

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH

Unicuique suum Non praevalerunt

Forty-seventh year, number II (2337)

Vatican City

Friday, 14 March 2014

The first anniversary

A great joy

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

Attentive to the times of the Church and to the profound meaning of Christian liturgy, Benedict XVI had carefully chosen the moment when he would make that astonishing announcement, a decision made long before. His declaration to renounce the papacy was thus set close to the start of Lent, a time of penance which, for half a century, Popes have opened with a week of silence and meditation in spiritual exercises. This same week, one year later, coincides with first anniversary of the election of his Successor, who at that moment was on retreat with his closest collaborators. And we can be certain that Francis is living out this singular circumstance as though it were a sign.

The memories of that cold and rainy night are many and diverse, but – in the unprecedented novelty of a Bishop of Rome taken from almost “the ends of the earth” – the greatest novelty were in his first words, a meditative and simple prayer together with the faithful. And following the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be for his Predecessor was the silence of the people to invoke God’s blessing upon the chosen one. Only then did the Successor of Peter bless “all the men and women of good will”, to take his leave with the announcement that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

To priests of Rome

The time of mercy



PAGE 8/9



At the Angelus the Bishop of Rome invites the faithful to build their lives on what is essential

Hunger for God

At the Angelus in St Peter's Square on Sunday, 9 March, Pope Francis reflected on Jesus' temptation in the desert for 40 days before beginning his public ministry. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's reflection which was delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

Each year, the Gospel of the First Sunday of Lent sets before us the narrative of the temptation of Jesus, when the Holy Spirit, having descended upon him after his Baptism in the Jordan, prompts him to confront Satan openly in the desert for 40 days, before beginning his public ministry.

The tempter seeks to divert Jesus from the Father’s plan, that is, from the way of sacrifice, of the love that offers itself in expiation, to make him take an easier path, one of success and power. The duel between Jesus and Satan takes place through strong quotations from Sacred Scripture. The devil, in fact, to divert Jesus from the way of the cross, sets before him false messianic hopes: economic well-being, indicated by the ability to turn stones into bread; a dramatic and miraculous style, with the idea of throwing him-



self down from the highest point of the Temple in Jerusalem and being saved by angels; and lastly, a shortcut to power and dominion, in exchange for an act of adoration to Satan. These are the three groups of temptations: and we, too, know them well!

Jesus decisively rejects all these temptations and reiterates his firm resolve to follow the path set by the Father, without any kind of compromise with sin or worldly logic. Note well how Jesus responds. He does not dialogue with Satan, as Eve had done in the earthly paradise. Jesus is well aware that there can be no dialogue with Satan, for he is cunning. That is why Jesus, in-

stead of engaging in dialogue as Eve had, chooses to take refuge in the Word of God and responds with the power of this Word. Let us remember this: at the moment of temptation, of our temptations, there is no arguing with Satan, our

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Interview in 'Corriere della Sera'

A normal man who loves being a priest

PAGES 6 AND 7

Message to the symposium of the dicastery for religious

The logic of gratuitousness

PAGE 4

Traces of the Pope's ancestors in old pages of the 'Gazzetta d'Asti'

A family named Bergoglio

PAGES 10 AND 11

From the February issue of Women Church World

Saving love everywhere

MARIA VOCE ON PAGE 12

VATICAN BULLETIN

AUDIENCES

Thursday, 6 March

Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

Friday, 7 March

Archbishop Andrés Carrascosa Coso, titular Archbishop of Elo, Apostolic Nuncio to Panama

Archbishop Jean-Abdo Arbach, BC, of Homs for Greek-Melkites, Syria

Members of the Spanish Episcopal Conference on an *ad Limina Apostolorum* visit:

– Cardinal Lluís Martínez Sistach, Archbishop of Barcelona with the Auxiliary, Bishop Sebastià Taltavull Anglada, titular Bishop of Gabi

– Archbishop Jaume Pujol Balcells of Tarragona

– Archbishop Joan Enric Vives Sicília of Urgell

– Bishop Agustín Cortés Soriano of Sant Feliu de Llobregat

– Bishop Josep Àngel Saiz Meneses of Terrassa with the Auxiliary, Bishop Salvador Cristau Coll, titular Bishop of Aliczira

– Bishop Francesc Pardo Artigas of Girona

– Bishop Joan Piris Frígola of Lleida

– Bishop Xavier Novell Gomá of Solsona

– Bishop Enrique Benavent Vidal of Tortosa

– Bishop Román Casanova Casanova of Vic

Saturday, 8 March

Cardinal Marc Ouellet, PSS, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops

Members of the Spanish Episcopal Conference on an *ad Limina Apostolorum* visit:

– Archbishop Francisco Javier Martínez Fernández of Granada

– Archbishop Juan José Asenjo Pelegrina of Seville with the Auxiliary, Bishop Santiago Gómez Sierra, titular Bishop of Vergi

– Bishop Adolfo González Montes of Almería

– Bishop José Manuel Lorca Planes of Cartagena

– Bishop Ginés Ramón García Beltrán of Guadix

– Bishop Ramón del Hoyo López of Jaén

– Bishop Jesús Esteban Catalá Ibáñez of Málaga

– Bishop Rafael Zornoza Boy of Cádiz y Ceuta

– Bishop Demetrio Fernández González of Cordoba

– Bishop José Vilaplana Blasco Huelva

– Bishop Francisco Cases Andreu of Islas Canarias

– Bishop José Mazuelos Pérez of Jerez de la Frontera

– Bishop Bernardo Álvarez Afonso of San Cristóbal de La Laguna, Tenerife

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Fr Ernesto Giobando, SJ, as Auxiliary of Buenos Aires, Argentina, assigning him the titular episcopal see of Appiaria. Until now he has been Rector of the *Residenza Sagrada Famiglia* in Montevideo, Uruguay (5 Mar.).

Bishop-elect Giobando, 54, was born in Santa Fe de la Vera Cruz, Argentina. He studied at the Jesuit College of the Inmaculada and was ordained a priest on 17 November 1990 and made his final vows on 9 May 2000. He holds a licence, and a degree in philosophy and theology. He has served as minister and as professor at the Massimo College; Minister of the CIAS (*Centro de Investigación y Acción Social*); Superior of the *Regina Martyrum* in Buenos Aires, National Secretary of the Apostolate for Prayer in Argentina; National director of the Eucharistic Movement for the Youth movement; member of the Council for Priests

and in charge of the pastoral care for adults, Buenos Aires.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Werner Franz Siebenbrock, SVD, of Governador Valadares, Brazil. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (6 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Antônio Carlos Félix as Bishop of Governador Valadares, Brazil. Until now he has been Bishop of Luz (6 Mar.).

Bishop Félix, 56, was born in Caldas, Pouso Alegre. He was ordained a priest on 20 December 1986. He was ordained a bishop on 4 May 2003, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Luz.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop André Marceau as Bishop of Nice, France. Until now he has been Bishop of Perpignan-Elne (6 Mar.).

Bishop Marceau, 67, was born in Cérons, France. He was ordained a priest on 25 March 1972. He was ordained a bishop on 7 March 2004, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Perpignan-Elne.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Enrique Troncoso

Troncoso, of Melipilla, Chile. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (7 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Cristián Contreras Villarroel as Bishop of Melipilla, Chile. Until now he has been Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of Santiago de Chile, Chile (7 Mar.).

Bishop Villarroel, 54, was born Santiago de Chile. He was ordained a priest on 5 December 1984. He was ordained a bishop on 21 June 2003, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Illiberi and Auxiliary of Santiago de Chile.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Michael Fabian McCarthy as Bishop of Rockhampton, Australia. Until now he has been episcopal vicar and parish priest of Hendra (10 Mar.).

Bishop-elect McCarthy, 63, was born in Toowoomba, Queensland. He was ordained a priest on 19 August 1978. He holds a science degree and a title in business studies. He has served in parish ministry; as president of the Pontifical Missionary Works and director of the Office for Migrants and Refugees; priest of the parishes of Laidley and Paradise; dean forane of South Coast; director for the permanent formation of the Clergy; rector of the provincial seminary of Brisbane; administrator of the parish of Wavell Heights; dean forane of Brisbane Northern Rivers, and Judge of the Provincial Tribunal.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Placide Lubamba Ndjibu, M. Afr., as Bishop of Kasongo, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Until now he has been provincial of the White Fathers for Central Africa (11 Mar.).

Bishop-elect Ndjibu, 54, was born in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo. He was ordained a priest on 27 July 1991. He holds a degree in pedagogy. After completing his studies in theology he served in as parochial vicar at *Notre Dame des Champs* parish; he then studied journalism and communications and started working for the *Vivant Univers* journal of the White Fathers; he was parochial vicar and parish priest of the Sacred Heart parish in Tanzania; editor of the *KARIBU* bulletin as well as serving as chaplain to Wima High School and to the Army Camp in Bukavu; he has been parish priest of *Sainte Bernadette* in Lubumbashi.

COUNCIL FOR THE ECONOMY

On 8 March, the Holy Father appointed *ad quinquennium* eight cardinals and seven lay experts as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



The Pope names Council for the Economy

A key step

On Saturday, 8 March, Pope Francis appointed the members of the new structure for the coordination of the economic and administrative affairs of the Holy See and Vatican City State, which was created with the *Motu Proprio Fidelis dispensator et prudens* on 24 February. It is composed of eight Cardinals and seven lay people.

In a statement the Director of the Holy See Press Office, Fr Federico Lombardi, SJ, emphasized that Cardinal Cipriani Thorne, Cardinal Napier, Cardinal Rivera Carrera, Cardinal Ricard, Cardinal Tong Hon, Cardinal Vallini, as well as Cardinal George Pell, the new Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy, were all members of the Council for the Study of the Organizational and Economic Problems of the Holy See, now dissolved. Cardinal Marx and Cardinal Pell are both members of the Council of Cardinals the

Holy Father established to help him to reform the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*, and in the governance of the universal Church.

The relationship between the Council and the Secretariat for the Economy will be defined by their Statutes, in any case, the Council is understood to be a body with full authority to act, and is not merely an advisory body of the later.

The different geographical provenance of the various members of the Council represents the Church's universality.

The establishment of the Council is a key step towards the consolidation of the existing management structures of the Holy See, which will serve to improve the coordination and supervision of economic and administrative issues. The first meeting is scheduled for May.

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION IN ENGLISH
Unicuique suum Non praevalent

00120 Vatican City
cd.english@ossrom.va
http://www.osservatoreromano.va

Tipografia Vaticana Editrice «L'Osservatore Romano»

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

Editor-in-Chief

Carlo Di Cicco
Assistant Editor

don Sergio Pellini S.D.B.

Director General

Editorial office

via del Pellegrino, 00120 Vatican City
telephone +390669899300, fax +390669883675

Service photo
photo@ossrom.va www.photo.va

Advertising Agency
Il Sole 24 Ore S.p.A.
System Comunicazione Pubblicitaria
Via Monte Rosa 91, 20149 Milano
segreteria@dirizione.system@ilsol24ore.com

Subscription rates: Italy - Vatican: € 58,00; Europe: € 100,00 - US\$ 148,00; 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@mdcplnslnet.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: 800-318-2440 ext.7; fax: 866-891-7330 - e-mail: ossales@ossrom.com.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Our Sunday Visitor, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46720

Hunger for God

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

defence must always be the Word of God! And this will save us. In his replies to Satan, the Lord, using the Word of God, reminds us above all that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4; cf. Dt 8:3); and this gives us the strength, sustains us in the struggle against a worldly mind-set that would lower man to the level of his primitive needs, causing him to lose hunger for what is true, good and beautiful, the hunger for God and for his love. Furthermore, he recalls that "it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'" (v. 7), for the way of faith passes also through darkness and doubt, and is nourished by patience and persevering expectation. Lastly, Jesus recalls that "it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only you shall serve'" (v. 10); i.e., we must

rid ourselves of idols, of vain things, and build our lives on what is essential.

Jesus' words will then be borne out in his actions. His absolute fidelity to the Father's plan of love will lead him after about three years to the final reckoning with the "prince of this world" (Jn 16:11), at the hour of his Passion and Cross, and Jesus will have his final victory, the victory of love!

Dear brothers and sisters, the time of Lent is a propitious occasion for us all to make a journey of conversion, by sincerely allowing ourselves to be confronted with this passage of the Gospel. Let us renew the promises of our Baptism: let us renounce Satan and all his works and seductions – for he is a seducer – in order to follow the path of God and arrive at Easter in the joy of the Spirit (cf. Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, Anno A).

After the Angelus the Holy Father greeted the faithful and invited all to join in the Caritas Internationalis campaign against world hunger:

I extend a cordial greeting to the faithful of Rome and to all pilgrims!

A special thought goes to the young people of Rosolina who will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation this next Sunday; and to those from Tuscany who are in Rome making their "promise" to follow Jesus; and to those from Paderno Dugnano, Seregno, Bellaria, and Curno.

