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The Congregation of the Oratory

John Patrick Donnelly, S.J.

INTRODUCTION AND SPIRITUALITY

THE CHURCH of the Counter Reformation is usually depicted as an institution that narrowed and regimented the teeming diversity of medieval piety and theology. The doctrinal decrees of the Council of Trent certainly did so, but during the same years there was striking vitality and experimentation in the formation of religious confraternities and congregations. Religious orders and congregations do not spring up at the *fiat* of the hierarchy; they grow from the experience of a few Christians who feel the need to give more permanent and structured form to their religious activity. The resulting congregations of men and women can be understood only in the context of that experience.

St. Filippo Neri, the founder of the Oratorians, unlike the founders of many religious orders, did not leave a significant corpus of writings as a spiritual legacy. He did not even write a rule for his followers. In the strict sense he did not found a religious order or congregation. What he left was a shining example and an apostolic thrust—an emphasis on the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist and a peculiar set of devotional practices, the oratorio. The distinctive spirituality developed by the French Oratorians in the seventeenth century will be discussed later in this essay.

ST. FILIPPO NERI

St. Filippo Neri, founder of the Oratorians, was born in Florence in 1515. During his youth he had many contacts with the Domini-

cans at San Marco, where the spirit of Savonarola remained strong. Filippo's father, an unsuccessful notary, sent him in 1533 to work with a cousin, a prosperous merchant near Naples; apprenticeship with relatives was common practice, but after several months young Neri left and trudged to Rome, uncertain about his future but certain that he was not cut out for business. At Rome a fellow Florentine, Galeotto del Caccia, gave him food and lodging, while Filippo undertook to tutor his two sons part-time. Mostly Filippo lived the life of an urban hermit, eating and sleeping sparsely and spending most of his time in prayer, visiting churches and the catacombs of San Sebastiano. During his first years Filippo walked the narrow streets in silence, usually by night, as he made the rounds of Rome's seven major pilgrimage churches, a journey of some twelve miles. In each he stopped for earnest prayer. Later in life he popularized this circuit, but the mood had changed to gaiety, song, and religious fellowship. After two years in Rome, Filippo recognized the need for more education in religious matters, so he acquired some books and attended lectures at the Sapienza, Rome's university, mostly in theology and philosophy. He was a quick student, but unlike Ignatius de Loyola at a similar stage, Neri continued to devote most of his time to prayer. He seems to have had no intention of taking a degree or becoming a priest.¹

In 1538 he discontinued his studies and sold his books. Although he continued to devote most of his time to prayer, he began making wider contacts in Roman society, especially among young men who were attracted by his warm personality. He often sent them to confession as a first step toward personal reform. He steered many into the Jesuits and the Dominicans, but he himself made no step to enter a religious order. Neri made regular visits to the squalid public hospitals, bathing and encouraging the sick. In 1548 Neri and his confessor, Persiano Rosa, gave this work institutional form by setting up the Confraternity of the Most Holy Trinity, which differed little from thousands of confraternities throughout Catholic Europe. After a short period devoted to personal religious exercises, the confraternity brothers began helping the sick and pilgrims during the Jubilee of 1550. Neri, under strong pressure from Rosa, was ordained a priest on May 23, 1551, and took up residence at the church of San Giro-

lamo della Carità, a hundred paces from the Palazzo Farnese, where he continued to live until 1583.²

It was also during the Jubilee of 1550 that Filippo and the Confraternity popularized at Rome the Devotion to the Forty Hours, which had begun two decades earlier in Milan. Gradually the Forty Hours (a public exposition of the Eucharist that commemorated Christ's forty hours in the tomb) came to play the major role it held in Catholic worship worldwide for the next four centuries. For Neri the Forty Hours was not a substitute for but an encouragement to frequent communion. Among his closest collaborators at San Girolamo was Buonsignore Cacciaguerra, who more than anyone in the sixteenth century deserves the title Apostle of Frequent Communion. A former merchant who was ordained at fifty-three, he settled in 1550 at San Girolamo, where he ministered to a circle of lay mystics; convinced that it was sinners who most needed the help of the sacraments, he began distributing communion daily to laymen and -women who crowded to San Girolamo—perhaps seventy on weekdays and 300 on Sundays.³ Linked to frequent communion was frequent confession. During the Middle Ages Catholics received communion rarely—during the Easter season and perhaps at a few major feasts. Frequent communion deeply divided the priests at San Girolamo. Both Cacciaguerra and Neri were subject to petty persecution by the traditionalists—"if you only knew how much I had to suffer in that place," Neri once exclaimed in later years.⁴ Cacciaguerra published a little book encouraging frequent communion which became a best seller.⁵ The traditionalists at San Girolamo failed in efforts to enlist the hierarchy against Cacciaguerra and Neri. Supreme vindication came in 1579 when St. Carlo Borromeo visited the new Oratorian church of Vallicella and celebrated Mass there; so many came forward to receive the Eucharist from the hands of the "new St. Ambrose" that distribution took three hours.⁶

Important as the Eucharist was for Neri's ministry, it was in the confessional that he earned the title Apostle of Rome. His assigned duties at San Girolamo were minimal and left him

alone to follow his vocation and to transform the rather embryonic rite prescribed for the sacrament of Confession by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) into an instrument of spiritual direction—one

that involved an ever closer relationship between a director and a penitent and that came to constitute one of the most important liturgical innovations of the Tridentine Church.⁷

In large measure the spirituality of the Counter Reformation grew from the interchange between director and penitent. What actually went on in the confessional between Neri and his penitents remains secret, of course; nor did he leave extensive letters of spiritual direction. But Neri served as confessor, director, and friend to many young men who later became prominent churchmen; he rarely served as director to women but many other Oratorians did. Later in life Neri saw to it that priests at the Oratorian Chiesa Nuova were available in the confessionals all morning on Sundays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and feast days.⁸

When Filippo arrived in Rome in 1533, Clement VII reigned over a Renaissance city. Reforms began with Paul III (1534–1549), not without some steps backward, but toward the end of St. Filippo's life the religious atmosphere of Rome was radically different. Visitors to Rome in the 1570s, such as the English priest Gregory Martin, the Spanish Jesuit Juan Maldonato, and Michel de Montaigne, were struck by Roman piety.⁹ Filippo Neri contributed to that transformation through both his example and his influence with high churchmen, although his relations with the popes were not always smooth. Like many others, he fell into disfavor under Paul IV and Pius V; if nothing else, his merriment and pranks must have jarred with their austere ideal of the priesthood.¹⁰ In his later years he was generally regarded as a saint. Gregory XIV and Clement VIII tried to make Neri a cardinal.¹¹ Filippo declined because he had no taste or talent for administration, and the pomp and power of a red hat could only have hindered his ministry, which rested on his transparent sincerity, high spirits, and goodness.

