

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH*Unicuique suum Non praevalent*

Forty-seventh year, number 36 (2361)

Vatican City

Friday, 5 September 2014

At the General Audience the Pope reflects on Mary as the model of the Church

## Like a good mother

And he expresses his closeness to persecuted and defenceless Christians around the world

*Christians are not orphans because they have the Church as a mama. These were Pope Francis' words to the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square for the General Audience on Wednesday morning, 3 September. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's catechesis which was given in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning,

We have pointed out many times in previous catecheses that one does not become Christian by oneself, that is, through one's own effort, autonomously; neither are Christians made in a laboratory, but they are created and they grow in the faith within that great body which is the Church. In this sense the Church is truly mother, our Mother Church – it is beautiful to say it this way: our Mother Church – a mother who gives us life in Christ and who lets us live with all the other brothers and sisters in the communion of the Holy Spirit.

1. In her motherhood, the Church has the Virgin Mary as a model, the most beautiful and most lofty model that there could be. This was already evidenced in the first Christian communities and the Second Vatican Council expressed it in a wonderful way (cf. Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 63-64). The motherhood of Mary is surely unique, singular, and was brought about in the fullness of



time, when the Virgin gave birth to the Son of God, conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit. However, the motherhood of the Church is established in precise continuity with that of Mary, as her continuation in history. The Church, in the fruitfulness of the Spirit, continues to generate new children in Christ, always listening to the Word of God and in docility to his plan of love. The Church is mother. The conception of Jesus in Mary's womb, in fact, is the prelude to the birth of every Christian in the womb of the Church. From the moment that Christ is the firstborn among many brethren (cf. Rom 8:29) and our first brother Jesus was born of

Mary. He is the model, and we are all born of the Church.

We understand, then, how the relationship which unites Mary and the Church is so deep: by looking at Mary, we discover the most beautiful and most tender face of the Church; and by looking at the Church, we recognize the sublime features of

Mary. We Christians are not orphans, we have a mama, we have a mother, and this is great! We are not orphans! The Church is mother, Mary is mother.

2. The Church is our mother because she has given birth to us in Baptism. Each time we baptize a baby, he or she becomes a child of the Church, who enters the Church. And from that day, like an attentive mama, she helps us grow in faith and she shows us, with the strength of the Word of God, the path of salvation, defending us from harm.

The Church has received from Jesus the precious treasure of the Gospel, not to retain it for herself, but to give it generously to others, as a mama would do. In this service of evangelization, the Church, committed as a mother, manifests her motherhood in a special way, to offer her children the spiritual nourishment which nurtures and makes the Christian life bear fruit. However, we are all called to receive with an open mind and heart the Word of God which the Church imparts every day, because this Word has the capacity to change us from within. Only the Word of God has this capacity to change us from the inside, from our deepest roots. The Word of God has this power. And who gives us the Word of God? Mother Church. She nurses us from childhood with this Word, she raises us throughout our life with this Word, and this is great! It is actually Mother Church who, with the Word of God, changes us from within. The Word of God which Mother Church gives us transforms us, makes our humanity pulse, not the according to mundane flesh, but according to the Holy Spirit.

In her motherly solicitude, the Church strives to show the believers the path to follow in order to live a fruitful life of joy and peace. Illuminated by the light of the Gospel and supported by the grace of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, we can guide our decisions toward the good and withstand with hope and courage the times of darkness and the most tortuous paths. The path of salvation, through which the Church guides us and accompanies

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# VATICAN BULLETIN

## AUDIENCES

Thursday, 28 August

Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò, President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People

Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches

Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, titular Archbishop of Voghenza, Italy; President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization

Friday, 29 August

Fr Jorge Hernandez, Institute of the Incarnate Word, parish priest in Gaza, Palestine

Monday, 1 September

Archbishop Luigi Pezzuto, titular Archbishop of Turris in Proconsulari, Apostolic Nuncio in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Montenegro

Members of the Episcopal Conference of Cameroon, on a visit *ad Limina Apostolorum*:

– Archbishop Cornelius Fontem Esua of Bamenda with the Auxiliary: Bishop Agapitus Enuyehnyoh Nfon, titular Bishop of Unizibira

– Archbishop Joseph Atanga, SJ, of Bertoua with the Archbishop emeritus Roger Pirenne, CICM

– Archbishop Samuel Kleda of Douala with the Archbishop emeritus: Cardinal Christian Wiyghan Tumi

– Bishop Immanuel Bushu of Buéa

– Bishop George Nkuo of Kumbo

– Bishop Andrew Nkea Fuanya of Mamfe with Bishop emeritus Francis Teke Lysinge

– Bishop Faustin Ambassa Ndjodo, CICM, of Batouri

– Bishop Jan Ozga of Doumé-Abong' Mbang

– Bishop Eugeniusz Juretzko, OMI, of Yokadouma

– Bishop Abraham Kome of Bafang

– Bishop Dieudonné Watio of Bafoussam

– Bishop Jean-Bosco Ntep of Edéa, Apostolic Administrator of Kribi

H.R.H. Grand Duchess Maria Teresa of Luxembourg

## CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Cardinal Antonio María Rouco Varela, Archbishop of Madrid, Spain. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (28 Aug.).

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Carlos Osoro Sierra as Archbishop of Madrid, Spain. Until now he has been Archbishop of Valencia (28 Aug.).

Archbishop Osoro Sierra, 69, was born in Castañeda, Spain. He was ordained a priest on 29 July 1973. He was ordained a bishop on 22 February 1997, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Orense. On 7 January 2002 he was raised to the dignity of Archbishop for the archdiocese of Oviedo and on 8 January 2009 he was transferred to Valencia.

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Holy See statement in Geneva on the situation in Iraq

## A tragic failure

On 1 September, Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, gave the following address at the 22nd Special Session of the Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in Iraq.

Mr President,

1. In several regions of the world there are centers of violence – Northern Iraq in particular – that challenge the local and international communities to renew their efforts in the pursuit of peace. Even prior to considerations of international humanitarian law and the law of war, and no matter the circumstances, an indispensable requirement is respect for the inviolable dignity of the human person, which is the foundation of all human rights. The tragic failure to uphold such basic rights is evident in the self-proclaimed destructive entity, the so-called “Islamic State” group (ISIS). People are decapitated as they stand for their belief; women are violated without mercy and sold like slaves on the market; children are forced into combat; prisoners are slaughtered against all juridical provisions.

2. The responsibility of international protection, especially when a government is not able to ensure the safety of the victims, surely applies in this case, and concrete steps need to be taken with urgency and resolve in order to stop the unjust aggressor, to reestablish a just peace and to protect all vulnerable groups of society. Adequate steps must be taken to achieve these goals.

3. All regional and international actors must explicitly condemn the brutal, barbaric and uncivilized behavior of the criminal groups fighting in Eastern Syria and Northern Iraq.

4. The responsibility to protect has to be assumed in good faith, within the framework of international law and humanitarian law. Civil society in general, and religious and ethnic communities in particular, should not become an instrument of regional and international geopolitical games. Nor should they be viewed as an “object of indifference” because of their religious identity or because other players consider them to be a “negligible quantity”. Protection, if not effective, is not protection.

5. The appropriate United Nations agencies, in collaboration with local authorities, must provide adequate humanitarian aid, food, water, medicines, and shelter, to those who are fleeing violence. This aid, however, should be a temporary emergency assistance. The forcibly displaced Christians, Yazidis and other groups have the right to re-



At the UN headquarters in Geneva (Reuters)

turn to their homes, receive assistance for the rebuilding of their houses and places of worship, and live in safety.

6. Blocking the flow of arms and the underground oil market, as well as any indirect political support, of the so-called “Islamic State” group, will help put an end to the violence.

7. The perpetrators of these crimes against humanity must be pursued with determination. They must not be allowed to act with impunity, thereby risking the repetition of the atrocities that have been committed by the so-called “Islamic State” group.

Mr President,


8. As Pope Francis stressed in his letter to Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon: “the violent attacks ... cannot but awaken the consciences of all men and women of goodwill to concrete acts of solidarity by protecting those affected or threatened by violence and assuring the necessary and urgent assistance for the many displaced people as well as their safe return to their cities and their homes”. What is happening today in Iraq has happened in the past and could happen tomorrow in other places. Experience teaches us that an insufficient response, or even worse, total inaction, often results in further escalation of violence. Failing to protect all Iraqi citizens, allowing them to be innocent victims of these criminals in an atmosphere of empty words, amounting to a global silence, will have tragic consequences for Iraq, for its neighboring countries and for the rest of the world. It will also be a serious blow to the credibility of those groups and individuals who strive to uphold human rights and humanitarian law. In particular, the leaders of the different religions bear a special responsibility to make it clear that no religion can justify these morally reprehensible and cruel and barbaric crimes, and to remind everyone that as one human family, we are our brothers' keepers.