During this Lenten season, let us bear in mind the invitation of *Caritas Internationalis* to join in its campaign against world hunger.



May the Lenten journey which has just begun be fruitful; and I ask you to remember me and my collaborators of the Roman Curia in your prayers, as we start the week of Spiritual Exercises this evening. Thank you!

Have a good Sunday and a good lunch. *Arrivederci!*

The Pope in Ariccia from Sunday to Friday

Spiritual exercises for the Roman Curia



"Please pray for me": this was Pope Francis tweet to some 11 million followers in 9 languages on Thursday morning, 13 March. Prayer was all he asked for to celebrate the first anniversary of his election as Holy Roman Pontiff. While messages of good wishes were arriving from around the world, employees of Vatican City State were quietly celebrating with their families and communities.

The Holy Father himself was not present but at the Casa Divin Maestro in Ariccia, just outside of Rome, following spiritual exercises with his closest collaborators in the Roman Curia. They left in the afternoon of Sunday, 9 March, and arrived back this morning, Friday 14. The

theme of this year's retreat was "the purification of the heart" and reflections were led by Fr Angelo De Donatis, pastor of the Roman parish of San Marco Evangelista al Campidoglio.

The exercises began on Sunday at 6 pm with Second Vespers, an opening meditation and eucharistic adoration. The following days opened each morning with eucharistic concelebration at 7:30, followed by the first meditation at 9:30. Then, at 4 pm, the second meditation was offered before vespers and eucharistic adoration.

On the last day, Friday 14, only one meditation was scheduled at 9:30 am, closing the yearly spiritual exercises. The participants then returned to the Vatican by bus. Naturally, this week there was no General Audience on Wednesday and all other private audiences were suspended as well.

The practice of spiritual exercises for the Pope the Roman Curia began in 1945 with Pius XI for the first week of Advent. He called the Jesuits Fr Giovanni Oldrà and Fr Alessio Magni to lead them. It was Paul

VI who in 1964 moved the retreat from the start of Advent to that of Lent, entrusting the meditations that year to Redemptorist Fr Bernard Häring. Up until the Pontificate of Pius XII, in fact, those invited to give the meditations were almost exclusively Italian priests from the Society of Jesus. Pope Montini, however, began the practice of choosing people of diverse cultural and spiritual backgrounds.

Please pray for me

(@Pontifex on 13 March)



A great joy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the following day he would go to Our Lady to ask for her protection over the City.

One year has passed since that announcement of "great joy" (*gaudium magnum*) and a personal relationship with God is perhaps the best context within which to understand Francis' Pontificate. As the Pope explains almost every day in his commentary on Scripture, God's mercy never tires of calling every human person (*miserando atque eligendo*), just as it once happened to him one September long ago, still vivid in his memory as though it were yesterday.

It will be left to historians to delve into this papal succession – unprecedented in the history of the Church of Rome – but already now it seems clear that Benedict XVI's act was exemplary both in its humanity and Christianity. He was the protagonist of a great and important pontificate – revealed to many for what it was only by its conclusion – preparing for the election of the Archbishop of Buenos Aires. Reflecting on a Pope's renunciation of the Chair of Peter disposed the cardinals to listen in a profound way to Bergoglio's intervention in the days preceding the Conclave, thereby convincing the electors of an urgent need for an ever more missionary Church, one that is ever less self-referential.

White smoke rose from the Sistine Chapel in the darkness and rain of a cold Roman night, confounding once again calculations and predictions – not just from journalists. The proclamation of a pontificate decisively set on the path of renewal takes up what was begun and called for by the Council half a century ago, calling the entire Church to action. A Church who does not want to be confined but wants to go out and witness to the joy and hope of the Gospel to the women and men of today.

Message to the symposium of the dicastery for religious

The logic of gratuitousness

And the need to counter the iniquitous economy of exclusion

Live the principle of gratuitousness and the logic of gift; counter this economy of exclusion and iniquity. This was Pope Francis' recommendation in a message he sent to Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life,

on the occasion of an international symposium on the management of ecclesiastical goods, which took place from 8-9 March at the Pontifical University Antonianum. The following is a translation of the Pope's message, which was written in Italian and dated 8 March.

significant changes and developments in various fields, with important consequences for the life of mankind. Despite having reduced poverty, the goals attained have oftentimes contributed to building an *economy of exclusion and inequality*: "Today everything is regulated by the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless" (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 53). In the face of the uncertainty in which most of the men and women of our time live, as well as the spiritual and moral frailty of so many people, especially young people, we feel challenged as a Christian community.

The Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life can and must be active protagonists in living and testifying that the *principle of gratuitousness and the logic of gift* find their place in economic activity. The founding charism of each In-

stitute is fully inscribed in this "logic": of *being gift*, as consecrated people, you can make a true contribution to economic, social and political development. *Fidelity to the founding charism* and to the subsequent spiritual heritage, together with the finality proper to each Institute, remain the first criterion for evaluating the administration, management and all of the work carried

out in the Institutes at every level: "The nature of the charism ... directs their energies, sustains their fidelity and directs the apostolic work of all towards the one mission" (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, n. 45).

Attentive vigilance is needed in order to ensure that the goods of the Institutes are administered with prudence and transparency, that they are protected and preserved, combining the primary charismatic-spiritual dimension with the economic dimension and with efficiency, which has its own *humus* in the administrative tradition of the Institutes which does not tolerate waste and which is attentive to using resources properly. The day after the closing of Second Vatican Council, the Servant of God Paul VI called for "a new and authentic Christian mentality" and for a "new style of ecclesial life": "We note with watchful attention that, in this period of ours, which is all absorbed in gaining, possessing, enjoying economic goods, a desire is apparent in public opinion both inside and outside the Church, to see evangelical poverty practised. It is almost a need. People want to see it most where the Gospel is preached and represented" (*General Audience*, 24 June 1970, *ORE*, 2 July 1970, p. 3).

I wished to recall this need also in this year's Lenten Message. The Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life have always been a prophetic voice and living witness to the newness which is Christ, of conformation to the One who made himself poor so that we might become rich by his poverty. This loving poverty is solidarity, sharing and charity and is expressed in moderation, in the quest for justice and in taking joy in the essential, so as to guard against the material idols which blur the authentic meaning of life. Theoretical poverty is not needed, but rather the poverty that we learn by touching the flesh of the poor Christ, in the humble, in the poor, in the sick, in children. Still, today may you be for the Church and for the world, the outposts of care for all of the poor and for all material, moral and spiritual poverty, and examples in overcoming every form of egoism through the logic of the Gospel which teaches us to trust in the Providence of God.

As I express my gratitude to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life who have promoted and prepared this Symposium, I also wish to express my hope that it will produce the desired results. For this I invoke the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and I bless you all.

From the Vatican, 8 March 2014

Franciscans



To the Venerable Brother
Cardinal JOÃO BRAZ DE AVIZ
Prefect of the Congregation for
Institutes of Consecrated Life and
Societies of Apostolic Life

I cordially greet you and all the participants attending the International Symposium on the theme: "The management of the ecclesiastical goods of the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, at the service of the *humanum* and of mission in the Church".

Our age is characterized by signi-



VATICAN BULLETIN

- Mr Francesco Vermiglio, Italy
- Mr George Yeo, Singapore

ROMAN CURIA

His Holiness also accepted the resignation of Archbishop Vittorio Lanzani from his office as Pontifical Delegate to the Basilica of Sant'Antonio in Padua (8 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Giovanni Tonucci, Prelate of Loreto and Pontifical Delegate to the Shrine of Loreto, as Pontifical Delegate to the Basilica of Sant'Antonio in Padua (8 Mar.).

RELATIONS WITH STATES

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Pedro López Quintana, titular Archbishop of Agropoli, as Apostolic Nuncio to Lithuania (8 Mar.).

The Supreme Pontiff also appointed Msgr Hubertus Matheus Maria van Megen as Apostolic Nuncio to Sudan, elevating him at the same time to the dignity of archbishop and assigning him the titular episcopal see of Novaliciana. Until now he has been Nunciature Counsellor (8 Mar.).

Archbishop-elect Megen, 52, was born in Eygelshoven, The Netherlands. He was ordained a priest on

13 June 1987. He holds a degree in canon law. He entered the Holy See's diplomatic corps on 1 July 1994. He has served as papal representative in Sudan, Uruguay, Brazil, Jerusalem, Slovakia, at the UN office in Geneva, and in the Apostolic Nunciature to Malawi.

START OF MISSION

On 28 January Archbishop Jean-Marie Speich, titular Archbishop of Sulci, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana.

NECROLOGY

Bishop emeritus Javier Naranjo Villegas of Santa Marta, Colombia, at age 95 (7 Mar.).

Archbishop Francesco De Nittis, Apostolic Nuncio emeritus to Uruguay and titular Bishop of Tunes, at age 80 (10 Mar.).

Cardinal José da Cruz Policarpo, Patriarch emeritus of Lisbon, Portugal (12 Mar.).

Bishop emeritus Fortunatus M. Lukanima of Arusha, Tanzania, at age 73 (12 Mar.).

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

members of the Council for the Economy:

- Cardinal Reinhard Marx, Archbishop of Munich and Freising, Federal Republic of Germany (Coordinator)

- Cardinal Juan Luis Cipriani Thorne, Archbishop of Lima, Peru

- Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, USA

- Cardinal Wilfrid Fox Napier, OFM, Archbishop of Durban, South Africa

- Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard, Archbishop of Bordeaux, France

- Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera, Archbishop of Mexico, Mexico

- Cardinal John Tong Hon, Bishop of Hong Kong, China

- Cardinal Agostino Vallini, Vicar General of His Holiness for the Diocese of Rome, Italy

- Mr Joseph F.X. Zahra, Malta (Vice-Coordinator)

- Mr Jean-Baptiste de Franssu, France

- Mr John F. Kyle, Canada

- Mr Enrique Llano Cueto, Spain

- Mr Jochen Messmer, Germany



To the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches

Never be resigned to division

The Holy Father met privately with the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Olav Fykse Tveit, in an audience on Friday, 7 March. After the two spoke, the Holy Father gave a public address in the presence of the a delegation of the WCC, during which he insisted that such divisions should not be considered as "an inevitable part of the historical experience of the Church", because in reality they are "a serious obstacle to the witness of the Gospel in the world".

Dear Brother,
Dear Friends from the World Council of Churches,

I wish all of you a warm welcome and I thank Doctor Tveit for his words to me on your behalf. This meeting marks one more stage, an important one, in the longstanding and fruitful relationship between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches. The Bishop of Rome is grateful to you for the work you are doing in support of Christian unity.

From its inception, the World Council of Churches has contributed greatly to making all Christians aware that our divisions represent a serious obstacle to the witness of the Gospel in the world. We cannot be resigned to these divisions as if they were merely an inevitable part of the historical experience of the Church. If Christians ignore the call to unity which comes to them from the Lord, they risk ignoring the Lord himself and the salvation he offers through his Body, the Church: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name ... by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Relations between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, developing since the Second Vatican Council, have brought us to a sincere ecumenical cooperation and to an ever increasing "exchange of gifts" between the different communities by overcoming mutual misunderstanding. The path to full and visible communion is still today an uphill struggle. The Spirit encourages us, however, not to be afraid, not to allow ourselves to be satisfied with the progress we have made in recent decades, but to move forward in trust.

Prayer is fundamental on this journey. Only with a spirit of humble and unceasing prayer will we be able to have the necessary foresight, discernment and motivation to serve the human family in

all its struggles and needs, both spiritual and material.

Dear brothers and sisters, I assure you of my prayers that during your meeting with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity it will be possible to find the most effective way for us to advance together on this path. May the Spirit of the Lord sustain every one of you and your families, your colleagues at the World Council of Churches and all those who have the cause of Christian unity at heart. Pray also for me that the Lord may permit me to be a docile instrument of his will and a servant of unity. May the peace and grace of the Lord accompany all of you.

Laity at the roots of the Church in Korea

The land where the sheep preceded the shepherds

CHRISTIAN MARTINI GRIMALDI

The Church in Korea is the sole example of evangelization – not by missionaries but – by simple men of culture. It is a unique case in history; the role played by the laity in Korea has no equal in the world. Years before the arrival of missionaries, in fact, scholars had begun to notice the existence of an unknown foreign religion and spread its tents throughout country.

The arrival of the Jesuits in China was an event that would have important repercussions on the birth of the first Christian communities in the Kingdom of Joseon (the ancient name for Korea).

The first Jesuits arrived in China at the end of the 16th century, and the most well known of whom was certainly Matteo Ricci. Ricci was one of the first to translate not only the Catechism but also many works of science and literature into Chinese. These hundreds of translated works aroused interest in the

Message for a conference at the Lateran

The lay resources of the Church

The following is a translation of the Pope's message in Italian to participants in the conference: "The lay Christian's mission in the City", which was held on 7 and 8 March at the Pontifical Lateran University.

common to all of us as children of Mother Church (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 120).

