

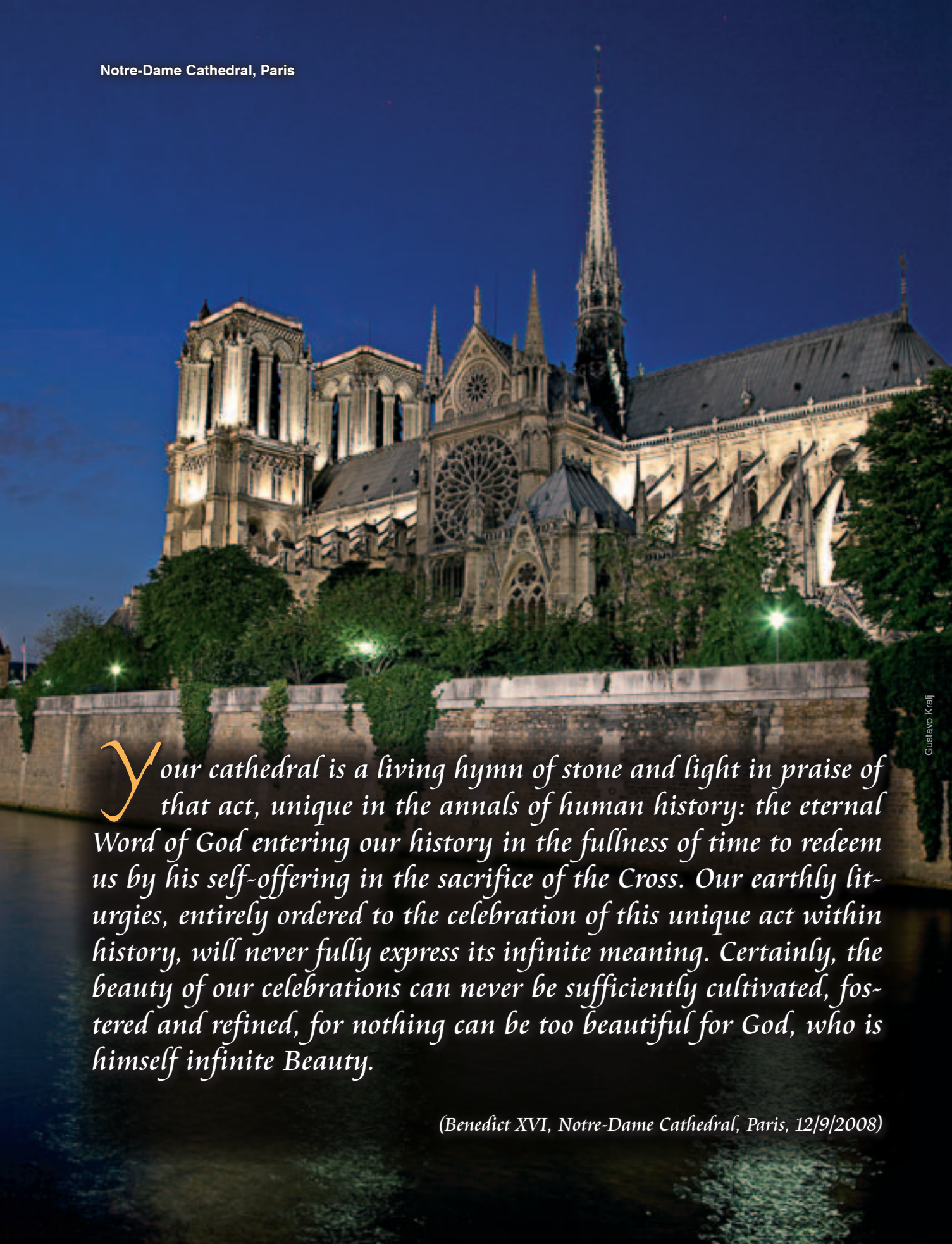
HERALDS OF THE GOSPEL

An International Association of Pontifical Right



Vol. 6, No. 51
January 2012

**Ambiences
That Foster
Virtue**



Your cathedral is a living hymn of stone and light in praise of that act, unique in the annals of human history: the eternal Word of God entering our history in the fullness of time to redeem us by his self-offering in the sacrifice of the Cross. Our earthly liturgies, entirely ordered to the celebration of this unique act within history, will never fully express its infinite meaning. Certainly, the beauty of our celebrations can never be sufficiently cultivated, fostered and refined, for nothing can be too beautiful for God, who is himself infinite Beauty.

(Benedict XVI, Notre-Dame Cathedral, Paris, 12/9/2008)



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**HERALDS
 OF THE GOSPEL**

An International Association
 of Pontifical Right

Vol. 6, No. 51, January 2012

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 addresses listed above*

CONTENTS

Our Readers Write 4



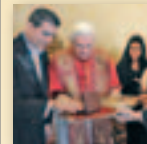
Mercy Aid Fund

36

*Ambiences
 That Foster Virtue (Editorial)* 5

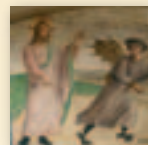


*The Voice of the Pope –
 Teaching the
 Little Ones to Pray*



The Day We Met the Pope

37

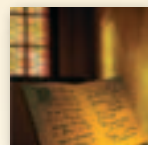


*Gospel Commentary –
 Two Standards...
 Only One Choice!*



Church and World Events

40



*Gregorian Chant –
 The Word of God
 in Music*

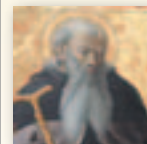


*Story of Faith for Children...
 House of God and
 Gate of Heaven*

46

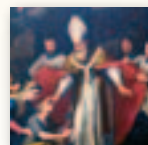


Heralds Worldwide

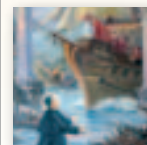


The Saints of Each Day

48



*St. Remigius of Rheims –
 Patriarch of a New Era*



*The Church Will Always
 Undergo Difficult Days –
 What should we do in such
 circumstances?*

50



OUR READERS WRITE

LEGION OF MARY

As a journalist, a long-time member of the Legion of Mary and subscriber to this valuable magazine, I congratulate its administrative and editorial staff on the wealth of material exposed in previous issues, most notably the November edition, in which I came across the important news regarding the commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the Legion of Mary.

As a faithful legion member, I was so pleased with Cardinal Odilo Scherer's statement: "The Legion of Mary has done much good and will certainly continue to do so through its spirituality, teaching and missions, undertaken with great commitment and simplicity, always following the example of Mary who, having received the grace of being the Mother of the Son of God, did not keep this for herself, but took it to others."

Mary is truly the archetype for all women, because she is incomparable—appearing in the Gospel as a figure to be imitated: a symbol of love, humility, perseverance, obedience, and other noble virtues. My entire family offers her all our veneration, always reciting the "Angelus" and the other prayers traditionally dedicated to her. She merits all our esteem and respect.

Anibal Silva
Coíania – Brazil

THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY ACCESSIBLE TO THE FAITHFUL

The parts of the magazine I most read are the Lives of the Saints and Stories for Children, because I make use of them both in pastoral groups as well as in the "Lectio Divina" or in the apostolate which I carry out in a

home for underprivileged mothers. I also place some articles—on sacramentals, Confession, indulgences, etc.—on the daily bulletin board of the parish. These things are important because there is much ignorance among Catholics regarding our Church. It would be good to see even more articles in the magazine on Theology and Philosophy, accessible to the faithful.

Mariella Lavarello Bagnara
Santiago – Chile

INSTRUMENT OF APOSTOLATE

Thank you for sending me *Heralds of the Gospel* magazine, which is so worthwhile! I really enjoy reading about the lives of the saints—I discover marvellous details. I always speak to my friends and relatives, even from other cities, about the magazine; its wealth of material, its importance in evangelizing and how much it has helped me spiritually. It is an apostolic instrument that illuminates our souls, preparing us to correspond with the graces that Jesus grants us each day.

Raimundo Neto
Lago dos Rodrigues – Brazil

HIGH ACADEMIC FORMATION

I had already heard about this magazine, but I could not have imagined it was this good. Reading just one edition was sufficient to notice the high academic formation of its contributors. It is indeed an excellent magazine.

Juan Carlos Pérez
Guayaquil – Ecuador

COMPLETE COLLECTION

I have been a subscriber to *Heralds of the Gospel* magazine since the very first issue. I eagerly await it each month so I can read the excellent articles. I can say without hesitation that it is today's best Catholic

magazine. After reading it, I save each issue, and I am proud to affirm that my collection is complete.

Paulo César Corrêa
Batatais – Brazil

LOVE FOR THE POPE, MARY AND THE EUCHARIST

I am thrilled to receive this magazine each month. I especially admire the stories for children and the Gospel commentaries of Msgr. João S. Clá Dias, from which I have learned so much. The *Heralds Worldwide* section is also very interesting, because it shows me the scope of your evangelizing message. Being part of the great family of the *Heralds of the Gospel* has completely changed my life, because you have taught me to love the Pope, our Mother Mary and the Eucharist, and this is a great blessing.

Ana Luísa Preti Rossi
Guatemala – Guatemala

A LIGHT THAT GUIDES US

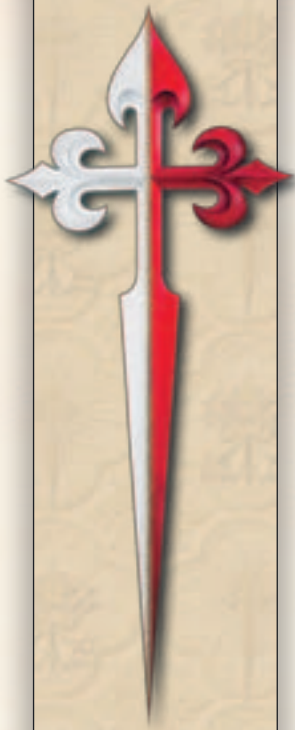
I would like to congratulate all those who work in producing *Heralds of the Gospel* magazine, because it is a light that guides us in this world, so full of false doctrines. It evangelizes, telling the whole truth about the Catholic Church and its history.

Shirley Aparecida de Paula Prince
Ribeirão Preto – Brazil

WORD OF GOD IN DIFFERENT FORMS

I am very happy to receive your beautiful magazines, so full of the love of God. The very meaningful content of each magazine helps me reflect and meditate. And the illustrations and photos are just beautiful! I commend you for your inspiration to carry the Word of God, in different forms, to thousands of people in Peru and throughout the world.

Nora Sarmiento de Flores
Lima – Peru



AMBIENCES THAT FOSTER VIRTUE

God established mysterious and admirable relationships between certain forms, colours, sounds, fragrances and tastes, and certain states of soul. By these means, mentalities may be deeply influenced, leading individuals, families, or entire peoples to new states of spirit.

Thus, the solemn peal of a bell can elevate thoughts to the supernatural. The fragrance of incense places us in a state of prayer. By uniting several of these elements, a setting can be created that curbs our disordered passions, favouring the spirit's desire for heaven.

The opposite is also true. Analyzing the artistic expressions of a given civilization is an ideal way of understanding its way of thinking, because the ideal of beauty and harmony abiding in it will always be intimately linked with the philosophical and moral principles that shaped it.

For example the balanced soul of medieval man, with its predisposition for transcendence, was admirably revealed in the soaring forms of the gothic cathedrals, with their transparent conception of space, richly hued stained glass windows and expressive sculptures. These somehow transmit certain imponderable aspects of the philosophy and theology of that era which is not even disclosed by the sublime arguments of the Angelic Doctor.

Music—even more than architecture—is able to awaken sentiments that affect states of spirit and even mentalities. Imagine a silent military parade, an action film without a soundtrack, or a Christmas celebration without “*Silent Night*”. The essence of the occasion would not be altered, but it would lack one of the principal means of touching the inner recesses of the human soul.

Therefore, since earliest times, the Church has also used this art, with the aim of raising souls to heavenly considerations. In the first centuries, only a *cappella* hymns in simple melodic lines were heard—whose powerful effects were nevertheless praised by St. Augustine: “I perceive that our minds are more devoutly and earnestly elevated into a flame of piety by the holy words themselves when they are thus sung” (*Confessionum* X, c.33, n.49).

Afterwards counterpoint arose, followed by polyphony, the sacred oratorios, and the Masses of the great composers. Developed in an immense variety of styles, music has confirmed throughout the centuries its capacity of “taking one beyond oneself to the Creator of all harmony, inspiring within one resonances which are, as it were, in tune with the beauty and truth of God—with that reality which no human wisdom, no philosophy can ever express” (Benedict XVI, Speech 4/9/2007).

It would be a mistake to consider architecture and music merely as aesthetics exercises devoid of transcendence. Through them, ambiances can be created that foster the practice of virtue and promote our sanctification.

Would this not be one of the most effective and perhaps least used tools of evangelizing people today? ✧



A setting in the Seminary of the Heralds of the Gospel in Caieiras, São Paulo, (Brazil)

(Photo: Luis M. Varela)



Teaching the Little Ones to Pray

Do not hesitate, dear children, to speak of Jesus to others.
He is a treasure whom you should share generously.

God our Father has gathered us around his Son and our brother, Jesus Christ, who is present in the host consecrated during the Mass. This is a great mystery before which we worship and we believe. Jesus, who loves us very much, is truly present in the tabernacles of all the churches around the world, in the tabernacles of the churches in your neighbourhoods and in your parishes. I ask you to visit Him often to tell Him of your love for Him.

“Do not hesitate to speak of Jesus to others”

Some of you have already made your First Holy Communion, and

others are preparing for it. The day of my First Holy Communion was one of the most beautiful days of my life. It is the same for you, isn't it? And why is that?

It's not only because of our nice clothes or the gifts we receive, nor even because of the parties! It is above all because, that day, we receive Jesus Christ for the first time! When I receive Communion, Jesus comes to live in me. I should welcome Him with love and listen closely to Him. In the depths of my heart, I can tell Him, for example: “Jesus, I know that you love me. Give me Your love so that I can love You in return

and love others with Your love. I give You all my joys, my troubles and my future.”

Do not hesitate, dear children, to speak of Jesus to others. He is a treasure whom you should share generously. Throughout the history of the Church, the love of Jesus has filled countless Christians, and even young people like yourselves, with courage and strength. In this way, Saint Kizito, a Ugandan boy, was put to death because he wanted to live according to the baptism which he had just received. Kizito prayed. He realized that God is not only important, but that He is everything.

Photos: L'Osservatore Romano



In St. Rita Parish, in Cotonou, one of the children from “Peace and Happiness” house, of the Missionaries of Charity, welcomed the Pope on behalf of all the children

“Ask your parents to pray with you”

What, then, is prayer? It is a cry of love directed to God our Father, with the will to imitate Jesus our brother.

Jesus often went off by Himself to pray. Like Jesus, I too can find a calm place to pray where I can quietly stand before a Cross or a holy picture in order to speak to Jesus and to listen to Him. I can also use the Gospels. That way, I keep within my heart a passage which has touched me and which will guide me throughout the day. To stay with Jesus like this for a little while lets Him fill me with his love, light and life!

This love, which I receive in prayer, calls me in turn to give it to my parents, to my friends, to everyone with whom I live, even with those who do not like me, and those whom I do not appreciate enough. Dear young people, Jesus loves you.



“Dear young people, ask your parents to pray with you!”

Ask your parents to pray with you! Sometimes you may even have to push them a little. But do not hesitate to do so. God is that important!

Pray for the Pope with the rosary in your hands

May the Virgin Mary, his Mother, teach you to love more and more

through prayer, forgiveness and charity. I entrust you to her, together with your families and teachers.