## The Pope's audience with the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg



Pope Francis received in audience on Monday, 1 September, the Grand Duchess Maria Teresa of Luxembourg

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WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH  
Unicuique suum  Non praevalentibus

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http://www.osservatoreromano.va

Tipografia Vaticana Editrice «L'Osservatore Romano»

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Subscription rates: Italy - Vatican: € 38,00; Europe: € 100,00 - US\$ 118,00; Latin America, Africa, Asia: € 100,00 - US\$ 160,00 - £ 88,00; Oceania, North America: € 160,00 - US\$ 240,00 - £ 130,00.  
Management Office: phone +390669899480; fax +390669883675; e-mail subscriptions@ossrom.va.  
For India: The weekly English Edition of L'Osservatore Romano is published and distributed in India by Camel International Publishing House, Cotton Hill, Tiruvandur- 605 014, Kerala-India; phone: +9147232723; fax: +9147232819; e-mail: ciph@md4vsnl.net.  
For North America: L'Osservatore Romano (USPS 066-419) is published fifty times per year (weekly, except third week in August and last week in December) by Our Sunday Visitor, L'Osservatore Romano, English Edition, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46720. Periodicals Postage Pending at Huntington, IN, and additional mailing offices, USA - phone: 800-348-2440 ext.7; fax: 866-891-7330 - e-mail: osssales@ossrom.com  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Our Sunday Visitor, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46720

# Like a good mother

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us with the strength of the Gospel and the support of the Sacraments, gives us the ability to defend ourselves against evil. The Church has the courage of a mother who knows she must defend her children against the dangers which arise from Satan's presence in the world, in order to lead them to the encounter with Jesus. A mother always protects her children. This defence also calls for vigilance: to be watchful for the snares and seduction of the Evil One. Because even though Satan was defeated by God, he always returns with his temptations; we know it, we are all tempted, we have been tempted and we are tempted. Satan comes "like a roaring lion" (1 Pt 5:8), the Apostle Peter says, and it is up to us not to be naive, but to be vigilant and to resist, steadfast in the faith. To resist with the counsel of Mother Church, to resist with the help of Mother Church, who like a good mama always accompanies her children at difficult times.

3. Dear friends, this is the Church, this is the Church we all love, this is the Church I love: a mother who has the good of her children at heart and who is able to give her life for them. We must not forget, however, that the Church is not only the priests, or we bishops, no, she is all of us! The Church is all of us! Agreed? And we too are children, but also mothers of other Christians. All who are baptized, men and women, together we are the Church. So often in our life we do not bear witness of this motherhood of the Church, of this maternal courage of the Church! So often we are cowards! Let us then entrust ourselves to Mary, that She as mother of our firstborn brother, Jesus, may teach us to have the same maternal spirit toward our brothers and sisters, with the sincere capacity to welcome, to forgive, to give strength and to instil trust and hope. This is what a mother does.

### SPECIAL GREETINGS

I offer an affectionate greeting to the English-speaking pilgrims and

visitors present at today's Audience, including those from England, Ireland, Malta, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Canada and the United States. May your stay in the Eternal City confirm you in love for Our Lord and the Church. May God bless you all!

I address a cordial welcome to Arabic-speaking pilgrims, those from Iraq in particular. The Church is Mother and, like all mothers, is able to accompany the needy child, to lift up the fallen child, to care for the sick, to seek the lost and to shake the sleeping one and also to defend the defenceless and persecuted children. Today I would like to assure closeness to, especially these latter, namely, the defenceless and persecuted: you are in the heart of the Church; the Church is suffering with you and is proud of you, proud to have children like you; you are her strength and steadfast and authentic witness of her message of salvation, of forgiveness and of love. I embrace all of you, everyone! May the Lord bless you and protect you always!

I would like to join in the recent interventions of the Bishop of Terni-

Narni-Amelia, and I express my profound concern for the critical situation that so many Terni families are experiencing because of the plans of the Thyssenkrupp company. Once again I address a heartfelt appeal, that the logic, not of profit, but that of solidarity and fairness prevail. The person and the dignity of the person must always be placed at the centre of every issue, also of work issues.

I address a cordial welcome to Italian-speaking pilgrims, in particular, I greet the faithful from Trapani with their Archbishop, those from Fabro Scalo with the Bishop of Orvieto-Todi, the soldiers of the "Pinerolo" Brigade. To all I hope that this visit to the centre of Christianity may strengthen you in adhering to Christ and make you his witnesses in your ecclesiastic communities.

Lastly I greet the *young people*, the *sick* and the *newlyweds*. Dear *young people*, especially you confirmands



from Lucca accompanied by your Archbishop, returning after the holidays to the normal daily routine, may you also resume the regular rhythm of your intimate dialogue with God, spreading his light around you. You, dear *sick people*, may you find support in the Lord Jesus, who continues his redeeming work in the life of every man. And you, dear *newlyweds*, — you are brave, I tell you, because it takes courage to marry today; these are the brave ones — strive to maintain a living relationship with God, so that your love may be ever more true and enduring.

# The centenary of Benedict XV's election

On the last day of August 1914, the cardinals entered the Sistine Chapel for the Conclave, exactly one month after the Great War had begun. Three days later on 3 September the world had a new pope: Benedict xv.

At the age of 60, "the Archbishop of Bologna seemed liked the right person" for the job, according to Gianpaolo Romanato. He had "extensive diplomatic experience (although accrued in Spain, far away from the warring countries) and strong experience in the Curia". He had also served for seven years as Archbishop of Bologna, which enriched his pastoral experience.

In spite of this and his papacy that followed, the centenary of Benedict xv's election risks being overlooked. Pope Benedict is one of the least known Popes to have led the Church in the last century. In fact John Francis Pollard entitled the Pontiff's biography: *The Unknown*



*Pope*. And, in some ways, this title seems to be justified, Francis Xavier Rocca of *Catholic News Service* wrote on 29 August. His 7-and-a-half-year pontificate was "relatively short and, with respect to his most prominent undertaking, spectacularly unsuccessful", according to the journalist.

Yet, Pope Benedict left a legacy for the Church through his role as an impartial interlocutor on matters of war and peace. After his election he immediately began a campaign against the ongoing war, eventually issuing a Peace Note on 1 August 1917, in which

he invited both sides to set down their arms and to turn to international arbitration regarding the issues which had caused the war. These efforts, unfortunately, did not obtain a positive result, due also to weak Vatican diplomacy at that time. The Pope also launched, among other things, a widespread effort to aid prisoners of war and those displaced by the conflict, and laid the foundation for what are, today, the young Churches in formerly colonized countries.

In 1914 the Vatican enjoyed relations with only two of the great powers, Pollard said. "One was Austria-Hungary, the other was the Russian empire, and with the Russian empire, relations were pretty bad". President Woodrow Wilson of the United States, who led his nation into the war in 1917, evaded acknowledging the Pope's appeals. When the war ended in November 1918, the Vatican was not invited to the peace conference in Paris.

Despite these weaknesses, Pope Benedict xv prophetically criticized the punitive treatment imposed on Germany, which subsequently prepared the ground for Adolf Hitler's ascent. Furthermore, Pollard also said that "by the time Benedict died in 1922, the Vatican had relations with nearly all of the great powers, including Germany, except America and except the USSR".

The Pontiff thus left a precious diplomatic legacy. Indeed, according to Romanato, "in the gallery of the 20th-century Popes, Benedict xv has, until now, remained in the shadows. However... the centrality of his pontificate is now understood".



Front page of 'L'Osservatore Romano' on 3 September 1914

The Holy Father calls for sports to exclude every form of discrimination

# Religion is not a vehicle of hate

*On Monday afternoon, 1 September, the Holy Father met with athletes and coaches participating in the Interreligious Match for Peace, which was held that evening in Rome's Olympic Stadium. The match was part of the seminar "Sports at the Service of Humanity", hosted by the Pontifical Council for Culture. The following is a translation of the Pope's address to participants, which he gave in Italian.*

Dear Friends, good evening!

I am delighted to meet with you on the occasion of the *Interreligious Match for Peace* in which you will play tonight at Rome's Olympic Stadium. I thank you for readily fulfilling my wish to see champions and coaches from various countries and religions compete in a sporting event to bear witness to the feelings of brotherhood and friendship. My special thanks go to the people and organizations that have contributed to the realization of this event. I am thinking especially of "*Scholae Occurrentes*" which is part of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and the "PUPPI Foundation".

The game this evening will certainly be an opportunity to raise

## Team Francis



The Pope's football team came to meet him on 1 September in the Paul VI Hall. It really is a dream team, including: the famous Maradona, players young and old, rookies and veterans, rising stars and seasoned champions, even a Palestinian and two Israelis, and, of course, Javier Zanetti, the Argentine star to whom Pope Francis entrusted the organization of this interreligious match for peace. Expressing his own satisfaction, Zanetti said: "We did it. I am very pleased. The message that our Pope wanted to communicate for peace was a strong one and everyone immediately answered yes. And here they are". The match is also raising money, by auctioning the jerseys worn by the players. Proceeds will go to the *Scholae Occurrentes* and PUPPI Foundation, which Zanetti and his wife Paola started.



funds in support of solidarity projects, but it will be above all an opportunity to reflect on the universal values that football and sports in general can foster: loyalty, sharing, acceptance, dialogue, trust in others. These are values common to every person regardless of race, culture and religious creed. Indeed, tonight's sporting event is a highly symbolic gesture to help one understand that it is possible to build a culture of encounter and a world of peace, where believers of different religions, while preserving their own identity – for when I said "regard-

less" this did not mean "setting aside", no. Believers of different religions, while preserving their own identity, can coexist in harmony and mutual respect.