Many stories circulated in Rome about Filippo's clairvoyance and ability to read hearts. Today we are inclined to attribute his success in analyzing people and events to psychological insight and shrewdness where his contemporaries saw evidence that God was working in and authenticating his Church through the miracles of a living saint.¹² The recovery of Catholic self-confidence in the later sixteenth century rested in good measure on such convictions. Stories also circulated about Filippo's pranks and ec-

centricities. Famous was the old red shirt that he wore for years when at home; once he took to wearing fox fur in summer and parading about in a valuable fur cloak. He deliberately used homely and humorous language in speaking to the high and mighty, even to popes. Often he went about singing a ditty: "I am a dog chewing on a bone 'cause I can't have meat to chew on."¹³ When stuffy, high-born guests came to the Oratorian community, Neri made one of the lay brothers dance a jig for them and once ordered Cesare Baronio, the famous church historian and later cardinal, to sing the *Miserere* at a wedding. He sometimes made penitents kiss the feet of a lay brother. For a time he went about with half of his beard shaved off. Once he went up to one of the Swiss guards in a solemn procession and pulled his beard. Such behavior was rooted in Neri's cheerful, playful disposition that can be traced back to childhood, but his eccentric behavior disarmed the cloying veneration in which he was held.¹⁴ His antics reinforced one of Neri's maxims: "He who cannot bear the loss of his own honor and reputation will never advance in the spiritual life."¹⁵ Sixteenth-century gentlemen were obsessed with their sense of honor and all too ready to fight duels to defend it. High churchmen were no less prickly about their honor. Once when ill, Neri asked Cardinal Ottavio Paravicini, who was visiting him, to fetch him a basin to spit in.¹⁶ Filippo's "dishonorable" behavior was a silent but effective critique of a value system incompatible with the gospel.

THE FIRST ORATORIAN

Neri spent most of his weekday mornings hearing confessions. In the mid-afternoon friends used to gather in his room for a period of prayer and religious discussion, but as their numbers grew this was moved to a nearby refurbished loft or oratory—a chapel set up for prayer but not for Mass. Between 1554 and 1558 these services became more standardized, but remained informal. The Oratory became the name of the building, of the exercises, and of the nascent religious congregation that sponsored the exercises. These services often ran three hours, but people could come and go. Part of the time was devoted to silent prayer and vernacular hymns. The meetings began with a reading, often a devotional

work or the life of a saint or even a letter from a Jesuit missionary. Anyone in attendance, including laymen, could be asked by St. Filippo to share his reflections on the subject. Another might then comment further, often in dialogue with the speaker. A prepared discourse followed, usually presented sitting down and without the rhetorical flourishes of Renaissance sermons.¹⁷ The most important of these prepared discourses were those on church history presented by Cesare Baronio at Neri's request. On Sundays and feast days the meetings were open to women and children and often included an organized walk to various churches, singing, perhaps a sermonette by a child, and a visit to a hospital to distribute sweets. Sometimes as many as four thousand people joined the procession. Neri was the presiding spirit at these meetings but seldom seems to have made presentations.¹⁸ During Filippo's last years improvisation and dialogue gave way to prepared presentations, usually four, but these at least avoided scholastic questions and stressed church history, the lives of the saints, and moral lessons. Older veterans lamented the lost spontaneity.¹⁹

In 1563-1564 the Florentine community in Rome asked Neri to take charge of their church, S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini. He sent them some of his closest companions, while he continued at San Girolamo; these provided the nucleus from which the Congregation of the Oratory grew. By 1567 there were eighteen members, living a community life but without vows or formal superior, although they looked to Filippo for leadership and were dubbed Filippini after him. When friction arose with the Florentines, the Filippini decided they needed a church of their own.²⁰ On July 15, 1575, Gregory XIII issued the bull *Copiosus in misericordia*, which recognized the Filippini as a congregation of priests and secular clergy and authorized them to draw up constitutions and rules which were then to be submitted to the pope for approval. The bull also put them in charge of the little church of Santa Maria in Vallicella. The old church of Santa Maria, just down the Corso from San Giovanni, was razed, and a vast new church, known as the Chiesa Nuova was begun in 1575; along with the Gesù of the Jesuits on the same street, the Chiesa Nuova was a pioneer in Baroque architecture. It has served as the mother-church of the Oratorians ever since the Filippini moved their quarters there in 1577.²¹

As early as 1565 the nucleus of what was to be the future Ora-

torian Congregation had already been formed around Neri. Most of these priests had been trained in law and had originally planned careers in the papal court system and curia before Neri drew them to his ideal of priestly service and community living. The most talented of the group were Cesare Baronio, Francesco Maria Tarugi, both future cardinals, and Giovanni Francesco Bordini. In August 1565 Pius IV granted them a series of privileges orally which were confirmed in writing by Gregory XIII on March 13, 1576, and by Sixtus V on September 5, 1586. The first attempt at a rule, drawn up in 1569, enjoined all those in the community or those who were to enter it to recognize Neri as "their superior and father" to whom they owed prompt obedience.²² The growth of the final Constitutions of the Congregation of the Oratory was by slow stages. After nearly eight months of discussions twice weekly at which all the senior priests could express their views, Bordini drew up a set of Constitutions in 1583. Not all the Oratorians were satisfied with the 1583 Constitutions, but all signed a summary and accepted Neri as superior. There were later drafts of the Constitutions in 1588, 1595, and 1612; the last draft received papal approbation and served as the basic document governing the Oratorians until 1918.²³ Much of the Oratorian history has been a dialectic between the ideal of a free association of priests serving like ordinary diocesan priests but living in community and the tendency toward the more elaborate structures and rules of religious orders. Among the early Oratorians the chief spokesman for the second viewpoint was Antonio Talpa, who was able later to put some of his views into practice as superior of the large community in Naples.²⁴

Neri himself was content with a few simple directives, but others were eager for a fuller set of laws.²⁵ Neri denied having begun the Congregation and seems to have distrusted its formal development. As he told a friend late in life, "I have not made this Congregation, God has made it, which I had never thought to make a Congregation."²⁶ Still, his contribution to the nascent congregation overshadowed that of his colleagues. It was he who had gathered and formed them and who gave them their goal. He exercised an informal veto on decisions regarding the Constitutions. He successfully opposed founding a new religious order: members of the Oratory were not to take the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and while they were to live in com-

munity, they retained their patrimonies. Some rules there must be, but these were to be minimal and look to the good ordering of the community. Superiors should rule by example. As Baronio put it later: "Our saint did not wish the government to belong to a single person, but that it should be a kind of well-ordered republic. That is why he took pains to suppress prerogatives generally exercised by superiors in other Congregations."²⁷ The 1583 Constitutions forbade priests to seek benefices or engage in secular affairs. The priests were to deal with one another as equals. All were expected to make mental prayer, but individuals were free to decide its time, place, and duration. Later redactions of the Constitutions tended to add specific recommendations, but these were light indeed compared to the rules of the religious orders. Thus, the Constitutions of 1612 state that meals were to be taken in common; after a reading at table one priest was to propose for formal discussion two problems, one dealing with Scripture, the other with moral theology. Curiously, the 1583 Constitutions said little about the priestly services which in Neri's view gave purpose and life to the Congregation. In fact, these services occupied most of the day. During the morning hours from dawn to noon one Mass followed another at the Chiesa Nuova, while the services and sermons of the oratory, already described, took most of the afternoon hours.²⁸

