document. Not all that is presented about a servant of God shows up in the final document presented to the Holy Father by the Congress of Cardinals and Bishops who study these causes. But the tracing to their respective sources the many citations which do show up in the final document makes the study of the causes a spiritual pilgrimage. Is holiness of life so noticeable that its history can be reconstructed?

The revision has tried to hold on to both the voice of Angel Lucas and the voice of Eustaquio van Lieshout, no easy chore. Thus for instance, in most cases, the word “soul” is retained although the word “person” is sometimes used. Understandably, Fr. Angel wants us to hear the voice of Fr. Eustaquio

without embellishment or commentary. An abundance of further quotations makes up for commentary on and analysis of any one citation. Eustaquio's reputation is not built on one-time statements but on his habits, the repetition over a long time of actions and attitudes which reveal conviction. Eustaquio was habitual to the amusement of the local community where he lived. That was his secret: Instead of seeking immediate relief from life's anguishes, in a neo gnosticism, Blessed Eustaquio lead people to confront the indifference to which such anguish can lead by seeing the extraordinary in the ordinary. Call it a mysticism if you will. Insight into life that came from beyond, acting as a mirror to reveal us as we are. "The Saints, however, are as it were the official appointed ways of the Church's discovery of herself which have become publically historical and which have been consciously adopted by the church." (*Karl Rahner "Church of the Saints" Theological Investigation 3*). Jesus of Nazareth lived 35 life times ago. Like Damien, who was Eustaquio's inspiration, we come to know Jesus over the course of our lifetime, in fact many intertwining life times. In the many concerns of Blessed Eustaquio, moving from indifference, through the right discernment of God's ways and a sacramental life leading to a practical mysticism of the Christian life, the reader will find an anticipation of Pope Francis's exhortation *Gaudete et Exultate*. (2018)

David P. Reid ss.cc
General Postulator

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

When we passed by Belo Horizonte you asked me about the Servant of God, Father Eustaquio, who was very well known in that city, and for whose cause you must now work.

Perhaps this reflection which I gratefully dedicate to you, could serve as a starting point. It is my opinion, that Fr. Eustaquio is not well known among us. Whatever has been said or written about him are superficial biographies and articles that narrate external events of his life. These events attract attention but do not give a close up, much less, an exact idea or sketch of his life. These articles deform his true image because they are not well focused. In looking and emphasizing superficial and appealing events, the authors do not tell who Father Eustaquio was in reality. This is so perhaps because they do not have other sources. They could not try or failed to reach the bottom of his heart and to find what inspired him and gave life to his soul: his 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 love for the sick and the needy, his complete and humble obedience, his apostolic zeal, etc., etc.

In these actions we discover what he was like personally and find the answers to why God used him and continues to pour out his graces in all his ministries, bring about conversions, peace, admiration, and why a multitude of people seek him, why so many hearts pray and implore his intercession. They do this because they see in him a living instrument and a tangible sign of the presence of God in the midst of the poor, the sick, the needy those hungering and thirsty for God.

Angel Lucas ss.cc. Postulator General (Rome)

Blessed Eustaquio Van Lieshout's Call to Holiness

BIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

Childhood

Education: Beginnings

Religious

Ministry: a) In Holland

- Maasluis

- Roelofarendsveen

b) In Brazil

- Parish priest in Aqua Suja (Romaria)

- Parish priest in Poá

- 'Fazenda San José' (Escondido)

- Patrocinio and Ibiá

- Parish priest in Belo Horizonte

Servant's of God death

SPIRITUALITY

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

The Spirituality of Blessed Eustaquio van Lieshout, ss.cc.

This reflection synthesizes the spirituality—his call to holiness— of the Servant of God. Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout lived fifty-two years, a time of vital spiritual union with God, through his love for God and neighbor. His praxis of the main virtues and his special devotion to the Sacred Hearts, the Blessed Sacrament and St. Joseph come into our reflection. These practices were offered in a spirit of prayer and lived out in a true and tireless apostolic ministry. His life put into service humility and loyal openness to God, whose will was made know to him through a humble and loyal obedience to ecclesiastical authority and the superiors of his religious Congregation..

Biographical Review

Family life

Religious life: years of religious formation

Apostolic and missionary life

The **first period** includes his **childhood years** (he was born on 11/3/1890 in Aarla-Rixtel, 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 advanced studies in philosophy at Grave and Tilburg, and theology at Bavel, his priestly ordination: 8/10/19 at Bavel.

The **third and final period** apostolic ministry, missionary life

- 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 8/30/43)

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).
- 3/02/26** He is named **pastor of Romaria and two other 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)
- 5/13/41-10/13/41**
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**.
- 4/07/42** 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.**

With only a glimmer of the life history of Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout, we nevertheless recognize his holiness in his dedication to the God's kingdom; living evangelically the precepts of love of God and neighbor with simplicity, generosity and limited self regard.

The essence of the spiritual life of this Servant of God comes through: his complete surrender to God in a life of prayer, in the celebration of his priestly and religious duties, in his great zeal for the good of souls; his total and wholehearted surrender to the will of God in the care he gave to his neighbors, especially 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 a 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)

For the sources of his spirituality, we look in his family environment, during his childhood, then his growth during years of Christian education, and finally a blossoming during his religious formation.

Family

The family was pious, and faithfully followed the teachings of the Catholic Church. They lived in the South of Holland, in Brabante, where his hard working father, persevering and religious, operated the family farm. A special constancy emanated from his mother: she was dedicated to her children, full of kindness, and empathised with the suffering of others. *"Work and prayer were the two things done at home ... We were eleven children, eight girls and three 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 family environment, uniting parents and children with trusting and loving bonds and fomenting 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 Divine Providence; supernatural love towards God and his commandments; unflinching obedience to the precepts of the Holy Church; Christian love towards his neighbor practicing acts of mercy. This model piety and religiosity, however, are not only confined to the Van Lieshout family, the entire Catholic town of Brabante is known for these qualities.

