

EDITION

SPECIAL

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*Thirty Years in  
Eternity*





## Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira *A Prophet for Our Times*

Given the importance of the life and work of Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, the writer and Catholic leader who is at the origins of the Heralds of the Gospel, we are pleased to present a work about this eminent Brazilian man.

Written by **Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias**, founder of the Heralds of the Gospel, this compendium is a synopsis in English of the five-volume collection published by LIBRERIA EDITRICE VATICANA and currently available in Portuguese, Spanish and Italian, entitled *The Gift of Wisdom in the Mind, Life, and Work of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira*, offering a faithful account of the story of Dr. Plinio, highlighting God's plans for him and the providential nature of his mission.



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## UNSHAKABLE CONFIDENCE

Who was Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira? One possible – though incomplete – answer would be to simply recall some of the achievements of his life: he was an undisputed Catholic leader, prolific writer, founder of an apostolic work whose influence knew no boundaries... And the list of his attributes could undoubtedly be much longer, as the pages of this edition suggest.

The mission of a providential man, however, is not circumscribed to his earthly journey. Rather than asking who Dr. Plinio was, we need instead to ask who Dr. Plinio is – and will continue to be. In fact, he himself once declared that his work is “not a museum, but a standard on the march.”<sup>1</sup>

This perpetuity, which bursts the fetters of death, is especially evident in relation to founders because, as this title itself denotes, all the growth potential of the edifice of their work is contained in the solidity of the foundation, which is they themselves, and the unfolding of the influence of that work will always refer back to its principle, the source of its strength.

Therefore, the relevance of Dr. Plinio’s figure will become evident to the extent that his legacy is put into action, or realized.

It did not remain hidden in the cellars of history, nor in the fading pages of mouldy books; it was placed on a lampstand and written in the souls of countless disciples. And therein lies its advantage. As St. Thomas Aquinas commented,<sup>2</sup> the perfection of a being is all the more manifest when he is able to transmit to others what he himself knows how to do. Thus, it cannot be immediately known who Dr. Plinio is without considering the role of his best interpreter: Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, founder of the Heralds of the Gospel.

As was the case between Blessed Jordan of Saxony and St. Dominic or, in another context, between St. Michael Rua and St.

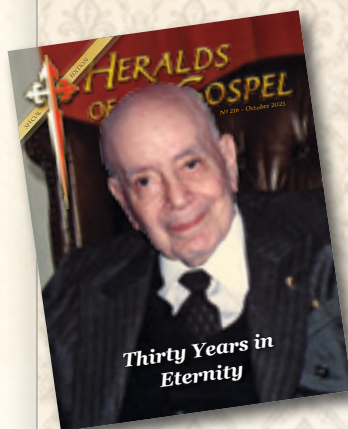
John Bosco, Msgr. João’s great feat did not consist solely in repeating the achievements of his master, but in taking them further, accomplishing the great aspirations that circumstances had forced him to renounce during his life and which we see today, to a large extent, realized in a work entirely at the service of the Church, as is the Heralds of the Gospel.

The vigour of this sap can be perceived in the seeds that Dr. Plinio planted throughout his life, watering them with much blood, sweat and tears. Its formal cause can be inferred from the will he wrote on January 10, 1978: “I declare that I have lived and hope to die in the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Faith, to which I adhere with every fibre of my soul. I cannot find words sufficient to thank Our Lady for the favour of having lived since my earliest days, and of dying, as I hope, in the Holy Church, to which I have devoted, devote, and hope to devote, until my last breath, absolutely all my love.”<sup>3</sup>

As is clear from the image of the standard on the march mentioned above, Dr. Plinio did not fix himself on a nostalgia for the past, but cast a look of hope to the future. Free from any “archaeologism”, for him the Counter-Revolution lived of longing for the future. And for this reason, *confidence* is the word that would sum up Msgr. João’s attitude in the face of the events that followed October 3, 1995, the date of his spiritual father’s death.

Confidence because Christ overcame death and this world (cf. Jn 16:33). Confidence because Our Lady in Fatima promised the coming of her Reign. Confidence because providential men, by their contemplation, already participate in the eternity of God<sup>4</sup> and therefore do not die: “he who believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live” (Jn 11:25).

Confidence is born of fidelity to a promise; it is nourished by selflessness in daily



*Dr. Plinio in  
the 1990s*

Photo: Mário Shinoda



struggles, consolidated by a hope that does not disappoint (cf. Rom 5:5) and radiates its effects to posterity. Dr. Plinio lived of hope until his last breath, confirming what he had declared: “After death, I hope to pray before [Our Lady] for all of you, thus helping you more effectively than in my earthly life.”<sup>5</sup>

Amidst the crises of all kinds that are mounting, the countless examples of confidence given by Dr. Plinio and his perpetual “yes” to the divine plans certainly inspire his spiritual children.<sup>6</sup> Grace continues to evoke in their hearts “words of sweetness and of peace,”<sup>7</sup> as Fr. Thomas de Saint-Laurent expressed it, and to illuminate the path of those who wish to hear them.

However, just as Dr. Plinio’s triumph was won at the price of much blood,<sup>8</sup> so it will also be with his work. As he himself pointed out, the most excellent form of confidence is that which contradicts all prognostications and makes the soul bleed on account of the unexpected, but which bears abundant fruit. In fact, only by following in the footsteps of the Crucified One can the glory of the Resurrection be attained.

The thirtieth anniversary of the death of so distinguished a man takes on special significance in 2025, as we find ourselves in a jubilee year dedicated to hope, the utmost expression of which is the virtue of confidence. In this perspective, Pope Leo XIV comments on true hope, that it consists “not in trying to avoid pain, but in believing that the seed of new life is hidden, even in the heart of the most unjust suffering.”<sup>9</sup>



Mário Shinoda

Dr. Plinio in February of 1990

Dr. Plinio’s trajectory in the Militant Church was an incessant proclamation of confidence, even when darkness seemed to definitively dominate the light, at the cost of so many injustices and contradictions. But it is on such occasions that it becomes beautiful to believe in the light. If they follow their master in this virtue, his spiritual children – as well as all men of good will – can be champions of confidence, even if events belie their faith. When this occurs, they will believe all the more in the victory and trust “even in the improbable, even in the impossible, if this impossible and improbable are in the paths of Mary Most Holy.”<sup>10</sup>

Confidence is invincible, for it participates in the victory of God Himself. ✠

*More than asking who Dr. Plinio was, we need to ask who Dr. Plinio is – and will continue to be. His legacy is not like a museum, but like a standard on the march, placed in the hands of countless disciples*

<sup>1</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conversation*. Amparo, 17/10/1985.

<sup>2</sup> ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Summa Theologiae*. I, q.108, a.2, ad 2.

<sup>3</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. 10 de janeiro de 1978: um testamento [January 10, 1978: a Testament]. In: *Dr. Plinio*. São Paulo. Year III. No. 22 (Jan., 2000), p.5.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, op. cit., q.10, a.3, ad 1.

<sup>5</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, 10 de janeiro de 1978: um testamento [January 10, 1978: a Testament], op. cit., p.5.

<sup>6</sup> See especially the article *The Story of a Constant “Yes”*, in this issue.

<sup>7</sup> SAINT-LAURENT, Thomas. *The Book of Confidence*. No-

bleton: Heralds of the Gospel Canada, 2019, p.13.

<sup>8</sup> In this regard, see the article *The Triumph Obtained by Blood* in this issue.

<sup>9</sup> LEO XIV. *General Audience*, 27/8/2025.

<sup>10</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conference*. São Paulo, 20/12/1991.





## “If you have faith...”



✠ Fr. João Carlos Gomes, EP

*The intensity and integrity with which we guard the precious gift of faith in our soul is a measure of our charity*

This Sunday’s Liturgy could well be summarized in the gentle rebuke of the Divine Master contained in the verse that gives this article its title...

And as an expression of what occurs in souls with regard to the gift of faith, the metaphor of the mustard seed draws us into the mysteries of natural life itself, a reflection of the supernatural. What, then, is life? How can it be explained? What is the gift of faith? How can it be increased, since the Apostles themselves ask the Master: “Increase our faith!” (Lk 17:5)?

Spurred on by the enigma of life, the human mind ponders at times on the tiny seeds that give rise to the paradisiacal carpets of grass in England, at other moments on those of the sequoia – comparable to tomato seeds in size, but from which will sprout the giant conifers that amaze humanity – seeking to understand the mysteries they hold, without, however, finding a fully satisfactory answer.

This mystery becomes even more compelling when it comes to animal nature... From a small egg emerges a graceful and agile hummingbird – a living iridescent jewel in its genus – or a majestic and fierce eagle, the only bird capable of staring at the sun with the naked eye.

Sacred Heart of Jesus -  
Mount Carmel House,  
Caieiras (Brazil);  
below, mustard seeds



Magazine archive

However, it is within the human being itself – described by St. Thomas<sup>1</sup> as a microcosm – that this investigation reaches its climax and greatest complexity, for they can also receive another form of life, infinitely superior to that of nature: the supernatural life of grace, a created participation in the uncreated life of God.

The entire edifice of supernatural life in man is founded on faith, the first of the virtues,<sup>2</sup> that “habit of the mind by which eternal life begins in us, causing the intellect to adhere to what it does not see.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, as the Letter to the Hebrews affirms, faith is “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (11:1).

Hence St. Paul’s eloquent and fatherly insistence with Timothy: “I remind you, to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands”; and continuing, he adds: “Guard this rich trust [of faith] with the help of the Holy Spirit that dwells within us” (2 Tm 1:6, 14). In other words, this gift is so precious that every effort and all vigilance we may exercise to preserve it and make it grow are as nothing at all in view of the eternal reward of which it is a pledge.

It is thus by the intensity and integrity with which man guards the precious gift of faith in his soul that his charity towards God and his neighbour can be measured; it is also through this gift that he will perform the greatest acts of heroism for the Lord, always considering himself a “useless servant,” seeking no other reward than to serve Him. And it is once again through this gift that he will say to the mulberry tree or the mountains, “Be uprooted and planted in the sea” (Lk 17:6), and they will obey him. ✠

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Summa Theologiae*. Suppl., q.91, a.1

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Idem, II-II, q.4, a.7.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, a.1.



# From Which Leprosy Do I Need a Cure?



✠ Dcn. Délio Almeida, EP

**I**n today's Gospel reading, Jesus was passing through a village on His way to Jerusalem when ten lepers stopped at a distance – for, according to the laws of the time, people afflicted with infectious diseases were forbidden to approach the healthy – and begged Him, “Have pity on us!” (Lk 17:13). It should be noted that Our Lord, true God and true Man, could have healed them immediately, but He did not. He wanted the lepers to participate in the miracle, requiring them, in addition to their request, to perform an act of faith: “Go show yourselves to the priests” (Lk 17:14). The ten obeyed and, still bearing their sores, departed.

Something similar often happens in our lives. We pray to God, even very insistently, for spiritual progress, healing of illnesses, solutions to family problems, remedies for financial difficulties... but we do not truly believe that we will be heard. Now, if one of the secrets to the effectiveness of prayer is perseverance in asking, another no less important is confidence that the Lord will hear us. This is the contribution He asks of us.

In the continuation of the Gospel account, another detail catches our attention: after realizing that they had been healed as they walked along, only one of the lepers returned to give thanks. The other nine were bound by the legal formalities that would allow them to regain the social status they enjoyed prior to their illness (cf. Lv 14:1-20), forgetting the God who had enacted those laws and had just performed a resounding miracle in their benefit! The concern for the law manifested by these ingrates was, therefore, a disguise for their own selfishness.

How often do human beings act in this way! When they find themselves in need and sick, they groan, pray and ask for help from Heaven. But as soon as they recover, they seem to forget entirely who so kindly helped them...

The lack of gratitude of those lepers undoubtedly hurt the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who asked: “Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine?” (Lk 17:17). And here one of the most serious aspects of the sin of ingratitude is manifested: “The debt of gratitude flows from the debt of love, and from the latter no man should wish to be free.”<sup>1</sup> They preferred their selfish interests to repaying the gratuitous love of the Divine Healer.

The Samaritan leper, who chose to return to Our Lord, teaches us that there are two types of leprosy: that of the body and that of the soul. Of the former, the ten were cleansed; but their lack of love and gratitude towards the Saviour meant that the nine ungrateful ones remained, by their own choice, lepers of the soul through sin.

God Incarnate shed all His Blood on the Cross to save us. There is nothing, therefore, that He is not willing to give us for our own good. It is up to us to express our gratitude to Him. ✠

*Ingratitude  
is a disease  
a thousand  
times worse  
than leprosy,  
for it strikes  
at the very  
core of  
our soul*

<sup>1</sup> ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Summa Theologiae*. II-II, q.107, a.1, ad 3.

“Jesus cures the lepers” - Library of  
the Monastery of Yuso,  
San Millán de la Cogolla (Spain)





## When Should I Pray?



Fr. Alex de Brito, EP

**T**his Sunday, Our Lord offers us the parable of the widow and the unjust judge, to show us “the necessity [...] to pray always without becoming weary” (Lk 18:1). Narrated only in the Gospel of St. Luke, it portrays a defenceless woman before a wicked magistrate who fears neither God nor men.

In explaining the parable, Jesus makes it clear that the main teaching it holds concerns the Lord’s attitude towards us: “Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to Him day and night? Will He be slow to answer them?” (Lk 18:7). Those who pray with faith win, because they recognize their helplessness before the Almighty and plead insistently.

St. Augustine, commenting on this passage from the Gospel, observes: “That unjust judge does not in any way allegorically represent the person of God; but yet as to how far God, who is good and just, cares for those who supplicate Him, our Lord wished the inference to be drawn from this circumstance, that not even an unjust man can despise those who assail him with unceasing petitions, even were his motive merely to avoid annoyance.”<sup>1</sup> Our Lord is not highlighting a problem of class struggle between a powerful magistrate and a poor lady, but another struggle: that waged by the Heavenly Father for His beloved children!

In the first reading we have confirmation of this: “As long as Moses kept his hands raised up, Israel had the better of the fight, but when he let his hands rest, Amalek had the better of the fight” (Ex 17:11). The prophet’s prayer gave him a share in divine omnipotence.

Thus, it becomes clear that we must lift our eyes to Heaven, for help will come to us “from the Lord who made Heaven and earth.” Praying at all times means turning to Him both “at your coming and at your going,” that is, during temptation and trial, as well as at the moment of victory, certain that God guards us “both now and forever” (Ps 121:2, 8).

Unfortunately, many are those who forget to thank the Good Lord in times of success, and in times of failure, accuse Him of abandoning them. And looking at myself, how do I react in the face of difficulties and hardships? What is my attitude in times of victory and abundance?

Let us not forget that while prayer makes us participants in divine omnipotence, it also teaches us that we depend on God. Accordingly, we pray in the Hail Mary: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.” Yes, “now and at the hour of our death,” that is, always! ✚

<sup>1</sup> ST. AUGUSTINE. *On the Sermon on the Mount*. L.II, c.15, n.52.



Members of the Heralds of the Gospel in prayer - Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, Caeiras (Brazil)

João Paulo Rodrigues

*Those who pray take control of history, but they also learn that everything depends on God*



# Do I Consider Myself Just?

✠ Fr. Pablo Luis Werner, EP



**T**his Sunday's Gospel presents us with the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, which Our Lord addressed to "those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else" (Lk 18:9), that is, to a group of proud people. In it, Jesus portrays two men who go up to the Temple in Jerusalem to pray: a Pharisee and a tax collector.

The Pharisee, standing, gives thanks to God for not being a sinner like other men; he boasts of his virtues, does not ask the Lord for help or forgiveness for his faults. The other keeps his distance, recognizing his unworthiness, lowers his head, admits he is a sinner and begs the Most High to be merciful to him. The Divine Master declares that the tax collector left the Temple justified, but the Pharisee did not, because "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Jas 4:6).