Look! I have this rosary in my pocket. The rosary is like a tool that we can use to pray. It is easy to pray the rosary. Maybe you know how already; if not, ask your parents to help you to learn how. At the end of this meeting, each one of you will receive a rosary. When you hold it in your hands, I would ask you to pray for the Pope, for the Church and for every important intention. And now, before I bless you all with great affection, let us pray together a Hail Mary for children throughout the world, especially for those who are sick, who are hungry and in places of war. Let us pray together: Hail Mary... ✧

(Excerpt from the address at the meeting with children in Cotonou, Benin, 19/11/2011)

Prayer of Jesus

Jesus' prayer penetrates all the phases of his ministry and all his days.

Difficulties do not obstruct it. When decisions became urgent and complicated his prayers grew longer and more intense.

In our previous Catecheses we have reflected on several examples of prayer in the Old Testament. Today I would like to begin to look at Jesus, at his prayer that flows through the whole of his life like a secret channel that waters existence, relationships and actions and guides them, with progressive firmness, to the total gift of self in accordance with the loving plan of God the Father.

Jesus prayed every day, in all the phases of his ministry

Jesus is also our Teacher in prayer, indeed He is our active and fra-

ternal support on every occasion that we address the Father. Truly, “prayer”, as it is summed up in a heading in the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “is fully revealed and realized in Jesus” (nos. 541-547). [...]

Jesus' prayer penetrates all the phases of his ministry and all of his days. Difficulties do not obstruct it.

The Gospels, on the contrary, allow us a glimpse of Jesus' habit of spending part of the night in prayer. Mark the Evangelist tells of one of these nights, after the tiring day of the multiplication of the loaves, and writes: “Immediately He made

his disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He dismissed the crowd. And after He had taken leave of them, He went into the hills to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and He was alone on the land” (Mk 6:45-47).

When decisions became urgent and complicated his prayers grew longer and more intense. Just before He chose the Twelve Apostles, for example, Luke emphasizes the nocturnal duration of Jesus' preparatory prayer: “In those days He went out into the hills to pray;

and all night He continued in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called his disciples, and chose from them twelve, whom He named apostles” (Lk 6:12-13).

Prayer demands commitment and continuity on our part

In looking at Jesus’ prayers, a question must arise within us: how do I pray? How do we pray? How much time do I give to my relationship with God? Are people today given sufficient education and formation in prayer? And who can teach it?

In the Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* I spoke of the importance of the prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture. In gathering what emerged at the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, I placed a special emphasis on the specific form of *lectio divina*.

Listening, meditating, and being silent before the Lord who speaks is an art which is learned by practising it with perseverance. Prayer is of course a gift which nevertheless asks to be accepted; it is a work of God but demands commitment and continuity on our part. Above all continuity and constancy are important.

Christians are called to be witnesses of prayer

Jesus’ exemplary experience itself shows that his prayer, enlivened by the fatherhood of God and by communion with the Spirit, was deepened and prolonged in faithful practice, up to the Garden of Olives and to the Cross.

Today Christians are called to be witnesses of prayer precisely because our world is often closed to the divine horizon and to the hope that brings the encounter with God.

In deep friendship with Jesus and living in Him and with Him the filial relationship with the Father, through our constant and faithful prayer we can open windows to God’s Heaven. Indeed, by taking the way of prayer, attaching no importance to human things, we can help others to take it. For Christian prayer too it is true that, in journeying on, new paths unfold.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us train ourselves in an intense relationship with God, with prayer that is not occasional but constant, full of faith, capable of illuminating our lives, as Jesus taught us. And let us ask Him to enable us to communicate to people who are close to us, to those whom we meet on our way, the joy of the encounter with the Lord, Light for our existence. ✧

(Excerpts from the General Audience of 30/11/2011)

Nature Speaks to Us of God

Respect for the human being and nature will only be able to develop and reach their full dimension if we respect the Creator and his creature.

Indeed when one studies Italian literature one of the first texts found in the anthologies is the “*Canticle of Brother Sun*” or “of the Creatures” by St. Francis of Assisi: “*Altissimo, onnipotente, bon Signore...!*” [Most high, all powerful, all good Lord].

A stupendous book that speaks to us of God

This canticle sheds light on the proper place to give the Creator, the One who called the whole great symphony of creatures into existence: “...*Tue so’ le laude, la glor-*

ia e l’honore et onne benedictione.... Laudato sie, mi’ Signore, cum tucte le Tue creature” [All praise is Yours, all glory, all honour, and all blessings.... Be praised, my Lord, through all Your creatures]. These verses rightly belong to your cultural and scholastic tradition. However, they are first and foremost a prayer that teaches the heart dialogue with God, teaches it to see in every created being the impression of the great heavenly Artist, as we also read in the most beautiful Psalm 19[18]: “The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handi-

work.... There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth” (vv. 1: 4-5).

Friar Francis, faithful to Sacred Scripture, invites us to recognize nature as a stupendous book, that speaks to us of God, of his beauty and of his goodness. Only think that the “Poverello” of Assisi always asked the friar of the convent in charge of the vegetable garden not to grow vegetables on all the land but to leave part of it for flowers, indeed to tend a beautiful flowerbed full of flowers so that passersby



might raise their thoughts to God, the Creator of so many beautiful things (cf. Vita secondo di Tommaso da Celano, cXXIV, 165).

It is necessary to respect the Creator's impression on creation

Dear friends, while the Church admires the most important scientific research and discoveries, she has never ceased to remember that in respecting the Creator's impression on the whole of creation, we understand better our true and deep human identity. If it is lived well, this respect can also help young men and women discover their personal talents and approaches and hence train for a specific profession which they will always seek to carry out with respect for the environment.

If, in fact, man forgets in his work that he is a collaborator of God, he can do violence to creation and cause untold damage that always has negative consequences, also on human beings, as we have unfortunately seen on various occasions.

Today, more than ever, it appears clear to us that respect for the environment cannot fail to recognize the value and inviolability of the hu-

man person in every phase of life and in every condition. Respect for the human being and respect for nature are one and the same, but they will both be able to develop and to reach their full dimension if we respect the Creator and his creature in the human being and in nature. In this regard, dear young people, I am certain that you are my allies, true "custodians of life and of Creation."

Importance of education in the field of ecology

I would now also like to take this opportunity to address a special word to the teachers and to the authorities present here. I would like to emphasize the great importance of education in this field of ecology too. I gladly agreed with the suggestion to hold this meeting because it involves such a large number of very young students and because it has a clear educational perspective.

In fact, it is obvious by now that there will be no good future for humanity on earth unless we teach everyone a lifestyle that is more responsible towards creation. And I underscore the importance of the word "creation" because the great

and marvellous tree of life is not the fruit of a blind and irrational evolution. Rather, this evolution reflects the creative will of the Creator and his beauty and goodness.

This style of responsibility is learned first of all at home and at school. I therefore encourage parents, heads of schools and teachers to undertake to pay constant educational and didactic attention to this aim. In addition, it is indispensable that the proper institutions—which are well represented here today—support families and schools in this endeavour.

Dear friends, let us entrust these thoughts and aspirations to the Virgin Mary, Mother of all humanity. As we have just begun the Season of Advent, she accompanies and guides us to recognize Christ as the centre of the cosmos, the light that illumines every person and every creature. St. Francis, moreover, teaches us to sing, with all creation, a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the heavenly Father, Giver of every gift. ✧

(Excerpts from address to students and professors participating in a meeting sponsored by the "Sister Nature" Foundation, 28/11/2011)

L'Osservatore Romano



L'Osservatore Romano

I gladly agreed with the suggestion to hold this meeting because it involves such a large number of very young students and because it has a clear educational perspective

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“Temptation of Christ”, by Fra Angelico -
Convent of St. Mark, Florence (Italy)



✠ GOSPEL ✠

²¹ “And they went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. ²² And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; ²⁴ and he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.’

²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent and come out of him!’ ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷ And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, ‘What is this? A new teaching! With authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.’ ²⁸ And at once His fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee” (Mk 1:21-28).

Two Standards... Only One Choice!

To win the battle of our spiritual life we must seek complete and perfect union with the Supreme Captain, making use of all the elements He places at our disposal.



Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP

I – THE BATTLE OF OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

One of the most compelling meditations proposed by St. Ignatius in his famous *Spiritual Exercises* is that of the “Two Standards”. In it, the founder of the Company of Jesus presents the spiritual life as a battlefield where two armies clash: that of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Supreme Captain and Lord, and that of Satan, mortal enemy of human nature.

It is impossible to take a neutral position before these antagonistic and clearly defined commanders. “Christ calls and desires all men under his standard; and Lucifer, on the contrary, under his.”¹ There is no third option; it is necessary to make a choice.

The peculiar dominion of the devil

What are the characteristics of the leader of the wicked? In the Gospel of St. John, Our Lord qualifies him as “a liar and the father of lies.” “He was a murderer from the beginning, and

has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (Jn 8:44).

Incapable of acting directly over man’s intelligence and will, the devil seeks to dominate souls through an external influence aimed at progressively clouding the reasoning until the distinction between good and evil is obscured. Through the masterful use of psychological resources he seeks to fill hearts with desires that lead them increasingly into sin. With each sin committed, the sinner’s will is weakened, his intelligence loses lucidity, leaving him more vulnerable to his master.

Now, this arrogant dictator has no power to penetrate within the soul, not even that of a possessed person—in such cases his dominion extends only to the body. His action is like a thief stealing a car, who takes control of the steering wheel and forces the owner into the passenger seat: he has control of the vehicle, but not the owner’s intelligence or will.

It is impossible to take a neutral position before these two antagonistic commanders

Christ lives in souls in a state of grace

On the opposite extreme of the battlefield is Our Lord. Contrary to the “father of lies” who longs to enslave rational creatures for all eternity in hell, Christ desires our salvation.

The Supreme Commander of the good makes frequent use of external influences to guide those who belong to Him. However, in contrast with the devil, He can act within souls through efficacious grace, before which the will and intelligence submit without offering obstacles.² Because “as clay in the hand of the potter—for all his ways are as He pleases—so men are in the hand of Him who made them” (Sir 33:13).

The devil’s presence is always outside of the soul. And even when, in the case of possession, the conscious life of the possessed is suspended, he can never invade it, because “only God has the privilege of penetrating within the very essence of the soul and establishing his dwelling place in it, by virtue of being the Creator.”³

Sanctified by grace, the soul is inhabited by and infused with the very life of the Blessed Trinity, through the Word Incarnate. St. Paul justly affirms: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loves me and gave Himself for me” (Gal 2:20).

Infinitely unequal combat

Under this prism, the combat described by St. Ignatius appears infinitely disparate: the dictator of evil only gains power over the intelligence and will of creatures to the degree that they open the doors of the soul to him; Our Lord, in contrast, causes us “both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil 2:13).

Indeed, Christ can act in our interior “so effectively that He infallibly begets God’s design, without, however, compromising the freedom of the soul

that adheres to grace, and while assisting it in an independent and simultaneously infallible way.”⁴ This occurred with St. Paul on the way to Damascus (cf. Acts 9:1-6): he was instantly converted by God’s initiative; a grace created by Him.

Therefore, to win the battle of our spiritual life, we should seek complete and perfect union with the Supreme Captain, making use of all the elements that He places at our disposal. For only by participating in the divine life can we definitively vanquish the cunning assaults of the “father of lies.”

II – THE LIVING DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE MASTER

In the episode recalled in the liturgy of this fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time we reflect on an encounter between the two standards in the synagogue of Capernaum. On one hand we see the Divine Master preaching the Good News for the first time; on the other the “evil spirit”, in possession of the body of one of the bystanders.

The duty of interpreting and adapting the Law

²¹ “And they went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught.”

According to the custom of Jewish worship, being “the Sabbath”, Our Lord and his first disciples were obliged to go to the synagogue to hear the Scriptures. However, the Gospel is clear that Jesus went not merely to listen, but mainly to teach.

Preaching in the synagogue was not an activity undertaken by just anyone. It required formation in one of the rabbinical schools, and a proven capacity to interpret the Law and the Prophets according

Preaching in the synagogue was not an activity undertaken by just anyone; it required formation in one of the rabbinical schools



“Christ calls and desires all men under his standard; and Lucifer, under his”

“St. Ignatius of Loyola” Artistic study of the Heralds of the Gospel



Jesus' gaze scrutinized the audience in a gentle, calm, firm, penetrating and attractive manner, inspiring enthusiasm

"Sermon on the Mount", by Fra Angelico - Convent of St. Mark, Florence (Italy)

Being the Creator of all things, Christ "did not speak based on superior authority, but on his own authority"

to its established principles. The doctors of the synagogues transmitted their knowledge garnered from renowned teachers such as Shammai or Hillel, avoiding personal criteria which could spark diverse doctrine.

In the time of Deuteronomy, it was the priests' responsibility to teach and explain the Law, and this custom endured for many centuries. Nevertheless, after the Babylonian Exile a new category of men, the Scribes, was dedicated to this duty. The first to receive this name, in the sense of "teacher of the Law", was Ezra, of priestly lineage (cf. Ez 7:1-6), however many others would receive the same title, without belonging to Aaron's race.

Preaching of the teachers of the Law

In Our Lord's time, the Scribes formed a separate class. In their office of transmitting and interpreting the Law from generation to generation, they had gradually adjusted certain precepts from Sacred Scripture to the point of creating norms foreign to the spirit of the Mosaic precepts. But they posed before the people as wise men, or *hakamim*, and deflected criticism by insinuating that undermining the words of religious leaders was a sin as serious as despising the word of God.⁵

The pith of their preaching was the same as the Divine Master's, because their ministry was to transmit and interpret Sacred Scripture,

The “father of lies” was unable to contain his consternation. He expressed it by the lips of a possessed man, who rudely questioned the Redeemer

whose ultimate author was He Himself. However, in giving into their evil inclinations, they had distorted revealed doctrine to their own liking, as Professors Robert and Tricot explain: “Through a subtle casuistry, they adapted certain prescriptions of the Law to the needs of the time or the weakness of men; while on other occasions, using clever artifices or exegetic ruses, they created obligations foreign to the letter and the spirit of the Law.”⁶

These errors became ingrained over time. In their decadence, the Scribes sought to obscure the true doctrine from the people, to avoid the unmasking of the manipulations made at the whim of their vices. This robbed their preaching of authority, since the word of one who does not live what he teaches has no impact.

Jesus taught “as one who had authority”

²² “And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.”

Jesus did not present Himself as the disciple of any rabbi in beginning his preaching. To his audience He appeared as “the carpenter’s son” (Mt 13:55). Yet He displayed unparalleled knowledge of Sacred Letters, and taught a new doctrine, *ex auctoritate propria*. In face of the prevalent deviations of the times, He hoisted the standard of Truth, whose substance was He Himself, knowing exactly what to say and do to attract and elevate the people. Even at the outset of his public life, his presence and word contradicted the gamut of erroneous standards of the epoch.

St. Jerome explains that as the Creator of all things, He acted not as teacher, but as Lord. “He did not speak based on superior authority, but on his own authority. He acted thus because his very essence said what was affirmed beforehand by means of the prophets. ‘I, who spoke by means of them, am He who is present with you here.’”⁷

It would be inappropriate to question where the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom had studied. As the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, He possessed *divine knowledge* from all eternity. He knew absolutely everything: both the universe of created beings—past, present and future—and the infinite world of possible creatures.

Furthermore, His soul having been created in the beatific vision, He also had the knowledge proper to angels and blessed souls who contemplate God face to face. In Jesus, *beatific knowledge* was joined with *infused knowledge*, a privilege granted to the angels at creation, to all departed souls, and, by a special gift, to some chosen souls during their earthly lives—to whom the Son of Man could not be inferior. This gave him a profound knowledge, superior to any other man, of all created things, of the natural truths and the mysteries of grace.