Thus, living in this milieu, it is not strange that the Servant of God in his youth showed an inclination to pray, and liked to worship at church, as his sister Faustina states: *"He went very willingly to church, and in the attic he used to celebrate mass. He was eight or nine years old when he told a seminarian, 'I will also be a priest.' He was not very much interested in the work on the farm because his mind was in the priesthood."*

² .- Witness III: Proc. Rog. before the Curia Buscad., Adriana van Lieshout, ad 5. Positio 186-187

³ .- Ibidem

⁴ .- Document 10, Sister Faustina van Lieshout. Positio p.27

His teacher, Hamelinck, used to say: "*This boy has the will of iron*", and his parents sent him to study in Gemert "*in case he could not handle the studies.*"⁵

The assistant pastor of the parish, Rev. Janssen, 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 for a year and a half he walked to and from every school day.

*"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."*⁶

It is interesting to note that all the witnesses and classmates, when talking about the possible vocation of the Servant of God, referred only to his reading of the life of Fr. Damien.

At the age of eleven he made his first Holy Communion in Beck, in 1901. His father had thought that his son would help on the farm, which he would one day inherit. But eventually he came to see that his son was not inclined to that life, confiding to 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.*"⁷

SS.CC. Seminary:

*"In September 1905, he begins his studies at the minor seminary of the SS. Hearts Fathers, in Grave. He was fifteen years old. He had to study hard in order to pass tests. He certainly was not the best of the class...but his efforts, together with his exemplar piety and his mindful prayer, were revealing."*⁸ "*The Superior used to say: He is not doing well in his studies, but his zeal compensates for everything.*"⁹ He suffered more from the fear that he would not become a priest rather than humiliation over his academic shortcomings.

⁵ .- Sister Faustina v. Lieshout: VI Witness, Proc. Rog. before the Curia (court) Buscad. ad 5. Positio p.207

⁶ .- V witness: Wilhelmina, Proc. Rog. before the Curia Buscad., ad 6 Positio p.202

⁷ .- VI witness: Sister Faustina, ad 6 (Pro. fol. tr. 53). Positio p.207

⁸ .- II witness, Fr. Cyrillus Grondhuis, Proc. Rog. before the court Buscad. ad 6, a

⁹ .- Sister Faustina, Doc. n. 10, page 86 Positio p. 21 (Expositio Bio.)

His desire for priesthood survived amidst these challenges. In spite of his awareness of the difficulties that could have put an end to his son's hopes. Huub's father shared with his son: *"My son, you cannot handle the studies."* Huub answers: *'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."*¹⁰

At that time the devotion to the Blessed Virgin was much practiced and he participated in this observance by building in the family garden a small grotto in honor of the Blessed Virgin of Lourdes. There he prayed and had his sisters pray and sing as well.

Once he entered the novitiate his seriousness became well known. His dedication to the work of his Congregation in the service of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary was much admired. The master of novices and his co-novices respected him as a model and generous novice.

Due to the German invasion, the novitiate was interrupted and the novices were sent back to their families. Brother Eustaquio decided to live in a cloistered environment, rather than at home. Thus he 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 embrace his spiritual life, and help the elderly and the sick, who were hospitalized at the institute near the convent. He had done this 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 himself 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."*¹¹

*"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. The novitiate was not something completely new and different for him. He faithfully fulfilled his temporal and spiritual duties."*¹²

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.

¹⁰ - VI witness: Sister Faustina, ad 6, (Pro. fol. tr. 53) Positio p. 207

¹¹ - Sister Faustina van Lieshout, Doc. n. 10, page 86 (tr.) Positio p.21

¹² - II witness: Fr. Cyrillus Grondhuis, Proc. Rog. before the court Buscad. ad 7 b-c Positio (S. Test). p. 177

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."*¹³

*"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 perspective he was a model for all of us. The thing that I admired most in him was his profound piety. It was also noticeable externally... We knew that his behavior was a natural expression of his interior state 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."*¹⁴

*"Regarding his character I could say that he was truly a good companion, a cheerful companion, and he knew how to take a joke. He was lively, and sometimes he could react slyly. He was very much liked by his brethren... Without any doubt he was a good young man, with a healthy piety, and without any bigotry..."*¹⁵

On February 1916 he went to Ginneken, where he studied theology until 1919. *"At the beginning Brother Eustaquio was a lagging student. He lacked retention and did not quickly grasp metaphysical questions. But little by little he acquired a theological intuition. His approach to practical pastoral questions was more than adequate... His professors had no problem in admitting him for ordination on account of his academic record. The Servant of God was a pious and zealous religious... What everybody admired in him was his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. His manner in chapel was praiseworthy: He genuflected piously, he knelt for long periods 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 mind."*¹⁶ Fr. Gil van Boogaart narrates an incident with reference to his difficulty in studies, which shows in whom he trusted and from where he got his confidence: *"during the three days prior to the exams he dedicated himself fully, but in the face of the*

¹³ - VI witness: Sister Faustina, Proc. Rog. before the court Buscad., ad 7 f-g

¹⁴ - Fr. Edgardo De Coster, Doc. n. 81, p. 638, (tr. p. 82)

¹⁵ - II witness: Fr. Cyrillus Grondhuis, ad 5 & 6. (Pro.fol.tr.18)

¹⁶ - I witness: Fr. Petrus Ceelen, Proc. before the court Buscad., ad 8

difficulty he experienced, he was about to give up; closing the books he went off to pray.”¹⁷