We all know that sport, especially football, is a human and social phenomenon of great importance, one that has an impact on contemporary customs and mindsets. People, especially young people, look to you with admiration for your athletic abilities. It is important to set a good example both on and off the field. In sports competitions you are called to demonstrate that sport

which expresses the joy of life, of games, is a celebration, and as such it must be appreciated through the recovery of its gratuitousness, its capacity to foster the bonds of friendship and strengthen openness between people. Also with your daily behaviour, full of faith and spirituality, humanity and altruism, you can render testimony to the ideals of peaceful civil and social coexistence, for the edification of a civilization founded on love, on solidarity and on peace. And this is the culture of encounter: working for this.

May the football match tonight revive in those who are taking part the awareness of the need to commit oneself so that sports may contribute effectively and fruitfully to the peaceful coexistence of all peoples, excluding any discrimination of race, language and religion. You know that discrimination can be synonymous with scorn. Discrimination is a form of scorn, and you, with this game tonight, will say 'no' to every kind of discrimination. Religions in particular are called to be vehicles of peace and never hatred, for in the

name of God one needs to bear love, always and only. Religion and sports, understood in this authentic way, can work together and offer to all of society eloquent signs of the new era in which "nation shall not lift up sword against nation" (cf. Is 2:4).

On such a unique and meaningful occasion as this match tonight, I want to deliver this message to all of you: expand your hearts as brothers to brothers! This is one of the secrets of life: to expand our hearts as brothers to brothers, and that is also the deepest and most authentic aspect of sports. Thank you.

Videomessage broadcast before the match

## Playing on a team brings personal growth

*Before the whistle blew at kick off, the Pontiff sent a video message which was broadcast on the stadium's maxi screens. The following is a translation of the Pope's words given in Spanish.*

Good evening,

I'm glad you have come together for such a symbolic match. It is a match which highlights the union of the teams, and the union of spectators watching, and everyone's desire, which is for peace. It is a match where no one plays for himself, nor for one another, but for all. And thus each one grows. And by playing as a team each one grows as a person, grows as a people, becomes greater. And by playing as a team, the competition, instead of being a war, is the seed of peace. For this reason the symbol for this match is the olive tree. I greet, in a special way, the members of *Scholae*, who have cooperated in the organization of this match, and who will plant the olive tree of peace. I invite all of you to plant it together with *Scholae*. I apologize for speaking in Spanish, but it is the language of my heart, and today I wish to speak to you from the heart.

Thank you.



At the Angelus the Pope warns Christians of the dangers of worldliness

## Wine or water?

And he asks that all commit to safeguarding life and respecting the environment

*Pope Francis admonished Christians of the risk of becoming "worldly". Because "it is sad", he told the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square for the Angelus on Sunday 31 August, "to find 'watered-down' Christians, who seem like watered-down wine, one cannot tell whether they are Christians or worldly; like watered-down wine, one cannot tell whether it is water or wine". The following is a translation of the Holy Father's reflection which was given in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning,

Sunday's reading from the Gospel according to Matthew brings us to the critical point at which Jesus, after having ascertained that Peter and the other eleven believed in Him as the Messiah and Son of God, "began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things..., and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (16:21). It is a critical moment at which the contrast between Jesus' way of thinking and that of the disciples emerges. Peter actually feels duty bound to admonish the Master because the Messiah could not come to such an ignominious end. Then Jesus, in turn, severely rebukes Peter and puts him in his place, because he is "not on the side of God, but of men" (v. 23), unintentionally playing the part of Satan, the tempter. In the liturgy for this Sunday the Apostle Paul also stresses this point when he writes to the Christians in Rome, telling them: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom 12:2).



James Tissot, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (19th century)

Indeed, we Christians live in the world, fully integrated into the social and cultural reality of our time, and rightly so; but this brings with it the risk that we might become "worldly", that "the salt might lose its taste", as Jesus would say (cf. Mt 5:13). In other words, the Christian could become "watered down", losing the charge of newness which comes to him from the Lord and from the Holy Spirit. Instead it should be the opposite: when the power of the Gospel remains alive in Christians, it can transform "criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life" (Paul VI Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 19). It is sad to find "watered-down" Christians, who seem like watered-down wine. One cannot tell whether they are Christian or worldly, like watered-down wine; one cannot tell whether it is wine or water! This is sad. It is sad to find Christians who are no

longer the salt of the earth, and we know that when salt loses its taste, it is no longer good for anything. Their salt has lost its taste because they have delivered themselves up to the spirit of the world, that is, they have become worldly.

This is why it is necessary to renew oneself by continually drawing sap from the Gospel. And how can one do this in practice? First of all by actually reading and meditating on the Gospel every day, so the Word of Jesus may always be present in our life. Remember: it will help you to always carry the Gospel with you: a small Gospel, in a pocket, in a bag, and read a passage during the day. But always with the Gospel, because it is carrying the Word of Jesus, and being able to read it. In addition, attending Sunday Mass, where we encounter the Lord in the community, we hear his Word and receive the Eucharist which unites us with Him and to one another; and then days of re-

treat and spiritual exercises are very important for spiritual renewal. Gospel, Eucharist, Prayer. Do not forget: Gospel, Eucharist, Prayer. Thanks to these gifts of the Lord we are able to conform not to the world but to Christ, and follow him on his path, the path of "losing one's life" in order to find it (Mt 16:25). "To lose it" in the sense of giving it, offering it through love and in love – and this leads to sacrifice, also the cross – to receive it liberated from selfishness and from the mortgage of death, newly purified, full of eternity.

May the Virgin Mary always go before us on this journey; let us be guided and accompanied by her.

*After the Marian Prayer and before greeting some of the groups in the square, the Pontiff mentioned the Day for Safeguarding Creation, for the right to life through respect for the environment.*

Dear brothers and sisters,

In Italy tomorrow the Day for Safeguarding Creation will be celebrated. The initiative is sponsored by the Italian Bishops' Conference, and this year's theme is very important: "Educating to care for Creation, for the health of our countries and our cities". I hope that it will strengthen the commitment of all, institutions, associations and citizens so that the life and health of people may be safeguarded, while respecting the environment and nature.

I greet all the pilgrims from Italy and various countries, in particular the pilgrims from Santiago de Chile, Chile; Pistoia, San Giovanni Bianco and Albano Sant'Alessandro; the young people from Modena, Bassano del Grappa and Ravenna, Italy; the large group of Police Motorcyclists and the Police Band. It would be nice to hear them play at the end...

I address a special greeting to Catholic members of parliament who are holding their fifth international meeting, and I encourage them to carry out their delicate role as representatives of the people, respecting the values of the Gospel.

Yesterday, I received a large family from Mirabella Imbaccari, who brought the greeting of the whole town. I thank all of you from this town for your affection. I greet the participants of the "Scholas" meeting: continue your work with children and young people in the areas of education, sport and culture; and I wish you a good game tomorrow at the Olympic Stadium!

From here I see the young people who belong to the plastics trade union. Be faithful to your motto: it is very dangerous to journey alone in the fields and in life. Always go together.

I wish you a happy Sunday and I ask you to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*

According to the Bishop of Alep for Chaldeans

### Against those who oppose peace

"As Christians, as Syrians, we hope to have a solution through reconciliation, through peace, with the help of the United Nations", amidst violence in Syria and Iraq by the Islamic State. "An international peace force is needed". Bishop Antoine Audo of Alep for Chaldeans, speaking from Aleppo, recently expressed this wish to Vatican Radio describing the difficult situation in Syria: problems with electricity, water and the ever-looming threat of bombs. Despite everything, "as Christians, we try to be present, active, to go about business. For example, this week we will have several days of reflections with all the people who work with us at *Caritas*. We try to survive. There is nothing else we can do".

At the moment in the centre of Aleppo, the Syrian city, where the majority of Christians live, there is

no violence at the hands of IS. "We are under the protection of the government", Bishop Audo said, however, many groups around the city attack and launch bombs.

It is the news from outside that incites fear. News comes from the Mosul, Iraq and from the Syrian governorate of Ar-Raqqa (where IS recently took over an airport). "The news speaks about laws, of the way one has to behave, of the violence. Yes, yes, and this generally makes the people afraid", the Bishop said. He then offered questions to be put to the conscience of the international community: "Who supports these groups? Who is selling the arms? Who stands to gain from this violence?".

Nearly one year has passed since Pope Francis called for the Day of Fasting and Prayer for Peace in Syria, held on 7 September 2013. In

the face of the tragic situation in the country, Bishop Giuseppe Nazaro, former Apostolic Vicar of Alep, wrote a note on the blog OraproSiria, recalling the event, which aided in forestalling "an invasion which could have proven to be a global catastrophe. There were several interests at stake, not everyone would have agreed to put down their arms, wreaking havoc on what was left of our beloved land of Syria", writes Bishop Nazaro, who asks the media not to forget the war in Syria. "We cannot remain silent, thereby becoming complicit in what is occurring there": the massacre of innocent people, especially women and children. Hence the Bishop called for a renewal of last 7 September's call for peace".

women church world women church world women church world women church world women church world

AGNESE CAMILLI

Pope Francis was clear. In his address to the Judges of the Roman Rota he recalled that what is asked of them is a human profile so that they may exercise "justice in a way adapted to the exigencies of the concrete situation, and not in a legalistic and abstract way". "Love", the Pope went on, "constitutes the soul as well as the function of the ecclesiastical judge". This approach is particularly necessary today, when the question of the nullity of the matrimonial bond is at the heart of the problem of the family, and in turn at the heart of the reflection of the Church. In fact, Pope Francis has decided to face this hot topic in the modern Church, where women have played a role in the juridical domain for more than 30 years.