Finally, Jesus also possessed *natural knowledge*, acquired progressively by means of the agent intellect during the course of his earthly life. For this He required no teacher, since He used this type of knowledge only to confer the notions of his natural intellect which, as God, He possessed from all eternity.⁸

Supremely beautiful and perfect creature

An author of the last century affirms that the Divine Master was not “a philosopher in the Greek sense, nor even a rabbi in the Hebraic style. He spoke directly to souls with the intention, more than convincing them, of conquering them and introducing them into the profound and overflowing stream of his religious life.”⁹

Thus, in addition to his teaching, his presence itself awakened admiration. His countenance could not be more perfect. His hair, lips, eyebrows and ears were of an unequalled beauty. His gaze scrutinized the audience in a gentle, calm, firm, penetrating and attractive manner, inspiring enthusiasm. A magnificent and communicative voice of extraordinary timbre and inflection, accompanied the movement of the hands, which, in turn, were perfectly proportioned and unpretentious, with neither exaggeration nor timidity. His carriage, his way of sitting or of turning his head, were unimaginably beautiful.

Seeking to express something of Jesus’ ineffable beauty, St. Augustine proclaims: “He is beautiful in heaven, beautiful on earth; beautiful in the womb, beautiful in his parents’ arms, beautiful in his miracles, beautiful in his scourging, beautiful in inviting to life, beautiful in not fearing death; beautiful in surrendering his soul, beautiful in reclaiming it; beautiful on the Cross, beautiful in the tomb, beautiful in heaven. Listen to the canticle with understanding,

and let not the weakness of the flesh draw your eyes from the splendour of that beauty.”¹⁰

III – A CLASH BETWEEN GOD AND THE DEVIL

The “dictator of the enemies”¹¹ could not be indifferent to Jesus’ preaching. Rather, he felt very put out by it, since the exposition of truth always thwarts his plans of leading men to hell. This Teacher, whose divine power He still did not know, had magnificently preached the purest doctrine. At his voice, hearts were drawn from sin and minds were opened to the supernatural.

Even though he had not been directly informed, the “father of lies” was unable to contain his consternation. He expressed it by the lips of a possessed man, who rudely questioned the Redeemer. He would have gained more by remaining silent...

The wily and variable tactics of the devil

²³ “And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; ²⁴ and he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.’”

The personification of vulgarity, the devil did not come forward to speak to Our Lord but shouted from afar, in order to be heard by all, to provoke confusion. An expert in the exploitation of human misery, he called Him Jesus of Nazareth, pointing out that He came from a small, “insignificant and unknown”¹² city.

Yet the Divine Master remained unmoved. Having neither vanity nor social airs He did not regret having chosen that city, in his infinite Wisdom, to be his home with Mary and Joseph.

Seeing his first attempt foiled, the evil spirit changed tactics, seeking to create a climate of hostility toward Our Lord in the synagogue. Perhaps onlookers saw the possessed man as merely ill, and his asking Jesus “have you come to destroy us?”, painted him as a pitiable unfortunate, placing Our Lord in the role of a tyrant, come to mistreat him.

Seeing this bid to make himself the object of commiseration also frustrated, the “father of lies” went to the opposite extreme. Unable to discredit Jesus, he threw the most audacious praise at Him, calling Him “the Holy One of God”. He hoped, by this new manoeuvre, to gild Our Lord with a halo of glory, unfitting for the moment, in order to tempt Him to pride. In exalting Him He also aimed to arouse envy and hatred against Him.

A new invective and a new failure. As St. John Chrysostom comments, “the Truth did not wish to have the witness of unclean spirits.”¹³ Christ teaches us here, once and for all, that we must never believe in the demons, “however they may proclaim the truth.”¹⁴

Our Lord must have spoken these words with all serenity and dignity, because Christ does not need to make any effort to impose his will

Gustavo Kraijl



Jesus wanted to make it clear before all that the man was not sick, but possessed

“Christ expels the evil spirit” - Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood, St. Petersburg, (Russia)



“St. Alphonsus Maria di Liguori” - St. Alphonsus Church, Cuenca (Ecuador)

“As soon as we perceive that a suspicious thought has come to our mind, we should reject it at the same instant, so to speak, slamming the door on its nose”

Absolute authority of Our Lord over all things

²⁵ “But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent and come out of him!’”

²⁶ “And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.”

Maldonado affirms that among the Jews there were exorcists “who had the secret art of expelling demons inherited from Solomon, as Josephus narrates.”¹⁵ St. Luke mentions them in the Acts of the Apostles (19:13-14) and Jesus says they were sons of the Pharisees (Mt 12:27; Lk 11:19). However, they carried out their office at the cost of mammoth effort, in ceremonies that lasted hours, and at times several days.

In this passage, Our Lord simply says: “Be silent and come out of him!” He must have spoken these words with all serenity and dignity, because Christ does not need to make any effort to impose his will. He reigns in an absolute manner over all things.

The Divine Master begins by commanding the evil spirit to be silent. In saying “be silent”, He denies him the ministry of the word which is the exclusive privilege of those whom God loves. Soon after, He orders him to come out of the man. The devil immediately finds himself obliged to obey.

Christ, however, wanted to make it clear before all that the man was not sick, but possessed. The violence with which the evil spirit convulsed him upon leaving and the loud cry that he gave confirmed the diabolical presence and the compulsion under which he left that body.

“Do not debate with your enemy, do not even answer him with a single word”

Finally, analysis of the tactics employed in this episode by the “father of lies” prompts us to take a lesson for our spiritual life: with their goal of dragging us down the path of perdition, the evil spirits are always seeking to draw us into confabulation with them, through the most varied strategies. Being angels, they grasp everything by intuition; they are extremely astute and incomparably more intelligent than man.

What, then, should be our attitude toward them in times of temptation?

It will serve us nothing at these moments to have learned the art of debate, to raise good arguments, or to have studied psychology. The only correct reaction when attacked by the devil is to ignore him, to pray, to redirect the thought and imagination, and to ask Our Lord that, as with the possessed man, He order the devil to flee from us.

The great moralist St. Alphonsus Marie Liguori gives this advice. “As soon as we perceive that a suspicious thought has come to our mind, we should reject it at the same instant, so to speak, slamming the door on its nose, and denying it entry into our thoughts, without concerning ourselves with discovering what it means or intends. It is necessary to expel these evil suggestions without delay, just as a man shakes off the sparks that fall upon his clothes.”¹⁶

And St. Francis de Sales, in his famous work *Introduction to the Devout Life*, gives the same suggestion: “Do not debate with your enemy, do not even reply one word to him. [...] When assailed by temptation, the devout

¹ ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA. *Obras Completas*. Madrid: BAC, 1952, p.186.

² Garrigou-Lagrange affirms this grace to be “efficacious in itself, because God wishes it to be this way, and not only for having foreseen that we would accept it without resistance” (GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, OP, Réginald. *La predestinación de los san-*

tos y la gracia. Buenos Aires: Desclée de Brouwer, 1947, p.280).

³ ROYO MARÍN, OP, Antonio. *Teología de la Perfección Cristiana*. 5.ed. Madrid: BAC, 1968, p.314.

⁴ ROYO MARÍN, OP, Antonio. *Somos hijos de Dios*. Madrid: BAC, 1977, p.63.

⁵ Cf. ROBERT, A. e TRICOT, A. *Initiation Biblique*. 2.ed.

Paris: Desclée & Cie, 1948, p.721-722.

⁶ Idem, p.722.

⁷ ST. JEROME. Comentario al Evangelio de Marcos. Homilía 2. In: ODEN, Thomas C. y HALL, Christopher A. *La Biblia comentada por los Padres de la Iglesia. Nuevo Testamento*. Madrid: Ciudad Nueva, 2000, v.II, p.68.

soul should not lose time in discussion nor arguments.”¹⁷

“And at once His fame spread everywhere...”

²⁷ “And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, ‘What is this? A new teaching! With authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.’ ²⁸ And at once His fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.”

The reaction of onlookers reveals how this episode favoured their understanding of the One before them. In other words, in wanting to harm the Divine Saviour, the demon ended up doing Him a service.

IV – GOD IS ALWAYS STRONGER

Therefore, when trial afflicts us, or temptation torments us, we should be certain that the “supreme and true Captain of the good”¹⁸ is at our side, ready to intervene at the right moment for his glory and our spiritual benefit.

The Jesus who awaits us today in Holy Communion is the same Jesus who expelled the demon in Capernaum and performed numerous miracles in Galilee. Under the veil of the sacred species is hidden the majestic figure of the “fairest of the sons of men” (Ps 45:2), whose omnipotence the devil cannot resist. ✧



Sergio Holmann

When trial afflicts us, or temptation torments us, we should be certain that the “supreme and true Captain of the good” is at our side

“Christ giving his blessing”
Cathedral of Barcelona (Spain)

⁸ Cf. ROYO MARÍN, OP, Antonio. *Jesucristo y la vida cristiana*. Madrid: BAC, 1961, p.104-124.

⁹ Cf. CASTRILLO AGUADO, Tomás. *Jesucristo Salvador*. Madrid: BAC, 1957, p.311.

¹⁰ ST. AUGUSTINE. *Enarrationes in Psalmos*. Ps.44, c.3.

¹¹ ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, op. cit., p.186.

¹² TUYA, OP, Manuel de e SALGUERO, OP, José. *Introducción a la Biblia*. Madrid: BAC, 1967, v.II, p.573.

¹³ ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, apud ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Catena Aurea – Expositio in Marcum*. c.1, l.9.

¹⁴ Idem, ibidem.

¹⁵ Cf. MALDONADO, SJ, Juan de. *Comentarios a los cua-*

tro Evangelios. Madrid: BAC, 1950, v.I, p.464.

¹⁶ ST. ALPHONSUS MARIE LIGUORI. *Obras Ascéticas*. Madrid: BAC, 1952, v.I, p.498.

¹⁷ ST. FRANCIS DE SALES. *Obras selectas*. Madrid: BAC, 1953, v.I, p.235.

¹⁸ ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, op. cit., p.139.

GREGORIAN CHANT

The Word of God

The unpretentious simplicity of Gregorian chant conceals a profound richness that uplifts the soul to a supernatural world of mystery. What is the secret of attraction of this ancient form of sacred music?



Sr. Kyla MacDonald, EP



in Music

Immersed in the agitation of today's world, of constant rush, velocity and noise, perhaps it is not easy to envision a different ambience. However, we invite the reader to pause for a moment and imagine...

Imagine a monastery whose cloister is austere and silent, yet gracious and welcoming, where monks, unhurried and recollected, proceed toward a chapel illuminated only by the diffused light from the stained glass windows.

These valorous men, having abandoned everything to serve God, dedicate their lives to work, to study and to prayer. To externalize the love that overflows from their grace-filled hearts, they join together in one voice to speak to God. In unison, they intone chants and hymns which fill the sacred temple with peaceful melody...

Let us contemplate this chant and its origins, to admire its mysterious richness and the transcendent quality that made it the sacred music *par excellence*.

Gregorian chant

Gregorian chant is a form of music unlike any other in practice today in the West. Unlike polyphony, Gregorian chant is unisonous; its perfection is achieved when only one voice is heard, even when sung by a large group.

In contrast with other musical styles, in which a regular, measured beat can readily be sensed, Gregorian chant is characterized by its free-flowing rhythm which seems to float on the air, unfettered by time; to rise and fall like the waves of the sea.

While today's music generally falls into either a major or minor scale, giving it a distinctly "happy" or "sad" quality, Gregorian melody's eight modes, or scales, convey a more subtle range of expression, in perfect equilibrium, always seeming to evade dramatic extremes of emotion.

These are just some of the reasons why, for ears unaccustomed to it, Gregorian chant may give a first impression of monotony. However, continuing to listen, one is struck with the remarkable force of a form of music that carries with it centuries of wisdom, and reflects generations of saintly talent which has converged towards the perfecting of its melodies—its "inspired modulations"¹—as Pope John Paul II described them.

Thus, despite its simplicity, it contains, as Prof. Plinio Corrêa de



Francisco Lecaros

St. Gregory possessed a deep understanding of how music could move souls

"St. Gregory the Great" by Francisco de Zurbarán – Museum of Fine Arts, Seville (Spain)

Oliveira observes, a formidable richness, "a seemingly inexhaustible potential to generate civilizations and wonders throughout the world. The force of innocence allied with grace which transformed, for example, the mephitic swamps and valleys of ancient Europe into gardens dotted with life and colour, where, amid beautiful trees and lakes, great abbeys, stately castles and majestic cathedrals rose up; a "gregorianized" Europe."²

Power to move souls

One of the most illustrative examples of the transforming power of this chant was Pope St. Gregory the Great's use of it in the conversion of the Angles. He announced his initiative to reclaim their island

overtaken by barbarians, declaring: “the praise of God the Creator must be sung in those lands.”³ Under his direction, St. Augustine of Canterbury entered Britain in cortège with forty other Benedictines, intoning the “solemn and touching strains which they had learnt from Gregory, their spiritual father and the father of religious music.”⁴ The celestial chant of the newcomers was decisive in winning the conversion of the people in short order.

This single episode in the process of the “gregorianization” of Western Europe shows that the Pope for whom Gregorian chant is named possessed a profound understanding of how music can move souls in ways that words alone cannot. His chants were the most spiritual of music, and yet they were able to captivate barbarians and peasants, completely uninstructed in things spiritual, and unaccustomed to such refined sounds.

Thus, history records that Gregory I “composed with great labour and musical skill the chants which are sung in our Church and elsewhere. By this means he would influence the hearts of man more effectually, rousing them and enlivening them; and in truth the sound of his sweet melodies has not only drawn spiritual men to the Church, but has even drawn those who are not so cultivated and sensitive.”⁵

A new impetus toward the unification of sacred music

A medieval tradition concerning the saint also demon-

strates the long-held belief that his chant was divinely inspired, and explains why he is often depicted with a dove at his ear, transcribing music that is being dictated to him:

“It was while considering the fascination exercised by profane music, that Gregory was led to inquire whether he could not, like David, consecrate music to the service of God. One night he had a vision in which the Church appeared to him in the form of a muse, writing her songs and gathering her children under the folds of her mantle. Upon this mantle was written the whole art of music, with all the forms of its tones, notes, neumes, and various measures and symphonies. He prayed to God to give him the power of recollecting all he saw. After he awoke, a dove appeared and dictated to him the musical compositions with which he has enriched the Church.”⁶

St. Gregory used this musical gift to provide a decisive complement to the work of his predecessors in liturgical music—particularly St. Ambrose⁷—giving a final, unified arrangement to the Church’s chant in Rome, and promoting its universal implementation throughout Western Europe, a cause which would be carried forward by great men after him, notably Charlemagne.

The topic of music has always been important to the Church, and the entire Middle Ages—not unlike the ancient world before it—showed a marked interest in understanding music’s influence over the soul. Gregorian chant, which came to its highest point around the thirteenth century, represents the fruit of a long process of study and fine-tuning.