As a consequence of this common membership in the Church and participation in her mission, it is important not to see parishes as conflicting with lay ecclesial associations. The latter, in their variety and dynamism, are a resource for the Church, with their outreach into diverse environments and sectors of social life; however, it is a good thing for them to maintain a vital link with the pastoral body of the diocese and parishes, so as not to construct a partial reading of the Gospel and not to uproot themselves from Mother Church (cf. *ibid.*, n. 29).

Lastly, thinking of your "mission in the City", in your contact with the complex issues of social and political life, I urge you to make habitual use of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, a thorough and precious instrument. With the aid of this "compass", I encourage you to work for the social inclusion of the poor, ever reserving to them priority in your religious and spiritual care (cf. *ibid.*, n. 200).

Invoking the motherly intercession of the Virgin Mary, *Salus Populi Romani*, I bless all of you and your work.

From the Vatican, 7 March 2014

Franciscus



The philosopher Jeong Yak-yong (1762-1863) a convert to Catholicism

It was only later that Catholicism ceased to be only an academic subject and became a religious reality in all respects. It was 1784: the French Revolution would break out five years later, but in the meantime, on the other side of the world, an

Pope Francis in an interview granted to the Editor-in-Chief of 'Corriere della Sera'

A normal man who loves being a priest

In moral discipline the question is not changing doctrine but seeking its depth

FERRUCCIO DE BORTOLI

One year has passed since that simple "good evening" that moved the world. The span of 12 very intense months – not only for the life of the Church – struggles to contain the great harvest of Francis' changes and the many profound signs of his pastoral innovation. We are in a small room in the Domus Sanctae Marthae. A single window looks out onto a courtyard that opens slightly onto a small corner of the blue sky. It is a most beautiful day, spring-like, warm. The Pope appears suddenly through a door, with a relaxed and smiling face. He is amused by the various recording devices that the senile anxiety of the journalist placed on the table. "Do they all work? Yes? Good". The assessment of this year? No, he doesn't like assessments. "I only make them every 15 days, with my confessor".

Holy Father, every now and then you telephone people who have asked you for help, and sometimes they don't believe it's you.

Yes, it has happened. When someone phones it is because one wants to talk, to ask a question, to ask for advice. As a priest in Buenos

now it's an institution. The same has to happen with the Pope emeritus. Benedict is the first and perhaps there will be others. We don't know. He is discreet, humble, and he doesn't want to intrude. We spoke about it and we decided together that it would be better for him to see people, to go out and participate in the life of the Church. Once, he came for the blessing of the statue of St Michael the Archangel, then for lunch at Santa Marta, and after Christmas, I invited him to participate in the Consistory and he accepted. His wisdom is a gift from God. Some would have preferred that he retreat to a Benedictine abbey far from the Vatican. I thought about grandparents who, by their wisdom and counsel, strengthen the family and do not deserve to end their days in a retirement home.

This is our impression of your way of governing: you listen to everyone but you decide alone – somewhat like the Father General of the Jesuits. Is the pope a man who is alone?

Yes and no, but I understand what you wish to say to me. The Pope is not alone in his work because he is supported and advised by many. And he would be a man

the spiritual care of people who work in the Curia was discussed, and then spiritual retreats began. More importance should have been given to annual retreats: everyone has a right to spend five days in silence and meditation, whereas before in the Curia they listened to three homilies a day and then some continued working.

Tenderness and mercy are at the heart of your pastoral message ...

And of the Gospel. It is the heart of the Gospel. Otherwise one can-

a man who laughs, cries, sleeps peacefully and has friends like everyone else. He is a normal person.

Are you homesick for Argentina?

The truth is that I don't get homesick. I would like to visit my sister, who is sick; she is the last of the five of us. I'd love to see her, but this doesn't justify a trip to Argentina: I call her on the phone, that is enough. I don't think I'll go before 2016, because I have already been to Latin America, to Rio. Now I have to go to the Holy Land, to Asia, and then to Africa.

You just renewed your Argentine passport. And yet, you are a head of state.

I renewed it because it had expired.

Were you displeased by the accusations of being a marxist, especially in America, after the promulgation of 'Evangelii gaudium'?

Not at all. I have never shared the Marxist ideology because it is not true; but I have known many great people who professed Marxism.

The scandals that rocked the life of the Church are fortunately behind us. A public appeal was made to you on the delicate subject of the abuse of minors, which was published by 'Il Foglio' and signed by the philosophers Besancon and Scruton among others. They asked that you raise your voice against the fanaticism and evil conscience of a secularized world which has little respect for children.

I wish to say two things. Cases of abuse are terrible because they leave very profound wounds. Benedict XVI was very courageous and paved the way. The Church has progressed considerably along this path, perhaps more than anyone. The statistics on the phenomenon of violence against children are shocking, but they also clearly show that the vast majority of abuse happens in the family and the neighbourhood environment. The Catholic Church is maybe the only public institution to have acted on this transparently and responsibly. No one else did as much. And yet the Church is the only one being attacked.

Holy Father, you say that "the poor evangelize us". The attention given to poverty, the most powerful mark of your message, is taken by some observers as a profession of pauperism. The Gospel does not condemn wealth; and Zachaeus was wealthy and charitable.

The Gospel condemns the worship of wealth. Pauperism is one of the critical interpretations. In Medieval times there were many pauperist currents. St Francis had the genius to set the theme of poverty within the context of the evangelical journey. Jesus says that one cannot serve two masters, God and Wealth. And

In the Italian daily and La Nación

Published here is a translation of the integral text of the interview granted by Pope Francis to the Editor-in-Chief of the Milanese daily *Corriere della Sera*, published on 5 March. The interview was published simultaneously in Spanish in the Argentinian daily newspaper *La Nación*.



Aires it was easier. It is still my custom. A service. I feel it within. Of course, now it is not so easy given the number of people who write to me.

Is there a contact, an encounter, that you remember with particular affection?

An 80-year-old widow who had lost her son wrote to me. And now I give her a little call every month. She is happy. I am being a priest. I like it.

In regard to your relationship with your predecessor. Have you ever asked Benedict XVI for advice?

Yes. A pope emeritus is not a statue in a museum. He is an institution. We were not accustomed to it. Sixty or 70 years ago, the figure of a bishop emeritus didn't exist. That came after the Council and

who is alone were he to decide without listening or after having pretended to listen. However, there comes the moment when one must decide, when one must sign, a moment when he is alone with his sense of responsibility.

You have reformed and criticized some attitudes among the clergy, shaken up the Curia, not without some resistance and opposition. Has the Church already changed as you wanted it to one year ago?

Last March, I had no plan to change the Church. I wasn't expecting this transfer of diocese, let us say. I began to govern, seeking to put into practice everything that had emerged in debate among the Cardinals of various Congregations. But in my actions I wait for the Lord to inspire me. I'll give you an example:

not understand Jesus Christ, the tenderness of the Father who sent him to listen to us, to heal us, to save us.

But has this message been understood? You said that the "Francis mania" would not last long. Is there something in your public image that you do not like?

I like to be among the people, with those who suffer, and to visit parishes. I don't like the ideological interpretations, a certain mythology, of Pope Francis. When it is said, for instance, that I go out of the Vatican at night to feed beggars on Via Ottaviano – the thought has never occurred to me. Sigmund Freud said, if I'm not mistaken, that in all idealization there is a kind of aggression. To depict the Pope as a sort of superman, some kind of star, seems offensive to me. The Pope is



"One year has passed since that simple 'Buonasera' that shook the world"

when we are judged at the end of time (Matthew 25) our closeness to poverty will matter. Poverty draws us away from idolatry and opens the doors to Providence. Zacchaeus gives half of his wealth to the poor. And at the end, the Lord will call to account those whose barns are full of their own egoism. What I think about poverty, I expressed clearly in *Evangelii gaudium*.

You have pointed out in globalization, especially financial, some of the evils assaulting humanity. However, globalization has also brought millions of people out of poverty. It has brought hope, a rare sentiment not to be confused with optimism.

It is true that globalization has saved many from poverty; however, it has condemned many others to die of hunger, for this kind of economic system becomes selective. The globalization envisioned by the Church does not resemble a sphere in which every point is equidistant from the centre and in which the distinctive features of peoples are lost. Rather, it resembles a polyhedron, with its different facets, in which each nation retains its own culture, language, religion and identity. The current "spherical" form of economic globalization, especially financial, generates only one way of thinking, a weak way of thinking. And the human person is no longer at its centre, only money.

The subject of the family is central to the work of the Council of eight Cardinals. Many things have changed since John Paul II's Exhortation 'Familiaris consortio'. There are two Synods scheduled, and big changes are expected. Regarding divorced persons you have said: they should not be condemned, they should be helped.

The Church has a long journey to make, a process that the Lord wants. Three months after my election, the topics for the Synod were submitted to me, and it was proposed that we discuss what Jesus is offering man today. But in the end, through gradual changes – which for me were a sign of God's will – we decided to discuss the family which is going through a very serious crisis. Young people rarely marry. There are many broken families in which a common plan of life has failed. The children suffer greatly. We must respond. But in order to do this, we

need to reflect very deeply. This is what the Consistory and the Synod are doing. We need to avoid stopping at the surface. The temptation to resolve every issue through casuistry is a mistake, a simplification of profound things. This is what the Pharisees did, it is a very superficial theology. And it is in the light of this profound reflection that particular situations will be able seriously to be addressed with pastoral depth, also those pertaining to the divorced.

Why did Cardinal Walter Kasper's report in the last Consistory (on the abyss between the doctrine on marriage and the family and the real life of many Christians) generate so much division among the cardinals? How do you think that the Church will be able to go through these two years of toilsome journey and arrive at a broad and peaceful consensus? If the doctrine is solid, why is debate needed?

Cardinal Kasper offered a beautiful and profound presentation, which will soon be published in German. He addressed five points, the fifth of which is that of second marriages. I would have been concerned if there hadn't been intense discussion in the Consistory, it would have been useless. The Cardinals knew that they could say what they wanted, and they presented many different viewpoints, which enrich [the discussion]. Fraternal and open debate makes theological and pastoral thought grow. That does not frighten me. Indeed, I seek it.

In the recent past, it was customary to refer to the so-called "non-negotiable values," especially on questions of bioethics and sexual morality. You have not taken up this phrase. Yet, the doctrinal and moral principles have not changed. Is this choice perhaps meant to signal a less prescriptive style, one more respectful of individual conscience?

I have never understood the expression "non-negotiable values". Values are values and that's that. I can't say that among the fingers on the hand there is one less useful than another. And so I don't understand in what sense there could be negotiable values. What I had to say on the issue of life, I set down in writing in *Evangelii gaudium*.

Many countries have regulated civil

unions. Is that a path that the Church could fathom? But up to what point?

Marriage is between one man and one woman. The secular states want to give grounds to civil unions in order to regulate various situations of cohabitation. They have been pressed by the need to regulate economic affairs between persons, to ensure health care for instance. We are talking about cohabitation agreements of various types; I wouldn't be able to list the various forms. We need to look at the various cases and evaluate them in their variety.

How will the role of women be promoted in the Church?

Casuistry doesn't help here either. It is true that women can and must be more present in the places where decisions are made in the Church. But I would call this a promotion of a functional type. One doesn't make much headway only in this way. Rather, we must think that the Church is a "she": she is feminine from the beginning. The great theologian Urs von Balthasar did extensive work on this topic: the Marian principle guides the Church alongside the Petrine principle. The Virgin Mary is more important than any bishop and any of the Apostles. Theological reflection is underway. Cardinal Rylko, together with the Council for Laity, is working on the matter with many women who are experts in various subjects.

A half-century after Paul VI's 'Humanae vitae', can the Church take up again the issue of birth control? Cardinal Martini, your confrere, held that the moment had already come.

Everything depends on how *Humanae vitae* is interpreted. Paul VI himself, towards the end, recommended to confessors much mercy and attention in concrete situations. But his genius was prophetic, as he had the courage to go against the majority, to defend moral discipline, to apply a cultural brake, to oppose present and future neo-Malthusianism. The issue is not one of changing doctrine, but of delving into the issue more deeply and of ensuring that pastoral ministry takes into account situations of particular persons and what is possible for each person to do. This will also be discussed in the process of the Synod.

Science is evolving and retracing the boundaries of life. Does it make sense to prolong life in a vegetative state? Can a living will be a solution?

I am not a specialist in bioethics, and I fear that my words will be equivocated. The traditional doctrine of the Church states that no one is obliged to use extraordinary methods once we know that a person is in a terminal phase. In my own pastoral ministry, in these cases I have always advised palliative care. In more specific cases, should it be necessary, it is good to seek the advice of specialists.