But what does pride consist of?

Properly speaking, it is a disordered appetite for one's own excellence, a sin that manifests itself in various ways, such as seeking to stand out at any cost; considering oneself better than others; belittling others; boasting of spiritual or material goods as if they came from oneself; presuming to save oneself by one's own strength, without counting on God's help.

It is a very serious sin, which opens the door to all others. The evil angels committed it, our first parents committed it, and... so have we.

The virtue opposite to pride is humility, by which we acknowledge what we really are before God. As St. Teresa teaches, "humility is walking in the truth; for it is a very great truth: that of ourselves we have no good, but misery and nothingness."<sup>1</sup>

And what about us? Are we humble or proud? Is it not true that, on many occasions, pride is the driving force behind our actions? Let us therefore examine our conscience in this regard.

Here are some questions we could ask ourselves: Do I recognize that only with God's help will I make it to Heaven and, consequently, do I make an effort to

have a serious prayer life? Do I consider myself better than others, do I ridicule them, insult them or slander them? Do I want others to praise me for my imaginary virtues, my human qualities or my physical appearance, and to honour me with the best positions? Do I get angry when things do not go as I wish?

The Virgin Mary is an example of humility for all of us. Before St. Gabriel, She recognizes herself as the handmaid of the Lord (cf. Lk 1:38), and in the *Magnificat* She proclaims that God "has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden" (Lk 1:48). This humility, however, is not manifested only in words. Shortly after the Archangel's visit, Our Lady hastens to the house of St. Elizabeth in order to serve her; She silently endures the hardships of the journey to Egypt as a result of Herod's persecution; She obeys St. Joseph in everything, even though She is the Queen of Heaven and earth.

Let us ask her, the universal Mediatrix of all graces, to grant us the priceless gift of having a heart as humble as hers.. ✠

*Are we  
humble  
or are we  
proud?  
Let us  
examine our  
conscience  
in this  
regard...*

<sup>1</sup> ST. TERESA OF JESUS. *Interior Castle*. The Sixth Mansions, c.10, n.8.

"The prayer of the Pharisee and the publican" - Lázaro Galdino Museum, Madrid







## The Story of a Constant “Yes”

In a detailed manner and with the authority of a perfect disciple, Msgr. João has already written five volumes on the life of Dr. Plinio. Inspired by his work, here we will consider the deeds of this Catholic man from a single perspective: the story of his “yes” to God throughout his life.

✠ Fr. Joshua Alexander Sequeira, EP



**F**ew in history have shone as brightly for their audacity as the giant St. Paul. One need only read some of his letters, or the Acts of the Apostles, to prove it. However, among his acts of valour, one stands out: he dared to summarize the entire life of the God-Man in a few sentences... and he succeeded! “Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a Cross” (Phil 2:5-8). Everything was said: the earthly existence of the Incarnate Word is summed up in obedience to the Father, as Our Lord Himself affirmed (cf. Jn 5:30; 6:38; 12:49).

Respecting the due proportions, this article also faces a similar challenge: how to summarize the achievements of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira in his eighty-six years of service to God, to Mary Most Holy, and to the Holy Roman Catholic Apostolic Church?

*“Lord, am I not the constant ‘yes’?”*

June 7, 1978. At the end of a filial tribute prepared by his disciples in celebration of the anniversary of his Bap-

tism, Dr. Plinio delivered an emotional and profound praise of the Church. He compared the Mystical Spouse of Christ to Jesus Himself who, amid the general reviling during the Passion, looked at each member of the faithful and asked the question: “My son, do you, at least, love Me?”

Transfixed with love, Dr. Plinio continued: “One of us might answer: ‘But, Lord, what a question! Why do I exist if not for this? What crime have I committed before You, Lord, that You should even ask this question? Am I not the constant “yes”, the uninterrupted “yes” of every hour of the day and night, ready to receive everything You want to give?’”<sup>1</sup>

Here, in his own words, is one way to epitomize this man’s existence: a

*Faithful to his first  
graces, little Plinio  
contemplated and  
loved the Holy  
Church and all that  
flowed from her into  
Christian Civilization*

constant “yes”, renewed in every period of his life.

*“Yes” to innocence and  
to the marvellous*

On *Gaudete* Sunday in 1908 – celebrated on December 13 that year – Dona Lucília Corrêa de Oliveira gave birth to little Plinio in the city of São Paulo. She was the first school where her son would learn to love God; indeed, “the greatest of universities cannot replace the role of a mother.”<sup>2</sup>

In the “Lucilian university,” Plinio was enchanted by innocence and the Catholic Faith, and he received a careful moral and intellectual education. Gifted with the charism of discernment of spirits, he contemplated his mother’s goodness, elevation and balance, which predisposed him to receive, during visits to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Shrine,<sup>3</sup> graces of profound penetration into the spirit of the Holy Church and of Our Lord.<sup>4</sup> At the age of four, during a family trip to Europe, he marvelled at the fruits of the Most Precious Blood of the Saviour that had sprung forth in Christendom.

His “yes” to these early graces was wholehearted: “From an early age, looking at the Catholic Church, not only at her but what flowed from her into sacred Christian civilization, I





Baptistry of St. Cecilia Church in São Paulo, where Dr. Plinio was baptized.  
Inset, Plinio in the arms of his mother, Dona Lucilia



Reproduction

took everything as certain, infallible, indisputable.”<sup>5</sup>

On November 19, 1917, Plinio received his First Communion, which had been opened to children shortly before by the exhortation of St. Pope Pius X. In the Blessed Sacrament, he would obtain the strength to remain faithful to his initial “yes” and to all subsequent ones: “I understood well that the ‘Bread of the strong’ would help me to walk a hard road, the road of fidelity, the road of a duty that many times would cost blood of the soul.”<sup>6</sup>

***A “No” to evil which  
prepared for the sweetest “yes”  
in his life***

In February 1919, Plinio was enrolled in the prestigious St. Louis School, run by the Jesuit priests. Having lived until then in an exclusively family environment, his mentality clashed completely with the environment he found among the students: the formulas of good manners, still taught with care at that time, were rejected and ridiculed; brutality reigned; immoral conversations had become unscrupulously commonplace.

Later, he understood that the mentality propagated by Hollywood cinema was the vehicle which, throughout the world, created this spontaneous, impure and pleasure-seeking way of being, characterized by contempt for the values of the Christian past. He concluded: “Deep down, it was a religious

*“Whatever may  
happen to me,  
I will be against this  
world. I will be in  
favour of purity, the  
Church, hierarchy  
and dignity”*

fight: to be or not to be as Our Lord had determined.”<sup>7</sup>

In view of his steadfastness, opposition from his classmates became widespread, even turning violent: during recess one day, Plinio was hit hard on the head with a stone. The charge of deep hatred, set on destruction, brought a brutal warning: if he did not give in to the modern world, the persecution would be harsh, until the end. He then made a firm decision: “Whatever happens to me, I will be against this world. I will be in favour of purity, the Church, hierarchy and dignity, even if I have to be the least of men, trampled, crushed, pulverized!”<sup>8</sup>

It was another “yes,” proclaimed in the form of a “no” to evil.

However, the trials were followed by the greatest of graces: to experience the mercy of Mary Most Holy.<sup>9</sup> Devotion to the Mother of God, the core of his spirituality, began before a statue

of the Virgin Help of Christians. And Plinio gave her the sweetest and most filial “yes” of his entire life.

***“Yes” to holiness: the struggle  
for purity and entry into  
the Catholic Movement***

The fight thickened when he entered the Faculty of Law at Largo São Francisco in 1926. As is normal at his age, he was assailed especially by temptations against his virginal purity. He resisted alone, isolated in the circles of high society, where it was considered ridiculous and contemptible for a young man not to frequent places of sin.

For this reason, Plinio was surprised in 1928 when he saw a banner stretched across the entire façade of St. Anthony’s Church<sup>10</sup> announcing the Catholic Youth Congress. “What did he feel at that moment? He was amazed, as if a piece of Heaven had fallen into his hands!”<sup>11</sup> His immediate and enthusiastic enrolment was a challenge to his social class, which was almost completely absent from the Catholic Movement.

Having discovered the *Story of a Soul* by St. Therese of Lisieux during this period, he decided: “I want to be a saint!” And on Good Friday in 1929, he





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From left to right: Plinio, in 1924 at St. Louis School; in mid-1934; in the 1950s; in 1974; in 1989; in the last year of his life, 1995

felt the call to an explicit “yes,” as he would later recount: “My son, do you, at least, not want to help Me? From the height of the Cross, I saw you. If you say ‘yes’ to my invitation, you will give Me joy today, amid my sufferings. If you say ‘no’, you will increase the cup of vinegar that I must drink.”<sup>12</sup>

His answer did not delay: “This ‘yes’ was said not only on that Good Friday, but it was pronounced on that occasion with great significance.”<sup>13</sup> This marked the beginning of a phase of battles on behalf of the Church, in which the apostolate through the newspaper *O Legionário*, of which Dr. Plinio would become editor-in-chief, was to play a prominent role.

### ***“Yes” to obedience: the youngest and most voted deputy in Brazil***

In 1932, the provisional government called national elections to give Brazil a new Constitution. In São Paulo, the Catholic Electoral League was founded, with Dr. Plinio as its secretary-general, and his name was proposed by the Metropolitan Archbishop Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, to the list of candidates for deputy. Overcoming many doubts, Dr. Plinio realized that obedience to his prelate was, in essence, a new “yes” to the divine will.

The elections, held on May 3, 1933, brought a resounding result: the Catholic leader was the youngest and most voted deputy in the history of Brazil, garnering more than double the number of votes received by the runner-up!

*With each battle won  
in order to fulfil the  
will of God, Providence  
asked for more and  
greater sacrifices of  
Dr. Plinio, which  
he readily offered*

### ***The “yes” to failure...***

However, a phase begins in which Providence will demand of him the repeated acceptance of failure, including that of mysteriously not being re-elected for a second term, thus ending his political career.

Upon reaching the age of thirty, Dr. Plinio begins to notice a dangerous infiltration in Catholic circles, which rebels against traditional forms of piety and virtue. Innovations surreptitiously gain ground, even among members of the clergy... While multiplying reports to the Holy See on the situation, he writes a book to denounce the errors: *In Defence of Catholic Action*.

Released on June 3, 1943, with a preface by the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Benedetto Aloisi Masella, the publication brings about, as expected, the end of Dr. Plinio’s influence in Catholic circles, until then dazzling. His activity was methodically nullified by those promoting the heterodox ten-

dencies, leading to a long and terrible ostracism.

### ***“Yes” to spiritual fatherhood for the weakest***

Throughout the 1950s, Dr. Plinio devoted himself almost exclusively to the formation of a small number of followers, known as the *Catolicismo* group because of the monthly magazine of the same name that he founded.

Dr. Plinio then gave Providence a new “yes”: to be the spiritual father of a generation broken by centuries of revolutionary process, which he would lead with admirable patience and kindness.

This fidelity blossomed in a historic encounter: on July 7, 1956, the young João Clá was introduced to him on the steps of the Basilica of Carmel.<sup>14</sup> From that date onwards, the course of both their lives would change. At last, Dr. Plinio had found a disciple willing to fight with the same dedication, generosity and love!

### ***“Yes” to being an expiatory victim for his mission and work***

In the following years of his life, particularly noteworthy events include the publication of his prophetic book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* on April 5, 1959 and the founding of the Brazilian Society for the Defence of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) on July 27, 1960.

And since we are here to consider the history of Dr. Plinio’s “yeses”, two facts demand our attention.



The first refers to the *grace of Genazano*, received on December 16, 1967,<sup>15</sup> when the Mother of Good Counsel herself gave her “yes” to her faithful son, with the interior promise that he would fulfil his vocation entirely.

The second fact is Dr. Plínio’s offering of himself as a victim for his work, made on February 1, 1975 and accepted by Providence through a car accident.<sup>16</sup> From this “yes” came a torrent of graces for the movement he founded, with the flourishing of the apostolate developed by the then Mr. João Clá.

### *The final and reparative “yes”*

At the twilight of his life, Dr. Plínio could present himself to the just Judge with his hands full of spiritual fruits: countless battles fought for the Holy Church and Christian civilization; thousands of conferences and lectures given, numerous books and articles published, in which he had expounded Catholic

*Was Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira’s constant “yes” not an “immense act of virtue”, making reparation for the past and pledging a new era?*

doctrine with complete accuracy; a flourishing institution, with spiritual children scattered across all continents; an existence marked by adamant fidelity. Thus he closed his eyes to this world on October 3, 1995.

However, his existence far exceeds the personal sphere.

The history of mankind is marked by a long sequence of infidelities: the “nos” and “maybe tomorrows” of so many called souls, whose lack of correspondence was the main factor in the astonishing advance of evil in recent centuries.

Did not this defection of the elect constitute a kind of conscious and deliberate “immense sin”? And was Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira’s constant “yes” not then an “act of immense virtue,” repairing past denials and pledging a new era of graces never before imagined? The future will tell...

One thing, however, is certain. Even after departing for eternity, Dr. Plínio continues to live on in those whose souls have been planted with a seed of participatory prophecy from his own charism, as will be proven in the following pages. ✦

<sup>1</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plínio. *Conference*. São Paulo, 7/6/1978.

<sup>2</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plínio. *Conversation*. São Paulo, 12/5/1980.

<sup>3</sup> Located in the Campos Elíseos neighbourhood, in São Paulo.

<sup>4</sup> In this regard, see the article *A Prophet for Our Times* in this issue.

<sup>5</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plínio. *Conference*. São Paulo, 1967.

<sup>6</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plínio. *Conversation*. São Paulo, 22/11/1982.

<sup>7</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plínio. *Notas Autobiográficas [Autobiographical Notes]*. São Paulo: Retornarei, 2010, v.II, p.527.

<sup>8</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plínio. *Conference*. São Paulo, 1954.

<sup>9</sup> This story is told in more detail in the article *The World for*

*Mary: the Apex of Devotion*, in this issue.

<sup>10</sup> Located in Praça do Patriarca, São Paulo.

<sup>11</sup> CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. *O dom de sabedoria na mente, vida e obra de [The Gift of Wisdom in the Mind, Life and Work of] Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira*. Città del Vaticano-São Paulo: LEV; Lumen Sapientiae, 2016, v.II, p.81.

<sup>12</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plínio. *Conference*. São Paulo, 20/4/1973.

<sup>13</sup> Idem, ibidem.

<sup>14</sup> Located on Martiniano de Carvalho Street, in São Paulo.

<sup>15</sup> See the articles *The World for Mary: the Apex of Devotion*, and *The Triumph Obtained through Blood*, in this issue.

<sup>16</sup> This episode is described in greater detail in the article *The Triumph Obtained by Blood* in this issue.





# A Prophet for Our Days

Well aware that the prophetic charism never abandons the Church, can we say that Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira was a prophet? By way of an answer, let us recall a few facts from his life.

✠ Fr. Luiz Francisco Beccari, EP



**W**hen we turn our attention to the events of the Old Testament, we are struck by the grandeur of the prophetic mission. Moses divides the Red Sea in two, Elijah brings down fire from Heaven and Isaiah predicts wonders centuries and centuries in advance...

The procession of prophets, however, did not end when St. John the Baptist pointed out the Messiah he had announced. On the contrary, according to the categorical affirmation of St. Thomas Aquinas, God also continually sends them to the Church: "at all times there have not been lacking persons having the spirit of prophecy, not indeed for the declaration of any new doctrine of Faith, but for the direction of human acts."<sup>1</sup>

It is true that every baptized person participates in the threefold mission of Our Lord Jesus Christ: priest, prophet and king.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Divine Providence dispenses the prophetic character with supreme largesse to some of his children, and it is through them that the Holy Spirit continues to speak in the New Testament.