The Church’s “Canticum novum”

From earliest times, people have always used song for sacred praise. Indeed, Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira observes that the human soul “seeks music to externalize its highest aspirations, its highest desires, its highest expressions.”⁸ On this inclination, St. Hildegard von Bingen held that Adam, in his state of original perfection in Paradise, before the fall, sang rather than spoke, and in his voice “there was the sound of every harmony and the sweetness of the whole art of music.”⁹

It was natural that, with the estab-



The transforming power of Gregorian chant was shown with the conversion of the Angles

“St. Gregory the Great in the slave market of Rome”
Cathedral of Westminster, London

lishment of Christianity, a new song would come to characterize the Church's liturgical worship. The first proponents of Christian psalmody and hymnody looked to none other than the God-Man as the inspirer of this *canticum novum* since, after the Last Supper, "The Lord himself, a teacher in words and master in deeds, went out to the Mount of Olives with the disciples after singing a hymn."¹⁰

With the signing of the Edict of Milan by the Emperor Constantine, Christian public worship was able to flourish, and the faithful increasingly found in singing a beautiful way of expressing and inspiring love of God, contrition, supplication; thus aiding the soul in praising the Creator.

Contributions from three ancient worlds—Greek musical theory, the Roman language and rules of metrical verse and the Judaic sacred books—combined in developing an entirely new sacred art that aimed at helping the sacred texts inspire the hearts of those who heard them.

A link between the world of sense and of spirit

During the first centuries of Christianity, the Church Fathers saw music, and especially singing, as a sort of link between the world of sense and the world of spirit, which could aid man in the process of spiritual transcendence. St. John Chrysostom's words are representative of these benefits: "Nothing so stirs the soul", he affirms, "gives it wing, sets it free from the earth, releases it from



Sergio Hollmann

Medieval tradition narrates that Gregorian chant was divinely inspired

"Apparition of dove to St. Gregory"
Cathedral of Seville, Spain

the prison of the body, teaches it to love wisdom and to renounce all the things of this life, as concordant melody and sacred song."¹¹

A perennial mystery was the question of how the sung word gained greater entrance into the soul than the spoken word. St. Augustine, who observed that "our minds are more devoutly and earnestly elevated into a flame of piety by the holy words themselves when they are thus sung, than when they are not," pondered this mystery without being able to fully explain it: "All affections of our spirit, by their own diversity, have their appropriate measures in the voice and singing, wherewith by I know not what secret relationship they are stimulated."¹²

The medieval perspective of music is also exemplified by Boethius: "music is so much a part of our nature that we cannot do without it even if we wish to do so."¹³ For him, the ears were a direct pathway to the soul, which was highly susceptible to influences from music.¹⁴

Part of music's effectiveness in gaining access to the soul was attributed to its innately pleasing quality. It heightened the expressiveness of the words in song, even making them more memorable to the listener. St. Niceta called sacred song a "medicine, powerful enough to cure the wounds of sin, yet sweet enough to taste by reason of the melody. For, when a psalm is sung, it is sweet to the ear. It enters the soul because it is pleasant. It is easily retained if it is often enough repeated."¹⁵

It is once again St. Augustine who testifies to having personally experienced such benefits, counting the Church's music as among the most powerful influences toward his conversion. His words once again underline how the soul is illuminated by means of the ears: "I wept at the beauty of Thy hymns and canticles, and was powerfully moved at the sweet sound of Thy Church's singing. Those sounds flowed into my ears, and the truth streamed into my heart."¹⁶

Before the widespread availability of books, when faith literally came through hearing (Cf. Rm 10:17), hymns were also important tools in teaching doc-

trines and doctrines. The Church Fathers saw music, and especially singing, as a sort of link between the world of sense and the world of spirit, which could aid man in the process of spiritual transcendence. St. John Chrysostom's words are representative of these benefits: "Nothing so stirs the soul", he affirms, "gives it wing, sets it free from the earth, releases it from



“Listen, O son, and incline the ears of your heart,” is the opening exhortation of the Benedictine rule

Detail of “Our Lady Enthroned with Angels and Saints” by Agnolo Gaddi National Gallery of Art, New York



St. Bernard taught that chant should “please the ear in order to move the heart”

“St. Bernard”, by Arnaldo Bassa National Museum of Catalonia Art, Barcelona (Spain)

trine. St. Athanasius, in the East, for example, and St. Hilary of Poitiers in the West, fortified the people against the evils of Arianism by writing hymns which refuted its errors. In this way, the truths of the Faith were easily and lovingly assimilated, reaching a much wider public than the written word, because as the historian Pernoud points out, “at that time, if not everyone learned to read, everyone did learn to sing.”¹⁷

A defender of the pedagogic value of sacred art, St. Gregory the Great wrote to dissuade the iconoclastic activities of one of his bishops: “What Scripture is to the learned, images are to the ignorant; [...] they read in them what they cannot read in books.”¹⁸ However, in lands only beginning to taste Christian civilization, the splendour of stained glass and other visual arts would delay in appearing. He discerned that the strains of Gregorian chant would be prompt to flow out upon the souls of its listeners in its full grandeur, exercising the same type of educative influence as the other arts.

The Benedictines and the ears of the heart

From the Church’s very beginnings, then, song was always part of worship in the most diverse settings, wherever the faithful gathered (Cf. 1Cor 14:26). However, as the age of martyrs gave way to the age of monks, the sacred art of liturgical chant found the ideal setting for its cultivation in monasteries. St. John Cassian, the hermit of Egypt who introduced the ideal of monasticism into Gaul with the establishment of the Abbey of St. Victor in Marseille, taught: “We frequently chant the psalms, so that we may continually grow in compunction.”¹⁹

The monasticism which first proliferated in Western Europe

closely imitated the desert monasticism of the East. It found its own distinctive note only with the founding of the Benedictines at Subiaco in the sixth century, and for this reason St. Benedict is hailed as the Father of Western monasticism.

He may be said to have applied the Roman gift of law and order to the monastic institution, exercising this same perfecting influence over its sacred chant as well. St. Gregory himself had been a monk before being called to official duties, and it was his personal affinity with the Benedictines that gave him a full knowledge of their modes of liturgical chant, which served as the *prima materia* of Gregorian chant. Benedictines scholars, in turn, would historically take the lead in Gregorian chant’s interpretation, preservation, and restoration.

For the Benedictines, just as work was carried out in common, it was natural that their primary task—the “Work of God” as St. Benedict called the Divine Office—should also be partaken in communally, and was the key note of their everyday life and spirituality. In his rule, St. Benedict admonishes: “let us be always mindful of what the prophet says: ‘Serve the Lord in fear’; and again: ‘Sing wisely’; and: ‘In the sight of the angels will I sing to Thee.’ Therefore let us consider how we ought to comport ourselves in the sight of God and His angels and let us so take our part in the office, that mind accord with voice.”²⁰

It is curious that sacred chant flourished and achieved its most perfect form in an ambience where, in order to favour contemplation, the monks “ought to be zealous to keep silence at all times.”²¹ The chant that filled the majority of their waking hours evidently did not break the monks’ interior silence,

but was consonant with it and, in fact, a fruit of it.

“*Ausculata, o fili [...] et inclina aurem cordis tui*”²²—“Listen, O son, and incline the ears of your heart,” is the opening exhortation of the Benedictine rule. Silence, which opens the ears of the heart to the unspoken voice of grace, also makes the soul more perceptive to the most profound meaning of words. As Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira reflects, the imponderable aspects that exist in musical sound help to bring out this imponderable aspect of the word, and thus it “puts a number of things into focus that the literal meaning of the word does not say.”²³

The word of God in music

Towards the twelfth century, the Benedictines, in their perfecting of sacred chant, had great insights into the aforementioned “secret relationship” between word, music and the soul, pondered by St. Augustine. St. Hildegard von Bingen saw word and music as a mystical representation of the union of human and divine nature in the Incarnation: “The word designates the body, but music manifests the spirit. For the harmony of heaven proclaims the divinity of God’s Son, and the word makes known his humanity.”²⁴

St. Bernard showed how the corporal ears were related to the ears of the heart, teaching that the chant should “please the ear in order to move the heart.”²⁵ The Mellifluous Doctor—himself the composer of numerous hymns in the Gregorian style—asserted that the chants must be, above all, resplendent with the truth so that in singing, the melody “should not obscure the meaning of the text, but rather should make it fruitful.”²⁶

In the thirteenth century, St. Thomas Aquinas would com-

bine the musical skill he developed during his youthful formation with the Benedictines at Monte Cassino with his extraordinary Dominican teaching capacity to compose both the melody and the words of some of the Church’s most treasured Eucharistic hymns. For him, “A hymn is the praise of God with song; a song is the exultation of the mind dwelling on eternal things, breaking forth in the voice.”²⁷ His masterpiece, *Lauda Sion Salvatorum*, melodically comprises the entire doctrine of the Church related to the Eucharist.

Thus, Gregorian chant, consisting solely of words and a single melodic line, “brings the ‘ear of the heart’ very close to the divine word in order to hear it directly.”²⁸

Pius XII would praise this quality in Gregorian chant: “This chant, because of the close adaptation of the melody to the sacred text, is not only most intimately conformed to the words, but also in a way interprets their force and efficacy and brings delight to the minds of the

hearers. It does this by the use of musical modes that are simple and plain, but which are still composed with such sublime and holy art that they move everyone to sincere admiration.”²⁹

Gregorian chant’s musical component possesses some rich tools of expression for placing the text in high relief, almost becoming one with the words, as Dom Dominic Johner demonstrates: “Gregorian music, however, is not merely a music of embellishment; it does not describe the text in the manner in which a garland entwines itself about a pillar, effecting no inner connection with it. Chant can also make the text interpretative, expressive, and explanative. It often brings its gradations at the very point where a declamatory rendition of the text grows in warmth, and it emphasizes that word which marks its climax. [...] It will become evident that chant unites text and melody well, and that there is an intimate relationship, a union of spirit, between them.”³⁰



A melodic phrase composed mainly of seconds and thirds establishes a setting of moderation and serenity

Facsimile of the Kiedrich Codex (circa 1300)
Parish Church of St. Valentine, Kiedrich (Germany)



“Through the sound of the psalmody, when it is done with the intention of the heart, a path to the heart is prepared for the almighty Lord”

Chanting of the Divine Office in the church of the Seminary of the Heralds of the Gospel in Caieiras (São Paulo)

One of the ways that Gregorian chant portrays textual meaning is through its use of note order; ascents, descents, and intervals, each of which play a determined part in interpreting the matter being sung. Dom Johner illustrates that ascending and wider intervals denote greater involvement of the sensibility than descending and lesser ones. Thus, a melodic phrase composed mainly of seconds and thirds—the predominant pattern for the majority of chants—establishes a setting of moderation and serenity, with a great capacity for the expression of reverence and tender confidence. In contrast, the interval of a fourth creates a stronger impact; ascending, it is portentous, festive. To the fifth is reserved the expression of the most profound experiences of the spirit, whether sorrow, serene felicity, or deep faith and awe.³¹

At fleeting moments, the chant’s melodic line even seems to break

¹ JOHN PAUL II. Lettera agli artisti, 04/04/1999, n.7.

² CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. Cântico da alma inocente. In: Dr. Plinio. ano V. n.57 (Dec., 2002) p.34.

³ ST. BEDE. *Historiam Ecclesiasticam Gentis Anglorum*. In: *Opera Historica*. London: Oxford University, 1896, p.80.

⁴ COMTÉ DE MONTALEMBERT. *Les moines d’Occident depuis saint Benoît jusqu’à saint Bernard*. Paris: J. Lecoffre, 1866. v.3, p.363.

⁵ LEO IV. Letter to the Abbot Honoratus. *Collectio Britannica*, apud BÄUMER, OSB, Suitbert. *Histoire du Bréviare*. Paris: Letouzey et ané, 1905, t.I, p.345, footnote.

⁶ DONAHOE, Daniel Joseph. *Early Christian Hymns: Translations of the Verses of the most notable Latin writers of the Early and Middle Ages*. New York: Grafton, 1908. p.88.

⁷ St. Ambrose is accredited with the first systemization of Church music, the composition of numerous hymns, and the origin of the first

four modes, known as the “authentic” modes. Tradition ascribes the addition of other four modes, known as the “plagal” modes to St. Gregory, and on these eight modes or scales were constructed all Church music (Cf. TERRY, Richard R. *Catholic Church Music*. London: Greening, 1907, p.54).

⁸ CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Music and Word as Complementary Expressions of the Soul: Address*. São Paulo, 13/6/82.

⁹ ST. HILDEGARD VON BINGEN, *Epistolarum*

Liber, Ep. XLVII, ML 197, 220.

¹⁰ ST. NICETA OF REMESIANA. *Opusculum de psalmodiae bono*. Op. II, c.3, ML 68, 373.

¹¹ ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM. *Expositio in Psalmos*. In *Psalmum XLI*, n.1. MG 55, 156.

¹² ST. AUGUSTINE, *Confessionum*, L.X, c.33, n.49, ML 32, 799-800.

¹³ BOETHIUS. *De Musica*. L.I, c.1, ML 63, 1171.

¹⁴ Cf. BOETHIUS, *Idem*, col.1169.

¹⁵ ST. NICETA OF REMESIANA. *op.cit.*, c.1, col.372.

off entirely from the verbal dimension, and take flight in a pure *jubilus*, a musical expression of a joy beyond words, which typically embellishes a word such as *Alleluia*. This form of unfettered vocalization is, as St. Augustine described it, “the voice of the heart breaking out into joy, and seeking as well as it can to express feelings whose meaning it may not even understand. [...] When are we jubilant? When we praise that which cannot be uttered.”³²

Path leading souls to the supernatural

For St. Gregory the Great, sacred chant can effectively prepare the heart for the action of God: “Through the sound of the psalmody, when it is done with the intention of the heart, a path to the heart is prepared for the almighty Lord, so that he may pour out into the intent mind either the mysteries of prophesy or the grace of compunction.

[...] When we sing to him we make a path so that He may come to our heart and inflame us by the grace of his love.³³” The first monk-Pope also understood that certain musical sounds can favour this encounter, in a human nature so inclined to focus on the temporal and material aspects of existence.

For example, a musical piece typically ends on the tonic note, giving it a sense of conclusion. Gregorian chant melodies, in contrast, often do not make this final resolution on the last note, evoking a sense of the infinite, of eternity. In addition, by the extreme lightness of its movement, Gregorian chant is rendered as spiritual as possible while remaining within the realm of the senses since, as Dom Mocquereau comments, it “borrows as little as possible from the material world. It moves, but invisibly; it advances, but imponderably.”³⁴

These suggestions of immateriality and eternity echoed in Gregorian

chant, when assimilated over time by the soul, can aid in forming a corresponding and salutary state of spirit. For Prof. Plinio Corrêa, hearing Gregorian chant “calls to mind the penitential aspect, it warns against the emptiness of worldly things, against the deceptiveness of the excessive élans of man himself. Such is Gregorian chant. From the exultant joys of the *Te Deum*, to the solemn recollections, of *Tantum Ergo*, it is the music that has an incomparable ability to express the perfect attitude, the exact degree of spiritual lightness of an upright and truly innocent soul when it places itself before God.”³⁵

This was the reason for his counsel—which concludes our journey through the world of Gregorian chant, so unlike the world in which we live: “Seek to have your temperament in the state of spirit of Gregorian chant, and you will have found a sure *via* for your sanctification.”³⁶ ✧

¹⁶ ST. AUGUSTINE, op.cit., L.9, c.6, n.14, col.769.

¹⁷ PERNOD, Régine. Pour en finir avec le Moyen Age. Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1977, p.54.

¹⁸ ST. GREGORY I. *Registri Epistolarum*. L.XI, Epist.XIII. ML 77, 1128.

¹⁹ ST. JOHN CASSIAN, *Collationum*. Coll.I, c. 17, ML 49, 507.

²⁰ ST. BENEDICT, *Regula*, c.XIX, ML 66, 473-474.

²¹ Idem., c.XLII, col.669.

²² Idem., *Prol.*, col.215

²³ CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Music and Word as Complementary Expressions of the Soul*. op.cit.

