

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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The Pope meets with the Sudanese Christian who was condemned for her faith

Meriam's courage

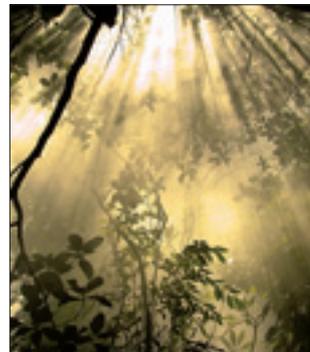
Pope Francis met Meriam Yahia Ibrahim Ishag, the young Christian woman from Sudan who had been condemned to death in her country for apostasy but whose sentence was overturned due to pressure from the international community. On Thursday morning, 24 July, she and her husband Daniel Wani and their two children – Martin, a year and a half, and Maya, born in prison two months ago – were received by the Pope at the Domus Sanctae Marthae. With them was also Italian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Lapo Pistelli, who had gone to Sudan the day before to complete negotiations and accompany Meriam and her family to Italy, from where they will then be relocated to the United States. Also present at the meeting was Msgr Yohannis Gaid, the Pope's private secretary. The heart-warming meeting lasted half an hour. The Pope thanked Meriam and her family for their courageous testimony of perseverance in the faith. And Meriam expressed her gratitude to the Pontiff for his support and comfort in prayer. At the end of the meeting Pope Francis greeted the Italian authorities accompanying Meriam's family during their stay in Rome. In this encounter the Holy Father wished to demonstrate his care, attention and prayers for all who suffer for their faith, above all for Christians under persecution and those whose religious freedom is being abused.



women church world women church world women church

The choice of solitude

There are not only hermits but hermitesses as well, although many people tend to forget this fact since it is a dangerous life and one often frowned upon by both ecclesiastical and lay authorities. Yet from the beginning there have been women who chose to live outside the din and chaos of the world in solitude, silence and meditation, and not enclosed in a monastery. Their decision is not just a distant phenomenon of times past, but rather a way of life that is also practiced today, an important way of seeking a relationship with God for those who wish "to listen directly to the voice of the Holy Spirit", as Antonella Lumini states in her interview with Lucetta Scaraffia, a listening that is all the more important since "women are more receptive, they know how to recognize the tenderness of God, transmit it, and tell of it". Separating oneself from the world by devoting oneself solely to meditation and one's relationship with God is a courageous choice. It is for men, and much more so for women for whom in times past it was often prohibited, so much so that it led them some to disguise themselves as men in order to retreat into a hermitage. Isolation was too risky, the decision to live protected only by faith in the woods and in caves was too radical for a woman. The convent was better, more secure, well-protected and disciplined by definite rules. Yet since the first centuries of Christianity there have been many who succeeded in surmounting the challenge, perhaps by choosing the city walls as the place of their retreat. Today – as many contemporary hermitesses explain – one can also



choose solitude in the city, in the midst of daily life with its problems and cares. Any normal house, a normal apartment, can become a "poustinia", a deserted place where one can gather one's thoughts in meditation and silence. Catherine de Hueck recreated a "poustinia" in the Canadian woods and recounted her experience in a book by the same title. Madonna Houses in North America have multiplied in recent years. To reflect, meditate, detach oneself from the world and seek a relationship with God and with the deepest part of oneself is a valuable guide also for women today. (Ritanna Armeni)

Women Church World July

Hermitesses and desert communities today

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Message to Catholics in the UK and Ireland

"Combat the culture of death", by protecting and loving life from its beginning until its natural end. With this exhortation, Pope Francis addressed the Catholics of the United Kingdom and Ireland who on Sunday, 27 July, are celebrating their annual Day for Life.

In a message signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, the Pontiff asked the English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish communities, and young people in particular, to work together "to ensure adequate legal protection for the fundamental human right to life". And to do so, he clarified, referring to the *Evangelii gaudium*, it is essential to seek "to bring the merciful love of Christ as a life-giving balm" wherever "those troubling 'new forms of poverty and vulnerability' are increasingly evident in contemporary society".

The Bishops of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland have also disseminated a message inviting the faithful to follow in Pope Francis' footsteps and calling them to commit to caring for, supporting and protecting life in all of its phases in conditions.

Over half a million of postcards were sent to parishes and chaplaincies in preparation for the Day for Life, this year's theme for which is: #livelife Protect and Cherish Life from its beginning to its natural end. The hashtag refers to the message sent via Twitter and social networks, which indicate that proceeds from the Day for Life will be donated to support local Church-related institutions involved in the promotion and defence of life. Specific materials for reflection and liturgical aids for the day's celebration are also available online: among these, a prayer to the Virgin Mary as the "mother of love".

Assisted Dying Bill in British Parliament

The crossroads

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It's possible

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VATICAN BULLETIN

AUDIENCES

Monday, 21 July

Bishop Nunzio Galantino of Cascano all'Jonio, General Secretary of the Italian Episcopal Conference

Tuesday, 22 July

Archbishop Giorgio Lingua, titular Archbishop of Tuscania, Apostolic Nuncio in Iraq and in Jordan

Wednesday, 23 July

Archbishop Charles John Brown, titular Archbishop of Aquileia, Apostolic Nuncio in Ireland

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Fares Maakaroun, MSP, of the Eparchy of Nossa Senhora do Paraíso em São Paulo for Greek-Melkites, Brazil. It was presented in accord with can. 210 § 1 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches. He is succeeded by Bishop Joseph Gébara, who until now has been Coadjutor of the said ecclesiastical circumscription (21 July).

Bishop Gébara, 49, was born in Amatur, Lebanon. He was ordained a priest on 10 July 1993. He was ordained a bishop on 21 December 2013, subsequent to his appointment as Coadjutor of the Eparchy of Nossa Senhora do Paraíso em São Paulo for Greek-Melkites, Brazil.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Carlo Ellena of Zé Doca, Brazil. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (23 July).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Jan Kot, OMI, as Bishop of Zé Doca, Brazil. Until now he has been parish priest of "Sagrado Coração de Maria" Parish in Campo Alegre do Fidalgo, Brazil (23 July).

Bishop-elect Kot, 52, was born in Makón, Poland. He made his religious vows for the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on 8 September 1986 and was ordained a priest on 20 June 1992. He studied philosophy and theology and holds a licence in Church history. He has served in parish ministry in Poland and Brazil and as provincial counselor.

ROMAN CURIA

The Holy Father appointed the following Consultors to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life for a five-year term: Archbishop Bruno Forte of Chieti-Vasto, Italy; Archbishop Angelo Vincenzo Zani, titular Archbishop of Voltorno, Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education; Sr Marcella Farina,

FMA, Ordinary Professor of fundamental and systematic theology at the Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences Auxilium, Rome; Fr José Cristo Rey García Paredes, CME, Vice-Director of the Theological Institute of Religious Life of Madrid, Spain; Fr Robert J. Geisinger, SJ, Professor of canon law at the Pontifical Gregorian University, General Procurator of the Society of Jesus, Rome; Fr Loïc Marie Le Bot, OP, Dean of the Department of Canon Law at the Catholic Institute of Toulouse, France; Sr Maria Domenica Melone, SFA, Magnificent Rector of the Pontifical University Antonianum, Rome; Fr Pier Luigi Nava, SMM, Professor of formation for consecrated life at the Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences Auxilium, Rome; Fr Jesu Maria James Pudukai Doss, SDB, Extraordinary Professor in the Department of Canon Law at the Salesian Pontifical University, Rome; Fr Bruno Secondin, O.Carm., Ordinary Professor emeritus in modern spirituality and the foundations of spiritual life at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome; Fr Yuji Sugawara, SJ, Dean of the Department of Canon Law at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome; Ms Elena Lucia Bolchi, consecrated of the *Ordo Virginum* for the Archdiocese of Milan, Permanent Patron of the Regional Ecclesiastical Tribunal of Lombardy, Milan, Italy; Ms Lourdes Grosso García, M. Id., Head of the Secretariat of the Epis-

copal Commission for Consecrated Life of the Spanish Episcopal Conference, Madrid (16 July).

The Holy Father appointed the following Members of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity: Archbishop Carlos José Nájuez of Córdoba, Argentina; Bishop Rodolfo Valenzuela Núñez of Vera Paz and President of the Bishops' Conference of Guatemala; Bishop Gerhard Feige of Magdeburg, the Federal Republic of Germany (22 July).

His Holiness also appointed Consultors to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity: Fr Cristiano Bettega, Director of the National Office for Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue of the Italian Episcopal Conference; Fr Hector Sherri, President of the Theological Commission of Malta and of the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission, Malta; Fr Michael Joeng-Hun Shin, Head of Ecumenism of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea; Fr Fernando Rodríguez Garrapicho, Director of the John XXIII Center for Eastern and Ecumenical Studies at the Pontifical University of Salamanca, Spain; Bro. Enzo Bianchi, Prior of the Monastery of Bose, Italy; Fr Franck Lemaitre, OP, Director of the National Service for Christian Unity in the Bishops' Conference of France; Fr John Crossins, OSFS, Executive Director of Ecumenical and Interreligious Af-

fairs in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; Fr Jorge A. Scampini, OP, Professor of Ecumenism at the Faculty of Theology at the Pontifical Catholic University of Buenos Aires, Argentina; Fr Milan Žust, SJ, of Slovenia, Lecturer at the Faculty of Missiology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome; Sr Maria Ha Fong Ko, FMA, of Macau, Lecturer of New Testament exegesis at the Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences Auxilium, Rome, and at the Holy Spirit Seminary in Hong Kong (22 July).