**A beacon that warns and guides**

It is often believed that prophetism consists above all of predicting the future. However, this simplistic concep-

tion does not encompass the essence of the prophetic mission.<sup>3</sup>



Plinio in approximately 1919

*Right from his first clash with the revolutionary ambience at the age of eleven, Plinio received a clear intuition about the future*

The prophet can indeed be helped by a divine light to foretell the future, but this gift is almost an addendum to his charism which, since it is a grace granted for the benefit of others, has the purpose of favouring his neighbour, according to the words of the Apostle: "he who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation" (1 Cor 14:3).

He therefore "knows how to read God's plan in the fabric of events"<sup>4</sup> and is thus able to warn humanity and guide it towards the fulfilment of God's plans. We therefore see these men and women emerge in all times and places, becoming beacons of history. St. Benedict, St. Bernard, St. Catherine of Siena and St. Joan of Arc are examples of souls who went "beyond the ordinary limits of human activity to exercise an angelic ministry: to speak in the place of God."<sup>5</sup>

So, well aware that the prophetic charism never leaves the Church, can we say that Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira was a prophet? By way of an answer, let us recall some facts from his life.

**Grand predictions made by a boy**

When Plinio had his first big shock at the age of eleven with the revolutionary environment, he already had a clear intuition about the future. In the

courtyard of St. Louis School, he saw the perfection of the universe materialized in the vegetation, clouds and fauna; but above this natural harmony, he saw a higher, spiritual order, represented in the priests who passed by praying. “Suddenly,” he would later recall, “the following idea took hold in my mind: there was so much opposition between the innocence, righteousness and sanctity of the Church [...] and the mentality of those bad students that, at a certain moment, the inanimate objects, the bamboo grove, the earth, the stones of the street and the residential structures would revolt against the aggression of sins, in legitimate self-defence.”<sup>6</sup>

A grandiose perspective loomed before him, in which divine punishment would purify a sinful world taken over by the Revolution. It was what he would later call “*Bagarre*”.<sup>7</sup>

These considerations, which could have been taken as mere childish impressions, were corroborated by the words of the Mother of God herself, although Plinio was unaware of them at the time. In fact, a few years earlier, the Virgin of Fatima had also announced, in the Cova da Iria, that tremendous calamities would ensue because of the wickedness of men.

A few years later, he was walking through Patriarch Square, in the centre of São Paulo. As the bells of St. Anthony’s Church tolled, a new portent filled him with joy. He glimpsed what appeared to be a grand procession, with military pomp, in which Mary Most Holy was acclaimed as sovereign of the world. Humanity, completely transformed, would then experience what the Church has been imploring for two millennia: “Thy Kingdom come!” It would be “an era in which people would receive the last teachings before history ends [...]”. The good that exists now will remain, but this era will

be much better than all that, because it will be God’s rejoinder against evil. And the Church will be queen!”<sup>8</sup>

This promise that Providence made to him in the depths of his soul was the logical complement to the “*Bagarre*”: where the Revolution had once reigned, the splendid cathedral of the Reign of Our Lady would arise.

Here too, the promises of Fatima supported Plinio’s predictions: “In the end,” prophesied Mary Most Holy, “my Immaculate Heart will triumph!”

### *Alone, but victorious*

Solemnity is part of grandeur, and this explains why great prophecies take time to be realized. What grounds, then, would we have to see in Dr. Plinio a prophetic charism, if his premonitions, confirmed by the mentioned apparitions, have not yet been verified by events? Let us turn our attention to the period that preceded and accompanied the Second World War: there we will be presented with some examples of the truly prophetic acuity that was granted to Dr. Plinio.

After the terrible drama of the First World War, the young Plinio, contrary to the general attitude of those around him, saw more severe scourges

approaching in the near future. His concern was recorded in a letter from 1931, eight years before the start of the new conflict: “The storm will soon be upon us, with a world war as a mere preface. But this war will

*The message of Our Lady of Fatima confirmed the premonition he had had while contemplating the bamboo grove in the schoolyard*



St. Louis schoolyard; in the background, the bamboo grove seen by Dr Plinio. On the right, an image of Our Lady of Fatima



spread such confusion throughout the world that revolutions will break out everywhere, and the putrefaction of the sad ‘twentieth century’ will reach its peak.”<sup>9</sup>

The war broke out in 1939. On both sides of the conflagration, apparently antagonistic and irreconcilable ideologies were simmering: Nazism and Communism. However, contrary to world public opinion, Dr. Plinio pointed out a veiled but real identity of doctrines and objectives between the two systems. And, in the *Legionário* newspaper, he denounced a forthcoming alliance between the alleged rivals: “While all the camps are defining themselves,

an increasingly clear movement is taking place. It is the doctrinal fusion of Nazism and Communism.”<sup>10</sup> Considered from a human point of view, such a prediction would be at least an exaggeration, if not outright nonsense. And that is how Dr. Plinio’s warning was received by society, generating a veritable scandal.

However, after a few months, the uproar turned into stupefaction, as the prognosis was fulfilled to the letter: in August 1939, the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact consolidated the Nazi-Communist union.

Many other events like these, reported in advance by Dr. Plinio, confirmed the accuracy of his warning.

### *Leading humanity towards God’s designs*

However, as we said above, prophecy does not essentially consist in predicting the future. Such announcements, fulfilled in time, serve above all to prove the authenticity of the mission. The core of this vocation lies, as the Aquinate indicates in the quote transcribed above, in “the direction of human acts.”

In Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, this aspect also became clear from the first stage of his public life. His words inflamed crowds, making him a natural leader. “It was not a position,” he recalled, “it was not a function; it was a prestige, an influence, an importance, a leadership acclaimed by all.”<sup>11</sup>

So much so that at the age of twenty-four he was elected by a wide margin of votes as a deputy to the Constituent Assembly of 1934, to defend the interests of the Church.

Another episode further demonstrated the power of attraction with which grace invested him, so that he could lead society on the right path. In 1942, the Fourth National Eucharistic Congress brought together a million Catholics in São Paulo’s Anhangabaú Valley. Before that vast audience, Dr. Plinio gave

*More than predicting the future, the essence of the prophetic vocation is to guide human activity in the direction indicated by God’s plan*



The National Eucharistic Congress of 1942; inset, Dr. Plinio giving a speech in May 1943, and articles from the “*Legionário*” written by him

a speech about the immense vocation granted by God to Brazil. The crowd, hanging on the orator's every word, erupted into applause and acclamations at the end of the speech: "Plinio! Plinio! Plinio!"

Occasions like these would be repeated throughout Dr. Plinio's epopee – so many that they could not even be listed in one article – as a consequence of the charism that impelled him to lead humanity in the direction set by Providence.



Luís Maurício Ferreira

Dr. Plinio on April 22, 1995

glimpsed in the courtyard of St. Louis School. His intense devotion to Our Lady brought closer the days of the Reign of Mary, foreseen in Patriarch's Square. The victory of the Blessed Virgin was already becoming a reality in his heart!

Only one element remained for this living prophecy to take on its full magnitude: the cross. As will be seen in detail in another article,<sup>13</sup> the Queen of Prophets did not deprive her chosen one of this crown, allowing him to struggle during

### *The immortalized prophecy*

But what does it mean to move the world, as compared with moving the Creator? Well, perhaps this is the most transcendent aspect of the prophetic vocation. Through his prayers and his faithfulness, the prophet must hasten, for the greater glory of God, the fulfilment of the promises he has received.

In what way? Not just by proclaiming the prophecy, but by personifying it. "Prophets," teaches St. Irenaeus, "do not prophesy by word alone, but also [...] by their conduct and their actions."<sup>12</sup> In the same way, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira realized in himself the prophecies he announced.

*It is above all through well-accepted suffering that the prophet must hasten the fulfilment of the promises that were entrusted to him*

His innocence, never touched by the revolutionary spirit, anticipated that defeat of the Revolution which he had

his agony with the trial of disillusionment: God had placed in his soul the certainty that he would see the Reign of Mary established; but where was the realization of these promises in a world where the Revolution still prevailed?

On his deathbed, Dr. Plinio heard the answer from the lips of Monsignor João himself, the disciple who would continue his battle for the consummation of such great prophecies: "You might say: 'So, how is the mission being fulfilled?' The mission is being fulfilled like this, in the most perfect way! Because suffering is the best way to accomplish it."<sup>14</sup> ✠

<sup>1</sup> ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. *Summa Theologiae*. II-II, q.174, a.6, ad 3.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. CCC 783.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, op. cit., q.171, a.3.

<sup>4</sup> CIARDI, Fabio. *I fondatori, uomini dello Spirito*. Roma: Città Nuova, 1982, p.298.

<sup>5</sup> CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. *O dom de sabedoria na mente, vida e obra de [The Gift of Wisdom in the Mind, Life*

*and Work of] Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira*. Città del Vaticano-São Paulo: LEV; Lumen Sapientiae, 2016, v.II, p.198.

<sup>6</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Notas autobiográficas [Autobiographical Notes]*. São Paulo: Retornarei, 2010, v.II, p.543.

<sup>7</sup> From the French, literally: confusion.

<sup>8</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, op. cit., p.544-545.

<sup>9</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. A José Pedro Galvão de Souza. In: *Opera Omnia*. São Paulo: Retornarei, 2008, v.I, p.24.

<sup>10</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. Entre o passado e o futuro [Between the Past and the Future]. In: *Legionário*. São Paulo. Year XII. No.329 (Jan. 1, 1939), p.2.

<sup>11</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conversation*. São Paulo, 7/3/1995.

<sup>12</sup> ST. IRENEAUS OF LYON. *Adversus haereses*. L.IV, c.20, n.8: SC 100, 650.

<sup>13</sup> *A Triumph Obtained with Blood*, in this issue.

<sup>14</sup> CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. *O dom de sabedoria na mente, vida e obra de [The Gift of Wisdom in the Mind, Life and Work of] Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira*. Città del Vaticano-São Paulo: LEV; Lumen Sapientiae, 2016, v.V, p.454.





# Wisdom and Greatness within Reach of the Little Ones

Forming a school of thought was one of Dr. Plinio's main aspirations. More than merely producing intellectual works, his intention was to transmit a spirit and a mentality.



✠ Fr. Marcos Faes, EP

If the greatness of a man were measured solely by the volume of his works, we would already have ample reason to consider Dr. Plinio an exceptional author. His books, articles, interviews, manifestos, conferences, and informal lectures now total an incalculable number of pages. However, to define him as a notable intellectual and professor, a brilliant columnist, or a prolific writer is to consider only the footnote of his true personality and his vision of the universe.

Dr. Plinio was never a single-issue specialist, but a tireless observer of events assisted by a special prophetic charism, as seen in the previous article. Being wherever the service of the Catholic cause required him was the continuous ideal of his life. However, he devoted his greatest efforts not to public action, but to the formation of his closest disciples, in order, among other objectives, to found a new school of thought and action.

## The origin of a school of thought

It was at the end of the 1950s that Dr. Plinio clearly expressed this desire, convinced that "the most important thing was to transmit a spirit and a mentality."<sup>1</sup> The creation, in December 1955, of a study commission called

MNF – short for *manifesto*<sup>2</sup> – characterized the aims, methods, and themes specific to this school.

Among the various circumstances that led to the creation of this commission was the desire to continue the theme contained in the treatise *Christendom, the Silver Key*, which Dr. Plinio had begun drafting five years earlier. This book contained an unprecedented vision of the perfect relationship between the Church and the State, the supernatural and natural orders, demonstrating that all good in temporal society derives from Faith and fidelity to the precepts of the Church.

Thus, he sought to condense, in what would be a major manifesto, his vision of history and, above all, the description of the sacred order that will

mark society with the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Whether describing the highest reasons for aesthetics and the noblest purposes of art, delving into the root causes of certain social transformations, marvelling at the nature and hierarchy of Angels, or drawing from the Church's teachings on the relationships between the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, the perfect model of human relationships<sup>3</sup> – original explanations of great theological and philosophical richness – Dr. Plinio's school was not given to merely abstract thinking. Historical recollections and metaphors abounded; they were clear, precise, always beautiful, grandiose, and captivating. Lofty panoramas of mystical and metaphysical contemplation became simple and accessible, following the example of the Divine Master, about whom he himself observed: "The wisdom of His parables leaves any Plato at the bottom of the sea..."<sup>4</sup>

On a trip to Rome in the 1960s, he wanted to be sure of the sound doctrine of some of his explanations and asked two of his disciples to present them to experts. These scholars affirmed that his theses were so consistent with the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas that, in order to refute them, it would first be necessary to demolish the entire

*Dr. Plinio put a great deal of effort into the formation of his disciples in order to found a new school of thought and of action*



Dr. Plinio during an MNF meeting in the early 1980s

Thomistic edifice. This comment surprised Dr. Plinio, as he had never had time to thoroughly examine the work of the holy Dominican. Such harmony with the doctrine of the Church could only be the result of an eminent use of the gift of wisdom, which allowed him to fly beyond the solid scholastic philosophical structure, but in the same direction pointed out by its stone towers.

### *Mystical graces and solid doctrine*

While still a student in secondary school, during Logic classes taught by a Jesuit teacher, Plinio, by the effect of a special grace, became enchanted with the logic of St. Ignatius of Loyola, which he saw shining forth in one of his disciples. This rapture of admiration was followed by an interior experience that allowed him to see the Ignatian mentality and charism with such supreme clarity that he felt penetrated by a participation in that same spirit. This imparted to him, as a freely given benefit from God, a very keen reasoning ability that would become evident in his own life.

Later, when he was in his final year of law school, a similar phenomenon occurred when he came into contact with the works of St. Thomas, through which he discerned the mentality of the Angelic Doctor so vividly that he

*He sought to explain  
and summarize his  
vision of history  
and the universe,  
especially the sacral  
order that would mark  
the Reign of Mary*

assimilated his method of thinking and used it for the rest of his life.<sup>5</sup>

To these mystical graces he added a great and methodical effort to check all his explanations against the teachings of the Church and the philosophy blessed by it. He defined himself as a “convinced Thomist”.<sup>6</sup>

In fact, the basis of his thinking is founded on the notion of what he called the *sense of being*, a reference to the innate principles of the human soul that St. Thomas and Scholasticism describe as *being* and *synderesis*. In other words, the child instinctively realizes that one cannot *be* and *not be* at the same time, and that he or she is distinct from other beings. *Synderesis*, in turn, is defined as a habit infused into the soul by which children, from an early age, have a no-

tion of fundamental moral principles: among them, what is true and what is false, what is good and what is evil, what is sin and what is virtue, and they constantly tend towards the good position by the force of this innate “instinct”.

Building on these philosophical foundations, Dr. Plinio explained a whole vision of the universe based on innocence. However, he did not conceive of innocence as merely the state of soul of one who has not sinned, for example, against chastity, as an overly simplistic view might suggest, but rather as an interiorly ordered state given by God early on, before the use of reason: a set of aptitudes and impulses that enable a right judgement of things and situations and allow one to always choose what is most perfect, most elevated and most beautiful. The graces resulting from Baptism strengthen this integrity of soul, despite the evil inclinations arising from original sin.

Accordingly, it is fidelity to the truth expressed in these first judgements that constitutes the state of innocence, the wellspring of Dr. Plinio’s entire school of thought and sanctity.<sup>7</sup>

### *The élan and fruitfulness of innocence*

The state of innocence is based primarily on the confluence of the external



world – the marvellous book of creation – with interior harmony and order, through a wise and natural observation of reality, followed by rational judgement and using reading and scientific research as secondary tools. “I would never be a man who reads more than he thinks: it would be like eating more than I can digest. It is an unhealthy phenomenon... I reject that illness,”<sup>8</sup> explained Dr. Plinio.