²⁴ ST. HILDEGARD VON BINGEN. *Scivias sive Visionum ac Revelationum*. L.III, v.13, ML 197, 735-736.

²⁵ ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX. *Epistolae*. Ep.CCCXCVIII, n.2, ML 182, 610.

²⁶ Idem, col.611.

²⁷ ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. In *Psalmos Davidis exposito*. *Proemium*.

²⁸ HERBERT, Rembert. *Entrances: Gregorian*

chant in Daily Life. New York: Church Publishing, 1999. p.11.

²⁹ PIUS XII. *Musicae sacrae*, 25/12/1955, n.3.

³⁰ JOHNER, Dominic. *The Chants of the Vatican Gradual*. Collegeville (MS): St. John’s Abbey, 1940. p.10.

³¹ Cf. JOHNER, OSB, Dominic. *A New School of Gregorian Chant*. New York, Cincinnati: F. Pustet, 1925, p.252; 256; 294.

³² ST. AUGUSTINE. *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, In *Psalmo XCIX*, n.4-5, ML 36, 1271.

³³ ST. GREGORY I. *Homiliae in Hiezechihalem Prophetam*. L.I, hom.1, n.15. ML 76, 793.

³⁴ MOCQUEREAU, OSB, André. *Le Nombre Musical Grégorien*. Tournai: Desclée, 1932, v.I, p.112.

³⁵ CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Cântico da alma inocente*, op.cit., p.34-35.

³⁶ CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Dístico*. In: *Liber Cantualis: Hymni et cantica sacra*. São Paulo: Artpress, 1989. s.p.



Spain – During the week of November 13-19, the Heralds of the Gospel carried out a Marian Mission in the province of Murcia, in the towns of Lobosillo and Valladolides (right), and from November 20-27, in Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in Roquetas de Mar, in the province of Almeria (left).



Portugal – On October 25, the statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary visited the ASAS Home, in Lisbon, where she was received by the institution's choir (right). On November 17, she visited the sick in the home run by the Commander Joaquim de Sá Couto Foundation in the parish of São Paio de Oleiros (left and centre).



Netherlands – Most Rev. Willem Jacobus Eijk, Archbishop of Utrecht, stops by the booth of the Heralds on Catholic Youth Day, organized by the Dutch Bishops' Conference.

Spain – Heralds participate in the traditional procession of Our Lady of Almudena, Patroness of Madrid, which passed through the downtown streets.

Italy: Evangelizing the “bambini”

It is from among the children of today that the vocations to the priesthood or religious life will flourish tomorrow, and that Christian families and consecrated lay people will be formed. With this reality in mind, Herald missionaries endeavoured to pay special attention to children during visits to parish communities, schools, and hospitals, from October 28 to November 22, in the provinces of Reggio Calabria and Messina.



Primary school (Galati Marina)



St. Francis of Paola Shrine (Milazzo)



Assumption of Our Lady (San Giorgio Morgeto)



Simone Neri School (Giampilieri)



Polyclinic Hospital (Messina)



Kindergarten and Primary School in Ponte Schiavo



Parish community of Itala



Recife



Vitoria



Bishop Irineu Scherer



Ponta Grossa

Youth Catechesis through the Nativity Scene

Nativity scenes can be an excellent way to explain the true meaning of Christmas to young people. The Heralds of the Gospel, who annually set up nativity scenes in their youth centres throughout the world, have experienced this. Designed especially for the catechesis of parish or school groups, the scenes narrate the story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem using light and sound display. In Joinville, following their established tradition, the inauguration was preceded by a Mass celebrated by the Bishop, Most Rev. Irineu Roque Scherer.



Cotia – On the feast day of Our Lady of Aparecida young people from the Heralds of the Gospel youth centre in Cotia, Brazil, together with their families, celebrated with a Mass and procession (right). Eight youths made their First Communion on the same day.



Pilgrim Statue Received in Quintana

A caravan of 200 vehicles escorted the pilgrim statue of the Immaculate Heart from Pompeia to Quintana (State of São Paulo), where it remained, October 8-9. The visit, organized by participants of the Shrine Apostolate, was marked by public manifestations of devotion such as the candlelit procession to Our Lady of Aparecida Parish, where a night vigil was held invoking the Virgin Mary's protection over the city. There were also several Eucharistic Celebrations and processions.



Curitiba – 190 young people from the Brazilian cities of Joinville, Ponta Grossa, Maringá and Curitiba, gathered in Curitiba from November 12-15 for the 3rd Southern Regional Congress. Some of the youths participated in a spiritual retreat (right), while another group took part in conferences, games and stage plays.



Mozambique – On the occasion of the liturgical memorial of Pope St. Clement, organized activities for youth and adults were held at the Heralds’ House in Maputo.



Guatemala – More than a thousand participants of the Shrine Apostolate went on pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lord of Esquipulas, on November 20.



Nicaragua – On September 23, the Heralds visited La Modelo Prison in the city of Tipitapa. There was a recitation of the Rosary interspersed with skits performed by the inmates, several of whom received Baptism during the Eucharistic Celebration presided by Msgr. Amado Peña, the diocesan delegate for Prison Ministry.



El Salvador – On October 30, 700 faithful in San Sebastián participated in a commemorative Mass and procession marking five years of the Shrine Apostolate in this city.



Paraguay – A “Day with Mary” was held on October 30 in Asunción. Eight new Shrines were entrusted to their respective coordinators.



Pastoral Activities in Peru

Sunday Masses in the Church of the Incarnation in Lima, entrusted to the care of the Heralds by the Archdiocesan Primate, are always very well attended, especially on Marian feasts (above).

Among other places, the Heralds of Peru recently visited the Lomas de Santa Maria School run by the Sisters of Holy Mary of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Chacacayo, a new and vibrant religious congregation of Spanish origin. They also paid a visit to the residents of Holy Mary of Hope Home in Chosica, where the Frater-

nity of Divine Providence, a branch of Franciscan spirituality, is devoted to the care of the elderly.

At the end of October, a Marian Mission was held in Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in Aucallama, in the Diocese of Huacho. As November began, monasteries, hospitals, and schools in the city of Cuzco received the statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Among these stops, the visit to St. Martin of Porres School stood out for the special affection with which the students received Our Lady.



Lomas de Santa Maria School (Chacacayo)



Holy Mary of Hope Retirement Home (Chosica)



Marian Mission in Aucallama



St. Martin de Porres School (Cuzco)

Patriarch of a New Era

The soul of the Bishop of Rheims had the mettle of a hero and the confidence of a prophet. He steadfastly believed in the promise of the conversion of the barbarian tribe that was destined to open a new historic era.



Sr. Clara Morazzani, EP

On March 16, 455, Emperor Valentinian III succumbed to the blows of two soldiers from the Imperial Guard, on the Field of Mars. With his death, the Theodosian dynasty perished, the last line to reign over Rome, hastening the end of a declining Empire.

For a further twenty years the throne of the Caesars would be disputed by transient rulers, the playthings of politics or unbridled human passions. Old and worn out, the Roman State disintegrated before its definitive collapse, undermined from within, corroded in its foundations by decadent customs, and political, military, and financial chaos. “Among the Romans there was no longer education, but only moral corruption and intrigues; family life was destroyed.”¹

On the other hand, the successive barbarian invasions from the north had weakened the authority and cohesion of the Rome of former times. Nevertheless, “it was not the barbarians that destroyed the Empire, it annihilated itself; the foreigners were merely executors of the death sentence pronounced against the ancient world by the moral order.”²

Within this crucial historical context, Divine Providence raised up great men such as St. Severinus, St. Hesy chius, St. Avitus of Vienne—and, later, St. Augustine of Canterbury, St. Boniface and St. Columbanus—to serve as the seeds of a new era germinating from the ruins of the Roman Empire of the West.

These men of God, adorned with the fame of virtue—and often by the witness of numerous miracles—exercised a powerful influence over the barbarians. Albeit fearsome warriors, these men were eager to learn supernatural truths. In contact with prelates and religious they awoke to the morning light of the Christian religion, which appeared to them like the splendour of the dawn.

Bishop of Rheims at 22 years of age

Remigius was born in Laon in 437, from a noble Gallo-Roman family. From a very early age his intelligence and aptitude for oratory garnered the admiration of teachers and classmates. The fame of his eloquence spread to such an extent that in 459, when the Bishop of Rheims died, he was chosen to replace him.

The work of this man of only twenty-two years of age, in heading such an important Episcopal See, soon revealed the wisdom of this choice. In his famous *Historia Francorum*, St. Gregory of Tours writes: “St. Remigius was a bishop of considerable knowledge who at first had been steeped in the study of rhetoric, but who so distinguished himself by his holiness that he equalled Sylvester in miracles.”³

The charity and kindness of the young prelate soon won over the hearts of the faithful, whom he served devotedly—comforting all those who sought his help with material alms or with consolation and guidance for the soul. However, without neglecting the care of those belonging to the flock of Christ through Baptism, St. Remigius burned with the desire to conquer new souls.

The tribe of the Salian Franks

The north of Rheims, in present-day Belgium, had been settled by the Salian Franks. They were perhaps the most modest of the Germanic peoples in origin, but with the passage of time they had gained pre-

ponderance in all fields—especially in the art of warfare. Their qualities did not pass unnoticed by the vigilant Bishop of Rheims who discerned a special design of God hovering over this people. His apostolic heart was moved, and he longed to draw them into the bosom of the Church.

Remigius focused his attention especially on King Childeric who, in 464, returned to his people after eight years of exile in Thuringia. Over the course of sixteen years of patient apostolate, the bishop strove to attract the Frankish leader’s soul to embrace the Catholic Faith. The latter, however, resisted, remaining tenaciously attached to his gods, but maintaining amicable relations with the ecclesiastics and giving them his support.

News one day arrived at the Episcopal See of Rheims that Childeric had died at an advanced age, without expressing the least desire for Baptism. All of Remigius’ efforts were suddenly dashed! The hopes built up over almost two decades suddenly vanished like a mirage...

Had he been deceived? Was the long-cherished dream merely a chimera, the fruit of his imagination?

Clovis succeeds his father Childeric

Many missionaries would have become discouraged in face of this apparent failure, but not the Bishop of Rheims. Steeled by virtue, his soul possessed the mettle of a hero and the confidence of a prophet. Far from disheartening him, the death of the king emboldened the strong-willed prelate.

Childeric left his son Clovis as successor—a 15 year-old adolescent, whom the Franks promptly proclaimed king. It became indispensable to win his friendship from the start and to instil in the youth a holy respect for the Church and its representatives.



Gustavo Kraijl

The charity and kindness of the young prelate soon won over the hearts of the faithful, whom he served devotedly

“St. Remigius cures a blind youth” - Church of St. Louis of France, Rome

Accordingly, Remigius sent him a letter that combined the affection of a father and the authority of a teacher: “In the first place, you must take care that the discernment of the Lord does not abandon you, and that your merit remains at the height to which your humility has led you, since, according to the proverb, the actions of men are judged by their end. You should surround yourself with councillors of whom you can be proud. Do good, be chaste and honest. Show yourself to be filled with deference toward your bishops, and always have recourse to their advice. [...] Divert yourself with the youths, but deliberate with the elders, and if you desire to reign, show yourself worthy to do so.”²⁴

This letter was the first step of a long journey that led the young king to the baptismal font in the Cathedral of Rheims.

A heart closed to grace

For ten years, Clovis counted on the friendship and support of St. Remigius in governing his kingdom. And although the Frankish leader showed no signs of openness to grace, the bishop’s influence over him during this period became stronger. “The pagan king learned to bow before the moral superiority of the priest of Christ. [...] The man to whom the voice of the people attributed the resurrection of one who was dead would become the instrument for the resurrection of a people.”²⁵

In 491, Clovis’ wife died. Remigius measured the risk to Church interests should Clovis decide to remarry a pagan princess or, worse yet, an adherent to the Arian heresy—knowing how his superstitious wife Basina had opposed his conver-



For ten years Clovis' heart showed no signs of openness to grace

"Clovis, King of the Franks", by François-Louis Dejuinne – National Museum of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon (France)

sion. Therefore he agreed with Avitus, Bishop of Vienne, in proposing that the Frankish King marry Clothilde, the Christian daughter of the king of the Burgundians, who had been educated since childhood by Avitus himself.

Clovis accepted, and the following year the nuptials were celebrated in the city of Soissons, presided and blessed by the Bishop of Rheims. Now the bishop had a powerful ally within the royal household. Indeed, in her fervour, Clothilde was convinced that her union with Clovis gave her the mission of converting him: "she ceaselessly counselled him to become acquainted with the true God and to abandon the idols."⁶

The long-desired conversion

The long-desired day arrived in the spring of 496, fifteen years after the royal ascension of Clovis. According to St. Gregory of Tours, the queen bid St. Remigius come to

"instil the word of salvation in the king."⁷

Starting by an exposition on the futility of idols, the holy Prelate of Rheims instructed the king in the truths of the Faith. He spoke to a rapt Clovis of Our Lord Jesus Christ, his miracles and divine teachings. But when the rustic monarch heard of the sorrowful Passion of Jesus, he was aroused to anger and exclaimed: "Ah! If only I had been there with my Franks!"⁸

Indeed, his Franks, captivated by supernatural enthusiasm, noted the sovereign's steps toward conversion and followed his example. When Clovis convoked them to proclaim his decision, they cried in unison: "We reject the mortal gods, pious king, and are ready to follow the immortal God who Remigius proclaims."⁹

"Remigius, fear not!"

All was in readiness for the baptismal ceremony to be held the next day, the Nativity of Our Lord. However, during the night Remigius was overcome by a sense of dread...It was a trial characteristic of a soul who treads the path of a prophet. He was tortured by the doubt that he was not working exclusively for God's glory in his great desire for the conversion of the Frankish king, and that he was, rather, being driven by worldly concerns.

A ray of light suddenly illuminated the utter darkness of the place in which the man of God was praying. It was accompanied by a powerful voiced: "Remigius, fear not!"¹⁰ In vision, he then saw the glorious consequences of this Baptism, for Gaul and the Church. The holy bishop had not been mistaken; this event would give rise to a chosen

nation, which for centuries would be the supporter of the Papacy and contribute to the flourishing of the Catholic Religion through the ages.

Still in vision, a procession of magnificent warriors filed past the awestruck and venerable ecclesiastic—some of them saints, who put their swords at the service of the Faith. However, this glorious scene was followed by others of desolation: the sad spectacle of this chosen people's infidelities, sinking into sin and abandoning God. While immersed in these thoughts, fluctuating between joy and horror, another voice, filled with kindness and reassurance, whispered in his ear: "Be not afraid, because I am here, watching over you."¹¹

Remigius regained his feeling of peace. Now he could advance fearlessly, assured of the most precious help. The Blessed Virgin, as a good Mother, would protect the young Frankish nation.



Like Simeon, Remigius could finally sing: "Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace..."

"Baptism of Clovis" - Basilica of St. Remigius, Reims (France)

Sergio Hollmann

“Is this the Kingdom of heaven?”

On the following afternoon, still under the effect of this magnificent vision, Remigius set out in cortège through the streets of Rheims, leading King Clovis by the hand, toward the cathedral. The building—much smaller and simpler than the present-day cathedral—was adorned with white curtains and illuminated by thousands of aromatic candles, as a symbol of the spiritual beauty of Holy Mother Church that on this day welcomed the Franks as her children.

