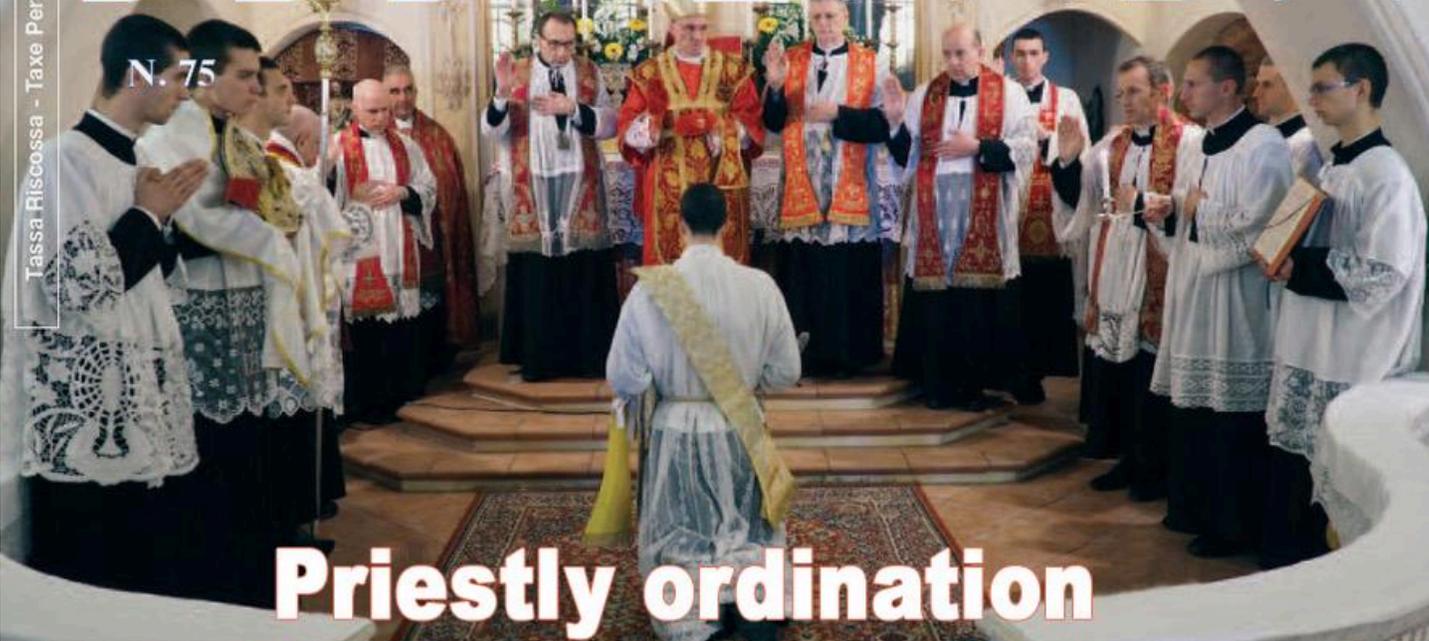


SODALITUM

N. 75



Priestly ordination and Pilgrimage to Bosco Marengo (St. Pius V)



“Sodalitium” Magazine
No. 75, Year XL no. 1/2024

Publisher *Centro Librario Sodalitium*

Loc. Carignano, 36.10020 VERRUA SAVOIA TO
Tel: 0161.839335 - CCP 36390334
INTERNET: www.sodalitium.it -email: info@sodalitium.it

Managing Director: *Rev. Francesco Ricossa*
Auth: Tribunale di Ivrea no. 116 of 2-24-1984
Printing: Comgraf Ivrea TO

This issue of the magazine was closed
for editing on March 19, 2024

English translation: Gregory DeSaye

Pursuant to Law 675-96 regarding the protection of personal data, the data provided by subscribers to subscriptions will be processed both in paper and automated form and will be used exclusively for sending this newspaper under subscription or other of our publications as copies and their data will not be communicated to third parties. The provision of data is optional and it is possible to exercise the rights referred to in article 13 by making a request to the data processing manager at Centro Librario Sodalitium.

Cover Illustration: The ordination of Father Coradello (May 6, 2023) and the pilgrimage to Bosco Marengo (Pope Saint Pius V).

Table of Contents

Editorial	Pg. 2
Is Saint Paul the Apostle the Inventor of Christianity?	Pg. 6
L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO	Pg. 34
“Sodalitium”....Theatinum!	Pg. 58
Interview on the situation of Christians in the Holy Land	Pg. 73
BOOK REVIEWS	
Cristina Campo: Let's clarify things on the centenary of her birth	Pg. 78
Radio Spada and the Society are not “tranquil”	Pg. 83
Again about history of “Traditionalism”: Louis Salleron and Jean Madiran	Pg. 86
“Great author, poor publisher”	Pg. 88
Institute Life	Pg. 91

Editorial

It was Christmas 1983 when the first issue of *Sodalitium* was published, then a simple bulletin by a priory of the Society of Saint Pius X: forty years have passed since this first publication, a significant achievement. In all these years, our magazine has tried to make a contribution to achieving one of the aims of our Institute: *“to represent for all the faithful who desire it - as the Statutes state - and particularly for its members, in these times of disorientation, an instrument of perseverance in*

For forty years Sodalitium was an important and serious intellectual point of reference during the storm that was unleashed in the Church and against the Church by Vatican II which, since then, has only grown larger, now becoming clearly perceptible and frightening for all those who retain even a glimmer of Faith.

absolute fidelity to the depositum Fidei revealed by God and proposed by the infallible

Magisterium of the Church". And even for those who do not identify with our positions and do not place their trust in our Institute, *Sodalitium* has nevertheless been an important and serious intellectual point of reference in these decades during which the storm that was unleashed by Vatican II in the Church, and against the Church, has only grown, becoming frightening now and clearly perceptible for all those who retain even a glimmer of Faith. Today, it is true, we prefer constantly updated news, only new things, audiovisual communication, while a magazine like ours, which in addition has a very irregular periodicity, may seem marginal in the panorama of so-called "traditionalism", which, at first following the wave of Ratzinger's encouragement (part of a strategy clearly described by the then "Cardinal" Ratzinger to Messori in the book-interview *Inchiesta sulla Fede*, which consists in favoring a moderate interpretation of the Council with the aim of deflating his opponents' reactions), and later in the wake of the reaction to the increasingly evident scandals of J. M. Bergoglio, and to his strategy of "repression" of "traditionalism" (with the exception of the Society of Saint Pius X) created what might be called a sort of "neo-traditionalism", which has almost made us forget early opponents of conciliar modernism. Today, "traditionalist leaders" and many opponents of the current occupant of the Apostolic See are people who often know little of the battles of the 60s, 70s or 80s (maybe they were on the other side), or who oppose Bergoglio's heresies in the name of "Saint" Paul VI, "Saint" John Paul II, or the future "Saint" Benedict XVI, perhaps raising the flag of conciliar collegiality against the centralizing government of the current occupant of the See. These noisy and very active lay people and priests (often ordained with the new rite), and seemingly omnipresent on the web, do not pose

an obstacle to a low profile Society (fully committed to defending the legitimacy of their Santa Marta benefactor) or the "ex-Ecclesia Dei" or "ex-Summorum Pontificum" congregations forced into silence, when they weren't being placed under commissioners and dissolved for unclear reasons.

The reflections I have made so far do not at all reject the valid contribution of new recruits, and even a return to their senses of those who actually occupy positions of responsibility in the Church, on the contrary! Provided, however, that it is a true and complete rethinking, and not, on the other hand, a matter of skillfully "managing the opposition" (in good or bad faith, it doesn't matter).

The recent speech given by Archbishop Viganò on the "vice of consent", whereby the elect of the Conclave would not have truly accepted the election as Supreme Pontiff given his intention (objective and habitual intention, Father Guérard des Lauriers o.p. would have specified) of not procuring the good and the end of the Church, would finally be a step forward towards the truth and therefore the solution to the crisis: I made this clear in a short



In February 2023, the priests, seminarians and brothers of the Istituto went on a pilgrimage to the land of Saint Pius X: here in Malo in front of the Church where Cardinal Gaetano de Lai is buried.

contribution published by *Duc in altum*. “Would be”... but is it so? There are too many things that are not yet clear, and which - as things stand - prevent us from supporting the action of the Italian bishop. I’ll offer a short list: just prior to his speech, Archbishop Viganò warmly approved the volume by Father Di Sorco (Society of Saint Pius X-Radio Spada) aimed entirely at demonstrating (sic) that Bergoglio is indisputably the legitimate Pope: which Archbishop Viganò should be believed? Secondly, there is a rumor, and the Archbishop has neither denied nor confirmed it, that Archbishop Viganò may have been conditionally reconsecrated by Bishop Williamson; if on the one hand this is reassuring, from the point of view of the ordinations that Archbishop Viganò could do or has already done, on the other hand it stirs up further confusion: Bishop Williamson is famously “una cum”, that is, convinced of the legitimacy of “Francis”. Also others notoriously in communion with Bergoglio and ordained with the new rite are the priests of the dissolved “Familia Christi” (who, like Pietro Siffi, gravitated towards Ferrara, before moving to Viterbo); these, as we have recently learned, collaborate and live with Archbishop Viganò. And finally, part of his notoriety is due to his mixing of religious and political themes, which we consider inappropriate (and in these things, as well as in “secret” ordinations, Archbishop Viganò seems to be in harmony with Bishop Williamson). If, then, we must talk about Bishop Williamson, the confusion grows: for him the new rites of the sacrament of Orders are almost certainly valid, and yet are doubtful, but God works miracles during the new mass, which then is valid, and one can assist at it, even though he once denied it ... Understand that if you can. The only certain thing is that the English bishop (who still claims to belong to the Society from which he was expelled) more or less secretly



In February 2023, at the cemetery in Breganze, at the tomb of the Scotton brothers, friends and collaborators of Saint Pius X

ordains priests or consecrates bishops, whoever turns to him, be it “una cum” or not. Once again, understand that if you can.

Returning to Archbishop Viganò and his priestly collaborators: do they celebrate Holy Mass in communion with “Francis” or not? This is not known. But what seems certain is that in any case he recognizes the full legitimacy - while not skimping on criticism - of the “Pontiffs” who have succeeded one another on the chair of Peter from Paul VI to Benedict XVI (another reason for dissent on our part). But then do those texts of Vatican II, while they are criticized, belong to the Magisterium of the Church? A Magisterium (horrible to think!) false and deceptive? The plague of Lefebvism (with its dogma, if you’ll excuse the jest, of the “fallibility of the pope”) still causes damage today.

We talked about (and criticized) Archbishop Viganò, to whom, nevertheless, we

ask that he believe in our respect. Among the many new opponents of “Francis” he seems, in fact, the closest to the truth. In fact, newspapers often label as “traditionalists” members of the “materialiter” hierarchy such as Müller, Sarah, Burke, or Bishop Schneider, who not only recognize Bergoglio as the Vicar of Christ and Vatican II as the Magisterium of the Church, but habitually celebrate, or in any case, also celebrate, the new Montinian rite. As for them, one can only hope for a radical evolution in their criticism of the errors undermining the Church from within, without which their role would (and does) only increase confusion.

Confusion, and false argument, is that of Bergoglio’s illegitimacy (he has now become less and less defensible) not being due to a defect in his consent (the correct position) or heresy (the position of the “sedevacantists”), but rather due

to the invalidity of Benedict XVI’s resignation, who then would have been, up to his death, the legitimate Pope. It makes no sense to delve into the controversies over *munus* and *officium* or the apostolic constitutions of John Paul II, if we believe the fact that both (Wojtyla and Ratzinger) were convinced supporters of the errors of Vatican II, incompatible with the magisterium of the Church: ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, religious freedom, collegiality, liturgical reform and so on, for which they could have only resigned from the material aspect of the Papacy (the election), but certainly not from the formal one, which they did not possess for the aforementioned reasons. Bergoglio's much-deprecated pachamama is no worse than the voodoo rites praised by Wojtyla, who, together with Ratzinger, never hesitated to pray in pagan temples, synagogues or mosques. Amidst such confusion of ideas, finally, certainly not helping people to know what to do are those like Professor Viglione, who writes learned books in order to explain that even he doesn't know whether Bergoglio is the Vicar of Christ or not, but that in any case he solely and exclusively attends masses in communion with him (we didn't have doubts about it). It is fine to know that you don't know, which is the



*February 2023, Holy Mass at Riese Pio X
At the Sanctuary of the Madonna delle Cendrole*



*Pope Saint Pius X
(painting found
at his birthplace)*

beginning of wisdom, but in this case silence would perhaps be more appropriate.

In such a confusion of ideas, it must be said that the poor faithful find it difficult to orient themselves. We entrust them to Our Lady of Good Counsel. Our magazine, which also is renewing itself with its collaborators, and which does not chase breaking news (I wanted to do so only in summary and in a somewhat superficial manner, I admit, in these lines), strives to give readers measured food for thought, together with other initiatives, such as the conferences that we organize. After the special issue on Msgr. Benigni (and the history of the Church in the first half of the twentieth century, which were a preparation for our days) we return to a classic format; a new young collaborator takes up the old *L'Osservatore Romano* column while other articles go beyond current events and controversy and aim to be solidly educational like those on the apostle St. Paul and the Theatines. The classic *Institute Life* column, which was not found in the last issue, will finally be particularly dense: it is perhaps the one that is read first and most often. As for us of the old guard, we are close to the *cursum consummavi* and we must look more at the Life to come than at the vicissitudes of this earth: those who preceded us remind us of the Eternity that awaits us; may the Lord grant us perseverance and a holy death by the grace of God.

Father Francesco Ricossa



EXEGESIS

Is Saint Paul the Apostle the inventor of Christianity?

Father Ugolino Giugni

Gratia Dei sum id quod sum et gratia ejus in me vacua non fuit. (1 Cor. 15:10)

Saint Paul ⁽¹⁾ is one of the most extraordinary and fascinating figures of early Christianity, the Apostle to the Gentiles, to whom Christ Himself transmitted a personal revelation, entrusting him with the task of preaching to the Gentile peoples. He himself gives us testimony of this, his mission and reason for living, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians: “*and last of all, he was seen also by me, as one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace in me hath not been void, but I have labored more abundantly than all they: yet not I, but the grace of God with me. For whether I, or they: so we preach, and so you have believed*” (1 Cor. 15, 8-11). **In him, first persecutor and then apostle, everything is the work of divine grace,** from his calling and conversion, to the exercise of his ministry, his doctrine, his divine assistance in the writing of his marvelous epistles (which are part of the deposit of revelation as they were divinely inspired and inserted into the Canon of Scripture), up to his martyrdom, when he shed his blood for Christ in Rome in the year 67 under Nero. Why did the Lord call Saul to conversion, to make him become an apostle at the very moment in which he persecuted the Church of Christ? This is a

mystery of divine predestination which according to the doctrine of Saint Thomas, depends solely upon the limitless will of God. (*“Can I not do what I want with what is mine?”* Matt. 20, 15). Paul himself asks this prophetically: *“But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it ‘Why did you make me like this?’”* (Rom. 9, 20).

Saint Augustine wrote about it: “Let’s see what the Apostle Paul said, who certainly we have seen receive without any merit, indeed with many demerits, the grace of God which returns good for evil, shortly before his passion, writing to Timothy: *‘For I, he says, am even now ready to be sacrificed: and the time of my dissolution is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith’* (2 Tim. 4, 6). He first remembers these, which are certainly his merits, so that he might soon come to the crown which he hopes to obtain as a reward for his merits; he who, despite his demerits, obtained grace. Furthermore, pay attention to what he adds: *‘As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just judge, will render to me in that day’* (2 Tim. 4, 8). To whom would the just judge give the crown if the merciful Father hadn’t given his grace? And how would this be a crown of justice, if grace which justifies the sinner had not preceded it? How would this be a due recompense, if grace had not first been freely given to him?

Therefore let us consider in the Apostle Paul his own merits, to whom it is said that the just judge will give the crown, and let us see whether these merits belong to him as his own, that is, whether he acquired them by himself, or whether they are a gift from God. *‘I fought - he says - the good fight, I finished the race, I kept the faith’*. First of all, these good works would be null and void if they had not been preceded by

Saint Paul is one of the most extraordinary and fascinating figures of early Christianity, the Apostle of the Gentiles, to whom Christ Himself transmitted a personal revelation, entrusting to him the task of preaching to the Gentile peoples. In him, first persecutor and then apostle, everything is the work of divine grace.

good thoughts. Observe therefore what he says of these same thoughts: *‘Not that we are sufficient to think any thing of ourselves, as by ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God’* (2 Cor. 3, 5). Now let’s look at each thing individually. *‘I have fought - he says - the good fight’* (2 Tim. 4, 7). I ask, with what strength did he fight, that which comes from himself, or that which was given to him from above? But far from thinking that such a doctor ignored the law of God as expressed in Deuteronomy: *‘Lest thou shouldst say in thy heart: My own might, and the strength of my own hand, have achieved all these things for me. But remember the Lord thy God, that he hath given thee strength’* (Deut. 8, 17-18). But what purpose does fighting well serve, if it is not followed by victory? And who gives the victory, if not he of whom he himself says: *‘Thanks be to God, who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ?’* (1 Cor. 15, 57)”⁽²⁾.

How many times have you heard that Saint Paul (or just Paul...since with rampant modernism the “Saint” is now often gone out of fashion and is almost no longer used!) is the true founder of Christianity? - That it was he who invented the Catholic religion? - That the Catholic Church with its hierarchical form as we have known it for two thousand years is due to



Saint Paul the Apostle (Masaccio)

him who imposed his will on that of the other Apostles, who would instead have wanted one more spiritual (the Church of Peter...against the Church of John)? There is an abundance of writings and videos in which this counter-truth is stated. But are these things truly so? With this article I would like to respond to these objections (called fake-news today) and then to review, following the sources of Sacred Scripture and the certainties of Catholic Tradition, what the Church really teaches us about the person of Saint Paul.

It might be said that, just as Saint Paul is in every way associated and configured to his master Christ in life, so he is too, after his death, in the field of historical criticism. He who rejects Jesus Christ or questions the historical existence of the Lord (the modernists' famous distinction between the Christ of history and the Christ of faith) will do the same thing with Christ's disciple, Paul.

Giuseppe Ricciotti points this out with his usual shrewdness: “Who is Paul? The judgment that the historian will give of him is equivalent to the judgment he will give on the sources of his biography. For those who accept the sources in light of the guarantees that have been transmitted to us by the most ancient tradition, Paul is a completely singular herald of Christ Jesus: he is a man surrounded by the supernatural, framed by miracles. His initial adhesion to Christ, the act of his conversion, is the first miracle; his progressive penetration into the understanding of Christ is an entire sequence of supernatural facts, because it is the product of particular revelations made to him by Christ; his preaching of the doctrines revealed to him by Christ is accompanied by physical and public miracles; the same general figure of him compared with the other figures of primitive Christianity (except perhaps that of John), gives one the impression of a markedly beautiful high relief compared to a roughly-hewn bas relief. This, undoubtedly, is the impression one receives upon first reading the sources. Therefore, as soon as you finish reading, the question arises spontaneously: But is all this possible? Even before asking whether everything is *factual*, we ask ourselves whether it is *possible*: a question much more philosophical than historical.

This philosophical question is the reason that studies on Paul suffer the same fate as studies on Jesus Christ. Scholars who respond negatively to that question are those who do not admit to the transcendent God nor the possibility of the supernatural, and consequently, they outright reject as absurd the figure of Paul as outlined by the sources; others who admit to those things, concede the possibility of the Paul found in the sources, and therefore proceed to critically examine those sources to see if they guarantee that figure.



Saint Paul preaches to the Athenians
Flemish production, Pinacoteca Vaticana

Among the former scholars, a ‘secular dogma’ exists that does not allow discussion; according to latter scholars, there exists a philosophical possibility that awaits real demonstration on historical grounds. Except that, this ‘secular dogma’ is only negative, that is, it says what is not: its adherents, therefore, still have the task of positive reconstruction, that is, of saying what is. And, in the first place, did Paul actually exist? If he existed, to what extent is the traditional figure of him false and at what point does it begin to be true? Which of his features are mythical, which are legendary, which are merely tendentious? Through what processes was that traditional figure formed? Through what work of decomposition, to be carried out on the sources, will it be possible to prune away that historically absurd figure, and turn it from supernatural to ‘rational’? This is the task of the ‘rationalists’.

They accomplish their task using the ‘extraction’ method, which we have seen widely applied to the biography of Jesus: each scholar extracts from the sources those elements which, according to his own particular conceptions, appear most appropriate to him, he retouches them, remanipulates them, and thus reconstructs

the historical Paul; all the documentary parts not used in this reconstruction are to be abandoned to myth or legend or tendentiousness, in short to historical unreality.

The figure of Paul drawn in this way vary from scholar to scholar, and even when grouping them together in series they vary from from era to era, as happens with painting: just as those in the eighteenth century painted in a very different way from those in the sixteenth century, and these in a completely different way from the fourteenth century, thus the historical figures of Paul drawn by the liberal School are the negation of those previously drawn by the School of Tübingen, and those drawn later by either the eschatologists or the School of Comparative Religions do not resemble the previous ones at all. Moreover - it must be recognized - the designers of these Pauline reconstructions do not claim to be photographically precise, but only aspire to a greater or lesser degree of verisimilitude: they present their figures as simple hypotheses.

This is correct. As can be seen from the word itself, an *hypothesis* presupposes a *thesis*, on which it relies and for which it attempts to provide a little more room. Now, **for these scholars, the indisputable thesis is the absurdity of the supernatural Paul, who is a figure to be completely repudiated:** once this thesis is assured, they are not equally uncompromising regarding the hypotheses. Loisy, one of the most illustrious and most radical of these scholars, begins the last chapter of his last and the most radical book of his entire life, entitled ‘Conclusioni’, with these words: *What we will now gather is not a handful of certainties, but a haystack of hypotheses that we will attempt to link according to their degree of probability or likelihood.* And in fact in the previous chapters he reduced Paul to splinters (as, indeed, he did to other characters of the



The modernist Alfred Loisy

New Testament) by scattering the pieces throughout the first two centuries of Christianity: but, for Loisy himself, all this is nothing but a haystack of *hypotheses*. In any case, his true thesis, i.e. the only certainty, he already exposed and ensured in the first chapter of the same book, entitled ‘Biblical Supernatural’, where any true conception of the supernatural is clearly rejected on the pretext that it deals with a ‘magical’ concept. All this corresponds perfectly to what we said above regarding ‘secular dogma’ and its decisive influences on historical research”⁽³⁾.

Who is Saint Paul and, according to the protestants, rationalists and modernists, what did he do?

Already by the eighteenth century there began to be elaborated the idea (or it might better to say the thesis...) according to which the contrast between the Judeo-Christian movement, represented by Peter, and the Hellenistic-Christian movement, represented by Paul, would give birth to the Catholic Church more or less as we know it (the apostle Paul himself would have merged these two movements creating a synthesis). This theory, inspired by Hegelian philosophy, born in

Germany (the founder was F. Christian Bauer around 1835, then followed by the school of Tübingen and later by the Dutch school), maintained that between the Paul of the Acts of the Apostles and that of the epistolary there were differences that appeared irreconcilable and this led those scholars to reject about ten of Saint Paul’s letters, and to date the writing of Acts to the second century. Bauer even went so far as to reject the entire Pauline epistolary as if it were an elaboration of the Christianity existing at the end of the 2nd century; he who had already denied the historical existence of Jesus had no difficulty in doing the same with Paul, maintaining that if he had ever existed he would not have had any of the moral traits that we find in Acts and his epistles. According to the Dutch school⁽⁴⁾ “the movement of Paulinism arose in the second century as an attempt to spiritualize early Christianity under the influence of the Platonizing Judaism of Alexandria; the Pauline epistolary was a jumble of fragments that could not practically be feigned to assign them to their respective authors; the traditional Paul was a psychological absurdity, placed as he was at such a short distance from Jesus, and whether he existed or not was a secondary question.”⁽⁵⁾ For these scholars, Paul remains an insoluble enigma if one wants to separate him from his natural setting. His teaching is derived from the Old Testament and in the first place from the direct revelation received from Christ himself. Furthermore, it is his contact with the other Apostles and his profound mystical experience, together with the contingent needs of the various communities, which will help to explain certain particularities or the varying importance attributed to the individual elements that we find in his writings.

Another scholar who alters the figure of Saint Paul, as mentioned above, is Alfred Loisy,

one of the best-known representatives of the modernist movement; after destroying the figure of Jesus, he consequently also destroys that of Paul: “For him, Jesus was nothing but an exalted visionary, who expected the end of the world within a very short time; pervaded by this expectation, the visionary preached to the crowds for a few months, until he was captured and killed in Jerusalem. Having established this, the question arises as to why this historical Jesus, a petty Galilean countryman ignominiously killed in public around the year 30, already appears in the Pauline epistolary as the glorious Christ, the Kyrios, the superior Being to all creation, the Son of God. Since the epistolary begins around 51, how could this process of boundless sublimation, or rather divinization, which led the Galilean visionary to sit at the right hand of God, take place within the twenty years between 30 and 51? An essential consideration, then, is that such a process took place among the Jews, not among the Greeks or Romans: these pagans, in fact, deified simple mortals at all costs who, in fact, were pagans who deified simple mortals, and a decree from the Roman Senate was enough to allow an emperor who had died shortly before to enter Olympus; but among the Jews it would have been the absurdity of absurdities to equate any mortal with the God Yahweh, the eternal, invisible, ineffable God, whose name they were not even allowed to pronounce: among these even Moses himself, the great legislator of the Jews, had received neither divine worship nor honor. This is the problem that Loisy had to resolve.

He solved the problem by assigning to Paul the greatest part of responsibility in the process of deification of Jesus. First of all, Paul had not personally known Jesus, therefore he did not have a very vivid feeling of his earthly life and human reality; furthermore, Paul was,

yes, a Jew by lineage, but very little in spirit: he was born and educated in Tarsus, in a Hellenistic environment, in an atmosphere of religious syncretism, he had known mystery religions, he had heard about the Gods who brought ‘salvation’, and unconsciously the vague idea of redemption had infiltrated his spirit, an idea that remained in a state of incubation within him for several years; on the right occasion this idea took shape and life, and Paul identified the principle of salvation and redemption, not with an indistinct Dionysus or with a crepuscular Isis, but with the very Jesus of Nazareth attested to him by many witnesses: this Jesus was truly, not just the Messiah of the Jews, but also the one who had brought about redemption and brought salvation to the entire human race through his passion and death.

Now, this solution to the problem was very precise and very clear, except that it appeared to be made up of a series of statements purely devoid of proof: worse still, these statements were completely disproved when they were compared with the sources, since both Acts and the Pauline epistolary present a Paul that was not only different from, but precisely opposite to, the Paul presented in this solution. The Paul of the sources was a one hundred percent a Jewish Paul, a Pharisee, educated in the most orthodox schools of Jerusalem, extremely zealous of national traditions, extremely hostile to any compromise with foreign ideologies, an implacable enemy of idolatry in any form: in short, he was a man who would have done anything but prepare a bridge between the God Yahweh and the Gods of the mystery religions, even it had meant placing the Jewish Messiah as a supporting pillar. How, then, could Paul have built this bridge?”⁽⁶⁾

This thesis about Saint Paul being the true founder of Christianity is actually very old, and has the specific aim of claiming that

Christianity is an “abstractly born” religion, having merely human origin (if its founder is a simple man like Paul of Tarsus...), completely alien to the preaching of Jesus. He would have been just a man and not the son of God, nor would he have ever thought of being worshiped as God nor of being the Messiah. In reality, already at the time of Saint Paul himself, his enemies (of whom he often speaks about, and from whom the apostle must defend himself in his epistles), those called “Judaizers”, had this very idea of Christianity: in fact they wanted to make it become a Jewish sect and force Christians who converted from paganism to the practice of the Mosaic law, especially circumcision, and these opposed Saint Paul who instead taught the opposite, that is, that the works of the law were dead and one could not be saved through them (see Eph. 2, 8-9), that Christ alone was the Savior and “*in him there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave or free; there is neither man or woman. For you are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Gal. 3, 28). Ultimately for them Jesus was just one of the many Jewish “rabbis” who had indeed preached a doctrine superior to others, but he was neither God nor Messiah and therefore Paul was guilty, in their eyes, of having attributed these prerogatives to him, thus wanting to distract the faithful from the ancient synagogue.

Even today this idea is perhaps the most widespread conviction among modernists and skeptics passionate about Christianity, and it is constantly revived. For example, in 2023, Corrado Augias, a famous journalist, writer and television host published a book entitled: *Paolo. L'uomo che inventò il Cristianesimo* [Paul. The man who invented Christianity] (Rai Libri) which presents the apostle thus: “*A crucial and mysterious character at the same time, a man of extraordinary intelligence, strength and will, Saul of Tarsus, better known as Paul, was the*

one who collected the unique teaching of Jesus of Nazareth and canonized him, forging Christianity as we know it today. On the one hand a fine mediator, but a political decision-maker on the other, Paul was able to ferry a spiritual experience into a historical institution that has remained more or less unchanged to this day, thus becoming a fundamental figure for the entire Christian world.” In less recent times Eugenio Scalfari ⁽⁷⁾, founder and director of “la Repubblica” newspaper, an atheist, secularist who enjoyed writing about religion, and en passant a great friend of Bergoglio... also speaking of Saint Paul wrote that “*he appointed himself an apostle and was the one who dictated law over all the others, starting with Peter, to whom according to the Gospels Christ had entrusted the Church. That designation was respected by all, nevertheless Paul's first controversy occurred precisely with Peter who led the Jewish-Christian community of Jerusalem*”, who conceived the “*Christian community of Jerusalem as one of the various 'readings' of Judaism. Christianity was seen by Peter as **one of the various sects**, grafted like the others onto the sturdy trunk of the Mosaic tradition and the biblical history of Abraham and his descendants. Until Paul arrived. His controversy with Peter was precisely on that point: according to Paul, Christianity was a completely different religion from Judaism and had to be **preached and spread among the 'Gentiles'**, that is, the pagans, in Rome, in Egypt, in Greece, in Greek cities on the Anatolian coast. Peter accepted, left Judaism and Jerusalem as well, and like Paul, he too founded communities in the Middle East and on the African coast; he arrived in Rome as did Paul and there, like Paul but in different years, he was executed. Since then he has been considered **the true founder of Christianity**. And he was.*” ⁽⁸⁾

Ricciotti's conclusion in defense of the traditional doctrine regarding Saint Paul is correct and acceptable: "After all, this fate of Paul is morally right. His master, Christ, had warned: *The disciple is not above his master*: now, modern critics are every day decreeing a new crucifixion for that Christ, given that they even deny his historical existence or, at most, barely leave a shadow of it to him; therefore Paul could not expect to be treated better by the same critics of his teacher. It is therefore normal that they decreed a new beheading for Paul, as a continuation of the old one.

I die daily, Paul had said while he was still alive (1 Cor. 15, 31), and he can repeat the same thing even now, seeing how his moral inheritance is treated in the name of science. While alive he died every day because he accomplished in himself the *things wanting of the sufferings of Christ* (Col. 1, 24), and even now he continues in this fulfillment because over the centuries the passion of Christ is prolonged through his mystical body. But even after this renewed death, Paul imitates Christ, his teacher: each time rising again more alive than before, and every mortal blow he receives is converted into a gain for him. He himself proclaims it incessantly from his tomb in Rome, around which his words are engraved: For me ... to die (is) gain (Phil. 1, 21)." ⁽⁹⁾

In order to better understand Saint Paul's doctrine and his fundamental and exclusive role in primitive Christianity, one must take into account that the Apostle received particular revelations made directly by God; these were recalled in Acts and in his letters, and they are important because it is precisely due to these that Paul qualified himself as an Apostle, as it rendered testimony to the very Jesus Christ who appeared to him personally at Damascus. In addition to recalling what happened at the moment of his conversion at

Damascus (Acts 9, 3-13), there were the events at Jerusalem (Acts 22, 18), and the most famous one narrated in his second letter to the Corinthians: "*I know a man in Christ above 14 years ago whether in body I know not, God knoweth, such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man, whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not, God knoweth: that he was caught up into paradise: and heralded secret words which it is not granted to man to utter*" (12 Cor. 12, 2-4). Other events during his second mission (Acts 16, 9): "*And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: A man of Macedonia standing and beseeching him, and saying: Pass over into Macedonia and help us!*" (Acts 18, 9) and to Corinth: "*And the Lord said to Paul in the night, by a vision: Fear not, but speak, and hold not thy peace*" (Acts, 23, 11). He learned by special revelation that which he taught regarding the institution of the Eucharist (1 Cor. 11, 23), regarding the end times (1 Thess. 4, 15) and so many others. Thus, Saint Paul, rather than being the "inventor of Christianity" or being in opposition to Jesus Christ, is his most faithful disciple, and it cannot be said that his doctrine was different from the teaching of the Lord in the Gospels. Saint Pius X, in the decree *Lamentabili*, condemned the modernists who

*Eugenio Scalfari, Founder of "la Repubblica"
Atheist, Secularist and friend of Bergoglio*



stated the contrary ⁽¹⁰⁾. Father Marco Sales o.p. correctly wrote: “If one compares that which is found in the Gospels and the teaching of Saint Paul concerning God, Jesus Christ, the redemption, etc., one immediately sees that far from being in opposition, there is perfect harmony and coherence between the two teachings, and that Saint Paul altered nothing of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and did nothing to modify the direction of Christianity, as with the greatest carelessness and bad faith wrote Renan, Loisy, Harnach, etc., but he simply preached what Jesus Christ had taught. Saint Paul was also able to draw some part of his doctrine from the tradition of the Apostles and disciples, who saw and heard Our Lord, but it is quite difficult to distinguish what he had by immediate revelation and what he had through Apostolic tradition.” ⁽¹¹⁾



The conversion of Saint Paul (Baciccio, Fiastra MC)

Then, who was the real Saint Paul? His life

After having seen the positions of the protestants and modernists, let us concentrate now on the person of Paul - much more interesting - seeing what he tells us about tradition and what he teaches us of our Holy Mother the Church. You will easily be fascinated and won over by his person and by what he did. **A Catholic cannot help but love Saint Paul!**

Most of the personal information that we have about Saint Paul is found here and there spread about in his letters and in the Acts of the Apostles. Scripture, then, acts as the principal source of information on him according to Catholic tradition; therefore one must accept its authenticity and authority, something that has generally come to be refused by modernists and protestants. Pope Pius X had already warned against those doctrines which tended to diminish the value of Sacred Scripture, which contains

the deposit of faith: “*we must defend with all our strength the deposit that was entrusted to Us, we have no reason to be in distress in the face of this attack, which is not a heresy, but the compendium and poison of all heresies, which tends to undermine the foundations of the faith and destroy Christianity.*”

Yes, annihilate Christianity, because for these modern heretics the Holy Scripture is no longer the sure source of all the truths that belong to the faith, but a common book; - for them inspiration is restricted to dogmatic doctrines, understood however in their own way, almost differing little from the poetic inspiration of Aeschylus and Homer. The legitimate interpreter of the Bible is the Church, subject, however, to the rules of the so-called critical science, which imposes itself on Theology and enslaves it. As to tradition, everything is relative and subject to change, and therefore the authority of the Holy Fathers is reduced to nothing. And they spread all these and a thousand other errors in pamphlets, in

magazines, in ascetic books and even in novels and embody them in certain ambiguous terms, in certain nebulous forms, in order to always have an opening for the defense so as not to incur an open condemnation and thereby catch the unwary in their snares.” ⁽¹²⁾

Saul (which was his Hebrew name later changed to the Latin Paul after his conversion) was born in Tarsus in Cilicia ⁽¹³⁾ (Acts 9, 11; 21, 39 tell us this) to pious Jewish parents from the tribe of Benjamin (Phil 3, 5) in the early years of the Christian era. “If therefore Jesus was born in the year 748 of Rome, 6 before the Common Era, Paul was slightly younger than him, approximately three to eight years.” ⁽¹⁴⁾ His father was a Pharisee (Acts 23, 6) and he held Roman citizenship (it is not known in what capacity) (Acts 16, 37). He was circumcised according to the law on the eighth day after his birth (Phil. 3, 5), receiving the name Saul (which in Aramaic means “desired”) to which he then added the Roman nickname of Paul (Acts 13, 9). Since Tarsus was a completely Hellenized city (Strabo *Geographica* tells us this, 14, 10, 13, 15), it is probable that Saint Paul’s mother tongue was Greek, or rather that vulgar dialect (*koiné*) which, after Alexander’s conquests, had become common in all the cities of the eastern Mediterranean. He wrote his letters in this dialect, but since in them he shows a very imperfect knowledge of syntax and rhetoric and the various forms of the classical language, it is to be believed that he did not attend the famous grammar schools which arose in his hometown (Strabo, *loc. cit.*).

His education, both within his family and at the synagogue of Tarsus, was exclusively Jewish, and like the rabbis of the time he also learned a manual skill by making tents (Acts 18, 3), which then allowed him during his missions to earn his livelihood, without being a burden to the Churches (1 Cor. 4, 12; 1 Thess. 2, 9; 2

Thess. 3, 7, etc.). Probably moved by the desire to become a rabbi, he came to Jerusalem when he was still young (around 13 and 15 years old) (Acts 24, 4), and there he had the famous Gamaliel as his teacher, in whose school he learned the profound knowledge of the writings that we admire in his epistles, but also all the Pharisaic preconceptions about the person of the Messiah. His zeal and progress in science allowed him to surpass many of his peers. Certainly Saul left Jerusalem (perhaps returning to Tarsus) before Our Lord began his mission since it is certain that he did not see Jesus in his mortal flesh.

The conversion of Saint Paul

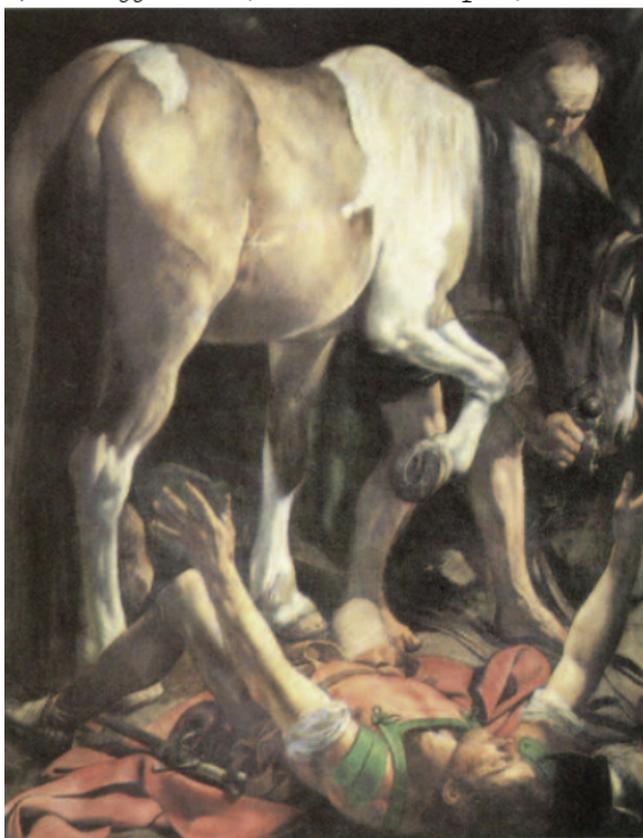
Saul’s conversion, from persecutor to Apostle, and Apostle par excellence, is certainly the key event of his life and not only for him but also for the spread of Christianity in the plan desired by Divine Providence. Ricciotti rightly points this out with his usual shrewdness: “In the history of Christian origins, Paul’s conversion is the event of greatest importance and has the most decisive consequences, after the resurrection of Jesus; indeed, for those who consider Paul - quite falsely - the true conceptual builder of Christianity, his adhesion to Jesus marks the true beginning of the new faith, the resurrection of Jesus remains a simple article of that faith. It is clear that the rationalists, just as they do not admit the resurrection of Jesus, cannot admit the conversion of Paul as narrated by the sources; but, even after this denial, they still have the task of affirming, that is, explaining how Paul’s spiritual change occurred and of replacing the narrative of the sources with a ‘rational’ narrative that they prepared. In reality, many attempts are made: they begin more or less together with the attempts on the life of Jesus,

and display the same characteristics, that is, absolute agreement in excluding every supernatural element in deference to ‘secular dogma’, and boundless freedom in rejecting or distorting documented evidentiary testimony, and in presuming facts that are flatly excluded from these testimonies.”⁽¹⁵⁾

We find him again in Jerusalem “a little after Pentecost, when the faithful had already formed a separate community, which, under the governance of the Apostles and through their preaching and that of the Deacons, tended to detach itself completely from the law and from Mosaic institutions. Seeing the danger that this presented to Judaism, he felt filled with zeal for the law of Moses and the traditions of the fathers and not content with only approving the death of Stephen, he was convinced that he had to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 26, 9), and like an angry beast he began to devastate the Church of God,

The fall of Saint Paul

(Caravaggio 1660, S. Maria del Popolo, Rome)



entering houses and dragging away men and women and putting them in prison (Acts 8, 3; 22, 4, 5, 19; 26, 9-11; 1 Tim. 1, 13, etc.). He presented himself to the chief priests and asked for letters to present to the synagogues of Damascus, with a special mandate to be able to drag back to Jerusalem as many Jewish Christians as he could find, men and women (Acts 9, 2-3). **But the grace of God awaited him.** While he was already near Damascus, at midday a very bright light flashed around him, and, falling to the ground, he heard the voice of Jesus who said to him: *Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? it is hard for you to kick against the goad.* At this voice he surrendered to grace and said: ***Lord, what do you want that I should do?*** The Lord commanded him to go to Ananias, who would instruct him and baptize him. So he did, and after three days of penance in which he neither took food nor drink, he received Holy Baptism, and from a rapacious wolf he became a most gentle lamb.”⁽¹⁶⁾ Abbott Ricciotti compares the conversion of Saint Paul to the sinking of the Titanic: as for that ship everything had been foreseen, and its first voyage had been prepared in every detail, the power of the ship promised unchallenged dominion over the external elements; but the unforeseen was the enormous iceberg that emerged, ripping open its side causing the sinking of that ship which, according to its builders, *not even God could sink...* Thus, the helmsman Paul was unshakably secure in himself, he oversaw his route, he had prepared everything: everything but the unpredictable. Suddenly, on his way, a white mountain loomed, and he collided with it.”⁽¹⁷⁾ For him, the mountain was Our Lord. Ricciotti continues: “The bewilderment of the fallen man increased. A quick exam of his surroundings assured him that he was conscious: he had been persecuting Christians, but they were the enemy of the God

of Israel, and therefore this God could do nothing but approve his conduct. He then asked anxiously: *'Who art thou, Lord?'* But the mysterious voice gave him an unexpected answer: *'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for you to kick against the goad!'*

Just as lightning had blinded his material vision, so this response shocked his mental vision, his judgment of human events. The entire world suddenly seemed upside down to him: that the Jesus who he had sunk into the abyss of his hatred, now appeared to him atop everything. He was not only a 'lord', but The Lord in the supreme sense. Paul contemplated him with his eyes as he stood there before him, but above all he felt him intimately present in his soul; his saying *'I am Jesus of Nazareth'* penetrated most of all in Paul's soul, arousing an irrepressible consensus. Yes, his great enemy was there, suddenly revealed to be so powerful, so dominating! And he was persecuting him, persecuting his faithful! Until then it was very hard to recognize the boundless error he had followed, but one could not retreat against such a biting stimulus; the truth was now too obvious to be denied, and he had to completely reverse his worldview. And, in the midst of so much moral upheaval, what should he do?