Will your upcoming visit to the Holy Land lead to an agreement of intercommunion with the Orthodox, which Paul VI, 50 years ago, almost signed with [Patriarch] Athenagoras?

We are all impatient about achieving "signed and sealed" results. But the path of unity with the Orthodox above all means walking and working together. In Buenos Aires, several Orthodox were coming to catechetical courses. I usually spent Christmas and 6 January together with their bishops, who would sometimes also ask advice from our diocesan offices. I do not know if the story is true that Athenagoras told Pope Paul VI that he proposed that they walk together and send all the theologians to an island to discuss among themselves. It's a joke, but it is important that we walk together. Orthodox theology is very rich. And I believe that, at this time, they have great theologians. Their vision of the Church and collegiality is marvellous.

In a few years the greatest world power will be China, with which the Vatican has no relations. Matteo Ricci was a Jesuit like you.

We are close to China. I sent a letter to President Xi Jinping when he was elected, three days after me. And he answered me. The relationships are there. They are a great people whom I love.

Why, Holy Father, do you never speak about Europe? What is it about the European project that does not convince you?

Do you remember the day I spoke about Asia? What did I say? [Here the reporter ventures to give some explanation, collecting vague memories only to realize that he had fallen for a nice trick]. I have not spoken about Asia, or Africa, or Europe. Only about Latin America when I was in Brazil, and when I had to receive the Commission for Latin America. There hasn't yet been an opportunity to talk about Europe. It will come.

What book are you reading these days?

Peter and Magdalene by Damiano Marzotto on the feminine dimension of the Church. It is a beautiful book.

And are you able to see any good films, another one of your passions? "The Great Beauty" won an Oscar. Will you see it?

I don't know. The last movie I saw was Benigni's "Life is Beautiful". And before I had seen Fellini's "La Strada". A masterpiece. I have also enjoyed Wajda...

St Francis had a carefree youth. I ask you: have you ever been in love?

In the book *The Jesuit*, I recounted that I had a girlfriend at the age of 17. And I also mention it in *Heaven and Earth*, the volume that I wrote with Abraham Skorka. In seminary, a girl made my head spin for a week.

And how did it end, if you don't think it indiscreet of me to ask?

They were things of youth. I spoke with my confessor about it [a big smile].

Thank you Holy Father.

Thank you.

At the beginning of Lent Pope Francis meets the priests of his diocese for the first time

The time of mercy

And he tells of the little cross which he took from the coffin of his confessor and which he carries with him always

Pope Francis' meeting with the priests of the diocese of Rome contained a wealth of pastoral guidance and personal stories. The meeting took place on Thursday morning, 6 March, in the Vatican's Paul VI Hall. After the proclamation of a passage from the Gospel of St Matthew, the Pope offered a Lenten reflection on the theme of mercy. The following is a translation of the Pope's reflection, which was delivered in Italian.

When together with the Cardinal Vicar, we planned this meeting, I told him that I could offer you a meditation on the theme of mercy. At the beginning of Lent, it does us good to reflect together as priests on mercy. We all need it. Also the faithful, since as pastors we must extend great, great mercy!

The passage from the Gospel of Matthew that we heard makes us turn our gaze to Jesus as he goes about the cities and villages. And this is curious. Where was Jesus most often, where he could most easily be found? On the road. He might have seemed to be homeless, because he was always on the road. Jesus' life was on the road. He especially invites us to grasp the depths of his heart, what he feels for the crowds, for the people he encounters: that interior attitude of "compassion"; seeing the crowds, he felt compassion for them. For he saw the people were "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd". We have heard these words so many times that perhaps they do not strike us powerfully. But they are powerful! A little like the many people whom you meet today on

In the Church, everything is the time of mercy.

This was an intuition of Bl. John Paul II. He "sensed" that this was the time of mercy. We think of the Beatification and Canonization of Sr Faustina Kowalska; then he introduced the Feast of Divine Mercy. Little by little he advanced and went forward on this.

In his homily for the Canonization, which took place in 2000, John Paul II emphasized that the message of Jesus Christ to Sr Faustina is located, in time, between the two World Wars and is intimately tied to the history of the 20th century. And looking to the future he said: "What will the years ahead bring us? What will man's future on earth be like? We are not given to know. However, it is certain that in addition to new progress there will unfortunately be no lack of painful experiences. But the light of divine mercy, which the Lord in a way wished to return to the world through Sr Faustina's charism, will illumine the way for the men and women of the third millennium" (*Homily*, Sunday, 30 April 2000). It is clear. Here it is explicit, in 2000, but it was something that had been maturing in his heart for some time. Through his prayer, he had this intuition.

Today we forget everything far too quickly, even the Magisterium of the Church! Part of this is unavoidable, but we cannot forget the great content, the great intuitions and gifts that have been left to the People of God. And Divine Mercy is one of these. It is a gift which he gave to us, but which comes from above. It is up to us, as ministers of the Church, to keep this message alive, above all through preaching and in our actions, in signs and in pastoral choices, such as the decision to restore priority to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to the works of mercy. Reconciliation, making peace through the Sacrament, also with words, and with works of mercy.

What does mercy mean for priests?

It occurs to me that some of you have phoned, written a letter, then I spoke on the phone ... "But Father, what have you got against priests?". Because they were saying that I bash priests! I do not wish to bash you here ...

Let us ask ourselves what mercy means for a priest, allow me to say for us priests. For us, for all of us! Priests are moved to compassion before the sheep, like Jesus, when he saw the people harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus has the "bowels" of God, Isaiah speaks about it very much: he is full of tenderness for the people, especially for those who are excluded, that is, for sinners, for the sick who no one takes care of



merciful heart... Thus, in the image of the Good Shepherd, the priest is a man of mercy and compassion, close to his people and a servant to all. This is a pastoral criterion I would like to emphasize strongly: closeness. Closeness and service, but closeness, nearness... Whoever is wounded in life, in whatever way, can find in him attention

Today the Church is a "field hospital". So many wounds! There are so many people wounded by material problems, by scandals, also in the Church... People wounded by the world's illusions

and a sympathetic ear... The priest reveals a heart especially in administering the Sacrament of Reconciliation; he reveals it by his whole attitude, by the manner in which he welcomes, listens, counsels and absolves... But this comes from how he experiences the Sacrament firsthand, from how he allows himself to be embraced by God the Father in Confession and remains in this embrace... If one experiences this in one's own regard, in his own heart, he can also give it to others in his ministry. And I leave you with the question: How do I confess? Do I allow myself to be embraced? A great priest from Buenos Aires comes to mind, he is younger than I, he is around the age of 72... Once he came to see me. He is a great confessor: there are always people waiting in line for him there... The majority of priests confess to him... He is a great confessor. And once he came to see me: "But Father..."; "Tell me"; "I have a small scruple, because I know that I forgive too much!"; "Pray... if you forgive too much...". And we spoke about mercy. At a certain point he said to me: "You know, when I feel this scruple keenly, I go to the chapel, before the Tabernacle, and I say to Him: Excuse me, but it's Your fault, because it is you who has given

me the bad example! And I go away at peace...". It is a beautiful prayer of mercy! If one experiences this in his own regard in Confession, in his own heart, he is able to give it to others.

The priest is called to learn this, to have a heart that is moved. Priests who are - allow me to say the word - "aseptic", those "from the laboratory", all clean and tidy, do not help the Church. Today we can think of the Church as a "field hospital". Excuse me but I repeat it, because this is how I see it, how I feel it is: a "field hospital". Wounds need to be treated, so many wounds! So many wounds! There are so many people who are wounded by material problems, by scandals, also in the Church... People wounded by the world's illusions... We priests must be there, close to these people. Mercy first means treating the wounds. When someone is wounded, he needs this immediately, not tests such as the level of cholesterol and one's glycemic index... But there's a wound, treat the wound, and then we can look at the results of the tests. Then specialized treatments can be done, but first we need to treat the open wounds. I think this is what is most important at this time. And there are also hidden wounds, because there are people who distance themselves in order to avoid showing their wounds closer... The custom comes to mind, in the Mosaic Law, of the lepers in Jesus' time, who were always kept at a distance in order not to spread the contagion...

There are people who distance themselves through shame, through shame, so as not to let their wounds be seen... And perhaps they distance themselves with some bitterness against the Church, but deep down inside there is a wound... They want a caress! And you, dear brothers - I ask you - do you know the wounds of your parishioners? Do you perceive them? Are you close to them? It's the only question....

Mercy means neither generosity nor rigidity.



Let us return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It often happens that we priests hear our faithful telling us they have encountered a very "strict" priest in the confessional, or very "generous", i.e., a *rigorist* or a *laxist*. And this is not good. It is normal that there be differences in the style of confessors, but these differences cannot regard the essential, that is, sound moral doctrine and mercy. Neither the laxist nor the rigorist bears witness to Jesus Christ, for neither the one nor the other takes care of the person he encounters. The rigorist washes his hands of them: in fact, he nails the person to the law, understood in a cold and rigid way; and the laxist also washes his hands of them: he is only apparently merciful, but in reality he does not take seriously the problems of that conscience, by minimizing the sin.

True mercy takes the person into one's care, listens to him attentively, approaches the situation with respect and truth, and accompanies him on the journey of reconciliation

True mercy takes the person into one's care, listens to him attentively, approaches the situation with respect and truth, and accompanies him on the journey of reconciliation. And this is demanding, yes, certainly. The truly merciful priest behaves like the Good Samaritan... but why does he do it? Because his heart is capable of having compassion, it is the heart of Christ!

We are well aware that *neither laxity nor rigorism foster holiness*. Perhaps some rigorists seem holy, holy... But think of Pelagius and then let's talk... Neither laxity nor rigorism sanctify the priest, and they do not sanctify the faithful! However, mercy accompanies the journey of holiness, it accompanies it and makes it grow... Too much work for a parish priest? It is true, too much work! And how do we accompany and foster the journey of holiness? Through pastoral suffering, which is a form of mercy. What does pastoral suffering mean? It means suffering for and with the person. And this is not easy! To suffer like a father and mother suffer for their children; I venture to say, also with anxious concern...

To explain, I'll put to you some questions that help me when a priest

comes to me. They also help me when I am alone before the Lord!

"Tell me: Do you weep? Or have we lost our tears? I remember that in the old Missals, those of another age, there is a most beautiful prayer to ask the gift of tears. The prayer began like this: "Lord, who commanded Moses to strike the rock so that water might gush forth, strike the stone of my heart so that tears..."; the prayer went more or less like this. It was very beautiful. But, how many of us weep before the suffering of a child, before the breakup of a family, before so many people who do not find the path?... The weeping of

"True mercy takes the person into one's care, listens to him attentively, approaches the situation with respect and truth, and accompanies him on the journey of reconciliation"

a priest.... Do you weep? Or in this presbyterate have we lost all tears?

Do you weep for your people? Tell me, do you offer intercessory prayer before the Tabernacle?

Do you struggle with the Lord for your people, as Abraham struggled?

"Suppose they were fewer? Suppose there were 25? And suppose they were 20?... (cf. Gen 18:22-33). This courageous prayer of intercession... We speak of *parrhesia*, of apostolic courage, and we think of pastoral plans, this is good, but the same *parrhesia* is also needed in prayer. Do you struggle with the Lord? Do you argue with the Lord as Moses did? When the Lord was annoyed, tired of his people, he said to him: "Don't worry... I will destroy everything, and I will make you the head of another people". "No. No. If you destroy the people, destroy me too". But, these were real men! Do we have enough guts to struggle with God for our people?

Another question I ask: in the evening, how do you conclude your day? With the Lord or in front of the television? How is your relationship with those who help you to be more merciful?



ful? That is, how is your relationship with the children, with the elderly, with the sick? Do you know how to reassure them, or are you embarrassed to caress an elderly person?

Do not be ashamed of the flesh of your brother (cf. *Reflexiones en esperanza*, Ch. 1). In the end, we will be judged on our ability to draw close to "all flesh" - this is Isaiah. Do not be ashamed of the flesh of your brother. "Making ourselves close": closeness, nearness, being close to the flesh of one's brother. The priest and the Levite who had passed by before the Good Samaritan did not know how to draw close to the person who had been beaten by bandits. Their hearts were closed. Perhaps the priest had looked at his watch and said: "I have to go to Mass, I cannot be late for Mass", and he left. Excuses! How often we justify ourselves, to get around the problem, the person. The other, the Levite, or the doctor of the law, the lawyer, said: "No, I cannot because if I do this tomorrow I will have to go and testify. I will lose time...". Excuses! Their hearts were closed. But a closed heart does not do. Instead, the Samaritan opens his heart, he allows his heart to be moved, and this interior movement translates into practical action, in a concrete and effective intervention to help the person.

At the end of time, only those who have not been ashamed of the flesh of

their brother who is injured and excluded will be permitted to contemplate the glorified flesh of Christ.