The ambiguity of the Oratorian lifestyle and canonical status allowed the Oratorians to enjoy some advantages of both the diocesan and the regular clergy. They lived together as a community under a superior, which brought them a measure of discipline and the psychological support of companionship. By not claiming status as religious, they avoided the hostility toward religious communities found in many circles and their actions were not challenged, as were those of the Jesuits, when they did not perform all the practices traditionally associated with religious orders, such as wearing a distinctive habit and singing the Office in common.

EXPANSION OUTSIDE ROME

The friction with the Florentine community of Rome, whose church the Oratorians served before moving to the Chiesa Nuova,

severely tempted San Filippo and his companions to take up an invitation from St. Carlo Borromeo to transfer their work to Milan in 1569; but several tasks imposed on his men by the pope and Neri's reluctance to see their apostolate in Rome dismantled scotched the transfer to Milan. In 1575 four Oratorians did establish a community in Milan, but difficulties soon developed, and Neri abruptly ordered them back to Rome the next year. St. Carlo founded a congregation of Oblates, partially modeled on the Oratorians but under his own strict control; one noteworthy difference was that the Oblates were bound to recite the Office in common. The imperious cardinal-archbishop and the gentle, genial San Filippo represent the polar opposites of Counter-Reformation sanctity.²⁹ Neri was reluctant to send his men out to form new communities. Their numbers barely sufficed for the oratory services and sermons among the people of Rome, which was always Neri's priority.³⁰ With the exception of Naples, the Oratorians spread to other Italian towns because local priests were inspired by what they saw and heard about the Philipine oratory, imitated its work, and requested affiliation. The first official affiliation came in 1579 with a community at San Severino in the Marches. Two groups of priests in Milan and other groups at Lucca, Bologna, and Fermo modeled themselves on the Roman community but without official links. Many churches—those at Naples, Montepulciano, and Verona, for instance—tried to imitate the oratory service of the Chiesa Nuova.³¹

It was at Naples in 1586 that the most important Oratorian community outside Rome was set up. Only reluctantly did Neri bow to the urging of Francesco Maria Tarugi and agree to send some of his best men there, including Tarugi and Antonio Talpa. The Naples community grew quickly and had nearly thirty members by 1588; many Neapolitans were attracted to its services, and generous benefactors came forward with financial support. Tarugi was the nominal superior from 1586 until his appointment by Clement VIII as archbishop of Avignon in 1592, but much of his time was spent in preaching, so that the actual direction of the community at Naples fell to Talpa.³²

Tarugi and Talpa had a dream that the Oratorians could provide a model for reformed diocesan clergy throughout Europe; Neri entertained no such grand vision—he was concerned with and concentrated on providing priestly service to the people of

Rome—and opposed the expansion of the Congregation. At Naples the lifestyle of the Oratorians in many respects paralleled that of the religious orders, even though vows were not introduced. Partly the shift depended on minor touches: the cassocks in Naples were sewn up the middle, so that they were distinct from cassocks worn by diocesan priests; the Oratorians were addressed as *Padre*, the title given religious, and like religious they traveled outside the community with a companion. The priests were not to have personal possessions, their books, clothing, and furniture being furnished by the community.³³ Neri acquiesced reluctantly in these changes: "I accept and do not condemn your manner of life, even though it is more strict than ours here."³⁴

More important were the number and the sort of young men that sought to join the Oratorians in Naples. In Rome recruits had been sparse; most of them were mature, and many were already priests so that they could be fitted into the community without much training or formation. In the first three years at Naples the Oratorians attracted twenty-five recruits, most of them quite young, boisterous, and lacking theological or spiritual training, and the drop-out rate was high. Tarugi and Talpa waived the requirement that recruits be at least eighteen. Since the recruits easily outnumbered the veterans, their formation could not be by mere assimilation into a large community where the veterans served as role models, as had been the Roman practice. Accordingly, a separate building was set up as a novitiate to train the young men, although they shared the community chapel and refectory. All these Neapolitan developments made the Roman Oratorians uneasy.

The main divergence, however, involved finances. At Rome the recruits usually had a patrimony or source of income, which they retained, but they were expected to make a regular contribution to the community's expenses. The young men entering at Naples had no financial security, and many came from a lower stratum of society than in Rome. Fortunately, outside benefactors provided for most of the community's expenses, although the community lived a leaner lifestyle than in Rome. Tarugi and Talpa felt that to require recruits to pay a regular sum to the community expenses would discourage or prevent many good recruits from entering. Recruits without money were welcome. Tarugi justified this to the Romans by observing that it would be cruel to turn

away poor but zealous young men, and he invoked the parable of the man knocking on the door in the middle of the night for bread. Those recruits who did have money were asked to make a gift; they could keep their patrimony but were required to give an account of their income and were to spend it on charitable works. Tarugi also offered to send men to Rome after their training in Naples. In 1589 he also tried to get Filippo to come to Naples so he could see and judge the new community for himself, but the saint was old, infirm, and reluctant to leave Rome.³⁵

Tarugi served as rector at Naples from 1586 to 1592, when Clement VIII made him archbishop of Avignon. There he did sterling service. In the same year the pope made Bordini bishop of Cavaillon. Later, Tarugi was appointed archbishop of Siena, and Bordini took his place in Avignon. In 1596 Clement VIII made both Tarugi and Baronio cardinals. These appointments no doubt gave great luster to the small Congregation of the Oratory, but it also robbed it of its best men at a time when Neri's own health was deteriorating and finding a successor as provost or superior general for the Congregation was a pressing concern. In 1587 Neri's health took a sharp turn for the worse. He tried to resign, but the community at Rome rejected his offer. There was no doubt that Tarugi was the obvious choice for provost in the mind of both the Roman community and Neri himself.³⁶ But Tarugi was absorbed in his new assignment in Naples, and gradually Neri's health recovered. At seventy-eight, Neri resigned in 1593. On July 21 two cardinals brought the community the name of Clement VIII's choice for his successor: Cesare Baronio. That evening the fathers in Rome went through an election and confirmed the pope's choice.³⁷ He continued in office until he was made a cardinal in 1596.