Since 1982 to be precise, ecclesiastical tribunals have included women. And the first female Rotal lawyers were admitted to practice in 1975. After a preliminary period of settling in, women were permanently integrated into this role in which the faithful application of the principles of Canon Law cannot disregard their charitable closeness to those who are suffering from the breakdown of their family.

We carried out a survey on the presence of women in the Church tribunals starting with the Vicariate of Rome. This Vicariate, among other things, is the headquarters of tribunals of first instance and tribunals of appeal for causes of matrimonial nullity in the Region of Lazio.

To obtain a declaration of the nullity of a celebrated marriage two levels of judicial procedures are required. At the first level, the grounds for nullity are introduced and form the basis of the request. Proof is gathered, both documentary and testimonial, and if necessary the case is evaluated. After this procedure, the judges are required to make their decision. Whenever the nullity of the marriage is recognized on the grounds of nullity introduced, the case is passed on from the tribunal of the first instance to the appellate tribunal. When on the contrary nullity is not recognized, the appellate tribunal is consulted by a separate petition, should there be an intention to pursue the case. In this tribunal the judicial body is called to review the decision made in the first stage, under the profile of both its legitimacy and its merit. When the tribunal approves the decision made by the judicial body in the first instance, a decree of ratification is issued, which confirms the grounds of nullity that were recognized by the tribunal of first instance.

The procedure that investigates the nullity or validity of the matrimonial bond can only assess the presuppositions that led to the celebration of the marriage and that concern the common thread that links these presuppositions to the effective failure of the marriage. When the tribunal verifies this direct relationship, even when a certain number of years have passed between the beginning of conjugal life and its conclusion, it cannot but make a decision, accept-



## Pride and responsibility

Survey on the presence of women in ecclesiastical tribunals

ing this request, although Canon Law currently in force assumes validity of the matrimonial bond.

The reasons for which a marriage may be annulled are mostly based on defects of consent. To demonstrate these a thorough investigation must therefore be made of the innermost sphere of the volition of the spouses-to-be, and the lawyers, who work in this context are asked to collaborate in the tribunal's work.

Those who work in the tribunal have essentially three roles: the roles of judge and auditor, of defender of the bond, and of notary.

In the context of the first role, there are women who work as auditors in the tribunal of the first instance. Approved by the bishop, they conduct the investigation in accordance with the mandate of the judge who is president of the



college. Here women are the majority: three out of five auditors are women.

Alessandra D'Arienzo is one of them. Married with two children, she earned a doctorate in canon law at the Pontifical Lateran University after obtaining a degree in jurisprudence in Italy. "When I started working at the tribunal", she says, "my daughter was very small, there had been two women

recruited before me. Today I carry out my activity as an auditor with pride and a deep sense of responsibility, actively collaborating with the ecclesiastical institution and putting my professional qualifications and my feminine sensitivity at its service. In the area of investigation which I conduct every day, I try to welcome the people I meet with respect, tact and professionalism".

Defenders of the bond instead painstakingly assess all the reasons that the contested conjugal bond should be considered valid. Their role is not always understood. However it is indispensable so that – in the area of procedural dynamics – all aspects in favour of and against the proposed arguments are crystal clear, and that prior to making a decision the judge may have available the necessary elements in order to decide the case with justice.

Women account for 67% of this sector. Chiara Gabellini – married with two children, a boy of eight and a girl of six, holds a degree in jurisprudence from La Sapienza University of Rome and a doctorate in Canon Law – has carried out this role for years with enthusiasm and seriousness. "In the context of my role as defender of the bond, a bearer of a public interest that belongs to the Church," Gabellini says, "I am required to suggest all the elements in favour of the validity of the marriage. In properly carrying out this task, which is necessary in seeking the truth that the canonical trial strives to discover, I am always faced with the suffering and difficulties of faithful who have unfortunately experienced the failure of their matrimonial union and turn to the ecclesiastical tribunal to obtain answers with regard to the sacrament they have celebrated".

Notaries carry out an equally important role since they are called to attest to the truth of what occurs in the proceedings, thus their presence is indispensable. In fact they guarantee the correctness of the routine activities of ecclesiastical tribunals. Women account for 75% of those who work in this sector.

Their task is as delicate as it is fundamental. The absolute propriety of trial procedures is necessary to engender

the equality of rights for all the parties concerned, and to guarantee a just sentence. Stefania Giombini – wife and mother of a 16-month-old, who also holds a degree in jurisprudence and is on her way to earning a doctorate in canon law – has served as a notary for eight years. Regarding her professional experience she underlined that "in order to carry out the role of notary too, the training and seriousness of the actual work amount to a partnership in the search for the truth. This is the reason I decided to complete my legal training in canon law. I am convinced that it is not a job like any other, since I am required everyday to welcome people with sensitivity and to contribute through my work to expediting the trial, thereby rendering a service to the Church".

In the context of the tribunal of first instance of the Vicariate of Rome, 45% of whose staff are women, of those women 15% have more than 15 years of service, while 40% have approximately 10 years. Ecclesiastical tribunals handling cases of matrimonial nullity are found throughout Italy, as in the rest of the world and a considerable number of women now work in them.

As we said at the outset, a bona fide women's revolution has come about in the defence role as well. If one analyzes the register of Rotal lawyers the statistic that leaps out shows that the presence of women has notably increased in the past 20 years. While, in fact, only three of the 27 lawyers enrolled in the register until 1980 were women, in the decade that followed, the number of women increased to 24 out of 100.

Since 2000, the ratio has been inverted: 95 out of the 154 newly enrolled lawyers are women. In other words the female presence has reached about 63% of enrolment. From 2010 until now there have been 13 women lawyers out of 24 new enrollees. The internal tribunals are also based in Vatican City. They deal with civil and criminal law and 82 lawyers are enrolled in these tribunals, 35 of whom are women.

We can now be certain. Whatever path the Pope takes in matters of matrimonial legislation, women will make a fundamental contribution.



Detail of "La Misericordia" by Clotilde Devalliers (2005)

LUCETTA SCARAFFA

Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller – Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, astutely known as the Holy Office in days of old – stunned me from the very outset by receiving me at his home, a few steps from the Vatican, wearing sandals and a black T-shirt.

Friendly and cheerful, he excused himself for his informal attire, alluding to the heat, and led me to his beautiful study where his books are perfectly arranged. He reminded me straightaway that this had been Cardinal Ratzinger's apartment, and so I saw it in a different light as I tried to imagine the former Pope's gentle presence and love of learning. Gerhard Müller, a giant of a man hailing from the Rhine region, differs from his illustrious predecessor, whose complete works he is in the process of editing. Naturally extroverted, he half-jokingly begged that we not talk about women, but rather about Our Lady. Yet he still managed to steer the conversation back to our original topic, chatting about his relationship with women, and especially about the extraordinary affection he bore his mother.

"I think every man has a special bond with his mother, since it was she who brought him into the world. Today, I think back to my own mother with the mind of an adult, and I realize she was my first and most important reference point for every experience, beginning with prayer. I still remember her in the evenings, sitting on my bed, teaching me to pray and recognize Jesus' presence, a real face, a reliable confidant. It was from her that I received that initial sense of trust which lies at the root of any faith and a child's relationship with God. From her I understood that God was truly concerned with me, that He was not just an abstract philosophical concept. There were images of Mary in the room and from an early age we were accustomed to turning to the Church as an aspect of God's Face".

The bond between family and parish was strong and enduring: I asked the Cardinal how his parents reacted when

he chose the priesthood; a choice he made after attending the local Catholic secondary school where he had the privilege of being taught by good teachers, especially by good women teachers and particularly in math and English.

"As far as I can remember I always wanted to follow the path of priesthood, as evidenced by a family anecdote: my mother used to recount that one day – I was four years old – we met Bishop Albert Stohr of Mainz, an excellent theologian who made such a deep impression on me that I exclaimed: 'when I grow up I want to be a bishop!'. My mother was a housewife, very attentive to the upbringing of her four children, two boys and two girls, whom she always cared for with solicitude and, if necessary, strong discipline. My father was a worker at Opel, but to maintain his large family he also labored as a farmer. My two older sisters were emancipated women, involved in their professions, one an elementary school teacher, and the other working for an insurance company. Today, I have 23 nephews, nieces, grandnephews and grandnieces, and I think of them whenever anyone claims that we priests are out of touch with real life, for they keep me up date with today's problems and changes".

When I asked him whether, in addition to these family members, he fostered friendships with other women, he was silent for a few moments. He then told me about the good sisters at his nursery school whom he had kept in touch with and helped through the years. He also recalled his female students from years of teaching, yet he does not seem to have a close friendship with any of them.

He certainly speaks affectionately of two Bavarian sisters who lived with him for many years and who shared his pastoral experiences. "I remember in particular that one of them looked after abandoned children for forty years, especially those from broken families who suffered from loneliness and neglect. For me it was very important to listen to her and to share in her mission. I always thought that her work with children was as important as mine as a bishop". And he hasn't changed his mind since he became Prefect. During an audience with Pope Francis, while introducing employees of the Congregation to the Pontiff, he included cleaning staff as well.