SPECIAL ENVOY

The Holy Father appointed Cardinal Ennio Antonelli, President emeritus of the Pontifical Council for the Family, as his Special Envoy to the consecration of the new Shrine of St Gabriel of Sorrows in Teramo, Italy, to be held on 21 September 2014 (19 July).

START OF MISSION

On 18 April, Archbishop Santo Gangemi, titular Archbishop of Umbriatico, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Guinea with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to the President H.E. Prof. Alpha Condé.

On 18 June, Archbishop Martin Krebs, titular Archbishop of Taborenta, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Tonga with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to King Tupou VI.

NECROLOGY

Bishop Robert William Donnelly, titular Bishop of Garba and Auxiliary of Toledo, USA, at age 83 (21 July).

The Pope's telegram

Tragedy in Taiwan

On Thursday morning, 24 July, Cardinal Pietro Parolin sent a telegram on behalf of Pope Francis to Archbishop John Hung Shan-chuan of Taipei, who is also President of the Chinese Regional Bishops' Conference.

The Holy Father, it read "learned with sadness of the air accident near Magong Airport and he asks you kindly to convey his heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and the assurance of his prayers for all affected by this tragedy. Upon all he invokes God's blessings of consolation, strength and peace".

Appeal for the victims of the tragedy over Ukraine

The conflict in east Ukraine has now been marked by an unimaginable tragedy. The downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 on Thursday, 17 July, killed 298 people. Pope Francis, according to a press release by the Holy See Press Office, "learned with dismay of the tragedy of the Malaysian Airlines aircraft downed in east Ukraine, a region marked by high tensions. He raises prayers for the numerous victims of the incident and for their relatives, and renews his heartfelt appeal to all parties in the conflict to seek peace and solutions through dialogue, in order to avoid further loss of innocent human lives". The airspace above that area of Ukraine is closed until further notice and investigations are underway as to who launched the missile strike which hit the commercial aircraft.

World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities in November

"The Joy of the Gospel: a Missionary Joy". *Evangelii gaudium* (n. 21) is inspiring the Third World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, which is being organized by the Pontifical Council for the Laity and which will take place in Rome from 20 to 22 November. Meeting at the International Pontifical College Maria Mater Ecclesiae will be delegates of the most widespread organizations, either already recognized as international associations of faithful or in consistent dialogue with the Vatican Dicastery. So far, support has been given by more than 55 founders and general superiors of more than 80 communities on more than five continents.

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At the Angelus the Pope explains the parable of the good grain and the weed

The problem of evil in the world

For Iraqi Christians and for peace in the Middle East and Ukraine

Evil in the world comes not from God but from his "enemy", who sows division between individuals, families and peoples. This was Pope Francis' message to the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square for the Angelus on Sunday, 20 July, where he explained the Gospel parable of the good grain and the weed. The following is a translation of the Pope's reflection, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning,

These Sundays the liturgy proposes several Gospel parables, that is, short stories which Jesus used to announce the Kingdom of Heaven to the crowds. Among those in today's Gospel, there is a rather complex one which Jesus explained to the disciples: it is that of the *good grain and the weed*, which deals with the *problem of evil* in the world and calls attention to *God's patience* (cf. Mt 13:24-30, 36-43). The story takes

place in a field where the owner sows grain, but during the night his enemy comes and sows weed, a term which in Hebrew derives from the same root as the name "Satan" and which alludes to the concept of division. We all know that the demon is a "sower of weed", one who always seeks to sow division between individuals, families, nations and peoples. The servants wanted to uproot the weed immediately, but the field owner stopped them, explaining that: "in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them" (Mt 13:29). Because we all know that a weed, when it grows, looks very much like good grain, and there is the risk of confusing them.

The teaching of the parable is twofold. First of all, it tells that the evil in the world *comes not from God but from his enemy, the evil one*. It is curious that the evil one goes at night to sow weed, in the dark, in confusion; he goes where there is no

light to sow weed. This enemy is astute: he sows evil in the middle of good, thus it is impossible for us men to distinctly separate them; but God, in the end, will be able to do so.

And here we arrive at the second theme: the juxtaposition of the impatience of the servants and the *patient waiting* of the field owner, who represents God. At times we are in a great hurry to judge, to categorize, to put the good here, the bad there.... But remember the prayer of that self-righteous man:

"God, I thank you that I am good, that I am not like other men, malicious" (cf. Lk 18:11-12). God, however, knows how to wait. With patience and mercy he gazes into



the "field" of life of every person; he sees much better than we do the filth and the evil, but he also sees the seeds of good and waits with trust for them to grow. God is patient, he knows how to wait. This is so beautiful: our God is a patient father, who always waits for us and waits with his heart in hand to welcome us, to forgive us. He always forgives us if we go to him.

The field owner's attitude is that of hope grounded in the certainty that evil does not have the first nor the last word. And it is thanks to this *patient hope* of God that the same weed, which is the malicious heart with so many sins, in the end can become good grain. But be careful: evangelical patience is not indifference to evil; one must not confuse good and evil! In facing weeds in the world the Lord's disciple is called to imitate the patience of God, to nourish hope with the support of indestructible trust in the final victory of good, that is, of God.

In the end, in fact, evil will be removed and eliminated: at the time of harvest, that is, of judgment, the harvesters will follow the orders of the field owner, separating the weed to burn it (cf. Mt 13:30). On the day of the final harvest, *the judge will be Jesus*, He who has sown good grain in the world and who himself became the "grain of wheat", who died and rose. In the end we will all be judged by the same measure with which we have judged: *the mercy we have shown to others will also be shown to us*. Let us ask Our Lady, our Mother, to help us to grow in patience, in hope and in mercy with all brothers and sisters.

At the end of the Marian Prayer, before greeting some of the groups present, the Pontiff launched an appeal for Christians persecuted in the Middle East, Iraqis in particular, calling for peace in the entire region of the Middle East and in Ukraine.

Dear brothers and sisters,

I received with concern the news of

Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches renews the Pope's appeals

Christians are not foreigners in the Middle East

"Violence must be overcome with peace". This was the invocation of Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, who, from the United States of America, renewed the repeated appeals of Pope Francis for persecuted Christians and for an end to hostilities in the various areas of the Middle East which are bloodied by conflicts.

The Cardinal was invited to Los Angeles by the local Lebanese community to celebrate the Feast of Sts Sharbel and Elias on Sunday, 20 July, in the Maronite Cathedral. Addressing the nearly 400 faithful present, Cardinal Sandri expressed his own sorrow for the desperate fate of so many innocent people, particularly for the Christians of Mosul, Iraq, and of Aleppo, Syria. Their houses and churches, he recalled, "are burnt and destroyed".

But "while today they are the most threatened", the entire area finds itself "in the insecurity that is unfortunately fostered by widespread indifference". Let us think of the Holy Land, from where there continues to be disconcerting news of escalating violence. In this regard the Cardinal spoke of a Palestine "in tears", whose residents are "unable to be men and Christians in serenity and dignity. Their tears are ours", he added, "but we share the same hope, and its name is Christ; and Jesus Christ is faithful. For this, we persevere together in the same journey".

After reading the Pope's words spoken only several hours earlier at the Angelus in St Peter's Square, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches then invited silent prayer and reaffirmed all of



the closeness of the Dicastery to the many so affected by hatred and violence, to the Syro-Catholic and Chaldean Patriarchs in particular, who, with the other bishops, are alongside their faithful "to share the suffering and persevere in the defence of human rights and of religious freedom for Christians as well". He strongly emphasized that "they are not foreigners in the East: it is there that Christianity was born; it is there that they have maintained the faith for two millennia, establishing, as generous citizens, the good of the respective nations; it is there that they must be able to continue to make their own contribution to the human community.

He then made the exhortation that "our hearts go out to the Christians in the Holy Land, in Lebanon, in Syria, in Iraq, in Egypt, and to all the innocent victims of violence. From this land of the United States of America, the land of freedom, justice and human

rights, we call", the Cardinal said, "for reconciliation, mutual understanding, and respect of all religions and human rights all around the world, particularly where Christians have been living for two thousand years since the beginnings of Christianity. We ask the Lord Jesus, the Prince of Peace, through the intercession of Our Lady of Mount Lebanon, to come to our aid and guide our steps in the way of peace. We ask Him to keep alive within us the flame of hope".

Before the homily, Cardinal Sandri had spoken about the biographies of Sts Sharbel and Elias, who are associated with the choice of hermitic life in response to the "call of the desert". Theirs is a message which holds the invitation to abandon everything and be alone with the Lord. The Cardinal noted that it is a consignment not easily understood by modern man, who seems to never have "time, neither for himself nor for God".