This question was, in reality, the most spontaneous. It actually came to the lips of the fallen man, who exclaimed: *What will I do, Lord?* The voice replied: *Rise up, enter the city, and you will be told what you must do.*

The shipwreck had occurred, sudden and definitive. There was nothing he could do about the past: there was everything that he could alter about the future. The castaway had to abandon his damaged ship down there on the slopes of the divine mountain, and had to move to the summit of that mountain. Up there, he,

like Moses, would have heard the voice of God."⁽¹⁸⁾

The conversion of Saint Paul is narrated three times in the Acts of the Apostles (9, 3-19; 22, 6-18; 26, 12-18): the first time historically by Luke, the author of the book, the second is the discourse by Paul at the Temple in Jerusalem, and third is the discourse given by Paul before the procurator Porcio Festo. This occurred probably in the year 34 (or 36 according to Ricciotti).

Here is the passage of his conversion as narrated in Acts (9, 3-19): *"And as he went on his journey, it came to pass that he drew near to Damascus: and suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: 'Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?' And he said: 'Who are thou, Lord?' And he: 'I am Jesus, whom thou dost persecute. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad.' And he, trembling and astonished, said: 'Lord, what wilt thou have me do?' And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do. Now the men who went in company with him, stood amazed hearing indeed a voice, but seeing no one. And Saul arose from the ground, and his eyes being open, he saw nothing. But they, leading him by the hands, brought him into Damascus. And he was there three days, without sight, and he neither ate nor drank. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, by the name Ananias: and the Lord said to him in a vision: 'Ananias.' And he said: 'Behold, I am here, Lord.' And the Lord said to him: 'Arise, and go into the street, that is called Strait, and seek in the house of Judas, one named Saul, of Tarsus: for behold he prayeth.' (And he saw a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands upon him, that he might receive his sight.) But Ananias answered: 'Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how*



great evils he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all, that invoke thy name.' And the Lord said to him: 'Go, for this man is the vessel of election to me, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and children of Israel. For I will show him what great things he must suffer for the sake of my name.' And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house: and laying his hands upon him, he said: 'Saul, brother, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, he who appeared to thee in the way as thou camest, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.' And immediately there fell from his eyes as if it were scales, and he received his sight: and rising up, he was baptized. And when he had taken meat, he was strengthened. And he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, for some days."

Saint Augustine commented on this passage thus: "Today is read the passage of the Acts of the Apostles that recalls how the

Apostle Paul from persecutor of the Christians became the preacher of Christ. In fact, Christ prostrated a persecutor, to make him a doctor of the Church: he struck him down, then healed him, he killed him and gave him life, the lamb sacrificed by wolves, changes the wolves into lambs. (...) Prostrated from heaven by the voice of Christ, and then receiving the command to stay his cruelty, he fell to the ground, having to first be knocked down, and then raised up again" (Sermon 14 on the Saints - 2nd nocturne of January 25, Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul).

After his baptism, Paul remained at Damascus for a short time and then retreated to Arabia to devote himself to prayer and meditation. He returned to Damascus, confounding the Jews by demonstrating that Jesus is the Messiah awaited by them, and for this reason they tried to kill him; and with the help of Christians he was able to escape to Jerusalem where he met Peter (*Neither went I to*

Jerusalem to the apostles, who were before me; but I went into Arabia, and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years, I came to Jerusalem to see Peter, and stayed with him for fifteen days. But other of the apostles I saw none: except James, the brother of the Lord (Gal. 1, 17-19). Again in Jerusalem he aroused the hatred of Jews, and as a consequence, he went to Caesarea in Palestine, and then to Tarsus. In Antioch, there was a thriving Christian community founded by many exiles from Jerusalem who had escaped persecution. The Apostles had sent Barnabas there, who, seeing the great field of the apostolate that was opening up, went to look for Paul in Tarsus and brought him to Antioch where he remained for a year, making many conversions. Later, after having made a journey to Jerusalem called "of the collections" to bring aid to those Christians, thanks to a revelation Paul and Barnabas were consecrated Bishops and were sent away to preach (*The Holy Ghost said to them "Separate from me Saul and Barnabas for the work to which I have taken them."* Then, after fasting and praying, they imposed their hands upon them, and sent them away - Acts 13, 1-4).

The Apostolic voyages of Saint Paul

- **The First Mission of Saint Paul (years 45-49).** Saint Paul, accompanied by Saint Barnabas, and for some time by Saint Mark, left Antioch and went to Seleucia, and then to Cyprus, where he converted the Proconsul Sergius Paulus. Again by sea he went to Perga in Pamphylia, and from there he went to Antioch of Pisidia, and then to Iconium, Lystris, and to Derbe, carrying out numerous conversions everywhere and enduring the gravest persecutions. Finally, after visiting the churches he had founded once again, he went to

Attalia, and from there he returned to Antioch in Syria (Acts ch. 13 and 14).

- **The Council in Jerusalem.** Later, at Antioch, the question arose as to the value of the Mosaic law, since some claimed that in order to be saved, one had to receive circumcision, while Saint Paul and Saint Barnabas proclaimed otherwise, that the Mosaic institutions no longer had an obligatory character. Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem to question the Apostles on the matter. In Jerusalem, in a public Council, it was declared by Saint Peter and the other Apostles that pagans should not be submitted to the prescriptions of the Mosaic law, even if, to facilitate the mutual relationship between Jews and Christian Gentiles, it was recommended the latter refrain from certain things for which the Jews felt a greater repugnance. Saint Paul and Saint Barnabas, together with Jude, Barsabas and Silas, were charged with the task of bringing the decision to the Church at Antioch, which was immediately carried out.

Some time later, however, the Church at Antioch was again disturbed by an incident that happened between Saint Peter and Saint Paul over legal observances (Gal. 2, 12), but the firmness and energy of the Apostle of the gentiles meant that the freedom of the pagans was recognized even more clearly (see Acts 15, 1-35; Gal. 2, 1-13).

- **The Second great mission (years 51-54).** Moved by the desire to visit the Churches he founded on his first voyage, Saint Paul, taking Silas as his companion, left Antioch and made his way to Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches and exhorting them to observe the decree of the Apostles (given in Jerusalem). Having arrived in Lystris, and taking Timothy with him, he passed through the various cities already evangelized, crossed Phrygia and Galatia and arrived in Mysia. He would have liked to go to Bithynia, but by divine revelation

he instead went down to Troas, from where, following a vision, he set sail for Macedonia. There he evangelized Philippi, and then, crossing Amphipolis and Apollonia, he went to Thessalonica, then to Beroea and then to Athens, and later to Corinth, founding flourishing churches everywhere. He then embarked for Ephesus, and then immediately went to Caesarea and to Jerusalem and returned to Antioch in Syria (Acts 15, 36-18, 22).

- **The Third great mission (years 55-58).**

After staying in Antioch for some time, Saint Paul departed once again and, having passed through the countries of Galicia and Phrygia, he arrived at Ephesus, where he stayed for two whole years (55-56), making countless conversions. Forced to flee from this city, due to the riot caused by the silversmith Demetrius, he went to Macedonia and then Achaia, staying for some time at Corinth (winter, 57-58). Leaving this city, he departed for Phillipi where he celebrated Easter (58), and then to Troas, then he set sail for Miletus, and from Miletus, always by sea, he reached Caesarea in Palestine, and from Caesarea he went directly to Jerusalem for the celebration of Pentecost (Acts 18, 21-23, 16)

- **Imprisoned in Caesarea (years 58-60).**

Saint Paul was welcomed with great cordiality by the faithful of Jerusalem, and to demonstrate to his fellow countrymen that he did not despise the law of Moses, he publicly submitted to a legal ceremony to be performed in the temple. However, as soon as he was seen in the temple, the people, incited by some fanatics, went into uproar and, dragging him outside the sacred enclosure, would have killed him, without the prompt and energetic intervention of the tribune Lysias. In vain the Apostle tried to harangue the angry crowd, but his words caused greater uproar, and he had to appeal his status as a Roman citizen to force the tribune to respect the

rights he enjoyed. Dragged in front of the Sanhedrin, he knew how to defend himself with the rarest skill, throwing discord into the camp of his adversaries. But since a group of Jews had hatched a conspiracy against him, the tribune Lysias sent him, accompanied by a good escort of soldiers, to Caesarea to the governor Felix, to be judged there. Felix took no heed of giving a sentence, since he hoped that Paul would be ransomed with money, and thus held him as prisoner for two years. Porcius Festus, having then succeeded Felix, proposed to Saint Paul that he be taken to Jerusalem to be judged there by the Sanhedrin. But the Apostle opposed it, and being a Roman citizen, made an appeal to the Emperor. Before leaving for Rome, he once again had the opportunity to preach Jesus Christ before King Agrippa (Acts 21, 17-26, 32).

- **The First Imprisonment in Rome (year 60-63).**

In the autumn of the year 60, Paul, having made his appeal to the Emperor, accompanied by Luke and Aristarchus, together with other prisoners was entrusted to the custody of the Centurion Julius and embarked for Rome. In the Acts of the Apostles (27, 1-28, 31), Saint Luke narrates in detail the vicissitudes of this journey which lasted several months and ended in the spring of 61. But the narrative of the Acts ends abruptly here, saying that the imprisonment in the eternal city lasted two years ⁽¹⁹⁾. From the letters that Saint Paul wrote in this period we can glean a few more details (Phil. 1, 4; 4, 22): his case had a happy outcome and he was able to regain his freedom (Phil. 1, 19; Col 4, 8).

- **The Fourth great mission (years 64-67) and his martyrdom.**

About this mission we have no direct information from Acts, however some information can be deduced from the epistles, and also the evidence from tradition is very strong. As soon as Saint Paul was free, in

accordance with his long-cherished desire (Rom. 15, 28), he undertook, probably in the spring of the year 64, a journey to Spain, as the ancients attest. Saint Clement of Rome, writing from Rome to those at Corinth (Cor. 5) ⁽²⁰⁾, says that Saint Paul reached the end of the West with his preaching; now, with this phrase a Roman writer could only mean Spain, where the Pillars of Hercules were located. We find the same thing stated not only in the Muratorian fragment, but also by Saints Athanasius, Epiphanius, Theodoret, Jerome and Gregory the Great. Eusebius in his *Storia Ecclesiastica* (n. 22) says that, between the first and second Roman imprisonment, he undertook another mission: “*Finally, after having pleaded his case before the judges, it is said that he left again to preach, and then, returning a second time to Rome, he suffered martyrdom there*”.

From Spain, Saint Paul soon left for the East (the same year 64), with the intention of visiting the Churches already founded. Almost all moderns agree in admitting this journey, which alone explains the apostolic activity that is suggested by his pastoral letters (two to Timothy and one to Titus). Saint Paul first went to Crete, and after having preached the Gospel there, he departed, leaving Titus to govern the Church there (Tit. 1, 5), traveling to Ephesus, where he left his disciple Timothy as bishop (1 Tim. 4, 14; 2 Tim. 1, 6). From Ephesus he headed to Macedonia, but shortly thereafter he returned to Ephesus (1 Tim. 3 14). Having then embarked at Miletus, he left again for Macedonia and Greece, and begged Titus to visit him in Nicopolis in Epirus, where he planned to spend the winter (Tit. 3, 12). He later went to Corinth, where, according to the testimony of Saint Dionysius, bishop of Corinth who lived around 170 (Euseb. H. E. II, 24), he met with the Apostle Saint Peter, and together with him, went to Rome and suffered martyrdom there.

Here are the words of Saint Dionysius: “*Both of them (Peter and Paul) entered our city of Corinth, instructed us by preaching the Gospel, then left together for Italy, and after having similarly instructed you Romans, they suffered martyrdom at that time*”. Saint Paul arrived in Rome, probably towards the end of the year 66, but was soon imprisoned and sentenced to death together with Saint Peter, and on the 29th of June of the following year he was beheaded, at the second milestone of the Via Ostiense, and was buried nearby.

This fact is more than self-evident. Dionysius and Eusebius are confirmed by Saint Jerome (De vir. ill. V), who writes: “*he (Paul) therefore, in the year 14 of Nero (67 AD), on the same day as that of Saint Peter, lost his life in Rome on the Via Ostiense*”. And Saint Clement Romanus (Cor. v) also says that Saint Paul suffered martyrdom in Rome under the prefects. Now it is precisely in the year 67 that, as Nero was in Achaëa, the praetorian prefects Tigellino and Nimfidius governed the city of Rome.

Saint Paul the writer. His style.

Traditional Pauline iconography represents the Apostle with a sharpened sword. Why? The sword not only depicts his martyrdom (he was beheaded by the sword as he was a Roman citizen), but also his most effective spiritual weapon, his writing, that he was the first to use among the Lord’s disciples ⁽²¹⁾. Saint Paul defines himself “ignorant of speech, but not of knowledge” (2. Cor. 11, 6) to signify both his inexperience in speech (he says this out of humility), and the fullness of his knowledge which in an overflowing manner (in accordance with his style) he wants to express in his writings. With regard to the vitality of Saint Paul’s ideas, Ricciotti writes: “When Paul began one of his writings (except perhaps those of his

incipient old age), his spirit must have been at the boiling point, agitated, compressed, beset by a thousand ideas that wanted to bring to light all together. He reflects for some time so as to bring some order to that overcrowding, and finally having chosen an idea he begins to explain it. But then, halfway through the exposition, a certain word that he has just used awakens in him another idea that seems indispensable to him: and he, leaving the first statement suspended, inserts the second idea into it as an aside; however, it is possible that, even in this passage, he inserts a small parenthesis to make room for a particular reflection that came to his mind then and there; finally closing the parenthesis and its additions; and brings to completion his initial presentation.

But it is not certain that he will end an exposition that he had begun and regularly close a sentence that he had started; if the Quintilian *vis mentis* becomes violence - as it often becomes in Paul - the sentence can also remain unfinished, because in the meantime other concepts have flashed into the writer's mind and made him lose sight of the topic that he was dealing with. It is what grammarians call the *anacolutha*.

Other times - always due to that crowding of concepts - it seems that Paul wants to save time, ink and papyrus, and express concepts in a summary way; in a form that the ancients would have called tachygraphic (and which we would call telegraphic): if, for a given concept, a sentence of at least four propositions is necessary, Paul expresses only two, and the rest is to be added by the reader. It is the ellipsis of the grammarians. Let's bring up an example of these cases.

An example of a sentence broken up by insertions and asides is found at the very beginning of the letter to the Romans (1, 1; 1-7), which begins like this: *Paul, a slave of*



Saint Paul
(mosaic, apse of the
Basilica of Saint Paul
outside the Walls, Rome)

Christ Jesus, called apostle, separated for (announcing) the gospel of God... At this point the word *gospel* unfolds a marvelous vision before Paul's eyes, and he cannot refrain from inserting a comment: - *which he had previously promised through his prophets in the holy writings concerning his Son...* The mention of the Son of God cannot pass through Paul without some presentation, and he inserts the presentation in a long parenthesis: (*who was made to him from the seed of David according to flesh, predestined the Son of God in power according to the spirit of sanctification by the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith in all nations for his name: among whom are you also the called of Jesus Christ*) - ... The long parenthesis ends (not without having received another short insertion with the final words *among whom...Christ*), and so ends the first aside in the commentary; so that Paul can now return to his initial statement and close the entire sentence: *to all those in Rome who are beloved of God, called to be saints, grace to you and peace from God Our father and (from) the Lord Jesus Christ. (...)*

But these are exceptional cases, and Paul is not always so angular or anxious; when his ship is caught in full force by one of those winds that dominate in his sky, he loosens the sails and, though the sea is always rough, the ship runs fast. The most impetuous wind, which is actually a true whirlwind, is his love for Christ: the consequence of this whirlwind are two other winds, less elevated but also impetuous, that is, his love for those fellow Judeans who reject the Christ, and his hostility against the Judaizing Christians who reject the freedom of the Gospel.

The love that Paul has for Christ makes him rediscover truly lyrical inflections; as he does in the following passage: *Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword?... But in all these things we overcome (ὑπερνικῶμεν) because of him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from*



*Saint Paul
Before the Areopagus*

(Giovanni
Domenico
Cigoli, Florence
Convent of the
SS. Annunziata)

the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ the Lord (Romans 8, 35-39)." ⁽²²⁾

It should not be forgotten that Saint Paul is a preacher and a polemicist, not just a calm, peaceful narrator; consequently what dominates him is ardor and life. "In his letters he instills his whole self, his vigorous and powerful imagination, his exquisitely sensitive and delicate heart, his will, full of energy and courage, his mind armed with a profound knowledge of critical truths and a powerful and compelling dialectic. Word and style are entirely subordinated in him to thought, and thought is always great, majestic and profound, both when he exposes the lofty problems of Christian doctrine, or when he assails his adversaries, or defends himself from their attacks, or when he pours out ineffable tenderness towards his neophytes. A vibrant character who cares little for form, he frequently abandons himself to antitheses, bold metaphors, direct questions, often coming out in dramatic exclamations, resorting to sarcasm and irony, to enumeration, to gradation, he leaves a sentence in suspense, making long digressions without caring about the obscurity that his words at times can engender.

He willingly repeats himself, and overloads his sentence with conjunctions and prepositions, so that the sentence becomes contorted and embarrassing, but nevertheless it is always full of life and vigor, attracting attention, it shocks, it convinces. Now, such a writer will certainly not be a purist from a philological point of view, but neither is he a barbarian, and therefore if it must be confessed that Saint Paul has defects, one still has every right to affirm that he is also rich in countless beauties." ⁽²³⁾

The physical aspect and character of Saint Paul

Just as for the Lord Jesus, the sources also tell us nothing precise about the physical appearance of Saint Paul. In 2 Corinthians (10, 10) the apostle reports what his adversaries say about him with the following words: “*For (his) epistles indeed, they say, are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible*”: these words would seem to allude to the fact that he was of short stature and not particularly good-looking, but this passage proves nothing about his somatic characteristics because it refers more to his moral behavior given that his adversaries accused him of being harsh and imperious in his letters.

In the literary field, the oldest description of Paul is given to us by the legend of Saint Thecla ⁽²⁴⁾ which “according to authoritative modern scholars (Harnack, etc.) must contain a notable historical nucleus. In the Acts of Paul, 3, which depend on this legend, we find this description of Paul: *A man of small stature, with a bald head, bowed legs, well-built, with joined eyebrows, with a rather large nose, (he was) full of grace since sometimes he appeared like a man and sometimes he had the face of an angel. (...)*. In the mid-sixth century, John Malalas offers us the following description of the apostle: *Paul while he lived was of short stature, bald with a grizzled head and beard, with a beautiful nose, bluish eyes, joined eyebrows, white complexion, of a florid appearance, with thick beard, smiling by character, wise, gentle, affable, sweet, animated by the Holy Spirit, a miracle worker*”. ⁽²⁵⁾

Passing from literary tradition to that of the pictorial, the surest and most ancient work is a fresco found in the Catacombs of Domitilla in Rome uncovered in the first half of the fourth century: “where Paul appears in contrast to Peter: his facial features are imprecise, his hair is dark but is sparse on top of his head, his



Saints Peter and Paul
(Ludovico Brea, Lucéram France)

beard is pointed in the typical shape of an inverted cone. His face, in its overall contours, has the form of a pear with the stalk at the bottom. Another depiction from the Catacombs of Domitilla dates back to around the year 348. Paul, the only surviving figure, appears in a form analogous to the previous one; a large and disproportionate head, hair dark but sparse, pointed beard; the overall impression of the face is an upside down pear.

The Catacomb of Saints Peter and Marcellinus has preserved a large composition from the fourth or fifth century where Paul is also represented: hair less sparse and less dark, beard pointed, the usual conical form of his face is less marked due to his protruding ears. These are what tradition transmits to us about his physical appearance, but these are hypotheses and deductions, and not much more is given us to know.

In his writings and in Acts, however, it is much easier to find Paul's moral and character traits, his great spirit; Ricciotti outlines it well: "nervous of temperament, extremely sensitive to all impressions, Paul was by nature impetuous. Physically he was extremely resistant to fatigue: not only his continuous and laborious travels, but especially the intense and difficult work he carried out in Corinth, Ephesus and elsewhere, presuppose a physiological constitution of exceptional strength - even disregarding other causes - for him to withstand so many burdens. However, from the time of his great mystical experience in the year 43, when he had been a Christian for about six years, he had to endure the *thorn of the flesh*, the mysterious illness which very probably arose in connection with that experience. This disease, with recurring manifestations but easily hidden as a whole, was still raging in the year 57 and probably accompanied Paul almost until his death; However, it did not distract him from his material and moral efforts, because his iron will prevailed over everything. (...)

Paul's entire life after his conversion is nothing but a race towards Christ: *for me to live (is) Christ* (Phil. 1, 21); *and I live now, not I, but Christ lives in me* (Gal. 2, 20). But, in reality, his course is guided and supported by Christ himself who frequently intervenes directly. Regarding his mystical experiences, Paul feels almost a sense of spiritual modesty, and therefore speaks about them little and reluctantly; but there is no doubt that they were frequent and very powerful. Moreover, even psychologically speaking, it would have been completely impossible to endure the frighteningly hard life endured by Paul for thirty years, if there had not been an exceptional *something* to support him, sustaining his always burning enthusiasm, while keeping him away from the excesses of glorified fanatics. Paul's

life, secret and public, has its roots in his charisms and mystical experiences: without which, it cannot be explained." ⁽²⁶⁾

We must therefore also consider that Paul is not just a man dedicated to action and careless about his spiritual life and his interior asceticism: he is a great mystic due to his exceptional charisms, the visions that he received from God, which accompanied his ministry. In his life Paul practices detachment from earthly things (Acts 20, 33-35) and practices asceticism (*I too therefore run, but not to as an uncertainty; I fight, but not as one beating the air* - 1 Cor. 9, 26) resembling more and more the divine model Christ Jesus (*and I live, now, not I, but Christ lives in me; and that I live now in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered himself for me.* - Gal. 2, 20).

The Letters of Saint Paul

Saint Paul wrote 14 letters which are contained in the Canon of Sacred Scripture, and addressed to six Churches and to three persons: the first to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Phillipians, the Colossians, two to the Thessolonians, two to Timothy, one to Titus, one to Philemon, and lastly one to the Hebrews. He probably also wrote others that were lost and are therefore not in the Canon. ⁽²⁷⁾ All the ancient writers and the tradition of the Church are practically unanimous in recognizing the authenticity and divine origin of the fourteen letters of Saint Paul. Among the first Church documents that report the list of canonical books which include the letters of Saint Paul were the Roman Council (year 382 - D 84) and at Carthage (year 419, can. 29 - D 92). The order in which the letters are arranged in the different catalogs is due, not to chronology, but to the dignity of the

Churches and the people to whom they are addressed, and to the gravity of the topic treated, having been established in the Latin Church since the time of Saint Augustine. The letter to the Hebrews is placed last because it was the last to be known in the Western Churches. If we take into account the time in which the fourteen letters of Saint Paul were written, they can be arranged into three groups, the first of which includes the letters written before his imprisonment in Caesarea, that is, Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, and 1st and 2nd Thessalonians; the second group contains the letters written during his first imprisonment in Rome or at least in Italy, i.e. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Hebrews; the third includes the letters written after his liberation from the first captivity in Rome, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.

It is impossible to fix the precise date of all the letters of St. Paul, and even among Catholic authors a certain divergence reigns on this point, although there is general agreement in determining the chronological order in which they were written. Thus, in fact, almost all moderns agree in believing that the earliest in order of time was Thessalonians (52-53 AD), followed subsequently by Galatians, Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Hebrews (63-64 AD), and then first Timothy, Titus and second Timothy (66-67 AD).

Almost all of the letters have an identical form and include a prologue or introduction, a body, and an epilogue or conclusion. All were written in Greek, not in the classical language, but rather in the Hellenistic or *koiné* dialect commonly spoken by the Jews of the diaspora. After Saint Luke, Saint Paul is the writer of the New Testament who best mastered the Greek language.

“Anyone who thought that they would find in the letters of Saint Paul a complete exposition of all the doctrine taught by the great Apostle would be greatly mistaken. In fact, one must consider that all the letters are writings of circumstance, determined by the needs or the special conditions of those to whom they are addressed. In none of them did Saint Paul wish to make a compendium of all his teachings but he treated this or that point of Christian truth, as the circumstances required. Furthermore, each letter presupposes that the readers are in possession of a well-defined dogmatic, moral and liturgical teaching, on which the Apostle does not need to explain in writing what he sufficiently preached orally.”⁽²⁸⁾

A little pearl, of which little is spoken due to its brevity, is the letter to Philemon. In it one can truly find all the great heart of the grand Apostle: he writes to Philemon to plead the cause of one of Philemon’s slaves who had taken refuge in Rome to escape punishment, and had met Paul who was a prisoner there. The slave having become a Christian had a change of heart, and Paul would have liked to keep him with him but he did not want to do so without the permission of his master Philemon. Everyone admits that this letter is a true literary masterpiece. “The Apostle shows so much affection, so much delicacy, and so much skill, as to win the admiration of even incredulous people, such as Renan and Sabatier, and to force Erasmus to exclaim that Cicero could not have been more eloquent.”⁽²⁹⁾

His doctrine

The points of doctrine that we find most frequently in the letters of Saint Paul, and on which he insists most, can be traced back to five main ones.

1. The universality of the redemption brought about by Jesus Christ, Son of God, who through his passion saved all men, both Jews and Gentiles.

2. That from Jesus comes the source of all grace, all justice, all salvation for men of all times.

3. That since all men have been contaminated by original sin, none of them can achieve salvation except through the grace of Jesus Christ, which can only be achieved through living faith in him and in his Gospel.

4. That the Mosaic Law served to lead men to Jesus Christ, but it was abolished by him and lost all its value after his coming.

5. And the point of the mystical body of the Church, in which all the faithful are intimately united with Jesus Christ and form a single body of which he is the head and they are the members hierarchically arranged among themselves; the members receiving supernatural life from the Head, who is Christ. Therefore Jesus Christ, Son of God made man and Redeemer of men, is the center of all Pauline doctrine and catechesis. In fact, in his letters the name of Jesus Christ, Savior occurs approximately 940 times. ⁽³⁰⁾

Spadafora writes in this regard: “The fundamental principle of Paul's teaching is the idea of the ‘Christ the Redeemer’ who lives in the person of the believers: for him the novelty of Christianity is the *mystery of God, the Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge* (Col. 2, 2s.). Christ, indeed the principle of all things in creation (ibid., 1, 16), centralizes and summarizes everything in himself, as the principle of elevation to a supernatural order (Eph. 1, 10); as Redeemer, He abundantly repairs the evil caused by Adam's sin, bringing the life of Grace (Rom. 5, 12-21) and making the dominion of Grace supplant the kingdom of sin, and Mosaic law with the ineffable reality of Mystical Body. The center of everything is Christ, the one and eternal priest and the only Mediator between God and men (see Heb. 2, 17; 4, 14; 5, 5 etc.; 1 Tim. 2, 5). An indispensable element for anyone desiring to become a living and working member of this wonderful organism is faith, understood as total adhesion of the whole man to Christ and to his doctrine (Rom.; Gal.). Baptism is the initiation rite presented. The Eucharist, which nourishes and makes supernatural life grow, is considered by Paul as the sacrament that intimately unites a person to Christ the victim (1 Cor 11, 26). (...)

In his apostolate, which he considered an imperative collaboration in the work of God (1 Cor. 3, 6-9, 4, 1-2; 9, 16), Paul acted with a great realistic sense. He suggested becoming all things to all men (ibid., 9, 22); he skillfully knew how to conform his teaching to the ability, mentality and needs of his listeners and readers. And he always did this with ardor and a profound conviction, so that to a superficial reader it may seem as if the basic element of Pauline teaching was always before him: for this reason one never forgets the oratory ardor of the Apostle and the concrete reasoning that pushed



*The farewell of Saints Peter and Paul
as they are led to their martyrdom
(Giovanni Serodine, Rome 1600)*

him to insist on one topic rather than another. In front of an audience made up of Jews, Paul will preach Jesus based on quotations and scriptural references (see Acts 13, 16-41; 17, 10 f.; 24, 14; 28, 17-29), while in front of pagan assemblies will resort to arguments of a completely different kind (ibid., 14, 15-18; 17, 22-31).

The Christocentric idea of his theology also dominates the fragmentary ethics of Paul. He loves to speak of 'death' and 'resurrection' (Rom. 6, 4; 6, 11; Col. 2, 20), of the need to 'strip off' the old personality (= Adam) to 'put on' the new (= Christ; see Rom. 13, 14; Eph. 4, 20-24; Col. 3, 9-11), and of the repudiation of the works of the flesh so as to follow the impulses of the Spirit, who dwells in the hearts of the faithful (Gal 5, 16-26; Rom. 8, 4-10). With great practical sense, then, Paul turns to concrete cases, such as relationships between members of the same family, or a Christian community and relationships with pagan authorities. His advice is always marked by respect for authority, of which he has a very high concept, considering it as a participation in divine sovereignty (Rom. 13, 1-7; 1 Tim. 2, 2; Tit. 3, 1)."⁽³¹⁾

The Adversaries fought by Saint Paul

In his letters and in his missions, the great Apostle finds himself having to principally combat Judaizers, gnostics and bad Christians.

As regards the Judaizers, it must be kept in mind that "since the first days of the Church, there arose the question relating to the relationship between the new law and the old. In fact, although everyone at the time believed that the Gospel was intended for all men, both Jews and pagans, it had not been clear whether the pagans, in order to enter the Church of Jesus Christ, had to first pass through Judaism,

receiving circumcision and subjecting themselves to the other Mosaic prescriptions.

Taught by a divine vision, Saint Peter had proclaimed that pagans could certainly be baptized; but the question once again became more lively in Antioch, and was not defined until the Council of Jerusalem, when it was solemnly decreed that pagans were not bound to Mosaic institutions. Many Jews did not surrender to the Apostles' decision, but, too proud of their ancient national privileges, continued to teach the necessity of the Mosaic law, some to obtain health, and some to be a perfect Christian.

Saint Paul, having been sent in a special way to preach to the pagans, opposed them with all his strength, teaching everywhere that the law of Moses no longer had any value for health, and no longer conferred any privileges, and that depending on it for health was to deny the efficacy of the death of Jesus Christ. The Judaizers then began to fight him fiercely, creating discord in the Churches he founded, provoking violent persecutions and riots in the cities where he went to preach. Where violence could not be enjoined, they used slander, going on to say that he was not a true Apostle equal to the twelve, that he had not been immediately instructed by Jesus Christ, that he was prideful and a great boaster, of an inconstant, rude character in speaking, ambitious, etc. Consequently the Apostle, as in his preaching, as well as in his letters, felt obliged, now to attack his adversaries by unmasking their errors and their hypocrisies, now to defend himself, highlighting his prerogatives, his mission, his right way of acting. In this way he sought to preserve the faithful from error."⁽³²⁾ Ricciotti writes: "Paul had views of boundless breadth, such as to arouse hesitation or even the open disapproval of other propagandists, equally



Saint Paul (mosaic, Basilica of Saint Paul outside the walls, Rome)

sincere but not as perceptive. The majority of the first Palestinian Christians regarded apostolate towards uncircumcised pagans, excluded from the sacred enclosure of Israel, as an unseemly audacity, almost a profanation; Paul, on the other hand, not only takes aim at the pagans, but discovers in them the main hope of the Gospel, the particular field where Christ will triumph. Indeed, he goes much further: he, already a rabbi and zealous of Jewish law, asserts the incompatibility of the new spirit with the ancient letter and advocates the clear separation of one from the other, as it is no longer a time to store the new wine inside old wineskins. The spiritual birth, through which the Christian Church separated itself from the Jewish Synagogue, above all had its maieutic in Paul".⁽³³⁾

Another category of peoples whom Saint Paul had to battle were the **Gnostics** and this especially in the latter years of his life. "It is very difficult to determine with precision what

their doctrines and errors were at the time, however, it is beyond doubt that the principles of all the Gnostic heresies of the second century date back to the time of the Apostles. In Asia Minor, there were false doctors who indulged in strange philosophical speculations, in the exaggerated cult of angels, in a misunderstood asceticism, they taught interminable genealogies, then proposed futile and harmful questions, etc., with the sole intention of harming the greatness of Jesus Christ, and to distance the faithful from him. Saint Paul wrote against these errors in the letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians, and then again in his pastoral letters"⁽³⁴⁾ (to Titus and Timothy).

Finally there were **bad Christians**. Alongside men and women full of fervor, there were many souls who led lives that did not conform at all to the teachings of the Gospel. Saint Paul with his authority often reprimands them in his letters, denounces their abuses, shows their gravity and malice, and punishes the scandalous ones. He reminds us that if Christ freed men from the servitude of the law, he did not abolish the moral precepts to which Christians must adhere. There is no need to scandalize brothers who are weak in faith, and for no reason should anyone participate in the worship of idols.

Conclusion: the legacy of Saint Paul

What today remains of the preaching and work of Saint Paul? Materially, there remains almost nothing. The numerous and fervent Christianities that he founded in Asia Minor and Greece, where Christianity had its cradle, have almost all disappeared: the Gospel of Paul was expelled by Muhammad's *Koran* or by the "orthodox" schism, just as in turn the *Koran* is today about to be expelled by atheistic laicism in the East as in the West. The few communities

founded by Paul elsewhere today are reduced to a few; the community in Rome still remains today and, despite being the backbone of Christianity, it is unfortunately infected by modernist heresy, but it was not founded by Saint Paul alone, but together with Saint Peter, who always considered it based *on someone else's foundations*.

From a spiritual point of view, the exact opposite happened. Through his writings, Paul's preaching has grown and expanded and spread over the centuries throughout the world: the memory of the evangelical parable comes spontaneously to mind in which the mustard plant in its full development is compared to the tiny seed from which it sprung.

Saint John Chrysostom, wanting to underline the importance of reading the letters of the great Apostle, writes: "While I assiduously listen to the reading of the Letters of the blessed Paul, a reading which I often do two, three and four times every week, each time we celebrate the memories of the holy Martyrs, I rejoice with happiness, enjoying this spiritual trumpet, and I feel excited and inflamed with ardor in recognizing a voice so dear to me, and it seems as if I almost see him present and hear him speak. But on the other hand, I am saddened and disappointed in the fact that not everyone knows this man as they should: in fact, many ignore him so much that they don't even know the precise number of his letters. Now this comes not from inability, but from not assiduously desiring to have the writings of this holy man in one's hands.

Since what we understand, if we understand anything, is not due to the quality and acumen of our ingenuity: but because, being greatly fond of this man, we never fail to read him: those who love, in fact, know the works of those they love more than all the others, because they care for them with solicitude. This is what

the blessed himself shows us, speaking to the Philippians *'It is right that I think this way about all of you, because both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, I carry you in my heart'* (Phil. 1, 7)." ⁽³⁵⁾

With his usual liveliness and acuity, Abbot Ricciotti points out that "today Christianity mostly means Paul, just like human civilization mostly means Christianity: the truly civilized man, consciously or not, is to a greater or lesser extent, today a follower of Paul.

But this historical law, one of apparent failure followed by real triumph, has always governed the destinies of Christianity, and was applied even before Paul to Jesus himself.

The conversion of the Jews, to whom the mission of Jesus is immediately addressed, does not occur: the mission fails, and not only does the doctrine of Jesus not take root on the very soil of the Jews but forty years after his death the nation of the Jews itself is also uprooted and thrown outside. The failure, therefore, seems total. But this too was foreseen: *amen, amen, I say unto you, unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it will remain alone* (John 12, 24). And therefore a failure to which triumph is subordinated, a death to which life is subordinated: the single grain dies to release the turgid ear. Mere mortals look to fleeting, immediate triumph: God looks to perennial, future triumph.

As in Jesus, so it is in his great disciple Paul. While alive, he fills space with his industriousness: but all the works done in space alone are perishable, because they are imprinted in matter, while only the immaterial works, imprinted in souls, are perennial. Thus, once Paul is dead and the works with which he has filled the space are also dead, he continues to fill time with his thoughts which he has imprinted on souls.

The analogy between Master and disciple is also surprising for the way in which they present themselves to the historian, and for the positions they occupy in primitive Christian documentation. It has been observed with complete accuracy that the New Testament, unlike the Old, essentially consists of two great biographies, the biography of Jesus contained in the four gospels, and the biography of Paul contained in the Acts and in the letters: the little else that remains acts almost as a reinforcement to these two biographies, and relies on them. Paul, in reality, had not been at Jesus' side, nor had he ever seen him in his mortal life, while the other apostles had been companions of the Master night and day throughout his public ministry; yet we know very little about the other apostles, sometimes only the name, while of this thirteenth companion, of this *abortive* apostle (1 Cor. 15, 8), we have a rich biography, which is also partly autobiography. Such an exalted privilege was not granted to anyone else, not even to the beloved young apostle, who was to die very old after Paul and in places cultivated by Paul; but perhaps God arranged it in this way so that the portrait of a very similar human model was added to the portrait of the truly divine model, and from the two superimposed portraits certain spiritual features of the single face would better emerge. *Be imitators of me, as I also of Christ* (1 Cor. 11, 1).⁽³⁶⁾

Giuseppe Ricciotti continues by asking: "In conclusion, what is Paul? Looked at as a complete figure, he is neither typically a mystic, nor a speculative, nor a missionary, nor an organizer, nor an ascetic, nor a shepherd of souls: in none of these categories can he be totally and exclusively included, yet these same categories are found in him, all brought together in a real life.

He is a mystic like Catherine of Siena, who shares many analogies with him, but at the

same time is a speculative like Thomas Aquinas, who comments with unsurpassed insight on the letter to the *Romans*; he too is a missionary to regions new to Christianity, like Francis Xavier, but is also an organizer within the Church like Charles Borromeo; he is a singular ascetic like Thomas à Kempis, but does not hesitate being a collective pastor of souls like Philip Neri. What is he not? And in how many ways does posterity fail to interpret some of his attitudes? When Philip Neri lit his daily lamp in front of the effigy of Savonarola, did he not all too candidly believe that the friar of Saint Mark had imitated Paul's attitude towards Peter in Antioch? And when Jerome expressed his disagreements with Ambrose, Augustine and others in such a rude manner, did he not also believe he was imitating Paul's attitude towards Barnabas?

Today's scholars, who are almost always only cerebralists, mostly investigate the theoretical Paul, searching for his abstract ideas. Perhaps this is neither most nor best. Christianity, at all times, has conquered men not only through abstract ideas - as any philosophical system could do - but above all through real lives: these have made those fundamental ideas of Christianity which have conquered men shine in practical reality.