Since the reading list of a cultured Catholic must include women authors, their books can hardly be excluded from a complete theological and spiritual formation. This was also the case for the cardinal: "Reading Teresa of Avila was of course important for me, as well as reading the writings of the other Teresa, Thérèse of Lisieux. But I also studied Hildegard of Bingen in particular and wrote three papers on

## A child's dream

Speaking with Cardinal Müller of the Holy Office

her. What especially interested me was her theology through images, a theology that reevaluates symbols and their power as a way of understanding complex realities. The idea of deciphering theological mysteries through images, and thus reevaluating the role of intuition, balances the rational theology of Thomas with early Scholasticism. In the wake of Hildegard, medieval feminine mysticism held a great fascination for me, from Catherine's idea of the Church to the visions of Bridget of Sweden. But I was also deeply impressed by Edith Stein, by her biography as well as her works, written in the most beautiful German. Elizabeth of Hungary (also known as Elizabeth of Thuringia) was also very important for me, as she is for all German believers. She was a contemporary of St Francis of Assisi and followed the same

Obviously his personal history has influenced his attitude toward collaboration with women. "Today women are welcome colleagues in diocesan offices where they carry out countless tasks, often in managerial posts, and are now deeply involved in the life of the Church".

He was amazed by my remark that although women are willing to help, they complain they are seldom heard. He said his experience in Germany was quite different; women truly count and their role is officially recognized – they receive a salary – and it is not merely a matter of volunteer work.

Müller also found in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith a number of women collaborators whose roles are anything but secondary. He does not hide his esteem for his secretary, Clothilde Mason, and other women colleagues, almost all of whom are married with families. He also says that in appointing women theologians to work at the Congregation, difficulties also arise, because, if they have a family, these women are not prepared to move to Rome. In addition, he alluded that the new International Theological Commission soon to be appointed by the Pope will include a larger number of women than the outgoing Commis-



path of total self-giving to the poor. Even as she governed after her husband's death, she became poor and was deeply involved in caring for the poor and for lepers. She is a tremendous example of the gift of self and of wielding power wisely and admirably.

We then moved on to consider problems of women the Cardinal has met, not only in Germany but also during his frequent travels in Latin America. There he denounced the regrettable plight of women stemming from unstable family life – a circumstance forcing more and more women to shoulder the burden of feeding and educating children – and from an attitude he doesn't hesitate to label "machismo". He also recalled that when he was Bishop of Regensburg he collaborated closely with dioceses in eastern countries to fight against the trafficking of women duped into being taken to western countries for purposes of prostitution. He also remembers having had many difficulties in political circles in this regard.

sion: perhaps an increase from two to five or six.

With regard to female presence in the life of the Church – which he qualifies as quite different from male presence, even with regard to theological research – the Cardinal recalls a piece Bergoglio wrote on the Jesuits, in which the future Pope stressed that the difference between Catholics and Calvinists lies precisely in the ability of Catholics to take into consideration emotions too – and not solely the intellect – on the path that leads to God.

This is a striking reflection, especially today when Protestant denominations have opened the door for women to serve in ministerial roles, and therefore seem more "feminist" than the Catholic Church. In this respect, Müller emphasized that the presence of women should be recognized in its uniqueness and not as a mere imitation of the male role. For this reason he insists on the need to recall that the

Pope Francis receives the Argentine parish priest serving in Gaza

# The closeness of the pastor

NICOLA GORI

Fr Zanni thanked the Pope on behalf of his parishioners in Gaza, a small flock of 136 who are experiencing the violence, supported by closeness of the pastor as well as the support of the prayers of the whole Church. On Friday morning, 29 August, the Holy Father received Fr Jorge Hernández Zanni of the Institute of the Incarnate Word and parish priest of Holy Family in Gaza. In an interview with our newspaper, the Argentine priest gave voice to the faithful of the war-torn area, who are grateful for Pope Francis' closeness.

*What is your first impression after meeting the Pope?*

The meeting with Francis was a grace. I should never have expected it. During the days of war in Gaza, the Pontiff emailed a message to the parish. I immediately informed all the faithful about this gift. The re-

lief they felt is unimaginable, just for the fact that the Pope carries all of us in his heart.

*What was in the message?*

First of all, Francis encouraged us to always go forward, to bear our witness, to be "salt of the earth". He referred to the extraordinary presence of Christians in that place. Let us not forget that out of almost two million people in Gaza, there are 1,350 Christians, 136 of whom are Catholic and the rest Orthodox. An important minority. And the fact that the Pontiff cares about us is meaningful.

*And what did today's audience with the Pope symbolize?*

After this encounter, I now have the same certainty: a pastor must be present among his faithful. He offers encouragement and wise counsel. It is a tremendous grace for us.

*What is the current situation in the Gaza Strip?*

Thanks be to God, a lasting ceasefire agreement has been reached, at least providing the chance to resume the negotiations in Egypt. And this is also an enormous grace for us, because the people cannot take it any more. More than the damage and the fear, the situation has become unbearable for both sides in the conflict.

*What work does your parish do at this time?*

Holy Family is the only Catholic parish in Gaza. During the conflict we hosted more than 1,200 people who had fled their homes. Ours was a witness of charity. We welcomed, sheltered and supported many refugees in their sorrow, also providing material aid, thanks to *Caritas Internationalis*, which was always close to us. I must say that we always had the unconditional support

of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem for Latins. Patriarch Tawal in person took care of the humanitarian aid for us and he himself telephoned our community many times. Someone who has lived through war knows the extraordinary value of these gestures. This is the presence of the Church: a steadfast charitable witness. Unfortunately, we also had three victims in our Christian community.

*How many people work in the parish?*

Besides me, as the parish priest, there is another priest from the Institute of the Incarnate Word, Fr Mario, who is from Brazil, and then there are religious sisters from three congregations: the Missionaries of Charity, the Dominicans of the Most Holy Rosary and the Institute of the Virgin of Matará, from Argentina. All three congregations help in the parish, some assist disabled children, others work in the three Christian schools, which are the best in Gaza. The schools are also attended by Muslims and are places which favour a dialogue for life among the religions.

*What developments do you hope to see for the future peace process?*

It is not simple; in general it starts again from the beginning, both in the parish and in the civic community. People go back and try to go on with their lives. It is difficult to predict what will happen. However, I would like to openly thank all those who, during these weeks of conflict, wrote and called us, offered us their prayers and expressed their sorrow for us. This was very important to us. I again ask that everyone continue to pray for us. It is essential, we need it.

## Cardinal Müller

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Church must primarily be a mother and not an institution; for an institution cannot be loved but a mother can. Moreover the family, the domestic church, is a primary model for the Church and women play a crucial role in it, albeit distinct from the male role.

The last question was the most pressing. It concerned the conflictual sequence of events concerning American sisters in the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. The Cardinal's dealings with them have been complex as of late. In the meantime we must bear in mind that "they do not represent all U.S. women religious, but a group of North American sisters who have formed an association. We have received many distressed letters from religious women belonging to the same congregations, suffering deeply from the direction their sisters are taking as they steer away from their original mission. As a consequence, these congregations are losing vocations; they risk dying out. Above all, we have tried to reduce conflict and soothe the tensions. This is partly thanks to Bishop Sartain, a very gentle man, whom we sent to engage with them. Above all we need to clarify that we are not misogynists.... Of course, we do have a different concept of religious life, but we hope to help them rediscover their identity".

There is no doubt that Cardinal Müller – the German who, following the American Cardinal William Levada, inherited from Ratzinger perhaps the most difficult position in all Church governance – wishes to establish cordial and open relations of true collaboration with these women, without any thought of great internal upheavals.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

The Holy Father appointed Cardinal Antonio Cañizares Llovera as Archbishop of Valencia, Spain. Until now he has been Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (28 Aug.).

Cardinal Cañizares Llovera, 68, was born in Valencia, Spain. He was ordained a priest on 21 June 1970. He was ordained a bishop on 25 April 1992, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Ávila. On 10 December 1996 he was raised to dignity of Archbishop for the metropolitan see of Granada and on 24 October 2002 he was transferred to Toledo. On 24 March 2006 he was created a Cardinal and assigned the title of San Pancrazio.

### EASTERN CHURCHES

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Mathew

## VATICAN BULLETIN

Vaniakizhakkal, VC, of the Eparchy of Satna for Syro-Malabars, India. It was presented in accord with can. 210 §§ 1-2 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (27 Aug.).

H.B. Cardinal George Alencherry, Major Archbishop of Ernakulam-Angamaly for Syro-Malabar, India, with the consent of the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church, in accord with can. 85 § 2, 2 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, has transferred Bishop George Njaralakatt from the Eparchy of Mandya to the Archdiocese of Tellicherry, India. The newly elected Archbishop succeeds Archbishop George Valiamattam, whose resignation was accepted by the said Synod in accord with can. 210 § 1 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (29 Aug.).

Archbishop Njaralakatt, 68, was born in Kalayanthani, India. He was ordained a priest on 20 December 1971. He was ordained a bishop on 7 April 2010, subsequent to his

appointment as the first Bishop of Mandya.

### START OF MISSION

On 7 July, Archbishop Martin Krebs, titular Archbishop of Taborenta, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in the Republic of the Marshall Islands with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to President H.E. Mr Christopher Loak.

On 11 July, Archbishop Martin Krebs, titular Archbishop of Taborenta, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Micronesia with the presentation of his Letter of Credence to President H.E. Mr Emanuel More.