I admit, sometimes it does me good to read the list on which which I will be judged, it benefits me: it is contained in Matthew 25.

These are the things that came to my mind to share with you. It is a bit rough and ready as things came to mind... [Cardinal Vallini: "A good examination of conscience!"] It will do us good. [applause]

In Buenos Aires - I am speaking of another priest - there was a well known confessor: he was a Sacramentine. Almost all of the priests confessed to him. On one of the two occasions he came, John Paul II had requested a confessor at the Nunciature, and he went. He was old, very old... He had served as Provincial in his Order, as a professor... but always as a confessor, always. And a long line was always awaiting him in the Church of the Most Blessed Sacrament. At the time, I was Vicar General and was living in the Curia, and every morning, early, I would go down to the fax to see if anything was there. And on Easter morning I read a fax from the community superior: "Yesterday, a half hour before the Easter Vigil, Fr. Aristid died at the age of 94 - or 96? The funeral will be on such and such a day...". And on Easter morning I was to go to lunch with the priests at the retirement home - I usually did on Easter - and then - I said to myself - after lunch I will go to the Church. It was a large church, very large, with a beautiful crypt. I went down into the crypt and the coffin was there; only two old ladies were praying there, but not a single flower. I thought: but this man, who forgave the sins of all the clergy of Buenos Aires, including mine, not even a flower... I went up and went to a florist - because in Buenos Aires there are flower shops at the crossroads, on the streets, where there are people - and I bought flowers, roses... And I returned and began to decorate the coffin with flowers... And I looked at the Rosary in his hands... And immediately it came to mind - the thief that we all have inside of us, don't we? - And while I was arranging the flowers I took the cross off the Rosary, and



The young Jorge Mario Bergoglio

At age 17 Bergoglio's father holds a conference on the papacy

When he decided to become a priest, Jorge Mario Bergoglio confided this first to his father Mario. The Pope himself recalls this in the book *Pope Francis: His life in his own words*, written by Sergio Rubin and Francesca Ambrogetti. He recounts: "I first told my father, and he took it well. In fact he told me that he was happy about it. I was sure that my father would understand me. His mother was an extremely religious person and he had inherited from her that religiosity and strength, combined with the great pain of leaving their homeland".

As natives of Asti – the Bergoglio family's homeland – and as people of faith, we read the Pope's testimony and are moved by it. However, even more moving have been the discoveries we have made in our archives. A surprising piece of news has been discovered in the old pages of the diocesan weekly, founded in 1899. Mario Bergoglio, the son of Rosa and the future father of the Pope, followed in the footsteps of his mother and joined the Federation of Diocesan Youth. And at the age of 17 (he was born in Turin on 2 April, 1908), having still not graduated, he held a conference on the papacy at Fulgor in Asti.

In November 1925, in fact, as an initiative of the federal presidency of the organization (assistant Fr Filippo Berzano) the Scuola Conferenzieri was formed, which was to run until Christmas. Various themes were assigned to its members: Gualtiero Marelli was assigned the theme: "How to form a youth club"; Francesco Ghia had "The history of Catholic Action"; Giulio Burattini, "The character of youth"; Attilio Pio, "Prayer, Action, Sacrifice"; Mr Torchio was assigned "Good press"; and Giovanni Musso had "Catholic Youth".

Mario Bergoglio instead was given a theme which, in hindsight, was truly unique and special: "The Papacy". Here is the account of that extraordinary Sunday as published in the *Gazzetta d'Asti* on 12 December, 1925: "Mario Bergoglio, a student of accounting, with warmth and powerful words, and with frequent and appropriate historical refer-

ences, expounded upon the theme of "The Papacy".

Eagerly listened to and applauded by his peers, he inspired the sure confidence that he shall succeed in being an ardent campaigner for our ideals".

Mario Bergoglio joined the Youth Unions of San Martino di Asti. Three years later (cf. *Gazzetta d'Asti*, 14 July, 1928), during the traditional festival of the Pope, celebrated by the Catholic youth of the Club, he delivered "a beautifully illustrated address on the papacy, at the end raising a hymn of praise and admiration to Pope Pius XI, the Pope of Catholic Action".

If Mario Bergoglio had not emigrated to Argentina in early 1929, he most certainly would have worked in a high position for Catholic Action in his diocese. In 1928 (cf. *Gazzetta d'Asti* 28 April, 1928) we see him in the role of examiner at the side of the then bishop, His Excellency Luigi Spandre, in a "catechetical competition" held at the Fulgor theatre. On Sunday, 7 October 1928, he is to be found among the amateur actors at the parish theatre of St Martin in Asti, for the resuming of formation activities for the youth involved in St Vincent de Paul, which provided assistance to the poor and the sick in their homes and in civil hospitals. In December of that same year (cf. *Gazzetta d'Asti*, 15 December, 1928), just one month before departing for Buenos Aires from Genoa, Mario Bergoglio visited the society at Castell'Alfero as the "campaigner" for the Youth Union. Years later he would transmit his charisma and great faith to his son Jorge. (Stefano Masino)

Grandma Rosina and Catholic Action

STEFANO MASINO

The name "Rosina" Bergoglio, as she is affectionately called in the "Gazzetta d'Asti" [*Asti Gazette*] appears several times in the diocesan publication. On 8 June 1924 she spoke as a counsellor for social action at the annual social day of the Italian Catholic Women's Union of Asti: "We thank the Sacred Heart for having blessed us by giving us this day; and to the keynote speakers we offer our gratitude and a promise of renewed vigour in our work and self-sacrifice in order to reach the ideals we propose".

In 1923 (President Clementine Zopigni) Mrs Bergoglio was 39 years old and a counsellor on moral issues. At the association she came to know Prospera Gianasso, a French professor at the Brofferio Institute, who taught her the language. Rosa, a humble former seamstress and wife of a former porter who then became a bartender, made up for her limited instruction through a voracious appetite for reading and her desire to learn. Thus, under the leadership of the charismatic clerical assistant, Fr Luigi Gorio, Rosa began to hold conferences and meetings throughout the province.

When she left Italy on a new adventure, Rosa never forgot her experience with Catholic Action in Asti, and she continued to register from the banks of the River Plata. She completed the form in French, as a tribute to her friend Prospera Gianasso.

A few months before her departure for Buenos Aires – on Sunday, 11 March 1928 – Rosa was elected as one of the leaders of the Catholic women's group at the Catholic parish of Santa Maria Nuova di Asti (the diocesan president was Santina Rocca). Counsellor Bergoglio was entrusted with the responsibility for religious works. Elected alongside Rosa were: Giustina Acquaviva, president, Amelia Mondo, vice president, Lidia Fantozzi, secretary, Rosa Pugno, treasurer, Maria Gatto, for culture; Agostina Graglia, for morality; Rosa Cugnasco for social organization (cf. "Gazzetta d'Asti" 17 March 1928). Santa Maria Nuova – the Bergoglios lived on Via Fontana – was the church Don Bosco visited in 1862. The parish priest at the time was Don Stefano Robino, who a few years earlier – in October 1919 – had brought the Salesians to Asti: the oratory is located on the parish's property, between the present day Via Don Bosco and Viale Victoria. Today this church belongs to Asti's most central Pastoral Unity, with San Secondo and San Silvestro.

But were these women of the Church involved with in the organization in the twenties? On Wednesday afternoons "Lessons on the Gospel" were held on Via Morelli 14; on Sunday afternoons they held their "St Vincent Women's Conferences" in a room of the parish house at Santa Maria Nuova, after which they would visit the sick in a nearby hospital; and they would offer an annual retreat for their members at the Institute of the Sisters of St Stephen on Via Gioacchino Testa. During the



Rosa Vassallo Bergoglio

year they would prepare a "Day for the Priesthood", a "Day for Catholic Universities", a "Missionary Day", and an "Easter for prisoners". They took up collections in the surrounding cities and towns for the restoration of the Cathedral of Asti (in 1928, the Bergoglio family appear on the list of donors), by setting up a charity booth. They donated books to the Asti prison library. They organized catechetical com-

petitions, participated in the Eucharistic Congresses, collected Peter's Pence, and prayed for religious freedom in Mexico.

"The UFCI", writes the "Gazzetta d'Asti" on 10 May 1924, "is not a pious Congregation. Rather, the Union strives to provide Christian formation for its individual members, but it also means to address issues regarding the family and society". Rosa Bergoglio made this her own, especially by ensuring a proper formation for the younger members. The 29 January edition of "Gazzetta d'Asti" describes her work in this way: "Our very active Counsellor on Moral Action Rosina Bergoglio, with love and intelligence, dedicates herself to providing a course of lectures for engaged couples at the office of the Women's Club of St Martin, which is increasing interest. Twice a week these fine young people gather around her to hear her words of wisdom and motherly expertise, which she gently offers in order to prepare them for the responsibilities to which many of them will soon be called. ... The Diocesan Council for Women is grateful for its excellent collaborator, who spares no sacrifice in order to educate her younger sisters. In so doing, she serves one of the most important aspects of social life".

Grandma Rosa Margherita Vassallo Bergoglio was the person who most moulded the faith of her grandson, Jorge Mario. It was she who taught him to pray as a child. Many years earlier, in Asti, she was a teacher of the faith to her son, Mario, the future father of Pope Francis. We now reveal something that has not yet been published. Mario Bergoglio, after the example of his mother, became part of the Federation of Diocesan Youth. He joined in 1928, just having graduated, after attending the professional technical schools of Asti. We read in the 28 April 1928 edition of the "Gazzetta d'Asti" that the accountant Mario Bergoglio was one of the examiners of the Diocesan Catechetical Competition. Present at the awards ceremony (200 awards), at the theatre "Fulgor", was Bishop Luigi Spandre (1853, Caselle Torinese – 1932, Asti), who during his long episcopate in Asti (1909-1932) gave a new impetus to Catholic Action, by adhering to the guidelines set forth by Pius XI.

From the end of the First World War until January 1929, Rosa Bergoglio lived with her family in a central area of the city, knew and collaborated closely with Bishop Spandre and the priests of the diocese, going to some of the largest churches and religious institutions in Asti.

A family named Bergoglio

From old pages of the "Gazzetta d'Asti" emerge traces of the Bergoglio family, and information about Rosa Vassallo. Born on 27 February 1884 in Piana Crixia in the countryside of Liguria, she married Giovanni Bergoglio – Pope Francis' grandfather – in Turin in 1907 (Asti, 1884 – Buenos Aires, 1964). As a young woman in her twenties, Rosa joined Asti's Union of Catholic Women, while her son Mario became part of the Diocesan Youth Federation.

The archives also contain a memorandum of the Italian Catholic Women's Union dating back to 1924, with a recorded speech of Mrs Rosa Bergoglio, who at the time served as a counsellor on morality. As Lucia Capuzzi recounts in the 12 January edition the daily,

"Avvenire", Rosa was very influential in the religious formation of young Jorge Mario.

These archival documents are interwoven with another interesting fact: "Since I was born", writes author Stephen Masino, who conducted research at the request of Msgr Vittorio Croce, Vicar General of the diocese and Editor of the *Gazzetta d'Asti*, "I have resided on Via Antica Zecca ad Asti, in the exact place where the Bergoglio couple lived for a time".

In fact, in 1918 the family returned from Turin to Asti (where they had moved on 1 January 1906). They first lived in a house on Via d'Azeglio 6 (now destroyed), then on Via Antica Zecca 6, Corso Alessandria 14 and finally on Via Fontana 10".



From Piedmont to Buenos Aires

The city of Asti's Registry Office and the State Archives preserve birth certificates, notarial deeds, and school records which show the roots of the Bergoglio family in Asti, dating back to the Pope's great-grandfather Giuseppe Bergoglio. He was born in Schierano in 1816. He married Maria Giacchino, a native of Cocconato. Their son Francesco was born in Montechiaro in 1857, and married Maria Teresa Bugnano, who was born in 1862 in San Martino al Tanaro – now San Martino Alfieri. In 1884 Maria Teresa gave birth to a son, Giovanni, the grandfather of Pope Francis. The Bergoglio family lived on a farm at Bricco Marmorito Vallevera near the city of Asti, bordering Portacomaro. They were farmers. Giovanni married Rosa Vassallo, who was from Piana Crixia, and they opened a grocery store. In 1908, Mario, the father of the future Pope, was born. On 1 February, 1929, they left for Argentina, accepting an invitation from Giovanni's brother to work in the pavement factory, thus bringing the Bergoglio family to Paraná. They embarked on the "Julius Caesar" steamer from the port of Genoa, their destination was Buenos Aires, and in doing so barely avoided shipwreck. Another ship, for which they previously had tickets, sank. In Argentina, Mario Bergoglio met and married Regina Maria Sivori, who had also emigrated from Liguria, Italy. They lived in Boca, in the "Genovese" neighbourhood of Buenos Aires, and he worked for Argentina's railways. Jorge Mario was born on 17 December, 1936. Then came the birth of his siblings: Marta Regina in 1940, Alberto Horacio in 1942, and Maria Elena in 1948, who are all registered in Asti as Italians living abroad.