The great souls who most influenced the spread of Christianity, especially in critical times, taught not so much with theory but with practice. Benedict of Nursia put into writing few abstract ideas; but then he brought them into practice himself, and thus by his example he attracted countless crowds in every century and in every region. Francis of Assisi wrote even less; but he too allowed his ideas to shine through his own practical example, and the result was that his gaunt shoulders supported the Church that was collapsing. In Italy alone, in ages equally decisive, Philip Neri and John

Bosco wrote few things with the pen, but they wrote very much with the fiery facts of their ideas in human souls. Before all of them, Paul did the same, because he wrote little compared to the very much he performed in his entire life. But even in this, Paul and all the others after him were imitators of Jesus, who left nothing in writing and - as the subtle Luke tells us with graduated reflection - *he began to do and to teach* (Acts 1,1). For Christ, like his followers, his teachings were first of all his works. The one true book composed by Paul is, therefore, his life, in which the pages are the works he completed, and from time to time between these pages there are some elucidating notes, which are his letters.”⁽³⁷⁾

We owe the preaching of the Catholic faith to the Gentiles to Saint Paul, so for us he is like a father in faith. To him, as an instrument in the hands of God and a secondary author, we are the tributaries of the wonderful teachings that we find in his epistles without which perhaps we could not have been truly Christians. How many prayers, how many meditations can we do thanks to his letters; what better way could we find to get closer to God and know and love Jesus Christ than his writings (besides the Holy Gospels)? **It is certainly very difficult to imagine a Christianity without Saint Paul; Catholicism would not truly be what we know without him. Saint Paul did not invent, nor did he distort or alter, the doctrine of the Master Jesus, but he was his most faithful Apostle and herald, the trumpet of Christ which was heard by all peoples, not only by his contemporaries, but by all the centuries to come after him.** As we have seen, in him everything is the work of divine grace (*by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace towards me was not in vain*); through him, grace still reaches our poor souls of the twenty-first century, and by reading and meditating on his letters we still seem to hear

him preach. The light of his doctrine shines throughout the centuries and for eternity in the Holy Church, bride of Christ, even in the midst of the darkest times of persecution or religious indifferentism in which modern man, forgetful of God, wants to live. “*We preach Christ crucified, who is a stumbling block to the Jews and a foolishness to the Gentiles*” (1 Cor. 1, 23). The saints made history and often changed society in their era, and perhaps no one did so in such a great and incisive way in the history of humanity as the Apostle Saint Paul.

If this article has made you know and above all love Saint Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, a little more, then it will have achieved its purpose and its author will be happy... because the desire to write this article came from studying and teaching Holy Scripture at our seminary; in fact one cannot read Saint Paul or explain his life and writings without experiencing his influence and being conquered by his charisma and trying to put his teachings into practice, as he teaches us: “*be imitators of me as I of Christ*” (1 Cor. 11, 1). Furthermore, for us priests today who have to travel a lot to celebrate the Holy Mass and administer the sacraments to souls, the example of Saint Paul who like us, but much more than us, traveled amidst a thousand vicissitudes, “*in itineribus saepe*” (*in journeys, often* - 2 Cor. 11, 26) as he himself writes, is a great example and comfort in our apostolate.

Footnotes

- 1) I began writing this article on June 29th, the feast of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and I concluded it on January 25th, the feast of the conversion of St. Paul.
- 2) S. AUGUSTINE, *On grace and free will*. Sermon of the 2nd nocturne of the feast of the commemoration of Saint Paul, June 30.
- 3) GIUSEPPE RICCIOTTI, *Paolo Apostolo* (Oscar Mondadori 1991, § 120-122, p. 100).
- 4) The major representatives of this school were: A. Pierson, S.A. Naber, A. Loman, van Manen, D. Völter.

- 5) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.*, § 128, p. 106.
- 6) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.*, § 137-138, pp. 114s.
- 7) Eugenio Scalfari, who died in June, 2022, had interviewed J. M. Bergoglio many times in his magazine *Repubblica*. On his death, he said he felt “sorrow for the loss of his friend. He fondly preserves the memory of his meetings he had with him over the years - and dense conversations on man’s ultimate questions - and in prayer entrusts his soul to the Lord, so that he may welcome him and console those who were close to him.” <https://www.avvenire.it/attualita/pagine/papa-francesco-e-scalfari-il-giornalista-ateo-amicizia>. This “friendship” amazed even the editors of *Avvenire*, and that’s saying something...
- 8) On this site (an article from 2015) can be found the quotation by Scalfari: <https://www.ucronline.it/2015/05/29/no-non-fu-paolo-il-vero-fondatore-del-cristianesimo/>
- 9) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.*, § 147, pp. 121s.
- 10) Saint Pius X, Decree *Lamentabili* of July 3, 1907 proposition no. 31: *The doctrine on Christ, handed down by Paul, John and the Nicene, Ephesian and Chalcedonian Councils, is not that taught by Jesus, but what Christian conscience conceived of Jesus*. No. 38: *The doctrine concerning the atoning Death of Christ is not evangelical, but only Pauline*. See DS. 3431, 3438; EB. 222, 229.
- 11) MARCO SALES O.P., *La sacra Bibbia commentata. Il Nuovo Testamento Vol. II, Le lettere degli Apostoli - L'Apocalisse*, Licet Torino 1925, p. 9.
- 12) Saint Pius X, Discourse *to the new cardinals*, April 17, 1907 https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/it/speeches/documenti/hf_p-x_spe_19071218_nuovi-cardinali.htm
- 13) In ancient geography, Cilicia formed a district on the southeastern coast of Asia Minor (today, Turkey), north of the island of Cyprus. It extended along the coast of the Mediterranean from Pamphilia to Mount Amanus (*Giaour Dagh*), which separates it from Syria.
- 14) “Paul’s birth year is not the result of any document. Indirectly one can conjecture from two occasional references. One is in the letter to *Philemon*, 9, where Paul calls himself old, which implies according to the common use of the work that he has at least reached the age of 60: since that letter was written between the years 61-63, Paul was born in one of the earliest years of the Common Era, if not even some years earlier.
- The other reference is even more vague on the occasion of the stoning of Stephen, which can be fixed with sufficient certainty in the year 36, Paul is called *young* [‘νεανίας’ in Greek] (Acts 7, 58), by which word the Greeks designated both an adolescent of not yet 20 years, or a man approaching 40. Taking an average between these two figures, and also considering that Paul is immediately presented as a person of a certain authority in carrying out the persecution against Christians (Acts 8, 3), we can reasonably assume that he was then between 30 and 35 years old: which once again leads us to place his birth in one of the very first years of the Common Era”. G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.*, § 149, p. 125.
- 15) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.*, § 270, p. 214.
- 16) M. SALES O.P., *La sacra Bibbia... op. cit.*, p. 2.
- 17) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.*, § 262, p. 208.
- 18) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.*, § 264-65, pp. 210-211.
- 19) Saint Luke wrote the Acts certainly after the third Gospel (around 60) and he without a doubt died in 63-64 as is known from the last verses of the Acts itself, that is, toward the end of Saint Paul’s Roman imprisonment. Luke in Acts speaks of Jerusalem, yet not even minimally mentioning that it had been destroyed, therefore it must be supposed that he wrote it before its destruction in the year 70 a.d. The same thing for Saint Peter of whom he writes as though he were not yet dead (therefore before the years 64-67).
- 20) Saint Clement of Rome who was the 4th pope of the Catholic Church (from 88-97) also wrote an epistle to the Corinthians (not to be confused with the two by Saint Paul), see R.J. 11.
- 21) It was said also of Father Davide Albertario that he “used a pen like a sword”, in fact one of his models was Saint Paul himself.
- 22) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.*, § 164-67, pp. 137-139.
- 23) MARCO SALES O.P., *La sacra Bibbia... op. cit.*, p. 7.
- 24) It is an apocryphal writing that has come down to us in three parts which contains, among legendary and miraculous details, also exact information about Ricciotti (see RICCIOTTI, *Paolo Apostolo*, § 90 footnote 1, p. 80)
- 25) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.*, § 188-89, pp. 153-154.
- 26) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.*, § Retrospective look, pp. 504-511.
- 27) By “Canon of Holy Scripture” is meant those books inspired by God, which were received by the Church and retained, therefore, as sacred and canonical.
- 28) MARCO SALES O.P., *La sacra Bibbia... op. cit.*, p. 8.
- 29) MARCO SALES O.P., *La sacra Bibbia... op. cit.* Introduction to the letter to Philemon, p. 432.
- 30) What a difference from Bergoglio, who almost never mentions him in his speeches and documents...
- 31) FRANCESCO SPADAFORA, *Dizionario Biblico*, ed. Studium Roma 1963, Voce Paolo.
- 32) MARCO SALES O.P., *La sacra Bibbia... op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.
- 33) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.*, § Retrospective look, p. 508.
- 34) MARCO SALES O.P., *La sacra Bibbia... op. cit.*, p. 11.
- 35) S. GIOVANNI CRISOSTOMO, Preface to the Letters of Saint Paul. See *Breviario Romano* 2nd Nocturne Second Sunday after Epiphany.
- 36) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. Cit.*, § Retrospective look. Pp. 502-503.
- 37) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.* § Retrospective Look, pp. 519-520



*Statue of St. Paul
(Antonio Begarelli,
Abbey of St. Benedetto
In Polirone, S. Benedetto
Po MN)*

L'Osservatore Romano

After many years, *Sodalitium* returns to chronicle the errors and scandals of the purely material occupants of the See of Peter - errors and scandals incompatible with what should be their habitual intention of procuring the good of the Church; and at times even incompatible with the infallibility of the Supreme Pontiff and of the teaching Church with regard to faith and morals. As we wrote in the first apparition of this column, we complete this chronicle “without acrimony or pride, with great sadness and concern. Conscious of the fact that the faithful should not debate, but embrace the teaching of the Pope and the Church, we allow ourselves to write as we do only because, as we have already said and proven, we know, by the light of faith, that John Paul II, [Paul VI, Benedict XVI, Francis], have no pontifical authority or divine assistance, since they do not objectively and habitually procure the good of the Catholic Church. [...] This analysis is imposed by the moral obligation of publicly testifying to the Faith” (*Sodalitium* no. 36).

Due to the amount of work that would result, we limit ourselves to the period of the issue of *Sodalitium* no. 73 to today.

•“Baptism is the door and foundation of all the other Sacraments” (Code of Canon Law 1917)

On 10/26/2022 in his audience to seminarians and priests studying in Rome, Jorge M. Bergoglio recalled an episode from his past: “I remember that I often went to the retirement homes in Buenos Aires, and sometimes I celebrated Mass. Old people are brilliant, because they ask you the most challenging

questions... And then at Mass I said: ‘Which of you takes communion?’. And I went to them, because many times they can't walk, they are old, and they walk with a stick. And so I went: ‘Whoever wants to communicate, raise your hand.’ Everyone raised their hands... **I gave communion to a lady, then she took my hand: ‘Thank you, father, I'm Jewish.’ ‘But this one that I gave you was also Jewish, go ahead.’**”

And after giving the *go-ahead*, practically, for communion to non-Catholics (the reader will remember his statements at the Lutheran church of Rome, Nov. 15, 2015), the Synod on synodality requires a theoretical *go-ahead*: “The question of Eucharistic hospitality (*communicatio in sacris*) must be further examined from a theological, canonical and pastoral point of view, in light of the connection between sacramental and ecclesial communion. This issue is particularly felt by interfaith couples. It also refers to a broader reflection on mixed marriages” (summary report of the first assembly).

If we are not surprised by Bergoglio, what is surprising is how many “traditionalists” see the crisis of Authority, which in reality has lasted since the time of Paul VI, to be only about him! In fact, as an example of this question of giving the Sacraments to non-Catholics and non-Christians, Wojtila and Ratzinger have already given their approval, the former explicitly, the latter implicitly: we refer to press release 38/10 of the *Centro Studi Federici*: “Modernist circus: the arrival of ecumenical miracles”, of April 13, 2010.

• Faith is immutable according to Saint Pius X

We preface the two following points with a description by Saint Pius X from his



Bergoglio, giving communion to a Jewish woman, is in continuity with Joseph Ratzinger who, in the Piazza San Pietro during the funeral of John Paul II, gave communion to Roger Schutz of Taizé



Brazilian Bishop Steinmetz giving communion in the hand to a muslim sheik

Encyclical *Pascendi*, of the thinking of modernists regarding the origin of the Faith: “Therefore religious sentiment, which through the agency of vital immanence emerges from the lurking places of the subconsciousness, is the germ of all religion, and the explanation of everything that has been or ever will be in any religion. The sentiment, which was at first only rudimentary and almost formless, under the influence of that mysterious principle from which it originated, **gradually matured with the progress of human life**, of which, as has been said, it is a form. [...] In that sentiment of which We have frequently spoken, since sentiment is not knowledge, God indeed presents Himself to man, but in a manner so confused and indistinct that He can hardly be perceived by the believer. It is therefore necessary that a ray of light should be cast upon this sentiment, so that God may be clearly distinguished and set apart from it. This is the task of the intellect, whose office it is to reflect and to analyze, and by means of which man first transforms into mental pictures the vital phenomena which arise within him, and then expresses them in words. Hence the common

saying of Modernists: that the religious man must ponder his faith. [...] These formulas therefore stand midway between the believer and his faith; in their relation to the faith, they are the inadequate expression of its object, and are usually called **symbols**; in their relation to the believer, they are mere instruments. **Hence it is quite impossible to maintain that they express absolute truth: for, in so far as they are symbols, they are the images of truth, and so must be adapted to the religious sentiment in its relation to man;** and as instruments, they are the vehicles of truth, and must therefore in their turn be adapted to man in his relation to the religious sentiment. But the object of the religious sentiment, since it embraces that absolute, possesses an infinite variety of aspects of which now one, now another, may present itself. In like manner, he who believes may pass through different phases. **Consequently, the formulae too, which we call dogmas, must be subject to these vicissitudes, and are, therefore, liable to change.** Thus the way is open to the intrinsic evolution of dogma. It is an immense collection of sophisms that ruins and destroys all religion. [...] And so they [modernists] audaciously charge the Church both with taking the wrong road due to an inability to distinguish the religious and moral sense of formulas from their surface meaning, and with clinging tenaciously and vainly to

meaningless formulas whilst religion is allowed to go to ruin. Blind that they are, and leaders of the blind, inflated with a boastful science, they have reached that pitch of folly where they pervert the eternal concept of truth and the true nature of the religious sentiment” (nn. 10-13).

- ...and for Bergoglio it is “fixism” and “backwardism”

On 12/22/2022, on the occasion of the Christmas greeting to the Roman Curia, J. M. Bergoglio pronounced these words: “*This year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. **What was the Council event if not a great opportunity for conversion for the whole Church?***”⁽¹⁾ Saint John XXIII said in this regard: ‘It is not the Gospel that changes, it is we who begin to understand it better.’ The conversion that the Council gave us was the attempt to better understand the Gospel, **to make it current**, alive, operative in this historical moment. Thus, as has already happened several times in the history of the Church, even in our era as a community of believers we have felt called to conversion. And this journey is far from over. The current reflection on the synodality of the Church arises precisely from the conviction that **the path of understanding the message of Christ has no end and continually challenges us**. The opposite of conversion is fixism, that is, the hidden conviction of not needing any further understanding of the Gospel. **It is the mistake of wanting to crystallize the message of Jesus in a single form which is always valid. The form, however, must always be able to change so that the substance always remains the same.** True heresy does not only consist in preaching another Gospel (see Gal. 1, 9), as Paul reminds us, but also in stopping it from being translated into current languages and ways, which is what the Apostle of the

Gentiles did. Preservation means keeping alive and not imprisoning the message of Christ.”

In these words it seems we rediscover the way of thinking that was condemned by Saint Pius XI!

A description of the faith that sounds like Protestantism was also given by Bergoglio on other occasions: “*The Gospel is not an idea, the Gospel is not an ideology: the Gospel is an announcement that touches the heart and makes you change your heart, **but if you take refuge in an idea**, in an ideology whether of the right or left or center, you are making the Gospel a political party, an ideology, a club of people. The Gospel always gives you this freedom of the Spirit that acts in you and takes you forward. And how necessary it is today to take the freedom of the Gospel into our own hands and let ourselves be led forward by the Spirit*” (general audience, Feb. 22, 2023). “*The Spirit did not initiate the Church **by giving instructions and rules to the community**, but by descending on each Apostle: each one receives particular graces and different charisms. [...] **Therefore it does not create a language that is the same for everyone**, it does not erase differences, cultures, but it harmonizes everything without homogenizing, without standardizing. And at this time it must make us think, in this time in which the temptation of ‘backwardism’ seeks to homogenize everything into disciplines of appearance only, without substance. Let us keep to this aspect, **the Spirit that does not start from a structured project**, as we might do, so that we often then get lost in our own programs” (Pentecost homily, May 28, 2023). “*Vincent of Lérins makes the comparison between the biological development of man and the transmission of the depositum fidei from one era to another, which grows and consolidates with the passage of time. **Thus, man's understanding changes over time, and thus man's conscience also deepens.*** The other*

sciences and their evolution also help the Church in this growth in understanding. The view of Church doctrine as a monolith is wrong. But some call themselves out, they go backwards, they are what I call 'backwardists'. When you go backwards, you form something closed, disconnected from the roots of the Church and you lose the lifeblood of revelation" (meeting with the Portuguese Jesuits, May 8, 2023).

Is Bergoglio the only one to take up the modernist error on the nature of faith, or not? If, in his words, we find the *sentimentalism* and *evolutionism* of the modernist, it is precisely starting from the quote from John XXIII; and we must not forget Ratzinger's particularly *agnostic modernism* ⁽²⁾. Sentimentalism, the evolution of dogmas, agnosticism, consciously or not, are common to anyone who accepts Vatican II, which is in contradiction with the Faith which has always been transmitted by the Church!

• The Origin of Faith

In the aforementioned Encyclical *Pascendi*, Saint Pius X describes and condemns what would be, according to the modernists, the birth of Faith. For the modernist, God first manifests himself to man uniquely in the subconscious (as we saw in the preceding paragraph); but then *"The intellect, encountering this sentiment directs itself upon it, and produces in it a work resembling that of a painter who restores and gives new life to a picture that has perished with age. The simile is that of one of the leaders of Modernism. The operation of the intellect in this work is a double one: first by a natural and spontaneous act it expresses its concept in a simple, ordinary statement; then, on reflection and deeper consideration, or, as they say, by elaborating its thought, it expresses the idea in secondary*

propositions, which are derived from the first, but are more perfect and distinct. These secondary propositions, if they finally receive the approval of the supreme magisterium of the Church, constitute dogma" (Pascendi). According to the modernist, then, it is the faithful who delineate, according to their historical and social circumstances and consequential needs, what the Faith must be; while the Church must listen to them, her teaching only sanctioning the common sentiments of the faithful.

In his audience of 3/23/2023 given to the participants of the Convention promoted by the Pontifical Alphonsian Academy, Bergoglio said; *"Don't forget the holy faithful people of God! But not on the level of thought, but starting from your roots which are in the holy people of God; don't forget that you were taken from the flock, you are from them, don't forget the air of the people, the thoughts of the people, the feelings of the people. And this is not communism, socialism, no! This is the holy faithful people of God which is infallible "in believing"; don't forget this, Vatican I says this, and then Vatican II."*

Infallibility *in believing* does actually exist; it is a truth connected to the dogma of the indefectibility of the Church: if all the faithful erred in faith, the Church would no longer be as Christ established it, it would no longer have the



same faith which is impossible given the words of Jesus: *The gates of hell will not prevail against it* (Mt. 16, 18). And given that the proximate rule of faith is the Magisterium of the Church, it is clear first of all that this *passive* infallibility of the faithful is simply consequent to the *active* infallibility (that of the Magisterium) from which the faithful receive their faith; and secondly it is clear that this *passive* infallibility is not always and necessarily total: it is certainly impossible for *all* Catholics to be wrong, but it is false that *no* Catholic, *no set* of Catholics can ever be wrong! ⁽³⁾

It is not the first time that Bergoglio speaks about this, always referring to *Lumen Gentium* and always suggesting that this infallibility would be *innate* in the people of God (and not *consequent*), and that the leaders of the Church, rather than regulating it (with *active* infallibility) must *listen* to this passive infallibility. “*When the dialogue among the people and the bishops and the Pope takes this path and is loyal, then it is assisted by the Holy Spirit*” (Bergoglio in an interview with Antonio Spadaro 8/19/2013, published in *L’Osservatore Romano* on 9/21/2013). “*Even in the Church we must distinguish between doctrine and ideology: true doctrine is never ideology, never; it radiates from the Holy faithful people of God; while instead ideology is detached from reality, detached from the people*” (press conference on the return flight from Mongolia 9/4/2023). “*When you want to know what Holy Mother Church believes, go to the Magisterium, because it is responsible for teaching it to you, but when you want to know how the Church believes, go to the faithful*” (to the 18th General Congregation of the Synod, 10/25/2023). “*Accordingly, the knowledge of the common sense of the people must be prioritized first, which is in fact the theological place [locus theologicus] in which so many portraits of God dwell, often not congruent*

with the Christian face of God, who is only and always love.” (Apostolic Letter *Ad theologiam promovendam*, 1/11/2023).

Wojtila too had words in this regard: “*in the context of the mission of the Church, which has a prophetic character, thanks to the prophetic mission of Christ himself, and in strict connection with the ‘sense of the faith’, in which all faithful participate, that ‘infallibility’ has the character of gift and service*” (Letter to the German E.C. May 15, 1980). Furthermore, the International Theological Commission has been dealing with it since the “pontificates” of Wojtila and Ratzinger [see the documents from 1989 and 2014, concluding the previous five years of work. ⁽⁴⁾]

We do not know which passage of Vatican I Bergoglio is referring to, given that the Constitution *Dei Filius* states that the word of God is contained in Scripture and Tradition, and is received, sacredly preserved and genuinely interpreted by the Shepherds of the Catholic Church. Vatican II in the constitution *Lumen gentium* in no. 12 actually speaks of the infallibility of all the faithful in the faith, without clearly distinguishing the role of bishops and lay faithful, but at the same time recalling the guiding role of the Magisterium.

- **The divinity of Jesus Christ called into question (again)**

Nestorius, the fifth century heretic, denied the union of the divinity and humanity in the one person of Our Lord; a consequence of this error is that Jesus Christ would be a simple man, whose knowledge would then be limited like that of any one of us. The Church condemned the fundamental error of Nestorius, and also the consequence of it that we described, as it condemned the modernists who practically supported the same doctrine: “*Christ was not*



*“Each of your traditions has a richness to offer the world”
speech to “women committed to interreligious encounter” (01/26/23)*

always aware of his messianic dignity” - a proposition condemned by Saint Pius X ⁽⁵⁾.

In his general audience of 1/18/2023, Bergoglio spoke ambiguously on this subject: *“Precisely in this relationship, in the prayer that binds him to the Father in the Spirit, **Jesus discovers** the meaning of his being man, of his existence in the world because He is on a mission for us, sent to us by the Father”*. Likewise in that of 11/22/2023: *“Not only does **someone change Jesus’ mind**, and it is a woman, foreign and pagan (Mt XV, 21-28); but **the Lord himself finds confirmation** in the fact that his preaching must not be limited to the people to which he belongs, but must be open to everyone.”* Wojtila already spoke of the *“historical evolution of Jesus’ consciousness”* (general audience of 5/10/1988).

- **There is no salvation outside of the Church**

...Because the Church alone transmits, integrally and uncorrupted, the truth of faith and morals, and the ordinary means of grace are only found within it. In the Constitution *Lumen gentium*, the Second Vatican Council betrayed this truth of faith; Wojtila and Ratzinger spoke similarly ⁽⁶⁾; Bergoglio in his audience of 1/19/2023 to the “Ecumenical Delegation of

Finland”: *“In the community of all the baptized, we know that we are indeed united with each other [Catholics and Lutherans], here and now, with every sister and brother in Christ, but also with our mothers and fathers in the faith who lived before us [Catholics and Lutherans]. **From the perfect communion of Heaven [Catholics and Lutherans] they look at us and invite us to walk together on this earth.** [...] What is needed, especially today, is an ardent zeal for evangelization because by proclaiming together we rediscover ourselves as brothers and sisters [Catholics and Lutherans].”*

For the modernist, subjectivism and bleeding-heart brotherhood, the foundations of ecumenism, pass over the condemnation of ecumenism itself by Pope Pius XI: *“It must seem as though these pan-Christians, all busy uniting the Churches, tend toward the very noble end of fomenting charity among all Christians; **but how could charity succeed if to the detriment of the faith?** [...] How then could one conceive of a Christian Confederation, whose members, even when it came to the object of faith, could each maintain their own way of thinking and judging, even if it was contrary to the opinions of others?”* (Pius XI, Encyclical *Mortalium animos*, 1/6/1928).

On 2/23/2023 Bergoglio returned to the topic: *“Of course, sadness and self-absorption prevented the disciples of Emmaus from recognizing Jesus; similarly **discouragement and self-referentiality prevent Christians of different confessions from seeing what unites them, from recognizing the One who unites them.** So, as believers we must believe that, the more we walk together, the more we will be mysteriously accompanied by Christ, because unity is a common pilgrimage”* (to the young priests and monks of the Eastern Orthodox Churches). *“We saw the leaders and representatives of the other Christian confessions praying together with the*

Pope, at Peter's tomb: *unity silently ferments within the Holy Church of God* [and therefore other confessions are already **within** the Holy Church of God, editor's note]. [...] *Baptism itself, which is at the beginning of synodality, also constitutes the foundation of ecumenism. Through it, all Christians participate in the sensus fidei and for this reason they must carefully be listened to, regardless of their tradition, as the Synodal Assembly did in its discernment process. There cannot be synodality without an ecumenical dimension. Ecumenism is first and foremost a question of spiritual renewal and also requires processes of repentance and healing of memory*" (summary report of the first session of the Synod on synodality). *"To advance on the path of faith we also need ecumenical dialogue with our brothers and sisters of other Christian confessions and communities. Not as something that confuses or creates discomfort, but as a gift that God gives to the Christian community so that it grows as one body, the body of Christ. [...] If we let ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit, richness, variety and diversity never become a reason for conflict. The Spirit reminds us that first and foremost we are beloved children of God. All equal in the love of God and all different"* ("Pope's prayer intention" for January 2024). Nothing new under the sun since the *Nota explicativa prævia* of *Lumen gentium*...

• New Saints...

After all, even someone who dies for a false religion is a Saint and can be prayed to: *"We are pleased to announce today that, with the consent of His Holiness [speaking about "Pope" Tawadros II, head of the orthodox Coptic Church; he's using the same label already used by Paul VI], these 21 martyrs [orthodox Coptics killed in Libya on 2/15/2015] are*



Paul VI had previously met with schismatic Patriarch Athenagoras

inserted into the Roman Martyrology as a sign of the spiritual communion that unites our two Churches" (speech on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the meeting between Paul VI and Shenouda III). Setting aside the possibility of the good faith of these people, which could bring to their salvation despite their heresy (but only God knows of their possible good faith): a martyr is someone that gives their life in testimony of the true faith publicly professed, not to heresy... To equate these two categories is equivalent to equating their faiths! *"With their physical suffering unto death, the martyrs bear witness to the truth, but not to any truth, rather to the truth revealed by Christ 'which is according to piety'; they are in fact martyrs of Christ, that is, his witnesses. Now such truth is the truth of faith. Wherefore the cause of martyrdom is the truth of faith."* (Saint Thomas, *Summa Theologica* IIa IIæ, q. 124, a. 5).

Paul VI had already stated that in addition to Catholics, of martyrs there are *"many more and not only Catholics but also Anglicans and also Muslims"*...(at the Angelus of 8/3/1969), and the Anglicans would really have died *"for the name of Christ"* (homily for canonizations, 10/8/1964). Bergoglio himself

reminds us that with Wojtila “ecumenical martyrs” “*had already been remembered on May 7, 2000* ⁽⁷⁾ *in an ecumenical celebration, which saw representatives of the Churches and ecclesial communities from all over the world gathered at the Colosseum, to evoke, together with the Bishop of Rome, the richness of what I myself later defined as the “ecumenism of blood”. Also in the next Jubilee we will find ourselves united for a similar celebration*” (letter of the constitution of the “Commission of New Martyrs - Witnesses to the Faith” at the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, 7/5/2023 ⁽⁸⁾).

“*The proposal to compile an ecumenical martyrology is relaunched*” (summary report of the first assembly of the Synod on synodality).

• Ecumenism towards the East

Particular mention should be made of the dialogue between modernism and the eastern schism. Following Ratzinger’s election, the current dialogue signals an important stage; in 2007 a document was released on *Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority*, developed by the *Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church*. In 2008 their studies continued regarding the conception of the papacy in the first millennium. In 2016 the document *Synodality and Primacy in the First Millennium* arrived: “*In the West, the primacy of the see of Rome was understood, especially starting from the fourth century, with reference to the role of Peter among the apostles. The primacy of the bishop of Rome among the bishops was gradually interpreted [evolution of dogmas... editor's note] as a prerogative that belonged to him since he was the successor of Peter, first among the apostles. This understanding was not adopted in the East,*

which had a different interpretation of the Scriptures and the Fathers on this point. Our dialogue may return to this issue in the future.”

On June 7, 2023 the document *Synodality and Primacy in the Second Millennium and Today* was released: “*Serious questions complicate an authentic understanding of synodality and primacy in the Church. The Church is not properly understood as a pyramid, with a primate who governs from above, but neither can it be properly understood as a federation of self-sufficient Churches. Our historical study of synodality and primacy in the second millennium has shown the inadequacy of both these views. Likewise, it is clear that, for Roman Catholics, synodality is not purely consultative, and for Orthodox, the primacy is not purely honorific. In 1979, Pope Paul VI and the ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios said: ‘[...] The purification of the collective memory of our Churches is an important fruit of the dialogue of charity and an indispensable condition for future progress’ (Joint Declaration, 11/30/1979). Roman Catholics and Orthodox need to continue on this path, in order to embrace an authentic understanding of synodality and primacy in light of the ‘theological principles, canonical norms and liturgical practices’ (Chieti, 21) of the undivided Church of the first millennium. [...] The Second Vatican Council opened new perspectives by fundamentally interpreting the mystery of the Church as a **mystery of communion**. Today, there is a growing effort to promote synodality at all levels in the Roman Catholic Church. There is also a desire to distinguish what can be defined as the patriarchal ministry of the pope within the Western or Latin Church from his primatial service regarding the communion of all the Churches, offering new opportunities for the future.*”

On 6/30/2023, Bergoglio confirmed that “today, keeping in mind the teaching of history, we are called to search together for a modality of exercise of the primacy which, in the context of synodality, is at service of the communion of the Church at a universal level. In this regard, a clarification is appropriate: **it is not possible to think that the same prerogatives that the Bishop of Rome has with regard to his Diocese and the Catholic community are extended to the Orthodox communities**; when, with God's help, we will be fully united in faith and love, the way in which the Bishop of Rome will exercise his service of communion in the Church on a universal level must result from **an inseparable relationship between primacy and synodality**” (audience with the Delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate). “The ecumenical movement is contributing to the ongoing synodal process of the Catholic Church, and I hope that the synodal process can in turn contribute to the ecumenical movement. Synodality and ecumenism are in fact two paths that proceed together” (audience with Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, Catholicos of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church, 9/11/2023).

In this regard, the Synod on synodality also expressed itself: “**Synodality [...] involves assuming a decision in a differentiated co-responsibility.** [...] From the work of the Assembly, there emerges the request for a better knowledge of the teachings of Vatican II, of the post-conciliar magisterium and of the social doctrine of the Church. We need to know better our different traditions so as **to be more clearly a Church of Churches in communion**, effective in service and dialogue. [...] In the Orthodox Churches, synodality is understood in the strict sense as an expression of the collegial exercise of the authority proper to the Bishops alone (the Holy Synod). In a broad sense, it refers to the active participation of all the faithful in the life



Benedict XVI barefoot in the blue mosque of Istanbul

and mission of the Church. There was no shortage of references to practices in use in other ecclesial communities, which enriched our debate. **All this requires further investigation.** [...] The ongoing ecumenical dialogues have made it possible to better understand, in light of the practices of the first millennium, that synodality and primacy are related, complementary and inseparable realities. The clarification of this delicate point is reflected in the way of understanding the Petrine ministry at the service of unity, as desired by Saint John Paul II in the Encyclical *Ut unum sint*” (relationship of synthesis of the first session).

From Montini to the Council to Ratzinger, all of them have brought forward the work of de-monarchizing the hierarchy (“**the Pope is not, in fact, an absolute monarch** but, in collective listening to Christ, he must, so to speak, personify the totality” thus Ratzinger on 8/5/2006); they committed themselves to making it “synodal”, approaching the characteristics of the model of the Eastern schismatics ⁽⁹⁾ - with whom it is therefore obvious to have a privileged “dialogue”. “There are two or three doctrinal points **on which there has been an evolution** on our part, due to the advancement of studies. We will explain the reason for this evolution and we will submit it for His consideration and that of your theologians” (Paul VI in the meeting with the schismatic patriarch Athenagoras, in Jerusalem,

1/5/1964). *“The Episcopal body has, in the successor of Saint Peter, not a different and extraneous power, but it's head and almost its center”* (speech of 11/21/1964).

- **Not just ecumenism: there are also other religions**

From Vatican Council II until today, we know that there is no longer a need to be Catholic to be saved; but is it at least necessary to be *Christian*? For those who don't remember the interreligious meetings at Assisi so desired by Wojtila and Ratzinger, Bergoglio recalls: *“The Catholic Church is committed to interreligious dialogue and in the promotion of understanding and cooperation among the believers of different religious traditions. Each of your traditions has a richness to offer to the world, to infuse it a spirit of welcoming, care and brotherhood”* (to the International Conference “Women Building a Culture of Encounter Interreligiously”, 1/26/2023).

The material occupant of the Apostolic See reiterated this the following April 30: *“God has gathered us here so that, even though we are different and belong to different communities, the greatness of his love may bring us all together in a single embrace. It is nice to find us together: the Bishops and priests, the religious and the lay faithful; and it is beautiful to share this joy together with the ecumenical delegations, with the leaders of the Jewish community”; “thank you for your presence and thank you because in this country different confessions and religions meet and support each other”* (in Budapest). In fact *“religions, when they refer to their original spiritual heritage and are not corrupted by sectarian deviances, are in all respects reliable supports in the construction of healthy and prosperous societies, where believers work hard to ensure that civil coexistence and*

political planning are increasingly at the service of the common good” (meeting with the Mongolian authorities, 9/2/2023).⁽¹⁰⁾

“The Church teaches the necessity and encourages the practice of interreligious dialogue as part of the construction of communion among all peoples. In a world of violence and fragmentation, a testimony to the unity of humanity, its common origin and its common destiny appears increasingly urgent, in a coordinated and fraternal solidarity towards social justice, peace, reconciliation and care of the common home. The Church is aware that the Spirit can speak through the voice of men and women of every religion, belief and culture” (summary report of the first assembly of the Synod on synodality).

Then on May 4, speaking to the participants in the conference “Creative Communities between Christianity and Islam”: *“The Middle East is varied and rich [...] in religions [...]. It is, in fact, a matter of jealousy preserving every piece of this beautiful mosaic. [...] Our common commitment is to a good life, which gives glory to God.”* Every religion must therefore be preserved, and we must follow the dictates of the Koran by leading a good life that gives glory to God - obviously the one God, that Christians and Muslims would have in common; Vatican II says all this in *Lumen gentium* at n. 16, the 1992 “Catechism” says this, and Ratzinger said so on various official occasions!⁽¹¹⁾ Bergoglio with the Abu Dhabi declaration of 2019 is nothing but the evolution of Vatican II, of Wojtila who kissed the Koran, of Ratzinger who prayed barefoot in the mosque.

- **Cremation**

Sodalitium has already abundantly spoken about cremation and the doctrine of the Church in this regard⁽¹²⁾. This is the text under the heading “Cremation” in the index of the

Code of Canon Law: “*Cremation of corpses is condemned (can. 1203 § 1), and is illicit, even if requested by the deceased, and any addition of this to a will, contract, deed, etc. is invalid (can. 1203 § 2); whoever requests this must be deprived of ecclesiastical burial (can. 1240 § 1 n. 5); the penalties against transgressors of this prohibition are listed (can. 2339)*”; they must be denied a funeral Mass and any funeral office. The ashes must be buried separately from the tombs of the faithful, and outside the blessed grounds of the cemetery (can. 1212).

And here is the history of modernist evolution up to Bergoglio...

- The instruction *De cadaverum crematione* approved by Paul VI (7/5/1963), after having recommended burial, established that canon 1203 and 1240 should only be applied in cases where it is evident that the choice for cremation is due to aversion to Catholic doctrine. “*It therefore follows that those who choose cremation of their corpse **should not be denied the sacraments or public suffrage.***”

- The “novus ordo exsequiarum” of Aug. 15, 1969 (n. 15 in the introduction) allows the carrying out of funerals for those who have chosen cremation; they can be carried out in the same crematorium.

- The “new law” promulgated by John Paul II (1/25/1983) confirms this decision; here is canon 1176 § 3: “*The Church strongly recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the deceased be preserved; however, she does not prohibit cremation, unless this has been chosen for reasons contrary to Christian doctrine.*”

Can. 1184 § 1 n. 2: “*If before death, those who chose the cremation of their body for reasons contrary to the Christian faith did not show any sign of repentance, they must be deprived of ecclesiastical funerals*”

- “Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church” (of 6/28/2005, approved by Benedict XVI), answer n. 479: “*The bodies of the deceased must be treated with charity and respect. Their cremation is permitted if it is carried out without calling into question their faith in the resurrection of the bodies.*”

- Instruction *Ad resurgendum cum Christo* of 8/15/2016: “*If for legitimate reasons the choice is made to cremate the body, the ashes of the deceased must normally be preserved **in a sacred place**, i.e. in the cemetery or, if necessary, in a church or in an area specifically dedicated for this purpose by the competent ecclesiastical authority. [...] Conserving the ashes in a sacred place can help reduce the risk of removing the deceased from the prayers and memories of relatives and the Christian community. Furthermore, in this way we avoid the possibility of forgetfulness and lack of respect, which can occur especially once the first generation has passed, as well as inappropriate or superstitious practices. For the reasons listed above, the storage of ashes in the home is not permitted. [...] To avoid any type of pantheistic, naturalist or nihilistic misunderstanding, the dispersion of ashes in the air, on land or in water or in any other way or the conversion of cremated ashes into commemorative mementos is not permitted.*”

- “Reply to His Eminence the Cardinal Matteo Maria Zuppi, Archbishop of Bologna, regarding two questions relating to the conservation of the ashes of the deceased, subjected to cremation” (12/12/2023): “*It is possible to prepare **a sacred place**, defined and permanent, for the mixed accumulation and conservation of the ashes of the baptized deceased [...]. Furthermore, provided that any type of pantheistic, naturalist or nihilistic misunderstanding is excluded and that the ashes of the deceased are preserved **in a sacred place**,*

the ecclesiastical authority, in compliance with current civil regulations, can take into consideration and evaluate the request of a family to duly preserve a small part of the ashes of one of their relatives in a place significant for the history of the deceased.”

- **Teilhard de Chardin**

Bergoglio is a confirmed admirer of the apostate and pantheist Teilhard de Chardin, whom he abundantly quoted after the Sunday celebration at Ulaanbaatar (9/3/2023) and whom he defined as “*an often misunderstood priest*”. Was he “*misunderstood*” by Pius XII, who condemned his ideas in the Encyclical *Humani generis*? Or by the Holy Office, who prohibited the distribution and translation of his works?

This is what Bergoglio's words suggest - as Montini, Ratzinger and above all Wojtila had suggested: as soon as Paul VI was elected, in June 1963, he invited the best-known of Teilhard de Chardin's followers, namely, Father de Lubac, to the VI International Thomist Congress, to present “*a favorable exposition of the thinking of Father Teilhard de Chardin*” (letter from Fr. Boyer to Fr. de Lubac). John Paul II publicly praised Teilhard on the occasion of his centenary (“Letter from Cardinal Casaroli, on behalf of the Holy Father, to the Rector of the Catholic Institute of Paris” in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 6/10/1981) and consecrated, so to speak, his doctrine by giving the cardinal's purple to his disciple, Henri de Lubac, and integrating various aspects of it into his own “magisterium” (for example in the *Letter to Families*; in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*; and in *Mulieris dignitatem*). Benedict XVI said he admired the “great vision” of the Jesuit apostate.

Other great fascinations, common to these individuals, and cited in a positive light by all of them in public speeches, are Jacob Möhler, of whom *Sodalitium* has already spoken about (no. 37 p. 9 footnote 23), and Martin Luther (the last laudatory quotation of this apostate, previously exalted by Wojtila and Ratzinger was by Bergoglio in his homily of 1/1/2024).

- **The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and questions of names**

On 7/1/2023 we saw the naming of the “Prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith” (ex “Congregation” as it was formerly named, ex “Holy Office”) of Archbishop Victor Fernández, the author, among other things, of books that studied kiss and sensuality. “*The Department that you will preside over has, in other times, gone so far as to use immoral methods. These were times in which, instead of promoting theological knowledge, possible doctrinal errors were persecuted. What I expect from you is undoubtedly something very different*”: Bergoglio's words in his letter of appointment recalls those of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, commenting on his appointment to the same prefecture: “*I would never have accepted this service to the Church if my task had been first and foremost one of control*” (JOSEPH RATZINGER-VITTORIO MESSORI, *Rapporto sulla fede*, Publ. Paoline 1985, Chap. I, § *L'ombra del Sant'Uffizio*). It is the same Joseph Ratzinger who wrote, on behalf of Cardinal Frings, the conciliar intervention of

11/8/1963 which gave way to the dismantling of the Holy Office (HENRI DE LUBAC, *Entretien autour de Vatican II*, Cerf, Paris 1985, page 123).