“The entire temple of the baptistry was imbued with a divine odour and God showered the assistants with such grace that they felt as if transported amid the perfumes of Paradise.”¹² Awestruck by the splendour of the trappings and the hymns, Clovis paused on the threshold of the holy precinct and asked Remigius: “Is this the Kingdom of heaven that you promised me?” The bishop replied “No, but it is the beginning of the way that leads to it.”¹³

The ceremony unfolded with all solemnity. Three thousand Franks—not counting women and children—received Baptism together with the king. Among them was the king’s sister, the Princess Albofléda, and the small Thierry, child of Clovis’ first marriage.

Like Simeon, Remigius could finally sing: “Lord, now lettest Thou

thy servant depart in peace...” (Lk 2:29).

The beginning of a new nation

It was God’s will, however, that Remigius continue his apostolic labour for many years in Gaul. Assured of the king’s protection, Remigius was free to dedicate himself to abolishing idolatry and proclaiming the Gospel of Christ throughout the kingdom. All who drew near him profited: pagans converted, Christians received the bread of doctrine, heretics renounced their errors, and bishops felt encouraged to follow his example.

In the final years of his life, God willed that the venerable brow of the bishop that had been encircled by a halo of glory be crowned with suffering: his body was bent under numerous illnesses that did not, however, dampen his enthusiasm or lessen his charity. Finally, in 530, Remigius surrendered his soul to God at the age of 96, after seventy years of Episcopal ministry.

Far from being lost in the mist of history through the centuries, his figure would shine with growing distinction and would reveal the true magnitude of his soul. By his fidelity to God’s calling, St. Remigius became the prophet of a new era and patriarch of a Catholic nation to which he will always remain associated, as the mediator of the graces that heaven poured out upon it. ✧



Eric Salas

Through the centuries, the figure of St. Remigius would shine with growing distinction, revealing the true magnitude of his soul

“St. Remigius” - Sanctuary of Lourdes (France)

¹ WEISS, Juan Bautista. *Historia Universal*. Barcelona: La Educación, 1928, v.IV, p.354. Regarding the situation of decadence of the Roman Empire of the epoch, see also BORDONOVE, Georges. *Clovis et les Mérovingiens*. Paris: Pygmalion, 1988, p.30.

² WEISS, op.cit., p.352.

³ GRÉGOIRE DE TOURS. *Histoire des francs*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1963, v.I, p.121.

⁴ MGH. *Epistolae Merovingici et Karoloni aevi*, I, 113, apud KURTH, Godefroid. *Clovis*. Paris: Jules Taillandier, 1978, p.212-213.

⁵ KURTH, op. cit., p.276.

⁶ GRÉGOIRE DE TOURS, op. cit., p.119.

⁷ Idem, p.120.

⁸ FREDEGAIRE, III, 21, apud KURTH, op. cit., p.297.

⁹ GRÉGOIRE DE TOURS, op. cit., p.120.

¹⁰ BERNET, Anne. *Clotilde, épouse de Clóvis*. Paris: Pygmalion, 2006, p.148.

¹¹ Idem, p.150.

¹² GRÉGOIRE DE TOURS, op. cit., p.120.

¹³ HINCMAR, *Victa sancti Remigii*, apud KURTH, op. cit., p.310.

Mercy Aid Fund

Between September 14 and October 12, the Mercy Aid Fund granted five more donations to social entities associated with the Catholic Church in Brazil.



... you have done it unto Me

To ease the needs of underprivileged parishes and charitable entities associated with the Church, the Heralds of the Gospel created the “Mercy Fund” in 2005. Through it they raise the resources necessary for concrete projects, which are presented to the Association accompanied by the necessary documents and the support of the diocesan bishop.

Recently, five more projects have received funds. On September 14, the aid requested by the Ministry for People with Special Needs of the Archdiocese of São Paulo was delivered to Sr. Antônio Carlos Munhoz. Four days later, a van was donated to the Rosa Mystica Missionary Community, from the Diocese of Mogi das Cruzes (São Paulo State). The keys were handed over during

a solemn Eucharistic Celebration presided by Diocesan Bishop Airton José dos Santos. Also in September, the project presented on behalf of the Clamor Cavanis House for Fr. Vanderlei Pavan, CSCH, received support.

On October 5, the Mercy Fund delivered its contribution to the new diocesan seminary, requested by Most Rev. Benedito Beni dos Santos, Bishop of Lorena. A week later, on the Feast of Our Lady of Aparecida, Fr. Aumir Scomparin, EP, visited the Santa Rita Parish in Caieiras, where he presented the amount requested by the St. Louis Maria de Montfort Community to Fr. Ednaldo Araújo dos Santos.



Clamor Cavanis House (São Paulo)



Ministry for Persons with Special Needs (São Paulo)



St. Rita Parish (Caieiras)



Mogi das Cruzes (São Paulo)

The Day We Met the Pope



L'Osservatore Romano

What does a practicing Catholic feel when he presents his credentials to the Vicar of Christ as his country's Ambassador to the Holy See? An enthusiastic testimony sent to our editors makes the encounter of a diplomat and his family with the Holy Father come to life with spontaneous authenticity.

Fernando E. Sánchez Campos

Ambassador of Costa Rica to the Holy See

Several weeks before my departure for Rome, diplomats and clergymen commented to me about the importance of the post I was about to assume and the speech to be made to the Holy Father when presenting my credentials.

This took place on December 3, 2010, a little over a month after my arrival in Rome. A few weeks earlier, the Chief of Vatican Protocol visited me to explain the historic ceremony in detail. I then learned that the speeches would be exchanged, rather than read. Therefore, I would have ten or fifteen minutes at most to speak freely with the Successor of Peter.

"It is a unique opportunity; take advantage of it," the prelate insisted.

Presentation of credentials

It is an extraordinary experience. Starting with the attire (tailcoat for men and veil for women), then the escort of the Papal Gentlemen from my residence, the "processional" route through the centre of Rome to the Vatican, and finally the salute of the Swiss Guard and their escort to the Pope's apartments and then to St. Peter's Basilica (where the Catholic ambassadors are led to pray after the ceremony)—all of this permeates the long-awaited moment with an air of surrealism that is difficult to explain.

This is one of the many ways that the Holy See expresses its deference to countries that appoint ambassadors to the Vatican, while distinguishing the person of the Holy

Father, to whom the letters of credence are presented.

The climactic moment is undoubtedly the conversation with the Vicar of Christ. Upon entering the walls of the Vatican State, amid the sound of sirens and the splendour of the decorations worn by the Papal Gentlemen, one feels deeply touched. At the entrance, monsignors and Vatican officials take the Ambassador "by the hand" and lead him through beautiful rooms, before stopping close to the private library of the Holy Father. In this place, surrounded with the magnificence of the sacred art and the emotional expressions of family, friends and colleagues, hearts start racing.

At a signal to enter the room, a monsignor informed me that I

might speak with the Pope in Spanish. Now I went forward alone. I was calm, thinking that, just like before, I would still pass through several rooms. But not this time.... I must admit that despite several days of preparation for this moment, the presence of the Holy Father took me by surprise.

His Holiness Benedict XVI was standing, awaiting me with a smile, at the door of his library. Perhaps because he saw the mixture of awe and emotion on my face, he took me by the arm and literally dragged me inside. There, the Monsignors and Holy See personnel stepped into action again. In a matter of seconds, I presented my letters of credence, we exchanged speeches, while photographs and the customary official videos were recorded.

Advice on how to be a sound Catholic

Then the attendants and photographers left the library, where the Holy Father and I remained, no more than a half metre apart. An amiable Monsignor was on hand for any translation needs that might arise. At that moment, I was filled with a profound peace. After listening to the Pope for several minutes, I disclosed each of the official themes I had prepared for discussion. Showing great deference, the Holy Father, replied to all of them with discernment and interest. The ten minutes elapsed, but I did not feel that His Holiness was ready to end our conversation. Therefore, remembering the advice of the Chief of Protocol, I “took advantage.”

“Holy Father, we have already dealt with official matters. Now, if you permit, I would like to speak of myself.”

The Pope assented, with a smile and a hint of surprise. First, almost as in confession, I asked his advice on how to be a consistent Catholic in both my personal and professional life. Without going into the details of this conversation, it suffices to say that he recommended prayer, Communion and study. His words echo in my mind: “Evil is powerful, but God is greater. Remember: God is stronger than any

“Holy Father, we have already dealt with official matters. Now, if you permit, I would like to speak of myself”



Won over by the Pope's kindness, my son Fernando Felipe followed along without missing any details

obstacle we can face in the fulfillment of the mission He has given us.”

“In Costa Rica, we love him and await him”

Secondly—fulfilling a promise made to members of my parish community—I mentioned to the Holy Father that, in the farewell Mass celebrated in Heredia, my birthplace, the people insisted that I ask the Pope to visit us soon, for, because “in Costa Rica, we love him and await him.” These words, which I thought to be of little import, made an impact on the Holy Father. He was visibly touched to hear these words, and smilingly replied: “Thank you! Thank you! Costa Rica has a special place in the heart of the Pope.”

Finally, I spoke to him about the cure of my son, Fernando Felipe, through the intercession of Padre Pio, and made bold to offer him as a gift the book I wrote on this. The Holy Father's face lit up when he heard the story. “Blessed be God, and blessed be Padre Pio,” he said, smiling and pointing to heaven.

“We left his apartments touched and filled with peace”

At the end of our almost half-hour conversation, the Holy Father went to meet my family, friends and colleagues from the Embassy. The first to be greeted was our son Fernando Felipe, who gave two white roses (one from himself, and the other on behalf of his little sister, Maria Pia) to the Pope, who declared: “This is the boy of the miracle!”—and kissed him with a big smile. He did the same with Maria Pia, and then greeted my family and all the members of the delegation. I



During the photograph with members of my family (left) and the giving of gifts (right) the Holy Father clearly noted everyone's genuine feelings

accompanied him, presenting each person with some background. Meanwhile, Fernando Felipe, won over by the Pope's kindness, followed us without missing any details.

The Holy Father clearly noted everyone's genuine feelings, especially my son's, who did not leave his side for an instant. When it was time for the group photograph, the Pope himself called him. Fernando Felipe jumped up and climbed onto the platform, to be with the Pontiff. However, to everyone's surprise, and to the consternation of the Monsignors in attendance, he stepped on the Holy Father's shoes. When my wife scolded him, His Holiness, smiling and unconcerned, said: "Don't worry, madam; he is a child."

After the photo, I gave the Pontiff several books and a beautiful painting of Our Lady of the Angels—Patroness of Costa Rica, the work of my mother. He thanked me and gave each one of us a medal and a rosary, and bade us farewell with his Apostolic Blessing.

"I met a wise man who is not afraid of his feelings. I left the Vatican feeling closer to God"

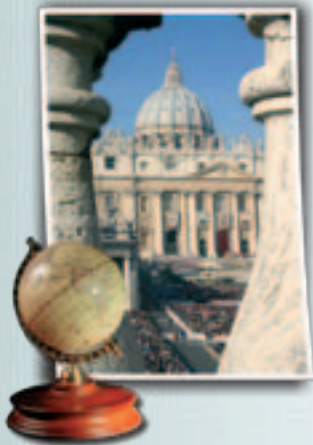
As can be imagined, we left his apartments very touched and inundated with peace. However, the sentiments of this final moment were truncated by another "holycaper" of my son.

Fernando Felipe was not satisfied with a "goodbye from afar" to the Holy Father. Realizing we were leaving his apartments, he asked me: "Daddy, where is the Pope?" I told him that we had already said our goodbyes, and now we were going to pray in St. Peter's Basilica. Evidently disappointed, he retorted: "But I didn't say goodbye to the Pope!" Scarcely had he uttered these words when he released my hand, "evad-

ed" the Swiss Guards and ran back to the Holy Father's private library. The moment of my son's loving reunion with the Vicar of Christ was happily captured by a photographer who saw what was happening and ran after the child. Since then, neither Fernando Felipe nor his proud parents cease to speak of this beautiful experience.

* * *

In less than an hour, Pope Benedict XVI, the great theologian, taught me that sensibility and simplicity are factors that perfect the intellect rather than cloud it. I met a wise man who is not afraid of his feelings. I left the Vatican feeling closer to God, not mainly because of the supernatural aspect of the experience, but mostly due to the deeply human side. Christ's first herald had made a profound impact upon my Faith, more by what he transmitted than by what he said. I also know that the Pope has a special place in the heart of Costa Rica and, from this day on, a very special place in my heart and that of my entire family. ✧



Third Report on the Social Doctrine of the Church in the World

On November 18, under the theme *The Social Doctrine of the Church cannot be chained up—Witnesses, Holiness and Martyrdom*, the Cardinal Van Thuân International Observatory presented the Third Report on the Social Doctrine of the Church in the World, which analyses the events of 2010, focusing on the diffusion and practical application of the Social Doctrine of the Church during this period.

On the choice of the motto *The Social Doctrine of the Church cannot be chained up*, Most Rev. Giampaolo Crepaldi, Archbishop of Trieste and President of the Observatory, explained to *Zenit* agency: “Emerging from the Report are the many chains that continue to prevent the Social Doctrine of the Church from expressing itself and becoming incarnated. There are external chains like the pressure exercised by international lobbies against life and family, but there are also internal chains like a lack of attention to the Magisterium of Benedict XVI in this field or the secularization of the Social Doctrine.”

More information is available at the Observatory’s website (<http://www.vanthuanobservatory.org>).

Study Day on the New Evangelization

On November 11, in Rome, the Pontifical Commission for Latin

America (CAL) sponsored a Study Day on the New Evangelization, which included the participation of Cardinal Marc Ouellet, Prefect of the Vatican’s Congregation for Bishops and President of the Commission; Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches; Cardinal Cañizares Llovera, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, and Archbishop Rino Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization, among others.

Prof. Guzmán Carriquiry, Secretary of the Pontifical Commission, declared to *Zenit* agency that during the studies the New Evangelization had been analysed “not as a response to the threats of secularization or sects,” but rather “as fidelity to Christ, to the Church and the proclamation of the Christian message.” He further specified: “The New Evangelization arises, not as a reaction, but from the very core of Christian being, and the mission of the Church. Therefore, what is essential is a Church continually evangelized so it can be ardently evangelizing.”



New Archpriest for the Basilica of St. Mary Major

On November 21, Archbishop Santos Abril y Castelló was appointed new Archpriest for the Papal Basilica of St. Mary Major, replacing Cardinal Bernard Francis Law, who presented his resignation due to age.

Born in 1935, in Alfambra, Spain, Archbishop Abril y Castelló received priestly ordination in 1960 and was ordained bishop in 1985 by Cardinal Agostino Casaroli. He holds degrees in Social Sciences from the *Angelicum* and in Canon Law from the Gregorian. He was Apostolic Nuncio to several countries until January 2011, when Pope Benedict XVI appointed him Vice-Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church.

In the eighties, as Head of the Spanish-speaking Sector in the Secretariat of State, he gave Spanish classes to Blessed John Paul II and accompanied him on several trips to Spanish-speaking countries.

North American parishes start using new edition of the Missal

On the first Sunday of Advent, after more than a year of preparation, the third edition of the Roman Missal in the English language began to be used in North American parishes in the United States and Canada.

Since July 2010, when the Holy See approved the new text, communities have been preparing to adapt to the modifications, including musicians, since the third edition also contains new musical arrangements, *Gaudium Press* agency reports.

“The entire Church in the United States has been blessed with this opportunity to deepen its understanding of the Sacred Liturgy, and to appreciate its meaning in our lives”—reads the message sent by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (<http://old.usccb.org/romanmissal/>).

Pope names two US Catholic evangelists to advise Vatican council

Pope Benedict XVI has appointed 15 experts in evangelization as consultants for the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evan-

gelization. The Vatican released the names of the 15 papal appointees on December 7, among whom nine are clergy and six are lay Catholics, including two Americans, CNS reports.