The intolerable situation in Iraq

No room for Christians

The "forced deportation" of the Christians of Mosul is an "intolerable crime". The atrocities and practices of the Islamic State (IS) "have nothing to do with Islam and its principles that call for tolerance and co-existence". The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) made this declaration, condemning "in the strongest terms" the violence by Sunni insurgents of the IS who last month took control of the second largest city in Iraq. According to the Misna news agency, General Secretary of the OIC, indicated in a statement released by the group of 57 Muslim countries, Iyad Madani, that the Organization was "ready to provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to displaced persons until they are able to return to their homes".

For weeks IS extremists have warned that Christians in Mosul must convert to Islam or pay a special tax, otherwise they risk imminent execution if they do not leave the city, which is the capital of the province of Nineveh. According to the latest United Nations reports, since the offensive by Sunni fighters began in Fallujah (west of Baghdad)

last January, at least 5,576 civilians have been killed in Iraq, 2,400 of which occurred in the month of June alone, with another 11,662 wounded.

Meanwhile, Iraqi bishops who met in Baghdad in recent days are calling for concrete and courageous solidarity from everyone. "We have made an appeal to all the world", declared Amel Shamon Nona, Archbishop of Mosul for Chaldeans, describing what has happened to Mosul's Christians as "a crime against humanity". He indicated that they are also asking for "three important things": protection for Christians and all other minorities; support for the families who fled from the city of Mosul; and housing and schools for the families who have had to leave everything behind."

On Sunday afternoon, 20 July, the jihadist militants seized the ancient monastery of Mar Behnam, located 10 minutes from the mostly-Christian city of Qaraqosh. Until Saturday the monastery had been managed by Syro-Catholic monks. "The international community", said Fr Nizar Semaan, a colleague of Archbishop Yohanna Petros Moshe

of Mosul for Syrians, has been "disturbingly passive in the face of what is happening. Concrete measures are necessary on the humanitarian and political level".

In an open letter addressed to "all men of good will and to those who are concerned about the nation of Iraq", Patriarch Louis Raphaël I Sako of Babylon for Chaldeans recalled that recent acts of violence are contrary to the Quran and damage the great common history of commitment of all Iraqis for the country.

Furthermore, Patriarch Ignace Youssif III Younan of Antioch for Syrians also confirmed the gravity of the situation. He explained to Vatican Radio on Saturday, 19 July, that the "Syro-Catholic bishopric of Mosul was burnt down". According to several local witnesses, there are no more Christians in the city. Mosul is the first city to have fallen under the ISIS offensive.

Patriarch Sako recalled his suggestion that Christians flee to safer locations; "those who leave Mosul", he said, "are welcomed in monasteries and villages. Friday morning, 20 July, vehicles with loudspeakers went through the city, intimidating Christians to flee. In addition, militants at checkpoints have been "seizing cars, money and documents from Christians before allowing them to continue on; they leave them with nothing".

It would be difficult to even consider dialogue and negotiation. "There is no authority to refer to, there's no one", the Patriarch said, "we don't know where they are coming from or what they really want. The central government cannot be contacted and now they have started airstrikes". He spoke of a "wall" which renders any form of dialogue impossible. "I recently stated that ISIS has nothing against Christians, but now the reality is much different," he said. "It's a situation that is crumbling between our hands and the refugee situation is ever more tragic". Children cannot go to school, he explained, "and many fathers have not been paid in two months. We cannot do anything, our hands are tied".

In order to stop the fundamentalists, according to Patriarch Younan "all financial assistance must be suspended. We call on the international community to be faithful to the principles of human rights, religious freedom, freedom of conscience. We are in Iraq, in Syria and in Lebanon: we are Christians, we were not imported, we have been here for millennia and, therefore, we have the right to be treated like human beings and citizens of these countries. They are persecuting us in the name of their religion and they are not only threatening. They follow through; they are burning and killing".

There are no words, Bishop Saad Sirop, Auxiliary of Babylon for Chaldeans, said to Aid to the Church in Need, "because what is happening is truly shocking. Christians have been in Mosul for centuries and those families were suddenly

taken from their city, their home, their life. We are truly concerned about the future of Christians in this country". "Christians have never been forced out of their homes before", he said, "as if they had no rights. Unfortunately this is the reality today in Iraq, especially Mosul". Bishop Sirop has asked the international community to pressure the Iraqi government to find a concrete solution. "With greater internal stability, there will be no place for these groups of fanatics who claim to govern our country". He underlined that the poor people who no longer have a home and have been robbed of everything must be helped. "It's truly a tragedy".

Some positive news in Iraq still remains. The two nuns and three orphans, who were abducted on 28 June, were released after 17 days in captivity. The two Chaldean nuns of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, Sr Atur and Sr Miskinta, who run a home for abandoned and orphaned children in Mosul, were seized by men linked to ISIS. They were taken to a house where they were treated well and stayed all together, according to the Patriarch of the Chaldean Church Mar Louis Raphael I Sako. The sisters feared for the safety of the girls, "but there were no problems", he said. "The sisters are relieved and happy, they have taken their personal belongings and returned to Dohuk, in Iraqi Kurdistan, where they found refuge on having to flee their convent".

"I am overjoyed at the release of the two sisters and three orphans" because it is "finally some good news" amidst the war, violence and division, the Chaldean Patriarch told AsiaNews.

UN Secretary General

Persecution in Mosul is a crime against humanity

The persecution of Christians in Mosul by the jihadists of the Islamic State is a true crime against humanity. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations stated this on Sunday, 20 July. The "systematic attack on the civilian population, or segments of the civilian population, because of their ethnic background, religious beliefs or faith may constitute a crime against humanity, for which those responsible must be held accountable", he affirmed in a statement explaining also his concern for the hundreds of Christian families forced to flee. Before 2003, there were approximately one million Christians in Iraq, and Mosul was home to more than 60,000 of them.



At the Angelus

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

the Christian communities in Mosul, Iraq, and in other parts of the Middle East, where they have lived from the beginning of Christianity with their fellow citizens, offering a meaningful contribution to the good of society. Today they are persecuted; our brothers and sisters are persecuted, they are pushed out, forced to leave their homes without the opportunity to take anything with them. To these families and to these people I would like to express my closeness and my steadfast prayer. Dearest brothers and sisters so persecuted, I know how much you suffer, I know that you are deprived of everything. I am with you in your faith in Him who conquered evil! And to you, here in the Square and to the many who are watching us on television, I address a call to remember these Christian communities in your prayers. I also

urge you to persevere in prayer for the situations of tension and conflict that persist in different parts of the world especially in the Middle East and Ukraine.

May God of peace create in all an authentic desire for dialogue and reconciliation. Violence is not conquered with violence. Violence is conquered with peace! Let us pray in silence, asking for peace; everyone, in silence.... Mary Queen of peace, pray for us!

I address a cordial greeting to all of you, pilgrims coming from Italy and from other countries. I greet the choir of the Diocese of Killala, Ireland, the Blessed Sisters of Divine Providence and the Sisters of Charity of St Joan Antida, the faithful of Pescara and Villanova in Padua, the youth of Messina and the children who are guests during the summer holiday at Tivoli. Please, do not forget to pray for me. To all I wish a happy Sunday and a good lunch. *Arrivederci!*

Assisted Dying Bill under consideration in British Parliament

The crossroads

FERDINANDO CANCELLI

Romano Guardini wrote that true vitality knows no bounds. It breathes with an open spirit. It is forever young, a constant source of pure, fresh air, bathed in light; it is an energy by which life grows healthy and pure.

On 18 July Lord Falconer's Assisted Dying Bill, a proposed law intended to introduce assisted suicide for terminally ill patients who have a prognosis of less than six months, has been brought for a second reading before England's House of Lords. No vote was taken, but it was decided that the measure will be subject to further examination.

Facing the Members of Parliament, what we are all facing, is a crossroads: two paths running in opposite directions. On one side a road apparently broad, flat and straight, and on the other a path which is narrow and steeply sloped, whose hairpin turns disappear rapidly from view like a promise of surprise or struggle. One takes the first road if one has a reductive vision of mankind: the answer to inevitable suffering, suffering that is part of human life even when, towards the end, medicine has done everything in its power to control the physical and psychological symptoms, can be none other than to terminate the life itself.

The answer seems simple: allow patients to ask doctors to help them die. But already there is comes an unexpected problem: will it be the doctor who administers the lethal drug or will the patient, with an appropriate prescription, do so by himself? The first case is active euthanasia, while the second is technically assisted suicide. And what if a patient wants to cut his life short but is incapable of doing so on his own? Must it then pass necessarily from assisted suicide to euthanasia?

I have often found myself beside a person who chose, in countries where it is permitted by law, to die by assisted suicide; I have also had the chance to see their relatives before and after this drastic solution was implemented. As a physician,

the impression I had was of someone trying at all costs to dam up the power of an ocean with a small dyke: this broad road of autonomy to the end instead aroused profound feelings of guilt for those losing their loved one, an experience of something heavy and unresolved which maybe just needed more time to find that resolution, and often a suffering that comes from a decision not fully shared.