For the Ratzingerians, there is much nostalgia for an era where serious appointments took place, such as when the “Holy Father Benedict XVI” personally appointed Enzo Bianchi as an expert or consultant at synods... Many criticize Bergoglio on every occasion, even when his Prefect for the Doctrine of Faith says something correct [we allude to the controversy over the infallibility of the Pope, where we do not see how Fernández distances himself, for example, from Wojtila (general audience, 3/24/1993)].

- **“Dubia”**: second installment

Cardinals Burke and Brandmüller together with two others, signed four *dubia* in 2017 and presented them to Bergoglio: they declared that if after Christmas of that year they hadn’t received a response, they would act accordingly. There was no follow-up. It seems as though destined for the same end are the *dubia* presented in the Summer-Autumn of 2023 by five Cardinals (among them Burke and Brandmüller).

The five cardinals presented five dubbio on 7/10/2023, only to receive an answer the following day; they were not satisfied with the text (“*Your reply did not resolve the dubbio we had raised, but rather deepened them*”), they reformulated the questions, presenting them in August, asking for a simple “yes” or “no” answer to each of them. Having received no response, they published the text of these second dubbio at the end of September; the Vatican then published, in early October, the text of the response to the earlier version of the dubbio. It was in effect sibylline (in perfect modernist



“Cardinal” Victor Fernandez, called “Tucho”, named Prefect of the Dicastery of the Faith by Bergoglio, is the author of a book that talks about sensuality and kisses.

style); but anyone who desires the truth can already find it in this response (and it is probable that Bergoglio won’t ever give an explicit response). Let’s review it in summary.

- As to the first dubbio, the earlier version was theologically very imprecise; the substance is: can the Faith change? We find that the answer responds to the reformulation of the dubbio as well: in the Faith there would be a “perennial substance”, “revealed and essential for the *salvation* of all” (italics in the original); the rest would be subject to change. All that remains to be known is what is included in this “perennial substance”! We will return to this talking about the fourth dubbio.

We make a side note about how Bergoglio establishes the need for a hermeneutics for Scripture and the Magisterium;

Ratzinger already invoked the “hermeneutic of continuity” to justify the contradiction, which he himself admitted, between Vatican II and the previous Magisterium.

- As to the blessing of “unions” different than between a man and a woman, Bergoglio explains that there is an objective truth, the affirmation of which is not the only means of doing good; and that the request for a blessing is asking for God's help. The reformulation of the *dubbio* carried out by the five cardinals contains two questions, the first of which had already received an answer in July: whether it is possible to bless such people when it wouldn't show an approval by the Church (as later said in the document *Fiducia supplicans* and its various clarifications); the second part of the question was absent from the first formulation, and for now it has not obtained a direct answer (“*do all sexual act outside of marriage, and in particular homosexual acts, constitute an objectively serious sin against the law of God, regardless of the circumstances in which it occurs and the intention with which it is accomplished?*”).

- The third *dubbio* asks whether or not synodality overturns the constitution of the Church. The cardinals, who in reformulating the *dubbio* shifted from the question of law to that of fact (what authority will the synod, to which they were not summoned, of October 2023-24 have); do they not see in collegiality, now synodality, the steps that will lead to the complete fulfillment of *Pascendi* ⁽¹³⁾?

- Will women be able to be ordained priests in the future? The answer to the reformulated *dubbio*, and indeed a more in-depth illustration of what was requested, is already found in point (b) of the original fourth response. The answer is that the priestly “*function*” does not belong to women; the illustration concerns “*the need for their*

participation, in different ways, in the running of the Church” (it is this that interests Bergoglio, not necessarily the priestly “*function*”).

What is noteworthy in the response is point (c), which carries forward modernist relativism in matters of dogma: “*On the other hand, to be rigorous, we recognize that a clear and authoritative doctrine regarding the exact nature of a ‘definitive declaration’ has not yet been comprehensively developed. It is not a dogmatic definition, yet it must be followed by everyone. No one can contradict it publicly and yet it can be the object of study, as happens with the validity of ordinations in the Anglican communion.*”

This statement opens up the possibility of an impressive diminution of the assistance of the Holy Spirit to the Magisterium of the Church: whatever was the sense of the (first) Vatican Council in giving the definition of the infallibility of the Pope “*every time he speaks ex cathedra*”, ⁽¹⁴⁾ a “*definitive declaration*” postulates in its very terms the office of supreme doctor and pastor, and therefore infallibility!

Bergoglio, however, in this case, merely formulates the principle of what has already been put into practice in the past. Setting aside the points of faith that Vatican II contradicts, let's take up another example of a so-called “*definitive declaration*”: the invalidity of Anglican ordinations, which the Church has declared invalid since Julius III, a declaration reiterated by Leo XIII (Apostolic Letter *Apostolicæ curæ* of 9/13/1896). The *Anglican-Catholic International Commission* (ARCIC, it began its work in 1968), said as early as 1979: “*Our agreement on the essential elements of the Eucharistic faith regarding the sacramental presence of Christ and the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist, and on the nature and purpose of the priesthood,*

ordination and apostolic succession, is the new context in which the questions are discussed. This requires a re-evaluation of the verdict on Anglican orders in Apostolicæ Curæ.” Who was “pope” in 1968? Who was “pope” in 1979? Can Leo XIII’s “definitive declaration” be questioned, while Wojtila’s cannot?

- Regarding the fifth dubbio, the first version placed the emphasis on the repentance required in confession, while the reformulation instead concerns the intention of no longer sinning. But it seems to us that the answer is quite precise and correct (unlike the statements reported in the paragraphs on confession, see below), and that the cardinals are looking for a needle in the haystack...

- At this point we ask ourselves: where will the cardinals’ concerns (correct in one respect, incomplete in another, as we have tried to point out) take them? We hope that it will lead to the inevitable - not only as regards Bergoglio, but also as regards his predecessors and Vatican II - as Bishop Guérard des Lauriers in his Cassiciacum Thesis already did, and to work accordingly, as outlined in this Thesis. To arrive at the admission that the authority is asking “*the faithful for the religious assent of their intellect and will regarding truths contrary to Catholic doctrine*” and that giving such assent is not possible (letter from Cardinal Müller to Cardinal Duka, October 2023) is important; however, not proceeding accordingly is contradictory to faith...

• Biblical Societies

“Nor finally are you ignorant of the diligence and knowledge required to faithfully translate into another language the words of the Lord. In the many translations from the biblical societies, serious errors are easily inserted by the great number of translators, either through

ignorance or deception. These errors, because of the very number and variety of translations, are long hidden and hence lead the faithful astray. It is of little concern to these societies if men reading their vernacular Bibles fall into error. They are concerned primarily that the reader becomes accustomed to judging for himself the meaning of the books of Scripture, to scorning divine tradition preserved by the Catholic Church in the teaching of the Fathers, and to repudiate the very authority of the Church.” So wrote Pope Gregory XVI (in his letter *Inter præcipuas* of 5/8/1844) - this condemnation was preceded by the Council of Trent and by Pope Pius VIII and followed literally by every pope that succeeded him up to Pius XII. And today?

Here are the words of Bergoglio at the audience of 2/16/2023 to the delegation of the *Universal Biblical Alliance*, the international network of about 150 national societies for the translation and diffusion of the Bible (these are Protestant societies): “*Dear brothers and sisters, God’s word continues to ‘run swiftly’ in our day too, and by your activity, you have placed yourself at its service. The diffusion of the Bible through the publication of texts in various languages and their distribution in the various continents is a praiseworthy endeavor. The data you publish are significant; and I am pleased to know that the work of the Biblical Alliance is increasingly carried out in cooperation with many Catholics in a number of countries. I ask the Holy Spirit to guide and sustain your service always. For the Spirit can reveal the depths of God, so that those who approach the sacred text, can ‘come to the obedience of faith’ (Rom 16:26) and an encounter with God through Jesus Christ (v. 27).*” We wonder which “faith” and which “obedience” does Bergoglio hope the U.B.A. to bring to!

Bergoglio's speech is not an innovation in the “magisterium”, it merely repeats “truths” already stated by Wojtila, for example in the speech to the same U.B.A. dated 11/26/2001.

• The Sacrament of Confession

During the “Penitential Celebration” of 3/17/2023, Bergoglio said: *“One of the most beautiful aspects of how God welcomes us is his tender embrace. If we read of when the prodigal son returns home (cf. Lk 15:20-22) and begins to speak, the father does not allow him to speak, he embraces him so he is unable to speak. A merciful embrace. Here, I address my brother confessors: please, brothers, forgive everything, always forgive, without pressing too much on people’s consciences; let them speak about themselves and welcome them like Jesus, with the caress of your gaze, with silent understanding. Please, the sacrament of Penance is not for torturing but for giving peace. Forgive everything, as God will forgive you everything. Everything, everything, everything.”*

From these words, one understands that the confessor is no longer required to ensure the integrity of the confession, to give counsel and admonishment; and that he is no longer required to deny absolution when there are obstacles; in short, he becomes a simple “distributor of unconditional absolution”! If not openly erroneous, this statement by Bergoglio is at least ill-sounding.

But must the confessor then neglect the sole integrity of the confession, or even the verification of the penitent's good dispositions (contrition, resolution to no longer sin, imminent occasions of sin, cessation of scandals)? Here is what Bergoglio said on Sunday 4/30/2023 during the homily in Lajos square in Budapest: *“How sad and painful it is to see closed doors. The closed doors of our selfishness with regard to*



• Visit to Marseille

During an interreligious meeting at the *Memorial for missing sailors and migrants at sea* in Marseille, Bergoglio pointed to Jules Isaac (Jewish, atheist, Freemason) as an example of a “pioneer and a witness to dialogue”. Dialogue with whom? With John XXIII (see for example *Sodalitium* No. 40 pp. 27-28). And a dialogue in what direction? Bergoglio cited David Sassoli: *“In Baghdad, in the House of Wisdom of Caliph Al Ma’Mun, Jews, Christians and Muslims met to read the sacred books and Greek philosophers. Today we all feel, believers and lay people, the need to rebuild that house to continue together to fight idols, break down walls, build bridges, give substance to a new humanism.”* “We too, more than anyone else, have the cult of man” exclaimed Paul VI (12/07/1965)...

others; the closed doors of our individualism amid a society of growing isolation; the closed doors of our indifference towards the underprivileged and those who suffer; the doors we close towards those who are foreign or unlike us, towards migrants or the poor. Closed doors also within our ecclesial communities: doors closed to other people, closed to the world, closed to those who are ‘not in compliance’, doors closed to those who long for God’s forgiveness. Please, brothers and sisters, let us open those doors! Let us try to be – in our words, deeds and daily activities – like Jesus, an open door: a door that

is never shut in anyone's face, a door that enables everyone to enter and experience the beauty of the Lord's love and forgiveness."

Is there, in short, a widespread abuse of Penance ongoing, or must the Church continue to adapt, to change...? *"We want to contribute together in building a Church where everyone feels at home, where no one is excluded. That word of the Gospel that is so important: everyone. Everyone, everyone: there are no first, second or third class Catholics, no. All together. Everyone"* (audience for the "È giornalismo" award, 8/26/2023). *"Please, let the Church not be a "customs office" to select who enters and who does not. No, everyone, everyone. Entrance is free"* (speech for the 10th meeting of young Russian Catholics, Aug. 26). *"Priests, please: in the Sacrament of Penance always forgive, forgive!"* (at Notre-Dame de la Garde, 9/22/2023).

Over and over again more ambiguity, ill-sounding expressions that require enormous good will to be interpreted in an orthodox manner....

• Sins

And Bergoglio returned to the topic of confession and sins in the aforementioned audience at the Convention of the Pontifical Alphonsian Academy, saying: *"Unfortunately I studied 'casuistic' morality at that time. Just think, we **were forbidden from reading Häring's first book, The law of Christ. 'It is heretical, you can't read it!'** And I studied with the kind of morality that says: 'It is a mortal sin if two candles are missing on the altar, a venial sin if there is just one'. And all casuistry is like that, I humbly say this. **Thank God we have moved on; it was a cold bureaucratic morality. We ask you** to be a model that responds to pastoral discernment filled with merciful love, aimed at*



On 10/18/2023, Bergoglio received pro LGBT Sister Jeannine Gramick

understanding, forgiving, accompanying and, above all, integrating (cf. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia, 312). Being ecclesial presupposes this: integration."

Now if it is true that morality should not be studied by focusing only on individual cases, but based on principles, as all sciences do, let's first of all say that practical applications are useful for learning theory; secondly, that the principles themselves say (as does the Magisterium of the Church) that regarding sin, there are matters which have a gravity which is in itself mortal, and others which have a gravity which is in itself venial - just as in the case of candles for celebration of the Mass, which are commanded by the Church! Here Bergoglio - in addition to criticizing the prohibition on reading an author, Häring, one of the most progressive of the last century ⁽¹⁵⁾ - is criticizing casuistry, but even more so the fact of assigning gravity to sins ⁽¹⁶⁾.

As confirmation, he complains because *"we must insist on a **humanist** formation. Let's open ourselves up to a cultural horizon that humanizes seminarians. The seminary cannot be an ideological foundry"* (interview with Vida Nueva, 8/4/2023). *"If you are always looking backward, you form something closed up, disconnected from the roots of the Church and you lose the lifeblood of revelation. If you don't go forward, you go backward, and then you take on criteria for change that are different from*

those that faith itself gives you in order to grow and change. And the effects on morality are devastating. The problems that moralists must examine today are very serious, and to face them they must run the risk of change, but in the direction that I was saying” (meeting with the Portuguese Jesuits, 8/5/2023). An example? Here is one regarding homosexuality: “It is necessary to apply the most appropriate pastoral attitude for each. We must not be superficial and naive, forcing people to do things and behaviors for which they are not yet mature, or are not capable” (ibid.); so then, without driving them out from the Church, we must accept certain behaviors...? This is the practice (or doctrine?) of *graduality*, one already admitted for contraception by Ratzinger (*Luce del mondo*, L.E.V. 2010) and by Bergoglio himself.

- **Even baptism can be administered sacrilegiously**

This is what can be inferred from the response by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, dated 10/31/2023, to the question: “*Can a transsexual be baptized?*” The response, signed by “Francis”, reminds us that if there is no obstacle to receiving the baptismal character, baptism confers it, even if there were an obstacle to grace (i.e. an attachment to mortal sin). This is correct, but a person receiving baptism in this way would be committing sacrilege, as would a priest baptizing him knowing the state of that person. Now from the *possibility* of this sacrilegious baptism, valid in terms of character but not grace, Bergoglio moves on to the lawfulness and even *obligatory* nature of this (sacrilegious) administration! “*Even when doubts remain about the objective moral situation of a person or about his subjective dispositions towards grace, we must never forget this aspect of the faithfulness of God’s unconditional love, capable of generating an*

*irrevocable alliance even with a sinner, always open to a development, which is also unpredictable. This is true even when a desire for amendment does not appear fully manifest in the penitent (...). In any case, the Church must always remind us to fully live all the implications of the baptism received, which must always be understood and unfolded **along the entire path of Christian initiation.***” The doctrine of graduality returns, whereby sins are quietly authorized while waiting to reach a better (not much publicized) situation.

- **The family no longer exists, in practice...**

Today, society is increasingly less composed of families: few marriages, many divorces, few children or even none (without naming other aberrations). The Catholic knows well that the cause of this catastrophe is primarily religious: people no longer have the faith (there is no one to teach them, and they are

- **On slavery**

Bergoglio said: “Let’s take slavery for example. The Church has said nothing in this regard, because at the time the cultures were like that” (from the documentary *The Pope answers*, Disney+ 2023).

Here is a little positive theology: **The Principle documents of the Magisterium on Slavery:**

- Pope John VIII, letter to the Princes of Sardinia (year 873)
- Pius II, letter *Rubicensum* to the Bishop of Guinea (1462)
- Paul III, Brief *Pastorale officium* on the treatment of indigenous Americans (1537)
- Urban VIII, letter *Commissum nobis* (1639)
- Benedict XIV, letter *Immensa pastorum* (1741)
- Gregory XVI, Constitution *In supremo* (1839)
- And above all Leo XIII, Encyclical *In plurimis* (1888)

too immersed in vices...), and therefore they do not respect the laws of God, neither within or outside of marriage, and are habituated to egoism rather than sacrifice. Experience demonstrates that the purely natural remedy of giving cash incentives for families is not very effective, except in general for large families who would have had many children anyway.

Sadly, Bergoglio supports a second solely natural remedy, promoted by progressive circles and easily exploitable: “A migration program, but well carried out on the model that some countries have followed on migration - I think for example of Sweden at the time of the Latin American dictatorships - , it can also help these countries that have low birth rates” (press conference on the return flight from Hungary, 4/30/2023). “It is necessary to place political and economic demographics in dialogue with migration policies for the benefit of all people involved” (moment of prayer at “Sinod23”, 10/19/2023).

Even in his speech on May 12, 2023 to the participants of the third edition of “Stati Generali della Natalità”, he denounced only economic problems, without touching on the foundational ones, which are religious and moral.

We open and close with a parenthesis; we don't believe that Bergoglio says only bad things: on the theme of matrimony, he said things that were very true, for example in his message to the Congress of W.O.O.M.B. (4/28/2023) ⁽¹⁷⁾ or in his audience to the EPA (11/11/2023): it's a shame that declarations acceptable for Catholic doctrine are only taken up by the official Vatican website, while the aforementioned passage of the press conference on the plane was taken up by all the newspapers... Would it be such a difficult thing for Bergoglio, the Episcopate etc. to work to spread Catholic statements too, and not just



No sooner said than done...The Jesuit, James Martin, an American noted for his Pro LGBT positions, was one of the first to bless a “couple” of the same sex.

“politically correct” ones? And vice versa, we ask ourselves: why do “traditionalists” and “conservatives” not praise the person they recognize as Pope when he makes speeches about spiritual life or when, for example, he condemns belonging to Freemasonry [Dic. d.d.f., 11/13/2023 ⁽¹⁸⁾]?

- **...and not even in theory?**

Wojtila had canonized personalist matrimonial morality ⁽¹⁹⁾.

Bergoglio, **after** having canonized concubinary unions: “I saw much faithfulness in their living together, much faithfulness; and I am sure that **this is true matrimony**, they have the grace of matrimony, precisely for the faithfulness they have” (response to a question at the opening of the Ecclesial Conference of the Dioceses of Rome, 6/16/2016)....

...He then moves on to broaden the nature of man and woman itself. From the dawn of the world (Gen. I, 27) and in the nature of things, human beings are divided into two genders (masculine and feminine), complementary to each other. We know all too well about “gender ideology” or “gender theory” publicized by the “princes of this world” and their puppets; it is no surprise that the modernists also easily align themselves to this

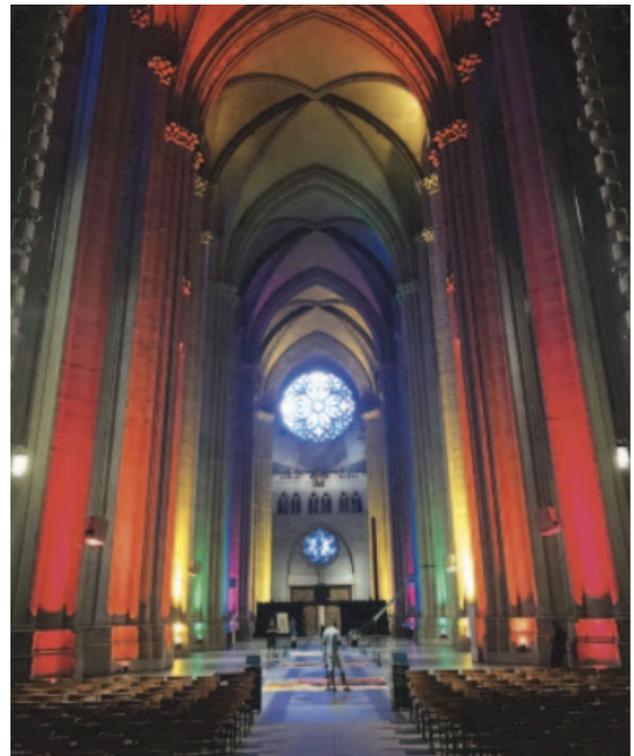
propaganda, and neither is it surprising that this theory becomes legitimized by one who has no Authority. In fact, in the documentary *The Pope answers*, produced by Disney and released on 4/5/2023⁽²⁰⁾, when the question was asked: “*Is there a little room in the Church for trans, non-binary, or LGBT people in general?*” Bergoglio responded: “*We are all children of God. God refuses no one, God is father. And I have no right to drive anyone from the Church. It is my job to welcome everyone. The Church closes its doors to no one, to no one.*” And following this goes on to say that priests “*who promote hatred using the Bible*” (man and woman He created them...) are “*infiltrators who take advantage of the Church for their personal passions, for their personal closure. It is one of the corruptions within the Church, of course. These closed mentalities... Deep down, these people have a great problem of internal inconsistency. They judge others because they cannot atone for their own sins. In general, people who judge are inconsistent. They have a weight inside them. And they get rid of it by judging others, instead of looking inside themselves and seeing their own faults. But when the Church loses its universality... The blind, the deaf, the good, the bad... It will no longer be a Church. Everyone has a place.*”

But do Moses, the Old Testament, Jesus Christ, and Saint Paul fall into this category of “infiltrating”, “inconsistent”, “closed up” and “corruptions”?

But after all, even a transsexual can receive the sacraments “*even when doubts remain about his objective moral situation or about his subjective dispositions towards grace*” (Responses of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith to Bishop Negri, 10/31/2023); it is therefore not necessary to be well disposed to God's grace, acceptance comes above all else; and there is no mention of the public scandal

that this person causes, and which unfortunately places him in an almost inextricable situation⁽²¹⁾
⁽²²⁾.

We must then mention the *Declaration “Fiducia supplicans”* (12/18/2023), which in the modernist revolution constitutes one of the many more or less ambiguous little steps forward, to which Vatican II has accustomed us. The declaration authorized, under determinate circumstances, the blessing of homosexual and irregular couples. This document received a thousand clarifications that doctrinally diminished its scope: “*to avoid causing grave scandal or confusion*”, no “*moral legitimacy [must be given] to a union that presumes to be a marriage or to a sexual practice outside of marriage*”, “*never [to be given] at the same time of a civil union rites nor in relation to them. Never, even with clothes, gestures or words typical of a wedding. The same applies when the*



The Cathedral of St. John in New York decorated with the rainbow colors for “gay pride” in June 2023

COMMON PRAYER
for the octave of
LAUDATO SI'

Loving Creator,

You have placed us on this earth to cultivate a communion of love within the web of life. We thank You for the gift of humanity's interdependence with our common home.

Infuse us with Your mercy and Your strength so that we may become painfully aware of our ecological sins and the cries of the earth and the cries of the poor.

Remind us how hope is the foundation of our faith, so that the certainty of the resurrection inspires us to greater action for a just and sustainable earth.

May we deepen our path of ecological conversion as individuals and as a global community, working together day after day to bring more hope for the earth and hope for humanity.

We ask you in the name of Jesus, and through the fire of the Creator Spirit,

Amen.

WEEK OF LAUDATO SI' 2023

• **Prayer published by the Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development**

Note the new soul-searching point, "ecological sin"; in line with *Laudato si'* and *Laudate Deum* but also with the constant teaching of Montini, Wojtila and Ratzinger.

blessing is requested by a same-sex couple", "the union is not blessed, but simply the people who have requested it together." But in contradiction, whether between modernism and tradition, or whether between the modernism of today and the modernism of yesterday, what prevails is progressive mentality (assisted by the media). In theory we are strict; in practice, the message

conveyed and that will be put into practice will, as always, be abundantly broad.

Today as yesterday, the Church, especially in the wake of Vatican II, must "look forward", "move forward", "leap forward"! (these are not quotes from Bergoglio, but from Montini, Luciani, Wojtila and Ratzinger).

• **Note about Godparents in baptism**

According to the Pius-Benedictine Code, in order to be a godfather or godmother, the Church requires, among other things (can. 765-766):

- As to licitness, to not find oneself in the category of "infamy of fact" (*"Infamy of fact is contracted when someone, due to a crime committed or bad morals, has lost good esteem among the serious and upright faithful"*, can. 2293 § 3; for example *"lay people legitimately condemned (...) for rape, sodomy, incest, aiding and abetting prostitution"*, can. 2357 § 1);
- As to validity and licitness, finding oneself excluded by "legitimate acts". For example, a person is excluded from legitimate acts: *"Who has publicly committed the crime of adultery, or lives publicly in concubinage ["cohabitation"], or has been legitimately condemned for other crimes against the sixth commandment; until he gives public signs of repentance and reparation"* (can. 2357 § 2).
- **"Update"...** Here is the response from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith dated 10/31/2023, to a question from Brazil: *"Can a homo-affective person who cohabitates be the godfather of a baptized person? In accordance with can. 874 § 1, 1st and 3rd, of the Code of Canon Law [Wojtilian], anyone can be a godfather or godmother who possesses the predisposition for it (see 1st) and leads a life in conformity with the faith and the role he assumes' (3rd; see can. 685, § 2 CCEO).*

Different is the case in which the cohabitation of two homo-affective people consists, not in simple cohabitation, but in a stable and declared more common-law relationship, well known by the community.” The response is signed by “Francis”. In practice, it is declared that two homosexuals who live together (not *more uxorio*, as a couple - but then in what way?) are allowed to be godparents - which, besides the vague distinction made by Cardinal Fernández, would however have been excluded under the Pius-Benedictine Code, as we have seen.

Needless to say, even other questions receive confusing answers - which, however are...“a step forward”...

• Conclusion

First of all, we can go on discussing the “theological note” to be given to the statements of the purely material occupants of the Apostolic See after Vatican II: sometimes they are heretical, sometimes erroneous, sometimes ill-sounding, or scandalous, sometimes merely ambiguous [but even if an *ambiguous* expression is not always an *erroneous* one, “the terms are perfectly clear thanks to the ambiguity that they are covering” ⁽²³⁾]. It doesn’t matter, because, together with those of the past, they show the lack of real and habitual intention to procure the good of the Church; this, like the public approval of the Second Vatican Council alone, by those who should be infallible every time they teach subjects concerning the faith ⁽²⁴⁾, is an obstacle to affirming and recognizing the divine Authority in this person. This is the primordial problem: the lack of Authority since the “promulgation” of Vatican II in 1965.

Secondly, let us remember that it is useless to seek solutions that avoid addressing the issue of Authority.

The (few) statements of these characters, which we have reported and commented on in the sections of our column *L'Osservatore Romano*, serve to examine the symptoms of evil, to observe **its development** [it is useless to be scandalized by Bergoglio alone, forgetting Ratzinger, Wojtila, Montini and Vatican II which essentially said the same things ⁽²⁵⁾], and to not denounce **the cause** (which is the manifest absence of the intention to ensure the objective good of the Church in these individuals).

Footnotes

1) The statement that Vatican II was “a great occasion for conversion for the whole Church” is true... if by “conversion” we mean the conversion to the principles of the Revolution and of '68: sixty years of experience prove it! And thank goodness that “*the time is not ripe for a Vatican Council III, because Vatican II has not yet been put into motion*” (Bergoglio's interview with the magazine *Vida Nueva*, 8/4/2023)!

2) We refer to the article *Assisi 2011: Joseph Ratzinger and agnosticism*, in *Sodalitium* n. 66 pp. 5-20.

3) Let us remember *en passant* that an error similar to the modernist one is spreading in the circles of the SPPX; we refer specifically to *La Fede dei fedeli è più sicura dell'insegnamento dei pastori*, [*The Faith of the faithful is safer than the teaching of the shepherds*], in *Sodalitium* no. 45 pp. 46-47.

4) Here are some of the words that emerged from three years of studies under Ratzinger and two under Bergoglio: “*Rejecting the distorted representation of an active hierarchy and a passive laity, and in particular the notion of a rigorous separation between the teaching Church (Ecclesia docens) and the learning Church (Ecclesia discens), the Council taught that all the baptized participate in their own way in the three functions of Christ as prophet, priest and king*”. In the search for a historical continuity, an attempt is made to extend to the



faithful the statements that the Magisterium and theologians have made of the teaching Church; then to historicize Vatican I, but with Saint Pius X this is impossible - and in fact the document annotates nothing (see no. 40); with Pius IX and Pio XII they pretend to ignore the fact that when the two Pontiffs talk about the faithful, they are always accompanied by their shepherds; and it is finally with Congar (no. 43) and Vatican II (no. 44) that the theologians appointed by Ratzinger are at ease. They then move on to describe the *sensus fidei* (from no. 48).

5) The Decree *Lamentabili* of 3/07/1907 (Denz.-S. 3435).

6) Among all the possible quotes, we recall for example Wojtila in his speech to the Federation of Evangelical Churches of Switzerland (June 14, 1984): *“Along with other Christians you Protestants bear witness to the Gospel of salvation”*. Or Ratzinger in the interview taken from the film *Bells of Europe*: *“The Christian soul of Europe must, above all, find a common expression in the ecumenical dialogue between the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Churches”*, *“unity in the one Lord”* (9/23/2011), *“the fundamental cause of ecumenism”* (11/17/2006).

7) We have already talked about this in the articles *Santi non cattolici*, in *Sodalitium* no. 40 p. 53; *La “Nuova era” di Giovanni Paolo II*, in no. 41 pp. 12-15; *Ancora sulla santità degli “ortodossi” eretici e scismatici*, in no. 45 p. 60.

8) Bergoglio explains: *“With this initiative we do not intend to establish new criteria for the canonical assessment of martyrdom, but to continue the initiated survey of those who, to this day, continue to be killed just because they are Christians. It is therefore a question of continuing the historical recognition, to collect the living testimonies, up to the shedding of blood, of these sisters and brothers of ours, so that their memory stands out as a treasure that the Christian community cherishes. The research will concern not only the Catholic Church, but will extend to all Christian confessions.”*

9) However, avoiding any inconveniences, such as nationalist autocephaly. In this regard we open a parenthesis, not against the modernists but against the Eastern schismatics, to point out how there still exists today in the world of “Orthodox churches” the *raison d’être* of their schism, that is, submission to politics, and nationalist pride. In recent years, Constantinople and Alexandria have approved the independence of Ukraine from the patriarchate of Moscow; which had broken with Constantinople, praised by Antioch and Serbia who, however, did not follow it; Moscow later founded its own mission in Africa, independent of Alexandria. More than religion, we see only politics: the sad beginning, life and death of every schism.

10) These words are similar to those in the Vatican II document *Gaudium et spes*, regarding atheists (and, implicitly, communists): *“all men, believers and unbelievers alike, ought to work for the rightful betterment of this world in which all alike live; such an ideal cannot be realized, however, apart from sincere and prudent dialogue”* (no. 21).

11) *“Islam and Christianity, can live together without hate, respecting each other’s beliefs, to construct a free and human society together”* (speech in Lebanon, 9/15/2012). Yes, *“free and human”* according to the dictates of the Koran... On 11/28/2006 in Ankara, Wojtila gave the following words: *“I wonder if it is not urgent, specifically today, in which Christians and Muslims have entered into*

a new period of history, to recognize and develop the spiritual bonds that unite us.”

“This same dynamic is found in the individual believers of the three great monotheistic religions: in harmony with the voice of God, like Abraham, we respond to his call and set out seeking the fulfillment of his promises, striving to obey his will, tracing a path in our particular culture” (speech at the Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center, 5/11/2009).

12) *Avviso sulla pratica della cremazione*, in *Sodalitium* no. 60 pp. 51-53; *Ancora sulle edizioni Lindau...* in no. 65 pp. 32-36.

13) But the “shepherd” calls the “sheep”! *“The entire journey, rooted in the Tradition of the Church, is taking place in the light of the conciliar magisterium. The Second Vatican Council was, in fact, like a seed that was sown in the field of the world and of the Church. The daily life of believers, the experience of the Churches in every people and culture, the multiple testimonies of holiness, the reflection of theologians, were the soil in which it germinated and grew. The 2021-2024 Synod continues to draw on the energy of that seed and to develop its potential. The synodal path is, in fact, implementing what*



On 3/22/2023 Bergoglio received a delegation from “Mediterranea saving humans”. Beside him is Luca Casarini, who then became a “synodal father”...

• Bergoglio praises Luca Casarini’s association *Mediterranea Saving Humans*

After the investigations for illegal immigration against members of the *Mediterranea Saving Humans* association (March 2021), after the scandal of the CEI (Conferenza Episcopale Italiana) financing of this association (10/12/2023) and those surrounding the centri sociali (!!), after the contemptuous sentences towards the Church by the mixed left-wing extremist Luca Casarini (head of mission of *Mediterranea*, and his being invited to the Synod on Synodality), Bergoglio confirmed his support: *“They do good work, they save a lot of people”* (general audience, 12/20/2023).

*the Council taught about the Church as a Mystery and People of God called to holiness. It enhances the contribution of all the baptized, in the variety of their vocations, to a better understanding and practice of the Gospel. In this sense it constitutes a true act of further reception of the Council, which prolongs its inspiration and relaunches its prophetic force for today's world. [...] Synodal practices are attested in the New Testament and in the early Church [false, editor's note]. Subsequently they took on particular historical forms in the various Churches and Christian traditions. **The Second Vatican Council "updated" them and Pope Francis encourages the Church to renew them again**"* (summary report of the first session of the Synod on synodality).

14) Please refer to the clarification *A proposito dell'infallibilità*, in *Sodalitium* no. 49 pp. 67-68.

15) Bernard Häring (1912-1998), Redemptorist. Here is his character profile: a personalist, he was in favor of ecumenism, Protestant "theology", contraception, sterilization, artificial insemination, non-violence, female priesthood. He considered the Magisterium of the Church to be the personal opinion of the Popes; he dreamed of a Church completely devoid of hierarchy.

16) Bergoglio already indulged himself on this topic in answering the second question posed to him during the opening of the Ecclesial Conference in Rome (6/16/2016): *"neither rigorism nor laxity are truth. The Gospel chooses another path. For this reason, those four words - welcome, accompany, integrate, discern - without sticking noses into other people's moral lives. [...] Let us think of the scene of the adulteress (see John 8:1-11). It is written: she must be stoned. It is moral. It is clear. **And it is not rigid, this is not rigid, it is morally clear.** She must be stoned. Why? For the sacredness of marriage, fidelity. Jesus is clear in this. The word is adultery. It's clear. **And Jesus plays dumb a bit**, lets time pass, writes on the ground... And then says: 'Begin: let the first of you who has not sinned cast the first stone.' **Jesus failed the law, in that case.** And they left, starting with the oldest. 'Woman, has no one condemned you? Neither do I'. What is moral? To stone her. **But Jesus is failing, he has failed towards morality.** This makes us think that we cannot talk about "rigidity", about "certainty", about being mathematical in morality, like the morality of the Gospel."* We omit the second-to-last example by Bergoglio, which is very questionable.

Even more recently: *"I don't like rigidity because it is a symptom of an evil interior life. The shepherd cannot have the luxury of being rigid. The shepherd must be ready for anything that comes his way"* (interview with *Vida Nueva*, 8/4/2023).

17) He said things that are true, but not only those... For example, quoting from *Amoris lætitia* he once again promoted sex education - it is one of his doctrines on which *Sodalitium* talked about in the article *J. M. Bergoglio e l'educazione sessuale* in no. 70, pp. 35-40. See also the conversation with the Portuguese Jesuits on Aug. 5, 2023: *"I am not afraid of the sexualized society. [...] What I don't like at all, in general, is that we look at the so-called 'sins of the flesh' with a magnifying glass, as has been done for a long time with regard to the sixth commandment. If you exploited workers, if you lied or cheated, it didn't matter, and instead the sins below the waist were relevant."*

18) The condemnation of membership in Freemasonry with reference to the 1983 Declaration, but ambiguously speaking of a ban on "active" membership. In 1984 (when Ratzinger was prefect for the Congregation for the

Doctrine of the Faith) Wojtila had begun the work by removing excommunication for Catholics who belonged to Freemasonry, Bergoglio merely developed this opening.

19) See the series of articles *1994: Anno della famiglia o dell'Androgino primitivo?* in *Sodalitium*, editions 38, 39, 40.

20) This documentary is yet another scandal for faith and morality given by a material occupant of the See of Peter: we find in it exaltation of apostasy (of the ex-nun and ex-Christian guest), silence when intervention should have been made, and personalism in sexual morality. Furthermore, the authors of the feature film claimed to have presented the final product to Bergoglio, who did not find anything to censor; if this statement is true, some questions must be asked about the scenes of homosexuality, about the descriptions (moreover in a positive light) of pornographic activity, and about the anti-Catholic tendentiousness of the entire editing. Does Bergoglio really find nothing to censure in all this?

21) For those who recognize Bergoglio's Authority and that of his predecessors, however, the doubt is finally resolved: the sacraments can be administered peacefully! Having previously appealed to the much-loathed "Rome", the SSPX already knew this.

22) Among other things, given that the document talks about the baptism of transsexuals, what name is a



Donald Trump with Ronald Lauder

• Palestine conflict and impartiality...?

From the start of the conflict in Palestine on 10/07/23, within ten days J.M. Bergoglio received in audience Deborah Lipstadt, "special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism" and Ronald Lauder, President of the Congresso Ebraico Mondiale [World Jewish Congress]; then a delegation from the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* arrived, and one from the *Conference of European Rabbis*. Six weeks later (11/22/2023) he received a Palestinian delegation (together, however, with an Israeli delegation).

transsexual to be baptized with, male or female? It is not specified... Was that door left open due to forgetfulness?

Speaking of open doors, a quick comment on the fourth response in the document. “*Can two homoaffected people be registered as parents to a child, who must be baptized, and who was adopted or obtained through other methods such as a rented womb? Response: For the child to be baptized there must be a well-founded hope that he will be educated in the Catholic religion (see can. 868 § 1, 2nd CIC can. 681, § 1, 1st CCEO)*”. The child can be baptized, there is no doubt about that; but can the people mentioned be registered as parents or not? The response does not answer, and by opening the door to baptism, it also leaves it open to “parents”...

23) M.-L. GUÉRARD DES LAURIERS, *Le siège apostolique est-il vacant?* in *Cahiers de Cassiciacum* no. 1, note 68.

24) The Magisterium, in fact, is infallible “every time” it teaches, and not only if it decided to use infallibility, perhaps without knowing whether it has done so or not (!) as the SSPX states.

“*In the parable, we look at the son who says ‘yes’ to his father, but then he doesn’t go into the field. He doesn’t want to do his father’s will, but he doesn’t even want to discuss it and talk about it. So he hides behind a ‘yes’, behind a false assent, which hides his laziness and saves face for the moment, he is a hypocrite. He gets away with it without conflict, but he deceives and disappoints his father, disrespecting him in a way worse than he would have done with a straight ‘no’. The problem of a man who behaves like this is that he is not only a sinner, but a corrupt person, because he has no problem lying to cover and camouflage his disobedience, without accepting any honest dialogue or confrontation*” (Bergoglio at the Angelus of 10/1/2023).

For those wishing to delve deeper, we first refer you to the article *Mons. Williamson contro il Concilio Vaticano...!* in *Sodalitium* no. 47 pp. 63-78; then *Sodalitium* no. 40 p. 65 article *Sulla nozione d’infallibilità*; no. 51 p. 15 at the article *Chi interpreta le leggi del Papa*; no. 52 p. 24 article *La questione dell’Autorità*; no. 58 pp. 20-21 article *Appello ai sacerdoti della FSSPX*; and the article *Gli errori di Sì sì no no*, in *Sodalitium* no. 45 pp. 30-54.

25) See Bergoglio’s own statements for example regarding “synodality”. Bergoglio, just like Ratzinger, is certainly more coherent in his “Catholicism” than his Ratzingerian and Lefebvrian critics; in fact in his speech of 5/25/2023 to the participants of the *Incontro Nazionale dei Referenti diocesani del Cammino Sinodale Italiano*, with supporting evidence, he points out how synodality and its extension are nothing but the logical continuation of the collegiality inaugurated by Vatican II and by Montini-Paul VI - as he had already done in the speech commemorating the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, on 10/17/2015 (where not only he speaks about the famous “Upside down Pyramid Church” but the identity of ideas between Bergoglio and all his predecessors up to Montini is also shown). The names change, the conclusions advance, but the principle always remains the same: episcopal error and egalitarianism.

In this, as in other cases, Bergoglio has only made more clear what was already contained in Vatican II, that is, the decision by these modernists to break with the Magisterium of the Church.



HISTORY

“Sodalitium”...Theatinum!

Father Piergiorgio Coradello

Sodalitium readers are already familiar with the figure of Gian Pietro Carafa, who became Pope in 1555 with the name Paul IV, the fearsome opponent of heresy and a true reformer of the Church ⁽¹⁾. We want to recall the 500 years since the beginning of a great work of which he was the founder; a work that marked his entire life as well as that of Saint Cajetan Thiene: it was 1524 when the Order of Regular Clerics, better known as the *Theatines*, was founded in Rome.