Curtis Martin, founder and president of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, is a fellow at the Augustine Institute in Denver, a Catholic graduate school dedicated to new evangelization.

Ralph Martin, director of graduate theology programs in evangelization at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in the Archdiocese of Detroit, was the founding editor of *New Covenant Magazine* and founding director of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office in Rome.

The majority of those chosen are professors from Europe, and four have taught at Rome's Pontifical Lateran University where the evangelization council's president, Archbishop Rino Fisichella, served as rector.



Beatification of Sister Maria Catalina Irigoyen

On October 29, in a solemn ceremony held in the Cathedral of Madrid, presided by the Prefect of

the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB, the Servant of God Maria Catalina Irigoyen Echegaray, religious from the Congregation of the Servants of Mary, Ministers to the Sick, was beatified.

Opening the celebration, Archbishop of Madrid Cardinal Rouco Varela summarized the edifying aspects of the Blessed's life. Cardinal Amato then read the Apostolic Letter in which the Pope inscribes her in the Catalogue of Blesseds, describing her as a "soul with a noble heart, a humble woman and untiring worker."

In his homily, Cardinal Amato pointed out that Sister Catalina "lovingly lived her Institute's mission, which demanded constant sac-

Present-day marriage in light of the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas

On November 11, at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (*Angelicum*), professors from major Roman universities participated in a symposium entitled *Current Questions on Marriage*.

Sponsored by the Thomas Aquinas International Society (SITA), the event analyzed the institution of Marriage from its twofold perspective—natural and sacramental—in light of the Angelic Doctor's teach-

ings, to clarify present-day questions concerning the family.

Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, addressed the rights and duties of parents regarding the education of children in his conference. During the homily of his Mass, he emphasized the importance of growth in the Faith for progress in theological studies: "The quality of theology cultivated depends on personal faith," he affirmed.

The President of SITA, Fr. Vincenzo Benetollo, OP, stressed in his conference that conjugal friendship is only complete when it is the fruit of a freely-given love.

Other symposium speakers included Don Giuseppe Abbà, SDB, from the Pontifical Salesian University; Fr. Terrence Kennedy, CSsR, from the Redemptorist Institute of Higher Education (*Alphonsianum*); Dr. Lorella Congiunti, director of SITA; Fr. Aldo Vendemiati, FFB, from the Pontifical Urbana University; and Fr. Francesco Compagnoni, OP, from the *Angelicum*.



Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski and Fr. Vincenzo Benetollo, OP, during one of the work sessions

rifice, devotion to the Eucharist and the Virgin Mary; an unconditional love.”

Blessed Catalina Irigoyen was born in Pamplona, Spain, on November 25, 1848, and was admitted to the Congregation on December 31, 1881. She cared for the sick with heroic dedication for 23 years until she herself succumbed to serious illness. She died on October 10, 1918.

***New book of Benedict XVI:
“Mary, Mother of Jesus”***

The most recent book of Benedict XVI, *Mary, the Mother of Jesus*, is already on sale at Italian bookstores. The 48-page work is written in a style accessible to children and is illustrated by Italian artist Franco Vignazia.

In it, the Pope explains to children the significance of the liturgical festivities instituted by the Church

in honour of the Virgin Mother of God and encourages them to have recourse to her in their daily difficulties.

In the preface, Cardinal Angelo Scola, Archbishop of Milan, points out that Mary, while conceived without sin, “lived the same joys as us, the same sufferings, difficult moments and happy ones, always confiding and placing herself in God’s hands.”

Pope advances sainthood causes of Marianne Cope and Kateri Tekakwitha

Pope Benedict XVI advanced the sainthood causes of Blessed Marianne Cope of Molokai and Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, signing the decrees recognizing the miracles needed for their canonizations in a meeting with Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes on December 19.

Blessed Marianne spent the last 30 years of her life ministering to leprosy victims on the Hawaiian island of Molokai and died there in 1918 at age 80. She was beatified in St. Peter’s Basilica in 2005. Blessed Kateri, “the Lily of the Mohawks,” was baptized by Jesuit missionaries at age 20, and suffered much persecution for this choice. She died in Canada four years later in 1680, becoming the first Native American to be beatified in 1980.

Blessed Kateri’s second miracle involves the remarkable recovery of 5-year-old Jake Finkbonner of Ferndale, Seattle, from the rare “flesh eating” disease, necrotizing fasciitis, in February 2006. The boy had suffered a cut on his lip while playing, which allowed the bacteria to invade his bloodstream, bringing him close to death days later. In the hospital, Fr. Tim Sauer urged the family, partly Native American, to pray through the intercession of Blessed Kateri, and by this means a cure was quickly obtained, CNS reports.

A medical and theological board also recently declared their confirmations of the second miracle attributed to Mother Marianne’s intercession. CNS reports that at present, the only publicly known detail about the miracle is that it involves a woman’s healing, declared inexplicable since doctors had expected her death and were amazed at her survival.

An “ordinary public consistory,” in which the cardinals present in Rome express their support for the Pope’s decision to create the new saints must take place before a date is set for the canonizations.



Bl. Marianne Cope



Bl. Kateri Tekakwitha



Plenary Session of the International Theological Commission

the annual Plenary Session of the International Theological Commission was held in Rome from November 28 to December 2 dealing with three subjects of fundamental importance: God and the understanding of monotheism, the criteria for defining a theology as “Catholic”, and the relationship between the Social Doctrine of the Church and the entirety of Christian doctrine.

In a closing audience for participants, Pope Benedict XVI affirmed that the starting point for all Christian theology is “personal acceptance of the Word made man, listening to the Word of God in Sacred Scripture.” Nevertheless, he added: “The acknowledgement of this starting point is not enough to guarantee the unity of the Faith. All reading of the Bible is necessarily situated within a specific context, and the only context within which the faithful can be in full communion with Christ is the Church and its living Tradition.”

The Theological Commission, presently composed of thirty members, is presided by Cardinal William Levada. Its Secretary General is Fr. Charles Morerod, OP, recently appointed by the Holy Father as Bishop of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg (Switzerland).

Religious freedom and the new evangelization

Personalities from the ecclesiastical, intellectual and political worlds participated in the 13th Catholics and

Public Life Congress, organized by the University of Saint Paul CEU in Madrid and the Catholic Propagation Association, highlighting the theme of Religious Freedom and the New Evangelization.

Explaining the Congress’ chosen theme, José Francisco Serrano told Brazilian agency *Gaudium Press* that it was especially important today to reclaim “a public place for God,” because “in many places, Christians from different confessions, and Catholics in particular, have lost their rights to publicly live their Faith.”

In the opening session on November 18, Carlos Romero, President of the two organizing institutions, highlighted how today religious freedom and the new evangelization are “two themes of the utmost importance” for the Church. Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Renzo Fratini recalled that the International Conference on Religious Dialogue in Hungary last August calculated that 105 thousand Christians are killed annually “as a direct and unequivocal consequence of their Faith.”

Pope Benedict XVI sent a message to congress participants, inviting them to “renew their constant commitment to be faithful to the demands of an authentically Christian life,” reports *Alfa y Omega* magazine of the Archdiocese of Madrid (www.alfayomega.es).

American Catholics help the Church in Latin America

Meeting on November 20 under the presidency of Most Rev. José Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles, the Subcommittee for the Church in Latin America of the USCCB approved 2.7 million dollars of aid to support 173 projects in nineteen countries of the continent, and one promoted by the Latin American Bishops’ Council (CELAM).

Two thirds of the total—1.8 million dollars—went toward the formation of religious, seminarians,

priests and permanent deacons, reports *Zenit* agency.

Cathedral of Brazzaville commemorates 120 years

The Cathedral of the Sacred Heart of Jesus—in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo—overflowed with faithful on November 20, when the Metropolitan Archbishop, Most Rev. Anatole Milandou, declared the opening of the Jubilee Year commemorating the 120th anniversary of the cathedral’s dedication.

In the homily during the Mass, Archbishop Milandou explained that during the Jubilee, “everyone is invited to witness that God still continues to grant graces and extend mercy today,” as well as to “ask the grace of a sincere conversion, for a personal encounter with the Lord.”

The Cathedral of Brazzaville was inaugurated in 1892 by Archbishop Prosper Augouard, a missionary during the early evangelization of Congo. The Jubilee Year will last until June 17 of 2012.



“The new evangelization is inseparable from the Christian family”

Commemorating the 30th anniversary of its founding, the Pontifical Council for the Family held its Plenary Assembly for 2011 at the Vatican. Beginning with a solemn Eucharistic Celebration in St. Peter’s Basilica, the meeting continued with three days of reflections—November 29 to December 1—on the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, of Blessed John Paul II.

In an audience for participants, headed by Cardinal Ennio Antonelli, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, the Holy Father stated that “the new evangelization depends largely on the domestic Church,” because the family is, in fact, the “human space” for the encounter with Christ.

Pope says late Cardinal Foley should inspire media use in spreading the Gospel

Pope Benedict XVI said he hoped the legacy of the late Cardinal John P. Foley would inspire others to make the Gospel known through mass media. The cardinal, a Philadelphia native, died of leukemia in Darby, Philadelphia at age 76 on December 11.

The Pope expressed his sadness and condolences for the Cardinal’s death in a December 12 telegram to Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia, transmitted by CNS: “I recall with gratitude the late cardinal’s years of priestly ministry in his beloved Archdiocese of Philadelphia, his distinguished service to the Holy See as president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications and most recently his labors on behalf of the Christian communities of the Holy Land” as grand master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, the Pope wrote. He also expressed hopes that the cardinal’s “lifelong commitment to the Church’s presence in the media will inspire others to take up this apostolate so essential to the proclamation of the Gospel and the progress of the new evangelization.”

Archbishop Claudio Celli, who succeeds the U.S. cardinal as president of the communications council, said Cardinal Foley “stressed the positive potential of the media in informing, instructing and inspiring others, as a key component of the Church’s mission and pastoral outreach in spreading the Gospel.”



Cardinal Comastri inaugurates “100 Crèches” display

The traditional Christmas display of 100 Crèches was inaugurated in Rome on November 26 and will remain open to the public until January 8, in the Sala del Bramante in the Piazza Del Popolo.

Organized by the *Rivista delle Nazioni*, the display presents 178 crèches this year, made with a wide range of techniques, materials and styles. The inauguration was presided by Cardinal Angelo Comastri, Vicar General of His Holiness for Vatican City.

In an interview with Vatican Radio, the Cardinal declared that the nativity scene “acquires remarkable relevance” in today’s consumerist society. “Today, we believe that entertainment will make us happy,” however, he added, “with the mystery of Bethlehem, God reminds us that wealth does not bring happiness.” After emphasizing that “if God is with us, there are reasons to hope, but if God is not with us, there is no hope,” he concluded, saying: “I would define the crèche as the very symbol of optimism.”

Aveiro distributes 17 thousand books in preparation for Advent

The Diocese of Aveiro, Portugal, distributed over 17 thousand copies of a booklet entitled *Familia, Esperança e Dom!* [Family: Hope and Gift!], with suggestions for reflections and prayers during the weeks of Advent and Christmas, *Gaudium Press* agency reports.

Each week is divided into three sections: *In the School of the Nativity Scene*, *In the Life of Today* and *In the*

Bible...to pray. They contain biblical references from Sunday liturgies and feast days, encouraging people to take on the challenge the Word of God presents, with the family of Nazareth as guide.

“Families have a specific mission and a growing opportunity to tell us about the joy of their faith in Jesus Christ and open before us, with the witness of their life and Christian commitment, the project of God for the future of the Church of Aveiro”—wrote Most Rev. António Francisco dos Santos, Diocesan Bishop, in the introduction for the booklet.

Meditating on St. Joseph in the Vatican Gardens

Inaugurated in 2010 in the Vatican gardens, the Fountain of St. Joseph invites reflection on the principal episodes of the holy Patriarch’s life, represented in six bronze panels, by sculptor Franco Mure. This is what Most Rev. Rafael Palmero Ramos, Bishop of Orihuela-Alicante, Spain, does in his book entitled *La Fuente de San José* [The Fountain of St. Joseph], published by Editorial Monte Carmelo.

Each of the volume’s six chapters begins with a evocative illustration of the scene described: the marriage with the Virgin Mary; the appearance of the Angel to St. Joseph in a dream; the Birth of Jesus; the flight to Egypt; the finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple; and the carpenter in the workshop of Nazareth.

Bishop Rafael offers theological and pastoral commentaries on each of the episodes, suggesting points for meditation and ending each chapter with a prayer asking for graces related to the theme.

The Fountain of St. Joseph is Bishop Rafael Palmero’s third book on the head of the Holy Family. In the introduction, he expresses his joy in proclaiming the grandeur of the holy Patron of the Church and in making his spirit known.

Benedict XVI Makes his Second Visit to Africa

“It is a great joy for me to visit for the second time this dear continent of Africa, coming among you, in Benin, to address to you a message of hope and of peace.” These words opened Pope Benedict XVI’s homily during the Mass of November 20, in the *Stade de l’amitié* (Friendship Stadium), in Cotonou, economic capital of Benin.

The Beninese people, for their part, showed enthusiasm and filial love in welcoming the Vicar of Christ, who disembarked at Cardinal Gantin Airport on November 18. He was warmly received by President of the Republic, Thomas Yayi Boni.

En route from the airport to Cotonou Cathedral, there was “visible joy on the faces of the people filling the streets to greet the Pope, waving, brandishing flags, or holding up placards,” re-

ported the Vatican Radio correspondent.

On November 19, the Pope met with members of the government, diplomatic corps and representatives from the main religions, in the Presidential Palace of Cotonou. “The Church does not propose any technical solution and does not impose any political solution. She repeats: do not be afraid! [...] There is a message of hope, hope which generates energy, which stimulates the intellect and gives the will all its dynamism”—the Pope stressed.

On the same day, His Holiness visited the tomb of Cardinal Bernardin Gantin (who died in 2008), in the city of Ouidah. He then proceeded to the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, where he signed the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africæ munus*.



Over 30 thousand faithful filled “Friendship Stadium” to attend the Pope’s November 20 Mass. Distinguished guests included the President of the Republic and many government officials. Over 200 bishops and one thousand priests concelebrated.

In the farewell ceremony, minutes before embarking for Rome, the Holy Father reaffirmed: “I wanted to visit Africa once more; it is a continent for which I have a special regard and affection, for I am deeply convinced that it is a land of hope.”



The Pope prays before the Blessed Sacrament in the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, where he signed the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “Africæ munus”

L'Osservatore Romano

House of God and Gate of Heaven

Seizing his coat, scarf, and hat and putting on his boots, he set out after the faithful old woman. He had to find out what force drove her on!



Sr. Maria Teresa Matos, EP

Robert Hofer was a prosperous lawyer. Coming from a long line of attorneys, he had made a distinguished name for himself in the world of law. He and his young wife, Rachel, had no children to brighten their home, which saddened Rachel. But she, an exemplary Catholic, was even more grieved that

her husband only cared for his work, scoffing at anything to do with the Church and religion.

She prayed the Rosary every day, asking the intercession of the Blessed Virgin for the grace of being a mother, and for the conversion of her hard-hearted husband. As for going to church, Robert would say:

“Why go to church? They say it’s the house of God, but why would God want to stay within four walls? ... God has his place in Heaven, and has no need of earthly houses!”

This saddened Rachel. How could someone be so ungrateful to the God who gives us our being, our lives... everything? How had her husband forgotten the graces of his childhood, his First Communion? She did not become discouraged, however, but prayed all the more.