In the same way, I can describe what I observed in the great majority of cases in which the seemingly steeper and more difficult path was taken, that of living with one's illness until the end. Even amid the difficulties, the weight of the onerous climb, these patients frequently knew how to be with their families, sometimes even mending emotionally compromised situations, showing a lucidity and a clarity of vision that healthy people sometimes lack. In still other cases, where the patient was too ill to interact with those around him or her, the work of the healthcare team enabled the family members to play an active and nurturing role which, when respected and supported by professionals, allowed them to mourn more peacefully when the time came. It was as if, in facing those uphill turns, new light suddenly arose in the darkness, new ties, new strengths not physical but much more tangible. Respect for the patient's vulnerability is more effective than the exercise of autonomy at any cost, the availability of palliative medicine much more suitable than lethal prescriptions, human presence and mutual assistance more fruitful than the promotion of an individualist culture.

In 1967, Cicely Saunders founded the first hospice in Europe, located on the outskirts of London. In so doing, she placed England at the forefront in the field of palliative medicine. She teaches us that assisted suicide is not needed to guarantee dignity at the end of life. She teaches us, along with Romano Guardini, that true vitality indeed knows no bounds.



The developing situation in Canada

Losing sight of the sacred

THOMAS ROSICA, CSB

Mainstream media has caused great confusion about the topic of euthanasia and has been extremely deceptive in its portrayal of human suffering and compassion. Most people who think that euthanasia and assisted suicide should be legal are not thinking the whole issue through. They are thinking about personal autonomy and choice. They think about what it would be like to suddenly become incapacitated and consider such a life as undignified or worthless. Perhaps they consider severely disabled people as having no quality of life. Our dignity and quality of life don't come from what we can or cannot do. Dignity and quality of life are not matters of efficiency, proficiency and productivity. They come from a deeper place – from who we are and how we relate to each other.

The notion that euthanasia and/or assisted suicide can be a reality for us in Canada should come as a wake-up call to all Canadians, not just because of the notion that all life is sacred from conception to natural death, but simply because of whom such a law would affect most, the most vulnerable; the chronically ill, who are a strain on the health care system; the elderly who have been abandoned and who have no one to speak on their behalf, and who feel they may be a burden to others; and the disabled who have to fight every day to maintain their own integrity and dignity.

Our society has lost sight of the sacred nature of human life. As Catholic Christians we are deeply committed to the protection of life from its earliest moments to its final moments. When people today speak about a "good death," they usually refer to an attempt to control the end of one's life, even through physician-assisted suicide or euthanasia. The Christian notion of a good death, however, is death not as a good end, but a good transition, that requires faith, proper acceptance and readiness.

What is wrong with abortion, euthanasia, embryo selection, and embryonic research is not the motives of those who carry them out. So often, those motives are, on the surface, compassionate: to protect a

child from being unwanted, to end pain and suffering, to help a child with a life-threatening disease. But in all these cases, the terrible truth is that it is the strong who decide the fate of the weak; human beings therefore become instruments in the hands of other human beings.

St John Paul II taught us how to respect the frail and the vulnerable. Nine years ago, as he died before the eyes of the entire world, John Paul showed us true dignity in the face of death. Rather than hide his infirmities, as most public figures do, he let the whole world see what he went through in the final phase of his life. He offered us a paradoxical image of happiness. Who can say his life was not fruitful, when his body was able to climb snow-capped summits or vacation on Strawberry Island in Lake Simcoe in 2002? Who doesn't feel the paradoxical influence of his presence, when his voice was muted?

We must never lose sight of the atrocities against the unborn, the untold and too-seldom spoken of pain and lingering anguish experienced by those who have been involved in abortions. Nor can we ignore the other great challenge faced by humanity today – the serious question of mercy killing, or euthanasia as it is sometimes called, no longer found in abstract cases and theories. It has arrived on our shores and it has invaded our lives.

This issue strikes to the very core of who we are and what we believe. Even when not motivated by the refusal to be burdened with the life of someone who is suffering, euthanasia must be called a false and misguided mercy. True compassion leads to sharing another's pain, not killing the person whose suffering we cannot bear. The best way to know if we are still in any way a Christian society is to see how we treat our most vulnerable people, the ones with little or no claim on public attention, the ones without beauty, strength or intelligence.

Human life and human dignity encounter many obstacles in the world today, especially in North America. When life is not respected, should we be surprised that other rights will sooner or later be threatened? If we look carefully at



A conversation with Antonella Lumini, a hermitess in Florence

In the silence and in the world

LUCETTA SCARAFFIA

Antonella Lumini, a delicate woman with large bright eyes described as a "urban hermitess", graciously came to meet me at the platform of the Florence train station. The conversation was immediately easy and intense: Antonella looks at others with interest and love, and one immediately feels sincerely welcomed and ready to tell her many personal things, to lay upon her shoulders a bit of the burden of suffering that each of us carries in our daily journey. But I overcome the temptation – and this already tells me much about her – to begin what would be more a conversation than interview. We are about the same age, and so together we unravel the story of our generation, which passed through 1968, taking from it, however, not only negative lessons but also a search for authenticity that subsequently marked our lives and especially our return to the faith.



Jean Guilton, "Florence" (1920)

What were the most significant events of those years?

A deep sense of unhappiness and pain led, at the age of 24, to a serious illness from which I was healed with macrobiotics and the use of techniques of Eastern spirituality. Soon thereafter, a strong call to silence prompted me to seek solitary places immersed in nature. Everything seemed a miracle to me. The contact with my soul opened me to wonder and joy. Encountering Fr Vannucci, whom I met shortly before his death, was essential. The hermitage of San Pietro alle Stinche, which he founded, as well as his books have been of great importance in my journey.

Have you ever considered entering a monastery?

I visited several monasteries, but I always felt they weren't my way. The hermitage of Cerbaiole was particularly important: for more than 30 years it was my soul's refuge. An ancient monastery once Benedictine, perched on a hill just in front of La Verna, it was later donated to the Franciscans. After being destroyed during the war, Chiara – the hermitess who lived there from the 70s, had it rebuilt. These sojourns – and my closeness to the figure of Chiara whom I consider to be my spiritual teacher – were fundamental to my growth.

When did you come to understand your vocation?

It was a long and difficult road because I didn't see any outlets or find an appropriate response to the call I felt so keenly. Silence attracted me, and I sought in every way to preserve it in my home in the centre of Florence. Msgr Gino Bonanni, the parish priest of the Abbey of Florence, helped me. The Church was dear to La Pira, who had given me a decisive book: *Poustinia, Christian Spirituality of the East for Western Men* by Catherine de Hueck Doherty (Jaca Book, 1981). Poustinia – a term from the Orthodox tradition – means a place where one can enter into solitude and collect oneself in silence. It can even be a corner of the home, and so I began to see my home as a poustinia. I arranged a small room for meditation and listening. I read a passage from Scripture, I call upon the Holy Spirit (*ruach* in Hebrew), and then I immerse myself in silence. I bring everything there.

But you aren't a hermitess who stays put, from what I gather you move around quite a lot....

For years I made solitary pilgrimages to Egypt, Jerusalem, Greece. I went to Patmos to meditate on the Book of Revelation. I wrote down in several notebooks what I received in prayer: things greater than me. I simply listen, receive, and write. Today the time of meditation is over, we have to listen directly to the voice of the Spirit and I believe that now it is women who must speak, because women are more receptive, they know how to recognize the tenderness of God, transmit it, and tell about it. If the Church is the bride of Christ and mother, isn't it a real contradiction that women so rarely have the opportunity to express themselves? Feminine and maternal potentialities need to emerge precisely within the Church. Humanity needs it.

You said that your writings come as the fruit of your meditations over the years.

Yes, for more than 20 years I wrote without knowing what I was supposed to do with all those notebooks. Several years ago, I began to publish a few things. A new phase opened for me,

one of witness, which I alternate with silence. I am invited to speak, to conduct prayer meetings, often with lay groups in various places in Italy. There is no doubt that I am attracted by those who are far away. I know what it is to be one. I look for a way of speaking that reaches everyone, one adapted to the various circumstances: I can't speak the same way in a parish as I can

"A strong call to silence prompted me to seek solitary places immersed in nature. Everything seemed a miracle to me. The contact with my soul opened me to wonder and joy"

with a group of feminists. These meetings are sometimes organized by the local Church, others by groups who wish to get a taste of spirituality. There are people who ask to be listened to, for individual encounters. Some want only to lay down their burden of pain, others are looking for a way amid difficulty and confusion. They come for long periods, more or less, then perhaps they return after being away for some time. It's a kind of spiritual motherhood. My door is open, yet I have to defend my times of silence



Painting on the ceiling of the Debra Berhan Selsie Church in Gondar, Ethiopia (photo Gerster)

which nourish me spiritually.

Your book 'Dio è madre' [God is mother] is organized according to the rules of the sacred representations of the medieval tradition: the interior journey develops through dialogue with St Mary Magdalene and the Apostle John, who shows how his gospel was inspired by Mary. It is a book of meditations centred on a message, a voice that you heard: "I am the Holy Spirit, I am the mother who is in God".