Baronio, or Baronius (1538–1607), was not Tarugi's equal as a preacher or administrator, but he was the greatest scholar among the Italian Oratorians and the only Oratorian who made a major contribution to the Counter Reformation (the effort to refute and repress Protestantism as distinct from the Catholic Reform understood as the theological, devotional, and moral reform and renewal of the Catholic Church). As has been seen, Neri urged Baronio to preach on church history at the oratory meetings and thereby encouraged his studies that made him the greatest church historian of the era. Reformation polemics involved arguments

drawn from church history, an area largely neglected by medieval scholasticism, and both Protestants and Catholics developed conflicting ecclesiologies which they traced back to the early Church. The most important Protestant history was the *Centuries of Magdeburg* written by a group of Lutheran scholars who were encouraged by Matthias Flacius Illyricus. The work was in thirteen massive, learned volumes, one for each of the first thirteen centuries of Christianity, and was published in Magdeburg between 1559 and 1574. The work as a whole set out to prove how the Roman popes had progressively perverted apostolic Christianity.

Obviously, Catholics had to respond. Peter Canisius started the task, but it proved beyond his powers. Neri encouraged Baronio to devote his life to writing a systematic Catholic interpretation of church history. The result was the twelve large volumes of the *Annales ecclesiastici* (Rome, 1588–1607) which were based on a meticulous study of documents from the Roman libraries and archives and from materials sent to Baronio by scholars from throughout Catholic Europe. If both the *Centuries* and the *Annales* have a polemical slant, they nevertheless raised the level of historiography by building on a solid base of documents. Too much of Renaissance humanist historiography had neglected archival investigation in favor of rhetorical effects.³⁸

Filippo Neri died on May 26, 1595 at age seventy-nine. The funeral ceremonies attracted an immense crowd, including many cardinals. After Neri's death the balance of power within the Congregation passed to the Naples community, which was supported by the two Oratorian cardinals, Baronio and Tarugi. In 1597 Clement VIII, urged on by Baronio, instructed the leaders of the Roman Oratory that they must consult with the Oratorian cardinals before making important decisions; he went on to forbid them from trying to force Naples to conform to Roman practices.

Meanwhile, the Neapolitans were trying to get the Romans to adopt two of their practices: first, that members were to make a promise (not a vow) to remain with the Congregation until death, and, second, that the Congregation should administer private property during the lifetime of an Oratorian and inherit it after his death. In 1601 the Roman community wrote to Naples and demanded that the Oratorians there cease acting contrary to the Constitutions. The Neapolitans replied by sending a delegate to Rome who proposed, after consulting with Baronio, that the two

communities should split and go their own separate ways. The Romans backed away from this, claiming that they did not want to impose their views on another community or to split up the two communities that claimed Neri as their founder.³⁹

In 1602, after long discussions and pressure from Baronio, Tarugi, and Talpa, the Roman Fathers agreed that the Naples community should be independent, as were the many smaller communities following the Oratorian pattern that were now springing up in many Italian cities. Talpa, supported by the two Oratorian cardinals, now conceived the plan for Naples to develop its own rule, which would become normative for the new communities. Meanwhile, the cardinals considered ways either to bring the Roman community into line with Neapolitan practice or to set up a second, Naples-style, community in Rome. In 1606 the two cardinals presented the Neapolitan rule to the pope for approval, but the Roman fathers objected to the Curia on a technicality: in 1602 the split between the two communities had not received papal ratification and hence the Naples community was still under the Roman provost or general and had no right to present a rule on its own. The cardinal in charge of the Segnatura della Giustizia was an old friend of Neri's and agreed with the Roman community. The Neapolitans had no recourse but to accept the reunion of the Congregation under the Roman provost.

Immediately after Neri's death the Romans had returned to redrafting the Constitutions. Following the saint's known wishes, they rejected the direction of convents, seminaries, and colleges; in this they were to differ sharply with the later French Oratorians, as will be seen. It was also decided that any Oratorians who spoke even privately in favor of introducing vows into the Congregation should be excluded *ipso facto* from it, even if their viewpoint enjoyed a majority among the membership. The government of the Roman Congregation was to be in the hands of the "Father," a superior elected for three years, but major decisions were to be submitted to a General Congregation. The Constitutions, redrafted yet again in 1610-1611, were finally ratified by Paul V on February 14, 1612. The next month a commission of cardinals decreed a second and permanent separation of the Rome and Naples Oratories. Henceforward, every Oratorian community was to be self-governing, including those already founded. Communities that later took the name of the Congrega-

tion of the Oratory were independent and under the jurisdiction of the local bishop but were expected to model their constitutions on those of the Roman Oratory in accord with a brief of Gregory XV of July 8, 1622.⁴⁰

In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some 150 Oratorian communities were set up after the Roman model. Here the overview of the expansion of the Philippine Oratory concentrates on the early seventeenth century since that is the focus of this volume. The early spread was largely confined to Italy. Already discussed were the communities set up at San Severino in 1579 and Naples in 1586. Between 1591 and 1650 thirty-five new Oratorian communities were established in Italy; those in large cities were at Palermo, 1593; Brescia, 1598; Perugia, 1615; Bologna, 1616; Padua, 1624; Florence, 1632; Genoa, 1644; and Turin, 1649. Venice and Milan are conspicuous for their absence, but there were communities in Venetian and Milanese territory. Ten of the new communities were south of Rome, with Sicily strongly represented; and twenty-five, north of Rome, with the Papal States strongly represented. Another twenty-nine communities were established between 1651 and 1700, and still another twenty-six between 1701 and 1774. Significantly, there were no new communities between 1775 and 1825—a pattern of decline paralleled to that of religious orders generally during the era of the French Revolution and Napoleon.⁴¹

The first Oratorian communities in Asia were in Portuguese India, at Goa in 1630, and at Banda in 1650; they antedated the first community in Portugal itself, set up at Lisbon in 1668. Four communities were established in northern Portugal between 1673 and 1686.⁴² The only community in Brazil was set up in 1671.

The establishment of Oratorian communities in Spain began slowly. The first congregation was at Valencia in 1640, the second at Villena in 1650, and the third at Madrid in 1660. Then growth became rapid, with thirteen more communities by 1700. Oratorian houses were also established in Spanish America: four communities in Mexico between 1671 and 1697, one in Peru in 1689, and one in Guatemala in 1694.

The growth in northern Europe outside France was also slow in the seventeenth century. Two houses were founded in Belgium, both in 1620, at Montaigu and Apremont, with a third at Douai in 1629. There were two more in Poland, at Gostyn (1668) and

Sudzianna (1674). The two German houses were both at pilgrimage sites, at Kevelaer (1643) in the Rhineland and at Aufhausen (1692) in Westphalia.