### NECROLOGY

Bishop emeritus John Joseph Nevins, of Venice in Florida, USA, at age 82 (26 Aug.).

Conference on imagination according to John Henry Newman

## A key word

ENRICO REGGIANI

The term *imagination* entered the English language around the mid-14th century as the result of the linguistic and cultural infiltration of Old French and Anglo-Norman: its specific original meaning of “concept, mental representation, hallucination” extends in English to designate in toto the “mental faculty that shapes and manipulates images”.

With some audacity, hermeneutics could trace its striking semantic evolution as follows: the Latin origin of the noun *imago* brought with it a range of unlimited representative possibilities ranging from the statuesque corporeity of sculpture to the impalpability of reflection, from the portrait of a face to the ambiguity of a shadow; its etymological roots in the Latin verb *imaginari* confer on it an unusual operative malleability in “shaping a mental image”, accentuated by the suffix which indicates action (-ation); lastly, its already vivid concreteness is further reinforced by the technical and semiotic resonance of its 13th-century Old French progenitor *imaginer*, employed in that language to mean “sculpt, engrave, paint, decorate, embellish”.

*Imagination* lost no time in becoming a key word in English literature: its intellectual, aesthetic and artistic fate was consistent and extraordinary. No epoch, however, cultivated, manipulated, transformed and misinterpreted it like 19th-century Romanticism, whose major and minor protagonists invoked and employed it according to the most diverse anthropological, epistemological, religious and cultural perspectives: as attested by, e.g., Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge.

For William Blake (1757-1827) – about whom Chesterton wrote in 1910, “no one had ever thought to shape his imagination, which was probably the greatest stroke of luck for this overlooked young man” – this faculty, as a “divine vision”, could be valued only according to its own measure and its gratuitousness overcame the contemporaneous distinction between production and consumption rooted in the teachings of Adam Smith (1723-1790). William Wordsworth (1770-1850), on the other hand, wrote about imagination in a manner which was often elusive, interweaving the 18th-century technical compositional valency with that of romanticizing the intellectual neoplatonic vision, of the power which enables the poet to “see into the life of things”, nearly rediscovering in his own soul “an embryo God” and “a spark of divine fire”. Finally, to Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), who introduced it in his *Biographia Literaria*, is owed the famous (and often extravagant) distinction between primary imagination – the “living power” and “prime agent of all human perception” and the “repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I am” – and secondary imagination – an “echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the nature of its agency, and differing

only in degree, and in the mode of its operation”.

John Henry Newman (1801-1890) likewise always attributed great importance to literary imagination, from his early essay, *Poetry, with reference to Aristotle's Poetics* (1829). According to Gerard Magill of Duquesne University in Pennsylvania, he was elaborating on the concept of a mental instrument for rational and reasonable discernment, which he used in his theological method to represent the intellectual depth of religious faith. In the course of this elaboration, Newman skillfully avoided the encyclopedic mandates of 18th-century literary culture (in which field, however, he appreciated the example of Joseph Addison and Samuel Johnson) as well as the subjective and egotistical imbalances of romantic literary culture (as shown by his 1885 letter to William Samuel Lilly, essayist and ‘Catholic Champion’, declaring “to have nev-



Magar, “Newman, the Young Rector” (2009)

er read one word of Coleridge”, often improperly invoked as his model).

By 1841 Newman had provided a principal and unequivocal definition of the destination of the imagination and of the instruments that it employs: “The heart is commonly reached, not through reason, but through the imagination, by means of direct impressions, by the testimony of facts and events, by history and description”. Not even caution in individual technical choices such as subjective impressions, current testimony, historical accounts or circumstantial descriptions is enough to prevent ‘the great ingredient of poetry’ from producing an *unbeautiful* result: as is read in the text of a lecture on poetry which Newman gave in 1849, “This again was a fault of Byron, whose imagination constantly led him into misanthropy; whereas true poetry partook of gentleness, simplicity, sweetness, and even playfulness; nay, melancholy might exist, but never misanthropy”.

For Newman, it was not important how fervid the imagination could be in the individualistic, anthropocentric or self-referential sense: given that “every faculty has its place” where

Admiring Flannery O'Connor

## Limitation as strength

ELENA BUIA RUTT

Flannery O'Connor – born in 1925 in Savannah, Georgia, to parents of Irish descent – had little time allotted to her and she knew it: Lupus erythematosus (a grave deficiency in the human immune system), inherited from her father, would lead to her death in the early hours of 3 August 1964, when she was only 39 years old. Her legacy would be a peacock farm and a small collection of writings, small but evidence of a rare and unmistakable talent.

Major biographical elements of her life are hard to come by, apart from a two-month stay in New York State in 1948 and a trip to Europe where, already seriously ill, she attended a Papal Audience at the Vatican and made a pilgrimage to Lourdes. When in 1951 she left an Atlanta hospital, too weak to climb the stairs, O'Connor moved with her mother to Andalusia, the old family home not far from the town of Milledgeville, a small agricultural centre in Georgia. On the ground floor of that farmhouse she wrote her first novel (*Wise Blood*, 1952).

Despite her severe physical suffering, Flannery O'Connor considered the isolation brought upon her by her illness a blessing – “Lord, am I happy to be a hermit writer”, she wrote to a friend – because she found herself face to face with what she considered to be the essential experience each one of us must in some way come to terms with: “the experience of limitation”. Furthermore, she viewed her physical condition with a profound sense of humour, defining herself, because of her crutches, a “structure with flying butresses”, and ending a letter saying “I must go out on my two aluminium legs”.

In spite of her illness and her limited productivity, success lay in store for Flannery O'Connor. Her 27 short stories and two novels earned her, during her lifetime, two honorary degrees and the O. Henry Award three times. In 1988, her complete works were included in the prestigious Library of America collection.

With regard to the Italian editions of her work, the current situation is dolefully sad: while her novels and short stories have been published unabridged, the same is not true of her essays and, especially, her extensive correspondence. Only small sections of these have been translated. In an attempt to interpret this writer's rather mediocre and no less arduous fate in Italy, one could agree on the fact that Flannery O'Connor's narrative is



rooted in such a burning, personal and radical Catholicism that it is not unsurprising that it triggered prejudice and censorship. But this writing does not target that vaguely secular, rational and enlightened common sense of atheists and agnostics. It is meant to provoke the righteous and respectable reader – with irony and sarcasm – whose conventional expression of Catholicism is all too often hypocritical and bigoted.

In a clear, rapid style, she delineates the borders of an extreme territory where characters are eccentric and odd but uncompromising seekers of the absolute. They are souls who are stub-

She found herself face to face with what she considered to be the essential experience each of us must in some way come to terms with: ‘the experience of limitation’

bornly closed in on themselves until a violent and unexpected event occurs to undermine their convictions and bonds. This breaking open costs them tears and blood, but this is the only possible way to come close to the mystery – a mystery which, according to Flannery O'Connor, is the intuitive recognition of a God who transcends and saves man, healing his incompleteness and frailty which are synonymous with humanity.

Reading these texts, therefore, means entering an arduous spiritual area. It means looking at reality in the light of a sometimes disconcerting Christian realism that makes human limitation its strength. A look so merciless that it leads back to a greater and more unconditional piety.



# Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Monday, 1 September

## The Gospel in your pocket

"Jesus is present in the Word of God and he speaks to us". This is why "the Word of God is different even from the loftiest human words". And we must draw near to it "with an open heart, with a humble heart, with the spirit of the Beatitudes". This is the reason that Pope Francis has again suggested that one should always carry a small, pocket-sized Gospel, to read it when possible and thus "to find" Jesus. He repeated this during the Mass at Santa Marta.

Resuming the morning eucharistic celebrations open to groups of the faithful – after a period of suspension during July and August – the Pontiff reflected on the Word of God based on the two readings from the day's liturgy, taken from, respectively, the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (2:1-5) and from the Gospel according to Luke (4:16-30).

Pope Francis underscored that, in the first reading, St Paul "reminds the Corinthians what his message was like, how he had proclaimed the Gospel", and he explained: "I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom". Paul continues, the Pope added, by saying that he did not present himself in order to convince his interlocutors "with arguments, with words, even with images". The Apostle chose instead "another mode, another style", and that is a "demonstration of the Spirit and power, that" – these are Paul's words – "your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God".

In effect, the Pontiff continued, the Apostle recalled that "the Word of God is something different, something which is unequaled by a human word, a wise word, a scientific word, a philosophical word". The Word of God, indeed, "is something else, it comes in another way": it is "different" because "it is how God speaks".

Luke confirms this in the Gospel passage which tells of Jesus in the Synagogue of Nazareth, "where he grew up" and where everyone "knew him as a child". In that context, the Pope explained, he "began to speak and the people listened to him", commenting: "Oh, how interesting!". Then "they bore witness: they were amazed with the words he spoke". And among them they observed: "Look at him, this one! How good, this boy whom we know, how good he has become! But where must he have studied?".

However, the Pontiff pointed out, Jesus "stopped them" and said to them: "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country". Thus, to those who listened to him in the Synagogue "at first" it seemed "a good thing and they accepted that manner of conversation and reception". But "when Jesus began to give the Word of God they became furious and they wanted to kill him". Thus "they passed from one side to the other, because the Word of God is differ-



ent from the word of man, even from the loftiest word of man, the most philosophical word of man".