At first glance, this small Order may seem historically noteworthy only because, although small, it gave the Church 250 bishops and cardinals: it was nicknamed the “seminary of bishops”! Initially present only in Italy, during the 17th century it spread throughout Europe and opened mission houses in the Indies (the Theatine Ven. Antonio Ventimiglia was the first evangelizer of Borneo). Since 1633 the Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate, founded by Ven. Orsola Benincasa, has become the female branch of the Theatine family, and is responsible for the education of youth and missionary works. In short, it might seem like a small religious family, one similar to so many others in the Church; but the story of its early days is astonishing. Together let’s learn more about it ⁽²⁾.

The founding fathers

Saint Cajetan Thiene (1480-1547), from Vicenza. Orphaned at the age of two, he spent

his childhood peacefully educated by his mother Maria Porto, a Dominican tertiary and deeply religious. Having finished his studies *cum laude*, Gaetano renounced the legal career that his family had desired for him, and decided to work in the ecclesiastical field, so that he might take time to understand what his vocation was: he went to Rome and worked for years in the Curia as a writer of apostolic letters and a Participating Apostolic Prothonotary. Having discerned his vocation, he was ordained a priest in 1516, but becoming dissatisfied with the worldly climate that reigned in Roman circles, he soon moved to Venice. He organized public prayers to obtain from God the protection of Christianity from the Muslim danger; he dedicated most of his energies to the apostolate of charitable works, and particularly to the care of the sick and the relief of the poor. However, even in Venice he found himself ill at ease: his collaborators did not correspond to his efforts, which were aimed not only at charity but at the sanctification of souls. Father Cajetan then understood that the reform of the Church and its morals could not begin with works of charity, but from charity of the heart! “O God, what are you doing? You came and you come, you even stay, to make a fire that burns, but all around only cold, snow and ice. It is not possible! [...] Christ awaits: no one moves. I am not saying that they are not a good-minded people, sed omnes stant propter metum Judæorum, and yet they are even ashamed to be seen confessing or communicating” ⁽³⁾. The sense of dissatisfaction and impotence, together with a growing desire for solitude, caused him a spiritual desolation that lasted several years; until he returned to Rome in 1523, and resolving to take the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and withdraw from the world, Providence arranged for him to meet three souls who thought like him and with whom he could implement his

Gian Pietro Carafa, who became Pope in 1555 with the name Paul IV, was the fearsome opponent of heresy and a true reformer of the Church. Together with Saint Gaetano Thiene [Saint Cajetan], he was also the founder of the Clerics Regular, better known as the Theatines. This year marks the 500th anniversary of their founding.

longed-for projects of religious life and reform of the Church: with the other “founding fathers” he established the foundation of the Clerics Regular. Father Cajetan finally found peace: “In the letters written after his religious profession [Theatine] he no longer speaks of his anxieties, fears, dissatisfaction and perplexities, as in the previous letters. He continues to confess his limitations, and consequently wants to be considered a person unworthy of consideration and deserving only of being humiliated, however in the letters written after 1524 he reveals serenity, awareness, balance. [...] He notes that the results of his [Theatine] ministry are in keeping with the needs of the Church and that his is ‘true vocation’” ⁽⁴⁾.

Later we will see the importance of Saint Cajetan for the spirituality of the Order and its activities in Venice and Naples - where the Saint died on August 7, 1547. He was canonized by Clement X in 1671, his feast day falls on August 7.

Gian Pietro Carafa (1476-1559), from Irpinia, ran away from home at the age of 14 to become a religious, but his noble family prohibited him from taking this path. In 1494 he



*Gian Pietro Carafa and
Saint Gaetano of Thiene [St. Cajetan]*

became a cleric and moved to Rome to live with his uncle, the great Cardinal Oliviero Carafa. Gian Pietro always refused the bishoprics that were offered to him, considering himself too young for such a dignity; but when in 1505 the Pope himself, Julius II, wanted him as bishop of Chieti - the ancient Roman *Theates* - he had to obey; and from that moment he was nicknamed *Theatine*. From 1513 to 1518 he carried out diplomatic missions on behalf of the Holy See in England and Spain (with a brief stay in Belgium), with the aim, among other things, of promoting peace between the Christian powers and of promoting a Christian League against the Ottoman threat. He never loved the life of the court, and always fulfilled his obligations as the bishop of residence in his own diocese, both in Chieti and in Brindisi (where he was archbishop from 1518); this of course when his diplomatic missions did not prevent him. In both dioceses

he oversaw the reform of the clergy through reorganizations and pastoral visits. In 1520 he was called by Leo X to be part of the commission that drew up Luther's condemnation. His desire for reform of the Church, his preparation, was such that he was called to Rome in 1522 by Adrian VI ⁽⁵⁾, who had already known him in Spain; and his desire to make him an active part in the reform of the Church was shared by his successor Clement VII, who in 1523 gave him sole responsible for all priestly ordinations (with related exams) for Rome, as well as all episcopal consecrations. It is at this point that Archbishop Carafa, much like Saint Cajetan, felt a strong spiritual restlessness, the culmination of the revulsion he felt while living in paternal, English and Spanish courts: and his desire for a more intense spiritual life, always combined, however, with the work of reform, was able to materialize in the meeting with the other founding fathers, at the beginning of 1524. Having learned that Father Cajetan was thinking of founding a religious institute, "he went to Thiene, congratulated him on his determination and, complaining to him that he had not sooner communicated his thoughts to him since he too had them, he therefore offered himself as a companion in the same vocation; then, Cajetan not wanting to assent too quickly, due to the difficulties that undoubtedly would arise from the renunciation of his archbishopric, he threw himself on his knees before him, protesting almost with threats that, if he did not yield to his desire, on the day of judgment he would be asked for an account of his soul. Father Cajetan also immediately knelt down and together they embraced each other with great tenderness, and Father Cajetan said to him: "Monsignore, I will not abandon you!" And so with Divine assistance they made a resolution of their thoughts. ⁽⁶⁾" Monsignor Carafa renounced his

inheritance, and his two bishoprics, and spent something of his wealth on the establishment of the new religious institute, donated the rest to the poor, and gave himself body and soul to the new congregation.

Gian Pietro Carafa was many times named the Superior General of the Theatines. He would never have wanted to leave the Theatine religious life to assume ecclesiastical duties, but he had to obey the express wishes of Julius III who, after Carafa had declined two invitations to come to Rome to be made a Cardinal, ordered him to accept the cardinal's beretta. "I assure you that I tried to persuade the same Juvenal [the papal envoy], with as much vehemence as I could, that this would not be useful either to my tranquility and peace, nor to the service of the Supreme Pontiff, nor to the worship and honor of God" commented Monsignor Carafa ⁽⁷⁾. And so, from Cardinal in 1536, then Cardinal Inquisitor from 1542, he became Pope in the year 1555 taking the name Paul IV; he died only four years later, meritorious in the struggle against heresy, simony, and bad morality.

Bonifacio De' Colli († 1558), from Alexandria. Coming from a high-ranking family, he held curial positions from his youth and spent many years spiritually assisting the sick, taking care to accomplish good works and spending much time in prayer despite his constant commitments in judicial cases (he had a law degree). Ordained a priest in 1524, he was repeatedly made Provost of the Order. On two occasions he demonstrated that he was ready to suffer martyrdom: the first in Rome, during the Sack of the city in 1527, when a Lutheran soldier wanted to test whether a Catholic was really ready to die for the faith: he showed his desire to kill Father Boniface with his sword; but he remained on his knees in prayer, as he was, ready to suffer death; then the soldier



The religious profession of the founding fathers (church of Santa Maria della Pietra e san Gaetano, in Ferrara)

decided to hit him only with the broad edge of his sword, still dealing a terrible blow to the poor priest. The second episode occurred in Venice, when a renowned murderer confessed to him, but without any intention of changing his life: upon being denied absolution (which would have been sacrilegious) and seeing that the priest refused money offered to become "absolved", he pulled out his dagger determined to extort absolution, or perhaps to take his revenge for the "snub"... but he was bewildered to see the priest humbly kneel down and offer him his chest, ready to die rather than fail in his duties as a confessor. And truly Don Bonifacio was a great confessor, with the gift of moving even the most hardened hearts to repentance, warming them with his own tears, which he shed with profound sadness for the sins of sinners. He died on August 3, 1558 in Venice,

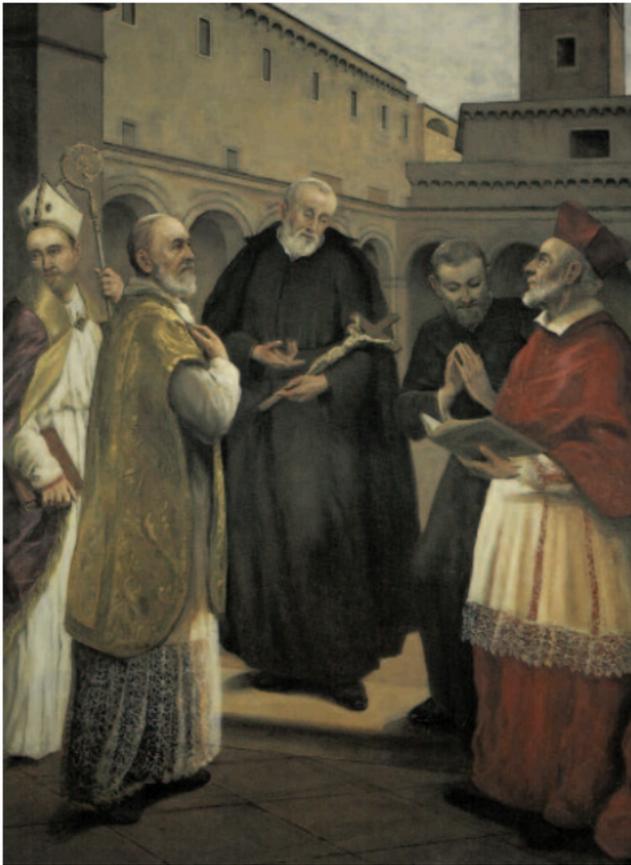
in his cell, which he had preferred to the honors which Paul IV wished to bestow on him by calling him to Rome: “My thanks to the Holy Father is eternal; but I beg him not to order me to leave the cloister in which, as a young man, I wanted to enclose myself once and for ever, especially now that I am old, and closer to the tomb than to honors.”

Paolo Consiglieri (1499-1557), from Rome; it is not clear whether he was related to Saint Pius V. As a young boy, he was modest, prudent, smart, and friendly to everyone. Ordained a priest by Archbishop Carafa himself, with whom he had and always maintained a deep friendship, he always lived humbly and almost in “the shadow” of the other fathers; in 1536 he remained in Rome with the new Cardinal Carafa, with whom he continued the usual common austere religious life as always: prayer, penitence, sparse meals. Cardinal Carafa, having become Pope Paul IV, would have wanted to make Consiglieri a cardinal in turn, but he refused out of humility: when he understood that some dignities received from the Pope, such as the canonry in St. Peter's Basilica, had the aim of preparing the way for him to the cardinalate, said to his dear friend: “Most Blessed Father, I beg you not to raise me to a position greater than my strength, nor to an honor greater than my merits. You know that I am at your service, but you know what I am; if you really want to adorn someone of my lineage with the purple, you have my brother Girolamo, who surpasses me in holiness and erudition.” Admiring such humility, Paul IV condescended, keeping Father Paolo as his friend and companion in holiness, with whom he shared the only loaf of bread which, even as the Pope, he had brought to the table, for the only daily meal that the two friends and religious consumed. Being more frequent than anyone else at the offices of the canons of Saint Peter's, perhaps

due to the cold, Father Paolo Consiglieri contracted a very violent cough which caused internal hemorrhage, which, after forty days, led to his death on May 15, 1557. With these words he consoled his elderly mother: “Don't cry: you created me mortal! And I die peacefully because I long for blessed immortality by the grace of God.”

The Vicissitudes of the early days of the Institute

We are now in the first 20's of the 1500. “Cajetan, of great brilliance and always intent on procuring and increase the glory of God, slowly came to understand that the corruption of morality and souls that had pervaded the Christian people far and wide was an evil so great, a poison whose roots were so deep, that they had to be eradicated with a strong and perpetual medicine. [...] Moved therefore, one must believe, by Divine inspiration, he began to consider the reestablishment of the way of life of the Apostles as best useful for the repair of Christianity, and to make it perpetually solid through the profession of solemn vows. In fact, in other times past, clerics had come to the aid of the afflicted Church: but being mortal beings subject to various turbulences, this help was now exhausted. It was therefore necessary to reawaken souls with a new and apostolic spirit, and clerics corrupted by the ruin, dishonesty and ignorance of the people had to be replaced by others who would repair the damage that the former were doing to the Christian world with their bad example. Gaetano knew how Augustine, an eminent pastor, by giving the clergy an apostolic rule of life, had purged Africa and Europe of almost every heresy. ⁽⁸⁾” Having expressed this reasoning to De' Colli, he approved it without reservation; and we have already seen how Carafa, hearing of this project,



Blessed Giovanni Marinoni, "Master of the Holy Theatines" surrounded by his disciples

went to Gaetano and associated himself with the challenge of founding an Order that united monastic life with clerical life. To these three was added Monsignor Carafa's friend, Father Paolo Consigliere.

Overcoming the difficulties raised by many who were opposed to the new institute (common life, choir obligation, living only by donations were typically the characteristics for religious, not for clerics), Pope Clement VII gave his approval *ad experimentum* to the clerics on May 3, 1524, the feast of the Invention of the Cross; and the following June 24 he officially confirmed it with the brief "Exponi nobis". On the 24th of September, the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, in the basilica of Saint Peter's, the four priests issued the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience that bound them to the Congregation of Regular Clerics. The

definitive approval came on March 7, 1533 with the pontifical brief "*Dudum pro parte vestra*".

Their experience began in Rome, where Monsignor Carafa was elected the first Provost of the Order and where, within only a few years, the number of fathers grew to twelve. But during the terrible Sack of Rome in 1527, imperial troops, mostly protestant or Marrano, plundered even the Theatines of all that they owned, and invaded their home. For some time, these religious did their best to assist the victims of the landsknechts [German mercenaries], and in interceding with the officers of the invading army to obtain some gesture of mercy for the population. The Theatine fathers were beaten, Saint Cajetan was tortured, and along with Monsignor Carafa and Father Bonifacio, they were kidnapped and imprisoned: the soldiers were aware of their past of wealthy life, and hoped to obtain a bounty; but the three possessed nothing... other than evangelical poverty! They began to recite the divine office in their jail cells, and one of the ringleaders was so impressed by their piety and their trust in the Lord that he ordered them to be freed.

It was now clear that it was too dangerous to stay in Rome. The twelve religious men, holding a crucifix and trusting in Providence, crossed the streets of the burning city and arrived unharmed at Ostia, where a Venetian ship offered them and other refugees an escape route from the Protestant barbarians. And thus on to Venice! where they had to start from scratch. Their love for the Lord and zeal for his cause did not make them lose heart: the life of the institute and the work of reform had to continue. At the end of the three years of the first provostship, Saint Cajetan was elected as second provost. Even in the lagoon the religious conducted their rule of common life, doing their utmost to assist the needy and the sick.

In time, many Neapolitan devotees begged the Theatines to open their house in Naples too; and having asked Clement VII for advice, he commanded them to extend their apostolic labors to the Neapolitan city. Understanding the will of the Pope, Monsignor Carafa, who in the meantime had been re-elected as provost, established that Saint Cajetan and Blessed Giovanni Marinoni would be the ones to found this second house: the two left immediately, and when, passing through Rome, the Pope saw that they appeared before him to pay his respects, and he exclaimed (it was June): “Why are you traveling in this scorching heat, risking your health?” “Holy Father,” they replied, “we prefer to put our lives in danger rather than delay your commands for a single moment.”

After the one established in Naples in 1533, by order of Julius III in 1535 a house was reopened in Rome, attaching to it the care of the church of San Silvestro (in truth this transfer was postponed until 1536 due to slanders and obstacles posed by those who disliked the reform and the Theatines who worked for it).

The direction of the new Institute

Since the years described so far are the ones that most interest us, we will set aside the chronicle of events until the end of this article. Let's now speak about the vocation of the Theatine Order.

The founding fathers were united mainly by a past involving the charitable works of the famous “Brotherhood of Divine Love”, by their exceptional theological preparation ⁽⁹⁾, and by their desire for a reform of the Church (defense of the Faith and the improvement of morality). It is therefore not surprising that the Clerics Regular gave themselves body and soul to the

defense of truth and morality, through action and holiness of life.

Aspirants who did not have a thirst for reform, austerity of life, and a training that guaranteed doctrinal integrity and usefulness for the institute's activities were not admitted: “Many want to enter and some come with great fervor, but then, they don't last.” ^{(10) (11)}

The poverty of the Theatine religious was perfect: they possessed no income, not even in common; they did not beg, but they lived on donations; “we ate the few donations that were sent, and many times we went to the table without anything; but the Lord provided and moved some of those devotees with some alms, and Father Cajetan instituted that all those generous should be reported publicly in the refectory, and with such thanks to those who sent them, always praising the Lord who had inspired such people.” ⁽¹²⁾ “They had no sure sustenance (in fact all their hope was placed in God) and if they were given something to calm their hunger, they did not accept more than was necessary and the superfluous was all distributed to the poor.” ⁽¹³⁾ It is no coincidence that Saint Cajetan is called the “Saint of Providence”; and this was the spirit of all the Theatines: “We know that if the Lord wants you in that city, there will be no lack of suitable places, thanks to the kindness of God and the liberality of the city”, so wrote Monsignor Carafa to the Theatines who were sent to Naples in 1533.

As with all religious, obedience to superiors and ecclesiastic authority were the guarantors of true sanctity: “We must think of throwing ourselves freely and absolutely at the feet of Christ and in the arms of superiors without promising ourselves any more liberty or any more freedom for ourselves. And if this seems strange to someone, it is clear that he does not believe that God is among us or that He

is the one who governs us; and if he thinks like that, he has no reason to want to be among us, because, once the protection and consolation of the goodness of God is removed, or the hope of serving and pleasing his Majesty through his grace, nothing remains in us that, according to the world, do not ought to be avoided and abhorred. [...] If someone wants to come among us, don't worry about thinking about rooms or anything else except to mortify every own opinion, and have enough faith to embrace the Cross alone.”⁽¹⁴⁾

And as for every soul that imitates Jesus Christ, charity was the “eternal and only virtue, daughter and mother of holy voluntary obedience; I recommend this to you that until death, stay that way, walk that way, and do not doubt that it will lead you to the door of salvation; woe betide the world today whose constant nausea of this gift, causes the great columns and the high mountains to fall into the deep sea; be humble; we don't bring attention to ourselves at all, and we try to be children of the Virgin Mary.”⁽¹⁵⁾ “May he be made worthy of being the sole of the feet of the mystical Body, a sole which does not appear and yet is united: that God is all, without which, alas, without such a union, non sum nisi nihil.”⁽¹⁶⁾

We quote from Saint Cajetan because he is the spiritual teacher of reference for the Theatines; Fathers De' Colli and Consiglieri too were men of holy life, like Monsignor Carafa who was recognized even by his enemies as “a most holy man”⁽¹⁷⁾; however, none of the three left written spiritual teachings, and Monsignor Carafa was absorbed with organizing the canonical practices of the institute and his inquisitorial activities. However, the motto of the congregation alone speaks to us of the spirit of all four founders: “Quærite primum regnum Dei”, “Search first the kingdom of God” (Mt. 6, 33).

Saint Cajetan summarized Theatine spirituality in a beautiful memorial left to all religious (we translated it from the original latin): “Man's true and priceless joy consists in the desire to faithfully imitate the interior and exterior life of Christ Jesus, without requiring any particular reward for this according to the thinking of Saint Paul: I am willing not only to suffer, but to die for our Lord Jesus Christ.

The door and crown of all perfection is the thought of being unworthy of divine favors. All the good that God gives us the joy of doing finds no reason within us, but everything comes from the infinite goodness of his power. Our humility must be two-fold: one springs from truth and another is informed by charity. True humility is that which is born from the love of charity and the desire for perfection.

The active life consists in the acceptance of fatigue and poverty, and in the contempt of the esteem of men and in the hiding of one's own person. There are three elements that integrate our contemplative life: interior purity, the vigilance of all our senses, and the obedience and submission to internal inspirations.”

The last important characteristic of the congregation was the direct dependence from the Holy See: the founding fathers understood that to be effective in their very particular action, it was necessary to refer directly to the Pope, and not to the local bishops; Clement VII also understood this, and granted them this privilege.

The novelty of the institute, its characteristics, and above all its objectives earned it many enemies, those who were happy with the relaxed and simoniacal Renaissance status quo, and those dominated by political logic or personal and family interests. Such a one, for example, was the Cardinal Penitentiary Lorenzo Pucci, who managed to prevent the granting of permits that the Theatines had

requested from the Pope; and other sad figures such as Curione, Giovio, Aretino, and Negri, who reached the point of denigrating and slandering the religious. Let us now see what the occupations of the Theatine regular clerics were in the early days of the institute.

Moral reform

The life of the Theatines was marked by the community schedule with the recitation of the Divine Office ⁽¹⁸⁾, and meals and prayers in common: “for our institute and for anyone who puts his hand to the evangelical plow it is appropriate, indeed it is necessary, to live *unius moris in domo*. [...] The servants of God must conform and avoid any singularity and inappropriate diversity.” ⁽¹⁹⁾ There was no lack of priestly ministry and works of piety: confessions, spiritual direction, preaching, aid to the sick (especially in the “Hospitals for the Incurable” founded years earlier by Carafa in Rome, and by Saint Cajetan in Venice), the institution of *Monti di Pietà*. All this was a powerful incentive to reform the life of the secular and regular clergy, which the Renaissance and Humanism had largely infected with laxity of morals, court life, greed, simony, ignorance, vagrancy. Moral reform had to begin with the shepherds as models, who could thus guide the flock on the same path: “Of all the negotiations, this should not be the last, as it is not the least.” ⁽²⁰⁾

“All these bishops and prelates [who for exams, ecclesiastical business with Carafa, or for spiritual retreats among the Theatines, visited the community] our father [Carafa, who was then Superior of the Theatines] bids them to stay with us for meals, exhorts them to stay away from the world: and so they remain obedient to all, and [they stay] for the canonical hours until the evening. Every day these

prelates are reforming themselves better in Christ, with their way of living, morals, life, religion, devotion, obedience, humiliation, contemplation and prayer, so different from the circles from which they came, as day is to night. [...] and they do whatever they are ordered by these [Theatine] fathers, those who before would not have deigned themselves, and who were considered idols on earth.” ⁽²¹⁾

“All pious works, monasteries, converts, hospitals, derelicts, pass through the hands of these [Theatine] fathers. They care for everyone and thirst for the salvation of souls.” ⁽²²⁾ With spiritual care they reformed many hospitals, and discipline in several monasteries. “They are considered to be the most learned and the first prelates of the court, and it is forbidden that anyone celebrate in Rome if he does not present



Saint Gaetano [St. Cajetan] with Count Oppido
(Andrea Vaccaro, Museo del Prado, Madrid)

himself to said fathers and is examined and admitted by them, he and his habits and life.”⁽²³⁾

The Defense of the Faith

The last quote from the previous paragraph introduces us to the topic of this next paragraph.

All the early Theatines greatly loved the Faith, and were very highly educated: one of the first assignments which they carried out was to assist Monsignor Carafa (who as we have seen became responsible for the examination of ordinands and for their ordinations) in examining the moral conduct and the formation of the candidates to the priesthood and the episcopate; an assignment carried out both in Rome and in Venice. “The Pope wants to give great endeavors to this Company [the Theatines]. All the priests of Rome are examined again, the ecclesiastics are reformed, confessors are put in order.”⁽²⁴⁾ Carafa, once he became Pope, made the need for bishops’ examinations official (with a decree of December 3, 1557).

Shortly after the foundation of the Regular Clerics, expressions such as “being Theatine” (to indicate doctrinal intransigence and intense spiritual life), “becoming Theatine”

(to describe a stance against lax morals or heresy) became common. Cardinal Alessandro Farnese thus described Marcellus II, the inquisitor Pope who had the absolute will to implement the reform (his election was favored by Carafa): “he is even more Theatine than Carafa”!⁽²⁵⁾ Liberals and heretics who, among their comrades, showed signs of change, were asked: “What, have you become a Theatine?”⁽²⁶⁾

The reputation for religiosity and the integrity of these religious attracted, in addition to the enmities which we mentioned, also holy friendships. Through the Theatines, equipped with special papal delegations, an information network was built and they established collaborations with the local inquisitors: the aim of this was to know the moral and doctrinal sentiments of the clergy and the population. It was thanks to these activities that the Theatines won many victories against the enemies of the Faith. Let's look at them in action.

The holiness of life and the doctrine of the Theatines was sometimes sufficient to bring heretics back to the fold, and they gladly came to them repentant; for this reason, on January 21, 1528, Clement VII gave these religious the faculty “to be able to use the form of absolution for excommunications, interdicts, suspensions, and irregularities”. Heretics “are healed with the medicine of the truth” said Saint Cajetan.⁽²⁷⁾ But hearts do not always allow themselves to be touched by grace... And therefore it becomes necessary to act to save the flock of the Lord: “heretics are needed to be treated as heretics, and to humiliate His Holiness by writing or speaking mildly to them, and letting them grab favors, could have succeeded *per accidens* in some cases, but ordinarily this is the path that only makes them become worse, and it increases the number of heretics every day,” reasoned Monsignor Carafa.⁽²⁸⁾

Crypt of Saint Gaetano [St. Cajetan] in the Church of San Paolo Maggiore in Naples



In Venice, due to its proximity to the German countries, the spread of Lutheran Protestantism was threatening: the Theatines recognized the penetration of Lutheranism into civil society by self-styled “enlightened” preachers and reformers, and denounced it to the Pope: “those who say that they are sent by God must show it with manifest signs and not fantasies. I often see people who say they are from the Lord, but only to deceive us, just as the spirit of lies does. I fear more every day that I will find false heralds of Christ on earth, and the darkness grows: *qui stat videat ne cadat* [let him who stands see that he does not fall]”.⁽²⁹⁾ “His Holiness could add to the Ordinaries some religious and approved persons, who together must diligently examine all those who have to undertake the exercise of preaching or hearing confessions and inform themselves not only of their sufficiency and grace, but *in primis* of life and reputation and of the Catholic faith; and those who were approved by them, and expressly licensed by them for this purpose, should be the only ones who could exercise said offices and not others; without however demanding any kind of pecuniary reward or other impost for said *examina* or *licentia*”⁽³⁰⁾; and “Carafa warned the rulers that there was no surer way to bring down the Republic than by attracting the wrath of God by conniving with heresy.”⁽³¹⁾ While still in Venice, the Theatines gave to the Holy See an account of the Lutheran deviations by many friars of the three Franciscan families of the Minor Observants, the Conventuals and the Capuchins, especially at their top; and in 1532 Clement VII entrusted Carafa with the task of reforming the Minor Observants.

In Naples, the second adoptive city of the Theatines after Venice, the Theatines fought in a merciless war against the group formed around the *Alumbrado* Juan de Valdés, a

propagandist of a kind of Protestantism permeated by false mysticism. Among his disciples were nobles and ecclesiastics who enjoyed powerful protection or who could guarantee it, and who also carried out intense proselytizing work within Neapolitan society: initially they had infiltrated the city's charitable institutions and propagated their heterodox ideas to other of their members. God only knows how many battles they had to endure, and how much the Neapolitan Theatines led by Saint Cajetan suffered to snatch souls from the clutches of these “enlightened” Protestants! And with regard to the welcome that the nobility, either naively or with connivance, gave to people of such suspicious doctrine, Carafa and Cajetan commented: “asylum is opened to greedy vagabonds, to impious deserters of the sacred religion, and to wicked apostates.”⁽³²⁾

Emboldened by their successes, these heretics began to spread their venom even in public preaching: but Saint Cajetan did not hesitate to personally intervene or send his religious to the preachings of the Valdesians Bernardino Ochino and Pietro Vermigli, to take note of every heresy that came from their mouths, to know how to combat them and make reports to Rome; thanks to the intervention of the Theatines, Pietro Vermigli was suspended from preaching. The powerful protections afforded to these heretics greatly hindered many actions of these religious; however their perseverance in the struggle and in the collection of information made clear the scope and danger of the Valdesian movement and made possible the subsequent investigations of the Inquisition, in the 1540s and 1550s, against the heretics friar Bernardino Ochino, Cardinal Pole, Cardinal Morone, Cardinal Bertano, and many bishops (such as Soranzo and Di Capua), nobles and personalities, who had all been in contact with

Valdés and his group from Naples and were dependent on them in some way. ⁽³³⁾

Saint Cajetan fell victim to the power that Valdesian Protestantism had acquired in Naples: in July 1547 a civil war broke out which was opposed on the one side by the legitimate power headed by Pedro of Toledo (brother of the famous Juan, a “Cardinal Inquisitor” and colleague of Cardinal Carafa), and on the other a large part of the Neapolitan nobility, infected with Valdesianism. The reason for the dispute? The proposal to introduce an Inquisition tribunal dependent on the Holy Office of Rome ⁽³⁴⁾ in Naples. Father Cajetan desperately tried to avoid war, but to no avail; he had to witness the ever-increasing bravado of the rebels against the Church and the State, murders carried out by hitmen, the escape from prisons of dozens of heretics, and thousands of deaths; the common opinion among the Saint's biographers is that the war caused him to die of a broken heart.

As we have seen, starting in the early 1530s, a new danger began to emerge: heresy no longer attracted only religious or lay people, but also secular clergy and even bishops and cardinals. Coordinated, extensive and centralized action became increasingly necessary: this is how the modern Roman Inquisition was born in 1542, equipped with powers and characteristics perfectly tested in previous years. Tested by whom? By people delegated *ad hoc* by Clement VII and Paul III; and these people were none other than our Theatines (who would be accompanied by individuals such as the nuncio Girolamo Aleandro, the canon Callisto Fornari, the local inquisitors, especially Dominicans and Franciscans), who until then, in addition to sanctifying themselves and their neighbors and setting a good example, they had in fact carried out inquisitorial activities, and had enjoyed the power to absolve from heresy, although for the

future, only the Inquisition would be the main body able to absolve from this crime.

The first mission is accomplished

After the organization of the Inquisition, the institute of Theatine Clerics Regular no longer had any reason to deal with inquisitorial activity or to have official roles in the reform, duties of which they had been the tireless precursor and model. Indeed, the inquisitors enjoyed greater freedom of action than the members of the small institute (although the Inquisition itself was able to seriously consolidate its faculties only in the pontificates of Julius III and especially Paul IV).

Many of the Theatines of the early times then continued the service of the Church with roles outside the institute. Thus Bernardino Scotti and Girolamo Consiglieri were created cardinals by Paul IV Carafa; the Theatine bishop Thomas Goldwel became responsible for affairs concerning England at the Council of Trent; and Father Geremia Isachino (who out of humility refused the cardinalate), was among the Roman consultors to the council. Many Theatine religious had a primary role in the reform of the Missal begun by Paul IV in 1559, and that of the Breviary sanctioned by Saint Pius V in 1568; the same applies to the Theatines Antonio Agelli and Vincenzo Massa in the Greek edition of the Septuagint, and in the revision of the Vulgate and the Roman Martyrology.

After the events of early times, the congregation continued to concentrate on the spirit of asceticism, prayer and apostolate that had always characterized it: with a tender devotion to the “Holy Child of St. Cajetan”, the Baby Jesus who appeared to Saint Cajetan in 1517; and to the *Holy Mother of Purity*, patroness of the Order. The Theatines are also

Behold, O Lord Holy Father, from thy sanctuary and thy abode of heaven; see the sacred Host that Christ your son, our Lord and humanity's High Priest, offers to you for the sins of his brothers.

Forgive the immense wickedness of the world.

Here, the voice of the Blood of our brother Jesus cries to You from the cross.

O lord our God, hear us; take care of us: do not linger, for your goodness, because your holy name has been invoked upon this city and upon this people.

Treat us according to your mercy. Amen!
(San Gaetano Thiene) [Saint Cajetan]

the propagators of the very famous devotion of the cerulean habit, that is, the indigo blue scapular in honor of Mary Immaculate. Furthermore, the congregation is famous for its love and devotion to the liturgy, and for the education of youth.

Reaching sanctity in this congregation were Saint Andrew Avellino and the Blessed Giovanni Marinoni, Giuseppe Maria Cardinal Tomasi (patron of liturgists) and Paolo Cardinal Burali (candidate of the intransigent party after the death of Saint Pius V). In it, theologians Raffaele Aversa⁽³⁵⁾, Antonio Naldo and the less fortunate Antonino Diana and Zaccaria Pasqualigo, illustrated the sacred sciences, as did the liturgists Gaetano Merato and Paolo Quarti; and not forgetting Father Lorenzo Scupoli, author of the famous work of spiritual life "*The Spiritual Combat*". The famous architect Guarino Guarini was also Theatine.

Final considerations

The story of the Clerics Regular in these early times is, in its own way, also current. The similarity of the first Theatines with the

Sodalitium Pianum of Monsignor Umberto Benigni is impressive. Both were works created for the defense and reform of the Church. Both were born in times in which they lacked the approval of the public, even if well deserved (for the inquisitorial and reformatory work of the Theatines, *there was still* no consensus, due to the corruption of sagacity and morality; as for the work of the *Sodalitium* the consensus was increasingly *coming apart*, due to the same corruption). Both were works strongly desired by the Pope and they acted under his direction (well known are the documents of Clement VII to the Theatines, and those of Saint Pius X to the *Sodalitium*). Both were rabidly hated and slandered by the enemies of the reform and the Faith (especially in the person of their leaders, Monsignor Carafa and Monsignor Benigni). And finally, the Theatines were a religious institute directly dependent upon the Holy See: Benigni's desire, and that of his companions, was precisely to obtain for the *Sodalitium Pianum* the status of an institute with direct dependence on the Holy See.⁽³⁶⁾

In the battles supported by the two institutes we see a parallel and a difference: the parallel is given by their enemies, Protestantism and the perversion of morals for the Theatines; and modernism (modern Protestantism) and the de-Christianization of society for the *Sodalitium Pianum*. The difference is found in the outcome of the two battles: God gave the Theatines the victory (almost miraculously, if we consider how extensive and intense the corruption of that era was), while he allowed the defeat of the integral Catholics and of the *Sodalitium*; in the Counter-Reformation, the Church shone more than ever, while now, it is humiliated by its enemies. And yet today the struggle is the same: truth against error, integrity against compromise, God's law against vice. "The Lord, in his goodness, grants many graces and gifts

which escape us, blinded as we are by passions and worldly desires.”⁽³⁷⁾

With these lines the members of the Mater Boni Consilii Institute - which in its small way wants to take the baton of integral Catholics and all Catholic militants of all times - wish to honor the meritorious family of the Clerics Regular Theatines in its five hundredth anniversary, and especially their first members, who spent so much for the holy Cause of God: may Saint Cajetan Thiene, Pope Paul IV and all the blessed souls of the Theatines intercede for those who are now fighting their same battle!

Bibliography

FRANCESCO ANDREU, entry *Theatines* in the *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, 1953.

ANTONIO CARACCILO, *De vita Pauli Quarti Pont. Max. collectanea historica, item Caietani Thienaei, Bonifacii a Colle, Pauli Consiliarii*, Officina Jan Kincki 1612.

VINCENZO COSENZA (translations), PASQUALE DI PIETRO (editor), “*Cristo aspetta e nessun si muove*”. *Le lettere di S. Gaetano Thiene*, 1988.

BERNARDO LAUGENI, *Gaetano Thiene il Presbitero Santo*, Curia Generalizia dei C.R.T. 1997.

BERNARDO LAUGENI, *Una vita per la Chiesa. Gian Pietro Carafa 1476-1559*, Curia Generalizia dei C.R.T. 1995.

ANDREA VANNI, “*Fare diligente inquisitione*”. *Gian Pietro Carafa e le origini dei chierici regolari teatini*, Viella 2010.

Footnotes

1) *Sodalitium* no. 36 pp. 24-25, pp. 33-47; no. 43 pp. 41-42; no. 70 pp. 22-30.

2) We undertake this historical research trying to avoid the two (wrong) extremes into which we

risk falling when doing ecclesiastical history: the first extreme is the *a priori* which justifies even that which should be criticized (as apologists often do); the other is the *a priori* which excludes any possible supernatural aspect of events and incidents (as unfortunately we see in all modern studies on ecclesiastical history, which, although rich in sources, judges historical figures by presuming their intentions to be predominantly careerist, political, or economic: never faith, never charity). A third error can be traced back to the latter *a priori*: that of not evaluating facts and actions from the perspective of Faith but from liberalism, as many Catholic historians have done, more or less infected with it: the method for reading history as a Catholic is not the same as that of a Lutheran, nor that of a modernist, nor even that of a liberal “Catholic”... Without judging their intentions and their circumstances, when writing about Paul IV it seems to us that the following erred in this third way: Pallavicini, Pastor, Jedin; Rohrbacher says too little to judge. After all, *qualis unusquisque est talis finis videtur ei...* [Every man judges what is good according to his good or evil interior dispositions...]

3) *Letter by Saint Cajetan to Paolo Giustiniani* (founder of the Mount Cordova’s Camaldolite Reformed Congregation), January 1, 1523.

4) P. BERNARDO LAUGENI, *Gaetano Thiene...*the work cited in the bibliography of this article, p. 107.

5) On this Pontiff, we refer you to *Sodalitium* no. 73 pp. 50-53.

6) *Testimony by Father Giovanni Antonio Prati C.R.T.* (Professed a Theatine in 1530).

7) *Letter by Gian Pietro Carafa to Francesco Vannucio*, of April 24, 1535.

8) ANTONIO CARACCILO, *De vita...* work cited in the bibliography of this article, p. 194.

9) Gaetano Thiene graduated *in utroque iure*, was Apostolic Prothonotary, and in the two years preceding his priestly ordination “with all his energies he dedicated himself to the study of Sacred Scripture, ascetics and improved his theological training” (Laugeni, *Gaetano Thiene ...* p. 49); his acquaintances referred to him without irony as “Magister”, “master Father Cajetan”.

Carafa obtained permission from his family to study under the Dominicans of the San Domenico Maggiore monastery in Naples: highly versed in languages (Italian, Latin, Greek, Spanish) and in the humanistic sciences; he continued his studies in law, history and theology in Rome with his Cardinal uncle, and with great success: “a memory so tenacious that he remembers what he has read, which is almost everything. He has all of the Holy Scriptures in mind, as well as the interpreters, but mainly Saint Thomas”, is how the ambassador of Venice Bernardo Navagero described him. “He called the Blessed Thomas Aquinas, his fellow citizen, ‘a cane for his old age’; and he said that ‘Naples was dead after giving birth to Saint Thomas’, meaning that the city would never give birth to someone

similar to him” (*Apologetic note* by Cardinal Antonio Carafa to the Venetian Senate). Also at his uncle’s house he had the opportunity to meet great intellectuals of the time such as the Dominican Tommaso De Vio (“Cardinal Gaetano”) and Iacopo Sadoletto.

Father De’ Colli was also a doctor *in utroque iure*.

10) *Letter by Father Girolamo La Lama* (elsewhere: Solana) to the directors of Venice’s «Hospital for the Incurables», of September 30, 1524.

11) The same thing that Monsignor Benigni said about the forming of any Catholic group: “As for the people, they should be chosen from among convinced and integral Catholics. If this organization is formed with so-called “liberal” Catholics, it will be stillborn. Its members will always be willing to make concessions to their opponents.”

12) *Testimony by Father Erasmo Danese* (a Theatine novice from the 1540s).

13) GIROLAMO MAGGI, *Racconto della vita di Gian Pietro Carafa* (translated from the original latin).

14) *Letter by Saint Cajetan to veronese aristocrat Francesco Cappello*, February 17, 1533.

15) *Letter by Saint Cajetan to sister Maria Carafa*, September 30, 1542.

16) *Letter by Saint Cajetan to Paolo Giustiniani*, January 1, 1523.

17) “I want to leave for Venice; in addition to other urgent reasons, it is to enjoy the company of two very dear people: the Theatine bishop, a very holy and religious man, who you will certainly know [...]” (letter from Reginald Pole to Iacopo Sadoletto, from the 1530s).

Against the ancient and modern detractors of Pope Paul IV, who paint him as a careerist, effectively equating him with many other unhappy characters of the time, we believe to be necessary a work of truth by reporting some of the testimonies of his contemporaries. Here is how the Camaldolite Abbot Paolo Giustiniani describes Gian Pietro Carafa in a letter to Saint Cajetan (December 1, 1523): ‘A man of letters of supreme modesty, of such holiness of life, of such purpose of mind, that I do not believe that anyone in Rome can be equal to him, and I hope to see him do things which, with the clear glory of God, will confuse the lovers of the world, and rejoice those who thirst for the glory of God.’ And then there is Sebastiano Giustiniani, Venetian ambassador to London (letter to Erasmus dated June 29, 1517): “In him cheerful manners, singular innocence, venerable gravity with a suitable sweetness, a festive affability with gravitas, doctrine complete and numerous. [...] Nothing works without reason, everything is directed by the plumb line rule. No movement or posture of the body that is not beautiful, elegant, full of naive modesty, no word that does not sound good to the ears. [...] I had chosen him to admire and imitate, because he was a great stimulus to me towards virtue.” And Erasmus



The Crest
of the
Theatines

himself, who met Monsignor Carafa in London, wrote to Leo X on May 21, 1521: “What will the eloquence of such a singular man fail to succeed in persuading? Who will not be shaken by the authority of such an upright and serious prelate? Who will not be inflamed by the rarest piety of his excellent character? Because to the uncommon knowledge of the three languages, to the supreme knowledge of all disciplines and particularly of theology, that still very young man added so much integrity, sanctity, modesty, so much cheerfulness seasoned with admirable gravity, as to give great prestige to the Roman see and to offer all Britons a perfect example of every virtue.” He prepared himself for the celebration of morning Mass from the previous evening, and while celebrating he often burst into tears. Even as Pope he ate only once a day.