Italian immigrants just landed in Buenos Aires

Written by Roberto Alborghetti

A story in pictures

Francis. Bishop of Rome for the world, is an illustrated biography about Pope Francis, Rosa Vassallo and the origins of the Bergoglio family. The publication (Bergamo, Velar-Elledici, 2013, p. 264) – written by journalist Roberto Alborghetti – with its 340 images, takes the reader inside the life of Jorge Mario Bergoglio and the origins of his family in Asti. Through text and image, the reader passes through the adventurous journey of hope from Genoa to Buenos Aires, through the formative years of his youth and the years that saw him as provincial of the Jesuits and later as bishop and cardinal, the milestones and events which mark the life of the future Pope.

Laity at the roots of the Church in Korea

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

other revolution was breaking: this time, however, unlike the first, it was destined to last for a long time.

His name was Peter Yi Seung-hun and he was the first Korean to be baptized. He had to literally go across the border to seek the sacrament (in Peking) from the French Jesuit Fr Jean-Joseph de Grammont.

In fact, contrary to what had already happened in China and Japan, priests were still not present in Korea.

In short, like sheep without a Shepherd, the first Korean Catholic communities had little chance to solidify their union and it could be assumed that they would lose their early vocation. Instead just the opposite happened. These first groups of faithful were in fact able to find the strength to remain united and even to thrive.

The first Korean believers used to meet in the homes of writers and Ly Beyok and Kim-Beom-u (this man's home was right on the spot where the Cathedral of Myeongdong now stands in Seoul). Just when the small community was consolidating with the contributions of new and young believers, the first persecutions began. At least 100 years, of the Korean Church's 230 year long history, were marked by discrimina-

tion and the martyrdom of thousands of individuals. The faithful were hunted down, forced to disavow their faith and eventually they were killed.

Ly Beyok John the Baptist was imprisoned at home by his own family. His father threatened to hang himself if his son did not give up the faith. Ly Byok died at the

age of 31 after 15 days of fasting. Kim Beom-u was arrested, tortured and exiled, but it is said that he never ceased praying aloud, whether in prison or in exile. He died due to the infections caused by the being beaten.

Ly Beyok and other literary men bore witness to their faith in the absence not only of a structured church, but of priests themselves. In short, as was happening in Japan at the time, the community of believers in Korea was maintained only through the sacrifice and the ardour of simple laymen.

Despite the lack of priests and the persecution that threatened and eliminated the founders of that first group of Christians, despite strong pressure even from their own families to repudiate the faith, and despite the hostility and contempt of society as a whole and the government too, the faithful few were able to regroup: they took refuge in the most remote areas of the countryside where they also found a way to spread the precepts of the Gospel in those areas which had never heard preaching before. In a time of crisis, Providence had shown them the way to successfully pass on the doctrine to the next generations.



The Cathedral of Myeongdong in Seoul

women church world

*His mother kept all these things
and pondered them in her heart*

www.osservatoreromano.va

MARIA VOCE

The need for a "profound theology of woman" is becoming more urgent; thus far, it has not been sufficiently developed. Pope Francis has spoken of it on several occasions: the Church "is feminine. It is impossible", he said, "to think of a Church without women, women active in the Church". It is then, perhaps appropriate that women should be called upon to help elaborate this theology as active subjects expressing their own identity in the Church and the world.

In this context we may give the floor to Chiara Lubich. Benedict XVI described her as a "woman of intrepid faith, a gentle messenger of hope and of peace, Foundress of a vast spiritual family", the Focolare Movement, "that embraces many fields of evangelization". She was thus an outstanding figure whose authority is universally acknowledged. Speaking of the theology of woman in Chiara calls for a very broad and structured treatment.

We can offer here only a few brief indications and an explanation: Chiara never felt any opposition between men and women but – through her own charisma, the *ut omnes* [spirituality of unity] – she continuously pushed herself to go beyond every barrier to start fruitful dialogue everywhere, in order to achieve universal brotherhood. She was thus a spokesperson of representatives of various religions and of political and cultural exponents, of young people and adults, of consecrated and lay people, of bishops and priests, and of families and communities.

When she and her first companions began their adventure 20 years before the Second Vatican Council, Chiara was not concerned with either the issue of laity in the Church or, even less, with that of women: "we felt in a particularly powerful way the call to live the Gospel. We did not feel so much like being lay women as, rather, being Christians. Jesus' prayer *Ut omnes unum sint*, his promise to be among two or three gathered in his name, his invitation to take up one's cross and follow him, as well as all his other words, fully concerned us even though we were neither sisters nor priests; they made us feel we were fully Church".

The Gospel is the first point of reference in Chiara's experience. And it is the last, if we remember her recommendation: "All I bequeath to you is the Gospel". The discovery of God as love and the need to proclaim him to one and all. The first factor that emerges in Chiara's life and thought is her reference to the Gospel that makes us experience the reality of being, all of us, men and women, children of one Father and brothers and sisters of one another. This is the truest reality. Sacred Scripture itself justifies it. We read in the Book of Genesis: "God created man in his own image,

in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them" (1:27). Commenting on this text Chiara shed light on the fact that woman, like man, is a person whom God created in his image, "whom he called, that is, to participate in his intimate life and to live in reciprocal communion with man, in love, after the model of God who is Love, who is Trinity" – hence in reciprocal communion. In today's society too the role of women should be interpreted within this plan of God for humanity. It is on this that their dignity is based, a dignity moreover which is also more than confirmed by Jesus' behaviour toward women. Indeed, he had great love not only for his disciples but also for every woman he met here on earth. And John Paul II clearly emphasized this with *Mulieris dignitatem*, a document that met with a profound echo in Chiara's soul: "In all of Jesus' teaching... one can find nothing which reflects the discrimination against women prevalent in his day. On the contrary, his words and works always

express the respect and honour due to women" (cf. n. 13). An obvious example of this is his meeting with the Samaritan woman.

Yet it is urgent likewise to recover in our time the male-female relationship, to rediscover once again reciprocal communion. In the face of this urgency Chiara never tired of telling us women too that we can find the fullness of our being only through looking at Christ who re-established order by redeeming together, after sin, both women and men. He, the Son of God who is love, came down to earth to live and die for love. And he called all, men and women, to live the new commandment: "love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12). Moreover loving means serving one's brothers and sisters, putting into practice his words: "whoever would be first among you must be the slave of all" (Mk 10:44). It is a fact, however, that women, although complementary to men, have a totally different vocation. They are called, moreover, especially today, to achieve their vocation in the Church and in the world with ways of their own.

In *Mulieris dignitatem*, women are recognized as having two qualities which are specific to them: women are better able to love and better able to suffer. And suffering is a condition for being able to love, because love comes at a cost. For this reason a woman is like a chalice that can receive more easily the gift of gifts, which, as Paul says, exceeds all other gifts: never-ending love. Nor can men, it is clear, be exonerated from this task, (loving). Just think of St Vincent and St Paul.

However, women have a specific vocation in themselves: motherhood, with its infinite nuances – including spiritual motherhood – demonstrates it. And love, charity, exceeds all graces, all gifts and all charisms. "When can we women", Chiara asked herself, "with our ability to love, our ability to suffer, dispose ourselves to receive this immense gift that exceeds the others; what more do we want? I would like", she confessed, "all women today to be of this stature, so that they may all be able to accept this gift within them in order to be other Marys in our time. For we need the figure of Mary to re-emerge in the Church too. And it can... it can reappear especially, not only exclusively, through women who can receive within them the charism of love". Therefore, women should not seek to copy men in all that men have or can be. Women have qualities of their own, their own specific features. They find their place in the Church by developing that charism

which characterizes them. Therefore, continued Chiara, "I do not need to become a priest; it is enough for me to be myself and to accomplish in the Church the mission God has given me". In this way we contribute to building the Church. And we have a model in Mary.

I would like here to refer to one of Chiara's writings, *Regina degli Apostoli*, which seems very explanatory: it examines Mary's role in the Upper Room. "Our Mother is so beautiful in the ceaseless recollection in which the Gospel shows her to us: *conservabat omnia verba haec confers in corde suo* (Lk 2:19). That complete silence holds a fascination for the soul that loves. How will I be able to live out Mary in her mystical silence when my vocation is speaking in order to evangelize, ever jeopardizing myself, in all places, rich and poor, from the cellars to Montecitorio, from the streets to the convents of friars and sisters? The Mother also spoke. She spoke Jesus. She gave Jesus. There has never been a greater apostle in the world. No one ever spoke the word as she did; she gave and spoke the Word. Our Mother is truly, and deserves to be, Queen of Apostles.

And she is silent. She is silent because two people cannot talk at the same time. The word always rests on silence, like a painting on its background. She is silent because she is a creature. Because nothingness does not speak. Yet from that nothingness Jesus spoke and he said: himself. God, Creator and All, he spoke of the nothingness of the creature. How then is it possible for me to live Mary, how can I scent my life with the fragrance of her charm? By silencing the creature within me and letting the Spirit of the Lord speak in this silence. This is how Mary lived and how Jesus lived. Jesus lived resting on Mary. I experience Mary in experiencing Jesus. I experience Jesus in experiencing Mary". What more beautiful image than this, in which women may be reflected?

Chiara stressed several times that Our Lady is "Seat of Wisdom", not because she spoke, not because she was a Doctor of the Church, not because she held a chair, not because she founded universities. She is Seat of Wisdom because she gave to the world Christ, Wisdom incarnate. Our Lady is the Queen of Apostles not because she preached, because she went to Africa or because of anything else. She is the Queen of Apostles simply because she was present when the Apostles were gathered together, when the Holy Spirit came down and the Church was born ("She did a deed": she was present. And I think that this presence may also be a response to Pope Francis' recent observation: "a Church without women is like the Apostolic College without Mary").

We women will succeed in changing the world and in being an incisive presence in the Church first and foremost by our being in her,



The author

Maria Voce (1937) has been President of the Focolare Movement, whose official title is Work of Mary, since 2008. Voce was elected by the General Assembly after the death of Chiara Lubich who founded the Movement in 1943. In 1962 John XXIII gave it its first approval, while the Statutes were approved by John Paul II in 1990. In particular the Work of Mary obtained from the Pope the rare privilege of being able always to be governed by a woman. Widespread on all the continents, today the Movement has more than two million members.

In his message for the Lenten Brotherhood Campaign the Pope asks Brazilians not to trample on the dignity of others

Man is not merchandise

And he denounces human trafficking, taking children for organ transplants and violence within families

It is impossible to remain indifferent when one learns that there are human beings who are bought and sold like merchandise: children who are adopted and whose organs are sold, women who are deceived and forced into prostitution, workers without rights or a voice. "This is human trafficking", Pope Francis says in his message for the annual Lenten Brotherhood Campaign. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's message which was written in Portuguese.

Dear Brazilians,

Bearing in mind the greatness of your hearts and the warmth of your welcome you gave me when I visited your country last July, allow me to accompany you on this Lenten journey, that begins on 5 March, by speaking to you about the Brotherhood Campaign that reminds you of the victory of Easter: "for freedom Christ has set us free" (Gal 5:1). By his Passion, death and Resurrection, Jesus Christ freed humanity from the fetters of death and sin. During the next 40 days we will strive to be more aware of the infinite mercy that God has given us and has asked us to give to others, especially to those most in need: "You are free! Go and help your brothers to be free as well!". In this sense, wishing to mobilize Christians and people of goodwill in Brazil's society against the scourge of society of human trafficking, our brothers, the Brazilian bishops propose as a theme this year: "Brotherhood and Human Trafficking".

It is impossible to remain indifferent knowing that there are human beings who are treated like merchandise! Think of the children adopted for organ transplants, of women who are deceived and forced into prostitution, of exploited work-

ers without rights or a voice, etc. This is human trafficking! "It is precisely on this level that we need to make a good examination of conscience: how many times have we permitted a human being to be seen as an object, to be put on show in order to sell a product or to satisfy an immoral desire? The human person ought never to be sold or bought as if he or she were a commodity. Whoever uses human persons in this way and exploits them, even if indirectly, becomes an accomplice of this injustice" (*Address to the new Ambassadors*, 12 December 2013). If we then go to the family level and enter a home, how often does abuse reign! Parents who enslave their children, children who enslave their parents; spouses who forget their promises, who use each other as if they were disposable goods, goods to be used and thrown away; elderly without a place, and children and adolescents with no voice. How many attacks there are against the basic values that constitute the fabric of family life and of social coexistence! Yes, there is the need for a deep examination of conscience. How can we proclaim the joy of Easter without supporting those who are deprived of their freedom on this earth?