*“He was considered a good brother by the professors and the brethren of the Major Seminary. His piety was extraordinary. His most preferred devotions, as told to me, were the Holy Eucharist and the Rosary.”*¹⁸ *“He was pleasant, a good and lively companion. His emotional stability was unchanging, with no noticeable ups and downs.”*¹⁹ *“As a young man Berto was serene and calm, and later when he was a student, he was very serious. When I met him –already a priest– I admired in him his zeal for souls.”*²⁰

*“Brother Eustaquio was always very faithful to his devotions and he always instilled among us the devotion to Mary. He put a statue of Mary in the garden at Ginneken, and, often, in the afternoons he brought us there to sing to the Virgin, or to pray two or three Hail Marys. We accepted this from him.”*²¹

He consciously prepares himself for the priesthood. *“He aspired for his ordination without fear.”*²² *“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 we received before and after the ordination. He prayed and he was counting on our prayers.”*²³

A month before his ordination he wrote to his sister Faustina: *“I feel very happy and I also sense you are happy to know that you have obtain the grace for which you so ardently prayed. And the happiness of our parents must also be great! I ask you, my dear religious sisters, to be during my priestly life, my Moses on the mountain. In 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.”*

On August 10, 1919, in the chapel of the Theological Scholasticate, The Servant of God, together with seven other classmates, was ordained a priest. *“His first solemn mass was celebrated in his baptismal parish of Beck*

¹⁷ .- I witness: Fr. Gil v/d Boogaart, Proc. Rio de Janeiro, ad 8 Positio 235

¹⁸ .- XIV witness: Fr. Gerardus Thiessen, Proc. Ord. B. Hor., ad 8

¹⁹ .- I witness: Fr. Gil v/d Boogaart, ad 8 (Proc. fol. tr. 27) Positio 235

²⁰ .- VI witness: Sister Faustina, Proc. Before the court Buscad., ad 5

²¹ .- II witness: Fr. Cyrillus Grondhuis, Proc. before the court Buscad. ad 8 Positio p.179

²² .- Ibidem

²³ .- Sister Faustina, Doc. 11

and Donk, on August 15. All his joyful and happy family were present, as well as the entire town... He lavished time on the celebration of the mass, especially at the beginning. People noticed and remarked: "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 stayed for one week in the convent of our sister." ²⁴

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

During his formation, the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts emphasized the devotion to the hearts of Jesus and Mary, and a profound devotion to the Blessed Sacrament made evident by their Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which in big communities, such as formation houses, was observed continuously, night and day. The devotion to St. Joseph, Patron of the Congregation, was also common in our communities. We can say that he came to personify the ideals and practices of his Congregation, and that this was recognized by his superiors, professors, classmates and religious and family brethren. In him they could much admire:

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

- 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 all especially the weak and the suffering and, by his visits to hospitals, those who were sick.

- Love of God and neighbor with his great zeal for the wellbeing of all God's people.

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

The Servant of God knew how to live and embody all these ideals in his own life during his formation. Later, he will animate these values

²⁴ .- V witness: Adriano van Lieshout, ad 9 (Proc. fol. tr. 35)

extensively and intensively during his apostolic and ministerial life: with a great fidelity to his priestly and religious duties; with great submission and exemplary obedience toward 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.

Apostolic Ministry

Holland: 1919-1925

1.—During the first months of his priesthood he was named assistant to the Master of Novices. Shortly after, he was assigned as chaplain to the immigrants of Valonia, Belgium, who worked in a glass factory in Maasluis, Holland, and lived in extreme poverty and rampant vice. Manifesting great courage, he was able to win the respect of the workers, harvesting, with the grace of God, abundant and extraordinary relationships 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 alcohol, a decision that he kept during his entire life."*²⁵

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 true mission to the Christian families of the parish. During home visits he inspired the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus by enthroning the image of Jesus in their homes and consecrating them to the service of God and Holy Mother the Church. The poor and the sick especially were won over by the understanding nature of the Servant of God, and for this reason he was sought out by them. He organized pilgrimages and meetings of members of Catholic Social Action groups. He was loved by the town's people leaving a deep spiritual influence among them. On account of his ardent zeal the parish priest gave him the title of *"raptor animarum"* (Souls' thief).

²⁵ .- Witness #1: Fr. Gil v/d Boogaart, Proc. Rio Janeiro, ad 9, n Positio 237

"In his fervent sermons he showed his ardent love for Mary, and he encouraged those who listened to him to honor and to invoke her help and intercession." ²⁶

But he felt the calling of the missions and he was sent to Brazil, where he arrived in 1925, *"obtaining in this way his missionary dream."* ²⁷ *"Father Provincial proposed to his council to send also Fr. Eustaquio, because of the impact of his priestly zeal, and with the effectiveness of his work [in Belgium], it was a sufficient guarantee that he could work there. I was present at this deliberation, as member of the Provincial Council. We were in agreement that we had chosen wisely."* ²⁸

Brazil: 1925 -1935

He arrived in Brazil together with two other companions, Fr. Mattias and Fr. Gil van Boogaart, who was assigned as 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 State of Minas Gerais, a poor region which lacked most material resources. The people lived just about exclusively on the fortunes of the "garimpos", gold prospectors. They were suspicious and reticent people who did not trust any foreigners especially priests from other countries. The town was particularly distrustful due to the negative experience they had had with the previous priests. Blessed Eustaquio 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 would be: to visit the poor, and those suffering, to console and encourage them, to be a presence to families facing problems.

Father Eustaquio was ready to give himself fully in order to change that reality of mistrust. Like the Good Shepherd, he would know his sheep and the sheep would know him. He spared no effort or sacrifice to educate and evangelize his poor flock. He was clear and demanding regarding the Christian duties, and faithfulness to Church precepts. He organized at all

²⁶ .- Bert van der Meer, Doc. 1 (page 72) Positio p.36

²⁷ .- Witness #1: Petrus Ceelen, Proc. before the court Buscad. ad 10 (Pro. fol. tr.7) Positio p.167

²⁸ .- I witness: Petrus Ceelen, Proc. before the court Buscad. ad 10 (Proc. fol. tr.7) Mk 1:40-42

levels: catechesis, youth, pilgrimages, fiestas, associations, etc. He used all means and resources to establish structures for evangelization and to get people's attention and their participation. Gradually the people responded. They saw in Father Eustaquio a gifted, helpful man, always conscious of the spiritual and material needs of the people. There was opposition coming from those who did not understand or did not want to change their comfortable situation.