Finally, what political or career-related utility could there ever be in leaving not only two important bishoprics, but even public life, shutting oneself away in a monastery?

18) A curiosity about the Office recited by the Theatines: given the variety of Breviaries, and the failure of the unfortunate reform of the Breviary desired by Leo X and Clement VII, Carafa himself carried out a revision of the Divine Office, the use of which was approved by Clement VII for the Theatines; and this revision was used as a model in the reform of the Breviary that he initiated as Pope, which was continued by Pius IV, and completed by Saint Pius V in 1568.

19) *Letter by Saint Cajetan to veronese aristocrat Francesco Cappello*, February 17, 1533.

20) *De Lutheranorum haeresi reprimenda et ecclesiae reformanda ad Clementem VII*, document called “Theatine Report” by Monsignor Gian Pietro Carafa to Clemente VII, Autumn 1532.

21) GIOVANNI DE CORTESIS, *Letter of* January 5, 1527.

22) *Ibid.*

23) *Letter by Valerio Lugio to Francesco Della Seta governor of Rome*, October 21, 1525.

24) *Letter by Father Girolamo La Lama to Sanudo Marino*, October 1, 1524.

25) LUDWIG VON PASTOR, *Storia dei Papi*, vol. VI p. 318.

26) VANNI, *op. cit.* in the bibliography, p. 215. Without a doubt, the enemies of Catholic orthodoxy used the term “Theatine” as a synonym for “hypocrite” and “retrograde”: but what interests us is that they used it as the precise opposite of what they were: and we know that they were Protestants and liberals!

27) *Letter by Saint Cajetan to Bartolomeo Scaini*, March 26, 1529.

28) “Theatine Report”.

29) *Letter by Saint Cajetan to Bartolomeo Scaini*.

30) “Theatine Report”.

31) CARD. ANTONIO CARAFA, *Nota apologetica al Senato veneziano*, item XIII.

32) PIO PASCHINI, *Thiene, Carafa e le origini dei teatini*, Scuola tipografica Pio X 1926, p. 126.

33) On this topic we highlight *Sodalitium* no. 36 pp. 40-44; no. 70 pp. 22-30; and the third conference of the 10th *Day for the Social Regality of Christ the King* which was held in Modena on October 15, 2016 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7U7avts0Yw&list=PLPV8HFQ0V0sj7g5auk-KUnZhb37buxjf q6&index=20>).

34) Also regarding this revolt we must complain about the tendentiousness and univocity of the criteria with which historians describe the events. We concede that the rebel nobility could fear that an Inquisition tribunal established on Spanish soil would become an instrument of political repression against them; but the people must be considered in their entirety: if we think that the rebel nobles were Valdesians or Calvinists it is very difficult to believe that their motive was exclusively political... Especially since the tribunal that was intended to be established in Naples would not have been of the purely Spanish Inquisition, but it was to have judges appointed by Rome.

35) Father Raffaele Aversa was repeatedly the provost of the Theatines, and wrote a *Theologia scholastica universa ad mentem Sancti Thomæ*, in 9 volumes.

36) FERDINANDO ANTONELLI, *Disquisitio circa quasdam obiectiones...*, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana 1950, first part chapter III no. II, 2; and the corresponding documents in the appendix of the *Disquisitio*.

37) *Letter by Saint Cajetan to unknown addressee*, date unknown (the original is torn and damaged).



IN THE NEWS

Interview on the situation of Christians in the Holy Land

For the readers of Sodalitium we publish the text of the “Interview with Father Ugo Carandino: The difficult conditions of Christians in the Holy Land”, edited by Francesco Di Ciano and Manuel Berardinucci, on the blog “Il Maccabeo” of Pescara.

The situation of permanent conflict affecting the territories between Israel and Palestine is periodically given media attention based on the size and intensity of the clashes. However, beneath and beyond the thundering noises of missiles on both sides, pompous declarations, political partisanship and international agreements, courses a silent, forgotten and ignored story: the life of Christians in the Holy Land; a life that is not a simple one, caused by discrimination and oppression. In this regard, we have the pleasure of reporting on the *Maccabeo*, in the format of an interview that we offer to the reader, the considerations of the Reverend Father Ugo Carandino, priest of the Mater Boni Consilii Institute, pilgrim to the Holy Land several times and a careful observer of Christian events in Israel and Palestine.

Reverend, we would first of all like to thank you for the kind availability you have given us in answering our questions. To understand current events without stopping at the threshold of superficial evaluations, it is necessary to know the historical background of what is being analyzed. A certain common historical ignorance thinks that Christians

essentially disappeared from the Holy Land with the arrival of the Mohammedan armies in the 7th century and that therefore the Crusader epic was already a sort of “revenge” or abuse beyond its time. However, we know from British sources that in the first half of the twentieth century the Christians in those lands still made up around a tenth of the total population. What led to such a drastic numerical reduction as the current one in the space of a few decades?

Christianity was born in Palestine and has continued to exist ever since, alternating happy moments with particularly difficult ones. A significant date for the Christian presence is December 11, 1917 when British, French and Italian troops (there was a nucleus of Royal *Carabinieri*) entered Jerusalem: the Ottoman empire was defeated and, after many centuries, the city and Palestine (at that time the southern part) returned to being governed by “Christian” nations. The enthusiasm among the representatives of the different churches (or rather, the Catholic Church and the non-Catholic sects) was great, images were circulating of the victorious soldiers which were associated with those of the ancient crusaders, and the possibility of re-Christianizing the Holy Land appeared on the horizon. The fact that General Allenby, the British commander, had the proclamation read to the troops by a Franciscan friar increased hopes among Catholics. In fact, the reconstruction of many sanctuaries that had been destroyed by persecution and natural disasters was carried out precisely in those years. For example, 2024 is the centenary of the construction of two of the most important and monumental churches, that of the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor and that of the Agony at Gethsemane, two masterpieces by the architect Barluzzi. Various religious

The conflict situation affecting the territories between Israel and Palestine is periodically subjected to media attention. But there is a silent, forgotten and ignored history which is the life of Christians in the Holy Land.

congregations competed to open a house in the Holy Places, and their various governments favored these settlements, such as the Italian one which promoted Italian culture and language in Palestine through the ANSMI (National Association to Help Italian Missionaries) founded by Ernesto Schiapparelli. Clearly it was mostly the Christian component of the Palestinian population - we can estimate 15%, with high percentages in cities such as Nazareth and Bethlehem - who hoped for a rosy future, after centuries of deprivation. But the Franciscan magazines of the Holy Land soon identified the Zionist project as a threat to these prospects. Unfortunately their fears materialized and starting from 1948 the exodus of Christians began, particularly the middle class, which represented a qualified component of the local ruling class. A further reduction in the number of Christians occurred after the Six Day War in 1967. If in 1948 the Catholics of the Latin rite alone in Jerusalem numbered around 90,000, today, adding the Catholics of all rites and the Christians of the various ‘churches’, we arrive at 9,000 thousand people! The total percentage today has fallen below 2%, and with the current war, many young Christians who cannot find employment prospects and security for their families, are seriously thinking about moving abroad.

You have been a pilgrim to the Holy Land several times, what can you tell us about what you have observed regarding the daily life of Christians in the Israeli state? Here too, the common vernacular depicts a situation of European-style “tolerance” (and Masonic and Enlightenment roots) but the recent and repeated images of spitting at religious or Christian pilgrims on the street, or even real attacks, are more often than not branded by the authorities as being just unruly kids, or they are punished lightly.

To respond, I refer to the previous answer, since the stakes lost after 1917 can help us understand the current situation. Today we are used to considering the presence of non-Christian civil authorities as completely normal in the Holy Land, with a limited choice between Jewish or Muslim institutions. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, (one of the many geopolitical upheavals of the First World War, a tragic event that was providential for those pursuing various ambitious projects), the political and social organization of Palestine could return to Christianity, and therefore make baptized Palestinians doubly “at home”, guaranteeing them favorable legislation. The transition instead from the non-Christian power of the Turks to the equally non-Christian power of the Zionists, which is particularly exclusive, has given us the current situation in which Christians are considered guests, ignoring their double bond with the Holy Land, as heirs of the first Christian communities and as an indigenous population. If the manifestations of intolerance of some Jewish groups which you mentioned in the question particularly affect the clergy (local or those visiting the Holy Places), all Palestinian Christians in Israel are penalized by the law approved in 2018, which defines the state as “the national home of the Jewish

people”, for which non-Jews are precisely more or less welcome guests in other people's home. In the wake of this legislative innovation and the tightening of the government line, there has been an increase in recent years in the Old City of Jerusalem of cases of religious intolerance towards buildings and people of different communities, inflicting bitterness on local communities.

What is the condition of Christians in the Palestinian territories, from what you have observed or heard?

Clearly there is a certain frustration for the context in which they are forced to live, like that of a young businessman from Bethlehem who last September 8 complained that he did not have permits to go to a concert held in Jerusalem in honor of the Marian feast: a short route, of just a few kilometers, made impossible by the separation wall. In this case, I think that the lack of freedom of movement, especially for younger people, is a significant burden; a situation that makes serious romantic relationships even more difficult for an increasingly smaller Christian community to found new Catholic families. Obviously what has been triggered since the beginning of October makes everything more difficult, both for Arab Christian Israeli citizens and for those under the Palestinian National Authority. The media for the Latin Patriarchate and the Franciscan Custody speak of how distrust and mutual resentment between Israelis and Arabs have grown out of all proportion, with social relations increasingly tense or even interrupted. Just think, for example, of the government measures that were particularly penalizing for Christian workers who passed from one part of the Holy Land to another every day. This threat of poverty in some sectors adds to the general

one caused by the lack of pilgrims and visitors, which has brought the tourism sector, one of the major sources of work for many Christian families, to its knees. Then there are the thousand Christians, including Latins and Greek schismatics, in Gaza City (before the war they represented 0.05% of the population of the Strip) who have been evacuated since October to the structures of the two communities, with their houses bombed and without any prospects of future employment for those who will manage to survive.

In conclusion, what is the resolution horizon for the current crisis that best complies with Catholic doctrine and the freedom of Christians in the Holy Land? In short, toward what intentions should we direct our prayers and currently, what practical prospects should we hope for?

In past centuries the Catholics of the Holy Land, although crushed by Muslim domination, first Arab and then Turkish, have always found valuable assistance in Christianity, which favored the centuries-old work of the Franciscan Custody in defense of local communities as well as pilgrims. That is what is missing today, and what was missing in 1917: no longer were Catholic nations determined to safeguard the Christian presence in the Holy Land, indeed, to make it prosper as much as possible, and instead apostate nations, sunk in the quicksand of secularism, with no intention of offending the new masters of Palestine, were therefore insensitive to the fate of the Christian communities. I'll give you an example: the governments of Italy, Spain, France and Belgium have particular diplomatic relationships with the Custody, which however goes as far as being present at some functions. Starting with the Italian institutions, I do not see any

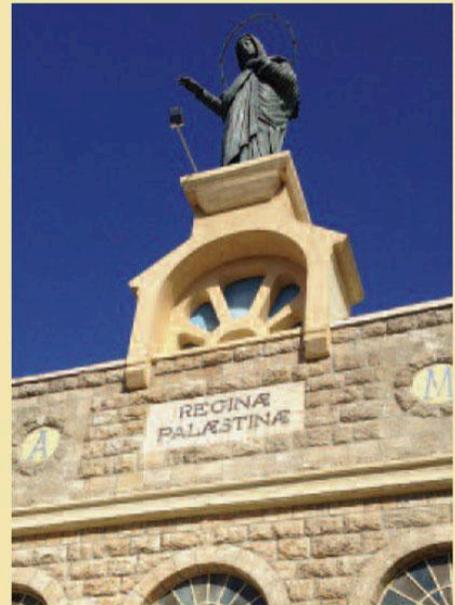
intervention to vindicate what Pope Pius XII forcefully and clearly asked for since 1948 (and which theoretically is still the official position of the Holy See), namely an international statute for Jerusalem, capable to guarantee freedom to the Holy Places and consequently the recognition of fundamental rights to local Christians. Added to these omissions are piteous intentions: unfortunately the latest generations of the political class treat particularly complex and delicate issues with a disarming superficiality, placing the illusion of ephemeral political advantage before a contribution towards a wise and lasting resolution to political and social upheavals which have troubled the Holy Land for decades. The hypothesis of subverting the diplomatic and political structure by moving the embassies to Jerusalem, put forward by certain Italian politicians, is the most clear and alarming example. So it doesn't seem like the solution can come from the chancelleries, where there are presumed statesmen who are unsuitable for their role and who are aligned with the strongest. As for the Vatican, I remember the words that a priest said to me this summer in Galilee, a veteran of pilgrimages, who considered the



Shireen Abu Akleh, the Palestinian Catholic journalist killed by an Israeli sniper on May 11, 2022 in Jenin.

Prayer to Mary Immaculate, Queen of Palestine

O Mary Immaculate, gracious Queen of Heaven and of Earth, behold us prostrate before thy exalted throne. Full of confidence in thy goodness and in thy boundless power, we beseech thee to turn a pitying glance upon Palestine, which more than any other country belongs to thee, since thou hast graced it with thy birth, thy virtues and thy sorrows, and from there hast given the Redeemer to the world. Remember that there especially, thou wert constituted our tender Mother, the dispenser of graces. Watch, therefore, with special protection over thy native country, scatter from it the shades of error, for it was there the Sun of Eternal Justice shone. Bring about the speedy fulfilment of the promise, which issued from the lips of Thy Divine Son, that there should be one fold and one Shepherd. Obtain for us all that we may serve the Lord in sanctity and justice during the days of our life, so that, by the merits of Jesus and with thy motherly aid, we may pass at last from this earthly Jerusalem to the splendors of the heavenly one. Amen.



excessive prudence of the Holy See to be bad. In this sense, I believe that the Judeo-Christian interreligious dialogue, which reached incredible levels in the 1980s with John Paul II, has not contributed to the dignified and fruitful exercise of Vatican diplomacy. I open a parenthesis to underline how the missionary spirit, even in the face of a prohibitive reality, must not give up the hope of conversion to the true Faith in the Most Holy Trinity for all those who do not have the grace of Baptism, since only the balm of sanctifying grace can transform men and prepare for a healthy transformation of Israeli and Palestinian society. Returning to our discussion, it therefore seems that humanly speaking there are no prospects for a peaceful and balanced social structure in the Land chosen by God for the work of Redemption. The events that exploded at the beginning of last October have made the general situation even more prohibitive, and the dramatic news relating to the civilian population confirms this perspective, along with the real risk that the conflict could affect the entire Near East. However, human affairs are always subject to Divine Providence,

which can unexpectedly defeat human projects. Our prayers are therefore necessary to ask for this divine intervention. After all, it is precisely in this land that in a miraculous way we passed from Good Friday to Resurrection Sunday. Clearly our prayer must be the consequence of greater public attention for the fate of the Christian presence in the Holy Land, attention currently put asleep by the media. To conclude, paraphrasing the words of Pius XI ("Pax Christi in Regno Christi"), let us never tire of asking for the peace of Christ in the land of Christ, through the intercession of Mary Queen of Palestine, a significant title that was chosen by Patriarch Luigi Barlassina to consecrate the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem to the Madonna in 1920.

The interview is published on this link:

<https://ilmaccabeo.wordpress.com/2024/01/19/intervista-a-don-ugo-carandino-i-cristiani-in-terra-santa/>



Cristina Campo: Let's clarify things on the centenary of her birth

In July 2000, *Sodalitium* announced one of my writings on the writer Cristina Campo: the title of the brief project (*Cristina Campo, quale tradizione?*) which previously explained which approach would have been taken towards Cristina's way of thinking and life. The objective was realized only in January 2005, when our *Centro librario* finally published *Cristina Campo, o l'ambiguità della Tradizione*, including the re-edition of a text of capital importance for the life and thought of the Bolognese writer, the *Answer to Simone Weil's 'Letter to a religious'*, by Father M.-L. Guérard des Lauriers, written by the Dominican religious in 1969 and published by Borla the following year at the request of Cristina Campo and Elémire Zolla. My short essay, born from sincere affection for the memory of Vittoria Guerrini (Cristina Campo's real name), who was called to God in January 1977, presented to the reader what had long before been the torment of many priestly hearts: that of the eternal salvation of Cristina Campo (whose mortal remains rest in the tomb of the Putti family at the Charterhouse of Bologna), since on the one side of the scale is weighed her extraordinary battle for the Roman Mass, while on the other there was her "Christian esotericism", fueled by her association with Zolla, and put into crisis by her hard-fought conversion. Ours was an isolated voice among many others. The *Adelphi* publishing house only remembered her esoteric acquaintances and Weilian thought, releasing Cristina's published and unpublished works and her "official" biography. Progressive Catholics,

like Enzo Bianchi, magnified her passion for the Christian East, forgetting her opposition to the Council; and contrarily, some "conservative" Catholics condemned her esotericism, and by doing so implicated all traditional Catholicism with suspicion. Exemplary for this last position is the case of Gianni Rocca, a name which turned out to be the pseudonym of Gianni Collu, who, beneath his vehement fight against Guénonian esotericism, hid an unspeakable connection with that dark world (see *Sodalitium*, no. 70-71). From "traditionalist Catholics" she receives only oblivion, or at most we find timid hints about her such as "founder of *Una Voce*" or admirer of Archbishop Lefebvre. A common point among all these divergent and incomplete exegeses of Cristina Campo and her work: the acute silence on the figure of Father Guérard des Lauriers, on whom, also in this case, falls the *damnatio memoriae*.

The centenary of Vittoria Guerrini's birth (she was born in Bologna on April 29, 1923) has encouraged new studies, new publications on her, which also affect our work which has now been going on for more than twenty years. I was informed of the existence, in the "traditionalist" Catholic world, of a video conference by Elena Bianchini Braglia, edited by the channel "*Cronache di Cielo e Terra*" (an association close to *Liberi in veritate*, if I'm not mistaken, which also collaborated with Radio Spada). The video, entitled: *Cristina Campo, scrittrice al servizio della Tradizione [writer at the service of Tradition]*, carefully avoids dealing with the issue raised by our book, that of *the ambiguity of Tradition* at the service of which Cristina Campo placed herself: at times, with great courage, a Catholic one, and at times, rather, what we could call a *Guénonian* one. At the end of the video (1 hour and 4 minutes), having reached the reading suggestions for further information, *Adelphi's* biography by

Cristina De Stefano (*Belinda e il mostro*), “beautiful, stupendous”, was “certainly” recommended. And then it was added: “I would like to point out, since I owe a debt of gratitude, since I actually met Cristina Campo many years ago in 2005 following the publication of this book: ‘Cristina Campo o l’ambiguità della tradizione’ by Father Francesco Ricossa. So I recommend it because it is very documented, but I partly distance myself from it because it is too much - although very documented and therefore certainly interesting - I find it very severe and incapable of truly grasping the real conversion of Cristina Campo which perhaps does not emerge enough from her official writings, from her published essays, but emerges very well in her letters. And so in my opinion the limitation of this book which, I repeat, was important for me because it introduced me to the character, on whom I later read all the rest, is precisely that of not grasping the conversion enough. It’s a very severe book. But, I repeat, it is well documented, and therefore it is good to read it.” I thank those who held the conference for the noting (“any publicity is good publicity”) but evidently the book from our *Centro Librario* could not provide a similar point of view to the *Adelphi* editions! And precisely because it is “well documented”, the reader will find clear evidence of the concern that Cristina’s true friends (the priests who shared the battle with her for the Roman Mass, her friend Emilia Pediconi) had for the salvation of her soul, a concern that was also mine in writing that book with the heart of a priest and pastor of souls, well aware that there was a conversion, but that she never managed to free herself completely from the ambiguities of the past.

We concern ourselves with Braglia’s conference only because she is an author known to the Italian traditionalist world. The book edited by Maria Pertile and Giovanni Scarca (I

met Maria Pertile in Bologna years ago) is of a very different scope: *Cristina Campo. La disciplina della gioia. Con le lettere a John Lindsay Opie* [*The discipline of Joy. With letters to Lindsay Opie*] (254 pages). On the centenary of her birth were published in book form the acts of the international conference promoted by the *Centro Studi Famiglia Capponi*, which took place in Florence on March 25, 2017, on the fortieth anniversary of her death (which occurred on January 10, 1977). The book is a collection of contributions from twelve authors, as well as published and unpublished texts by Cristina Campo, among which stand out the letters she wrote to John Lindsay Opie (who died in 2021) and published in the original English with accompanying translation by Alessandro Giovanardi. Lovers of poetry and literature, enthusiasts of Cristina Campo, will find great satisfaction in the volume; to us, in this context, we are now, as always, interested in Campo’s role in defending the Catholic tradition and its liturgy. From our point of view, we cannot fail to point out first of all that, of the twelve authors in question, all admirers of Vittoria Guerrini, not a single one shares her positions on the Roman Mass (to the point of hypothesizing that the poem *Canone IV* was inspired by a Eucharistic prayer from the new missal), and not a single one comes from the so-called world of “Catholic tradition”. Because of a supposed deficiency of traditionalists? Or rather the voluntary omission of this voice, even when speaking about an author who was part of this world, and was able to speak with this voice?

It is also true that, although none of the authors are Catholics who are faithful to tradition, for which reason their voice (and ours) is aphonic, at least some of the authors in question write, inevitably ‘in their own way’ (i.e. as outsiders), about these themes: the liturgical

reform, Vatican II, the question of the Pope, and they do not ignore the contribution that our publishing house has given to the question, with the re-edition of the *Brief Critical Examination* (2009) and our *Cristina Campo o l'ambiguità della tradizione* (2005), described by Antonio Donati as a “*strongly critical and markedly peremptory essay*” and mentioned “*for simple completeness*” (p. 137, no. 28; the convergence of judgment with the aforementioned video by *Cronache di Cielo Terra* is curious).

Giuseppe Goisis (*Andrea Emo, Simone Weil e Cristina Campo: alcune riflessioni*) speaks at length (pp. 60-66) about Cristina Campo's introduction to Simone Weil's *Attesa di Dio* (Rusconi, 1972), in which she distances herself from the French Jewish writer; but Goisis ignores (or remains silent about) the decisive role played by Father Guérard des Lauriers in this evolution of C. Campo's thinking, with his response to the *Letter to a religious* (1970) requested by and completed for Campo herself. However, who does not ignore – or at least he cites – the contribution of Father Guérard des Lauriers o.p. is Alessandro Giovanardi (p. 196, footnote 19, where he cites our work and the re-edition of Father Guérard's response to Simone Weil). However, Giovanardi (whom I met on the occasion of a conference about Campo) is linked to the diocese of Rimini (as a teacher at the Higher Institute of Religious Sciences of Rimini and San Marino, dependent on the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education) so his efforts to present Cristina Campo as much as possible in continuity with Vatican II and not attributable to the “traditionalist” Catholic world is not surprising. An extremely difficult undertaking, Giovanardi realizes, who at least tries to distance her from the “schismatic” (Archbishop Lefebvre) or “sedevacantist” (Bishop Guérard) positions: “*Campo, in the letters to John (Lindsay Opie),*

does not hesitate to define the ‘Novus Ordo’ as ‘apostaticus’: here, too, emerges the closeness to the radical positions of Archbishop Marcel François Lefebvre, whom the writer considers a bulwark of true Catholicism against the heterodoxy of post-conciliar reforms” (pp. 196-197). Indeed, in the footnote he adds: “*Campo, in private, does not hesitate to define the pontifical authority as ‘Apostate’, or to call the Instructio signed by the Pope on May 4, with the new rubrics of the Mass, ‘blasphemous’ (Letters to Rodolfo Quadrelli...)...*” (note 22). But... there is a ‘but (for Giovanardi): “*The heated and extreme tone of certain passages which have the form of condemnation and invective must not, however, mislead us as to their deeper and more authentic meaning: at the time, Guérard des Lauriers and Lefebvre were effective and prominent members of the Official Catholicism, no less than Ottaviani and Bacci and, as long as Cristina was alive, their definitive break with the Vatican did not take place, although they were one step away from it. Furthermore, it is honestly impossible to imagine what the writer's own considerations would have been about the doctrine of the vacant papal see, developed by Guérard des Lauriers in 1978, or Lefebvre's schism with the Holy See which occurred in 1988”* (p. 197). Of course, as she died in 1977, we cannot say what she would have said in 1978... but we can know with certainty what she claimed and thought in 1969, thanks also to the texts published (with their translation from English) by Giovanardi himself! Writing to her friend John Lindsay Opie on Friday, May 2, 1969 in reference to the introduction of the ‘novus ordo’, Cristina Campo compares the passion of the Church to that of Christ: “*It's the sixth hour, John. The apostasy has been brought to completion: ‘Consummatum est’. The Church hangs on the Cross: a nefarious object for everyone to see. She ‘has been made a*

curse', 'similar to a leper struck by divine wrath and humiliated'. She is now putting her spirit back into the hands of the Father. She will soon let out a great cry (whose?) and bowing her head, you understand, **with no head left to be seen**, she will entrust her spirit to the Father to have Him preserve it" (p. 215). Dear Giovanardi: you published these lines! What does it mean, by grace, speaking of the Church, that it finds itself "with no head left to be seen" other than that it will be without the Pope (the visible head of the Church) while Christ will always remain, the invisible Head (for us) of the same? And I assure you that in 1969 there were very few, even among the faithful linked to Tradition, who thought this way (certainly Father Guérard des Lauriers).

Giovanardi, and others, object that Cristina – even in those circumstances – maintained her faith in the Pope and the Papacy. Certainly! And not unlike Father Guérard des Lauriers: the error of these 'conciliar' Catholics consists in their thinking that anti-modernist Catholics are consumed by a schism like the Anglican or the "Orthodox", establishing a church distinct from the Catholic one founded on Peter. The testimonies brought by Giovanardi and others regarding the fact that Cristina Campo always remained faithful to the Church of Rome (Giovanardi speaks of her "*indispensable loyalty to the Roman pontiff*" on p. 197) do not exclude - among other things - her conviction that Paul VI wasn't (any longer) Pope; they only exclude the malevolent interpretation of "Gianni Rocca" (Gianni Collu), Vassallo, *Opus Dei* and all the others for whom Campo's opposition to the Pope and the (reformed) Mass was an anti-Catholic maneuver of the occultist esotericism world which later will be called "Adelphian". We have ample proof of Cristina Campo's loyalty to Rome. In the same letter of May 2, 1969, written to the

friend who from being Anglican had become "Orthodox" of the Russian church in exile, and referring to Marcello Marco Davitti (a Catholic seminarian from the Russicum who had apostatized by also adhering to the "Orthodox church") Campo writes: "*Marcello called me, he said: 'when will you escape from this hell and come away with us, outside, into the light and joy?'. I answered him: 'get behind me, Satan, because you do not distinguish the things of God from the things of men'. And he said: 'Do you still believe in the Pope?'. And I: 'More than I did before, in the presence of the Apostate. Because, who will redeem the fallen Church? A Synod? A Council? Who, if not the Pope?'. Truly Surrexit Dominus, Alleluia. And He appeared to Simon, Alleluia, Alleluia (...)*".

Giuseppina Cardillo Azzaro, friend from the Russicum, also attempts an ecumenist and conciliar revisitation of Cristina Campo: "*Vittoria Guerrini lived her love for the Church and served the Church; she was not Lefebvrian, she was not sectarian. (...) Vittoria predicted and anticipated the embrace between the Churches of the West and the East, that embrace which is really happening today*" (p. 24). The letter of May 2 according to which the invitation to leave the Catholic Church for the "Orthodox" one is a diabolical temptation, the nickname of Apostate towards Paul VI (who also physically embraced the Constantinopolitan 'patriarch' Athenagoras), her words are conclusive in the same letter: "*I continue to keep my eyes fixed on Archbishop L. (Lefebvre), the light of whose radiating face becomes more and more similar to that of his outraged and agonizing Lord*" (and, according to Cattabiani, "*it was she who pushed him into positions of rupture*", p. 234) tell us what value should be given, in this case, to the testimony of Azzaro, professor at LUMSA University (linked to the Vatican) and a

collaborator of the “Orthodox patriarchate” of Moscow and the Russian Federation.

Giovanardi falls into the same equivocation, speaking of Campo’s love for the Church and the Eastern liturgy: “*To Campo we also owe the large windows opened towards Orthodox spirituality in many important documents of the traditionalist Catholic front: openings which, after her passing, in that circle will not be so frequent or favorable.*” The misunderstanding concerns “Orthodox spirituality”: Catholic or schismatic? Giovanardi delves into the criticism of the “traditionalist environment”: “*for this reason it is legitimate to hypothesize a substantial cultural difference compared to the doctrinal rigidities and ideological waste of the most extreme traditionalist theses in the canonical field; a difference due to the breadth and refinement of her training and her readings*” (p. 197). The education and readings of a highly cultured woman, of course, which however does not authorize one to treat the “traditionalist” environment as a world of rude people ignorant with their “*ideological waste*”. In reality, among Cristina’s readings and training which pushed her towards the aforementioned “*openings*” and which led, in Zolla’s *Conoscenza religiosa*, to “*pure ecumenism*” (as Campo writes, p. 200), one finds the thinking of Guénon, “*master of the esoteric Tradition and of the transcendent union of all faiths*” (Giovanardi, p. 199) of whom Zolla and Campo were “*attentive and admired readers*” (p. 199) on the one hand, and of Simone Weil (p. 200) on the other. J. L. Opie, of whom Giovanardi is a “disciple”, was also a Guénonian, albeit critical (p. 199). Giovanardi, however, forgets how the defense of the Roman Mass, in particular her meeting with Father Guérard des Lauriers who responded to her doubts about Simone Weil’s objections to Catholicism, made Cristina Campo understand

the importance of dogma and ecclesiastical magisterium, those which instead he contemptuously calls “*doctrinal rigidities and ideological waste*”. Zolla and Cristina Campo initially considered “Tridentine”, “dogmatic”, “rigid” Catholics as “imbeciles”; but after 1969 Cristina Campo (not Zolla) changed her opinion, criticizing Weil for not having understood “*the function that the infallible Magisterium plays in the Church*”, so much so that her friend Citati described her as having become “*fanatical Catholic... with the ruthless violence of the 'Inquisitor'*” (see my book pp. 22-24, 29-32, 69 notes 108 and 109). This discovery of the importance of dogma, doctrine and magisterium made her sense the difficulty of reconciling this faith with her previous beliefs, which, however, she never completely abandoned, hence her 1970 preface to the Kabbalist rabbi A. J. Heschel (one of the protagonists of the Judeo-Christian dialogue) seems “almost apostatic” (pp. 199, 222-223, 237). Giovanardi sees “*self-irony*” in these words and a sign of “*her freedom of thought compared to the narrow confessional network of the most intransigent and exclusivist Catholicism*” (p. 199). In my opinion her expression is not so ironic, but shows the embarrassment, if not the torment of the writer who is barely able to reconcile in her mind and in her heart “*the ambiguity of Tradition*”: that is, the “Guénonian” or “Zollian”: the transcendent unity of religions; and the “Tridentine” Catholic one that she had learned to know and love precisely by defending the Roman Mass. Cristina then wants to delude herself, writing that when Rabbi Heschel “*says the Torah, he is saying, without knowing it, the Word... (And I don't even know to what extent he is without knowing it)*” (p. 238), while in reality the kabbalist is rather a disciple of those “traditionalist” Jews who cursed the man who was born blind: “*They insulted him and said:*

'You are this man's disciple! We are disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses; but as for this man, we do not know where he is from' " (John 9, 28-29).

Giovanardi - who tries to enlist Cristina Campo in Conciliar orthodoxy - recalls how she was close to religious reformers, such as the Servite fathers Turollo and Vannucci (p. 195). But he forgets that *"what to her appears to be an assassination of the liturgy pushes Cristina to break ties with those who represent a Catholicism not adverse to the Second Vatican Council"* (Mita, Margherita Pieracci, whom I quoted in *L'ambiguità della Tradizione*, p. 71, n. 119): it is paradoxical that the very people with whom she would have broken ties are those who monopolize the topic of the author's Catholicism, transforming an opponent of the Council and the liturgical reform into a conciliar Catholic without her knowledge.

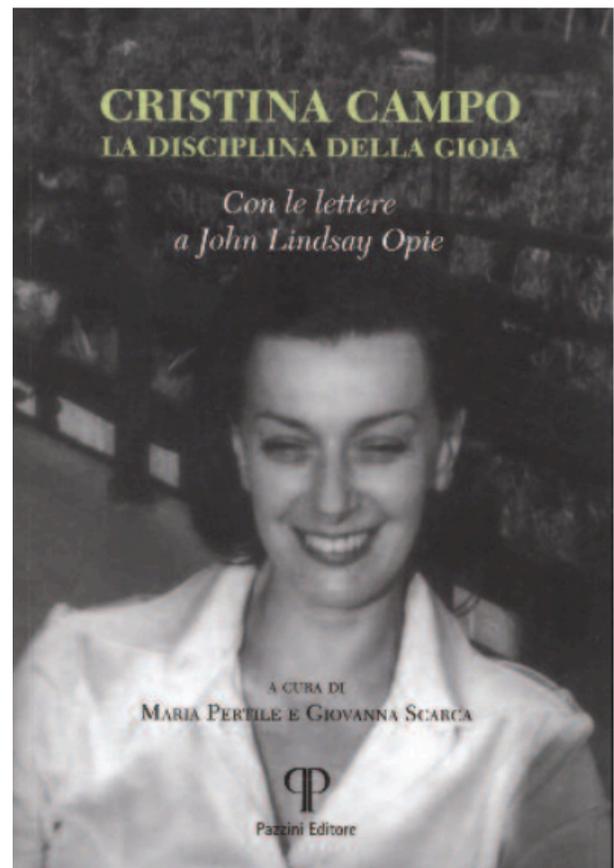
Therefore, at the risk of appearing "severe", "strongly critical and markedly peremptory", "radical", with "doctrinal rigidities" and "ideological waste", "intransigent" and "exclusivist", entangled in "tight confessional networks", we will continue to present Cristina Campo for what she was, in the complexities of her lights and shadows, without hiding any aspect of her. It seems to us that this is the most respectful gesture that can and should be made towards her memory.

Father Francesco Ricossa

- **Maria Pertile e Giovanna Scarca**
Cristina Campo La disciplina della gioia
Pazzini publishing 2021

Radio Spada and the Society are not "tranquil"

The publishing house of Radio Spada recently published a work by Father Daniele Di Sorco: *Parole chiare sulla Chiesa. Perché c'è una crisi, dove nasce e come uscirne.* [Clear words on the Church. Why there is a crisis, where it originates and how to get out of it]. The book includes an introduction by Andrea Giacobazzi, previously the manager of the *Intermarket Diamond Business spa (Idb)* and cofounder of Radio Spada, and an afterword by the Vaticanist Aldo Maria Valli, who manages the blog *Duc in altum*, where a letter of support was published for the thesis of the book by Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò on April 3, 2023 ([Monsignor Viganò / "Parole chiare sulla Chiesa": le giuste domande e le giuste risposte – Aldo Maria Valli](#)) [[Archbishop Viganò / "Clear words on the Church": the right questions and the right answers - Aldo Maria](#)



[Valli](#)]. The work was presented in Rome by the author, by Valli, and for Radio Spada by Ilaria Pisa.

To be more precise, the work is “edited” by Father Di Sorco (a Society priest from Livorno, who previously received his formation from the bi-ritualist *Francescan Friars of the Immaculate*), as it is the fruit of a collaboration with two of his confreres, Father Gabriele D’Avino, and above all, his mentor, Father Mauro Tranquillo, without knowing which parts of the book are attributed to one or the other of the trio, who in recent years, always following Father Tranquillo, have collaborated on the initiatives of Radio Spada and its satellite “committees”. It is legitimate to ask whether the collaboration is between Radio Spada and the Italian district of the Society, or rather between Radio Spada and a group of tranquil priests of the same Society with the blessing or at least the tolerance of their superiors.

A ...“shameful”...collaboration

Even before saying anything about the book (its strategy and contents), allow me to recall (*vox clamantis in deserto*) how the collaboration itself between these two entities is sufficient to dishonor both, leaving only the doubt whether it is more dishonorable for Radio Spada to collaborate with the Society, or rather whether it is shameful for the Society to collaborate with Radio Spada (with Archbishop Viganò’s blessing). Allow me to explain. Radio Spada on the one hand, and the Society on the other, certainly have the “right” to defend their respective opinions, or even to declare that they share the same opinions. However, Radio Spada’s deception, entertained by its president and its other co-founder, Giacobazzi-Pisa, of presenting itself as a polyphonic expression of all “Traditional” souls must cease, since, and

this is not the first time, Radio Spada adopts the Society’s position, and it uses the priests of the Society for its own “liturgical” initiatives (except for what concerns the private life of the “founders”, who resorted to modernist parish priests and parishes for the sacrament of marriage). Not only does R.S. clearly choose the Society (the “neo-Society”, or the “resistant” one, which are equivalent) but it openly fights - in the face of polyphony - other unwelcome versions, such as “sedevacantism” or the bizarre theories of Cionci and Father Minutella, as they did in this book.

The President of R.S. should finally realize that it is not enough to “post” a few photos of Bishop Guérard des Lauriers while books are published and conferences are given against his thesis, and what we announced in our press release on Radio Spada on June 12, 2015 has largely been realized ([“Radio Spada”: un parere e un consiglio - Sodalitium](#)) ([“Radio Spada”: an opinion and an advice - Sodalitium](#)):

We therefore advise those faithful who in the past have shown friendship and trust in our Institute, and who now support “Radio Spada”, not to continue on a path which - in their following a slow but sure “ideological transfer”, risks leading them like many others before them - to the bank opposite to the one in which they started.

Most of the said faithful followed the advice; those who didn’t listen, now find themselves “*on the bank opposite to the one in which they started*”: they should have the courage and honor to admit it, to themselves and to others, and to stop deceiving themselves and others.

If, for Radio Spada, it is dishonorable to have increasingly betrayed its initial positions to adhere to the errors of the Society (to the point that the website *Duc in altum* published an article in which it was written that the problem

is the Papacy as it had become over the last millennium, and that the definition of the Pope's infallibility in the Vatican Council was inappropriate), is it then perhaps not **shameful** for the Society to collaborate with R.S., and therefore to accredit R.S., after what was written and demonstrated in the work "*La vergogna della Tradizione*"? Either it approves of that shame (the spread and defense of a homoerotic, esoteric, astrological culture and so on) or disapproves of it in private but does not consider it appropriate to do so in public: all of which is called complicity (I remind you that cooperation in evil can be a *positive* sin of commission, or it can be a *negative* sin of omission. The instigator, the advisor, the consenting person, the flatterer, the receiver and the participant cooperate positively. Those who remain silent, those who do not prevent it, those who do not report it, cooperate negatively).

A misleading title

I'm not referring to the first part of the title ("*Clear words on the Church*"), even if the clarity is debatable, but to the second part: "*Why there is a crisis, where it originates and how to get out of it*". "*Clear words*" do not at all explain why a crisis exists, where it comes from, and above all how to get out of it, and moreover this isn't its purpose. An honest title would have been: "*Defence of the Society's position (or of a portion of the members of the Society) against its competitors*", which can be supported by the ever-growing scandal that Jorge Mario Bergoglio causes in the souls of the still Catholic faithful (or of the Catholics still faithful), while the Society itself - which benefited more than ever by Bergoglio - is forced to defend his **legitimacy as Vicar of Christ** at all costs, even when the number of those who (if only with bad arguments) don't believe it any more is growing.

Therefore, it is a matter of distancing the reader from the temptation - rightly or wrongly - of joining those who deny Bergoglio the role of Head of the Church: "sedevacantists" of all kinds, followers of Father Minutella for whom the Pope is (was) Ratzinger, or apostates in favor of the "orthodox" "church" (which is not church, and is not Orthodox). The priests of the Society and the 'Pisan' publishers have the thankless task of defending the legitimacy of "Pope Francis", even at the cost of debasing the Papacy, the Church, the Magisterium, and reducing the Pope to a subject in a state of permanent vegetative coma.