As a result of this contemplative habit, he once mentioned that he had around three hundred “railway tracks” in his mind. By this he referred to the different intuitions and unconcluded thoughts that pointed to new horizons, like the beginning of a railway line that invites one to head out into the mysteries of a distant path. He had kept some of them in his memory since childhood, convinced that he would find in each small and particular perfection a new wonder of God’s wisdom that made up the immense kaleidoscope of the order of the universe.

### ***A brief sample of Plinian explanations***

Let us mention just a few examples of themes he developed.<sup>9</sup>

Already in childhood, observing the reality of suffering in those closest to him, he understood that there were certain higher reasons for it, as well as a psychological need on the part of man to suffer, which gave rise to his explanations about the *sufferative*.<sup>10</sup>

At the age of eighteen, a conviction emerged in his mind, based on the teachings contained in the Book of Job (cf. 1:6-12; 2:1-6): there is a reality in which, before the divine gaze, Angels

and demons wage a sustained struggle based on the merits of men, which serve as permissions for them to act on earth, either for good, the Angels, or for evil, the demons. To this zone, whose existence is based on the doctrine of the Communion of Saints, he gave the name *trans-sphere*, and for several years he would speak about the mysterious laws that govern it and how, in this battle, the Church is benefitted.

His ideas on *symbolology* cover a wide range of topics in psychology and metaphysics, considering symbols not as mere conventions or analogies, but as realities linked to the world of *archetypes*, through which the human spirit can journey towards the *Absolute*, which is God.

But it was the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary that occupied the centre of his explanations, based on his personal experience in discerning the Soul of Our Lord. He de-

veloped sublime hypotheses about the *Secret of Mary*, mentioned by St. Louis Grignion de Montfort, whose revelation will enable an *exchange of wills* with the Redeemer and His Most Holy Mother, a phenomenon both natural and mystical, individual and collective, from which a renewal of humanity can take place.

He thus began his description of *organic society* on a very high level, a series of meetings in which he analyses the psychological and political-social bases of the organization of human life according to the right order of nature enlightened by grace, in which everything would be governed according to the mentality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

At the heart of these explanations we find his global and sapiential vision of history, never presented as a simple succession of disconnected events, but understood in terms of the centrality of the Church’s mission and the enmity that began in Paradise with the “*inimicitias ponam*” (Gn 3:15).

When commenting on historical episodes, he demonstrated a profound knowledge of the missions of peoples and individuals before God, pointing out the fidelities and transgressions that explained certain turning points in events, and revealing not only the immense culture of a professor, but above all a particular gift linked to the discernment of spirits. The book *Revolu-*

*Dr. Plinio had in his mind approximately three hundred “railway tracks”, which were unfinished thoughts pointing to new horizons*

Dr. Plinio at an MNF meeting in the 1980s



tion and Counter-Revolution, in many ways his masterpiece, is nothing less than the index of this truly prophetic vision of the *Theology of History*.

### Universal manifesto

Dr. Plinio appreciated the MNF commission so much that he kept it active until the end of his life, meeting with it three times a week, despite the intense activities that absorbed his attention and the other study commissions he directed and conferences he gave. He taught, through surprising examples, that his school of thought was eminently contemplative, without, however, abandoning active life.

Although various circumstances prevented the manifesto from emerging as it had been initially conceived,

*The MNF meetings provided the opportunity for explanations on a vast body of doctrine; but were, above all, a living and fruitful work*

the meetings allowed for the clarification of a colossal doctrinal collection, with unfathomable potentialities that will still enable the discovery of new horizons of Catholic thought in order to “revive the sense of humanity’s being, reconstituting the moral foundations corroded by the revolutionary mentality.”<sup>11</sup>

Above all, when Dr. Plinio was about to end his long earthly labours, lived without stain under the gaze of Mary Most Holy, this *universal manifesto* was about to be constituted, not in books to be buried in libraries, but in a living, active and fruitful work, as he ardently desired. ✦



Copies in various languages of the book “Revolution and Counter-Revolution”, Dr. Plinio’s masterpiece, including the first edition published in the monthly “Catholicismo”. At right, Holy Mass celebrated by Msgr. João in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary in August, 2018

<sup>1</sup> CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. *O dom de sabedoria na mente, vida e obra de [The Gift of Wisdom in the Mind, Life and Work of] Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira*. Città del Vaticano-São Paulo: LEV; Lumen Sapientiae, 2016, v.III, p.515.

<sup>2</sup> The most important details regarding this study commission can be found in: CLÁ DIAS, op. cit., p.519-561.

<sup>3</sup> It would be impossible to provide a complete list of the topics developed by Dr. Plinio in the MNF. Only a few of them are mentioned over the course

of this article. A more complete, though not exhaustive, list can be found in Msgr. João’s aforementioned work.

<sup>4</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Talk*. São Paulo, 24/4/1985.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. *O dom de sabedoria na mente, vida e obra de [The Gift of Wisdom in the Mind, Life and Work of] Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira*. Città del Vaticano-São Paulo: LEV; Lumen Sapientiae, 2016, v.II, p.161-163.

<sup>6</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Autorretrato filosófico [Philosophical Self-Portrait]*. In: *Catholicismo*. Campos dos Goytacazes. Year XLVI. No. 550 (Oct., 1996), p.29.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. *O dom de sabedoria na mente, vida e obra de [The Gift of Wisdom in the Mind, Life and Work of] Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira*. Città del Vaticano-São Paulo: LEV; Lumen Sapientiae, 2016, v.I, p.37-40.

<sup>8</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conference*. São Paulo, 18/2/1968.

<sup>9</sup> The words in italics are part of the Plinian vocabulary or have taken on their own meaning in his explanations. They would therefore require further elaboration, but due to the brevity of this article, they will only be mentioned in passing.

<sup>10</sup> Regarding this subject, see: RIBEIRO, EP, Leandro Cesar. *Learning to Suffer*. In: *Heralds of the Gospel*. São Paulo. Vol. 19, No. 214 (Aug., 2025), p.18-21.

<sup>11</sup> CLÁ DIAS, op. cit., v.III, p.527.





# Wisdom Embodied in People

More than in his public life, it was in his private life that a unique aspect of Dr. Plinio's greatness was manifested. His boundless kindness and profound wisdom, combined with countless other qualities, made him the best of fathers.



✠ Sr. Maria Beatriz Matos

**I**n the gardens of the Academy, comfortably seated and reflective, master and disciple still seem to be meditating: Socrates, his chin supported in his hand, prepares to bring into the world yet another concept; at his side, Plato, with an attentive ear, waits patiently. However, tourists come and go, days pass, and the wise men utter nothing new: the stone from which they were carved is incapable of this; they are mere statues, impassive to the centuries and to the elements.

Many are those who, like them, entered history through the portico of human wisdom, borne by a brilliant intelligence or an unusual talent, and had their memory immortalized in books and monuments.

Perhaps Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira's name could be added to this list of illustrious figures... As was amply demonstrated in a previous article, his natural ability lent itself to this, which was evident to those who knew him closely. One day, in fact, a certain bishop who was very close to him advised him to withdraw from his absorbing apostolic labours and the direction of souls in order to devote himself exclusively to writing, so as to leave his thoughts duly recorded. "We will die," the bishop concluded, "but books live on through the centuries."

Undoubtedly, thinkers enrich philosophy and science, inspiring schools and filling libraries, and in this sense that prelate was right. However, there is something that all of these lack: the memory of their works is everlasting, but lifeless, like the sculptures of Socrates and Plato in historic Athens... With them, their genius dies; what remains for consultation are the inanimate writings that constitute their entire legacy, often consigned to the dust of oblivion.

However, Dr. Plinio's great mission was not limited to the craft of the sage as the world conceives it (cf. 1 Cor 3:19-20). Providence had adorned his soul with superior knowledge: his wisdom was of a supernatural order, and it far transcended the services of earthly understanding. Elevated to the category of a gift of the Holy Spirit, it enabled him to grasp all realities – of God and of creatures – from a divine vantage point, and to arrange everything according to this privileged vision.

Thus, Dr. Plinio would perpetuate the immense treasures born of his contemplation of the order of the universe not only in papers and brochures, but would also transmit them to his disciples. These, above all, he would invite to follow him further, in imitation of his ways and in a communion of objectives.

Indeed, Dr. Plinio's greatest concern throughout his life was not his public action or his intellectual production, although both were fruitful facets of his existence, but rather his commitment to gathering a handful of followers willing to adhere unconditionally to the good. Anointing their souls with his propheticism, Dr. Plinio would be a father to them, and they would be his children.

## First attempts

At the dawn of his battle, when he had just completed his first decade of life, his selfless and generous attitude towards others stood out. When confronted with the Revolution in the school environment and discerning the evil it contained, he did not choose to shut himself off in the serenity of his innocence and rest on his own righteousness, but decided to help his companions and prevent them from being unconsciously or weakly swept away by the worldly waves. Thus, along with the counter-revolutionary epic that would span his life, his apostolate was also born.

While still a young university student and Catholic leader, he saw the first fruits of his zeal blossom: small groups of followers gathered around him. How blessed these early combatants would have been if, open to Dr. Plinio's pro-

phetic vision and fidelity, they had fully responded to this gift, allowing themselves to be led by him against all odds!

But, alas, shaken by the cruel persecution – sometimes overt, sometimes silent – that was unleashed upon their master, some betrayed him, others blamed him for the failures that transpired; in the end, all of them turned to trivialities, making them the object of internal dissonances that Dr. Plinio was forced to resolve, exhausting much of the energy that he could have applied to combats that in his eyes were much more glorious ...

However, amid denials and uncertainties, the delicate action of Providence would gradually reveal his lofty mission. His work with these companions would transcend the limits of a mere Catholic public figure and take on their true proportions.

### ***Union with the Counter-Revolution***

Although he foresaw a great future awaiting him, Dr. Plinio wondered, in his humility, if there was someone he should follow. Like a vassal in search of his lord, he visited eminent ultramontane figures in the Old Continent, but their inconsistent moral conduct and nostalgic position, lacking in initiative, extinguished his last hopes...

From this painful realization blossomed the certainty of the exceptional calling with which he had been graced: "I realized that an almost millennial tradition was expiring, but it did not die entirely because it lived in me, and from me it would have its rebirth. There was a kind of union between this vocation and myself that was much deeper than before; a true exchange of will with the



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**Dr. Plinio's school of thought was not to be perpetuated in books, but rather in his disciples, whom he invited to a communion of objectives**

Dr. Plinio with Msgr. João  
in the mid-1960s

Counter-Revolution, as opposed to all the evil done and bringing with it the seeds to destroy that evil and do the opposite, by which I became co-identical with it."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Plinio's soul, like a treasure chest where the sublimities of the past and the promise of future splendours coexisted, was ready to bring forth the sons and daughters who, over the decades and centuries, would become the heirs of his spirit and his struggle. Perhaps the suffering caused by the isolation and incomprehension he faced was the

precious ransom he paid to Our Lady for the new generations.

Indeed, after years of sterility and turmoil, as if by miracle, the Group<sup>2</sup> took on a new life with the young people who have been arriving ever since. Among them, without a doubt, the most blessed fruit of Dr. Plinio's spiritual fertility was Msgr. João, future founder of the Heralds of the Gospel.

### ***Paternal reception for a broken generation***

Perhaps a contemporary observer would be amazed if he were given the opportunity to contemplate the moments of conviviality between Dr. Plinio and his younger disciples. Although absorbed by tasks of great importance in defence of the Catholic cause and Christian civilization, he never lacked time to advise one, encourage another and talk to all, in a relationship that harmonized seriousness and benevolence, respect and intimacy.

With the first members of that generation, not yet ready to participate in the conferences given to the members at large, he took advantage of a brief commentary on the saint commemorated on that day to impart to them a wide variety of teachings. These

informal talks took on such importance that, over the years, they became one of the cornerstones of the formation given by Dr. Plinio and took the place of the plenary meetings, far transcending their initial content.

The growth of the work brought Dr. Plinio an increase in activities and a consequent reduction in available time. However, he did not fail to use certain periods within his busy schedule to spend time with those who were taking their first steps in the counter-revolutionary vocation.





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Sergio Miyazaki

**He always had time to advise and encourage individually, and to speak to all, in a relationship filled with both respect and closeness**

At left, Dr. Plinio during a conference on February 12, 1994; above, greeting one of his sons on January 31, 1993

He would, for example, have short but blessed conversations, in which groups of young men – whether students before leaving for their classes or very young disciples visiting from other regions of Brazil and abroad – confidently shared their struggles in the fight for virtue at such a delicate age, their incipient doctrinal questions, or their curiosity about the story of the father who welcomed them with such kindness. Dr. Plinio attended to everyone and usually concluded the gathering by greeting each one personally, an unforgettable moment in which there was no lack of quick but profound exchanges of words and advice, illuminated by the charism of discernment of spirits with which he had been adorned by Providence.

And what about afternoon tea – part of his routine since childhood – during which he took the opportunity, surrounded by his slightly older sons, to answer a wide variety of questions, resulting in a wealth of teachings that are still extremely useful to subsequent generations today?

These touching examples of dedication, of which we have only given a few brief glimpses, were not spontaneous manifestations of circumstan-

tial affability. On the contrary! More than instructing minds, the Revolution had forged a way of being – sloppy, vulgar and unrestrained – by which it dragged the world along. In contrast, Dr. Plinio took advantage of every opportunity to patiently and masterfully form his disciples into living symbols of the Counter-Revolution, so that their subsequent actions would constantly invite prodigal humanity to the good, and constitute a basis for the establishment of the Reign of Mary.

### *The fertile seed of a new form of community life*

However, in order for them to achieve such identification with the cause, it was necessary for them to distance themselves from worldly distractions and allow themselves to be moulded by the supernatural atmosphere. Years earlier, on a trip to Europe, Dr. Plinio had observed the beneficial effect on his companions of long periods spent in prayer at the Franciscan monastery *Eremo delle Carceri*. Discerning in this fact a sign of Providence, some time later he would establish the so-called *hermitages*, residences where his disciples, leading a community life devoted to contemplation, ceremony, and intellectual work,

would seek to translate the principles of the Counter-Revolution into ways of being, as Dr. Plinio explained when outlining the mission of the community that was to be the model for the others: “This is the hermitage of doctrine converted into facts, of wisdom embodied in people, in action, in lifestyle, in concrete, palpable and tangible realities. This is the engine of the ship: to present wisdom in practical, experiential terms, through which the person ascends to the doctrine.”<sup>33</sup>

However, in order to shape a human type, in addition to the environment, a specific garb was necessary: inspired by what they already wore as tertiaries of the Carmelite Order, a new habit was designed. Upon contemplating it, Dr. Plinio expressed his satisfaction: “[The scapulars] fully express the spirit that we must carry.” He concluded: “For the first time in my life, I will wear a garment in which I feel myself expressed.”<sup>34</sup>

Gregorian chant, silence, prayer, discipline: everything contributed to restore balance, peace and composure to souls marked by a revolutionary pace. Thus, little by little, Dr. Plinio introduced those young people to a life of ceremony, in which sacrality was the teacher.

### *“I became your father in Christ”*

Dr. Plinio communicated to them the spirit of the Counter-Revolution that filled his soul, taught them to take sure steps in virtue, comforted them in their struggles, and supported them in their falls: he was, in the highest sense, a father to them. He could rightly repeat the words of the Apostle: “I became your father in Christ” (1 Cor 4:15).

The relationship established by this spiritual filiation was based on a deep affection that sprang from his paternal heart and found an echo in his followers: “My sons, something in your relationship with me [...] reminds me of my relationship with my mother. [...] It is a repetition of my own story, fulfilling the proverb that says that a good son makes a happy father.”<sup>5</sup>

If paternal affection is already something admirable when reciprocated, perhaps its deepest beauty is only revealed in the face of ingratitude. In a conversation, Dr. Plinio revealed: “When I see a member of the Group, even when he is wasting the remainder of the calling that is not extinct in him, I am well disposed towards him and bear him this

spiritual love. This does not presuppose reciprocity. The very nature of paternal love is such that it almost eliminates reciprocity. So that, even when receiving the worst ingratitude, it acts as if nothing had happened.”<sup>6</sup>

And these were not mere words. In dealing with those associated with him, as long as there was true repentance and a desire to make amends, he was willing to overlook even the greatest infidelities, focusing his attention on the calling that Providence had placed in that person’s soul and leaving the rest behind.