In his ministry he had a special affection for the poor. He had compassion for those suffering, as he identified himself with people who were in pain. Far from being a mere feeling, his compassion stretched out to share in the suffering he came upon and in that sharing to transform it. He was convinced of the transforming power of God. God, it is who heals people through people.. He observed the *signs of the times* and sought to embody the Gospel and his personal charisma—that is his identification with the charisma of the founders— in the given concrete situation.

Father Eustaquio's superiors decided to send him to another mission. The reaction of the people was remarkable. The people used all means (public manifestations, blocking the streets,etc) to prevent Father's departure. This was the reaction to the presence of the man who brought life to the celebrations, making people feel welcome, helping people, in freeing people of their sufferings and bringing comfort to the sick. The people did not want to lose God's tool, who was performing among them true "miracles:" in the acceptance of the word of God, the spirit of the Church, community participation. Little by little, all was transforming the life of the community.

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 basket; 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)

Bless Eustaquio begins his new mission with the same dedication and humility, in a cold religious environment, where Protestants are many and spiritualism is increasing.

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

evangelical values and the Church tradition, his radical opposition to spiritualism, Father Eustaquio is the instrument of conversions and of growth in the participation of the Church's life. And there is also an increase in the flow of pilgrims from everywhere to receive one of his blessings. This man totally given to his mission comes to be accepted by the people as a "saint." The people thirst for God, the living God, who would share 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."* ²⁹ Because he felt 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'."* ³⁰ Something similar happened with Fr. Eustaquio. The number of people who came to the Servant of God was so great that it was impossible to accommodate all of them. Disturbances ensued for the civil authorities as well as for 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."* ³¹ *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."* ³² Jesus goes proclaiming and doing the will of the Father, at the same time showing 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 liberating power. Others follow him because they are curious or to oppose him; or to trick him with tests; or to attack parts 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 interest of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities. Many priests visited the Servant of God who showed them honor and preference. Other priests

²⁹ .Mk 1:32-34

³⁰ Mk 1:40-41

³¹ Mk 2:1-2

³² Mk 2:13

including bishops sent sick persons with letters of recommendation to the Servant of God. " ³³

Both the civil and ecclesiastical authorities made investigations, but they found no cause for censorship of 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, giving liturgical blessings according to the Roman Ritual and the Sacraments of the Church. Preaching against the spiritualism heresies, the Servant of God converted sinners, and sometimes, he was able to bring back to the Church apostates and indifferent people."* ³⁴

In spite of this, the ecclesiastical and civil authorities, agree to move Fr. Eustaquio from Poá. His religious superior suggests that he is "tired" and needs a vacation. The Servant of God leaves Poá to avoid a replication of the events in Agua Suja.

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

Friends invite him to R o de Janeiro. The cardinal Archbishop Sebastião Lema grants him full powers to exercise ministry, but with one warning: *"The moment news is published, the moment people started migrating from the mountains, in case this happens then Fr. Eustaquio should leave immediately."* ³⁵ The Servant of God exercises his ministry trying to avoid any publicity of his presence in Rio, but, in the act of putting his gifts at the disposal of the people, they start their exodus to him. In no time this movement is publicized by mass media and the Servant of God had to leave R o de Janeiro quickly.

3. *Fazenda San Jos *

Fr. Gil, his Provincial, finds a way to take him away from the crowds. He finds him refuge at a friend's plantation, *Fazenda San Jos * in the interior of S o Paulo State. These months of solitude are painful since he is unable to minister, fulfill his apostolic and missionary ideal to which God had called him. There for approximately five months he writes to his Provincial in Holland, asking him to be transferred to another country, like Argentine,

³³ Fr. Elfrink Alfredo, "Artigos e Posi es", Art. 45, p.

³⁴ - Ibidem Art. 46, p. 31

³⁵ - "Artigos e Posi es", Art. 50

Chile, or Portugal, where the Congregation was present and where there was no danger that he would be recognized. He writes 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.*"³⁶ In this distressing situation he shows a complete confidence in his superiors orders. He is entirely obedient, convinced that God speaks through his superiors, and that with their gift of discernment they can see what is best for the Church mission. His charismatic gift helps him to see and read *the signs of the times* in the danger of the spread of spiritualism, which he sees as a current danger, which could worsen 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 again the people recognize him attributing to him cures performed by his blessings. Again great crowds assemble, and again he must return to the solitude of the "Fazenda San José." Before he retires he writes to the authorities, who were unhappy: "*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.*"³⁷

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:

During October, 1941, he is transferred to **Patrocínio**, by his religious superiors, where they allow him again to begin his ministry in that city, and afterwards in nearby **Ibiá**. In both cities they place restrictions under which he can minister. These conditions limit his apostolic activities in that he can only minister in church and during regular scheduled hours. Blessings can be

³⁶.- Ibidem, Art. 53

³⁷.- Ibidem, Art. 54.

given in the confessional only. He observes with extraordinary obedience all the requirements.