Dear Brazilians, we can be sure: I offend the human dignity of others only because I have sold my own first. In exchange for what? For power, fame, material goods.... All this - amazingly enough! - in exchange for my dignity as a son and a daughter of God, delivered at the cost of the blood of Christ on the Cross and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit who calls out within us: "Abba!, Father!" (Gal 4:6). Human dignity is the same for all human beings: when I trample on the dignity of another, I am trampling on my own. It was for freedom that Christ has set us free! Last year when I was with you, I said that the people of Brazil were teaching a good lesson in solidarity; certain of this, I hope that Christians and people of goodwill may commit themselves to working so that no man, woman, young person or child will ever again be a victim of human trafficking! This is the most effective foundation on which to re-establish human dignity and proclaim Christ's Gospel in the countryside and in the cities, because Jesus desires to pour out an abundance of life everywhere (cf. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 75).

With this hope, I invoke the protection of the Most High upon all



Brazilians so that new life in Christ may reach them in the most perfect freedom of the children of God (cf. Rom 8:21), awakening in every heart sentiments of tenderness and compassion for our brother and our sister who needs to be freed, and I willingly impart an Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 25 February 2014

FRANCIS

women church world women church world women church world

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

fully in her. Therefore, the facts first of all. And this re-evaluation of women will happen by the very fact that we are in her. How? If one truly looks at the history of the Church, women down the centuries have always made their incisive contribution through the numerous institutions that also blossomed from their charisms. However, today more than ever, at the beginning of the third millennium, we are convinced with Chiara that women are called to develop, in the Church and in the world, the greatest of the charisms: love. After the example, precisely, of Mary, "the first lay woman". "I see women above all looking at Mary".

Women, Chiara affirms, "are the ones who point out the eternal to men, and what counts, what will count, what will always count. Everything else that is beautiful, that is necessary..., is necessary while we are on this earth; but afterwards it is love that will endure. Therefore, if Mary is the model of every Christian, every woman likewise must be a model for the Christian, highlighting

what is most worthwhile and will last for ever, and this is love". In her the Church sees the supreme expression of the feminine genius and women still find in her today - while they work in the family and in society, in the most varied environments



(schools, parliaments, theatres, hospitals, Church organizations) - a "source of ceaseless inspiration". She can thus set hearts on fire with God's love, eliminate walls of incomprehension and bring peace to people of different races, to different peoples, to rich and poor alike. She can enliven innumerable and varied situations in the Church. She can bring unity and collaboration to all the Church's members.

The vocation of women is essentially this: to save love everywhere. This is the deepest meaning of an effective presence of women in the Church and in the world. An incisive presence in the Church which, in the case of the Focolare Movement, also becomes a presidency. Chiara had always hoped for a female presidency and spoke of it directly to John Paul II. The Pope's answer was unequivocal: "Hopefully!". This female presidency, determined by the Statutes, is very significant: it indicates a distinction between the power of governance and the importance of the charism. It clarifies that to govern a work it is essential to possess a charism. Such a presidency thus of-

fers the universal Church innovative indications. It emphasizes the priority of love.

The female presidency of the Focolare Movement is therefore not a matter of power. The true power lies in the reciprocal relationship of love that Jesus' presence generates among us and that Chiara wanted to be the premise of every other rule in the General Statutes of the Movement that is also called "Work of Mary". Mary's human and spiritual role is to give Jesus to the world, thus we men and women too may restore him to the world, spiritually, every time we are faithful to the evangelical ideal that guides us and to the spirituality that enlivens us. The figure of Mary as Theotókos, Mother of God, explains the extraordinary dignity to which God raises the woman in her. By looking at Mary women can live their vocation to the full, they can bring into the limelight the "Marian dimension of the life of Christ's disciples" and can contribute to expressing themselves and to keeping the Church's so-called "Marian profile" alive.

Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Thursday, 6 March

The Christian way

In his homily at Holy Mass, Pope Francis reflected on the day's Gospel from the evangelist Luke (9:22-25), in which Jesus foretells the sufferings he would undergo in his sacred Passion. The Pope began by noting that, at the beginning of Lent, the Church "has us read and listen to a message" that "we might call *the Christian way*: 'If any man would come after me – i.e., be a Christian, be my disciple – let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me'. For the Lord himself was the first to make this journey".

The Pope continued reading from the sacred text: "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised". He then remarked that we "cannot think about the Christian life apart from this path, from this journey that he first made". It is "the journey of humility, and of humiliation, of self-emptying". For "the Christian way of life without the cross is not in fact Christian" and "if the cross is a cross without Jesus, it is not Christian".

Taking on a Christian way of life therefore means "taking up one's cross with Jesus and going forward". Christ himself has shown us this way by emptying himself. Although he was in the form of God, the Pope said, he did not boast, he did not consider himself "a good that could not be renounced, but rather he emptied himself" and became "a servant to us all".

This is the way of life that "will save us, give us joy and make us fruitful. For this journey of self-denial is undertaken in order to give life: it is the opposite of the journey of egoism ... which leads to one becoming attached to goods for one's own sake". The Christian way is "open to others, for it is the same journey that Jesus has made". It is a journey "of self-emptying for the sake of giving life".

"The Christian way is precisely this way of humility, of meekness, of gentleness. Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it. Jesus repeats this idea elsewhere in the Gospel. Remember when he speaks about the grain of wheat: unless the grain dies, it does bear much fruit (cf Jn 12:24)".

Pope Francis noted that this journey is to be made "with joy, for it is Jesus himself who gives us this joy. Following Jesus is a joy". He warned, however, that one needs to follow along his way "and not according to the way of the world". The important thing, he said, is that the journey be made "so as to give life to others and not to give life to oneself. It must be carried out in a spirit of generosity".

This is the path to follow: "humility, service, not a shred of selfishness, not feeling self-important or making oneself out to be important before others, saying: I am a Christian...!". Here the Pope quoted the Imitation of Christ which, he said,



"gives us this most beautiful counsel: *ama, nesceri, et pro nihilo reputari*, i.e., 'love being unknown and unregarded'. This is Christian humility, it is what Jesus did first".

"Let us think about Jesus who goes before us, who guides us along the way. This is our joy and this is our fruitfulness: to travel with Jesus. Other joys are not fruitful; as the Lord says, they look to gaining the whole world, but lead to ruin and to losing and forfeiting oneself".

Pope Francis concluded: "At the beginning of Lent, let us ask the Lord to teach us a little of this Christian way of service, joy, self-emptying and fruitfulness with him, as he will".

Friday, 7 March

The spirit of hypocrisy

In his homily at Holy Mass, Pope Francis reflected on the readings of the day taken from the Prophet Isaiah (58:1-9a) and from the Gospel of Matthew (9:14-15). Through these two readings, the Pope noted, on the first Friday after Ash Wednesday, the Church meditate on the true meaning of fasting. "The spirit of hypocrisy is lurking behind these readings", the Pope said, "the spirit of formality in keep-

ing the commandments, in this case, of fasting". Therefore, "Jesus frequently returns to the issue of hypocrisy many times when he sees that doctors of the Law think themselves to be perfect: the fulfil the commandments as though it were a mere formality".

Here the Pope observed that they suffered from a kind of memory loss. For "they forgot that they had been chosen together with the People of God, and not on their own. They forgot the history of their people, the history of salvation, of their election, of the Covenant, of the promise".

In so doing, the continued, "they reduced their history to ethics. Religious life became for them a matter of ethics". Thus, "theologians say that, in Jesus' time, there were 300 commandments" to be observed "more or less". Yet "receiving the love of a father from the Lord, receiving from the Lord an identity as a People and then changing it into an ethical system" means "rejecting the original gift of love". The hypocrites were "good people, they did what they were supposed to do, they were apparently good". But "they were ethicists, ethicists without goodness, because they had lost the sense of belonging to a people".

"The Lord grants salvation within a people, in belonging to a people," the Pope said. "Thus we understand Prophet Isaiah says to us about fasting and penitence: what is the fast which is pleasing to the Lord? The fast that stands in relation with the people, the people who which we belong: the people to which we have been called and in which we have been inserted".

Pope Francis then reread a portion of the day's passage from the Book of Isaiah: "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the op-

pressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"

Thus, the Pope said, is the true meaning of fasting: "to care about the life of your brother, not to be ashamed of the flesh of your brother, as Isaiah says." In fact, "our perfection, our sanctity advances with our people, the people with whom we were chosen and inserted". And "our greatest act of holiness is precisely in the flesh of our brother and the flesh of Jesus Christ".

Thus, he emphasized, "today's act of holiness – for us who stand at the altar – is not a hypocritical fasting. It means not being ashamed of the flesh of Christ who comes here today: for this is the mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is going out to share our bread with the hungry, to care for the sick and the elderly, for those who can give us nothing in return: this is what it means not to be ashamed of the flesh".

"The salvation of God", the Pontiff repeated, "occurs in a people, a people that advances, a people of brothers and sisters who are not ashamed of one another". However, this "is the most difficult fast: the fast of goodness. This is where goodness leads us".

"Perhaps the priest who passed by that wounded man was thinking, recalling the commandments at that time: 'If I touch his blood, his wounded flesh, I will be made unclean and will not be able to celebrate the Sabbath!' And he was ashamed of the flesh of that man. This is hypocrisy!". Yet, he continued, "a sinner passed by and saw him: he saw the flesh of his brother, the flesh of a man of his people, a son of God like himself. And he was not ashamed".

"What the Church sets before us today" provides us with a true examination of conscience, the Pope said. He therefore proposed that we ask ourselves: "Am I ashamed of the flesh of my brother or sister? When I give alms, do I let the coins fall without touching his hand? And if by chance I touch him, do I do this?" he asked mimicking a gesture of drawing back his hand. He continued: "When I give alms, do I look at my brother or sister in the eyes? When I know a person is sick do I visit him? Do I greet him with tenderness?"

"There is a sign that may help us" to complete this examination of conscience, the Pope said. "A question: do I know how to caress the sick, the elderly, and children? Or have I forgotten what it means to cherish someone?" Hypocrites have forgotten what it means to cherish and caress someone. Hence the recommendation "not be ashamed of the flesh of our brothers: it is our flesh". The Pope concluded by observing that "we will be judged by our conduct toward 'these brothers and sisters' and certainly not 'by a hypocrite's fast'".

The time of mercy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

with a little effort I detached it. At that moment I looked at him and said: 'Give me half of your mercy'. I felt something powerful that gave me the courage to do this and to say this prayer! And then I put the cross here, in my pocket. But the Pope's shirts don't have pockets, but I always carry it here in a little cloth bag, and that cross has been with me from that moment until today. And when a uncharitable thought against someone comes to mind, my hand always touches it here, always. And I feel the grace! I feel its benefit. What good the example of a merciful

priest does, of a priest who draws close to wounds...

If you think about it, surely you have known many, many of them, because Italian priests are good! They are good. I believe that if Italy is still so strong, it is not because of us who are Bishops, rather it is because of the parish priests, the priests! It is true, this is true! It is not a little incense to comfort you, I truly believe it to be so.

Mercy. Think of the many priests who are in heaven and ask of them this grace! May they grant you the mercy they had with their faithful. This does good.

Thank you for having listened and for having come here.

Letter of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches for the Collection for the Holy Land

At the root of great hope

The following is the letter to bishops of the world sent by Cardinal Leonardo Sandri and Archbishop Cyril Vasil', respectively Prefect and Secretary of the Congregation for Eastern Churches. The letter was written on the occasion of the annual Collection for the Holy Land.

The season of Lent, as a journey with Christ towards the Cross and Resurrection, always reawakens our sense of brotherhood with those living in the Holy Places. It was there that the Apostles first heard the voice of the Lord Jesus, were made partakers by grace in the Mystery, and then began to announce it with the witness of their lives. Around them the first Christian communities began to blossom, beginning from Jerusalem.

Again this year our unity in Christ the Redeemer urges us to promote this important initiative, the Collection for the Holy Land, and so to fulfil the debt of the Universal Church to that Mother Church. Pope Francis confirmed this view, as he received the Patriarchs, Major Archbishops, Cardinal Fathers and Bishops in the Plenary Session of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches: "My thoughts turn in a special way to the Holy Land where Christ lived, died and rose again. In that land – I heard it today, too, from the voice of the Patriarchs present – the light of faith is not extinguished, indeed it shines resplendent. It is 'the light of the East' which 'has illumined the universal Church, from the moment when "a rising sun" appeared above us (cf. Lk 1:78): Jesus Christ, our Lord (Apostolic Letter *Oriente Lumen*, n. 1). Every Catholic therefore owes a debt of thanks to the Churches that live in that region. From these Churches we may learn, among other things, the effort of the daily exercise of the spirit of ecumenism and of interreligious dialogue. The geographical, historical and cultural context in which they have lived for centuries has indeed made them natural interlocutors with numerous other Christian confessions and with other religions" (21 November 2014).