Of course, the identification of the Spirit with the

maternal aspect of God has precedent in the Eastern Fathers who associated Him with *sophia*, i.e., Divine Wisdom, and also in Hebrew, *ruach* is feminine. The moment has come when humanity perceives God as a loving presence, no longer as judgmental. It is we who condemn ourselves, not God. And this is precisely what Pope Francis, who aims to reawaken hearts and consciences, says in order to render them more open to love. The time we live in seems dark, but a great spiritual expansion is occurring that can reconcile humanity to itself. If we open ourselves to love, we become instruments of the Holy Spirit's work, and the communion between God and humanity, and between all living beings, will grow. The relationship of love welcomes, it sustains.

You practice spiritual motherhood, the same that you have seen as characteristic of the Holy Spirit. In your book you speak of a new time that is opening up for humanity, an era of the mother.

Today we are in a time of great trial. All of the resistance that is opposing



the work of the Spirit has come out into the open. Satan, in Hebrew "the adversary", is pulling out all his forces. We see it in the crisis of motherhood. Women, who are the heart of love, are losing their maternal instinct, the capacity to welcome and to love. But today we are witnessing the rediscovery of Mary by so many women who had moved away from her: thus a new feminine model is being recognized which seeks to be embodied ever more universally. There is an aspect of the divine motherhood which moves me deeply: in opening themselves to maternal love, children discover that their mother carried in her heart the pain they did not want to feel. "I am the mother of a wounded humanity that bleeds because of how far it has wandered away from me" the Holy



Spirit says. But the new era, that of maternal love, is drawing near: humanity will understand, it will no longer be able to believe that it is sufficient unto itself.

What are your plans for the future?

I feel the time has come to open a poustinia, a place to welcome people

An urban hermitess

For over 30 years a powerful call to silence and solitude has moved Antonella Lumini (Florence, b. 1952) to lead a hidden life in the world. Her one and only rule consists in seeking a balance between inside and outside, between listening to God and listening to people, between an inner search and immersion in reality. After completing studies in philosophy, she dedicated herself to the study of Scripture and spiritual texts by attending courses in Biblical philology. She works part-time at Florence's Central National Library, where she is responsible for the collection of ancient books. She conducts meetings on spirituality and prayer. Among her most recent books are, *Memoria profonda e risveglio* (2008); and *Dio è madre* (2013).

who need silence and to be listened to. I entrust this intuition to the Spirit. Another significant initiative is being led by the Temple for Peace, which I have been a part of for a long time. It is a lay association that sprang up in Florence and which gathers together people of various religions as well as non-believers. The idea would be to obtain from the city council of Florence

a permanent space for silence, as happened in Berlin.

One is sorry to leave this delicate woman who radiates so much love, who lives a spiritual motherhood in every moment. But knowing that Antonella Lumini lives in the midst of a city, mixed in with the tense and breathless everyday life, fills one with hope.

Desert communities today

The breath of prayer

CATHERINE DE HUECK DOHERTY

The one who goes to the poustinia for the first time, for a day or two, will experience a certain amount of interior noise. The first time one of the staff went she said to me on returning, "Boy, that was a terrible experience! You know what happened to me?" I said, "Yes, I think I do. But tell me anyway." She said, "All my thoughts buzzed in me like flies. I was thinking that my jeans needed patching, that the garden needed weeding. I thought about everything except God." I said, "Oh, that's perfectly natural." It takes a long time for modern man to close the wings of his intellect and to open the door of his heart.

For those of you who go into the poustinia for a day or two, this is the essence of it: to fold the wings of your intellect. In this civilization of the West everything is sifted through your heads. You are so intellectual, so full of know-

The author

These words were written for those who sought to experience silence in the poustinia – a hut in the Canadian woods – built by Catherine de Hueck Doherty and modelled on a spiritual practice which she had known in her Russian childhood. Catherine was born in 1896 into a wealthy Catholic Russian-Polish family and was then forced by the Revolution to flee with her husband, a Russian aristocrat, to Canada and the United States. She experienced exile and poverty, then once again riches and a worldly life from which she withdrew in order to live with the poor in Toronto. She later founded a House of Friendship in Harlem and several people joined her to share her life there. As a friend of Dorothy Day she strove to create places of silence for prayer and meditation, which she was to call Madonna House. She devoted herself to this project until her death in 1985. In her many writings she revealed the importance and need for silence in life today.

ledge of all kinds. The poustinia brings you into contact first and foremost with solitude. Secondly, it brings you in contact with God. Even if you don't feel anything at all, the fact remains that you have come to have a date with God, a very special rendezvous. You have said to the Lord, "Lord, I want to take this 24, 36, 48 hours out of my busy life and I want to come to you because I am very tired. The world is not the way you want it, and neither am I. I want to come and rest on your breast as St John the Beloved. That's why I have come to this place." Or you might say, "Lord, I don't believe in you. I just don't think you exist. I think you are dead. But they tell me that in this strange little cabin in the midst of the woods you might be alive. I want to come in and see. May I?" There are a thousand reasons why a person might come to a retreat like this, but the essence is the folding of that intellect that makes so many towers of Babel and is still doing it – and opening the heart that alone can receive the word of God.

St Paul says, "Pray without ceasing." Prayer is the source and the most intimate part of our lives. "When you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret." These words of Our Lord mean that you must enter into yourself and make a sanctuary there; the secret place is the human heart. The life of prayer – its intensity, its depth, its rhythm – is the measure of our spiritual health and reveals us to ourselves. "Rising long before daybreak, he went out and departed into a desert place, and there he prayed." With the ascetics, the desert is interiorized, and signifies that concentration of a recollected spirit. At this level, where man knows how to be silent, true prayer is found. Here he is mysteriously visited.

This is another thing that the poustinia will teach you if you allow it to do so. It will teach you prayer, a different prayer than perhaps you have been used to.

Often people say that they have no time for prayer. Where is the place for prayer? Prayer is inside. I am a church. I am a temple of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They came to me. The Lord said that he and his Father

would come and make their dwelling with me. I don't have to go anywhere. Neither does this mean that you shouldn't render glory to God in church where everybody else comes to pray, but it means that you should pray constantly. There should be no break in our prayer. There is a poustinia of the heart. Why should my heart be removed from God while I am talking to you? When you are in love with someone, it seems that the face of beloved is before you when you drive, when you type, when you are taking out insurance, and so on. Somehow or other we can encompass these realities, the face of the beloved and whatever we happen to be doing.

My friends, prayer is like that. If you fall in love then it's impossible to separate life and breath from prayer. Prayer is simply union with God. Prayer does not need words. When people are in love they look at each other, look into each other's eyes, or a wife simply lies in the arms of her husband. Neither of them talks. When love reaches its apex it cannot be expressed anymore. It reaches that immense realm of silence where it pulsates and reaches proportions unknown to those who haven't entered into it. Such is the life of prayer with God. You enter into God and God enters into you, and the union is constant.

The day I was baptized my little feet made the first step toward that union with God for which I was born. I can walk through my life and never remember. Such will be an arid life. It will be an unhappy life. But no matter what happens to me, if I remember that I exist to be united with God, and that I am united with God every minute, all I have to do is think about it. In fact, I don't even have to think. His face is always before me.

women church world women church world

MUHAMMAD YUNUS

The Catholic Church would like to work to establish an appropriate level of spiritual, social, and material 'capital' in the world. I believe that under the present global economic system, this cannot be done. The present system is an impersonal sucking machine which thrives on the continuous sucking of juice from the bottom to transport it to the top. The higher you are in the system, the more juice you are able to suck. It is not because bad people are running the machine, it is because the machine is built that way. The system was not designed to have any moral responsibility. At least not in practice. Discussion on moral responsibilities is an afterthought.

Business schools pick up the practice and compete to produce market-warriors, to go out and capture market and money. The stock market which is the ultimate judge of business success, does not grade businesses on the basis of their moral commitment nor on their spiritual orientations. Moral issues were never included in their reporting template.

I have been proposing and practicing a new kind of business which is based on selflessness, replacing selfishness, of human beings. This type of business runs parallel to the selfishness-driven business that rules the world. Conventional business is

immemorial. But it is not sustainable. Charity money goes out and does a wonderful job, but it doesn't come back. Business money gets the job done but also makes a return. As a result, this money can be re-used endlessly. It creates independent self-sustaining enterprises, which have their own lives. These enterprises become self-fueled entities.

Business schools today train young people to become business-warriors to capture market and money. They are not given any social mission. If we accept the concept of social business, business schools will also produce social-problem-fighters to bring an end to social problems through social businesses. We would need to create a social stock market to attract investors who would like to invest in problem-solving enterprises without having any intention of making personal profit.

If the present variety of capitalism continues, the more we advance in technology, improve our infrastructure, spread globalization, and bring 'efficiency' in the system, the more the system will become ruthless in sucking the juice from the enormously wide bottom to transport it to the progressively thinner top.

The present version of capitalism will never deliver equitable distribution of income. A system that is built as a sucking machine cannot bring equitable distribution. It was never put in its DNA.