Wool in the eyes

From page 11 to page 32 (passing over the useless 'introductory note' by Giacobazzi, i.e. Radio Spada) "*Clear Words*" should have explained to the reader what the 'crisis in the Church' is and 'where it originates'. Extremely disappointing, superficial pages, more journalistic than theological in nature, thrown there just because a criticism of the 'crisis in the Church' had to be made, a criticism which would then be, in theory, the *raison d'être* for the Society. Where does it come from? No historical studies on modernism or the Nouvelle Théologie. What's that? No in-depth doctrinal study on Vatican II doctrine, of the occupants of the Apostolic See (from Paul VI onwards), or of "Pope Francis", of whom only mention is made - for example - of *Amoris laetitia* or the reform of the Catechism of the Catholic Church regarding the death penalty, mixed with other questionable but non-doctrinal acts of governance. However, the authors want us to believe, with these few poor pages, that the Society is opposed, and harshly so, to "Pope Francis" while the book is entirely intended to defend the papal authority

of the one who, more than anyone else, has benefited the Society itself:

- recognition of the canonical existence of the Society by the “Bishop” of Buenos Aires, on orders from Bergoglio
- recognition of the authority of the Society as a court of first instance in judgements
- conferral of jurisdiction for confession
- authorization to carry out priestly ordinations
- agreement to be able to assist at weddings
- usual concession of churches for Society celebrations
- authorization for “Bishop” Huonder to retire to a house of the Society and collaborate with it.

All this (limiting ourselves to those agreements in the public domain) without asking for anything in return. Or rather: almost nothing. Only the recognition of his legitimacy as Pope. This is what “*Clear Words*” strives to do. The 20 pages of criticism that “*Clear Words*” dedicates to the ‘crisis in the Church’ are objectively this, and only this: wool in the eyes (for those who want nothing more than to remain blind).

Father Francesco Ricossa

Again about history of “Traditionalism”: Louis Salleron and Jean Madiran

With the passing of years, I notice an apparently paradoxical phenomenon: on the one hand, the growth of studies on the history of Catholic “Traditionalism” (issue no. 73 of *Sodalitium* presents an in-depth review of the “*Histoires des Traditionalistes*” of Yves

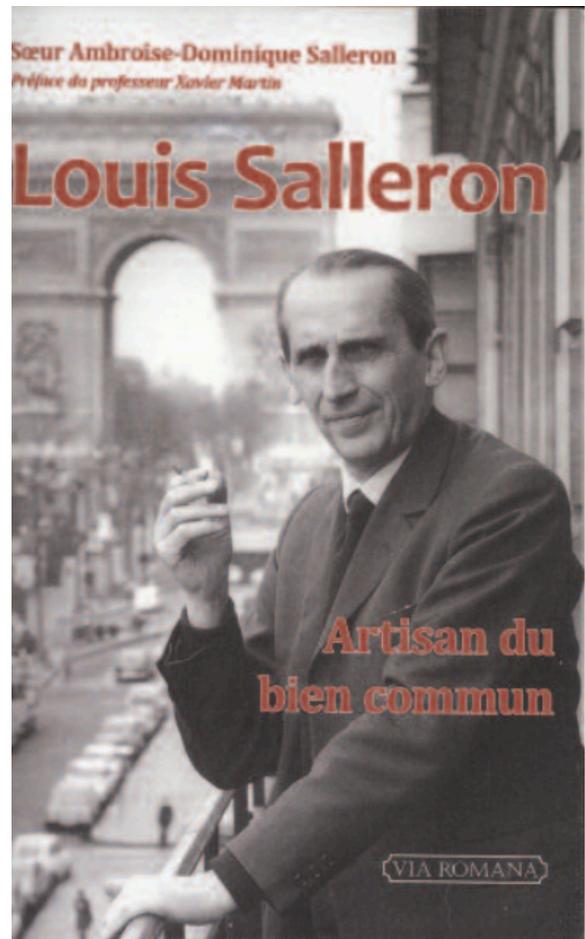
Chiron and issue no. 74 was entirely dedicated to those who set the stage for this history in the 1920s and 1930s), and on the other hand, ignorance of their own recent past increases among the young generation and the many newcomers to the “traditionalist” ranks. The paradox is perhaps only apparent: it is precisely because time passes and generations (fortunately) are renewed, that it follows that “the old guard” becomes an object of history, and no longer of current affairs. We would therefore like to point out, to those who remember and those who may not know, two biographies recently released (2023) dedicated to two writers who played an important role in this context: Louis Salleron (1905-1992) and Jean Madiran, *nom de plume* of Jean Arfel (1920-2013). Their interests and activities were multifaceted: writers, journalists, politicians, economist (Salleron)... but the memory that is closest to my heart, and which – and from this point of view what makes me



grateful – is that of their open-faced defense of the Roman Mass in the crucial years of 1969-1970, when the Montinian “new missal” was imposed in the Church and in the churches. There was no hiding then behind the fact that the Mass was only the concern of priests, or that the question of the missal would divide the troupes committed to political or social activities (like for example *L'Office* of Jean Ousset, or the *T.F.P.* of Corrêa de Oliveira), but they both took a position, openly, in defense of the Roman Missal and the sacrifice of the Mass (and of the catechism, and of the Vulgate...). In those early years, heroically, by their refusal of the new ecumenical rite, rather, *l'équipe* of *Itinéraires* (and therefore Madiran, Salleron...) was to the “right” of Archbishop Lefebvre, who refused to give public support to those who did not accept the N.O.M., so as not to compromise the founding of the Society of Saint Pius X and its approval by the “Conciliar” authorities. And then, alongside the Brief Critical Examination (which Monsignor Lefebvre did not sign, for the reasons mentioned above) I remember well that the other book that was in everyone's hands was *La nouvelle messe* by Louis Salleron (the studies by Vidigal da Silveira were not published in French by the order of the T.F.P.).

Of course, even back then, the flaws that later would lead Louis Salleron, and above all Jean Madiran “to the left” of Archbishop Lefebvre were present, though perhaps barely perceptible. The common Maurassian origin (which is not the reason, but only some reason, for the reduction of Traditionalism to a political factor, as Father Congar claimed) certainly had a positive influence, but also a negative one, especially on Madiran: unfortunately, with the death of Saint Pius X, integral Catholicism no longer had the influence it should have had. Negative too - on Madiran - was the ancient influence of the school of Charlier and Dom

Gérard osb. Negative was his diffident role towards those priests who were more determinedly against the N.O.M., first among them Father Guérard des Lauriers, and then also Father Barbara or Abbé Coache: Madiran contributed to the scuttling, for example, of the Pentecost pilgrimages to Rome, even if the coup de grâce for it was due to Archbishop Lefebvre and Michel de Saint-Pierre. The distrust towards Father Guérard - who was also a collaborator at *Itinéraires* - became violent outrage, mockery and contempt on the occasion of his publication of the *Cahiers de Cassiciacum* first of all, and then of his episcopal consecration; the applauding Society did not realize that in that way it was also preparing the rejection of the episcopal consecrations carried out later by Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop De Castro Mayer and the betrayal by Barroux. I



certainly cannot describe in a few lines the great interest in these two volumes by a religious woman from Fanjeaux, on Salleron, and by Yves Chiron, on Madiran, celebrating the tenth anniversary of his death. This last volume was given to me as a gift by the author with the following dedication: “For Father Ricossa, this ‘total’ biography of Jean Madiran, who appreciated *Sodalitium*”. It is true: Madiran sent us all of his works with non-trivial dedications, and for this reason it saddens me even more to think that he didn't understand the value of Bishop Guérard des Lauriers. Despite the doctrinal distance between we at *Sodalitium* and the individuals portrayed with their biographers, we cannot fail to note with sadness how great was the human and intellectual value of the first “traditionalists”, while on the other hand, many of those of today are made renowned more from YouTube views than from intellectual preparation. A phenomenon that should worry us, and pose further questions...

Father Francesco Ricossa

• **SOEUR AMBROISE-DOMINIQUE SALLERON**
Louis Salleron. Artisan du bien commun Via Romana, 2023

• **YVES CHIRON** *Jean Madiran 1920-2013*
DMM, 2023

“Great author, bad publisher”...

In the last issue of *Sodalitium* (no. 74, footnote 297, page 185) I commented on the approaching publication of *Le scoutisme catholique et la Théosophie* by Father Jeoffroid, by *Éditions Saint-Remi*, published with the

anodyne title of: *Notes sur le scoutisme*. The excellent author is notably Father Henri Jeoffroid (1880-1961) of the Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul, a close friend of Monsignor Benigni, to the point of his being one of the two priests to have participated at his funeral (the other was Father Saubat). The “bad publisher” is Bruno Saglio, of *Éditions Saint-Remi*. When I write “bad publisher” I am not referring to the material quality of the publications (like the binding or similar things): we know well that “traditionalist” pockets are not well furnished. Nor am I referring to the fact that the ESR publish (only) bad authors: instead, they publish (also) the best, just as in this case, Father Jeoffroid (and we could cite others: not the least is Father Maignen, he too a member of the Brothers of St. Vincent, and of the Diet of *Sodalitium Pianum*). Unfortunately, like other exponents of the current “anti-liberal school” (we are thinking of Louis-Hubert Remy - who passed to a better life - or Abbé Grossin now called Rolland, and others) the defect of these editions consist in the mixing of serious authors and documents with others who are lacking in these characteristics; studies that combine orthodox doctrine with scientific seriousness and others that are dated, obsolete, or poorly documented; reliable authors and others which are tainted, for example, by nineteenth-century fideistic traditionalism (see the article “*Ritrattazione*” of no. 70-71 of our magazine). We have talked about it many times on *Sodalitium* (for example in no. 64, May 2010: *Appunti per lo studio della Sacra Scrittura e, in genere, delle altre scienze ecclesiastiche*) [*Notes for the study of Sacred Scripture and, in general, other ecclesiastical sciences*] and recently in September 2020 (again in no. 70-71: *Problemi di documentazione in alcuni libri anti-Massonici* [*Problems of documentation in some anti-Masonic books*], an article, among

other things, written by others, which concluded with this fully acceptable program: “rigor and truth”).

Father Jeoffroid's book on the links between the Scout movement and Theosophy is certainly not among the unreliable works due to any of the author's shortcomings: on the contrary! We absolutely recommend reading it and we share the theses of this courageous and clairvoyant priest, who unfortunately remained unheeded. What, then, is our criticism about? Not so much, and not only, the fact that we don't like the publisher, obviously, but it has to do with the preface to the book and the notes on the text which are not by Father Jeoffroid but by the editor, Louis-Michel Dufay, which the publisher himself presents as follows: “*L'auteur de la présentation, grand connaisseur du scoutisme et fidèle dans une chapelle de la FSSPX, tient à remercier les prêtres (FSSPX et communautés amies) qui l'ont conseillé et relu*” [“*the author of the preface, a true expert in Scouting and faithful of a Mass center of the Society of Saint Pius X, thanks the priests - of the Fraternity of Saint Pius X and of their friendly communities - who advised and reread him*”]. This editor (of whom I know nothing) had the merit - not of discovering the existence of the text and describing its events, since this credit goes to Christophe Carichon, whose role is heavily belittled and denigrated by the publisher and editor - but of having published Father Jeoffroid's work in its entirety: credit where credit is due, then! As for the rest, we can say, the editor has ruined the text that he publishes. Especially since he dedicates his work (also) to Archbishop Lefebvre with these words: “*To Archbishop Lefebvre who, following the Roman Pontiffs, gave us the light of principles to guide us in times of crisis.*” And we, who thought that the publisher was declaredly “non una cum”! so that he found even the Thesis of

Cassiciacum too moderate! and instead, we must believe that, among the luminous principles that Archbishop Lefebvre gave us in following the Roman Pontiffs, there exists error in the magisterium of the mentioned Roman Pontiffs, in order to justify the legitimacy of Paul VI, John Paul I and II, Benedict XVI and Francis, with consequent expulsion from the Society of anyone who thinks otherwise. But, some might object, today Archbishop Lefebvre would be a sedevacantist. While waiting for a séance, an exorcism or an apparition to confirm this, what is certain is that the Society, even today, is among the few, very few, who still defends the legitimacy of Bergoglio in the traditionalist ranks... But, have Archbishop Lefebvre and the Society of Saint Pius X ever at least denounce the Masonic, Theosophical and naturalist infiltrations in Scouting, including Catholic Scouting? Making people believe that is an open, shameless lie. I have before my eyes a leaflet by the “*Scouts et Guides Notre-Dame de France*” founded April 17, 1977 in the Priory of Notre-Dame du Pointet of the Society of Saint Pius X with the approbation and encouragement of Archbishop Lefebvre who wrote: “*Scouting is an exceptional source of Christian generosity. It has formed numerous parents animated by a living faith, and sparked many vocations*” (August 25, 1977). A respectable opinion, surely. But how to reconcile this with a writing that denounces Scouting, even Catholic Scouting, as impregnated with the spirit of theosophy? Anyone who visited Écône knows well how Archbishop Lefebvre welcomed and ordained candidates from the Scouting community of Riaumont (I remember well the Abbé Philippe Peignot, sadly famous), whose current Prior, Alain Hocquemiller clearly recommended the book by Father Sevin against what Father Jeoffroid had written. On the cover of the book the editor and curator present the

reader with photographs of the supporters and adversaries of Scouting, the latter numbering six. Noteworthy is the absence of Monsignor Benigni, and he is almost absent in the introduction by L.M. Dufay as well. Yet, the much deprecated Carichon had highlighted the leading role played by Monsignor Benigni in the whole issue of Father Jeoffroid's book, but we see that in the Society of Saint Pius X and at Cadillac, Monsignor Benigni is almost unknown or does not enjoy, for reasons mysterious to me, good press.

Having also been part of the Society, I understand how difficult it is (above all for seminarians, or at least for the priests, not so much for the faithful, unless they have commercial interests to safeguard) to be consistent with their good ideas and distance themselves from aforementioned Society: the editor and his collaborators therefore have my understanding and indulgence. Not the publisher: he ruined, for no reason, an excellent book.

Father Francesco Ricossa

• **R.P. HENRI JEOFFROID** *Notes sur le Scoutisme* ESR, Cadillac, 2022



Institute Life

From November 15, 2022 to March 15, 2024

The last issue of *Sodalitium* (74) was a special issue, therefore lacking the usual “*Life of the Institute*” column. Therefore, let's take up the news where we left off in issue no. 73, that is, from November 15, 2022!

The Houses of Verrua and Raveau. In Raveau, we highlight the work of renovation on the electrical system and some retreat rooms in the “outbuildings”. The Verrua house has now become too small to accommodate the priests, seminarians, friars and any guests, therefore, in 2023 major works began for the renovation of the roof and attic where some bedrooms will be built. For all these works we resort to the generosity of our friends and faithful.

Holy Orders. On May 5, 2023 Bishop Stuyver conferred minor orders on two seminarians, and on June 10 four seminarians received the cassock. But, above all, 2023 was the year of the priestly ordination of Father Piergiorgio Coradello: ordained deacon on February 15, the priesthood was conferred upon him on May 6 in Verrua Savoia, again by the hands of Bishop Stuyver. Piergiorgio Coradello was born in Trento on 5/6/1997 to Giuseppe and Sylvie; after graduating from high school in 2016, he entered the *S. Pietro Martire* Seminary at Verrua Savoia where he completed his studies in philosophy and theology.

Friars of the Institute. On June 10, 2023 brother Serafino Agostino pronounced his first vows.

Sisters of the Institute. On January 31, 2023, on the beautiful feast of Saint John Bosco, patron of the Congregation, Sister Teresa of Jesus took vows of poverty, chastity and obedience for three years, waiting to take them for her whole life, surrounded by the affection of her large family and friends from Hungary: Holy Mass was celebrated by Father Trauner. Between daily study, cooking, laundry, tailoring, graphic layouts of books,

the twenty classes of girls in online catechism (in five languages), not to mention the in-person courses, the Sisters never have time to be bored...! United in the various moments of prayer that mark everyday life, they draw from it the graces to sanctify themselves in the fulfillment of their daily duties, carried out for the love of God and offered for the Catholic priesthood. We also highlight the activities of the girls of the *Company of Santa Teresina*, supported by our nuns, and also trained by brief instructions from our priests on topics that they themselves propose.

• Apostolate in various countries

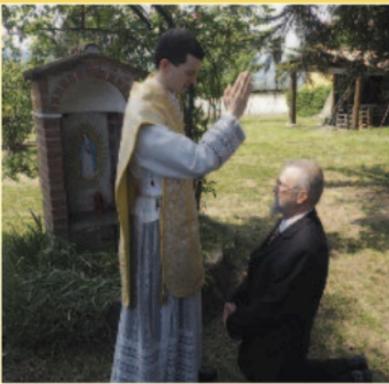
Italy. In **Piedmont** we highlight the monthly Mass celebration in a retirement home. Father Ricossa responded to the request of various associations for a blessing and a prayer at the Monumental Cemetery of Turin for the fallen of the R.S.I. (April 29 and November 4, 2023). The four Sunday Masses between Turin and Verrua are increasingly popular, with the participation of the faithful also coming from various Piedmontese provinces and from the Val d'Aosta.

In **Trentino** in 2023, the faithful had the joy of witnessing the priestly ordination of a son of their own land, Father Piergiorgio Coradello, which took place in Verrua on May 6. Father Coradello then celebrated his first solemn mass in Lasino (TN) on Sunday May 14 at a farmhouse that made a large room available, since our little church of s. Ignatius would have been too small for the occasion. Many faithful were present, some seminarians and friars of the Institute, Father Giugni and Father Frascchetti. The ordination of this new priest made it possible to increase our monthly Masses in Rovereto from 2 to 3 Sundays per month. For the first time, in 2023, on the last day of the year, the Holy Hour with the *Te Deum* was officiated at our little church in Rovereto.



*First Mass at Lasino TN
(05/14/2023)*

Ordination of Fr. Piergiorgio Coradello on 05/06/2023 at Verrua



In **Lombardy** we highlight the tenth anniversary of the oratory of St. Ambrose of Milan in its current seat, celebrated on 11/1/23 with a beautiful sung Mass and a particular consecration of the families and community to the Madonna. On 12/16/23 a retreat to prepare for Christmas was preached at the Oratory. We thank Father Marco Pizzocchi for his constant help for the celebration of the Holy Sunday Mass. On December 31, 2023 Holy Hour was celebrated with the *Te Deum*. Father Ugolino regularly brings the sacraments to the elderly and sick who are unable to go to church. During the Ambrosian Advent, which begins 2 Sundays before the Roman Advent, the homes of many faithful were blessed. On 6/16/23, the feast of the Sacred Heart and 1/27/24, feast of St. John Chrysostum, at the request of some faithful from Bergamo, Father Ugolino celebrated Mass in Mapello (BG) in a lovely and refined chapel.

Emilia-Toscana. A notable increase in the faithful also in Emilia in the two Sunday Masses celebrated in Modena, which are also

attended by faithful from Reggio Emilia and Bologna (where the usual Stations of the Cross took place at the *Osservanza* cemetery on April 1, 2023). Since September the monthly Mass in Pistoia has been celebrated in an ancient family chapel in the municipality of Cantagrillo. We warmly thank the owner who offers us this hospitality.

Umbria. The monthly Mass is now an almost fixed appointment, celebrated with alternating locations in San Terenziano, in the



*Vesting of seminarians and vows
of Friar Serafino (06/04/23)*

Municipality of Gualdo Cattaneo and in Gualdo Tadino. In the locality of Pecorone, in the municipality of Castel Giorgio (TR) at the *Tenuta Val Verde*, the Mass took place on Sunday July 2 and on the 24th and 25th of July. **Calabria.** Father Frascchetti visited a family near Bovalino (RC) on the 27th and 28th of February 2023, who had been inviting us for some time to get to know each other better and, in addition, he celebrated Mass on Saturday 1/27/2023 in Catanzaro for a group of people. **Sicily.** The family chapel in Santa Croce Camerina (RG) where Father Frascchetti has celebrated since November 2019, by the will of the owner Mrs. Gueli, has been dedicated to the *Madonna del Buon Consiglio* as of April 2023. Furthermore, particularly in recent months, the number of participants in the Masses has increased.

In **Romagna**, Father Carandino from the *Casa San Pio X* gives at the oratory religious instructions, commenting on the Gospels with text by Salvatore Garofalo on the Saturday preceding the 3rd Sunday. At the oratory in **Rome** and **Pescara**, there were also instructions on the liturgical year. Important news comes from **Modugno** (BA), where a new place for Mass has finally been found in the central avenue *Conte Stella*, with the *San Rocco* oratory. Particular functions: 6/11/2023 in **Paderno** (FC), in the church-shrine of the *Ass. Famiglie Caduti e Dispersi Rsi*; almost monthly at Selva di Fasano (BR); near **Piobbico** (PU) on 8/10/2023; on 11/20/2023 in **Sala Consilina** (SA); in **San Giacomo delle Segnate** (MN) on 6/11/2023 and 4/01/2023; also worth mentioning is a visit in April 2023 to **Trebisacce** (CS) to bring Easter Communion to a family. Among the convivial meetings: the "papal dinner" in the Rimini area on 7/1/2023 with the faithful from Romagna (22nd edition) and the dinner organized by the faithful from Abruzzo in Pescara on 10/8/2023 for the new priest, Father Coradello.

France. Following the call to God of Father Philippe Guépin in February 2023, the Daughters of Wisdom in Brittany asked our Institute for the help of a priest, older than our dear young brothers from Nantes, as a confessor, as requested by their rules. One of our priests has been visiting them since March 2023 at least once a month.

Hungary and Eastern Europe. The Hungarian group celebrates ten years of its existence this year. From the humble debut - at the end of 2014 there were nine souls - to today there are around sixty, of which half are children. This group of faithful has so far given rise to two vocations, a seminarian and a nun. The residence purchased by the Institute two years ago awaits expansion to be able to also serve as a home for the Exercises. A priest resides on site, but the mother house occasionally assists him with the visit of a brother. In the south-west of Hungary, near the border with Croatia, Slovenia and Austria, a second Mass center now exists. Pastoral visits continue in **Romania** (Cluj-Napoca) and sometimes in **Sweden** (Gothenburg), but it is above all **Croatia** that is showing very promising signs of growth, unexpected for these times!

• **Activities with youth: Summer camps and Eucharistic Crusade**

As in the past, the seminarians and friars of the Institute, under the guidance of a priest, organized summer camps for children and teenagers in the spirit of the Eucharistic Crusade: a few days of exhortation, conferences for the older ones, Sacraments, and of course lots of games and fun! Winter camps for the Immaculate Conception and the beginning of Lent are now traditional. What the religious and seminarians do for the boys, the Sisters do for the girls. In 2023, ten camps were organized for the girls, of which two were in France and some days, at different

The vesting of 4 seminarians at Verrua Savoia (06/04/23)



times of the year, were dedicated to the Exercise for a holy death for the older girls, a practice introduced by Don Bosco in his schools and very fruitful for the perseverance of young people. The main camp, the summer

one, took place in Verrua from the 10th to the 17th of July 2023. The great news this summer was the inauguration in July of a small library available to the girls, celebrated with a nice cake and a lesson on the

ACTIVITIES OF THE EUCHARISTIC CRUSADE



The camp in Raveau: group photo



*Games and a play (on Rolando Rivi)
During camp in Raveau*



Games and ceremonies during camps at Verrua

Camp in the mountains of Susa valley for the older children



ACTIVITIES OF THE SISTER OF THE I.M.B.C.



In Mornese of St. Maria Mazzarello



With the children in Claviere



During the camping with the children



importance of good reading. For now it hosts about 500 titles, including lives of the Saints, now unobtainable Catholic novels and books of all genres, carefully selected by the Sisters. Given the shortage of Catholic books for children, the Sisters have begun to produce some volumes of the lives of the Saints adapted for young people. The first four volumes have already been published.

Like every year the *Saint Aloysius Gonzaga summer camp* took place in Raveau

from the 10th to the 24th July 2023. This year there were 50 children aged 8 to 13 taking part; we visited the sanctuaries of Paray-le-Monial, place of the apparitions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This holiday camp always takes place according to the spirit of the Eucharistic Crusade blessed by the Popes.

From July 31 to August 11, the *Saint John Bosco camp* brought together around thirty young people of five different nationalities in Val Argentera, near the French

border. This year the campers, instead of sleeping in the usual tents, slept uncomfortable beds in an Alpine house; consequently, well rested, they undertook a greater number of excursions, seven in ten days, reaching among other things three peaks above 3000 meters. Mont Chaberton with its fort and its ice-covered military ruins will remain unforgettable. But despite the physical effort required by the excursions, on their return and in their free time they engaged in much appreciated table tennis, soccer, volleyball and... chess tournaments, with spectacular finals. Of course the purpose of the camp is to elevate the spirit as the body marches towards the peaks; the town chapel, small but sufficient to contain us all, began functioning again for ten days with Mass, the sacraments and the daily rosary. Furthermore, the traditional doctrinal and moral instructions of the evening, the harmony, the fraternal understanding, the Christian spirit that animated everyone, were so many graces given by God. Thanks to all the people who helped us, all the monitors, the cook Mr. Lombardi with his wife, Mr. Jean-Pierre Cassa, our faithful guide in the mountains and Mr. and Mrs. Ricchiardone, our friendly hosts. Reminder for this year, God willing, for all the brave ones from the 29th of July to the 9th of August, this time in Val d'Aosta.

The mountain camp organized by the Sisters of Christ the King took place in Moline in France in Champsaur from the 10th to the 28th of July 23, in the southern Alps in the Valgaudemar region. There were 25 girls present with two priests of the Institute as chaplains. There were almost two camps: one as usual, and another shorter one for the older and more experienced mountain girls, who attempted the more challenging routes.

- **Apostolate of prayer.** For a year now, we regularly published (in French) the Apostleship of Prayer card. You can find it on our website:

<https://www.sodalitium.eu/apostolat-de-la-priere/numeros-de-lapostolat-de-la-priere/>

- **Conferences. Study Centers**

The Day for the Social Kingship of Christ. 150 people participated on 10/3/23 for the 16th annual Day for the Kingship of Christ in Vignola (Modena) organized by the **Giuseppe Federici Study Center.** Those present followed with deep interest the three



16th annual Giornata per la Regalita' sociale in Vignola (10/07/23)



19th annual Conference of Studi Albertariani in Milan (11/18/23)

lessons by Father Francesco Ricossa on the theme of social modernism, *“From the social doctrine of the Church to its denial. From Saint Pius X to J. M. Bergoglio”*. The lessons held by the speaker (which can be listened to on the *Sodalitium* YouTube channel) allow for serious doctrinal training, which is too often absent in our environments. For all those who intend to follow the authentic social doctrine of the Church in the political sphere, the second lesson on the topic *“Authority, capital and work, State and Church, religion and homeland”* is particularly useful.

On 11/18/23, after several years of interruption, due to the well-known “Covid” events, the **Daide Albertario Study Center** resumed its organization of the Albertarian Conference in Milan, which reached its 19th annual edition. The theme this year was: *“Moderates against integral Catholics. From the dissolution of Monsignor Benigni's Sodalitium Pianum to the conciliar 'victory' of modernism”*. Two talks held by Father Francesco Ricossa: *“Pope Saint Pius X, Card. Merry Del Val and the fight against*

Modernism” and “*The moderate breakthrough under Benedict XV. Cardinal Gasparri; the dissolution of the Sodalitium Pianum*”. Many people were present in the room and as always the good press table was available. Videos of the conferences are available on the *Sodalitium* YouTube channel. Even Father Ricossa's annual conferences in Paris were finally able to resume on 11/26/2023, after four years of interruption due in particular to health restrictions. The theme of this day, much appreciated by the faithful, was, as in Vignola, on social modernism: “*From the social doctrine of the Church to its denial, from Saint Pius X to Bergoglio*”. Father Ricossa spoke in particular about the social doctrine of the Church in which the faithful must be formed, about the way in which the modernists used these themes to advance their ideas, about the horrible “nouvelle théologie”, on Judas and finally about Archbishop Viganò. You can find all these conferences on the YouTube channel of the “Mater Boni Consilii Institute Conferences” in French. On 1/18/24 a conference on “*The principles of Protestantism*” was held in **Lyon**. In **Hungary** on 1/28/2024, after Sunday Mass, Father Coradello (who now travels regularly to this country) held a conference followed by questions and answers on the theme of the *Sodalitium Pianum* and Modernism. After Sunday Mass, the faithful of Hungary receive instructions as regularly as possible.

• The Institute and the press

Thanks to the work of a courageous translator, at our website in the English language (www.sodalitiumpianum.it), some issues of *Sodalitium* are now available, (including the voluminous issue 74), together with some individual articles. Translations have been edited, and more are planned. You can find the same thing on our website in Spanish (www.sodalitiumpianum.it), but the translations have not yet been edited. On our site you will also find some first articles translated into Czech; and some new translations of articles into Polish. We warmly thank the translators. The website of the journalist and Vatican expert Aldo Maria Valli, *Duc in altum*, published some of Father Ricossa's speeches on February 2 and October 21, 2023 (the latter with the title: “*Don Ricossa: Viganò e le sue valutazioni sul vizio*

*di consenso da parte di ‘Francesco’. Un intervento da approfondire” [“Don Ricossa: Viganò and his assessments on absence of consent on the part of ‘Francesco’. A speech to be explored further”]). The editorial staff and the author have received numerous letters of appreciation and congratulations, even coming from brothers in the priesthood and even from environments far away from us. Professor Francesco Lamendola (Unione Apostolica *Fides et Ratio*) dedicated three videos from the series “*Galleria di filosofi e storici cattolici italiani*” to Father Ricossa, the first for his studies on Cardinal Rampolla, and the other two specifically on issue no. 74 in defense of Msgr. Benigni. But undoubtedly the most interesting review is that of another author who does not share our position, Yves Chiron. The French historian writes the following review in the *Bulletin d'histoire du Traditionalisme* (number 3, November 2023): “*the French edition of the latest issue of Sodalitium, the magazine of the Mater Boni Consilii Institute (IMBC), is dedicated to Msgr. Umberto Benigni. After the indispensable works of Emile Poulat (1969, 1971, 1977), this study, entirely written by Father Francesco Ricossa, is one of the most complete, rigorous and best informed, dedicated to the founder, among other things, of the Sodalitium Pianum (called ‘La Sapinière’ by his opponents) and ‘La Correspondance de Rome’. This special issue, which has 194 pages, is entitled ‘In defense of Mons. Benigni’. Don Ricossa aims to respond to the analyzes on Benigni by his former brother Father Curzio Nitoglia and to the work**



Exercises for priests, seminarians and brothers at Verrua (September 2023)

of Nina Valbousquet: *‘Catholique et antisémite: le réseau de Mgr Benigni, 1918- 1934’ (...), a work resulting from her 2016 thesis. (...)* The numerous footnotes in this essay – 310 in all – are not limited to providing the indispensable bibliographical references, but often provide truly appropriate clarifications and additional information. Such a rich study would have deserved an index of names” (which was omitted only because the study was published not in the form of a book but as an issue of a magazine).

The “Maison Saint-Joseph” (Sisters of Christ the King) translated into French the conference held in Milan on 11/23/19 for the C.S. Davide Albertario, with the title: “*Non! ‘Una cum’ ne veut pas dire ‘pour’*” [“No! ‘Una cum’ does not mean ‘for’ ”](February 2021); the publisher Shield of Faith Press released the English edition (*The Una Cum Issue & The Honor of God*) in 2023 with an introduction by Bishop Sanborn RCI. Also within the English-speaking environment, we highlight the video interview with Father Nathanael Steenbergen on Bishop Guérard des Lauriers published on *The Pre-Vatican II Catholic Show channel*.

We had missed two important reviews of the book *Études sur la franc-maçonnerie américaine* by Arthur Preuss, published by our Centro Librario: in the face of the inexplicable silence of the “traditionalist” world, the work of Preuss's publication had not escaped very different circles: see Émile Poulat's review in *Politica hermetica* n. 12, 1998, pp. 288-290 and that of Jérôme Rousse Lacordaire in *Bulletin d'histoire des ésotérismes, Revues des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, October 1999, pp. 795-796.

• **Centro Librario Sodalitium.** We would like to highlight the new publications from our Centro Librario: in 2022 “*La Teoria dell’Evoluzione secondo la scienza e la fede*” [“*The Theory of Evolution according to science and faith*”] by Cardinal Ernesto Ruffini, former archbishop of Palermo in the 1960s and an illustrious exegete who refutes the theory of evolution based on Holy Scripture. In 2023, three titles were added to the “Lives of Saints” series for children: “*L’accolito delle Catacombe. San Tarcisio patrono dei chierichetti*”, “*La mia vita per la tua. L’eroico segreto di Laura Vicuña*” e “*Pippo il buono*.”



*Pilgrimage at the Sanctuary of Saint Gerolamo Emiliani
in Somasca (10/29/23)*

San Filippo Neri, il santo del buonumore.” In 2024, “*Il Santo Vangelo di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo e gli Atti degli Apostoli*” [“*The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Acts of the Apostles*”] which was out of print, was reprinted. Unfortunately, printing costs, both for books and for magazines, are increasing more and more and therefore also the cover price. All books can be ordered on



Pilgrimage to the Loreto: 2023 edition.

our website www.sodalitiumshop.it. *Sodalitium* Issue No. 74 with the important study by Father Ricossa in defense of Msgr. Benigni is also available.

- **Spiritual Exercises.** The preaching of the spiritual exercises continued regularly during 2022 and 2023. In Verrua: from the 2nd to the 7th of January 2023 (mixed crowd 21 attendees); August 21-26, 2023 (18 women); August 28 - September 2, 2023 (17 men); from the 1st to the 6th of January 2024 (mixed crowd, 21 attendees). The exercises for priests, religious and seminarians were then held from September 18 to 23. These retreats were preached at the Maison St-Joseph in France: December 2022 (21 retreatants); February 2023 (21 attendees); April 2023 (20 attendees); July 2023 (23 attendees); August 2023 (19 attendees); September 2023 (44 nuns); December 2023 (19 attendees). In our house in Raveau there were 2 exercises preached in August 2023 (20 and 23 attendees). All these brought together a total of 312 participants. In Hungary, from time to time, the Spiritual Exercises are given to one or two people at a time. **Retreats for Perseverance.** On 3/12/23 in Serre Nerpel, at the Maison St-Joseph, and on 11/1/2023 in Raveau: 150 people present to rediscover the momentum and fervor of spiritual life. Two priests and some nuns were present.

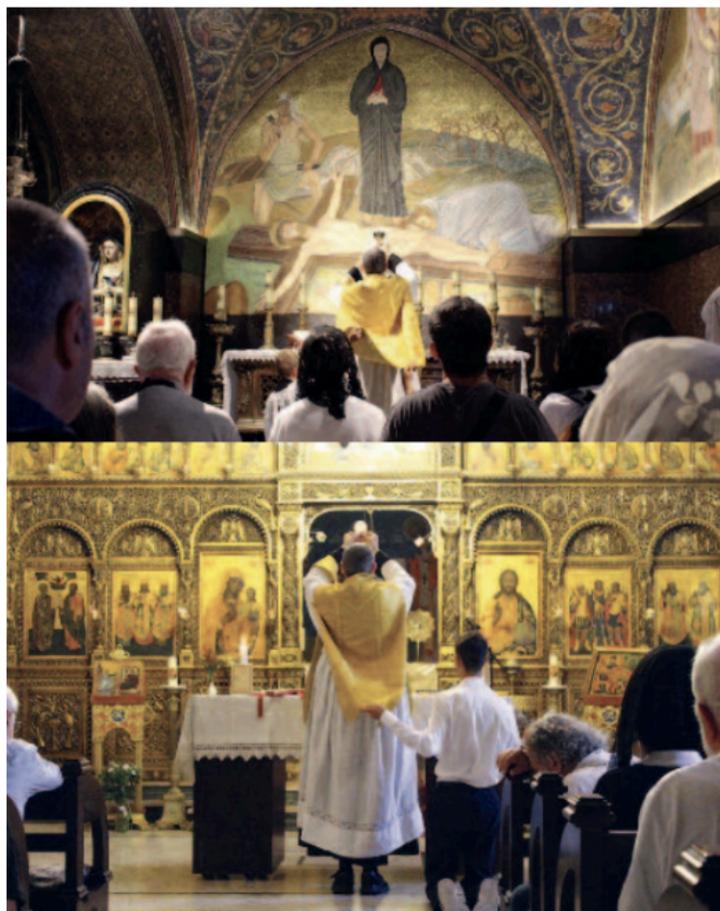
- **Pilgrimages.** We began with two pilgrimages that brought together priests, friars and seminarians of the Institute, the first at the footsteps of **Saint Pius X**. The second at

Pilgrimage to the Riese of Pius X for priests, Seminarians and brothers (February 2023)



those of **Saint Pius V**, both secondary patrons of the Institute. From the 7th to the 9th of February 2023 we went on a pilgrimage to Veneto to the places where Pope Saint Pius X was born and where some of his closest integral Catholic collaborators worked [see photos on the first pages]. After visiting Malo, the birthplace of Cardinal Gaetano De Lai, and then Breganze, where the Scotton brothers exercised their ministry, we finally went to Riese, the birthplace of Giuseppe Sarto, and to Salzano which was his parish: Father Trauner celebrated at the *Santuario delle Cendrole*, then we visited the Pope's birthplace in Riese, the parish church and local museum, and in Salzano the parish church and the museum (the most courageous proceeded up to Camposampiero on the tracks of Saint Anthony of Padua). On the way back we prayed at the foot of the Madonna of Monte Berico in Vicenza. There were 25 of us, 11 of whom were priests of the Institute. On 10/25/23, eleven priests of the Institute and one friend, with the seminarians and the friars

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land: Holy Mass at the altar of Calvary in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre and at the Greek-Catholic Cathedral in Jerusalem



of the Institute, went on a pilgrimage to **Bosco Marengo** (AL) to the places of **Saint Pius V**. We visited the church and the convent of Santa Croce (where Saint Pius V would have liked to be buried and where he wanted to create a Dominican center of Faith and a bulwark against heresy), the parish where he was baptized, in which we recited the Rosary in front of the tomb of Cardinal Boggiani, also a native of Bosco and a worthy emulator of Pope Ghislieri, as well as the Pope's birthplace. Pilgrimages such as those to the birthplaces of Pius X and Pius V are not only moving moments of prayer, but also an opportunity for the religious and intellectual formation of our seminarians in the spirit of the Church and the Institute. Other important pilgrimages - this time for the faithful - are those to the Sanctuary of Loreto and to the Holy Land. The 18th annual Pilgrimage to Loreto (May 20-21, 2023) had to deal with the floods in Romagna, with the motorway closed and the railway connections interrupted from the north towards the Marche region. The serious problems caused the absence of around fifty people who had already registered. The 150 "survivors", including several families with children, prayed also for those who were absent; on the first day marching from Castelfidardo to Loreto, with an overnight stay in the Marian city, and on the second day returning our starting point, and then reach Osimo by private means to be able to venerate the body of Saint Joseph of Cupertino. With the new route, participants are able to visit the Holy House of Loreto, the main destination of the pilgrimage, on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, remaining in prayer in the holy place. As always, they were two beautiful days, truly Christian in terms of prayer, the



Pilgrimage of the Belgian faithful to Oostakker (09/03/23)

sacraments received as well as the general spirit, all of which will be repeated on the next next May 11 and 12. **Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.** A nice group of 33 people participated in the trip which took place from September 5 to 12, 2023, just before the outbreak of the war that began in October. The pilgrims were able to venerate the most important Holy Places, retracing the stages of the life of Our Savior in the various locations of Palestine, with daily Holy Mass celebrated on Mount Tabor, at the Basilica of the Annunciation of Nazareth, at the Chapel of the Milk Grotto in Bethlehem, the Greek-Catholic Cathedral of Jerusalem and above all the altar of Calvary at the Holy Sepulchre. In particular in Bethlehem, the participants were able to help Christians by purchasing local artisan olive wood objects. Added to these pilgrimages are those organized by the various houses of the Institute.

In France. From the Parisian community: on December 8, 2022 in Paris, the torchlight procession of the feast of the Immaculate Conception warmed the hearts of around 140 faithful gathered to sing the praises of the Blessed Virgin through the streets of Montmartre and up to the Sacré Cœur. On 1/28/23, about thirty Parisian faithful met for lunch near the place where we celebrated Mass for 7 years in *rue Bleue* in Paris to remind the old (or to present to the new) this place full of many memories of the first years of our Parisian ministry. Since then we have celebrated our ten years of presence at *Espace Dubail*, and the search for a more suitable and larger venue continues... 5/29/23: Pilgrimage to **Laon** Cathedral for a very beautiful, pious and friendly day. On 9/02/23, pilgrimage to **Pontmain**. On 9/9/23, for the first time from Paris, a visit to the places of Saint Therese in **Lisieux** was organized, it was a much appreciated visit. On 12/8/23, the traditional torchlight procession from **Montmartre** to the Basilica of Sacré Cœur brought together more than 160 faithful to praise the Immaculate Conception. On 2/3/24 we visited, with a group of faithful, the Basilica of **Saint-Denis**, we prayed there above all for France and for the Church. From the south of France: for the feast of Pentecost, Sunday May 28, 2023, the devotees of Saint Joseph met in **Cotignac** in the Var, after a few years of interruption. About 80 faithful

attended the beautiful Mass sung outdoors, in a clearing near the sanctuary (whose doors are not opened for the Mass); after a pleasant meal, the procession formed starting from the sanctuary of Our Lady of Graces (where the Virgin Mary appeared to a woodcutter in 1519) to arrive at the place of the apparition of Saint Joseph in 1619, reciting the meditations of the Rosary, interspersed with songs. This pilgrimage is unique in the world because it brings together around the same hill, Mont Verdaille, an apparition of the Holy Virgin and one of Saint Joseph!