It was in France that the Oratorian ideal found its most influential expression during the seventeenth century, but developments in France took a distinctive turn that require a more extended examination. The first French community was at Cotignac in Provence and had seven members when it received papal approval in 1599. The same year St. François de Sales set up a community at Thonon in Savoy. A Philippine community at Aix-en-Provence, established in 1612 and approved three years later, set up eleven daughter-houses within southern France during the next decade, but only nine survived until 1619 when they and their mother-community merged with the French Oratory of Jesus and Mary Immaculate of Cardinal Bérulle.⁴³

THE ORATORY OF PIERRE DE BÉRULLE

Pierre de Bérulle (1575–1629, named a cardinal in 1627) was both the founder of the French Oratory of Jesus and Mary Immaculate and the most important spokesman of the distinctive spirituality developed by the French Oratorians. Bérulle attended a Jesuit college and made the *Spiritual Exercises* under a skilled Jesuit director. He was a friend of St. François de Sales's and confessor to Carmelite nuns, yet his own spiritual writings were not deeply influenced by Ignatian, Salesian, or Teresian spiritualities. The major influences on him were much older. He was steeped in the writings of pseudo-Dionysius and especially of St. Augustine; together they formed the basis of his Neoplatonism. A secondary influence were the Rheno-Flemish mystics, particularly Harphius. The center of Bérulle's spirituality was Christ. The Jesus of the synoptic gospels is overshadowed by the cosmic Christ of the opening chapters of Ephesians and Colossians and the Word made flesh of John's prologue. Bérulle's Christocentrism is not at the expense of theocentrism. The Trinity is very prominent in his thought and indeed enriches his approach to Christ, in whom he sees a secondary trinitarian structure of Word, soul, and body. Bérulle therefore easily overcomes the temptation of some mystics to bypass Christ's humanity. If he dwells on the need for self-

annihilation, it is a prelude not to an empty nirvana but to an expansion of the soul's capacity for Christ. His spiritual writings are strongly oriented toward mysticism because he was writing for an audience more advanced than most readers of *The Introduction to the Devout Life* or retreatants making the *Spiritual Exercises*. For years he served as confessor to contemplative Carmelite nuns; his treatise on the vow of servitude to Jesus and Mary, written about 1612, attempted to win them over from the abstract school of mysticism to his own more Christocentric theology, but it raised a firestorm of protest from many nuns, Carmelite friars, and Jesuits. Bérulle's crowning work, *Discours de l'état et des grandeurs de Jésus* (1623, expanded in 1629) is his answer to his critics.⁴⁴

The institutional relationship of the French Oratory to the Philippine Oratory defies easy characterization, especially since every Philippine community was canonically independent. Pierre de Bérulle, a model priest much esteemed at the French royal court, recognized as early as 1601 the need for a congregation of reformed priests who would set an example by their ministry to France, where standards were still very lax. France had just emerged from the wars of religion and was far behind Italy and Spain in beginning a sweeping Catholic reformation. Bérulle's own contacts with the Roman Oratory were mainly indirect. He knew of the work Neri had done in Rome, and two friends, St. François de Sales and Brûlard de Silly, described for him the work of the Oratorians in Italy and Savoy. He also made contacts with Père Romillion, superior of the Philippine Oratorians in Provence. Silly urged him to found a parallel organization.⁴⁵ On November 11, 1611, Bérulle founded the French Oratory with the encouragement of the archbishop at Paris, where its general continued to reside until the French Revolution suppressed the congregation. Paul V issued a bull of approbation in 1613. Two of Filippo Neri's closest associates, Tarugi and Bordini, served as successive archbishops of Avignon and encouraged the growth of the Philippine Oratorians in southern France.

Although the French Oratorians were closer to the Naples model cherished by Tarugi and Bordini than the Roman model that had triumphed in Italy, Neri and Bérulle shared a fundamental vision: devout priests living in community without vows but bound together by charity and by their work for God and his church. In both Italy and France the priests were incardinated in

the diocese and worked under the bishop without the exemptions enjoyed by the religious orders. The model that Bérulle held up to his priests was Christ the Incarnate Word who through his priestly sacrifice reconciles man with God.⁴⁶ Priests of this sort, Bérulle was convinced, would be an inspiration for the French clergy generally and would blunt the attraction of Calvinism.⁴⁷

The French Oratory differed from the Italian on many points. Bérulle and his successor as superior general, Charles de Condren (1588–1641), were gifted theologians and writers who developed the distinctive spirituality discussed earlier. Bérulle felt that French conditions demanded a tighter organization than in Italy; the communities were linked together under a general who served for life. The general, however, was under the authority of a General Assembly which was elected every three years and met to approve or reject his decisions. The General Assembly, moreover, elected his major subordinates. The general's power was then small indeed compared with that of the Jesuit general.⁴⁸ There were distinct novitiates and houses of formation for younger members at Paris, Lyons, and Aix.⁴⁹ The French seemed uninterested in developing the sort of oratory service that made the *Chiesa Nuova* so distinctive and was so beloved by Neri, but their singing of the Divine Office, often accompanied by musical instruments, was widely admired.⁵⁰ The French Oratorians, like the Jesuits, Capuchins, Vincentians, and Eudists, engaged in revival missions in country parishes.

Above all, the French Oratorians devoted themselves to teaching and running colleges, seminaries, and even military academies. Education played no more a part in Bérulle's original plans than in Neri's; the task was imposed by Paul V's bull of approbation.⁵¹ The educational apostolate had two side effects, one good, one bad. The French developed a tradition of scholarship that far outstripped the Italians, Baronio excepted. But they also came into rivalry with the Jesuits, whose colleges dominated secondary education in seventeenth-century France. Bérulle foresaw the problem and instructed his men to avoid towns that possessed a Jesuit college. Many towns needed colleges, and when the city government could not get Jesuits or did not want them, the Oratorians were the obvious alternative. The curriculum at Oratorian colleges tended to be more modern and flexible, with less empha-

sis on classical languages and literature, than the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* allowed. Both sets of colleges were famous for their drama.

The rivalry progressively took on ideological dimensions. Bérulle was strongly attached to the papacy, and the early Oratorians faced opposition from the Sorbonne and the Parlement of Paris, but, later, Gallicanism became widespread among the French Oratorians. More important, so did Jansenism. Some generals—for instance, François de Bourgoing (general, 1641–1662)—opposed Jansenism strongly, but Abel Louis de Sainte-Marthe (general, 1672–1696) was sympathetic to it.⁵² The most intransigent of the Oratorian Jansenists was Pasquier Quesnel (1634–1720), who fled to the Dutch Netherlands and set up a Jansenist church rather than submit to Louis XIV and the pope. Many young men from Jansenist families chose to join the Oratory precisely because they found there a tolerant or even congenial atmosphere.