While 1% of people in the world own half of the world's wealth, 85 individuals own more wealth than all those in the bottom half, and the top half population of the world own almost all the wealth of the world.

Indifference to other human beings, which has been denounced by Pope Francis, is deeply embedded in the conceptual framework of economics. Economic theory is based on the belief that the human being is basically a personal profit-seeking being. Economic rationality is defined as maximizing personal profit. This encourages a behavior which may be described by a harsher word than mere indifference.

I am proposing and practicing a new kind of business based on selflessness. It is not the same thing as charity, which is not sustainable. Charity goes out and helps, but it does not come back. However, businesses get the job done and the money does return. As a result, this money can be re-used endlessly.

A look at the roots of the global economic system

It's possible

Concrete suggestions for the Church

Capitalist Man does not have any other virtue than selfishness. Real Man is a composite of many virtues. He enjoys relationships with other human beings. He is a caring man. He is a selfless man. He is a trusting man. We have many good examples to demonstrate these virtues. To show that he is a trusting man, take the case of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. The entire bank is built on trust. There is no effort in this bank to establish relationships with legal glue. It is a lawyer-free bank. It lends out over \$1.5 billion a year to 8.5 million poor women on basis of trust only. Now it works in many other countries, including in the USA, exactly the same way. The repayment rate is near 100%.

As we create a world based on selfishness, people move away from each other. In that selfish world the very way we create measurements of business success itself fuels more selfishness. Human society is an integrated whole. Its success or failure should be measured in a consolidated way, not purely on the basis of some purposefully chosen aggregate economic information.

The GDP does not tell the whole story. We need something else to do that. It may be the GDP minus all human problems (poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, income inequality, status of women, lack of human rights, absence of law and order, lack of technology and opportunities for all people, etc.)

Globalization brings people closer to each other, though not in a friendly way, but in a confrontational posture. Ideally, globalization should be the process towards building the global human family.

Information and communication technology, other technologies, higher levels of creativity, speed of accessing information – these combined forces are changing the world faster and faster. There is indeed a great progress in sight. But there is no global vision driving these changes. Changes are used for commercial purposes. Innovations rush in the direction wherever businesses see market potential.

Nobody is putting up any high-way signs to lead the world to its destination. There are lots of amazing breakthroughs, but they don't add up to becoming an unstoppable force to get the world to its destination.

Given the power of technology and creativity of human beings today any destination is reachable. But it does not look like anybody is

seriously concerned about a destination. We float without direction. In the worst case, in the wrong direction.

The education system is at fault. Young people are never asked to engage themselves in finding out what kind of world they would like to create. They are never told that they are the creators of that world. There is no curriculum in the school to let the students imagine their dream world, what considerations they should put together to construct that dream world. While they are not happy with the world they see around them, they don't know that they can transform this world into their dream world.

We have created a world for the rich by creating financial institutions for the rich. If we want to get the poor out of poverty we have to create exclusive financial institutions for the poor. Finance is power. For the bottom half of the world population, banks do not exist. So they remain powerless.

Today there is a concentration of economic power in a few hands because financial institutions are at their disposal. We talk about land reform for overcoming poverty, because land represents power and independence in rural societies. But we don't talk about credit reform. We don't ask the question of who gets how much bank credit? Or what percentage of the population gets what percentage of bank credit? This one piece of information will give us the real story on power and powerlessness. Credit disparity is the major cause of income disparity.

We'll have to create new financial institutions if we are worried about income disparity and poverty. Grameen Bank has shown how even the poorest women, and even beggars, can do business with a financial institution provided it is designed for them. Don't ask them to do business with an institution which is designed for the rich.

Unemployment means keeping a fully capable person under mothballs. Why should human beings be punished and remain paralysed? A human being is born to be active, creative, energetic – always exploring ways to unleash his own unlimited potential. Why should we allow anybody to unplug him, and deny him the opportunity to use his amazing capacity? Who unplugs him? Why do billions of creative people remain unplugged? Why is our world condemned to miss out on the creativity of almost half the



personal profit-seeking business. The new business, which I am suggesting, is personal profit-forsaking business. It is a for-profit business, but personal profit-forsaking business. I call it social business – a non-dividend company to solve social problems. The owner can take back his investment money, but nothing beyond that. After getting the investment money back all future profit is ploughed back into the business to make it better and bigger. It stands between charity and profit maximizing businesses. It is designed with the objectives of charity and carried out with the methodology of business, but delinked from personal profit-taking.

Charity is a great concept to help people, and has been used since time



population? This problem is not created by the unplugged people themselves. It is created by our grossly flawed conceptual framework which has drilled into our heads that people are born to work for some privileged people called entrepreneurs. All policies and institutions are built for them. If they don't hire you, you are finished. What a misreading of human capacity. What an insult to a human being.

Our education system is built on the basis of same the assumption. It assumes that students should work hard, get good grades so that they can get good jobs. Young people are never told that all people in the world are entrepreneurs. They are born with two choices, and retain both choices throughout their lives. A job-giver, or a job-seeker, these are his options.

In Grameen Bank we are inspiring the second generation of borrowers' families to believe that they are not job seekers, they are job givers. All children in the world should grow up that way. Institutions and policies should be created to make it happen. Job seeking should become a second choice for any young person. In Bangladesh we have created social business to provide full equity to any young person who wants to create his own business. We provide him all support to make him successful.

Why are half the young people in some European countries unemployed? Why are we talking about a lost generation? Why are we accepting it as if it is a fate ordained by God? Are we not insulting God by accepting it as a fate? Is putting them on state charity the only solution? Is this how we uphold human dignity, by putting young creative people on state charity? What about giving them opportunity to explore their own creative power? How can we take away something which God has given them?

Have we ever asked them if they can start an enterprise of their own? If they can, what would they need? Have we ever thought of coming up with support which they need? We have created social business funds in Bangladesh to provide exactly that type of support. Young people are loving it. Why not try it in Europe. The Catholic Church can easily create social business funds to solve the problem of youth unemployment in Europe. If it works for Europe, it will change the world forever. Someone has to take the initiative. We cannot just sit and watch a whole generation of young people fall through the cracks of theory because we are too timid to question the wisdom of our theoreticians.

We have to redesign our theory

by recognizing the limitless capacity of a human being, not just relying on 'invisible hands' which remain invisible because they do not exist. We have to design new concepts, new institutions. This is where the Catholic Church can play the most important role.

If we can demonstrate that nobody needs to remain unemployed, it would easily lead to a society without poverty and without charity. Unemployment is an artificial creation of our faulty conceptual framework. It is not natural to human beings. Human beings are doers, and go-getters. Theory has the audacity to put them in chains.

Nobel

On 12 July 2014, a seminar was held in the Vatican, entitled "The Global Common Good: Towards a more Inclusive Economy", organized by Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Muhammad Yunus, a Bangladeshi social entrepreneur and economist who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for founding the Grameen Bank and pioneering the concepts of microcredit and microfinance was invited by Pope Francis to attend.



Losing sight of the sacred

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

the great dramas of the last century, we see that as free markets toppled Communism, exaggerated consumerism and materialism infiltrated our societies and cultures. Aging populations, especially in the west, and resulting smaller workforces are now creating a market push towards euthanasia. As St John Paul II wrote: "a right to die will inevitably give way to the duty to die".

In a very powerful message addressed to the Pontifical Academy for Life this past February, Pope Francis wrote about a very current theme, dear to the Church. "In our society there is a tyrannical dominance of an economic logic that excludes and at times kills, and of which nowadays we find many victims, starting with the elderly". He affirmed that we see the existence of a "throwaway" culture, in which those who are excluded are not only exploited but also rejected and cast aside.

In the face of this discrimination, Pope Francis considered the anthropological question of the value of man and of what may be the basis of this value. "Health is without doubt an important value, but it does not determine the value of a person. Furthermore, health is not by itself a guarantee of happiness, which may indeed be experienced even

Theory should not be allowed to punish human beings – the greatest creation on earth. We should be the one to punish theory by scrapping it.

We should make sure that the word 'unemployment' soon gets unemployed. When we build a new world we know for sure in that world the word 'unemployment' will not make sense to anybody. Nobody would be able to figure out how could a person remain idle. They would suspect something related to his health, but not his lack of opportunities.

In our conceptual framework we should not allow anything which is derogatory to the human spirit. Theory should reflect us, human beings should not be squeezed to fit into narrow theory. Theory must keep enough room to accommodate the fact that human beings thrive in this

world by constantly making impossibilities possible. People should have the final word on their fate, not theory.

Helping people in distress is the prime responsibility of the state. State charity must be applauded for doing an excellent job of taking care of its citizens in distress. But still higher responsibility of the state will be to make sure that people can come out of their distressful situation as soon as possible so that they can end their dependence on the state.

Human beings are all about independence and freedom, and constant search for his own worth, not about dependence on anyone. Dependence diminishes human beings. His mission in this planet is to make it a better place for everybody. He should not be put in a situation where he remains dependent on the state all his life, then passes it on to his next generation, who in turn, passes on to the third generation, creating an unending series. State charity has created this situation for many people in Europe. We have the technology and methodology to bring an end to this. All it needs is a determined initiative.