5. Parish of Santo Domingos: Belo Horizonte.

Finally, the Archbishop of Belo Horizonte, Mons. Antonio dos Santos Cabral, offers a parish named "San Domingos" located on the outskirts of Belo Horizonte to the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts. He asked expressly expressly for Fr. Eustaquio who with Fr. Hermenegildo, he begins his pastoral duties on April 2, 1942. Little by little and with the permission of the Archbishop, who follows Fr. Eustaquio's work closely and with admiration, his services spread to other parishes of the city. The Servant of God is an instrument of conversions, spiritual enrichment, and strengthening of the faith. God's presence gave him encouragement and new strengths, and inspired him making his ministry increasingly powerful. Extraordinary occurrences, like healing, promote his 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 is unmindful of his health and is stricken with a tick borne disease commonly known as "spotted fever." He suffers gravely and dies a premature death, August 30, 1943, less than a year and a half after his arrival.

When news media announced his death, a large crowd of people flooded 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 say their last farewells. He had been the presence of God in their midst. The pilgrimage to his grave continues even today because people revere the virtues of the Servant of God and his reputation of sanctity.

SPIRITUALITY OF THE SERVANT OF GOD

Let us turn now to Fr. Eustaquio's spirituality, to his intimate life with God, and to the intimate experiences of this union with God in his apostolic life: his priestly and religious ministry.

His spirituality in general:

After a careful inquiry of the works and writings of the Servant of God,³⁸ and testimonies, Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout appears to be **a very good religious and diligent priest**. The "**religious**", according to the sound theological-ascetic doctrine, is he who *by such a bond, is totally dedicated to God, who is loved beyond all things. In this way, that person is bound to the honor and service of God under a new and special title*³⁹ St. Thomas says religious are those who dedicate themselves to the service of God⁴⁰) From the documents collected for the Church's process of discerning one's heroism in the exercise of the virtues, as it will be shown later, one can easily see that Blessed Eustaquio had consecrated his life to the service of God. For now let it be argued –as one of the consultants who has reviewed his writings did– that his consecration could be considered equal to what is called "*mystical elevations in God (elevationes mysticae in Deum)*" 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.*"⁴¹

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.*"⁴² St. Thomas commenting on these words of Saint Paul says: "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,

³⁸ .- We are guided by someone who worked as official writings' censor.

³⁹ .- Constit. "Lumen Gentium", 44. "*Deo summe dilecto totaliter mancipatur, ita ut ipse ad Dei servitium Eiusque honorem novo et peculiari titulo referatur.*"

⁴⁰ .- Summa Theologica, II-II, 186, 1 ("*qui se totaliter mancipant divino servitio*")

⁴¹ .- Proc. E. 19.- Const. III p. 3 Positio super scriptis p.4

⁴² .- Heb 5:1

priest means he who gives sacred things.”⁴³ Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout gave his whole life to God, and for God’s sake in apostolic works, he gave his life to the people in a generous and fatherly service especially to the sick and the suffering and he gave his life to his superiors,.

On account of his charity towards the sick and those who suffer: Fr. Eustaquio encouraged people, lifting their spirits, healing their bodies, laying his hands and blessing them with love and with the blessing of the Roman Ritual, going to such lengths that people remarked that he was healing miraculously. 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 humanity through my priesthood, who by this blessing 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 and the concerns+ of the spirit.. **This is the holy vocation that I feel in myself: to relieve the corporal sufferings in order to arouse the faith in 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 was turned into 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, a poor sinner.”*⁴⁴

After this testimony, humbly presented by Fr. Eustaquio let us see what he writes to one of his religious brothers: *“For a long 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*

⁴³ .- Summa Theologiae, III, 22, 1^o *“proprium officium sacerdotis est esse mediatorem inter Deum et populum: in quatum scilicet divina populo tradit, unde ‘sacerdos’ dicitur quasi ‘sacra dans.’”*

⁴⁴ .- Proc. C, III, 1a - 1b Letter to Don Jose Gasper June 24, 1941 Positio pp.84-87

extraordinary event, the newspapers have made a lot of noise regarding me; so much so that my superiors, including the clergy, fearing something serious could come from Rome, advise me to go into seclusion till further orders would come from above ... " 45

Major emphasis must be placed on the spirit, and zeal that 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. Originally a native speaker of Dutch, he wrote some sermons and publications in Portuguese. 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 understanding of the faithful at that time. His sermons about the day to day duties of Catholics at that time, were more moralistic than dogmatic with an abundance of texts from the New and Old Testaments. Quotations from well known Church Fathers are also numerous. He does think of himself as an interpreter of the faith but rather a shepherd of souls, encouraging his flock with sacred texts, proclaimed with the authority of God's minister. about the life and Christian asceticism

The Servant of God's principle devotions were to the Sacred Heart, to the Immaculate Conception, and the Blessed Sacrament, characteristic of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts and practiced during his time and in his Dutch region. 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.

The Servant of God was an authentic vowed religious priest with a simple but genuine faith; an ardent and tireless apostolic zeal; and a man of extraordinary and exquisite charity. He was a man of prayer and ascetic life, which he practiced before he preached it to others.

His personal spirituality

To speak in particular about the personal life of the Servant of God, or of his spiritual experiences in the ways of the Lord, I believe it is of primary importance to show him in his public life and in his private writings.

⁴⁵ .- Proc. C, II, 1

Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout emerges as a man united with God, through prayer, by the theological virtues: faith, hope and charity and by his total surrender to God's will.