And so, Francis asked himself, "what is the Word of God like?". The Letter to the Hebrews, he affirmed, "began by saying that, since ancient times, God had spoken, and he spoke to our fathers through the prophets. But in these times, at the end of that world, he spoke through the Son". In other words, "the Word of God is Jesus, Jesus himself". That is what Paul was preaching, when he said: "When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Christ crucified".

This is "the Word of God, the only Word of God", the Pope explained. And "Jesus Christ is a reason for scandal: the Cross of Christ scandalizes. That is the strength of the Word of God: Jesus Christ, the Lord".

It becomes so important, the Pontiff said, to ask ourselves: "How do we receive the Word of God?". The response is clear: "As one receives Jesus Christ. The Church tells us that Jesus is present in the Scripture, in His Word". This is why, he added, "I have advised you many times to always carry a small Gospel with you" – moreover, "it costs little" to buy it, he added, smiling – to keep it "in your purse, in your pocket, and read a passage from the Gospel during the day". Some practical advice, he said, not so much "to learn" something, but mostly "to find Jesus, because Jesus actually is in His Word, in His Gospel". Thus, he restated, "every time I read the Gospel, I find Jesus".

And what is the right attitude to receive this Word? It must be received, the Bishop of Rome affirmed, "as one receives Jesus, that is, with an open heart, with a humble heart, with the spirit of the Beatitudes. Because this is how Jesus came, in humility: he came in poverty, he came anointed by the Holy Spirit". Such that "he himself began his discourse in the Synagogue of Nazareth" with these words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed

me to preach the Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord".

Thus, "he is strength, he is the Word of God, because he was anointed by the Holy Spirit". In this way, Francis recommended, "we too, if we want to hear and receive the Word of God, we must pray to the Holy Spirit and ask for this anointing of the heart, which is the unction of the Beatitudes". Thus, to have "a heart like the heart of the Beatitudes".

As "Jesus is present in the Word of God", the Pope said, and "He speaks to us in the Word of God, it will do us good during the day today to ask ourselves: How do I receive the Word of God?". An essential question, Pope Francis concluded, again renewing his counsel to always carry the Gospel with you so as to read a passage every day.

Tuesday, 2 September

## Old women and the theologian

It is the Holy Spirit who gives "identity" to the Christian. This is why – Pope Francis said in his homily during morning Mass at Santa Marta – "you can have five degrees in theology, but not have the Spirit of God". And "you might be a great theologian but you are not a Christian", precisely "because you do not have the Spirit of God".

Thus, he pointed out, "many times we find, among our faithful, simple old women who perhaps didn't finish elementary school, but who speak to you about things better than a theologian, because they have the Spirit of Christ". And the Pope offered the example of St Paul, who despite his effective preaching had no particular academic qualifications – he had not taken courses in "human wisdom" at the Lateran or Gregorian Pontifical Universities – but he spoke to satisfy the Spirit of God.

In the passage of the Gospel according to Luke proposed for the day's Liturgy (4:31-37), the word "authority" appears twice. The people "were astonished by Jesus' teaching, for his word was with authority", the Pope affirmed. And then again, at the very end of the passage, the Gospel tells that "they were all amazed and said to one another: 'What is this word? For with authority and power he commands...'. Thus, Pope Francis continued, "the people were astonished because when Jesus spoke, when he preached, he had authority which the other preachers didn't have, which the other legal experts didn't have, those who were teaching the people".

The question to ask yourself is: "But what is this authority of Jesus, this new thing which astounded the people? This gift, different from the legal experts' manner of speaking and teaching?". And the answer is

definitive. "This authority", the Pontiff explained, "is precisely the unique and special identity of Jesus". Indeed, "Jesus was not a common preacher; Jesus was not one who taught the law like all the others: he did so in a different way, in a new way, because he had the strength of the Holy Spirit".

Pope Francis then recalled that the day before, "in the liturgy, we read that passage in which Jesus presents himself, visits his synagogue and he speaks of himself in the words of the Prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me" and "he has sent me to proclaim". The Holy Father explained that this, too, confirms that "the authority which Jesus has comes precisely from this special anointing of the Holy Spirit: Jesus is anointed, the first Anointed One, the true Anointed One". And "this anointing gives authority to Jesus".

"The very identity of Jesus is the Anointed Being", the Pontiff restated. He is "the Son of God, anointed and sent, sent to bring salvation, to bring freedom". Thus "this is the identity of Jesus, and because of this the people said: 'This man has special authority, which the legal experts who teach us do not have'. But", the Pope added, "some are scandalized by this manner of Jesus, this style of Jesus".

Here then, "the liberty, the freedom of Jesus is the very anointing of the Holy Spirit". And, Francis exhorted, we can ask ourselves what our identity as Christians is". In the First Letter to the Corinthians (2:10-16), St Paul explains that "we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom". And in this regard the Pontiff highlighted that "Paul's preaching" does not emanate from "human wisdom", because his words were "taught to him by the Holy Spirit". In fact, the Pope emphasized, he "preached with the anointing of the Spirit, expressing spiritual matters of the Spirit in spiritual terms".

However, Francis noted, using the very expressions of St Paul: "The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, ... and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned". Thus "if we Christians do not understand the gifts of the Spirit, we do not bear and we do not offer testimony, we do not have identity".

After all, "these gifts of the spirit" seem only "a folly", such that those who lack identity are "not able to understand them".

The Pontiff recalled, referring again to the Letter of St Paul, that the "spiritual man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one". Indeed, the Pope added, again quoting the words of the Apostle, "who has known the mind of the Lord? But now we have the mind of Christ, that is, the Spirit of Christ". And "this is the Christian identity: not having the spirit of the world, that manner of thinking, that manner of judging".

Ultimately, "what gives authority, what gives identity is the Holy Spirit

Cardinal Pell speaks to Italian Catholic newspaper

## Expectations for the Church

On 26 August Cardinal George Pell, the Vatican's first Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy and member of the Council of Cardinals created by the Pope for the reform of the Roman Curia, spoke to Paolo Viana of *Avvenire*, a Catholic newspaper in Italy. The Archbishop of Sydney spoke about the world's expectations for Pope Francis' Magisterium, as well as the current Vatican reforms.

Describing the figure of the Pope, he said: "I think the Holy Father is a magnificent example of one who lives in poverty", Cardinal Pell explained, stating that those who live on the world's peripheries understand that he is with them. The Church aims to help "the poor to escape from poverty, also through education, hospitality, strengthening families, communities, parishes". He continued by explaining that one of the most important challenges for the modern Church and the ecclesial mission is the decline in the number of believers and in religious practice.

However, "thanks to the testimony of Pope Francis, many have resumed thinking about the Christi-



Cardinal Pell (right) presents the new economic framework for the Vatican on 9 July

an message". He said that this is because they see his mercy. In addition to teaching this message of mercy, he also "demonstrates it and identifies with the fundamental matters of Christian life, beginning with the fight between good and evil, which is ongoing in all the war zones, from Ukraine to the Middle East".

The world has great expectations for the Pope, but we must not misunderstand the Holy Father's message, he warned. "We are Christians, not 'Franciscans'. Our hope is in Jesus Christ and it is Francis' strength, a strength which comes from the Spirit", through which "he offers God's mercy to all the peripheries of the world".

When asked if he ever felt burdened by the reforms he is expected to complete, the Cardinal first clarified, "we are not reforming

the Church", we do not have to start from scratch. "We are still Catholics", he said, and "we have 2,000 years of tradition. Of course, we can learn a few things from the modern world, such as, in the case of Vatican financial reform, the observation of international norms and cooperation on anti-money laundering". However financial reform is not, as it is commonly thought to be, "complex reform", he said, "rather, it is much simpler than other types of reform".

Finally Cardinal Pell underlined that the he, like the other Cardinals on the Council, serve as advisors to the Pope, "we are not there in order to reform the Church but to advise the Pope on the reform of the Curia". He will be the one to decide", he said.

## New chaplain of the Pontifical Swiss Guard begins his service



On Monday, 1 September, Fr Pascal Burri begins his service as chaplain of the Pontifical Swiss Guard. The 40-year-old priest from Bern, Switzerland, concelebrated Mass on Friday afternoon, 29 August, in St Martin's Church in the Swiss quarter of the Vatican. Bishop Alain de Raemy, Auxiliary Bishop of Lausanne, Genève et Fribourg and Fr Burri's predecessor as the Corps' chaplain, presided at the Mass. Other concelebrants included Msgr José Avelino Bettencourt, Head of Protocol of the Secretariat of State, and Msgr Markus Heinz, who was entrusted with the pastoral care of the Pontifical Swiss Guard during the interim. Following the Mass, in the *Cortile d'Onore*, Daniel Rudolf Anrig, the current Commandant of the Corps, introduced the new chaplain to the guards.

## Secretary of State to Catholic legislators

To foster a more just society centred on the dignity of the human person; to act in favour of the family; to alleviate poverty and to support the integral development of society's most neglected members. Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, suggested these principal tasks to Catholic legislators, calling them to not only "to live in the midst of the world, but also to be a 'leaven in the world' in favour of the family, the local community and your respective nations".

In a message to the members of the International Catholic Legislator's Network, which met from 28-31 August in Frascati for their yearly gathering, the Cardinal emphasized in particular that "the Church needs you in her universal mission, and in turn, you need the Church as mother and teacher of all".