Taxation is needed to overcome the deficiencies of the market mechanism in creating common goods. With the introduction of social business we'll have to revisit this proposition. The state is no longer the only creator of social goods. Citizens can create social businesses to do that. Through social businesses, citizens can create better healthcare, education, and many other social services more efficiently, creatively and sustainably than the state. Every society then will have three options for providing common goods, a) through public sector intervention, b) through social businesses, or c) through for-profit private sector intervention. They should compete and collaborate to bring the best common goods to the people.

In most countries tax administration is extremely corrupt, big money in the government exchequer makes politicians corrupt and too powerful to listen to citizens' voices. Also work done by public money in most cases is low quality and inefficient. I would feel more comfortable to see the citizens organising social businesses to create the common goods. Citizens can bring more creative power and technology to solve people's problems than governments can. Once government creates a programme for offering social good, it cannot be stopped, even if it is not necessary, or totally inefficient and corrupt for political reasons.

The human being is an enormously creative and entrepreneurial being. The conceptual framework of present capitalist theory is too narrow and very undignified for him. A true human being is a selfless, caring, sharing, trusting, community-building, friendly human being. He is, at the same time, also the reverse of all these virtues. Which one of these virtues he'll promote, which ones he'll suppress will depend on the world around him. We need to give him opportunities to bring out the right virtues. Today he we don't give him that opportunity. That's where the trouble begins.



The rubble after the attack of 18 July 1994 in Buenos Aires

On the anniversary of the attack against Jews in Buenos Aires

Terrorism is always madness

"Terrorism is madness. Terrorism is only killing, it builds nothing; it destroys": the Pope stated this in a video message to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the attempt on the headquarters of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA), which took place in Buenos Aires, 18 July 1994. That day a vanload of dynamite was detonated in the underground parking of a building which houses the offices of the Association. The explosion claimed the lives of 85 people and injured more than 200.

"Twenty years after the tragedy of AMIA", Pope Francis said, "I wish to express my closeness to the Israeli community in Argentina and to all relatives of the victims, both Jewish and Christian". Then, recalling the many "lives cut short, the hopes destroyed, the ruins" caused by the vile attack, the Pontiff called on the people of Argentina to ponder the tears unleashed by this tragedy and to never forget them, for "we are frequently inclined to bury things away", he explained in the video, "to relieve ourselves of the weight of the stories, of the suffering, of the beautiful things that might have been". For this, he added, "it costs us a great deal to choose the path of justice, to face the damage" that such a tragedy inflicted on society.

"May justice be done", Pope Francis concluded before praying in suffrage for the victims and blessing their families.

The video message was recorded with a mobile phone belonging to Claudio Epelman, executive director of the Latin American Jewish Congress – which Pope Francis visited in recent days – and was then broadcast on social networks.

Holy See statement on the situation in the Gaza Strip

The voice of reason is being drowned out

On 23 July Archbishop Silvano M. Tomás, Permanent Representative of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, gave the following address at the 21st Special Session of the Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem.

Mr President,

As the number of people killed, wounded, uprooted from their homes, continues to increase in the conflict between Israel and some Palestinian groups, particularly in the Gaza Strip, the voice of reason seems submerged by the blast of arms. Violence will lead nowhere either now or in the future. The perpetration of injustices and the violation of human rights, especially the right to life and to live in peace and security, sow fresh seeds of hatred and resentment. A culture of violence is being consolidated, the fruits of which are destruction and death. In the long run, there can be no winners in the current tragedy, only more suffering. Most of the victims are civilians, who by international humanitarian law, should be protec-

ted. The United Nations estimates that approximately seventy percent of Palestinians killed have been innocent civilians. This is just as intolerable as the rockets directed indiscriminately toward civilian targets in Israel. Consciences are paralyzed by a climate of protracted violence, which seeks to impose a solution through the annihilation of the other. Demonizing others, however, does not eliminate their rights. Instead, the way to the future lies in recognizing our common humanity.

In his Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Pope Francis demanded that the present unacceptable situation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict be brought to an end. "For the good of all," he said, "there is a need to intensify efforts and initiatives aimed at creating the conditions for a stable peace based on justice, on the recognition of the rights of every individual, and on mutual security. The time has come for everyone to find the courage to be generous and creative in the service of the common good, the courage to forge a peace which rests on the acknowledgment by all of the right of two States to exist and to live in peace and security within internationally

recognized borders" (Address of Pope Francis in Bethlehem, 25 May 2014). The legitimate aspiration to security, on one side, and to decent living conditions, on the other, with access to the normal means of existence like medicines, water and jobs, for example, reflects a fundamental human right, without which peace is very difficult to preserve.

The worsening situation in Gaza is an incessant reminder of the necessity to arrive at a cease-fire immediately and to start negotiating a lasting peace. "Peace will bring countless benefits for the peoples of this region and for the world as a whole," adds Pope Francis, "and so it must resolutely be pursued, even if each side has to make certain sacrifices." It becomes a responsibility of the international community to engage in earnest in the pursuit of peace and to help the parties in this horrible conflict reach some understanding in order to stop the violence and look to the future with mutual trust.

Mr President, the Delegation of the Holy See reiterates its view that violence never pays. Violence will only lead to more suffering, devastation and death, and will prevent

A telephone call to Israeli and Palestinian presidents

Invocation for peace

As a ground offensive begins in the Gaza Strip

After 10 days of answering Hamas rocket fire with pounding air raids, the Israeli army launched an extensive ground offensive in the Gaza Strip on Friday, 18 July. Thus the Egyptian diplomatic initiative was unsuccessful and hopes for peace seem to once again be marking time.



Pope Francis with the Presidents on 8 June at the Vatican

Following a heartfelt appeal for continued prayer for peace in the Holy Land on Sunday, 15 July, Pope Francis personally telephoned Israeli President Shimon Peres and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Saturday morning, 19 July, sharing his grave concerns regarding the state of the conflict which particularly involves the Gaza Strip. The atmosphere of escalating hostility, hatred and suffering for the two populations has propagated countless victims and given rise to a serious humanitarian emergency.

As he had done during his recent pilgrimage to the Holy Land and at the Invocation for Peace on 8 June, the Pope as-

sured his unceasing prayer and that of the whole Church for peace in the Holy Land and he shared with his interlocutors, whom he considers to be men of peace and who want peace, the need to continue to pray and to commit to ensuring that all interested parties and local and international political leaders commit themselves to putting an end to all hostility, striving toward a cease-fire, toward peace and heartfelt reconciliation.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon also expressed hope that the weapons would soon be silent, declaring: "There can be no military solution to this conflict".

peace from becoming a reality. The strategy of violence can be contagious and become uncontrollable. To combat violence and its detrimental consequences we must avoid becoming accustomed to killing. At a time where brutality is common and human rights violations are ubiquitous, we must not become indifferent but respond positively in order to attenuate the conflict which concerns us all.

The media should report in a fair and unbiased manner the tragedy of all who are suffering because of the conflict, in order to facilitate the development of an impartial dialogue that acknowledges the rights of everyone, respects the just concerns of the international community, and benefits from the solidarity of the international community in supporting a serious effort to attain peace. With an eye to the future, the vicious circle of retribution and retaliation must cease. With violence, men and women will continue to live as enemies and adversaries, but with peace they can live as brothers and sisters (Words of Pope Francis, Vatican Gardens, 8 June 2014).

Thank you, Mr President.



Muslim students in East Timor reading the Quran during Ramadan (ANSA)

Message of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue for the end of Ramadan

Bridges of peace between Christians and Muslims

Let us work together, then, to build bridges of peace where Muslims and Christians together suffer the horror of war. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue made this appeal to "dear Muslim brothers and sisters" on the occasion of the end of Ramadan (Id al-Fitr 1435 h. / 2014 a.d.) celebrated on 27 and 28 July. The following is the English text of the Message – signed by President Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran and Secretary Fr Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot – entitled "Towards a Genuine Fraternity between Christians and Muslims".

Dear Muslim Brothers and Sisters,

It gives us great joy to offer you our heartfelt congratulations and good wishes on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr at the conclusion of Ramadan, a month dedicated to fasting, prayer and helping the poor.

Last year, the first year of his ministry, Pope Francis personally signed the Message addressed to you on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr. On another occasion, he also called you "our brothers and sisters" (*Angelus*, 11 August 2013). We all can recognize the full significance of these words. In fact, Christians and Muslims are brothers and sisters in the one human family, created by the One God.

Let us recall what Pope John Paul II said to Muslim religious leaders in 1982: "All of us, Christians and Muslims, live under the sun of the one merciful God. We both believe in one God who is the creator of man. We acclaim God's sovereignty and we defend man's dignity as God's servant. We adore God and profess total submission to him. Thus, in a true sense, we can call one another brothers and sisters in faith in the one God" (Kaduna, Nigeria, 14 February 1982).

We thank the Almighty for what we have in common, while remaining aware of our differences. We perceive the importance of promoting a fruitful dialogue built upon mutual respect and friendship. Inspired by our shared values and strengthened by our sentiments of genuine fraternity, we are called to work together for justice, peace and respect for the rights and dignity of every person. We feel responsible in a particular way for those most in need: the poor, the sick, orphans, immigrants, victims of human trafficking, and those suffering from any kind of addiction.