His doctrine, articulated in his preaching and in his written publications, treats almost all the Christian virtues, our love and devotion to God, especially to the person of Christ, the Virgin and the Saints. The 'spirit' which gives life to his entire apostolic work cannot come from other than 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 both to the many who suffer and the many who are lost."*⁴⁶

Elsewhere 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."*⁴⁷

But the best source of the spirituality of Fr. Eustaquio van Lieshout can truly be found in the treasure which consists 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 words⁴⁸, are the true fountain of all sanctity. *"God is charity"*⁴⁹ and *"above all have charity, which is the fountain of perfection."*⁵⁰ Charity then must be present in the union with God, charity's

⁴⁶.- Proc. C. II, 19, c

⁴⁷.- Proc. D, 3 d

⁴⁸.- Jn 13:34

⁴⁹.- I Jn 4: 7

⁵⁰.- Col 3:14

and love's fruit. *Charity is the one which unites us with God "Caritas est quae unit nos Deo."*⁵¹.

a) Charity and love of God Fr. Eustaquio was full of charity and love of God as it is revealed in almost all his letters. Here as examples, we transcribe some passages: *"Everything to thank you, oh my God! All my actions for you! Let us have only one thought: One only but fervent... To love and to make others love God... God always, God is all..."*⁵²

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 battlefields 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 relief because many don't have religion, faith, true faith. Oh good Jesus, have mercy on our people."*⁵³ And in another place he says: *"Oh Jesus, grant me the grace to do everything for everyone and to win all for Christ."*⁵⁴

2. A strong and unshakable trust in God.

As a man who lived by faith, Blessed Eustaquio based his whole life on God's omnipotence and in Christ's charity. Very often there are passages 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 of him"*; when he was still young. Thus when one day his father told him: *"Lad, you can not handle 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."*⁵⁵ 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."*⁵⁶ His trust in God was such that he voiced expressions such as: *"Let nothing frighten you, let nothing affect you, let nothing disturb you. Everything passes, happiness and*

⁵¹.- St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, II-II, 184, 1

⁵².- Proc. E, 19; cfr. D, 3c, 19

⁵³.- Proc. C, VI, 7 b

⁵⁴.- Proc. E, 7 a

⁵⁵.- Sister Faustina, ad 6, Proc. fol. tr. 53

⁵⁶.- Proc. C, VI, 75

*pain, sorrow and joy. Only God stays. Only God remains for ever.”*⁵⁷ Expressions originated from Saint Teresa of Avila, but he appropriated them. And another: *“Trust, trust without limits in God and we will not be disappointed in our faith.”*⁵⁸

This trust was not only placed in God ‘in the abstract’ but without a doubt also 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 myself, and my family, all my affairs, and especially our eternal salvation.”*⁵⁹

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) *do not complain about anything, not even about the weather.*
- 2) *do not judge the things you don't know.*
- 3) *do not compare your condition with that of others*
- 4) *do not wish that this or that be different from what it is*
- 5) *do not think about tomorrow, or on things which sometimes are painful; think always: God will provide.”*⁶⁰

4. Love and strong trust in Christ.

The love of God which burns in the soul of Fr. Eustaquio certainly was not a speculative or abstract love, it was a true and concrete love towards Christ and his Holy Cross. His words are true and of 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*

⁵⁷ .- Proc. E, 16; cf. E, 3a, 7; C, VI, 55, etc

⁵⁸ .- Letter on September 1, 1941, Series C, V, n. 5

⁵⁹ .- Proc. C, VI, 59

⁶⁰ .- Proc. D. 3a, 21

with joy and satisfaction.”⁶¹ *“Oh my Jesus, I love you with your cross, with your suffering with your great love.”*⁶²

In practice his love for Christ translated into 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.”*⁶³ *“My friend, Mister J. Severino de Aguilar may God bless you and help you to be the spokesman of all those who suffer.”*⁶⁴ *Let us unite ourselves to 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 comfort; let us also love Jesus with our cross. Jesus, Mary and Joseph. I wish very much to remember Our 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.”*⁶⁵

His love of Christ was frequently expressed 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 to us and to our countries and to our families, but above all be merciful to our souls.”*⁶⁶ *“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.”*⁶⁷

And that ardent love of God, that endless peace and trust in the Lord which reigned in his soul brought about a great desire to sing the divine mercies: *“Oh how could I sing of God’s mercies for me during my life? Ah, if I had a 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. Placed me at your side and gave me to drink from the chalice of your happiness. Blessed be God, who was so good to 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*

⁶¹ .- Proc. VI, 37

⁶² .- Ibidem 54

⁶³ .- Proc. C, VI, 70

⁶⁴ .- Ibidem, 71

⁶⁵ .- Ibidem, 73

⁶⁶ .- Proc. C, VI, 21

⁶⁷ .- Proc. D, 3a, 6

*my heart, my salvation, guardian of my eternity, the sun of heaven, glory of the Earth, book of goodness, music from heaven, rest for my soul, comfort in all miseries, delight of all eternity.”*⁶⁸

5. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament in the Eucharist.

The love of God and concretely the love of Christ, was best manifested in his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. When he was still young, Fr. Eustaquio distinguished himself in this devotion, spending hour after hour kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament: ... *“What above all called the attention of others to the Servant of God was his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. His constant activity at the chapel, also his devout genuflections, his respectful posture with no leaning on his elbows when he kneeled served as a model.*⁶⁹ *“He had a great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and when he was young in Gemert and during his vacations, he was attending Mass everyday and he always received Holy Communion.”*⁷⁰ Frequently, his homilies and conferences dealt about the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, so much so, that it can be said that for Fr. Eustaquio, the Eucharist was at the center of his heart, as these next passages show: *“Oh, he saw so many empty tabernacles. He saw churches deserted during the week. He saw how in the early morning a priest was coming to celebrate Mass, how few people were 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 a church, when I visit the Blessed Sacrament! How do I give thanks to Jesus after the Holy Mass!”*⁷¹ He loved very much the exposition of 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.⁷²

⁶⁸ - Document # 3

⁶⁹ - I witness: Fr. Petrus Ceelen, Proc. ad 8 (Proc. fol. tr. 6-7)

⁷⁰ - Adriana, Doc. p. 83

⁷¹ - Proc. A, V, 1-2

⁷² - With respect to this, and as a unique anecdote, I want to offer here an event to which Mrs. Maria das Dolores Damasceno, a 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

He had so much devotion to the Blessed Sacrament that **he was ready to sacrifice his life for this truth**, as we can take from his own 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."*⁷³

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 his family environment: *"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 his younger sisters to Haandel, where there is another Chapel of the Virgin, on the way there he was inviting us all to sing..."*⁷⁴ He has many writings about the Virgin, **especially advocating the Holy Rosary** like: *"May God permit that the Catholic people of our time rejoice on Earth like a heavenly echo of her*

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 a 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 the previous Sunday, understood what happened!"

⁷³ .- Proc. E, 6

⁷⁴ .- Adriana, Doc. page 83

prayers, especially of her rosary praying it fervently every day in honor of that holy and good Mother, of whom we speak 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.”⁷⁵ 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.”⁷⁶

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.”⁷⁷

7. Servant's devotion to Saint Joseph

Devotion to St. Joseph has always flourished among those dedicated to the interior life. As the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary he is their Patron. Likewise, since the beginning, the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts claimed St. Joseph, Patron of the Church as its Patron. In Brazil, Blessed Eustaquio showed his devotion to St. Joseph, through his apostolic activities especially when teaching against the practice of spiritualism then prevalent there. With this in mind he founded an association, named “*Antispiritualism League*” which he placed under the patronage of St. Joseph.⁷⁸ His love is made all the more obvious in that in almost all his letters he mentions St. Joseph. 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 of His holy will.*”⁷⁹ “*St. Joseph protect me, guide me, free me from evil!*”⁸⁰ “*Saint Joseph, in you I trust. Saint Joseph, in you I hope. Saint Joseph, in you I believe.*”⁸¹

Writing to his Excellency, the Metropolitan Archbishop of São Paulo, on June 24, 1941, he is convinced of the need to turn to this saint for all the needs of the world: “*It is also suitable that among all saints we should*

⁷⁵ .- Proc. B. III, 13

⁷⁶ .- Proc. C. VI, 44

⁷⁷ .- Proc. C. VI, 84; cfr. *ibidem* 85, 86, etc.

⁷⁸ .- Proc. E. 2 a, b, c

⁷⁹ .- Proc. C, VI, 16

⁸⁰ .- Proc. *ibidem*, 27

⁸¹ .- *Ibidem* 38.- Cfr. Proc. D. 3a, 1, 30, 50, 3b, 10, 14, 17; 4b, etc.

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 even though the day of hardship has arrived, salvation is at hand to those who believe in the two persons to whom Saint Joseph points: Jesus and Mary." ⁸²

This special devotion to Saint Joseph was personal in his life and he tried to pass it on to all 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 devotions. Here is one :

"Saint Joseph, self renouncing 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, securely fled and safely returned. Saint Joseph, if there were in me things disagreeable to Jesus or his Mother, help me to take them away, since I want to be holy as you, Jesus, and Mary are holy. I would like to dwell with them under the same roof, and I do not want to keep anything which would be contrary to you. Oh, Saint Joseph, ask light for my spirit, light for my eyes, courage for my heart, a greater fear of sin. Oh, Saint Joseph, I ask 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 in suffering, 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." ⁸³

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

The Servant of God, through his ministry to Protestants, spiritualists and atheists, had opportunities to show his personal devotion to the Pope as can be seen in the "*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.*" ⁸⁴ During his life time the Church was often persecuted, for this

⁸² .- Doc. # . 2, (Proc. Ord. fol. 647)

⁸³ .- "Padre EUSTAQUIO", author José Vicente ANDRADE, ss.cc. 1990, p. 151.

⁸⁴ .- Proc. E, 2, Art. 2.

reason true Catholics 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 steel the sheep. Jesus, Mary and Joseph protect the Church; protect and enlighten the shepherds."*⁸⁵ *"Let us pray for the Pope so that God will enlighten the control of his ship in the turbulent waters of our days."*⁸⁶

When the Church was in conflict with the fascist government, Father Eustaquio made his thoughts clear in one of his sermons: *"During these painful moments of suffering which our Mother the Church is undergoing, let us Catholics remember the words with which the Pope ends his encyclical about fascism: The Holy Father greatly hopes for an immense chorus of prayers which will rise up to God from all parts of the world for his intentions because in prayer everything is seen as divinely premeditated and, although prayer will not give us material tranquillity, it would provide Christian patience, holy courage and inexpressible satisfaction to suffer for Jesus and for youth, so dear to the Supreme Pontiff, till the hour of victory for the truth and for what is good."*⁸⁷

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, adopted as his own the mission of the Church and of his Congregation. He had upmost respect for ecclesiastical and religious authorities to which he fully surrendered himself and strictly obeyed. He observed faithfully the Rule and the Constitution of the Congregation, and canonical laws of the Church.

It could be said that the success of his mission consisted in the faithful and extraordinary obedience to 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 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 was however content and ready for hard labor. As time went on,*

⁸⁵ .- Proc. C, VI, 1.

⁸⁶ .- Proc. Ibidem 10. The encyclical to which Father Eustaquio refers is *Summi Pontificatus* of Pope Pius XII October 20, 1939.

⁸⁷ .- Proc. A, IV,5

the Curia of São Paulo⁸⁸ would realize that in fact Fr. Eustaquio was a model priest, an authentic man of God full of zeal for souls, a leader of unlimited love, 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, wrote: *"The Apostolic Archbishop of Belo Horizonte confided in me, that he held a high opinion of the priestly spirit of Fr. Eustaquio, especially for his complete and humble obedience with which he complied to the decisions of the ecclesiastical authorities.”⁹⁰*

And his Provincial, **Fr. Gil van den Boogaart**, in speaking of the enforced seclusion of Fr. Eustaquio at the plantation of "San José" declares: *"It would be good to add that Fr. Eustaquio went to the plantation in obedience to his superiors, even though he was upset that he could no longer spend time in Rio; he did not state his 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 this the man, the religious obeyed; he won by overcoming himself, without any objection to the Superior. I can say that on this occasion my conviction that he was something more than a priest and religious was reinforced.”⁹¹*

The Servant of God made great sacrifices when his obedience was demanded, for example :

- **His exit from Poá** to resolve the problem of thousands of faithful who everyday came to the parish.