In 1644 the fifth General Assembly decreed that the Congregation did not espouse any particular doctrinal option accepted among Catholics. Oratorians tended to scriptural and patristic studies, especially St. Augustine, more than scholasticism, to Plato more than Aristotle, and to spirituality more than dogmatics. This open atmosphere nurtured the attempts of Nicholas de Malebranche (1675–1715) and Bernard Lamy (1640–1715) at a synthesis of Descartes and St. Augustine. Louis Thomassin (1619–1695) pursued historical studies in theology, liturgy, and canon law. The greatest of the galaxy of French Oratorian scholars was Richard Simon (1638–1712), the father of the historical-critical study of the Bible.

Like the Philippine Oratory, its French sister was initially a community of priests. Although there were lay brothers in the Italian communities, they were few, and their main task, like that of the Jesuit brothers, was to serve the community. In addition to the traditional brothers, the French Oratorians developed a new category called confrères, who taught in the colleges. Since they took neither vows nor holy orders, the confrères could easily leave the Oratorians. The turnover rate among these young men steadily increased so that in the eighteenth century the Oratorian colleges often served to provide in-service training for young teachers before they moved on to better-paying jobs. This evolution certainly served the young men involved and education in France generally,

but that was hardly how Neri and Bérulle saw the Oratorian vocation.⁵³

The numerical growth of the French Oratory was rapid during Bérulle's generalate. In 1630, a year after his death, there were sixty-three communities, including thirteen colleges and four seminaries staffed by 400 priests, not counting lay brothers and young men in formation. During the next thirty years growth slowed, and education became still more the predominant ministry. By 1700 the Oratorians were operating twenty-two colleges and at least nineteen seminaries. In 1650 there were 480 priests. Growth peaked at 650 priests in 1714, after which a decline set in. By 1783 there were only 298 priests compared to 438 confrères; the latter made up 80 per cent of the teaching staff at the colleges. The French Revolution, which many Oratorians initially favored, abolished the Congregation. Since its re-establishment in 1852, its growth in France has been very slow. The French Oratorians also spread to the Spanish Netherlands, but in 1649 the Flemish houses became independent while the Walloon houses remained under the general in Paris. The age profile of entering novices changed gradually; from 1630 to 1679 the average age at entry was 23.3 years; from 1680 to 1759 it was 20.9. The fathers of the novices were almost without exception men of substance: 14 per cent were noblemen and 85 per cent were office holders, merchants, or professional men. Only 1 per cent were *laboureurs* or prosperous farmers. It seems that virtually none of the priests or confrères was recruited from the poorer peasants, who made up the majority of Frenchmen, although many of the lay brothers came from peasant backgrounds.⁵⁴ The location of Oratorian communities and the birthplace of the members was unevenly spread through France. While twelve provinces contributed less than 1 per cent each to the Congregation, in the period from 1611 to 1662 20 per cent came from Provence, 11 per cent from Normandy, and 9 per cent from the Ile de France.⁵⁵

The French Oratorians had close links with three other religious communities. Before founding the French Oratory, Bérulle worked to establish Discalced Carmelite nuns in France and served as co-superior and confessor to many of them, including their leader Madame Acarie, Blessed Marie de l'Incarnation. His efforts to have the nuns take a vow of servitude to Jesus and Mary caused unequity and resentment since many saw this vow as a confusing

addition to the traditional religious vows. The Carmelite friars resented his role as co-superior and that of other Oratorians as confessors. His successor as general, Charles de Condren, was weary of the friction with the Carmelites, both male and female, and severed formal ties.⁵⁶

Among Condren's penitents was Jean-Jacques Olier (1608–1657), whom he trained in Oratorian spirituality and inspired with the desire to establish Tridentine seminaries in France. In 1643 Olier, pastor of St. Sulpice in Paris, received approval for a society of priests who would devote themselves to staffing seminaries. By Olier's death the Sulpicians were directing seminaries in Paris, Nantes, Viviers, Le Puy, and Clement. Somewhat parallel is the story of St. Jean Eudes (1601–1680), who joined the Oratory in 1620 and was trained as a preacher by Condren. Later he enjoyed great success as a spiritual writer and in giving parish missions and conferences to parish priests. At Caen, where he was superior, he made plans for a seminary, but in 1641 Condren, who had encouraged his plans, died. His successor as general was François Bourgoing (1585–1662), who opposed the project. In 1643 Eudes left the Oratorians and set up the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, known as the Eudists, as a society of diocesan priests without vows dedicated to running seminaries and giving parish missions. By 1670 the Eudists were in charge of six seminaries in northern France. Both the Sulpicians and the Eudists were suppressed during the French Revolution but revived in the nineteenth century; today both outnumber the French Oratorians, who underwent the same fate.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

Only after this essay was completed did the most comprehensive and recent work on the Oratorians come to the author's attention: Antonio Cistellini's three-volume *San Filippo Neri: L'oratorio e la congregazione oratoriana, storia e spiritualità* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1989). From 1970 to 1977 the journal *Oratorium: Archivum Historicum Oratorii Sancti Philippi Neri* was published semi-annually in Rome. Although devoted mainly to the Philippine Oratorians, it also carried articles on the French Oratory.

There are dozens of biographies of St. Filippo Neri. The most

scholarly is that by Louis Ponnelle and Louis Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and the Roman Society of His Times (1515–1595)*, trans. R. F. Kerr (London: Sheed and Ward, 1932; repr. 1979), which builds on new archival research and discusses the sources for Neri's life (pp. 1–46). Less scholarly but very insightful is the biography by Meriol Trevor, *Apostle of Rome: A Life of Philip Neri, 1515–1595* (London: Macmillan, 1966), best known for her studies of John Henry Newman, the great English Oratorian. We know comparatively little about Neri's early life since he was a private person who left no autobiography or spiritual journal; only some thirty letters and a few sermons survive, largely because he burnt his papers shortly before his death. There is more information on his later years when he was regarded as a saint whose every action deserved watching. The process toward canonization began soon after his death in 1595, and many eyewitnesses left their recollections in writing. Their testimony, which early biographers drew upon, has been published in four volumes by Giovanni Incisa della Rocchetta and Nello Vian, *Il primo processo per s. Filippo Neri* (Rome: Vatican Press, 1957–1963). Another fundamental source is the two-volume biography first published in 1622 by Neri's young friend and disciple Pier Giacomo Bacci, *The Life of Saint Philip Neri: Apostle of Rome and Founder of the Congregation of the Oratory*, trans. F. I. Antrobus (London: Kegan Paul, 1902). Specialized studies of Neri's life and works are mentioned in the notes to this essay.

Before 1650 the vast majority of Philipine Oratorians were Italians; the best recent studies are by Antonio Cistellini, "Oratoriani," *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione* (vol. 7 [Rome: Edizione Paoline, 1979], cols. 770–71), who draws on Marciano's sprawling five-volume compilation, *Memorie storiche della Congregazione dell'Oratorio* (Naples, 1693–1702). On Baronio there is Pullapilly's study of his work as historian, *Caesar Baronius: Counter-Reformation Historian* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1967) and a massive collection of essays from a congress devoted to Baronio in 1979: *Baronio storico e la controriforma*, edd. Romeo di Maio et al. (Sora: Centro di Studi Sorani "Vincenzo Patriarca" [1982]).