As we know, our contemporary world faces grave challenges which

call for solidarity on the part of all people of good will. These include threats to the environment, the crisis of the global economy and high levels of unemployment particularly among young people. Such situations give rise to a sense of vulnerability and a lack of hope for the future. Let us also not forget the problems faced by so many families which have been separated, leaving behind loved ones and often small children.

Let us work together, then, to build bridges of peace and promote

reconciliation especially in areas where Muslims and Christians together suffer the horror of war.

May our friendship inspire us always to cooperate in facing these many challenges with wisdom and prudence. In this way we will help to diminish tension and conflict, and advance the common good. We will also demonstrate that religions can be a source of harmony for the benefit of society as a whole.

Let us pray that reconciliation, justice, peace and development will remain uppermost among our priorities, for the welfare and good of the whole human family.

Together with Pope Francis, we are happy to send you our cordial best wishes for a joyful celebration and a life of prosperity in peace.

From the Vatican, 24 June 2014

Aboriginal Sunday celebrated in Australia

Guard the earth

The message of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference on the occasion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday, celebrated on 6 July, was centred around the theme of safeguarding creation. In the message the prelates noted how, above all, native peoples see the earth "as being alive with power" and as something "sacred". The bishops added that, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples "have a unique contribution to make as the wider Australian community is challenged to face up to the damage it is doing to God's beautiful creation. They can help the rest of us to learn how to 'take care of the country,' to protect the land, the seas, the rivers and the forests, and all the creatures who inhabit them".

"From time immemorial", the message continues, "indigenous Australians have considered themselves as custodians of the land", and "have exercised this responsi-



ility faithfully over countless generations".

According to the Australian Bishops, the "witness of indigenous Australians can teach all members of the Christian community to see that when we gather for Eucharist, and when we bring gifts of bread and wine to the altar, we hold this land with all its creatures up to

For establishing a Catholic University in Vietnam

In Vietnam, about 40 years ago, Catholic Universities were forced to close their doors, like many primary and secondary educational institutions founded by the church. But, according to Archbishop Paul Bùi Văn Đọc of Thành-Phò Hồ Chí Minh things may soon change. An interview with the prelate recently appeared on "Vatican Insider" (the website of the Italian newspaper *La Stampa*), taken from the news agency, *Églises d'Asie*, the Society of Foreign Missions of Paris. According to the Archbishop, construction of a new Catholic university should not be long off and will signal a historic change for the Church in this country, toward complete freedom of education. "The dialogic approach with the government is bearing its fruit", he said. Conceived in collaboration with the prestigious Catholic Institute of Paris, the "Advanced Institute of Theological Studies" should emerge in Thành-Phò Hồ Chí Minh within the course of a year. The Catholic Church, Archbishop Bùi Văn Đọc explained, "can offer philosophy and the educational experience that comes with it".

God". The prelates' message concludes with a call for respect for local peoples and recalls the *Canticum of the Creatures*, which is attributed to St Francis, in whose footsteps the Catholic Church of Australia invites all the faithful to "restore right relationships between God, humankind and all that exists".

Stories of Rome during World War II

The courage of the Brigettines



New book: *'Courage and Conviction: Pius XII, the Brigettine nuns, and the rescue of Jews'*, by Joanna Bogle, Gracewing Books: Herefordshire, England. £5.99 paperback.

JOHN MCCARTHY*

The subject of the plight of Jews in Rome during World War II continues to excite much interest, often generating more heat than light.

The central task, however, is to discover the true stories of what occurred. One such involves the Brigettines and their convent in the Piazza Farnese – particularly intriguing as the convent is the original house in which St Birgitta lived, centuries before, which received a new lease of life in the 1920s and 30s.

A further twist to the story is that the nun who played a major role in helping the Jews was an English woman from a family which had no connection whatever with Rome and who could never have imagined herself involved in such drama.

British author Joanna Bogle has researched the saga. *Courage and Conviction* tells the story of two young English women, Katherine Flanagan and Madeline Hambrough, who in the early 1900s joined the redoubtable Swedish Mother Elisabeth Hesselblad to re-found the Brigettine Order which had disappeared at the Reformation over three hundred years earlier.

By the time of World War II, the Brigettine house in Rome was thriving, and Katherine Flanagan was running daughter houses in England and Sweden. Madeline Hambrough – who took the name Riccarda when she made her final vows, honouring the English martyr Richard Reynolds – remained in Rome and would be the central figure in rescuing Jews who appealed to the Brigettines for help.

Piero Piperno, who as a teenager was hidden by Mother Riccarda along with his Jewish relatives, remembers her as endlessly patient, kind, and sweet-natured, soothing over the inevitable tensions and difficulties of a family living in hiding. Food was short – Piperno remembers thinking that the soup was so thin that he thought the nuns had made it by simply picking the weeds and shrubs from the nearby city square. There was perpetual fear of discovery – and if they had been found, the nuns would have been shot and the Jews taken to Auschwitz to perish there.

Unknown to Piperno, the nuns were also hiding a deserter from the German army – who later became a priest and contributes his memories to this book.

This is a fine story, told with details researched in some depth: the Hambrough family and their aristocratic connections, the vanished world of late-Victorian England in which Madeline Hambrough grew up, the debate surrounding Pope Pius XII, the work of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI for good Jewish-Catholic relations.

Serious historians are now recognising the truth about the saving of so many Jewish lives through the efforts of Pius XII and of religious communities in Rome. This paperback sheds useful light on the whole subject and is a good read.

*Australian Ambassador to the Holy See

For the 50th anniversary of the St Pantaleon Shrine in Argentina

A Pilgrim Church

Pope Francis expressed closeness in prayer and gratitude to the faithful and to the pilgrims who will gather in the Maderos neighbourhood of Buenos Aires on Sunday, 27 July, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Shrine of St Pantaleon. In his message the Pope nostalgically recalled the times that he, as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, personally visited the parish dedicated to the holy doctor from Nicomedia. "I would like to be beside you", he wrote, "to relive in some way the occasions on which I was able to be at the shrine on 27 July to help the priests with confessions".

"I would go home spiritually strengthened", he shared, "by the testimony of faith. It is unimaginable how much good I received. And I would like to give thanks for all of this good. May the Lord reward you abundantly".

The Pontiff then stated: "I pray for you, for your families, for the shrine and for the priests", underlining that "many faces pass" through his memory, together with "the names of many colleagues"; and he recalled the "many gestures of hope lined up to venerate the image of St Pantaleon. All that testimony of faith and of prayer", he wrote, "now helps me to have trust and to pray more".

Finally, using an evocative message, the Pope described the shrine as "a temple which appears still, but which the people of the pilgrim God have made to walk. In this way it has walked for 50 years in the hearts of so many faithful who have come to venerate the saint, to



"Martyrdom of St Pantaleon" (14th c., Turin, Palazzo Madama)

implore health and to profess their faith. Thus it has walked in the heart of the neighbourhood, casting itself throughout the city. I pray the Lord grants you the grace to continue to walk", he stated, "to continue this pilgrimage of the heart in the midst of the great city. In these days of the 50th anniversary celebration I am together with you. I ask you please do not forget to pray for me".

In these days the community of the faithful is on a spiritual journey of preparation for the feast articulated by the novena in honour of the saint, which began last Friday, 18 July. On Sunday, 27 July, the shrine will be open from 5:00 a.m. until midnight, and 10 Masses will be celebrated throughout the day.

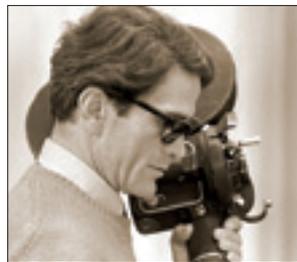
Scheduled for the afternoon of Sunday, 3 August, are the procession with the image of St Pantaleon and the closing Mass dedicated to the shrine's patron saint.

Digitizing in the Vatican

Film by Pasolini remastered

Fifty years after its release in theatres, the Vatican's copy of Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel According to Matthew* has now been remastered. The 16 millimetre black and white film in the archives of the Vatican Film Library was beginning to show signs of deterioration, losing its bright and intense images. Then last winter, in addition to repairing the reel and cleaning the more than 150,000 metres of film, the movie was digitized thanks to the process of telecine.

The head of the Vatican Film Library Claudia Di Giovanni explained to our newspaper that the remastered film has restored the human emotion paramount to Pasolini's masterpiece which tells the life of Christ according to the Gospel writer Matthew. Some critics have even called this film the best depiction of Christ in the history of cinema.



In addition the Vatican Library has also begun the process of digitalization of approximately 80,000 manuscripts. The project is being carried out by *Digita Vaticana Onlus*, a non-profit which began in 2013. According to Bishop Cesare Pasini, Prefect of the Library, digitized material gives us the opportunity to protect antique books – even if these books will remain in an anti-atomic shelter – and, among other things, are "an instrument to make world heritage immediately accessible to everyone".