### *Fatherhood beyond time*

Having Dr. Plinio as a father was not an exclusive privilege of the generations who enjoyed the good fortune of his direct company. Governed by the laws of the spirit, his fatherhood is not subject to the limitations of nature or the dictates of time.

In fact, if someone were proud to belong, in the hundredth degree, to the lineage of a great personage, the laws of matter would not allow them to consider themselves directly his child, for

centuries and generations would separate them. From eternity, however, Dr. Plinio continues to beget spiritual sons and daughters, to whom he transmits his spirit and leads in the ways of the Counter-Revolution.

Thus, over the years, the bond that unites us to him does not weaken or fade. Today, three decades after his passing, the same affection rises up to him from hearts that, never having met him physically, but possessing his spirit and continuing his work, can rightly call him father. ✦

<sup>1</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Talk*. São Paulo, 12/12/1985.

<sup>2</sup> The name given internally to the movement founded by Dr. Plinio.

<sup>3</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Talk*. São Paulo, 6/3/1972.

<sup>4</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Talk*. São Paulo, 13/9/1971.

<sup>5</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conversation*. São Paulo, 23/10/1980.

<sup>6</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conversation*. São Paulo, 4/4/1988.

**The bond that unites us to him has not weakened or become distant. Today, the same affection rises up to him from the hearts of those who, having never met him physically, can rightly call him father**

Mass at the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, Caieiras (Brazil);  
inset, Dr. Plinio on December 14, 1994



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# *The World for Mary: the Apex of Devotion*

Dr. Plinio's union with Our Lady, the mountain set above all other mountains, consisted of a sublime ascent from peak to peak, until the consummation of his life.

✠ Fr. Rodrigo Alonso Solera, EP



**"I**f I had met St. Louis Grignon de Montfort five minutes before his death," Dr. Plinio once said, "I would have knelt down, kissed his feet, and urged him: 'Be even more devoted to Our Lady!'"<sup>1</sup> The boldness of this exhortation, given to the greatest of Mariologists, presupposes a life of insatiable growth in love for Mary Most Holy...

Indeed, according to the majestic designs of Providence, the universal Mediatrix of all graces obtained for Dr. Plinio the gift of yearning for the sublime, especially in his devotion to her as Mother of mercy. This fervour had its dawn, went through countless trials, grew in fullness and now shines at its zenith at the feet of the Queen of Heaven.

What were the milestones of this journey? What was the culmination of this ascent?

## *A mother's supreme teaching at her son's dawning*

So great is the mystery of motherhood that the Creator of the universe Himself wanted to have a Mother. And from then on, one of the main duties

of mothers is to mirror the virtues of the Woman clothed with the sun (cf. Rv 12:1), chosen to give birth to the Sun of Justice.

This splendour of the Virgin among virgins and Mother among mothers was faithfully reflected in Dona Lucilia, to whom Dr. Plinio was born. Already at the dawn of her son's springtime innocence, she taught him to pronounce the Most Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, even before he could say "papa" and "mama," thus introducing him to the atmosphere of the supernatural.

The unfailing kindness, enveloping affection, and selfless dedication that little Plinio experienced in Dona Lucilia were a stepping stone to understanding Mary Most Holy, as he would later affirm: "The fact that I felt my mother's patience prepared me for something much greater: devotion to Our Lady. And when I pray the *Salve Regina* and the *Memorare*, I feel as if I am doing with her a little of what I did with my mother [...], understanding that the supplication of the afflicted child is heard and that I can explain my problems to her with confidence, for I am never unwelcome."<sup>2</sup>

## *By the cross of trial... to the light of devotion!*

When he was twelve years old, amid the difficulties he faced at school, Plinio



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*Dona Lucilia's  
affection, goodness  
and dedication were  
the first steps towards  
understanding  
Mary Most Holy  
for little Plinio*

Dona Lucilia in Paris, in 1912



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Altar of Our Lady Help of Christians - Sacred Heart of Jesus Shrine, São Paulo.  
Inset, Plinio in 1921, the year in which the report card episode took place

*Our Lady Help of Christians, smiling in the immobility of the marble, conveyed her forgiveness, kindness and tenderness to him, offering a covenant*

went through a terrible trial, which would, however, be the cause of a huge step forward in his devotion to Our Lady.

Having always received top marks in behaviour, one day he found a six on his report card. Stunned, he decided to do himself justice and clumsily marked a ten on the card... His mother immediately recognized his writing and said: "I would rather have anything than a son who is a forger!" Threatened with being sent to a distant school in Minas Gerais, he ended his Saturday in sadness, slept in bitterness

and went very early to Sunday Mass at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Shrine. Entering, he took refuge at the back of the aisle to his right, where a statue of Mary Help of Christians shone in snow-white splendour. Kneeling, he prayed the *Salve Regina*, changing the salutation into a shipwrecked man's plea: "Save me, holy Queen!"

The Mother of mercy, smiling in the immobility of marble, made him feel her forgiveness, goodness and tenderness, and offered him a covenant, as if speaking to his soul: "I give myself entirely to you, but you must give yourself entirely to Me! Walk in faithfulness, say 'no' to the revolutionaries, so as to say 'yes' to Me, Queen of Heaven and earth. Fight and struggle, for one day you will see your ideals come true! Love Me all your life, and I will love you for eternity."<sup>3</sup> Promising never to forget that help and to be very devoted to her, Plinio replied in his heart: "My Mother, I am yours!"<sup>4</sup>

On Monday, the school principal confirmed the perfect score, and Dona Lucilia forgave her son. The severity of his earthly mother had been an act

of mercy, which had lifted him up to his heavenly Mother. For the greatest strides in devotion to Our Lady are made when a person, begging for an extraordinary forgiveness or facing a tremendous hardship, prays to her and experiences her mercy, protection and desire to save.

***Slavery: a reality not yet explained, but already lived***

Tested like gold in a crucible and purified by Our Lady Help of Christians, Plinio gained the strength to fight the Revolution. After beginning his membership in the Catholic Movement, he underwent six months of terrible trials. In this storm, a novena to St. Therese led him to the book of his life: *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, by St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort.

While reading it, he found a theme never mentioned by anyone: the Reign of Mary, the goal toward which he was soaring. He admired the combatants called to establish this reign, as well as the height of holiness that would mark it as the pinnacle of history. He studied the book with transports of joy, but as





At left, Dr. Plinio before the altar of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Genazzano (Italy). At right, St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort – St. Peter's Basilica (Vatican); inset, the 'Treatise on True Devotion'

one who had been thinking about such wonders since the episode of the “Save me, holy Queen!” To seal his surrender to the Blessed Virgin, he went to church and received Communion, then returned to his room, meditated, prayed the *Veni Creator Spiritus* and the *Ave Maris Stella*, and finally consecrated himself.

Throughout his life, in his thanksgiving after Communion, he would always implore Jesus for the fullness and summit of devotion to Mary, as far as human nature aided by grace would allow, with the aim of establishing the reign of Our Lady in souls and in the world.

The infallibility of prayer, guaranteed by the Redeemer (cf. Mt 7:7) and witnessed in its fruits by Dr. Plinio's disciples, leads to the conclusion that he did, in fact, reach his utmost capacity to love the Mother of God.

### ***School to establish an order of chivalry***

In St. Peter's Basilica, a gallery of thirty-nine founders invites the faithful to raise their eyes to Heaven. The reason for this special honour is that founders receive the gift of inspiring not only in-

*Having consecrated himself to Mary as her slave, Dr. Plinio implored God daily for the grace to attain the plenitude and apex of devotion to her*

dividuals or a group, but a veritable host called to spread the charism granted to them.

Seeing in Dr. Plinio the archetype and apostle of slavery to Mary, his disciples took him as their mediator and placed in his hands their consecration to her. The pioneer in receiving this inspiration, the young João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, would decades later found the Heralds of the Gospel, in whose charism the *Treatise* is a book of light, as it was for his master, who had conceived an order of chivalry based on the teachings of St. Louis Grignion.

Just as the best way to consecrate oneself to Jesus consists in slavery to

Mary Most Holy, thought João, those who have Dr. Plinio as their father and founder should surrender themselves to Our Lady through him, in order to bring their obedience, service and praise to God to its peak.

If slavery is true devotion, then a marvel of grace imposes a prophecy on us: Reign of Mary... reign of slaves of Mary!

### ***A counsel for a lifetime***

In 1967, a diabetes crisis seriously affected Dr. Plinio's health. He was not distressed by the prospect of death, but rather by the fear of seeing the prophecy of Scripture fulfilled: “Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered” (Zec 13:7). Leaving his mission incomplete was his sorrow. At the height of his anguish, he received a picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel, whose fresco is venerated in the city of Genazzano, Italy. A deep communication was established between them, and Our Lady, as if smiling, spoke to his heart: “My son, do not be troubled. Trust, because your work will be completed and you will fulfil your mission in its entirety.”<sup>75</sup> He called this favour the *grace of Genazzano*.

In that suffering, could there have been a better counsel? No! As he repeatedly stated, the rest of his days were spent supported by the certainty of this supernatural help. A few years before ending his struggle on earth, he declared: “With so many concerns, if it were not for the promise of Genazano, I would have died, for I could not have endured the uncertainties and doubts.”<sup>6</sup>

This mystical grace elevated his devotion to even greater heights. More arduous crosses and battles would come, conquests and victories would be more splendid. In return, his union with Mary would reach an ever greater fullness.

In his final days in 1995, despite being debilitated by the cancer that led to his death, Dr. Plinio continued to encourage everyone to devote themselves to Our Lady. One day, pointing to the picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel and clasping Msgr. João’s hand, he asked: “My son, look over there. Do you realize how much She loves you?” When he received an affirmative answer, he added: “You know how much I esteem you! Our Lady has given you so much!” And the faithful disciple, recognizing all he had received from his father and master, replied: “Yes, Our Lady has given me so much: She gave me you and She gave me Dona Lucilia. I want nothing more!” His encouragement had been reciprocated...

**Thoughts of wisdom reveal the unfathomable nature of love**

Who can measure the depth of Dr. Plinio’s love for the Blessed Virgin? For him, without Our Lady’s fidelity, the world would have ended after the deicide, such is her importance in the history of salvation. As the Woman of Genesis (cf. Gn 3:15) and of the Apoca-

lypse, who opens and closes Revelation, reigning above time and place, She prevents humanity from rejecting the totality of the graces poured out on the children of Adam, gathering in herself, as *Vas honorabile*, the Creator’s designs in conceiving the universe.

To glimpse her grandeur, let us think of all the wonders of the Church and Christianity summed up and distilled in her soul: “Considering the splendours of history, elevated to a peak never be-

fore reached, we can have some idea of who Our Lady is. Ark of the Covenant, She gathered what men have rejected and, as in the Book of Life, accumulates everything that is beautiful and good, great and true, in unimaginable proportions.”<sup>7</sup> Would anyone be able to sound the depths and heights of history in this way without having seriously lived slavery to Mary?

We now understand better the advice that Dr. Plinio would offer to St. Louis: to grow even more in devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Insatiable in his devotion to the Queen of the universe, he lived it: “As I breathe my last breath, may my words be a hymn of love to Our Lady and to the Holy Church: a Roman Apostolic Catholic, a slave of Mary. Nothing else!”<sup>8</sup>

He always sought the sublime, the first élan of his soul, and in this upward impulse he obeyed St. Bernard’s “*De Maria nunquam satis*” (Of Mary, never enough). A Catholic man, he lived breathing Mary, as the world will live when her Immaculate Heart triumphs. ✚



Dr. Plinio in 1993

*He desired that his last words be a hymn of praise to the Blessed Virgin and to the Church: “a Roman Apostolic Catholic, a slave of Mary”*

<sup>1</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Talk*. São Paulo, 26/12/1994.

<sup>2</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Notas autobiográficas [Autobiographical Notes]*. São Paulo: Retornarei, 2008, v.I, p.71.

<sup>3</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Notas autobiográficas [Autobiographical Notes]*. São Paulo: Retornarei, 2012, v.III, p.196.

<sup>4</sup> Idem, *ibidem*.

<sup>5</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conference*. São Paulo, 26/4/1974.

<sup>6</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conversation*. São Paulo, 16/8/1992.

<sup>7</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conference*. São Paulo, 13/12/1977.

<sup>8</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Talk*. São Paulo, 14/3/1981.





# Boundless Love of the Holy Church

The true north and compass of Dr. Plinio's life was the Catholic Church. He adhered to her, suffered with her and with her awaited the days of glorification!

✠ Sr. Diana Milena Devia



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St. Peter, by Nardo di Cione - National Gallery of Art - Washington D.C.

**M**ore, much more and always more, breaking all limits, surpassing with such exuberance the “normality” of the facts, that his surrender, his restitution and his love were fully on a par with the love of Holy Mother Church for her children... This is the meaning of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira's entire existence.

There are those who would like to sum up his epopee in terms of the heroic political battles he sustained, the fame and victories he won, the institutions he founded, the crowds he drew to his ideals, or the persecutions he suffered, the hardships, the disasters, the suffering... But for himself, Dr. Plinio longed for only one title of honour: that of being a man who was wholly Catholic, apostolic and entirely Roman.

*Dr. Plinio always believed he would one day behold the victory of the Holy Church over the gates of hell that try in vain to defeat her*

If he fought, sacrificing personal advantages to make his life a continuous oblation for the interests of the Papacy and Christendom, it was because he believed with every fibre of his heart that one day he would behold the victory of the Holy Church against the gates of hell (cf. Mt 16:18), which since the night of time have been trying in vain to defeat her.

***A faithful son, the fruit of a most faithful mother***

Man's life on earth is a constant struggle (cf. Jb 7:1), but Dr. Plinio's battle began even before he was born, and it was to his mother that he owed his first victory. If she had listened to the advice of the doctor who suggested she criminally terminate a high-risk pregnancy, her son would never have been born. Thus, through her willingness to offer up her life if necessary, Dona Lucilia taught little Plinio a lesson that would guide his entire life: it will never be enough to obey God and the Holy Church; to be faithful, one must love them to the point of holocaust.

This would not be her only teaching to her son. Gifted with a profound discernment of spirits and a keen psychological sense, he recounted having come to know the true Faith by looking

at and analysing Dona Lucilia, comparing the virtues of her soul to the sacral ambiances of the churches he attended, discovering reflections of God Himself in his mother and understanding that from Him came the gentleness, kindness, tenderness and uprightness he perceived in her personality. “I realized that everything that was best in Mama was not hers, but was communicated by the Sacred Heart of Jesus,” he commented.

It was by watching her pray, following her way of acting and receiving her beneficial upbringing that Dr. Plinio, already in his early childhood, became enamoured this sacred institution called the Catholic Church and adhered to it with all his being.

***From a little polemicist  
to a great fighter***

This adhesion was given all with all his characteristic vehemence. “If the Church is the source from which such marvellous things spring, then: unconditional fidelity to her! Loyalty taken as far as it can go, with no conditions, no limits. It is the Church or nothing!”<sup>2</sup> he would exclaim as a young boy.

Obedience to the Holy Church became the light of his life, allowing him to climb, from enthusiasm to enthusiasm, to the summit of an inexpressible love for her as he learned more of her truths and the mysteries of her doc-

trine. But loving her unreservedly also meant defending her! And it was driven by this threefold desire to love, serve and defend that we see little Plinio – at just four years old! – arguing in a puppet theatre in Paris with an anticlerical character who had a leading role in the play, giving moral lessons to relatives who had strayed from the path of virtue, or catechizing the household servants from atop a chair in the kitchen...