- **His exit from Rio de Janeiro city.**

- **His hiding at "San José"** plantation, imposed on him to end the pilgrimages and stop the crowds who sought him.

- 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.

- From the **doubts and hesitations of Superiors**, from whom the Servant of God was asking advice and guidance.

- The **incomprehension and doubts of his brethren** regarding the mission of the Servant of God and the appropriateness of his extraordinary activity.

⁸⁸⁸⁸ The Curia of Sao Paulo refers to the Bishop's Office and the point made is the high regard in which Father Eustaquio was held by the Archdiocese.

⁸⁹ .- Fr. Elfrink Alfredo, "Artigos e Posições", Art. 131 Positio pp.115-116

⁹⁰ .- Ibidem

⁹¹ .- I Witness: Fr. Gil v/d Boogaart, Proc. Rio de Janeiro, ad 12, b Positio p.249

Nevertheless under all these circumstances he followed humbly the commands, always recognizing in his superiors the will of God.

He participated with his Superiors in solving problems in ways which were in accordance with the will of God; he was helping them in prayer with his total availability. In difficult moments he facilitated and offered new possibilities to solve demanding situations. In this regard he writes to his Provincial Superior, Fr. Marie-Joseph Bisschop, residing in Holland:

"I am hiding here at 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 healings due to a blessing which I gave to one or two unfortunately sick persons, and now the people and also the clergy pressure me to obtain healings. 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 in hiding, as I do now as a provisional solution.

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

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 to respond. In the first place I thank you for all your efforts to solve this case, even if it is still far off. 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 everyone interested. 'Fundamur 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 R o de Janeiro, Fr. Thomas Keller, O.S.B. writes this testimony about the obedience of the Servant of God:

⁹² .- Letter on September 14, 1941 to Fr. Joseph (Marie Joseph) Bisschop (1899-1978) the leader of the Dutch Province of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts. This Province was responsible for the mission in Brazil; Fr. Gilbert van den Boogaart was the leader of the mission community in Brazil; technically his office was that of Pro-Provincial

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

"I met Fr. Eustaquio only three times, but from these meetings I have unforgettable impressions. Twice I met him in R o de Janeiro, during his brief visit on his way from Po a to the San Jos e Plantation, and the other in Belo Horizonte. In S o Paulo I had heard about him. Don Mamede told me in R o de Janeiro about the healing of a sister of Saint Vincent, – if I remember correctly, in S o Paulo – with so many details and containing 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 his attitude was one of simple humility, interior peace and tranquillity. The general impression he left with those with who he came in contact with 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 for himself in his apostolate of the sick. I also understood his charity and fervent desire for humanity's salvation through our conversations. This concerned desire constantly grew his spirit of faith and trust. He thought that we had to counterbalance with these means the influence of the spiritualism. He did not wonder about God making miracles with the holy water, according to the formulas of the ritual. He felt himself as instrument of God, for the salvation of humanity. 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 often that on one hand Fr. Eustaquio submitted perfectly to the rules established with respect to the sick and humbly accepted the dispositions of a much younger Father and on the other hand the results especially of his conferences organized for Easter, were really out of this world. So much so that the archbishop thought he had made a good acquisition for Belo Horizonte inviting the Father without considering the difficulties which arose in Po a and in R o de Janeiro." 94

94 .- Doc. # . 24, 16-Jul-57.Positio pp.131-133

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 must we 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

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 programed 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 women, with the children, with the intellectually challenged? How should I prepare my preaching, what will always be my conclusions? How should I talk and converse in the world: with men prudently; with the women with greater prudence still. What should I avoid in my conversations; not to speak without need of those who are not present; neither judge a neighbor; as much as possible to excuse a neighbor. How should I speak with my superiors? Simply, without affectation, without flattery, with respect.”*⁹⁸

⁹⁵ .- Galatians. 2, 19

⁹⁶ .- Galatians, 6, 14

⁹⁷ .- Proc. B, III, 32

⁹⁸ .- Proc. E, 11

Keeping in mind this discipline that he applied to his spiritual life we can understand well those expressions which came from 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 for whatever passionate motive, my soul should even for an instant part company with its creator, at once I would feel that my heart is full of the greatest misery. Ah! If we could flee the small things! Oh would that my way of seeing things were always pure, a view directed straight to God. Ah! When will come the time for me every thing of this world will be transparent! Ah! When will I cease to deceive God and the world, when will it be true, when will I be the truth, 'that there be no fraud in me' ('non dolus sit in me'), which seeks purely the glory of God. And that my body would be little indulged—as happens to a slave—since my body with all its demands represents the greatest enemy of my life. We have to fight, then! And fight without respite!"*⁹⁹

⁹⁹ .- Ibidem 12

CONCLUSION

From a close reading of the life and writings of Blessed Eustaquio van Lieshout, an extraordinary spiritual life clearly appears, which to our understanding can only come from a person 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 put into practice before preached to others. This union with God, this spirit of prayer are shown by him more clearly in these phrases, a true summary of his spiritual life, phrases which Fr. Eustaquio wrote and had continuously before his eyes in his breviary,¹⁰⁰ 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.¹⁰¹*

*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 day¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ *The Liturgy of the Hours*, the collection of psalms and readings for different hours of the day.

¹⁰¹ In your Lord I have hoped let me not be put to shame forever. (Psalm 30:1). To the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary honor and glory. Although honor and glory are given differently to Mary and Jesus, Mary's heart is called sacred when it reflects the holiness of Jesus. Alone, Mary's heart is said to be immaculate.

¹⁰² .- Proc. D, 4, 1

And, lastly, here 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
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