The Church, he explained, needs "active Catholic legislators, because your law-making is a vital part of the lay apostolate". The "great challenge for you is to bring your faith to bear upon the pressing issues facing the world today, that is, to dialogue with society and culture, and to humbly speak from the light which our faith offers".

The Secretary of State wished to assure Pope Francis' encouragement and repeated his call to "strive to 'light a fire in the heart of the world'". The Church, he said, "places at your disposal her sacraments, her wise counsel and her commitment to the moral truths of the natural law", supporting "your ongoing initiatives to serve the common good through sound lawmaking".

## Santa Marta

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

it, the anointing of the Holy Spirit". This is why, according to the Pope, "people don't love those preachers, those legal experts, because they spoke truthfully about theology, but they didn't reach the heart, they didn't give freedom, they weren't capable of doing so in a manner the people identified with, because they were not anointed by the Holy Spirit". However, the Pope clarified, "the authority of Jesus – and the authority of the Christian – comes from this very capacity to understand the gifts of the Spirit, to speak the language of the Spirit; it comes from this anointing of the Holy Spirit".

Pope Francis concluded by praying to the Lord to give us "the Christian identity, that which You have: give us your Spirit; give us your way of thinking, of feeling, of speaking; that is, Lord grant us the anointing of the Holy Spirit".

## Newman

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

there is no love for Man, even this "wonderful faculty" does not serve "the cause of truth", but "it often subserves the purposes of error – so do our most innocent affections" (*Theological Papers*, 1890). It loses, that is, its "living hold on truths", its ability to "pronounce by anticipation" and to "interpret what it sees around it", and to fail in its duty to supply "objects to our emotional and moral nature" and in its natural disposition to be a "principle of action" (*Grammar of Assent*, 1870).

Also regarding the experience of the imagination (in literature and elsewhere) and the cultural reflection of it, Newman confirms his role (strategic, monumental and as yet unexplored) as the textual and cultural classifier of the 19th-century English, Romantic and Victorian setting: these very aspects of his "most powerful thought" (Edmondo Berselli, 2004) were addressed by numerous gifted scholars in an international conference organized by the Newman Association of America. The conference, entitled "A Comparative Study of the Creative Imagination in Newman and Maritain", was held at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, from 31 July through 2 August. The hoped-for outcome of the conference was likely the same as Pope Benedict XVI expressed in reference to Newman in 2010: "Great writers and communicators of his stature and integrity are needed in the Church today, and it is my hope that devotion to him will inspire many to follow in his footsteps".

The Pope expresses his appreciation for the work of a French youth

## The Book of the East

"Thank you for the many testimonies of the Church in the East, a Church which has given birth to so many saints, and which today is suffering. I pray for all of you. I am close to you. And I ask you to, please, pray for me. May the Lord bless you and may Our Lady keep you. With my blessing." Pope Francis wrote these words last Monday, 25 August, on the pages of the "Book of the East", a kind of travel journal containing testimonies, messages and images of the Christian communities in more than 20 countries in Asia and Africa. Vincent Gelot, 24, from Nantes, France, compiled this book and sent it to the Holy Father who, in turn, expressed his appreciation by signing it.

The book began almost like an adventure, spurred by the stories of Christians who have fled their homeland, escaping the wars in Iraq and Syria. It then transformed into a kind of survey seeking the roots of the Faith. It all began in 2002 when Gelot was working for a non-profit organization in Lebanon, where he had completed a master's degree. There, the young man discovered the East and learned about the experiences of various communities and Churches that live in those lands – Maronites, Melkites, Armenians, Chaldeans, Copts – with all their variety and richness.

Benedict XVI's visit to Lebanon in September 2012 invited the Frenchman to reflect. He thus decided to travel to discover the Christian East. Not only was it a journey that

covered many kilometres, it was also an inner journey. Gelot began visiting various communities, parishes, monasteries and villages. He learned about their history and experienced their liturgy. He chose to travel in a car covered with symbols of the Christian East. "I believe," he said to our newspaper, "that behind this inspiration was a call. It's not easy to explain today. It was a call from the East, a call to travel, to respond to the wish to live a kind of adventure, to step out of daily life just a little bit".

At that time Christians in the East were not often discussed. But, explains Gelot, "I did not intend to be the first. I truly wanted to learn more about them. I had planned to be away for 10 months and instead I was gone for two years, travelling approximately 60,000 kilometres". He hid the large album which he calls the "Book of the East" in the back of his Renault so that it was not confiscated at the border.

"When I started," he said, "I wanted to give witness to the situation of the communities scattered in the East by means of photographs, and I wanted to take those Christian something, especially the Pope's message of peace". This gave him the idea for a book which recorded the experiences lived in the places he visited. From a simple collection of testimonies, the book became a tool for communication among the various communities, even the most isolated ones. The people not only described their experiences on the pages of the book,

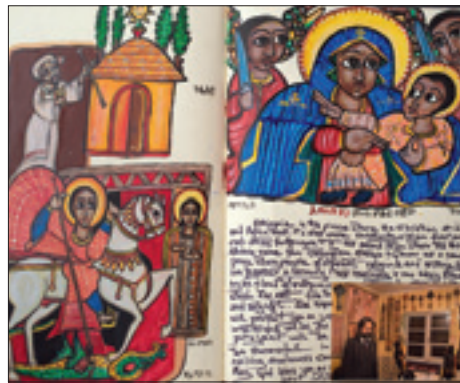
they also sent messages to other Christians. Recalling these messages, he said: "when I was in Afghanistan, the Christians there found the messages in the book written to them from Iraq". Therefore the book is a living witness of the hope of Christians in the East.

Gelot will present the book to the Custody of the Holy Land, where it will be kept.

It wasn't an easy time for the young man. He had to fend for himself in situations that were sometimes difficult. At times he had to be a mechanic, at others he was forced to navigate languages and very obscure dialects. "I was very struck", he said, "by the communities who suffer the most. For example, in Iraq where even before the violence escalated the situation was far from easy. There was a lot of suffering and the people were leaving their homes."

With deep emotion, Gelot recalled when he stopped in a village in the plain of Nineveh, where he was welcomed by a family who, a few days later, left for Lebanon, forever leaving the land of their ancestors. "They were a Chaldean family", he said, "a couple with three children and their grandmother who

A page from Gelot's book



had never left her village. I thought of my grandmother who lives in France. If someone would have told her that she had to leave her homeland forever, she would have been wounded".

He especially remembers the smallest and most isolated communities, in particular those in Central Asia and the countries of the former Soviet Union. "I remember Kazakhstan where there were only two churches and where the Christians are still able to survive. I saw crosses, chapels and I understood that the priest's presence in a small community is very important".

Now it's time to look back. "It is as though I had just completed a kind of internship", he admits, "discovering these countries and their cultures. I experienced the power of prayer, welcome. I would never have thought that this trip would have taken me so far away". (Nicola Gori)

A Muslim metaphor which speaks to all Christians

## That strip of land called ecumenism

ALBERTO FABIO AMBROSIO

We were in the Evangelical Church of Istanbul, for a service conducted by a woman, probably the first to lead a Christian community in this city with a Muslim majority. It was the week dedicated to Christian unity and my thoughts turned to a slightly bizarre ecumenical metaphor. As usual in Istanbul, known as the historical city of diverse Churches and thus of fundamental ecumenical valency, this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity unfolded in reciprocal welcome in the churches of the different confessions and in the collective prayer for unity of all the world's Christians.

In former Constantinople the magnitude of this experience, which is repeated from year to year, lies in the fact that in every church one breathes, one can almost touch, one experiences the ancient or current Christian Tradition that is there. Yes, because when you are in an assembly of Syrian Christian Orthodox you perceive a language and ritual rooted in Christian antiquity. When among Armenians, the whole essence of oriental sounds conjures up dreams of ancient Armenia's sacred Mount Ararat (known as Masis to Armenians). In the home of the Greek Orthodox, between the incense rising like prayer and the magnificent iconostasis, one hears the rich beauty of the Greek language, thanks to which we know the Gospel and the message of the New Testament. And among Istanbul's Prot-

estants you feel the search for the essential and for the message within the ritual, but without sacrificing the depth of Christian values and the welcome. The pastor of the oldest Protestant community in the city welcomes as if in an embrace the Christians coming from all the churches for this occasion. The chapel resembles an inverted

ark, and this makes one think of that ark which is the whole Church, the reunion of all mankind reconciled with God, with one another and with Creation, thanks to the redeeming work of the one Christ.

Over the course of several days, this idea came to mind, borrowed from the Muslim world which welcomes us in this multifaceted country. In Islam there is the concept of *araf*, that is, a strip of land suspended between heaven and hell where the spirit of the deceased roams, awaiting judgment. The metaphor represents that imaginary place suspended between desperation and the certainty of salvation. Ecumenism is that road, that narrow path on which we are all travellers and which brings us to the salvation of Christ.

We move forward as pilgrims on a journey that Christ himself wanted, one rich in differences, although the course is exceedingly narrow. We have everything in common, Christ, but then on life's journey, we run the risk of balancing on a very thin rope stretched under our feet, like tightrope walkers. That is the road, the narrow gate through which we must pass in order to find salvation: individual, of course, but common because our Lord Jesus wanted it.

That strip of land stretches between the desperation of division and the slight but very real hope of unity and ecumenism. So let us cross that exceptionally narrow path with the joy of one who knows he has already been saved.