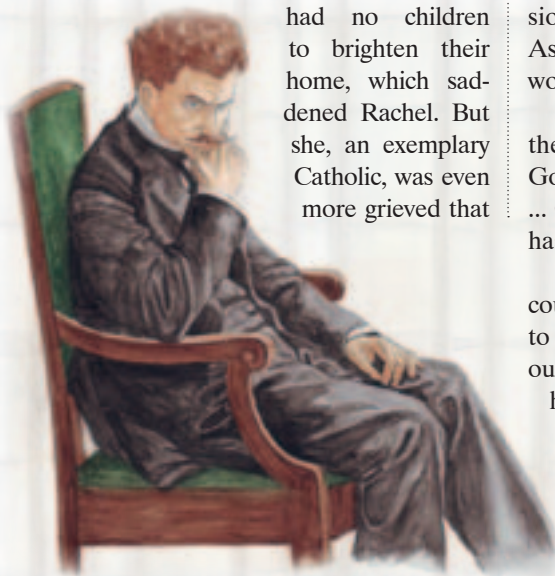
One afternoon, Robert came home announcing that he had been offered a law

firm in a nearby town. It was a small town, but all of its legal needs and that of the surrounding area would be in his hands. He declared that he would accept the offer, which meant they would be moving within a month.

Rachel’s hopes rose with this new prospect. Perhaps in a smaller town her husband would have more time to hear the voice of God ...

She was not mistaken. In this little town which became their new home, the harmonious pealing of bells filled the air every day, calling the people to morning or afternoon Mass. Hofer, who was sensitive to music, always paused in his work and went to the balcony to enjoy the beautiful melody.

His new office was on the second floor of stately old building on Main Street. Every day, as he listened to the bells chime, he would see an old woman slowly climbing the hill leading to the cathedral. Every day without fail the woman



“Why go to church? God has his place in Heaven...”



The old woman, bent against the wind, was slowly making her way to Mass

made her route, dressed with simplicity and dignity, and walking with a slow but determined tread. He thought to himself:

“Must be going to church. What could there possibly be in church to cause a woman of this age make such a painful walk every single day?”

There was something in the woman’s perseverance that began to make a deep impression on the lawyer’s hardened heart. His wife sometimes joined him on the office balcony, and she also saw the faithful old woman on her way to Mass.

Winter came and with it, snow. The town, situated in the mountains, turned pure white and bitterly cold. On one particularly icy afternoon, Robert decided to close the office early, because a snowstorm was brewing. Even the cathedral bells were silent that afternoon.

Glancing at the clock and seeing that it was time for Mass, Robert thought:

“Today even the bells aren’t ringing! Surely the little old lady wouldn’t venture out on a day like this!”

But as he peered out the door to the balcony he was astonished to see the old woman, wrapped up and bent against the wind, slowly making her way to Mass. The hill was so slippery that she had to grasp the ground with her hands to steady herself.

In amazement, Robert exclaimed:

“But this is incredible! What is it that makes this woman go out in such weather?”

Seizing his coat, scarf, and hat and putting on his boots, he set out to follow her. He just had to find out what force drove her on! On

reaching the steep and slippery hill, he had no choice but to imitate her, using his hands to support his ascent.

Who could have imagined such a scene! Robert Hofer, the aloof and sceptical lawyer, was down on all fours, struggling against a snow storm on his way to church; the very place for which he had had always shown such disdain. God’s grace was at work deep inside this unbelieving heart.

Entering the cathedral, the muted lighting, the ruby-coloured glow of the sanctuary lamp, the sound of Gregorian chant intoned by the priest the altar boy, and the firm voice of the old woman responding, touched Robert’s soul. To his wondering eyes, the golden tabernacle seemed to gleam and beckon in the peaceful surroundings. He fell to his knees with tears in his eyes and whispered:

“It really is the house of God! It is the gate of Heaven!”

After Mass went he went and told the priest everything. He asked for Confession, and made up his mind to never again turn his back on his religion. Back at home, he told the whole story to Rachel, who, overcome with joy, thanked Our Lady for answering her prayers with such a miraculous conversion.

The Virgin Mary is always generous in answering prayers. Some time later, the couple was blessed with their first child. When the young parents took their little son to church to be baptized, they consecrated him to Our Lady, placing his earthly pilgrimage under her protection—a tradition they followed with each new child. And as soon as the baby was able to understand and babble its first words, Robert pointed to the tower of the cathedral, as the bells pealed for Mass, saying:

“Listen to the church bells! Look, there is the house of God! There is the gate of heaven!” ✦



Edith Pettitclerc

**He fell to his knees and whispered:
“It really is the house of God!
It is the gate of Heaven!”**

THE SAINTS OF EACH DAY

1. Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

St. Odilo, abbot (†1049). Fifth abbot of Cluny (France), promoted peace through the Peace and Truce of God; instituted the commemoration of the Faithful Departed in the monasteries of the Order.

2. St. Basil the Great (†379) and St. Gregory Nazianzen (†circa 389), bishops and Doctors of the Church.

St. John Camillus the Good, bishop (†circa 660). Re-established the Ambrosian Episcopal See in the city of Milan, which had been transferred to Geneva due to the Lombard invasion.

3. Holy Name of Jesus.

St. Theogenes, martyr (†320). Imprisoned, tortured and thrown into the sea in Parium (present day Turkey), after refusing military service because of his Christian Faith.

4. Blessed Manuel González García, bishop (†1940). Known as *The Apostle of the Abandoned Tabernacles*, he spread devotion to the Eucharist in the dioceses of Malaga and Palencia, Spain. He founded the Congregation of the Eucharistic Missionary Sisters of Nazareth.

5. St. John Nepomucene Neumann, bishop (†1860). Redemptorist religious, Bishop of Philadelphia. He provided aid to poor immigrants, and a Christian education to children.

6. St. Raphaela Maria of the Sacred Heart, virgin (†1925). Foundress of the Congregation of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in Cordoba, Spain; a victim of misunderstandings, she was deposed from the office of superior and spent 32 years as a simple nun, without resentment, praying for the growth of the Congregation.

St. André Bessette, religious (†1937).

7. St. Raymond of Penyafort, priest (†1275).

St. Canute Lavard, martyr (†1137). Duke of Schleswig (Denmark), he justly and prudently ruled his principality and favoured religious practice. He was assassinated.

8. Epiphany of the Lord.

St. Severinus, priest and monk (†circa 482). Reorganized the region of Noricum (present day Austria), devastated by the Huns. He reformed customs, converted unbelievers, founded monasteries and provided religious instruction.

9. Baptism of the Lord.

Blessed Marie Thérèse de Jesus LeClerc, virgin (†1622). Together with St. Peter Fourier, she founded the Congregation of Canonesses Regular of Notre Dame in Nancy (France).

10. Blessed Gregory X, Pope (†1276). Worked tirelessly to restore Church unity and settle disputes between Christian princes.

11. Blessed William Carter, martyr (†1584). Catholic layman who was imprisoned, tortured, and drawn, hanged and quartered in London during the reign of Elizabeth I for having printed a treatise on schism in his print shop.

12. St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, virgin (†1700). French missionary in Canada, she founded the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame in Quebec.

13. St. Hilary of Poitiers, bishop and Doctor of the Church (†367).

St. Peter of Capitolias, priest and martyr (†713). For preaching the Christian Faith in the region of Capitolias (Syria), the Saracen governor ordered his tongue, hands, and feet to be cut off. Finally, he was crucified.

14. Blessed Odoric of Pordenone, priest (†1331). Franciscan missionary who journeyed throughout several countries of the Far East for thirty-three years, winning innumerable souls for Christ.

15. 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

St. Arnold Janssen, priest (†1909). German priest who stood out for his devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and his missionary fervour. He founded three Congregations: Society of the Divine Word, Holy Spirit



St. Anthony Abbot, by Master of the Osservanza - Louvre, Paris

Sérgio Hollmann

Missionary Sisters, Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit of Perpetual Adoration.

16. St. Honoratus of Arles, bishop (†429). Founded the famous Abbey of Lerins (France). Elected Bishop of Arles, he died after three years of arduous pastoral work.

17. St. Anthony, abbot (†356).

Blessed Gamelbert, priest (†circa 802). A wealthy young man, he was ordained priest and successfully combined pastoral ministry with hermetic life. Feeling the imminence of death, he gave all his possessions to found the monastery of Metten, Germany.

18. Blessed Beatrice d'Este, religious (†circa 1262). After the death of her husband, she withdrew to the Benedictine Monastery of St. Stephen which she had founded, in Ferrara, Italy.

19. Blessed Marcelo Spinola y Maestre, bishop (†1906). Archbishop of Seville, Spain; an outstanding apostle of charity, he showed ardent zeal for the sanctification of souls in preaching, the confessional, and spiritual direction.

20. St. Fabian, Pope and martyr (†250).

St. Sebastian, martyr (†fourth century).

St. Asclas, martyr (†fourth century). Cruelly tortured and finally thrown in the Nile River, in Antiochopolis, Egypt.

21. St. Agnes, virgin and martyr (†third/fourth century).

Blesseds Edward Stransham and Nicholas Wheeler, priests and martyrs (†1586). Beheaded

in London, England, for being priests.

22. 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

St. Vincent, deacon and martyr (†304).

Blessed Laura Vicuña, virgin (†1904). Chilean girl of firm faith and ardent piety, she endured great moral sufferings and died at 13 years of age, after offering herself as a victim for the conversion of her mother.

23. St. Andrew Chong Hwa-gyöng, martyr (†1840). Catechist tortured and hanged in prison, during the persecution in Korea.

24. St. Francis de Sales, bishop and Doctor of the Church (†1622).

Blessed Paula Gambarà-Costa, widow (†1515). Franciscan tertiary from Binaco, Italy, she patiently endured abuse from her husband, leading him to conversion.

25. Conversion of St. Paul, Apostle.

Blessed Henry Suso, priest (†1366). German Dominican priest, outstanding preacher of the Holy Name of Jesus. He patiently endured numerous setbacks and illnesses.

26. St. Timothy and St. Titus, bishops.

St. Alberic of Citeaux, abbot (†1109). One of the founders of the Monastery of Citeaux in France.

27. St. Angela Merici, virgin (†1540).

Blessed George Matulaitis, bishop (†1927). Bishop of Vilnius (Lithuania), appointed Apostolic Nuncio for this country. He founded the Congregation of the Marian Clerics and Poor Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.



santiebeat.it

Blessed Laura Vicuña

28. St. Thomas Aquinas, priest and Doctor of the Church (†1274).

Blessed Olympia Bida, virgin (†1952). Ukrainian religious from the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, she was sent to a Siberian concentration camp, where she endured grievous suffering for love of Christ.

29. 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

St. Sulpicius Severus, bishop (†591). Praised by St. Gregory of Tours for his wisdom, pastoral zeal, and efforts at restoring discipline in the Diocese of Bourges, France.

30. Blessed Carmela Garcia Moyon, martyr (†1937). Catechist burned alive in Torrent, Spain, during the religious persecution in the country.

31. St. John Bosco, priest (†1888).

St. Eusebius, religious (†884). Irish monk from the Benedictine Monastery of St. Gall, in Switzerland; he withdrew to Mount St. Victor in Vorarlberg, Austria, where he lived as a hermit for thirty years.

The Church Will Always Undergo Difficult Days

What should we do in such circumstances?



St. John Bosco

J imagine that you are with me on the seashore, or better, on an isolated rock with no other land in sight except that which is under your feet. On that immense surface of water, can be seen a countless fleet of warships in battle array. Their prows are formed into sharp, spear-like points, which will damage and pierce anything they collide with. They are armed with cannons, loaded with rifles and all sorts of other firearms, incendiary material, and also books. They advance toward a much larger and higher ship, attempting to run it through with their prows, burn it, or at the very least to do it every possible harm.

Two mighty Columns above the waves

Escorting that majestic and fully equipped ship is a convoy of many small ships which, receiving signalled commands from it, manoeuvre to defend it from the enemy fleet. The wind is against them and the turbulent sea favours the enemies.

In the midst of the immense expanse of sea, two mighty columns of great height arise above the waves, a short distance apart. One is surmounted by a statue of the Immaculate Virgin, at whose feet a large banner is unfurled with the inscription: *Auxilium Christianorum* (Help of Christians). Upon the other column, which is much stronger and loftier, is a Host of proportionate size, and at its base another banner with the inscription: *Salus credentium* (Salvation of the Faithful).

The supreme commander convokes the navigators of the fleet

In the great Ship, the supreme commander, who is the Roman Pontiff, seeing the fury of the enemies and the difficult situation in which the faithful find themselves, resolves to summon the captains of the secondary ships to hold a council and decide what is to be done. All of them gather around the Pope in the Flagship. They hold a meeting; but as the wind and the

storm grow in fury, they are ordered to return to govern their respective ships.

There is a slight lull in the storm and the Pope gathers the captains around him for a second time, while the Flagship follows its course. However, the gale returns with dreadful fury.

The Pope stands at the helm and all his efforts are aimed at positioning the Ship between those two columns from whose summits hang many anchors and large hooks attached to chains.

A cry of victory resounds among the enemies

All the enemy ships move in to attack it and do everything in their power to surround it: some with writings, books, incendiary material of which they are full; others with cannons, rifles and the rams. The battle rages ever more relentlessly. The enemy prows strike violently, but their efforts and blows are futile. In vain they renew the attack and exhaust their forces and muni-

tions: the great Ship goes safely and smoothly on its way.

At times, having been struck by formidable blows, gaping holes are opened in its hull, but immediately a gentle breeze from the two columns seals the gash.

Meanwhile, the assailants discharge their cannons, rifles and other weapons, and attack with the rams. Many of their ships are destroyed and sunk. The infuriated enemy then engages in hand-to-hand combat using fists and blows, with blasphemies and cursing.

Suddenly, the Pope falls, seriously wounded. Immediately, those who are with him rush to his aid and lift him up. A second time the Pope is struck, he falls again and dies. Among the enemies, a cry of victory and joy rings out; wild rejoicing can be seen on their ships.

But no sooner is the Pontiff dead than another takes his place. The captains of the other ships have gathered so quickly to elect him that the news of the Pope's death coincides with that of the election of his successor. The enemies begin to lose heart.

A great calm reigns over the sea

Overcoming and annihilating all resistance, the new Pope guides the Ship between the two columns and there secures it with a short chain hanging from the prow to an anchor of the column with the Host atop it; with the other chain hanging from the stern he secures it, on the opposite side, to the other anchor hanging from the column surmounted with the Immaculate Virgin.

Then a great convulsion takes place. All the ships that until then had fought against the Pope's Ship flee; they are scattered, collide with one another and are destroyed. Some sink and try to sink others.

Several small ships that had fought gallantly for the Pope are the



Victor Dominguez

“Overcoming and annihilating all resistance, the new Pope guides the Ship between the two columns”

“The dream of the two columns” - Basilica of Our Lady Help of Christians, Turin (Italy)


first to bind themselves to those two columns. Many other ships, having retreated through fear of the battle, cautiously watch from afar; the wreckage of the broken ships having been scattered in the depths of the sea, they in their turn sail in good earnest to those two columns, and, having reached them, they bind to

the hooks hanging down from them and there they remain safe, together with the principal Ship, on which is the Pope.

A great calm reigns over the sea. ✧

(Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco, Volume 7: Chapter 18 – Translation: Heralds of the Gospel)

"Our Lady of Humility," by Fra Angelico
– National Museum of Catalonia Art in
Barcelona (Spain)



*M*ary, being the first and most perfect
disciple of Jesus Christ in the practice
of all virtues, was also the first in that of
humility, and by it merited to be exalted
above all creatures.

(St. Alphonsus Liguori, "Glories of Mary")