The Collection is still today the principal source which sustains the life and works of the region's Christians, in response to the ardent desire of the Supreme Pontiffs, who, especially on the occasion of Good Friday, have always recommended concrete acts of authentic fraternal charity.

Every day the Christians in various regions of the Middle East ask themselves whether they should remain or emigrate: they live in danger and often suffer violence only for the fact of professing the faith common to them and us. Every day there are brothers and sisters of ours who resist, choosing to remain in the place where God carried out in Christ the plan of universal reconciliation. From that Land, in obedience to the word of Christ, the Gospel has been carried to the four corners of the globe. Consequently, there, also, at her roots the Church

must ever discover the "great hope" that the Name of Jesus brings.

Nonetheless, the present situation is truly precarious. It suffices to think of the tensions between Israel and Palestine, of the unsettled situation of Egypt, of the ongoing tragedy in Syria. This Good Friday we would like to raise up to the Crucified the cry of peace for Jerusalem but also for the whole world, that, beginning from the Land of Jesus, it may become the City of Peace. Disciples of Christ are asked to work for peace mindful that "Wars are a concrete refusal to pursue the great economic and social goals that the international community has set itself" (Pope Francis, *Message for the World Day of Peace 2014*). These are words which take on a clear and precise meaning in relation to today's Collection for the Holy Land. The burdensome situation of social upheaval, and indeed of open war, has worsened, upsetting at every level the fragile balance in the region and pouring out on Lebanon and Jordan a river of refugees which overflows the increasingly inadequate camps set up to welcome them. One can only be stunned by the number of kidnappings and killings of Christians in Syria and elsewhere, by the destruction of churches, houses and schools. All this only increases the exodus of Christians and

the scattering of their families and communities.

So many brothers and sisters in the faith are writing a page in the history of the "ecumenism of blood". We, too, wish to be close at the side of those whom suffering is drawing together.

Thanks to the Good Friday Collection, the various Catholic communities of the Holy Land, from the Latin Patriarchal Diocese of Jerusalem, the Franciscan Custody and the other circumscriptions, to the representatives of the Eastern Churches – Greek-Melkite, Copt, Maronite, Syrian, Chaldean, Ar-

menian – with their innumerable religious families and organizations of every sort, will receive a contribution with which to stay close to the poor and suffering without distinction of creed or ethnicity. Parishes will be able to keep their doors open to the needy, as will the schools, where Christians and Muslims prepare together for a future of respect and collaboration. Likewise, the hospitals, clinics and other assistance centers will be able to continue helping all in need, so that in the midst of these unsettling times, thanks to ecclesial charity, the words of Jesus will resound: "Take heart... have no fear!" (Mk 6:50).

In this way, in a spirit of anticipation, we will be able to accompany Pope Francis who is preparing to become a pilgrim of unity and peace to the Holy Land. His visit is much desired and very necessary. May it strengthen the faith of the Christians, making them ever more capable of mercy, forgiveness and love.

To You and to the priests, religious and lay faithful who will take trouble to ensure the success of this Collection, I have the joy of transmitting the lively thanks of the Holy Father Francis, along with the gratitude of the entire Congregation for the Oriental Churches. At the same time I invoke upon you God's abundant blessings.



A widespread network

The annual Collection for the Holy Land is regulated by specific papal conditions. It is firstly assigned to the Franciscan Custody, which is responsible for maintaining the Shrines and for supporting the pastoral, educational, welfare, health and social institutions of the Holy Land. It also allows the parishes and various ecclesial bodies to live an active life in community.

An annual contribution is assigned to the Assembly of the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land for the indispensable task of coordinating and promoting the Church's presence.

The territories which benefit from the Collection are: Jerusalem, Palestine and Israel, Jordan, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Turkey, Iran and Iraq.

Special subsidies include those provided for the completion of the restoration of the roof of the Basilica of the Nativity of Bethlehem. Both local and international ecumenical institutions, together with the Palestinian Authority, have also supported projects that provide housing for young families to remain in the Holy Land.

Additionally, an educational network has also been established, especially through parishes, to promote a high and qualified level of education. The initiative has come to enjoy great esteem at the ecumenical and interreligious level, as shown by the significant percentage of student attendance from other Churches and ecclesial communities and the Muslim population.

The patriarchal diocese of Jerusalem and the Franciscan Custody have long supported this admirable endeavour with funds received from the Collection.

A secretariat of solidarity is also in place for coordinating and supporting the educational institutions run by other Catholic communities and religious institutions.

Through annual donations, Bethlehem University was able to increase the expansion of their institution after buying a facility in the city of Bethlehem.

Training and formation have always been a top priority. The Collection allows donations to be directed to seminarians, religious houses of formation and cultural institutions in the territories indicated above. Support is thereby provided in various forms (e.g. through full scholarships which cover room and board, tuition fees and healthcare needs), even to young seminarians and priests, religious men and women who are studying in Rome. Available funds may also help to support lay students coming from the Middle East, who will eventually return to their countries as future educators.

Because of the delicate international economic situation, in recent years there has been a growing problem of providing adequate support to Christian families who find it increasingly difficult to ensure their participation in the administrative management of Catholic schools.

Emergency situations are also a top priority. In the year 2013, as in years past, Syria was placed at the top of the list. Assistance is currently being provided to priests, religious and lay faithful communities, with funds allocated for humanitarian emergencies through the Apostolic Nunciature, which works in close collaboration with *Caritas Syria*.

Lastly, through donations offered by the universal Church and individual benefactors, and with the commendable efforts of the above-mentioned international Catholic agencies, the Congregation for Oriental Churches provides ordinary and extraordinary subsidies to all the other Eastern Catholic Churches in the world, both in the homeland and in the *diaspora*.

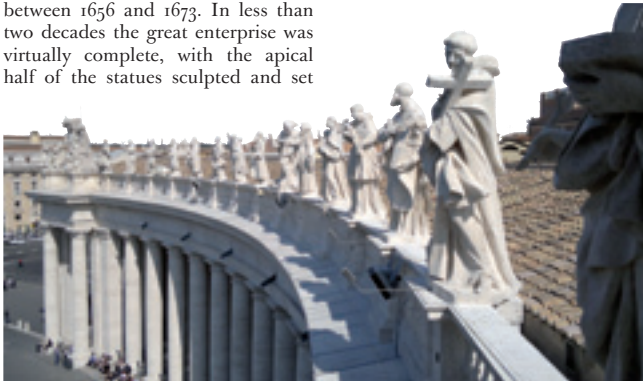
In the ambit of education, in Rome alone, it contributes significantly to the Pontifical Oriental Institute and to supporting some 400 students studying in the eight educational institutions which are directly managed with the help of full scholarships, and also assists students from other cultural facilities.

Restoration of the colonnade completed for Easter and the canonization of two Popes

Amid earth and sky in a great theatre of columns

ANTONIO PAOLUCCI

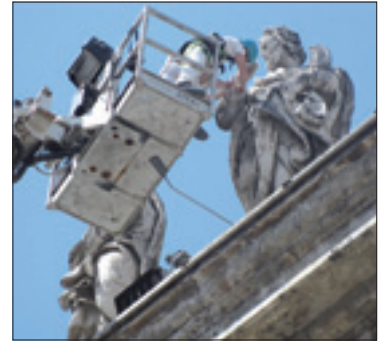
Forty-four thousand cubic meters of travertine, 284 columns, 140 statues. These are the dimensions of the colonnade of St Peter's Square, that "great theater of columns" that Gian Lorenzo Bernini designed and realized for Alexander VII Chigi between 1656 and 1673. In less than two decades the great enterprise was virtually complete, with the apical half of the statues sculpted and set



in place. If the dream of Cavalier Bernini was "to shape the city as if it were a single immense sculpture" (Argan), Pope Chigi gave him the chance to realize that dream, at least in that part of Rome which precedes and encompasses the tomb of the Vicar of Rome having its giant obelisk in the centre that Domenico

Fontana had raised in 1586.

If rhetoric is the art of persuasion, nothing is more rhetorical and therefore persuading and seductive than that "great theatre of columns" put into place by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. The two semicircular colonnades are, in fact, a metaphor for the universal Church which opens her arms to welcome the faithful: a meaningful symbol as great as the sculptures which crown the square, conversing with the sky and clouds of Rome, in white travertine which changes colour according to the hour and season. They are figures of saints, virgins, martyrs, confessors, doctors of the Church, founders of religious orders. There is no precise iconographic order. They are the celestial army of the Catholic Church who represent eternal and triumphal Christianity, participating in the joy and faith of the people when the Pope of Rome



calls them to the square dedicated to the Prince of the Apostles.

More recently Bernini's colonnade underwent a major restoration which began in November 2008 and was completed at the end of February of this year. The firm Navarra was in charge of the restoration, which cost around 14 million euros and was realized by 60 restorers and 30 workers.

The construction was scheduled to be completed by Easter 2014 and before the great canonizations of John xxiii and John Paul II, events which will bring millions of pilgrims to Rome. In fact they finished early.

The restoration consisted in cleaning all the surfaces, in testing, consolidating and reinforcing projecting sections and above all the statues, often loose and in many cases, unsafe. Finally, various types of protective and anti-volatile equipment, were put in place so as to ensure the proper preservation of the complex in future.

There are two monuments that identify Rome, which are emblematic of its history and destiny: one is the Colosseum and the other is the colonnade in St Peter's Square. The first represents the glory and majesty of classic antiquity, and the other is a symbol of the universal Church. Those who come to Rome from all over the world want to enter the Colosseum at least once and then go to St Peter's Square.

Now – in the spring of 2014 – the colonnade has been restored to an optimal state of preservation, while work on the Colosseum, having been delayed from the beginning by construction claims and disputes of various kinds, is still in full swing. My hope is that it will be finished as soon as possible so that everyone may appreciate through the Colosseum and Bernini's colonnade, the quality of Italian restoration.

Pontifical Villas open to the public

Strolling through history

With Pope Francis' approval, the gardens of the papal summer residence are now open to the public. Osvaldo Gianoli, who has served as director of the Pontifical Villas for less than three months, is calling this idea a sign of openness and welcome.

It was Urban VIII who first went on holiday to Castel Gandolfo on 10 May 1626. From that day forth few people – with rare exception – have been allowed to visit the precious works of art and natural wonders there. Few people, that is, with the exception of the thousands of refugees who Pius XII sheltered during the dramatic days of the Second World War.

"Now with the opening of the Barberini Gardens," Gianoli told our newspaper, "the Pontifical Villas in Castel Gandolfo are allowing the general public to enter. Visitors will have exclusive access to the botanical and the architectural marvels of the papal residence – often called 'the second Vatican' – by way of plurilingual guided tours". The Director confirmed that for now the tour will be limited to the Barberini Gardens where it is "possible to admire together the natural and archeological settings both exceptionally important and highly suggestive."

Villa Barberini stands on what during the Roman empire, served as the location of Emperor Domitian's villa, which looks out over Lake Albano. Among the artifacts which are preserved between the oaks and the magnolias are the remains of the Roman theatre and the famous cryptoporticus.

The tour begins by entering the Villa Barberini through a side door and crossing the street, Viale dei Lecci, where visitors arrive at a pavilion. There, at the Padiglione del Riposo, one can begin to see the remains of Domitian's Villa, especially the Roman amphitheatre. To the right of the road is the beginning of the Garden of Magnolias. In the centre of the garden is Pope Pius XI's coat-of-arms. And farther on, one can admire the magnificent gardens of Belvedere, which face the external walls of the Domitian's cryptoporticus. Then, crossing the Viale delle Erbe aromatiche (Boulevard of the Aromatic Herbs) one arrives at the Boulevard of Roses which runs towards Barberini Palace. An hour-long tour unlike any other.

The Vatican Museums are handling the tours. "Managing this process", the Director said, "requires experience. And I am personally committed to learning about this magnificent – and for me – new experience. Everything has been entrusted to the Vatican Museums, which have set up a website for the tours (visiteguidategruppi.musei@scvva). There it is possible to request information and book visits".

The Villa although opened on 1 March, "we were advised to postpone the first tour due to poor weather conditions", Gianoli said. "We are now accepting reservations and are ready to welcome visitors". For now the tour does not include visiting inside the palaces, because, he explained, "this makes the visit more complicated and requires further organization. We will see how this first step goes and then we can

eventually consider other options", which most likely will include the farm.

The Villa employees "have welcomed this initiative", the director said, "because they see it is an opportunity for growth and it also grants them the possibility to express all of their professionalism". The people of the city of Castel Gandolfo have also enthusiastically welcomed this project, also due to the increase in tourism which it is likely to bring".

To visit the Villas it is necessary to book online and both group and individual tours are available. The Villas are open for visits from Monday to Saturday and tours begin at 8:30 and 11:30 am. On Saturday there is an additional tour at 10:30 in Italian. Tours will be given in English and Italian, however French, Spanish and German are possible on request.