We also highlight the small pilgrimages to **Ars** on 3/4/2023 and to **Sainte-Solange**, patron of Berry on 6/21/2023. Father Murro then informs us of two pilgrimages: the usual one organized by the Sisters of Christ the King to **Notre-Dame de l'Osier** (May 8) and the one on October 14 in **Fribourg**, Switzerland: the pilgrims were able to venerate the relics of St. Pier Canisio and St. Nicholas of Flüe in the cathedral; they then stopped at the Sanctuary of Notre-Dame de Bourguillon, where the Madonna is invoked with the title of "Guardian of the Faith", for having protected the city and the canton of Friborg from the devastation of the Protestants.

From Belgium. On March 26, 2023, the pilgrimage to **Tielrode**, a place dedicated to Saint Joseph in honor of his 7 joys and 7 sufferings. On 9/3/2023, pilgrimage to **Oostakker**, sanctuary dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, where Pieter de Rudder was miraculously healed in 1875.

From Italy. On Saturday 8/19/23 the pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of the Madonna delle Grazie of **Boccardirio** (BO) took place as every year, in which a large number of faithful from different regions participated, in particular from Tuscany and Emilia Romagna.

On 10/29/23 the regional pilgrimage for the Lombard faithful took place in **Somasca di Vercurago** (LC) to the sanctuary of San Gerolamo Emiliani. After a convivial lunch, the 27 people present (2 priests) were able to enjoy a splendid sunny autumn day with a view of the lake and the mountains, with the recitation of the Holy Rosary on the holy stairs a plenary indulgence was granted. The usual pilgrimages of the Pescara oratory took place in Lent to the **Scala Santa di Campi** (TE) on 3/25/2023 and 2/24/2024 and in autumn to the sanctuary of the **Holy**

Face in Manoppello (PE) on 10/21/2023. In **Rome** on Saturday 6/17/2023 we highlighted a pilgrimage visit to the churches of the Celio.

• ADMINISTRATION OF SACRAMENTS

• Baptisms

Correction: Tommaso Michelotti was baptized 10/15/22 (not 11/15/21).

11/19/22, Abel Masurel a Tourcoing (F).

11/26/22, Giorgio Filippo Giovanni Calcidese in Milan (with the rite of adults).

11/27/22, Maxime Beda in Épagny (F).

03/12/22, Paul Voisin in Serre-Nerpol (F).

04/12/22, Morena Francesca Cirasola in Altamura.

12/17/22, Paul Marcus in Paris.

12/18/22, Mathis Corjon in Serre-Nerpol (F).

07/01/23, Claire Herbrich in Parigi.

01/15/23, Caterina Salza in Albarea (FE).

01/21/23, Cleofe Maria Varano in Milan.

01/22/23, Zante Leone, Iago Michele and Sirio Giovanni Garcea in Verrua Savoia.

01/22/23, Judicaël Cailliez in Le Mans (F).

01/27/23, Jordan James Joseph Wain (sub conditione) in Dendermonde.

01/28/23, Elisabeth Marguerite Beale in Épagny (with the rite of adults).

01/29/23, Anaïs Gudefin in Le Mans (F) (with the rite of adults).

04/02/23, Anaïs Aubanel in Nîmes (F).

04/02/23, Constantin Garcia in Paris.

02/11/23, Emilie Nadège Marie Pringent in Servion (Switzerland).

02/03/23, Pietro Portaluri in Turin.

02/13/23, Anne Marie Paul in Hettange-Grande (F). 02/15/23, Gregorius Andreas Vcev in Osijek (Croatia).

02/18/23, Augustin Tazaïrt in Paris (with the rite of adults).

02/23/23, Clothilde Bluthé in Douai (F).

02/23/23, Charlotte Bertrand in Paris (with the rite of adults).

02/03/23, Sebastian Toffanin in S. Ignatio de Sabaneta (Dominican Republic).

03/11/23, 11 baptismal ceremonies in Milan.

03/18/23, Justine Luna in Paris (with the rite of adults).

03/25/23, Paul-Arnaud Boudou in Nîmes (F) (with the rite of adults).

03/28/23, Veera Maria Elviira Anttonen in Finland.

- 03/28/23, Björn William Lindholm in Finland.
- 01/04/23, Arthur Girard in Paris.
- 04/10/23, Joachim Hamaden in Luynes (F).
- 04/10/23, Jérémie Jézéquel and Camille Trinquet in Paris (with the rite of adults).
- 04/15/23, Rachele and Irene Gerola and Olivia Emerenziana Partel in Rovereto.
- 04/23/23, Michele Piras in Modena.
- 04/29/23, Ottavio Costantino Armanini in Rovereto.
- 04/30/23, Marie Jakubial in Le Mans (F).
- 01/05/23, Vincenzo Maria and Edoardo Maria Petrone in Potenza.
- 05/13/23, Julia Ronconi in Rovereto.
- 05/13/23, Paul, Lydie-Marie and Lucie Bénichou in Paris (all three with the rite of adults).
- 05/18/23, Erwan Badouard in Serre-Nerpol (F).
- 05/20/23, Marie Zogheib in Paris.
- 05/27/23, Nicolò Perri in Verrua Savoia.
- 05/28/23, Elie Collomb Patton in Épagny (F).
- 03/06/23, Charles Connier in Paris.
- 06/10/23, Cyriel René Gilbert Astle in Dendermonde.
- 06/17/23, Haude Chiocanini in Serre-Nerpol (F).
- 06/17/23, Evan Louis-Marie Esclatine in Paris.
- 06/24/23, Emilie Gastin in Luynes (F).
- 06/25/23, Mayeul Courcier in Le Mans (F).
- 07/08/23, Irénée Vincent Régis Joseph Chappot de la Chanonie in Nîmes (F).
- 07/09/23, Thaddée Axel Adrien Leduc in Estaimpuis (B).
- 07/15/23, Pierre Grégoire in Paris.
- 07/23/23, Paul Favry in Le Mans (F) (with the rite of adults).
- 07/30/23, Guillaume Tanner in Switzerland.
- 08/14/23, Guillaume Brodbeck in Paris (with the rite of adults).
- 08/26/23, Henri Langlet in Vailly-sur-Sauldre (F).
- 08/26/23, Gabriel Grept in Paris.
- 08/26/23, Céline Foulquier in Paris.
- 03/09/23, Elia Fieni in Cantagrillo (PT).
- 03/09/23, Alice Ariel Simon in Dendermonde.
- 09/09/23, Louis Bardon in Luynes (F).
- 09/13/23, Ginevra Portaluri in Turin.
- 09/14/23, Michele Fernando Pio D'Arco in Sala Consilina (SA).
- 09/16/23, Pierre-Hadrien Fabre in l'Œuvre de l'Étoile a Nîmes (F).
- 07/10/23, Sébastien Laville in Paris (with the rite of adults).
- 04/11/23, Tommaso Fernando Alberto Maria Micheletti in Rimini.
- 04/11/23, Alexis Biévelot in Paris (with the rite of adults).
- 08/11/23, Emeline Ramis in Serre-Nerpol (F).
- 11/18/23, Louis Langlet in Vailly-sur-Sauldre (F).
- 11/25/23, Evangéline Poireau in Saint-Joseph de Rivière (F).
- 11/30/23, Privat Elian in Raveau.
- 02/12/23, Debora Maria Berterano in Rimini.
- 02/12/23, Johanna Kinga (Cunegundis) Csillag in Budakeszi (Hungary).
- 09/12/23, Oscar Marcel Isidore Brassart in Dendermonde.
- 12/26/23, Lorenzo Michelotti in Loro Ciuffenna.
- 12/29/23, Tommaso Santoro in Caronno Varesino VA.
- 12/30/23, András József Balog in Budakeszi (Hungary).
- 01/01/24, Clémence Camille Anne Marie Podevin in Épagny (F).
- 02/01/24, Andrea Stefano Di Carlo in Rimini (with the rite of adults).
- 03/01/24, Kenan Jean Telga in Coulommiers (F).
- 04/01/24, Philippine Bonnel in Araules (F).
- 07/01/24, Victoire Laurent and Célestin Laurent in Le Mans (F).
- 01/20/24, Pierre Gangloff in Paris (with the rite of adults).
- 01/27/24, Prudence Redon in Paris.
- 02/10/24, Antoine Gilet in Paris (with the rite of adults).
- 02/03/24, Raphaël Gabriel Basile Thomas, and Louise Marie Elisabeth Anges Favier in Serre-Nerpol (F).
- In Paris there were 25 baptismal ceremonies and 7 in Le Mans.

• Confirmations

- 02/15/23, in Verrua Savoia (9 confirmandi).
- 07/05/23, in Verrua Savoia (51 confirmandi).
- 01/10/23, in Häusern (La Forêt Noire) in Germany.
- 11/19/23, in Budakeszi in Hungary (15 confirmandi).

05/29/23 and 9/12/23, in Dendermonde (B) and other dates: (28 confirmandi).

10/15/23, in Paris (41 confirmandi).

• Weddings

02/26/22 Carlo Portaluri and Alice Ferrario in Verrua Savoia (forgotten in issue no. 73).

09/12/22, Salvatore Faulisi and Milica Ostojic in Paris.

02/11/23, Driss Manetta and Isabelle Zamora in Serre-Nerpol (F).

02/14/23, Olivier Berlingué and Juliette Bouthonnier in Paris.

02/20/23, Daniel Legué and Brigitte Lesauvage in Paris.

04/22/23 Martin Thomas and Eulalie Cazalas in Chasselay (F).

05/13/23, Paul-Arnaud Boudou and Margaux Cros in Nîmes (F).

05/27/23, Christophe Donnez and Bernadette Renaud in Estaimpuis (B).

02/06/23, Carlo L. Giugni and Ester Borio at the Torre di Battibò in Asti.

06/21/23, Pasquale Lorusso and Beatrice Masi in Altamura (BA).

06/24/23, Mathieu Henriquet and Justine Luna in Meudon (F).

06/24/23, Alessandro Garcea and Milena Assunta Lo Giudice in Verrua Savoia.

08/07/23, Joeffrey Lafranceschina and Delphine Favier in Moirans (F).

07/22/23, Samuele Fornelli and Chiara Rho in Supersano (LE).

3/08/23, Elia Aleksanteri Joosef Pöykkö and Veera Maria Elviira Anttonen in Dendermonde.

02/09/23, Paolo Ciola and Lucia Bichiri in Cortezzano (AT).

02/09/23, Federico Zanotti and Valeria Irene Schirripa in Rovereto (TN).

06/19/23, Jordan James Joseph Wain and Elizabeth Margaret Summer Beale in Switzerland.

09/30/23, Romain Besdinier and Maurane Benko in Nyons (F).

05/10/23, Jean Chiocanini and Adeline Aumage in Chasselay (F).

10/21/23, Bruno Labarre and Hélène Môme in Paris.

10/21/23, Giancarlo Calanni and Stefania Vitale in Verrua Savoia.

10/28/23, Carlo Di Pietro and Daniela Tamura Gomes Norinder in Pignola (PZ).

10/28/23, Alessandro Cavallini and Aurora Rizzo in Locara (VR).

01/27/24, Rémi Dochy and Kim Wawrykowycz in Dendermonde (B).

01/27/24, Benjamin Roussel and Béatrix Di Antonio in Chasselay (F).

02/13/24, Pierre Croissant and Agnès Le Baube in Paris.

• First Holy Communions

11/27/22, Maxime Beda in Épagny (F).

12/18/22, Mathis Corjon in Serre-Nerpol (F).

12/25/22, Marie Odile Fritz in Serre-Nerpol (F).

12/25/22, Romain Pasquier at the *Œuvre de l'Étoile* in Nîmes (F).

12/26/22, Caterina Bocchi in Milan.

01/22/23, Zante and Iago Garcea in Verrua Savoia.

01/28/23, Elsa Armanini and Flavio de Fanti in Rovereto.

03/19/23, Thomas Ramis and Elena Manetta in Serre-Nerpol (F).

04/10/23, Alessandro Manara and Riccardo Ricchiuti in Rovereto.

04/15/23, Mario Palmisano in Rovereto.

07/05/23, Viviana Sansoldo in Verrua Savoia.

05/18/23, Marie-Madeleine Cazalas in SerreNerpol (F).

04/06/23, Massimo De Leo in Potenza.
 06/11/23, Vilmos Varga, Michael Mayer and Marcell Ujszászi in Budakeszi (Hungary).
 06/11/23, Benoît Ker Bidi, Yanis Federici, Kaïs Telga, Jehanne Théry, Pauline Buliard, Marie Herbrich and baby Antoine in Paris.
 06/25/23, Samuel and Anna Bouloc in SerreNerpol (F).
 01/07/23, Eve de Loisne in Paris.
 02/07/23, Benedetta Kamguia in Rovereto.
 05/07/23, Viviane Bolliger in Verrua Savoia.
 08/15/23, Erwan Badouard and Constance Bonnel in Serre-Nerpol (F).
 08/27/23, Greta Zippo in Potenza.
 02/09/23, Caterina Lescarini in Roma.
 12/25/23, Egide Cazalas in Serre-Nerpol (F).
 01/28/24, Léana Foilleret in Serre-Nerpol (F).
 02/02/24, Andrea Di Carlo in Rimini.
 04/02/24 Pierfrancesco Micali in Gravellona Lomellina (PV).
 02/18/24, Corentin Goarzin and Jerry Waizenegger in Servion (CH).

• **Anniversaries.** March 1, 2023 marked the 40th anniversary of the death of Father Ludovic-Marie Barrielle. First a parish priest in Marseille, then a religious of the Cooperatori Parrocchiali di Cristo Re of Father Vallet, finally spiritual rector of the *Écône* seminary, Father Barrielle was a great preacher of spiritual exercises not only in France and Switzerland, but also in Italy. We owe him much, and for this reason we remember him with affection in prayer. Rosario Cannarella and Santina Russo celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Friday August 11, 2023 in Pachino (SR), surrounded by their loved ones and closest friends; Father Frascetti celebrated the Mass and gave the blessing. October 14, 2023 marked the tenth anniversary of the death of Benizzi Ferrini, from Predappio; Father

Carandino remembered it as narrated in no. 44 of *Opportune importune*. Every February 27, in the *San Pietro Martire* seminary of Verrua Savoia, a sung Requiem Mass is celebrated in memory of the soul of Bishop L.-M. Guérard des Lauriers. The same day also marks the anniversary of the death of Msgr. Umberto Benigni: in 2024 we remember his ninetieth year since he was called to the Lord.

• Deceased

On 11/19/22 **Ettore Quintavalle** died in Turin; his funeral was celebrated on 11/22. On December 6, 2022, a dear early believer, **Marco Suman**, suddenly passed away in his house in Turin. Sadly, vicissitudes only allowed the celebration of his funeral, in our Oratory of the Sacred Heart in Turin, on January 30, 2023. Always present first at the Mass celebrated at the Most Holy Trinity by Msgr. Vaudagnotti, then to those of the Society of Saint Pius X in Montalenghe and in via Verdi, was among the first faithful of the Institute, and remained so until the end. We remember him as a friend, benefactor and soul of profound compassion. On 12/16/22 **Claudine Voisin** was called back to God, who had received the sacraments the previous 11/12 at the Saint-Aubin-en-Elbeuf hospital in Normandy. On 12/21/22 in Chieti Scalo **Maria Cornacchia (widow of Berardino)** passed away at the age of 95, who regularly received Holy Communion from Father Carandino and who also administered her the last sacraments. On 11/24/22 **Gianluigi Consonni**, Davide's father, passed away in Bergamo. On 12/20/22 **Rodolfo Stenico**, father of our faithful Martina, passed away in Trento; he had received the sacraments on 12/19 from Father Ugolino, who then celebrated his funeral on 12/22 at the Lavis cemetery (TN). **Carmela Cusumano (widow of**



Michele Di Pietro

Di Frisco) died on 3/1/23; mother of Giuseppina Bichiri; her funeral was celebrated by Father Marco Pizzocchi on the following 5th. On 4/1/23 **Dr. Paolo Paperi** died in Arezzo, who assiduously attended Holy Mass at Loro Ciuffenna, where his wedding had been blessed; we celebrated the Trigesima Mass there on February 5th. **Marie Joséphine Loury** passed away on 1/28/23 at La Guerche de Bretagne. On 2/1/23 Father Ugolino celebrated the funeral of **Domenico Ortelli**, Roberto's father, at the Cernobbio (CO) cemetery (he had died on 01/28). **Bernd Brunner** died on 3/2/23 in St. Pölten: Father Trauner celebrated his funeral on February 11. **Vanda Spuri (widow of Pitaffi)** died in Rome on 2/9/2023, 89 years old, who in recent years received the help of the sacraments brought by our priests. Father Carandino celebrated her funeral on 2/13/2023 in Poggio Mirteto (RI). **Marie-Anne Bayard** died on 2/23/23, the funeral took place at the Maison Saint-Joseph. On 02/24/23 **Giancarla Balboni** was buried in Cesari; we remember her because we blessed her wedding with Raul Cesari in Ferrara. Our friend from Ferrara, Stefano Buosi suddenly mourned the death of both his parents: on February 27th **Elena Ghiraldelli Buosi** (she had received Extreme Unction the day before at the Cona hospital) and **Evolò Buosi** on the

19th March (he had received Extreme Unction on March 11); we celebrated the funeral in a church near Ferrara on the 4th and 23rd of March respectively. In Nîmes on 2/28/23 the almost centenary **Paul Durand**, benefactor of the *Œuvre de l'Étoile* died, he regularly came regularly to Mass and received the sacraments; his funeral was celebrated on March 4.

On 3/29/23, **Henri de Malleray**, a friend of Father Vinson, died. **Joseph Adda-Benatia** passed away on 3/30/23, the funeral took place at the *Œuvre de l'Étoile* in Nîmes. On 4/11/2023 in Zsámbék (Hungary) Father Trauner celebrated the funeral of **Klara Lang**, who died on 4/4. **Olivier Chazy** died on 4/26/23 after receiving the sacraments the same day at Garches hospital. On the same day **Pietro Mottola** died, whose funeral we celebrated in Verrua on April 28; he is buried in Verolengo. On 5/02/23 the funeral of **Philippe Chaumont**, faithful historian of our Institute, was celebrated in Annecy. On May 11 in Turin, almost a hundred years old, **Dr. Pina Furia**, always a friend of the Ricossa family, passed away with all the sacraments. On 5/16/23, in Turin, **Gilda Conrieri** passed away after having confessed and received communion in viaticum. She was devoted to Our Lady, every Sunday she brought a bouquet of flowers to the statue of her in the Oratory of the Sacred Heart in Turin, the place where -as she said - she had found what her Christian soul was looking for. **Elisabetta Stefanini**, aged 94, died on 5/28/23 in Abano Terme (PD). She had received the last sacraments from Father Ugolino on 1/16. A talented poet and artist, together with her

husband Plinio, she was for many years a point of reference for the apostolate of the Institute in Veneto: when Mass was celebrated in Abano, her house was always open to host the our priests; We remember her with great affection. On 9/5/2023, **Lorival Dos Santos**, father of our faithful Ines in Lombardo, to whom Father Frascetti had previously administered the sacraments, passed away in Sicily. On 5/12/23 **Colette Bally** was called back to God after a long illness, we had given her the sacraments. We celebrated her funeral in Tournan-en-Brie in Seine-et-Marne. On 5/24/23 **Mario Biello** was called back to God after receiving our last visit for the sacraments on May 1st; we celebrated his funeral at the Monsoult church in Val-d'Oise. On 5/31/23 the funeral of **Élia ne Beauvilain** was celebrated at the Cuttoli Corticchiato cemetery in Corsica.

On 1/06/23, **Jacqueline Robert de Villedon**, mother of a nun of the Sisters of Christ the King, died. On 8/7/23, **Gilberte Bénichou** died in Gentilly, near Paris, after receiving the sacraments days before. **Carmela Lorusso** died on 7/12/23 in Bari. Lorusso, 93 years old, unable to walk due to illness, Father Ugo regularly brought her Holy Communion for many years. On 7/16/23, **Michele Di Pietro**, 77 years old, originally from Acerenza, where he was an esteemed historical researcher, passed away at the Potenza hospital. For years he had hosted priests in his home in Pignola, together with his wife, Professor Alfonsina, and his children. His physical difficulties of the last year had been alleviated on several occasions by the grace of the sacraments. The funeral was celebrated by Father Carandino on 7/17/2023 in Pignola.

On 7/21/2023 **Nikola Stankovski**, grandson of Christ and son of Lieve Van Overbeke, passed away suddenly. The funeral

was celebrated in Malines. On 7/21/23 we celebrated the funeral of **Nicole Planchette** in Perreux-sur-Marne. **Daniel Corsan** passed away on 7/30/23 in Lyon and his funeral was celebrated on 8/7/23. Sacred Scripture compares the love of God to that of a mother, because it is difficult to find a greater and unconditional love than that of a mother for her children; even more so in the case of the mother of a priest (and the figure of Mamma Margaret, Don Bosco's mother, comes to mind). We therefore remember with great affection **Renata Angela Gianarda (widow of Carandino)**, called to God on 7/27/2023 in Rondissone, mother of Father Ugo, who celebrated her funeral in Verrua and her burial in San Mauro Torinese (see *Opportune Importune*, no. 44, p. 7). We remember her faithful to the Mass in Turin, assiduous at the Exercises in Verrua, in our company in the summer camps in Raveau or with her son, of whom she was rightly proud in Rimini. She was faithful to Religion, to the King, to her little homeland and also to her favorite team (Granada, obviously); we recommend her to everyone's prayer.

On 8/9/2023, **Alessandra Faccia**, from Padua, sister of Luigi and Fausto, for whom we managed to ensure the sacraments during



Renata Angela Gianarda (Widow of Carandino)

her final moments, passed away. On 8/24/2023, **Adriano Mantegato** passed away in Florence, having received all the religious comforts from Father Piero on 7/15. On 9/14/23, **Madeleine Lhuizière** was called back to God; we had given her the sacraments, first in Champigny sur-Marne then in Créteil the day before her death. **Lelio Casale** passed away on 9/26/23: we remember him because he was close to us, together with his wife, in the early days of the Institute. On 8/10/23, **Yvette Saliot** was called back to God, in the Sarthe, we had brought her the sacraments in Le Mans and Saint Christophe du-Jambet. **Franco Bianconi**, grandfather of one of our faithful young men, who had received the sacraments on 9/11, died in Perugia on 10/16/23. On 10/19/23, **Simone Brumauld des Houlières**, grandmother of a nun of the Institute, passed away. On 10/21/23 **Maria Rinaldi (widow of Maltese)** passed away in Palermo. Father Piero had administered her confession and extreme unction on 9/10 at the Civil Hospital of Palermo. **Cristina Saba** passed away on 11/17/23: we remember her fondly. On 11/18/23 **Thomas Perotto**, aged 16, died in tragic circumstances: he had been baptized at the Maison Saint Joseph.

On 11/22/2023, **Jacqueline Erauw**, widow of Willy Goossens, passed away, having received the last sacraments. A faithful and pious woman, she rendered numerous services to the chapel at Dendermonde. **Giuseppina Spriuoli** (grandmother of Francesco, Anna and Giusy Labellarte) died on 11/27/23 after having received the sacraments from Father Coradello. **Jan Huysmans** died on 11/28/23 after receiving the sacraments; his funeral was celebrated at the church of Saint Gummarus in Steenbergen, with burial in the Dinteloord cemetery (the Netherlands). **Prof. Francesco Antonio Masoli**, former professor of Physics

at the University of Ferrara, after having received all the sacraments with devotion, died on 11/30/23 at the Cona hospital (Ferrara). Father Carandino celebrated his funeral at Villa San Martino in Lugo. On 12/22/23 **Jan Freriks** died piously, comforted by the sacraments of the Church. His funeral was celebrated at the church of Saint Dominique in Tiel (the Netherlands). On 12/23/23 – after having received the holy sacraments – **Domenico Vitale** passed away in Turin (Stefania Calanni's grandfather) and **Prof. Marco Cavicchioli**, in Modena (thanks to the care of the Casto friends).

On 12/24/2023, **Julien Wouters**, widower of Marie-Thérèse Van der Elst, passed away, having received the last sacraments. For almost 40 years he faithfully attended the ceremonies first in the chapel of Zele and then in Dendermonde. In these last years he welcomed the Lord to him with joy and gratitude. The funeral ceremony took place in Haaltert. **Simone Derrée**, who had received the sacraments in Beaumont-sur-Sarthe, died on 12/28/23. Three friends of the Pescara oratory died in 2023: **Antonio Finiello**, on 5/5/2023 in Ortona (PE); **Domenico Di Girolamo** on 9/11/2023 and **Donato Caporale** on 10/7/2023, both in Pescara. On 01/8/24 **Giovanni Millo** passed away in Turin, who had received the sacraments with devotion in the month of December, and **Alfonso D'Arco** passed away in Sala Consilina (SA).

On 1/15/24 the lawyer, **Gianni Correggiari** passed away in Modena: he had been attending masses at the Institute since August 31, 2003, and had practiced the Spiritual Exercises in Verrua several times. Born in Bologna on 12/12/1956, a university assistant in Criminal Procedure and Criminal Law, he played in *Forza Nuova* and then in the

Movimento Nazionale-La Rete dei Patrioti. Struck by a serious illness, he returned to Bologna and then to Modena to be closer to our chapel of Saint Pius V, to make a good confession and to be able to attend Holy Mass. Mass; he received viaticum and extreme unction again on January 6; Father Ricossa celebrated his funeral at the Certosa in Bologna on the 19th, while he now rests in Pieve di Cento: his niece remembered his “deep sense of friendship and the intensity of bonds” who was able to create “texts inspired by the intense wave of affection that he surrounded his family members in recent days”, milestones to whom we are close, especially our children Federico and Elisa, and we thank engineer Amato and attorney Bertaglia who helped him spiritually.

On 1/26/24, in Cavagnolo, **Giuliano Solini** died, having received all the sacraments on the first of the month. The funeral was celebrated in Verrua on the 30th, after which the deceased was accompanied to the Gabiano cemetery. On 2/1/24, **Renato Melloni**, grandfather of Simone Reggiani, died in the Baggio Vara hospital (Modena), having received all the sacraments. **Amelia Mordenti** passed away in Bologna on 2/3/24; thanks to the interest of her nephew Mario G. Naldi, she received Holy Communion at home. On 2/16/24 in Busto Arsizio (VA) after receiving all the sacraments, **Gaudenzio Colombo** died; as long as his health allowed him he attended Holy Mass in Milan and Varese; later Father Ugolino regularly brought him the sacraments in the retirement home. The funeral was celebrated on 02/20 by Father Ugolino in Busto Arsizio with burial in Legnano. On 2/22/24 **Giuseppina Sibona (widow of Borio)** passed away in Carignano (TO), having received all the sacraments from Father Ugolino on 12/14/23. On 4/3/24, in the

Carignano hospice, **Ciro Gisondi** died, equipped with all the sacraments. We also recommend to the prayer of our readers Father Curzio’s mother, **Vittoria De Angelis (widow of Nitoglia)** († 19/2/23) and **Fabrizio Agnelli** († 21/4/23), brother of our seminarian Roberto, who died in an accident at work.

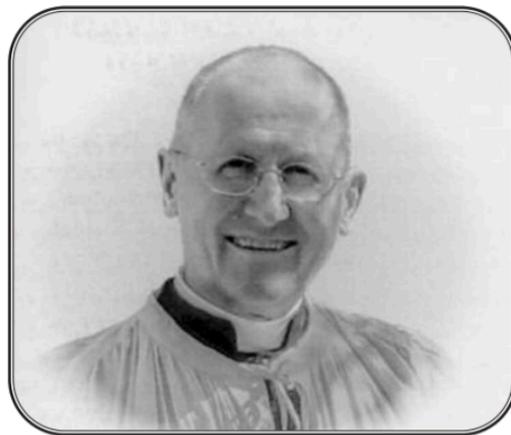
Our most sincere condolences go to all the families of our dearly departed and we will always remember their souls in our prayers. *Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur.*

• **Condolences in the “world of Tradition”**

On 3/1/23, Prof. **Father Giuseppe Rambaldi** passed away, former parish priest of Cantavenna (AL) and Dominican tertiary; he had been a good friend, sometimes hosting us in his beautiful church for weddings and baptisms; he also taught Latin to our seminarians. Shortly before his death we visited him in the retirement home where he had been confined. While we were on the trail of Saint Pius X we received the unexpected news of the death of **Father Philippe Guépin**, in Nantes on 7/2/23. A former student of Péraudière, he was ordained by Archbishop Lefebvre in 1977. Appointed prior in Bordeaux, he was excluded from the Society for his loyalty to the positions of Father Guérard des Lauriers. Called by the faithful of Nantes, he administered to the chapel of Christ the King and the church of Notre Dame of Dons for many years, which he restored from the foundations. He was often our guest in Verrua, in particular on the occasion of Holy Ordinations. His funeral was celebrated on 2/11 by Father Cazalas, a distant relative, assisted by Father de la Chanonie and Father Bernard Langlet. Also present was Father J. Le Gal, of whom Father Guépin was assistant priest during his priestly ordination ceremony.

Another priest friend of the Institute recently left us: **Father Hermann Weinzierl**. Born on January 13, 1960, he died on March 5, 2024. In mid-November he suffered from an aortic aneurysm, from which he never recovered. He was originally from Passau (Bavaria), born into a large family. Ordained in the Society of Saint Pius X, he always fought modernism, which led him to leave the Society in 2012, adopting a strong position in favor of the vacancy of the Apostolic See. He published, together with a confrere, the bulletin “*Antimodernism*” containing theological studies of great value. Since 2015 he called Bishop Stuyver several times to administer Holy Confirmations to the faithful he looked after, and had asked him to take care of the faithful of the Lierfeld chapel, near Treviri. We also remember some more or less well-known individuals in the world of Italian and French tradition. **Prof. Michele Vallaro**, who for a certain period attended our Oratory in Turin passed away on 1/12/23; on 2/11/23 **Michele Manganaro**, former militant of the F.M.G. in Emilia and then well known to the Venetian traditionalists; on 6/24/23, **Emilio Cristiano** passed away, credited with having contributed to the foundation of the Mass center in Naples in the early 1980s. On 3/1/2024, **Marie-Thérèse Cassal**, widow of **Felix Porcella**, passed away in the Riddes retirement home: close to Archbishop Lefebvre they were the originators of the Mass center of Lausanne in the 1970s. Father Ricossa remembers her with affection and gratitude, from her time at the Pareto High School in Lausanne, recalling her faith and constant friendship. However, we were not friends with two prominent figures in the world of traditionalism, **Adrien Bonnet de Villers** († 1/6/23) and **Louis-Hubert Remy** († 8/3/23), but we remember them in prayer for the

support they gave in the past for a certain period, to Bishop Guérard des Lauriers in the magazines *Bulletin de l'Occident Chrétien* and *Sous la Bannière*.



Fr. Philippe Guépin

In Memory of Cristina Saba

Don Carandino, in issue no. 44 of *Opportune importune* remembered with affection and friendship Miss Cristina Saba, born in Bologna on December 20, 1955, and who died there in the Sant'Orsola Hospital on November 17, 2023. After an acquaintance of forty years, which began on December 12, 1982, I cannot be outdone by my brother. At the age of 16, following in her mother's footsteps, she began political activity in the Youth Monarchist Front (which at that time adhered to traditionalist ideas), an activity which at the time could have involved suffering physical attacks and even a stay (albeit short) in the country's prisons. At the same time she began to work to help her family (later and throughout her life she was legal secretary). In 1981-82, with some friends, she contributed to the return of the Mass of Saint Pius V in Bologna (until then the "traditionalists" of Bologna attended the Mass in Latin, but Novus Ordo, by Father Santucci); the Lord rewarded her with full conversion during the Spiritual Exercises of July 1983 (in total she participated in the Exercises 5 times, in Montalenghe and Verrua). Early issues of *Sodalitium* bear witness to this: she was the contact person for the Mass in Bologna in the Oratory of St. Athanasius. In December 1985 she made the difficult choice of following our Institute, attending Holy Mass in Maranello (and then Modena), Ferrara and Rimini: Holy Mass was also often celebrated in her home in Casalecchio di Reno for the faithful of Bologna. Father Carandino rightly wrote: *"there is no exaggeration in saying that the Casalecchio accommodation was for many years like a Bethany for Father Francesco Ricossa and for the other celebrants. It was not just a matter of putting a bowl of soup on the table (always a meritorious work, especially in the pioneering period of the Institute, when so many doors had closed), but of ensuring support for the priestly ministry with discretion and sincerity."* She did it until the end, considering it a mission. We owe many initiatives to her devotion and generosity: the organization of the first conferences of the Institute in Bologna, the pilgrimage to the Madonna di San Luca in the months of May and October, the Via Crucis (first to the Bregoli, then to the Osservanza, the Bolognese know what I'm referring to) in Lent, the pilgrimage to Bocca di Rio...



Her role in 2000-2001 was even more discreet but no less effective in bringing Father Carandino (and Father Pagliarani!) closer to the Institute, making her home available for these necessarily... confidential meetings. Above all, she was devoted to the Holy Virgin, which she renewed every year, to her Immaculate Heart, to her consecration at Montfort, to the Immaculate Conception, and reciting the entire rosary every day. Struck by a serious illness, she requested and received the sacraments of penance, viaticum and extreme unction on October 28, before being admitted to the hospital. I celebrated her funeral Mass on November 24th in the hospital chapel, and then accompanied her remains to the Certosa cemetery. I think it might be useful to report the short words pronounced at her funeral: "Dear friends, dear friends of Cristina, dear family members, you have just heard the words of the Gospel: before the dead body of Lazarus the Lord, moved, says: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life, whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' Lazarus' sister replied: 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God who has come into this world.' This was Cristina's Faith. And since she can't talk to us right now, I would at least like to give you, if not her voice, then her thoughts. She gave me a little book written in her own hand with her reflections and prayers, writing: 'it's a bit of everything, but it corresponds to how I am'. Here, I'll leave you with just a few of her thoughts, because we have little time. 'Loneliness does not exist when you are with Jesus and Mary'. 'I would like to be a little one, to love Jesus with the pure heart of a child. I would like to be old because the ultimate goal

would be nearer.’ ‘If Jesus and Mary are close to you in your last breath, death cannot be frightening.’ ‘Lord Jesus, have mercy on us who are afraid of the Cross, but despite this fear we adore You, we bless You, we thank You for having instituted it. By virtue of the Cross, you give us strength in pain, so as not to suffer badly; peace in pain, to suffer well; joy in pain, to suffer like saints’. On the last page of this booklet she wrote: ‘I am always and only a disaster’. But that is not true: you weren’t a disaster. It’s the first time I’ve addressed you informally (del tu) in forty years. You were not a disaster, but you were truly loved by God and by many people who knew you. But we are here to pray for her soul, that it may be freed, if it needs to be, from Purgatory and soon see the face of God. And so I conclude with this prayer which is the one from the Mass that I have just read to you: ‘O God, merciful and always willing to forgive, I humbly call upon you for the soul of your servant Cristina who has left this world. Don’t abandon her into the hands of the devil, don’t forget her forever. But command the holy Angels to welcome her and lead her to the homeland of paradise so that having hoped and believed in You she will not suffer the pains of hell, but will enjoy eternal joy.’ May the Madonna of San Luca, under whose gaze she has always lived, introduce her to her Son Jesus in the vision of the Most Holy Trinity. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Praised be Jesus Christ.

Don Francesco Ricossa



BOOKSTORE NEWS

A series on the Lives of the Saints for children and teenagers. Edifying, entertaining and educational readings provide some help in the Christian education of children.

4 BOOKS:

- Blessed Imeida
- San Tarciaio
- Laura Vicuna
- Saint Philip Neri

Reduced from 46,00 €
to 40,00 €

All the books of the C.L.S. can be ordered on:
www.sodalitiumshop.it
 e-mail. centrolibrario@sodalitium.it

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST. IGNATIUS AT VERRUA SAVOIA

- **For women:** from Monday August 19 (12pm) to Saturday August 24.
- **For men:** from Monday August 26 (12pm) to Saturday August 31.

For more information, contact the Istituto in Verrua Savoia

Tel.: 0161.839.335 - mail: info@sodalitium.it



Pilgrimage to Loreto 2024

The next walking pilgrimage from Castelfidardo to Loreto, with a final stop in Osimo, will take place on Saturday the 11th and Sunday the 12th of May 2024.

The complete program has been published on the Sodalitium website:

<https://www.sodalitium.biz/pellegrinaggio-a-loreto-programma/>

For more information, contact the Casa San Pio X
 Tel. 0541.758961 - info.casasanpiox@gmail.com

NOTICE TO OUR READERS

The costs of mailing and printing the magazine continues to increase, the paper has tripled in price. Help us pay them with your offerings.

e-mail: info@sodalitium.it - tel. 0161.839335

HOLY MASSES

INSTITUTE RESIDENCES

ITALIA - Verrua Savoia (TO): HEADQUARTERS

- Istituto Mater Boni Consilii, Chiesa SS. Pietro e Paolo, Loc. Carbignano, 36. Weekdays, Mass at 7:30 am.; Every Sunday Mass at 6:00 pm. Eucharistic benediction every Friday at 9:00 pm. Tel.: 0161.839335; e-mail: info@sodalitium.it

San Martino dei Mulini (RN): CASA S. PIO X - Fr. Ugo Carandino, via Sarzana 86, CAP 47822. Tel.: 0541.758.961; e-mail: info.casasanpiox@gmail.com

BELGIUM - Dendermonde: Bishop Geert Stuyver, Kapel O.L.V. van Goede Raad, Koning Albertstraat 146, 9200 Sint-Gillis, Dendermonde. Mass every Sunday at 10:00 am. Tel. e Fax: (+32) (0) 52/380778.

FRANCIA - Raveau: 350 route de Mouchy, 58400 Raveau. For information: Tel.: (+33) 03.86.70.11.14; e-mail: info@sodalitium.eu

OTHER MASSES IN ITALY

Ferrara: Chiesa S. Luigi, via Pacchenia 47, Albarea. All Sunday Masses at 5:30 pm.

Imperia (provincia): one Sunday per month. Schedule available by mail.

Gravellona Lomellina (PV): Fr. Marco Pizzocchi, via Verdi 28. Mass every Sunday. For information: Tel. 347.109.7481 e-mail: donmarco.pizzocchi@alice.it

Loro Ciuffenna (AR): Fattoria del Colombaio, str. dei 7 ponti Levante. First Sunday of the month at 5:30 pm.

Milan: Oratorio S. Ambrogio, via della Torre 38. Sundays and holy days at 9:00 and 11:00 am. For information: www.oratoriosantambrogioombc.it

Modena: Oratorio S. Pio V, via Savona 75. Sundays at 8:30 and 11:00 am.

Modugno (BA): Oratorio S. Rocco, via Conte Stella 26/A. For the Mass schedule consult the website.

Perugia (prov.): First Sunday of the month.

Pescara: Oratorio del Preziosissimo Sangue, via Ofanto 24. For the Mass schedule consult the website.

Pistoia: Third Sunday of the month at 10:30 am.

Potenza: Oratorio San Lorenzo, Via Angilla Vecchia 126. For the Mass schedule consult the website.

Ragusa (S. Croce Camerina): One Sunday per month at 11:30 in via Belpiano 36.

Rimini: Oratorio San Gregorio Magno, via Molini 8. For the Mass schedule consult the website.

Roma: Oratorio S. Gregorio VII, via Pietro della Valle 13/B. First, third and fifth Sunday of the month at 9:00 and 11:00 am.

Rovereto (TN): Chiesa di S. Ignazio, via Stazione 13, Mori Stazione. First, third and fourth Sunday of the month at 9:00 and 11:00 am. Schedule sent by mail.

S. Bonifacio (VR): First, second and fourth Sunday of the month at 6:00 pm. Schedule sent by mail.

Torino: Oratorio del S. Cuore, via Thesauro 3/D. Mass on Sundays and holy days at 9:00 and 11:15 am.; First Friday of the month at 6:15 pm.

Valmadrera (LC): Via Concordia, 21.

Varese: The fourth Sunday of the month at 5:30 pm. Schedule sent by mail.

Confessions 30 minutes before the start of Mass.

For more information on the celebrations, please consult the corresponding location on the webpage www.sodalitium.it

Or call or write at:

• Verrua Savoia: info@sodalitium.it

Tel. 0161.839.335

• Rimini: info.casasanpiox@gmail.com Tel.

0541.758.961

FOR YOUR OFFERINGS:

- On the account of Banco BPM di Crescentino VC, (IBAN): IT 16 Z 05034 44440 0000 0000 3850 payable to Centro Culturale & Librario Sodalitium.
- On the Conto Corrente Postale number: IT 83 X 07601 10300 000036390334 BIC : BPPIITRXXX payable to Centro Culturale & Librario - Sodalitium Periodico.
- You can donate 5 per thousand to MATER BONI CONSILII ONLUS. On all tax return forms (Modello Unico, 730, CUD etc.) choose the box dedicated to the "Support of non-profit organizations of social utility..." Sufficient is your signature and the tax code number of MATER BONI CONSILII ONLUS (91 00 60 50 016).
- To receive the tax deduction receipt: make an offer to the *Associazione Mater Boni Consilii onlus* on cc. Banco BPM (ag. Crescentino VC) IBAN: IT09 I 05034 44440 0000 0000 9930 BIC: BAPPIT21856, to ask for receipt.