The historiography dealing with the French Oratory in the seventeenth century is richer than for the Philipine Oratory. There are more than a dozen books on Bérulle. For his life before he

founded the French Oratory, the best study is that by Jean Dagens, *Bérulle et les origines de la restauration catholique (1575–1611)* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952), who also edited *Correspondance du Bérulle* in three volumes (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1937–1939). In the 1870s Michel Houssaye published three volumes on aspects of Bérulle's life: *M. de Bérulle et les Carmélites de France, 1575–1611*; *Le Père Bérulle et l'Oratoire de Jésus, 1611–1625*; and *Le Cardinal de Bérulle et le Cardinal de Richelieu, 1625–1629* (Paris: Plon, 1872, 1874, 1875). Of the many studies of Bérulle's spirituality we note here only Jean Orcibal, *Le Cardinal de Bérulle: Évolution d'une spiritualité* (Paris: Cerf, 1965) and Michel Dupuy, *Bérulle: Une spiritualité de l'adoration* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1964). The third volume of Henri Brémond's classic *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1929) deals with Bérulle and his disciples Charles de Condren and Jean-Jacques Olier and quotes extensively from them. More recent is the anthology edited by William M. Thompson with a long introduction, *Bérulle and the French School: Selected Writings* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 1989).

A useful contemporary source for the first five generals of the French Oratorians (Bérulle, Condren, Bourgoing, Senault, and Sainte-Marthe), covering the years 1611–1690, are the three volumes of Père Charles Cloyseault (1645–1738), *Recueil des vies de quelques prêtres de l'Oratoire*, ed. R. P. Ingold (Paris: Poussielgue, 1882–1883). The most sophisticated study of the French Oratorians, strongly influenced by the *Annales* school and rich in statistics and graphs, is by Willem Frijhoff and Dominique Julia, "Les Oratoriens de France sous l'ancien régime: Premiers résultats d'une enquête," *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France*, 65 (1979), 225–65. More traditional is the survey by Hedwige de Polignac in *Une société de prêtres: l'Oratoire* (Paris: Éditions Émile-Paul, 1968). There are also several studies in English: notably, Charles E. Williams's *The French Oratorians and Absolutism, 1611–1641* (New York: Lang, 1989); Stephen John Wagley's "The Oratory of France, 1629–1672: A Social History," Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1976; and H. G. Judge's "The Congregation of the Oratory in France in the Late Seventeenth Century," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 12 (1961), 46–55. Useful for Oratorian schools is a volume by Paul Lallemand, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'ancien Oratoire de France* (Paris: Thorion, 1889; repr. Geneva:

Slatkine-Megariotis, 1976). A good study of an individual community is Jacques Maillard's *L'Oratoire à Angers aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1975). The literature on the great French Oratorian scholars, Bernard Lamy, Nicholas de Malebranche, Pasquier Quesnel, Richard Simon, and Louis Thomassin, is immense; a good starting point is the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*.

NOTES

1. Louis Ponnelle and Louis Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and the Roman Society of His Times (1515-1595)*, trans. R. F. Kerr (London: Sheed and Ward, 1932, reprinted 1979), pp. 65-112 for the hermit years; Meriol Trevor, *Apostle of Rome: A Life of Philip Neri, 1515-1595* (London: Macmillan, 1966), pp. 46-47.

2. Trevor, *Apostle of Rome*, pp. 66-68. Neri's work at San Girolamo is also discussed by G. L. Masetti Zannini, "San Filippo a San Girolamo della Carità," *Oratorium*, 6 (1975), 38-42.

3. Trevor, *Apostle of Rome*, pp. 75-80.

4. Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 182-86; Trevor, *Apostle of Rome*, p. 83.

5. On Cacciaguerra see Romeo De Maio, *Un mistico senese nella Napoli del Cinquecento* (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1965).

6. Trevor, *Apostle of Rome*, pp. 80-85, 196; Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, p. 334. Later in life Neri recommended weekly communion to devout penitents. *Ibid.*, p. 590. He insisted that all priests at the Roman Oratory celebrate Mass daily, so that up to twenty Masses were available each day for worshipers. *Ibid.*, p. 338.

7. Eric Cochrane, *Italy, 1530-1630*, ed. Julius Kirshner (London and New York: Longman, 1988), p. 130.

8. Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, p. 388. Among Neri's penitents were eighteen future cardinals and three future popes: Clement VIII, Leo XI, and Gregory XIV.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

10. Trevor, *Apostle of Rome*, pp. 128-34, 172-73; Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 229-30, 268-70, 279-84.

11. Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 492, 514-16, 526, 529.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 148-65.

13. Trevor, *Apostle of Rome*, pp. 144, 219, 280.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 213, 279, 258, 144; Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 423, 496.

15. Trevor, *Apostle of Rome*, p. 208.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 266.

17. These Roman practices bear an interesting resemblance to prophesying among Elizabethan puritans. See Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 168–76.

18. Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 263–65; Trevor, *Apostle of Rome*, pp. 117–22. Joseph Connors, *Borromini and the Roman Oratory: Style and Society* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1980), p. 6. Connors's work discusses the splendid Baroque oratory designed by Borromini next to the Oratorians' mother church of S. Maria in Vallicella that replaced Neri's humble oratory at San Girolamo. Scholars today no longer trace the development of the musical oratorio from the hymns or *laude* sung by Neri and his associates. See *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s.v. "Oratorio," by Howard E. Smither, XIII:656–57, and Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, p. 265.

19. Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 389–97; Trevor, *Apostle of Rome*, p. 275.

20. Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 257–59. See also G. Incisa della Rocchetta, "I discepoli di San Filippo a San Giovanni dei Fiorentini," *Oratorium*, 6 (1976), 43–50.

21. Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 287–317; Connors, *Borromini and the Roman Oratory*, pp. 6–8. The text of the bull of institution is discussed and printed by Alfonso M. Stickler, "La bolla *Copiosus in Misericordia* di Papa Gregorio XIII," *Oratorium*, 6 (1975), 28–34. Antonio Cistellini also discusses the bull in his "Nascita della Congregazione Oratoriana," *ibid.*, 22–25.

22. Connors, *Borromini and the Roman Oratory*, pp. 4–6.

23. Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 374–79, 386, 484–89; Thomas C. G. Glover, "The Juridical Development of the Oratory from 1612 to 1918," *Oratorium*, 3 (1972), 102–16.

24. Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip and Roman Society*, pp. 374–75, 476–87. The status of the Oratorians in church law is discussed by Robert Lemoine, *Le Droit des religieux de Concile de Trente aux instituts séculiers* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1956), pp. 88–97.

25. Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, p. 373.

26. Cistellini, "Nascita," 17; see also 18–21.

27. Quoted by Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, p. 374.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 385–88, 487, 325–26. In addition to the work at the Chiesa Nuova and the attached oratory, the Oratorians visited the sick and those in hospitals, taught catechism, and served as confessors to

prisoners of the Holy Office and as censors of books. Ibid., pp. 325–27 and 469–70. They were also involved in work of the many confraternities that flourished in Rome. Christopher Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 33, 46, 70, 190, 194, 196, 205, 208, 212, 275.

29. Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 307, 311–13, 329–38.

30. In 1567 there were eighteen men at the Roman Oratory, in 1575 there were twenty-six, and in 1578 there were thirty-three, of whom twenty-eight were Italians, with Piedmontese predominating. Ibid., pp. 295–97. Some members of the community were lay brothers who handled bookkeeping and the upkeep of the house. Unlike lay brothers in many religious communities, they were often literate and did not come from low social strata. Ibid., pp. 361–62.

31. Cistellini, "Nascita," 6–8, 13–16, 23, 25, 26; Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 372, 375, 382–83, 462, 474. There was some short-lived consideration given to merging the Oratorians with the Barnabites, and some members left the Oratorians to become Barnabites. Ibid., pp. 313, 474.

32. Trevor, *Apostle of Rome*, p. 274; Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, p. 483.

33. Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 476–78, 560.

34. Ibid., p. 479.

35. Trevor, *Apostle of Rome*, pp. 333–34; Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 481–84, 544–66. There was a considerable correspondence between the Roman fathers who were critical of the innovations in Naples and Tarugi and Talpa, who justified their actions as appropriate adaptations to different conditions. Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 479–84.

36. On Tarugi, see "Francesco Maria Tarugi, *Apostolicus Vir, omni laude praestantior*," *Oratorium*, 6 (1975), 65–84.

37. Trevor, *Apostle of Rome*, pp. 274–86; Patrizio Dalos gives vital statistics on all the superiors general of the Congregation from Neri till 1975 in "I prepositi della Congregazione dell'Oratorio di Roma: I successori di S. Filippo Neri durante quattro secoli (1575–1975)," *Oratorium*, 6 (1975), 51–64. The usual term of office was three years, but most generals served several consecutive terms.

38. Cyriac K. Pullapilly, *Caesar Baronius: Counter-Reformation Historian* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1967).

39. Trevor, *Apostle of Rome*, pp. 332–36; Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, p. 562. Talpa's understanding of the Oratorian vocation is best seen in a document published with commentary

by Giovanni Incisa della Rocchetta, "Il trattato del P. Antonio Talpa sulle origini e sul significato dell'Istituto della Congregazione dell'Oratorio," *Oratorium*, 4 (1973), 3-41. The turbulent decade after Neri's death is reviewed by Marco Impagliazzo, "I padri dell'Oratorio nella Roma della Controriforma (1595-1605)," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa*, 25 (1989), 285-307.

40. Trevor, *Apostle of Rome*, pp. 336-40; Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and Roman Society*, pp. 558, 560, 562, 563. The Oratorian Constitutions also went through redrafting in 1588, but when some of the community developed second thoughts, the draft was not presented to the pope. *Ibid.*, pp. 485-89. The Constitutions were printed in 1612 and 1630. Antonio Cistellini, "La redazione finale e le prime edizioni a stampa delle Costituzioni oratoriane," *Oratorium*, 2 (1971), 65-87.

41. Antonio Cistellini gives a list of all Italian foundations with dates and founders in his article "Oratoriani" in the *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, vol. 7 (Rome: Edizione Paolini, 1979), cols. 770-71. His research is largely based on G. Marciano's massive *Memorie storiche della Congregazione dell'Oratorio* (Naples, 1693-1702), in 5 volumes. The most detailed recent study of one of these Italian communities is also by Cistellini, "I primordi dell'Oratorio filippino in Firenze," *Archivio storico italiano*, 126 (1968), 191-285. Cistellini also wrote the article "Oratoire philippin" in the *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, 11:853-76, where he gives biographical data, with bibliography, on dozens of noteworthy Oratorians (869-875).

42. Eugénio dos Santos, *O Oratorio no Norte de Portugal: Contribuição para o estudo da história religiosa e social* (Oporto: History Center of the University of Oporto, 1982).

43. Cistellini, "Oratoriani," 771-73.

44. The classic work for Bérulle's spiritual ambiance is Louis Coignet's *La spiritualité moderne: 1500-1650* (Paris: Aubier, 1966); for Bérulle himself, see pp. 310-59; for his followers, pp. 360-410; for the Abstract School to which he was reacting, pp. 233-73.

45. Jean Dagens, *Bérulle et les origines de la restauration catholique (1575-1611)* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952), pp. 90-91; Charles E. Williams, *The French Oratorians and Absolutism, 1611-1641* (New York: Lang, 1989), pp. 71, 84, 86; Hedwige de Polignac, *Une société de prêtres: l'Oratoire* (Paris: Éditions Émile-Paul, 1968), p. 62.

46. Williams, *French Oratorians*, pp. 74, 134-37. There were some French Oratorians who wanted to add vows but they were outvoted. *Ibid.*, pp. 256-61.

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 80.

48. H. G. Judge, "The Congregation of the Oratory in France in

the Late Seventeenth Century," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 12 (1961), 47.

49. Paul Lallemand, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'ancien Oratoire de France* (Paris: Thorian, 1889; repr. Geneva: Slatkine-Megariotis, 1976), pp. 208-10.

50. Polignac, *Une société de prêtres*, p. 69.

51. Paul Auvray, "L'Oratoire de France," *Oratorium*, 3 (1972), 60, 61.

52. Judge, "Congregation of the Oratory," 46-57; Lallemand, *Histoire de l'éducation*, pp. 140-82.

53. Auvray, "L'Oratoire de France," 61-62; Willem Frijhoff and Dominique Julia, "Les Oratoriens de France sous l'ancien régime: Premiers résultats d'une enquête," *Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France*, 65 (1979), 244-49.

54. These statistics are based on Frijhoff and Julia, "Les Oratoriens de France," 227-58. They give four maps of Oratorian communities at various times (pp. 228-31); page 250 has six maps indicating the geographical origins of the Oratorians, 1641-1790; there are also five graphs and five tables illustrating Oratorian demographics (pp. 236-60). Williams also provides tables and graphs based on different manuscript sources. *French Oratorians*, pp. 338-43. His material largely confirms Frijhoff and Julia.

55. Williams, *French Oratorians*, pp. 336-37.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 99-172, esp. 136-39, 261-65; Polignac, *Une société de prêtres*, pp. 73-79. Carmelite convents and Oratorian communities tended to be in the same towns. *Ibid.*, p. 67.