Supported in this by profound mystical graces that helped him glimpse the grandeur of the Holy Church in her essence, Plinio aspired to be as united to her as a “blank piece of paper” in her hands, waiting for whatever she wished to write on it. His obedience reached unimaginable heights. “Our Lady made me discover the truth by exaggerating my obedience to the Church,”<sup>3</sup> he would declare decades later, summar-

izing his life as follows: “I intend to be nothing more than an echo of the great bell that is the Holy Roman Catholic Church, [...] the echo that in the midst of battle prolongs the voice of the bell and makes it heard everywhere.”<sup>4</sup>

For him, the Church was an open gallery through which Heaven could be seen; the joy of all the elect, the glory of the good, the honour of God’s followers; his great enthusiasm and consolation; a Milky Way of perfection, holiness and immutability; the refuge of his soul and his Paradise on earth; in short, the philosopher’s stone of his life, towards which all his admirations converged.<sup>5</sup>

After the struggles of his student years, Plinio realized that his loyalty had to become militant. If he had to be chaste in order to follow the luminous paths of the Holy Church, he had to be

*Obedience to the  
Holy Church became  
the light of his life,  
allowing him to reach  
the summit of love for  
her as he learned her  
truths and doctrines*

Dr. Plinio in 1988, in front of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris







Dr. Plinio venerates the statue of the Fisherman; in the background, St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican

eminently and combatively so! If in order to love her with all his heart it was necessary to renounce the world, he would lock the doors of success with vigour, turning his back on the glories of the world and consecrating his future absolutely to the defence of the Church.

***“It is no longer I who live...”***

A step of such magnitude was matched by graces of an immeasurable calibre. Captivated by the Holy Church, which he saw as a person capable of feeling, rejoicing and suffering, Dr. Plinio was given a unique gift: a mystical marriage with the one he so loved. This can be inferred from his words: “I gave my soul to the Catholic Church. I did this consciously, thoughtfully, calmly; I did it in such a way that when I decided to do it... it was done! In such a way, the Church had become part of my being.”<sup>6</sup>

So, without any fear, he would exclaim, paraphrasing the Apostle (cf. Gal 2:20): “It is no longer I who live, but it is the Holy Roman Catholic Church that lives in me!”<sup>7</sup>

*His admiration for the  
Papacy was boundless,  
for he understood  
that this love also  
encompassed love for  
Our Lord, Our Lady,  
and the Church*

If during his childhood and youth he loved the Church, in maturity he became one with her; if before he analysed her with rapture, now he saw everything from her eyes; if before he fought from outside to glorify her, much more now, within her, he would lead from the ranks of the laity greater struggles to keep her faithful to herself.

Faced with such a panorama, one can imagine Dr. Plinio's delight when he considered – in a collapsing world – the promise of infallibility that hovered over the Chair of Peter. A soul made

to admire, he venerated the spiritual greatness of the man who, being human, touched the borders of the divine and could safely lead the Holy Church of Jesus Christ through the stormy seas of history. His love for the Roman Pontiff was boundless, because he realized that this love also included love for Our Lord, Our Lady and the Church. “My last thought is of love for the Pope,” he would write on his Catholic identity card.

Nevertheless... how hard the battles that awaited him would be! Accustomed to the atheist and relativist environment of our times, it is hard for us to measure the magnitude of the sacrifice and suffering that Dr. Plinio endured as he faced the revolutionary tide that was sweeping away the last glimmers of Christian civilization from society, as well as striking the millenary foundations of the visible face of the Mystical Bride of Christ. “The great suffering of my life was the crisis of the Church,”<sup>8</sup> he would declare at the end of his days.

***More than generosity, heroism***

Faced with such a panorama, Dr. Plinio understood, by a special action of grace, that to defend the Holy Church it was not enough to write works, de-



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Dr Plinio during a Good Friday ceremony in 1992

liver speeches or organize campaigns in the streets... She needed not only the generosity of one who fights or polemizes, but the heroism of one who consumes himself like a candle, aware that he has offered himself as a sacrifice.

Knowing that the treasure of the Church lies in all the suffering souls and that – to paraphrase the beautiful expression of St. Bernard – “there is only one way to love the Church: to love her without measure,”<sup>9</sup> he took the sorrows of this Holy Mother upon himself as if they were his own.

Measuring and weighing the enormity of the sufferings that would come, and accepting with love the torment of his days, without, however, knowing for certain what use this blood would be, Dr. Plinio assumed a posture of incomparable fidelity: “If I suffer, being

*The Church needed not only the generosity of those who fought and polemized, but the heroism of those who offered themselves as a holocaust*

hated, persecuted and despised because I have been faithful to the immutable and eternal aspects of the Holy Catholic Church, so be it! My martyrdom of

soul or my martyrdom of body will be a continuation of the suffering of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, glory! Asking His Blessed Mother to give me courage, I will go forward under the contempt and hatred of the whole world.”<sup>10</sup>

How did he consummate this offering and how did he live it? That is what we will see in the next article. Here we will do well to ask, with him, for the grace to embrace the same path: “May I also, Lord, in the great desolations of the Church, be always faithful; may I be present in the saddest hours, unshakably preserving the certainty that the Church will triumph by the fidelity of the good because Thy protection assists her!”<sup>11</sup> ✠

<sup>1</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conversation*. São Paulo, 4/1/1995.

<sup>2</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conversation*. São Paulo, 9/10/1985.

<sup>3</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conversation*. São Paulo, 24/6/1982.

<sup>4</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conference*. São Paulo, 15/1/1970.

<sup>5</sup> Expressions of Dr. Plinio taken from: *Conversation*. São Paulo, 11/10/1983; *Conference*. São Paulo, 26/9/1992 and 26/11/1993.

<sup>6</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conversation*. São Paulo, 5/8/1988.

<sup>7</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conference*. São Paulo, 7/6/1978.

<sup>8</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conversation*. São Paulo, 19/6/1995.

<sup>9</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conference*. São Paulo, 6/10/1989.

<sup>10</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conference*. São Paulo, 30/3/1985.

<sup>11</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Via-Sacra*. In: *Catolicismo*. Campos dos Goytacazes. Year I. No.3 (Mar., 1951), p.5.





# The Triumph Obtained by Blood

“Father, if Thou are willing, remove this cup from Me! Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done.” *Fiat voluntas tua* : This phrase could well summarize the life that Dr. Plinio led.



✠ Fr. Mario Beccar Varela, EP

**E**xpiatory victim: the concept at the centre of this article is so foreign to any contemporary reality that it does not seem superfluous to explain it.

The expiatory victim is essentially someone who suffers for others. Individuals who offer even their very lives to God for the sake of others or of higher objectives deserve this title. However, in the majority of cases they remain unknown, and expect nothing in return.

The definition will certainly make a person from today’s society frown; a society in which the principles of self-interest have become almost absolute, or rather have made other principles – perhaps less practical, but more transcendent – such as charity, become almost obsolete.

To sacrifice oneself for no personal advantage might seem like madness, or even a crime against humanity. A crime, yes, whose perpetrator would be none other than a bloodthirsty God, who demands the sacrifice of the innocent to redeem the guilty, and whose accomplices form a list including names such as St. Therese, the little shepherds of Fatima and, above all, Jesus Christ Himself.

But with the eyes of faith, the truth is seen quite differently. As St. Paul teach-

es us: “in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of His Body, that is, the Church” (Col 1:24). The Mystical Body of Christ is undergoing a Passion, and it is in light of this that we can understand the mission and importance of the expiatory victims.

## The Church’s “Garden of Olives”

The agony in the Garden was the moment of the *Via Crucis* that most touched Dr. Plinio’s piety. There, confronted with the prospect of the sufferings awaiting Him, Jesus supplicated: “Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me” (Lk 22:42a). Thus was expressed the tribulation of a be-

ing both divine and human. In the face with Providence’s plan, which caused Him affliction and made Him sweat blood, Our Lord’s human nature was terrified.

Something analogous occurs with the Church. At times her Passion takes on the nature of a true *agony* – from the Greek, *struggle* – in which what we might call the “human nature” of the Mystical Body – that is, the human beings who constitute her, representing her visible face – feel that the fulfilment of the divine will weighs too heavily upon them, and therefore resist obeying. Such individuals prefer a Church that is more in accordance with this world, that is more “human” and less divine. As a result, they disfigure the Church, as if “forcing” her to say to God: “Remove this cup from me!”

Now, if it is within our nature that this agony takes place, it is also from within it that reparation should be carried out. It falls to expiatory victims to pronounce, with Our Lord, the words “*fiat voluntas tua*” for the Church: “not my will, but Thine, be done” (Lk 22:42b).

## Three more breaths

During the 1980s, in his apartment on Alagoas Street in São Paulo, Dr. Plinio begins his first prayers of the day. Af-

*The role of the  
expiatory victim is to  
join with Our Lord  
in saying their “fiat  
voluntas tua” for the  
Church: “Not my will  
but Thine be done”*



Sérgio Miyazaki



Mário Shinoda

At left, Dr. Plinio in 1994; at right, the statue of Christ scourged belonging to him

ter an almost sleepless night due to the weight of his worries, he is exhausted. As has become habitual, his gaze turns to the statue of the scourged Christ that is in his room.

At that moment, he receives a grace: he has the impression of seeing the image come to life and sigh deeply three times. In the depths of his soul, he feels that Our Lord says to him: “My son, when a man considers that he has reached the peak of exhaustion and thinks that he can bear no more, he still has three more breaths to give.”

Reinvigorated by that grace, Dr. Plinio prepares himself to carry not only the weight of that day but also of the years of sufferings that yet await him. It was the call to the Garden of Olives, which he answered incessantly, following the example of Jesus, with an invariable “*fiat voluntas tua*”.

### *A pain worse than death*

In fact, Dr. Plinio once confided to some spiritual sons: “Reading the life of St. Therese, it seemed to me much

*Feeling in the depths of his soul Our Lord's invitation to give his all, Dr. Plinio answered with the same “yes!” he had given Him his whole life*

more useful to the Catholic cause to give myself up as an expiatory victim. To die at a single stroke, offering an immediate sacrifice [...]. In a few years, as a result of that sacrifice, the Counter-Revolution would be dominant.”<sup>21</sup>

However, God did not desire a premature death from him, as from the Saint of Lisieux. In fact, what was in store for him was not to shed the blood of his body all at once, but rather to give the blood of his soul, which would

be poured out over the course of decades...

On Dr. Plinio's Calvary, Providence gave him to drink of a chalice as bitter as it was unexpected. Seeing that heterodoxy was rampant in certain Catholic circles, he threw himself immediately into the fray. However, those who should have been the first to support him failed to do so. Instead, revealing their complicity with the false doctrines, they attacked him.

This cross accompanied him throughout the entire epic involving his work *In Defence of Catholic Action*, published in 1943, which he later dubbed his *kamikaze* book. The analogy with the Japanese pilots is exact. The publication dealt the adversaries a fatal blow, but also cast Dr. Plinio into an annihilating ostracism: “Exclusion and rejection enveloped us, when we were still in the prime of life: this was the foreseen sacrifice, to which we consented.”<sup>22</sup>

We could considerably extend the narration of this part of his “*via cru-*





Dr. Plinio during the time of his convalescence after the car accident he suffered on February 3, 1975

cis". But there are still many "stations" to cover...

### *A trial, a grace and a promise*

For a founder, the decadence of his spiritual children is the cruellest of torments. In this particular case, the bitterness suffered was so severe that in 1967 it provoked the acute diabetes crisis mentioned in a previous article.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Plinio attributed the spiritual deterioration of his disciples to a possible punishment from Providence for some sin of his, unknown to him. He was urgently hospitalized with advanced gangrene in his foot, and the prospect of his impending death further increased this torment: "I asked myself if it was not, finally, the moment when Our Lady, weary of me, would free my soul."<sup>4</sup>

However, as we have seen, it was not the prospect of death itself that afflicted him, but rather the idea that his mission would be truncated by it: "I was certain that my death at that juncture would bring about the ruin of the endeavour that was beginning to flourish with

*His offering of himself as a victim to save his work was promptly accepted, and Dr. Plinio was soon to see the fruits of his immense sacrifice*

vigour and which I ardently desired to carry out for the greater glory of Our Lady, before dying."<sup>5</sup>

At the apex of his suffering, however, the Mother of Mercy intervened with the grace of Genazzano and, at the worst moment of his illness, an unshakeable certainty was anchored in his soul: he would fulfil his mission.

### *Wonders born of an accident*

Nevertheless, the spiritual decline of his sons continued, reaching such a paroxysm that Dr. Plinio felt the need to

renew his offering as a victim, this time specifically in the intention of saving his work. His offering was accepted by Providence with remarkable haste.

The day after the offering, February 3, 1975, he suffered a serious car accident: several bones fractured, two teeth knocked out, deep lesions all over his body, a violent blow to the head that left him in a state of semi-consciousness for several days. Due to a fractured femur, he would be obliged to use a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

However, the fruits produced by this immense sacrifice exceeded Dr. Plinio's expectations. Winds of renewed fervour began to blow over his disciples, especially upon a cherished son: the then Mr. João Clá.

Referring to the attentive gaze of his follower, who accompanied him throughout his convalescence, Dr. Plinio stated: "I can see from the ensuing repercussions that he paid attention to everything, he analysed and drew conclusions from everything, with filial devotion. Our Lady was well-served in that he was edified with what he saw. To what extent could this edification have contributed to his subsequent accomplishments? Perhaps in no small measure."<sup>6</sup> Indeed, thanks to Msgr. João's apostolate, everything flourished in the work.

But the ascent of Calvary continued. Violent publicity campaigns were launched against the movement founded by Dr. Plinio, like great waves of mud. Just one of these "tsunamis" of calumny, which took place in 1975, totalled more than two thousand defamatory newspaper articles in two months. He faced it all, suffering unspeakably.

### *If only one point were clear...*

Finally, 1995 was the year in which the sacrifice was consummated. In the

final months of his earthly life, Providence asked him to drink the most bitter draughts from the chalice. Attacks from external enemies and, even worse, from spiritual sons, submerged his soul in a sea of grief. All the while he was fighting a cancer that devastated his health over his last year of life.

Admitted to the Oswaldo Cruz German Hospital in São Paulo, Dr. Plinio spent a month immersed in atrocious physical and, above all, spiritual suffering, until October 3, when he surrendered his soul to God. His greatest anguish in this final stage consisted of a tremendous perplexity: how could he fulfil his mission? That is why he repeated this mysterious lamentation three times: “If only one point were clear to me, everything would be resolved.”

Our Lady wanted this further trait of resemblance to her Divine Son from him: the feeling of abandonment by God and the futility of his blood.

### *In failure, triumph!*

Death is a deeply misunderstood phenomenon. We compare it to sleep, but for those who cross the threshold of this life, it must be much more like an awakening. It is only through death that one can contemplate the whole of reality, in face of which earthly existence is but a kind of mirage.

After Dr. Plinio’s passing, a smile blossomed on his inert lips. What did this discreet sign signify? Could it be that that “one point”, upon becoming clear in the afterlife, shone so brightly that it illuminated even his physiognomy? If so, what was it he saw?

Of all the prophecies referring to Jesus’ Passion, Psalm 21 is among the

most complete. Beginning with the poignant cry, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”, repeated by Christ on the Cross, it ends in a song of praise for the man who has been attended by Providence. This is the itinerary of all the prophets: through ap-

parent failure, they fulfil their mission and bring about the realization of their prophecies.

How could Dr. Plinio be excluded from this rule? He himself once prognosticated: “My head would be cut off by disappointment, but, true to itself, it would hit the ground and carry out God’s plan. My disappointed hopes will have inaugurated the Reign of Mary.”<sup>7</sup>

The defeat of the Revolution and the triumph of Our Lady were Dr. Plinio’s prophecy par excellence, the goal of his life. Working, fighting and praying, he pursued it; and in being crucified, he obtained it from God. Perhaps his smile at the tomb’s threshold was caused when he realized that, taken up from the earth, he could more effectively draw people to Mary. ✠

*Perhaps his smile  
at the threshold of  
the tomb was caused  
when he realized  
that, from Heaven, he  
could more effectively  
draw others to Mary*



Sérgio Miyazaki

The body of Dr. Plinio at his funeral in October 1995

<sup>1</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Talk*. São Paulo, 16/7/1994.

<sup>2</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Kamikaze*. In: *Folha de São Paulo*. São Paulo. Year XL-

VIII. No.14,489 (Feb. 15, 1969), p.4.

<sup>3</sup> *The World for Mary: the Apex of Devotion*, in this issue.

<sup>4</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conference*. São Paulo, 13/1/1968.

<sup>5</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. Una “dichiarazione”. In: *Madre del Buon Consiglio*. Genazzano. Year LXXXVIII. No.7-8 (July-Aug., 1985), p.28.

<sup>6</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conference*. São Paulo, 6/2/1982.

<sup>7</sup> CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, Plinio. *Conversation*. São Paulo, 23/1/1994.





# Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira Is Alive!

Dr. Plinio went through his whole life desiring the Reign of Mary. Nevertheless, Providence chose to call him from this world before he could see its establishment... Could the promise have failed?

✠ Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP

**I**t is inherent to the human spirit to seek the *unum* of things, that is, the intelligence strives to reach a point that defines and synthesizes what has been known in separate details and analysed in its minutiae. These pages, without a doubt, are no exception to the rule.<sup>1</sup>

As we arrive at their end, it is inevitable that we feel the need to draw a conclusion. Accordingly, questions like these arise in our minds: “Has everything been said about Dr. Plinio? Has his personality been fully outlined? Have his vocation and his role in history been thoroughly comprehended?”

Perhaps a poorly informed reader would be inclined to answer in the af-

firmative. However, those who knew Dr. Plinio closely think differently...

## *A tower whose peak is lost in the firmament*

Although this edition gives an overview of who he was, after examining many facets of his souls one comes to the conclusion that it is very difficult to arrive at an all-encompassing notion of the vocation and the spirit of a man who, at sixty years of age, was capable of affirming that the totality of

his memories would provide material to fill more than a hundred volumes!<sup>2</sup>

Neither the remarkable gift of prophecy nor the discernment of spirits, by which he was able to see souls, penetrate circumstances from a distance, and describe a country he had never visited; nor again his vibrant personality, splendidly courageous and representative of God’s greatness; or even his paternal kindness, which drew numerous sons to him: none of these fully portray him.

*Has everything been  
said about Dr. Plinio,  
his spirit and his  
vocation? Those who  
knew him personally  
can assert the opposite  
with all certainty*



Dr. Plinio in 1994

He himself, on various occasions, attested to having experienced in relation to himself, in fleeting moments, the curious sensation of a person who looks out of the window of a tower without being able to glimpse the top of it.

In fact, Providence chose to raise him up as a tower of wisdom: those who entered this tower acquired knowledge that is neither taught in universities, nor found in books. And those who lived with him had the feeling of being closer to God – such was the unquenchable flame of enthusiasm that burned in his soul, a column of fire so high that its peak was lost in the firmament.

### *A mission to accomplish*

However, it is not merely the amplitude and richness of his personal gifts that make it so daunting a task to convey a complete picture of Dr. Plinio. There is another, much deeper reason, based on the fact that his providential mission has not yet been entirely fulfilled on earth. Far from viewing him as a figure from the past whose journey reached its consummation on October 3, 1995, it is necessary to consider him in intimate relation with the unfolding of current events.

How many people pass through life like leaves on a tree, which, once dried

up, are blown away by the wind, leaving no lasting memory behind!

But there is a principle pertaining to spiritual values that permeates the whole of history: whenever a person endowed with unparalleled gifts of the Holy Spirit and singled out by a special calling seems to have been extinguished by ostracism, a time comes when the obstacles raised by his enemies to hide the splendour and greatness of his person can no longer be sustained.

Neither the persecutions, nor the campaigns of slander or silence of ad-

versaries, nor the inattentiveness of some of his closest companions, nor even death itself and the granite slab of the tombstone can prevent his light from breaking forth, scattering the darkness...

### *His light will shine before all mankind!*

These thoughts accompanied me throughout the days leading up to Dr. Plinio's death, and above all during the funeral, as I sensed the dereliction in which Dr. Plinio passed from this world, forgotten and rejected by so many, to the point of not a single ecclesiastical, civil or military authority appearing to pay him their final respects. Only his sons were there to lay him to rest.

Faced with this reality, I was led to conclude: "This is a mystery. It is not possible for a man of Dr. Plinio's moral stature to die in isolation and become lost in the mists of time like so



Msgr. João beside  
Dr Plinio's coffin

*Persecution, slander,  
oblivion, even death  
and the granite  
of a tomb are not  
able to prevent  
his light from  
shining through*



Photos: Sérgio Miyazaki





Dr. Plinio in the 1990s

many others. If men turn their backs on him, the Angels and saints will descend from Heaven to earth to pay him funeral honours! Months may go by, perhaps years, but dawn will finally break, and by an influx of divine grace, his light will reappear from amidst the haze, and, like a dazzling midday sun, it will shine for all of mankind!”

During the Holy Masses and other rites surrounding Dr. Plinio’s interment, the prevailing atmosphere of faith confirmed my filial conviction. Far from reactions of dejection, gloom or unbelief, the first effect of his departure from this world was a surge of new and intense graces amidst his true followers, filling them with joy despite the apparent tragedy.

Never had his spiritual sons demonstrated such clear certainty in the victory of his mission as during those stirring ceremonies. They participated with serene expressions, heads held high, and a firm and confident bearing.

### ***God and His chosen ones do not die***

From that day on, I began to experience something similar to what ensued

*Such was his union of soul with Dr. Plinio that, when the latter was in eternity, his presence increased in the depths of Msgr. João’s heart*

after the death of Dona Lucilia: it was difficult to remember that Dr. Plinio had died. I felt him alive, and constantly within my reach; not as before, when I guided his wheelchair, but rather as if he were going before me, opening the way, and yet somehow turned to face me so that it was always possible to maintain eye contact.

Moreover, I noted an ever intensifying effect of Dr. Plinio’s spirit within me, in a way that is difficult to express in words. Such had been my spiritual union with Dr. Plinio that now, with him in eternity, through a true mystical phenomenon, his presence in the

very depths of my heart was all the more vivid.

On the other hand, as time went by, this supernatural inspiration was also felt by his other followers, united in their enthusiasm and fidelity to their father and teacher. His figure was alive in their memory, and from Heaven, he was a channel of sanctity for his disciples.

Applicable here is the phrase uttered by the Catholic president of Ecuador, Gabriel García Moreno, as he lay wounded and dying on the steps of the National Palace in Quito: “¡Dios no muere! – God does not die!”<sup>33</sup>

Now, if God does not die, neither does a man of God, precisely because he is a reflection of God! Death only represents an interval when considered from the earthly perspective of time; before the divine throne, God’s chosen ones are always alive.

Indeed, although he physically experienced the ordeal of death three decades ago, his spirit is alive and active, and with the aid of the Mediatrix of all graces, will remain immortal in his work for future centuries. He is alive in his writings, alive in the precious legacy of his oral and written expositions, alive



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Msgr. João in January, 2008

in the course that he indicated, alive in the way of life that he instituted; above all, alive in the human type he inspired, namely, in those souls in which was planted a seed of prophetism, which is a participation in his own charism.

### *First glimmers of the Reign of Mary*

Dr. Plinio spent his whole life yearning for the Reign of Mary – that reign foreseen by St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, and announced by Our Lady to the three shepherd children in Fatima; that reign already glimpsed by him in his early youth, the continual object of his contemplation and admiration; that reign in which the fruits of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the tears of Mary Most Holy will work their full effect on the face of the earth.

*His spirit lives on and  
will remain immortal  
in the souls in which  
a seed of prophetism  
has been planted,  
a participation  
in his charism*

Nevertheless, Providence chose to take him from this life before his bodily eyes could witness the effective realization of this promise... Undoubtedly, he will see it with the eyes of the soul from the vantage point of eternity, and his mission will be accomplished

as he always hoped, by means of his spiritual sons.

At a certain moment, according to the law of history, there will be a glorious manifestation from God! The Revolution denounced by Dr. Plinio for so many years will be humiliated, condemned, and defeated, and the Church will flourish again with an utterly unprecedented beauty, light, and vigour.

When will this come about? We do not know. But from atop the mountain of faith, the first glimmers of the magnificent dawn of the Reign of the Most Blessed Virgin over the earth can already be detected. May She, as I ardently desire, deign to make use of these pages to hasten the proclamation, in a concrete and definitive way, of the triumph of her Immaculate Heart! ✠

<sup>1</sup> This article is a transcription of the concluding chapter of work in five volumes written by Msgr. João on Dr. Plinio (cf. *O dom de sabedoria na vida, mente e obra de [The Gift of Wisdom in the Life, Mind, and Work of] Plinio Corrêa de*

*Oliveira*. Città del Vaticano-São Paulo: LEV; Lumen Sapientiae, 2016, v.V, pp. 479-486). With minor adaptations to make it more accessible to the reader, the text is perfectly suited as the conclusion to this edition of our Magazine dedicat-

ed to this distinguished Catholic leader.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. CLÁ DIAS, EP, João Scognamiglio. *O dom de sabedoria na mente, vida a obra de [The Gift of Wisdom in the Life, Mind, and Work of] Plinio*

*Corrêa de Oliveira*. Città del Vaticano-São Paulo: LEV; Lumen Sapientiae, 2016, v.I, p.29.

<sup>3</sup> GALVEZ, Manuel. *Vida de Don Gabriel García Moreno*. Madrid: González, 1945, p.480.



## Always With Mary

**W**ith sights on fostering devotion to Our Lady in souls, the Heralds of the Gospel in Brazil organized several events between June and August. The photos below show “Afternoons with Mary” at the institution’s house in the city of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais (photos 1 and 2), and at the Oratory of Our Lady of Fatima in Nova Friburgo, Rio de Janeiro (photos 3 to 5), with Fr. Ricardo José Basso, EP; as

a speaker at both occasions, a Marian mission in Balneário Camboriú (photo 6) and Blumenau (photo 7), both in Santa Catarina; and the beginning of a course on consecration to the Blessed Virgin using the method of St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, at the Parish of Our Lady of Deliverance in Vitória de Santo Antão, Pernambuco, with a lecture given by Dcn. Adilson Costa, EP (photo 8).

Photos: Pablo Brito



1



2

Photos: Diengles Heggdorne



3



4



5

Photos: Ana Cristina Barros



6



7



8

Jackson da Silva





## 15th National Pilgrimage to Aparecida

**P**articipants in the “Mary, Queen of All Hearts” Shrine Apostolate gathered in August for another national pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida. The programme began on Friday the 8th with a luminous procession from the Old Basilica to the Shrine. On Saturday,

the solemn coronation of the statue of the Blessed Virgin took place, as well as the recitation of the Rosary in the Pope Benedict XVI Gallery, followed by Holy Mass presided over by Bishop Benedito Beni dos Santos, Emeritus of Lorena.







Photos: Luiz Felipe



Lucas Gabriel

**Brasilia** – To commemorate the jubilee year, two hundred faithful from Jesus the Good Shepherd Parish in Structural City made a pilgrimage to the Basilica-Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi in Brasilia on August 16 (photos 1 and 2). On the 5th, twenty-one participants in the Artisanal Bakery Project, from the same parish, received their course completion certificate from Brazil's second lady, Mrs. Maria Lúcia Ribeiro Alckmin (photo 3).

Xavier Jacob



Photos: Diocese of San Lorenzo

**Paraguay** – On the occasion of the first day, August 6, of the novena to Our Lady of the Assumption, the Patroness of Paraguay, the Heralds led the procession of the statue of this invocation from the National Pantheon of Heroes to the Metropolitan Cathedral, (photo 1). On July 26, members of the institution participated in the 2nd Catechesis Congress of the Diocese of San Lorenzo, which took place in the city's multi-sport gymnasium (photos 2 and 3).

Photos: Aida de Mérida



**Guatemala** – In the months of June and July, the Pilgrim Statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary visited the Margarita Cruz (photo 1) and Day & Night (photo 3) geriatric centres, as well as the independent clinics run by Guatemala's Social Security Institute (photo 2), in Guatemala City, bringing comfort and hope to the sick and elderly.





Photos: Jesse Arce

**Colombia** – The Church of Our Lady of Fatima in Tocancipá celebrated its tenth anniversary on August 8. The Mass of thanksgiving, attended by approximately seven thousand people, was presided over by the Bishop of Zipaquirá, most Rev. Héctor Cubillos Peña and concelebrated by several priests. It was this same prelate, a decade ago, who officiated at the church's solemn dedication ceremony.



Photos: Emilio Pérez

**Ecuador** – On the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, commemorated on July 16, the Heralds of the Gospel added a note of splendour to the Holy Mass presided over by Archbishop of Cuenca, Marcos Aurelio Pérez Caicedo, in the town of Tarqui (photo 1). The Eucharistic Celebration at the Carmelite Convent of the Assumption, in Cuenca, on the last day of the novena was also organized by the members of the institution (photos 2 and 3).



Photos: Reginaldo Pomim

**Ubatuba (Brazil)** – The eighteenth anniversary of the inauguration of Our Lady of the Pillar Chapel, located close to Maranduba Beach, was solemnly celebrated on August 19 with a thanksgiving Mass presided over by Most Rev. José Carlos Chacorowski, CM, Bishop of Caraguatatuba, and concelebrated by several priests.



The Patriarch Abraham

# Confidence Against All Hope

About four thousand years separate us from the patriarch Abraham. However, as with all righteous souls, his memory endures through the centuries and stands for all time as an example of faith and unconditional surrender to the plans of God.



Sr. Lucilia Veas ✞



**G**o from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation" (Gn 12:1-2).

Over the millennia, Abraham's descendants have repeated this passage countless times, marking the beginning of the great patriarch's vocation. The Church also exalts him as the one to whom God entrusted the first fruits of his "holy nation" (1 Pt 2:9), the portion chosen "out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth" (Dt 14:2), from which the Saviour promised to Adam before he was expelled from Paradise would be born (cf. Gn 3:15).

He was eminently a man of faith because, in addition to the straight path of promise and blessing, his life was marked by the capricious zigzag of delays, setbacks and apparent contradictions.<sup>1</sup>

## Glimpses of a robust faith

Using the narratives of the Holy Scriptures and information from Universal History, it can be calculated that God called Abraham between approximately 2000 BC and 1850 BC.

Originally named Abram;<sup>2</sup> he was the son of Terah, from the tenth generation after Noah, in the lineage of Shem. A native of Ur of the Chaldeans, he moved with his father and some relatives to Haran, where he first heard the voice of God, commanding him to leave his family and his father's house.

He promptly left with his wife, Sarah, and his nephew Lot, from Haran to Canaan, taking with him his possessions and slaves. Upon arriving there, the Lord promised him that he would give that land to his descendants. Abraham, however, went from camp to camp until he reached the Negeb, always considering himself a foreigner in the land.

This passage shows the first glimpses of the patriarch's strong faith: he leaves the comforts of his father's home and heads for an unknown land, which God had promised only to *show* him, to give it not to him, but to his descendants. They did not yet exist, however, and Abraham was already seventy-five years old.

## Father of a great nation

Abraham, whom we are led to imagine as a robust old man with a calm tem-

perament and strong character, must have meditated deeply on God's words. Among the promises God had made to him, He had said, "I will make of you a great nation."

What did it mean, in those times, to be the father of a great nation? One might mistakenly think that in that distant age there were only nomads, such as Abraham and his family, and that humanity lived only in tents... Nothing could be further from the truth.

As chapter 10 of Genesis recounts regarding the posterity of Noah, in the third generation of Ham's lineage, Nimrod, the "first on earth to be a mighty man" (Gn 10:8), was born. According to commentators and historians, he was the initiator of orderly political life and the autocratically organized State.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, long before the time of Abraham, large city-states already existed throughout Mesopotamia. The prosperity of agriculture, thanks in great part to the Sumerians' inventions for soil irrigation, fostered constant trade among them, and as a consequence, small villages were eventually transformed into urban centres in constant development

in terms of architecture, literature and economy.

Lagash, Susa, Kish, Assur, Nineveh, Mari, and Babylon were large, powerful, and wealthy cities, and Ur itself had already shown a remarkable degree of civilization.<sup>4</sup> No less important was Egypt, at that time ruled by its twelfth dynasty.<sup>5</sup>

Now, when Abraham received the promise that peoples and kings would be born of him, God asked him to believe that the powerful nations of the earth would be nothing compared to the lineage that would be his descendants. And by faith he glimpsed the deeper meaning of the divine plan.

### *One certainty: God's plans will come to pass*

About ten years had passed, and Abraham continued to confide; however, like any human being, as he meditated on the promises he had received, acute perplexities certainly came to his mind: "Have I been mistaken? It all seemed so real... Perhaps I have not been faithful, and God has decided to abandon me." The weight of the years increased, and the possibility of having a son became increasingly unlikely.

On a certain starry night, perhaps while recalling the promises amid the pain of uncertainty about his own faithfulness, he heard again the grave and serene voice of God: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great" (Gn 15:1).

Full of confidence, the patriarch expressed his perplexity, and the Lord, "brought him outside and said, 'Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able... [...] So shall your descendants be'" (Gn 15:5).

These words resonated deep within his soul, making him desire and even glimpse – not through the light of reason, but in a supernatural way – the fulfilment of the divine plans in which he had undeservedly been included. The certainty that the promises would be fulfilled began to shine like the sun within

him, and this confidence was based solely on faith in God, for being who He is, and deserving of all love.

Hence St. Paul repeats in his Epistle to the Romans (4:3) and to the Galatians (3:6), as does St. James (2:23): "And he [Abraham] believed the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gn 15:6).

This episode reveals something unknown – or forgotten, due to the infidelity of idolatry – to ancient peoples: the Creator's desire to communicate with men, granting them graces and enflaming souls that do not oppose His action with ardent charity. The wild imagination of the children of Adam, on the contrary, has always produced tyrannical gods, whose cruelty and brutality is confirmed by archaeological discoveries.

### *Prediction of great suffering*

Following this event, the Holy Scriptures recount that the patriarch asked the Lord how he could know if he were to possess that land, to which the Lord replied by ordering him to make an of-

fering. Abraham prepared the animals according to the customs of the time and was then overcome by a deep sleep, accompanied by a "dread" (Gn 15:12). At the same time, a thick darkness covered the place, for it was already evening.

At that moment, God revealed to him that only the fourth generation of his descendants would inherit that land, but not before suffering slavery and oppression for four hundred years in a place where they would be considered to be pilgrims.

To seal the covenant, "a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces" (Gn 15:17), symbolizing the firmness of that divine oath.

### *Ishmael, the son of the slave woman*

Undoubtedly Abraham shared the graces he received with his wife, for she was co-heir to the promise. But perhaps he did not tell her about the trials his descendants would undergo, because God can only reveal them fully to souls with a special calling, and robust faith.



Gustavo Kraijl

**Abraham left the comforts of his father's home and headed out to an unknown land, which God had merely promised to show him, and to give only to his descendants, who did not yet exist...**

"Abraham goes to Canaan", by Jacopo and Francesco da Ponte - National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; previous page: stained glass in St. Nicholas Church, Nérac (France)





Perhaps feeling guilty that the couple had no children, Sarah gave her slave Hagar to her husband so that he could have a child with her. In the region where they lived, as in the entire ancient world, masters had complete dominion over their slaves and could dispose of them as they saw fit. Sarah acted according to this concept, aware that if Hagar bore a child, it would not belong to the slave, but to her mistress.

Hagar did indeed conceive and therefore began to show contempt for her mistress... As a result of this rebellious and egalitarian attitude, her son was rejected by Sarah even before he was born, and the Lord participated in this rejection, despite Abraham's plea for the boy: "'O that Ishmael might live in Thy sight!' God said, 'No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him'" (Gn 17:18-19). In this way, God showed clearly that the son of the promise would be born directly from his legitimate wife.

Ishmael received another blessing from the Lord, but he would not be the heir to the promise. As St. Paul refers in his Epistle to the Galatians, alluding to the importance of faith: all who believe in Jesus Christ are free and children of the promise; on the contrary, those who cling to the obsolete customs of the old covenant become like the children of the slave Hagar (cf. Gal 4:21-31).

### ***The son of the promise is born***

Abraham was already ninety-nine years old, and Sarah had not yet given him a son. One hot afternoon, as he sat at the door of his tent, he saw three men before him, who were in reality three Angels. With great zeal and hospitality, the

patriarch set about serving them, and they predicted that they would return within a year and that, by that time, a son would have been born to him. And so it came to pass.

One can imagine the joy of the couple, who trusted in the Lord despite delay of almost a century without desisting along the way. What affection and caresses the boy must have received from both of them!

The years would pass, and in the midst of that immense joy that still lingered another trial would be introduced, perhaps the cruellest of all...

### ***Abraham's great trial***

God said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you. So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; and he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him" (Gn 22:2-3).

Abraham had many reasons to consider God's request incoherent: it was a human sacrifice, contrary to natural law; he was to sacrifice the son to whom God had linked the promise of populating the earth; after which Sarah would have every reason to consider him a man who had gone mad or a homicidal father...

Against all hope (cf. Rom 4:18), Abraham confided, without showing any inconformity. His lips did not utter a single word to argue with the Lord, as he had once done for the sake of his nephew Lot. At that crucial moment, when life presented him with the worst possible turn of events and the future of all of humanity depended on his decision, he proved himself to be a man of faith.

"Great indeed was the faith of Abraham. [...] in this case it was necessary not only to go beyond human reasonings, but to manifest also something more. For what was of God seemed to be opposed to what was of God; and faith opposed faith, and command promise. [...] He [God] enjoined things that were in contradiction to the promises, and yet not even so did the righteous man stagger, nor say he had been deceived. [...] By the same faith by which he believed that God gave what was not, and raised up the dead, by the same was he persuaded that He would also raise him up after he had been slain in sacrifice," comments St. John Chrysostom.

On the third day of their journey, Abraham saw the place designated for the sacrifice in the distance. Leaving his servants at the foot of the mountain, he placed the wood on his son's shoulders and continued on alone with him.

"Isaac said to his father Abraham, 'My father!' And he said, 'Here am I, my son.' He said, 'Behold, the fire



Francisco Lecaros

**Abraham was ninety-nine years old when three Angels visited him and foretold that a son would be born to him within a year**

"Abraham serves the three Angels", by Giusto de Menabuoi - Baptistery of St. John the Baptist, Padua (Italy)

and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?’ Abraham said, ‘God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.’ So they went both of them together” (Gn 22:7-8).

Despite his faith, it is impossible that deep in his heart Abraham did not suffer at the prospect of becoming the executioner of his own son. And the boy, walking beside his father, was undoubtedly also touched by a grace to understand something of what was happening and to accept being offered in sacrifice. God, who always manifested Himself to the patriarch as Father and Friend, at that moment seemed to hide Himself ...

Abraham continues on. It is only when he has bound his son and raises his dagger to sacrifice him that his faith is finally rewarded: “But the Angel of the Lord called to him from Heaven, and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here am I.’ He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me’” (Gn 22:11-12). Looking up, he sees a lamb caught by its horns in a bush and offers it in place of Isaac.

Rewarding his faith, God’s promise becomes an everlasting covenant through an oath: “And the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time



**The Patriarch had many reasons to consider the divine request to sacrifice the boy as contradictory, but he trusted against all hope, without expressing any inconformity**

“The Sacrifice of Isaac”, by Giusto de Menabuoi - Baptistery of St. John the Baptist, Padua (Italy)

from Heaven, and said, ‘By myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore. And your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves, because you have obeyed my voice’” (Gn 22:15-18).

This may be considered the event alluded to by Our Lord Jesus Christ in His invective against the Pharisees: “Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad” (Jn 8:56). What an immense grace that was, to envisage God made Man dwelling on earth, to foresee His Passion,

Death and Resurrection, to recognize in his own son, Isaac, one of His prefigures!

### **Firm in the same faith**

Deeply rich in meaning, the various episodes in Abraham’s story are admirable examples for us. Since it is not possible to encompass the greatness of his figure in a limited number of lines, may they serve as an invitation to meditate on the references to him in Sacred Scripture, as well as an appeal to cultivate the same confidence.

Indeed, Abraham lived in a pagan world that denied the existence

of God in everything, just as the world of today. However, the Lord saw fit to make the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ into the world depend on Abraham’s faith, and he was true to the divine desires. For our part, we have also received a promise from Heaven, uttered by the lips of the Blessed Virgin: “In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph!”

After contemplating the story of this great patriarch, can we still doubt the fulfilment of these words and, consequently, the victory of Jesus through Mary?

The facts considered here clearly demonstrate that the practice of faith, a supernatural virtue infused at Baptism, is a free and a meritorious act. It is up to our will to cooperate with or to resist the invitations of grace. ✠

<sup>1</sup> The biographical information contained in these lines were taken from chapters 15 to 22 of the Book of Genesis.

<sup>2</sup> For clarity, in this article we will always refer to him only as Abraham. God changed his name only after the cove-

nant narrated in chapter 17 of Genesis.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. WEISS, Juan-Baptista. *Historia Universal*. Barcelona: La Educación, 1927, v.I, p.90; CHARBEL, Antônio; LAURINI, Heládio Correia. *Comentários ao Livro do Gênese*.

sis. In: *A Bíblia*. São Paulo: April, 1965, p.26, nota 5.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. KELLER, Werner. *E a Bíblia tinha razão...* 5.ed. São Paulo: Melhoramentos, 1960, p.36-37.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. WEISS, op. cit., p.525.

<sup>6</sup> ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM. *Homilias sobre la Carta a los Hebreos*. Homily XXV, c.1, n.1-4. Madrid: Ciudad Nueva, 2008, p.416-418.



# Affinity

While St. Ignatius is entirely focused on a goal, on his neighbour, on God, Luther turns inward, towards himself, towards the constant torments of conscience that assail him.



✠ Raphaël Six

**P**ortrayed by their contemporaries, the facial features of the two men illustrated on these pages – who, without ever having met one another, were perhaps the greatest antagonists in the 16th century – are impressive for their eloquence.

\* \* \*

St. Ignatius of Loyola, in the prime of his intellectual maturity, immediately suggests an early decline in physi-

cal vigour: he is thin, with noticeable balding and facial creases. A man much more accustomed to exercising his moral rather than his physical qualities, of these last, the former soldier no longer reveals anything... except perhaps his gaze.

The Saint appears to be in conversation with someone. His eyes, though large, are half-closed and the orbicular muscles are contracted, a sign of acute,

penetrating and dispassionate observation. In fact, this must be a frequent activity for him, judging by the pronounced expression lines.

His attention seems to be focused much more on the soul of the person speaking than on the commentary being made, and his gaze seems to say: “I penetrate you, but I am impenetrable.”

In contrast, his mouth – rather small, as if to only allow the passage of words that truly deserve to be spoken – with its firm, well-defined contours, is closed in a friendly and understanding smile. The neck inclines almost imperceptibly towards his supposed interlocutor, as if assuring him: “I welcome you and am willing to help you, regardless of the faults I discern in you.”

The whole therefore gives the impression of authentic kindness, focused on others, but reserved, firm, austere, formal.

\* \* \*

Luther is quite the opposite. Still full of vigour, his abundance of adipose tissue is lavishly distributed on all sides, further reinforcing the rounded obliqueness of his features.

His nose is large and fleshy. His mouth, which, being the uppermost end of the digestive tract, constitutes a kind of “embassy” of instinct in the head – the most “rational” region of the body – is wide and sinuous in outline, sitting spaciouly on a powerful chin.



Reproduction

Martin Luther, by Lucas Cranach the Elder - Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence (Italy)



The bone structure is pronounced. Everything suggests robustness, voracity and vehement desire, veiled by an ostensibly relaxed but not appeased physiognomy.

In fact, the hint of a smile and sparse hair contribute to forming an imponderable irony in a state of gestation, ready to erupt into loud and sonorous, albeit somewhat unbalanced, laughter.

This man, of undeniable intellectual ability, immediately betrays himself as a lover of lavish dining, of easy pleasure and of jocular conversation... At first glance, he is precisely the kind of figure that many might be tempted to consider likeable.

\* \* \*

We would not hesitate to say that many of our contemporaries, unaware of the identities of these two characters, if asked to invite one of them to a relaxed weekend meal, would choose Luther.

After all, does the lean thinker not seem too serious and analytical to make for easy-going company? On the other hand, who would deny the portly and good-humoured man a place at the table?

However, perhaps this choice would not be the most accurate one.

While a first physical analysis points to the German reformer's vital force, a second indicates the service to which it is devoted. Is there not a hint of sadness in his look? While St. Ignatius is entirely focused on a goal, on his neighbour, on God, Luther turns inward, towards himself, towards the constant torments of conscience that assail him.

A proud, irascible man, the latter would hurl insults with the same ease with which he would tell a joke. His volatile temperament does not imply security. He is indeed a man ahead of his time, in the sense that he fits perfectly into ours.

The founder of the Society of Jesus, for his part, while retaining all the austerity of the recollected man, of



Reproduction

St. Ignatius of Loyola, by Alonso Sánchez Coello (edited)

the Jesuit and – why not say it – of the good Spaniard, although he somehow inhabits the isolation of an inaccessible interior light, deserved to receive, from countless among the most notable of his time, the title of father.

Someone might object that judgements based on facial expressions, essentially on appearances, tend to be superficial and therefore fallible. We agree. That is why we must try to reconcile our impressions with what history tells us about both of these figures.

But, incidentally, is this not exactly the kind of hasty judgement we make when we admire, for example, one of the so-called influencers, whose private life and works we know nothing about?

“Cursed is the man who trusts in man” (Jer 17:5), says Scripture. How many people deceive themselves, thinking they have found a friend, when they have found nothing more than a good appetite and a good laugh! What is the value of an illusory affinity without authentic and solid friendship?

It is in difficult situations that we discover who our true companions are: “*Amicus certus in re incerta cernitur.*”

At times like these, that circumspect gentleman could prove to be a lifeline, while the hearty conversationalist might become a weight that would drag us into the abyss.

May this serve to teach us to discern and to be true friends. ❖



Dr. Plinio at the Mother of the Council Shrine in Genazzano, on September 23, 1988

João Clá Dias

## ***Let Us Be Her Intimate Children!***

**C**ontemplating the image of the Mother of Good Counsel and seeing the Child Jesus so well-protected and holding fast to her so tightly, I desire that a ray of grace descend upon each one of us, leading us to understand that this is how we ought to be in relation to Our Lady: exceedingly intimate children of hers, convinced that her mercy never tires, that her forgiveness is never refused to us, and that her maternal smile comes almost before we turn to her. In fact, the very grace of having recourse to Mary Most Holy is granted to us through her intercession.

Hence our boundless and continuous confidence in her goodness, on all occasions, in all circumstances, in every way.

Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira