

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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Friday, 8 April 2016

Pope Francis' Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation 'Amoris Laetitia'

The Joy of Love

"The joy of love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church". The much anticipated Post-Synodal Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* – "The Joy of Love" – was presented to the world on Friday, 8 April. From the start of his Pontificate, Pope Francis has been concerned with the challenges facing families today. The Exhortation synthesizes the work of the third Extraordinary and 14th Ordinary sessions of the Synod of Bishops, giving hope that the Church will "focus on concrete realities" that guide her "to a more profound understanding of the inexhaustible mystery of marriage and the family" (*Amoris Laetitia*, n. 31). Signed by Pope Francis on 19 March, the Solemnity of St Joseph, *Amoris Laetitia* encourages the Church to avoid a sterile juxtaposition of the demand for change and the general application of abstract norms.

The exhortation, arranged into nine chapters, was presented today in the Holy See Press Office. The panel was made up of Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops; Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, OP, Archbishop of Vienna; and a married couple, Francesco Miano and Giuseppina De Simone in Miano, both professors of philosophy. The panel reflected the breadth of pastoral experience present on the synod floor. The need for bishops to share their experiences with one another is confirmed by the Holy Father, who insists that "not all discussions of doctrinal, moral or pastoral issues need to be settled by in-

terventions of the magisterium" (n. 4).

The exhortation opens with a profound meditation on the meaning of love, marriage and family in Sacred Scripture. The next chapter moves to the present, considering the real issues now confronting society. The

third chapter covers essential aspects of Catholic teaching on marriage and family, emphasizing the indissolubility of the marital bond, the sacramental nature of marriage, and the transmission of life. The inexhaustible mystery of conjugal love is probed in the fourth chapter, with

special reference to the Pauline "Hymn to Love" in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

A beautiful reflection on offspring as the fruit of marriage occupies the fifth chapter, inviting the extended family to play an active role in raising and forming children. The sixth chapter presents perspectives and initiatives to improve the pastoral care of the family. Education is the key to ensuring hope for strong families, as the seventh chapter makes clear. That the world is far from perfect is candidly acknowledged in the eighth chapter, which addresses delicate situations broadly defined as "irregular". The Holy Father states that "the baptized who are divorced and civilly remarried need to be more fully integrated into Christian communities in the variety of ways possible, while avoiding any occasion of scandal" (n. 299). The crowning chapter is dedicated to spirituality and prayer, showing that every aspect of marriage and family can be "experienced as a sharing in the full life of the resurrection" (n. 317).

Amoris Laetitia recognizes an era in which "ideal" families are few and far between. And it ushers in a new era in which the Church openheartedly commits herself to helping in situations that are less than ideal. Readers will quickly pick up on Francis' invitation to stop placing "conditions on mercy" that empty it of its "concrete meaning and real significance" (n. 311). It is, indeed, a very timely message in the Jubilee Year of Mercy.



Marc Chagall, "The Bride and Groom of the Eiffel Tower" (1939)

FOR THE DOCUMENT, SEE VATICANVA.

At the General Audience

Waiting in line with sinners



PAGE 3

The Holy Father to visit Greece on Saturday, 16 April

With refugees in Lesbos

On Saturday, 16 April, Pope Francis will visit Lesbos where, together with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, Ieronymos, he will visit with the refugees living in displacement camps on the island. The announcement of the Pope's visit was made on Thursday, 7 April, in the Holy See Press Office. The Holy Father accepted the invitation of Bartholomew and the Greek President, Prokopis Pavlopoulos. The schedule for the visit

has not been made public, however the Pope and the two Orthodox leaders are expected to visit a refugee camp and then pray together at a port which faces the sea where many have lost their lives attempting to flee war and poverty. Fr Federico Lombardi, Director of the Holy See Press Office, told journalists that the one-day visit "represents a strong call to responsibility and solidarity regarding this dramatic emergency".

The Pope's visit comes at a crucial moment. Since the agreement between the EU and Turkey took effect on 20 March, forced relocation looks inevitable for the approximately 3,000 refugees who are stuck on the island of Lesbos. Their only hope is to present the documents necessary for asylum. However, as many humanitarian organizations are witnessing, due to a lack of documents and time, many of the island's refugees will most likely be transferred to Turkey.

Swiss Dominican and Papal Theologian emeritus

Cardinal Georges Cottier dies

Divine Mercy Sunday

Living writers of the Gospel

PAGE 4

PAGE 6/7



VATICAN BULLETIN

AUDIENCES

Friday, 1 April

Cardinal Donald William Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington, United States of America

Archbishop Renzo Fratini, titular Archbishop of Botriana, Apostolic Nuncio in Spain and in the Principality of Andorra

Fr Hans Stapel, Founder of *Fazenda da Esperança*

Dr Libero Milone, Auditor General

Saturday, 2 April

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

Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments

Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, Prefect of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, with the Secretary, Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM, titular Archbishop of Belcastro

Archbishop Savio Hon Tai-Fai, SDB, titular Archbishop of Sila, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

Monday, 4 April

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

Cardinal José Luis Lacunza Maestrojuán, OSA, Bishop of David, Panama, with Archbishop José Domingo Ulloa Mendieta, OSA, of Panama

Archbishop Luis Mariano Montemayor, titular Archbishop of Illici, Apostolic Nuncio in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Archbishop Santo Gangemi, titular Archbishop of Umbriatico, Apostolic Nuncio in Guinea and in Mali

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Florentino F. Cincense of Tarlac, the Philippines. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (31 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Enrique V. Macaraeg from the clergy of the Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan, as Bishop of Tarlac, the Philippines. Until now he has been

parish priest of Saint Ildephonse parish, Malasiqui, Pangasinan (31 Mar.).

Bishop-elect Macaraeg, 60, was born in Manila, the Philippines. He was ordained a priest on 19 May 1979. He holds a Master's in Oriental religions and cultures. He has served in parish ministry and as: dean of seminarians; professor and dean of studies at the philosophy seminary of Dagupan City; headmaster of the St John Cathedral School, of the Malasiqui Catholic School and of the St Charles Academy; diocesan director of the Pontifical Mission Societies; vicar of the fourth district; director of the Archdiocesan Commission for the Clergy.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Jacobus Kim Ji-Seok of Wonju, Korea. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (31 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Basil Cho Kyu-man as Bishop of Wonju, Korea. Until now he has been titular Bishop of Elephantaria in Proconsulari and Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of Seoul (31 Mar.).

Bishop Cho Kyu-man, 60, was born in Pochon, Busan. He was ordained a priest on 26 August 1982. He was ordained a bishop on 25 January 2006, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Elephantaria in Proconsulari and Auxiliary of Seoul.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Felipe Salazar Villagrana of San Juan de los Lagos, Mexico. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (2 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Jorge Alberto Cavazos Arizpe as Bishop of San Juan de los Lagos. Until now he has been titular Bishop of Isola and Auxiliary of Monterrey, Mexico (2 Apr.).

Bishop Cavazos Arizpe, 53, was born in Monterrey, Mexico. He was ordained a priest on 31 January 1989. He was ordained a bishop on 26 March 2009, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Isola and Auxiliary of Monterrey.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Dieudonné Madrapile Tanzi from the clergy of Isiro-Niangara, as Bishop of Isangi, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Until now he has

been visiting lecturer at the Pontifical Urban University (2 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Tanzi, 57, was born in Faradje, Democratic Republic of the Congo. He was ordained a priest on 25 August 1985. He holds a doctorate in missiology. He has served in parish ministry and as: formator at the Minor Seminary in Rungu; lecturer and spiritual animator at the Major Seminary in Kisangani; vicar general; diocesan administrator of Isiro-Niangara; rector of the Blessed Anuarite National Marian Shrine and chaplain to the Daughters of St Mary of Providence.

The Holy Father appointed Fr John Akin Oyejola from the clergy of Oyo, as Bishop of Osogbo, Nigeria. Until now he has been parish priest of St Stephen Catholic Church and director of the diocesan Centre for the Family Apostolate (2 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Oyejola, 52, was born in Aawe, Nigeria. He was ordained a priest on 5 October 1991. He holds a diploma in humanities and Master's degrees in pastoral leadership and in marriage and family therapy. He has served in parish ministry and as: diocesan director for vocations; diocesan chaplain for youth; diocesan director of the Biblical Apostolate; member of the Council of Consultors; national director of religious educators in Nigeria; regional director of the Pastoral Institute.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Mile Bogović of Gospić-Senj, Croatia. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (4 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Zdenko Križić, OCD, as Bishop of Gospić-Senj, Croatia. Until now he has been rector of the International Theological College *Teresianum* in Rome (4 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Križić, 63, was born in Johovac, Bosnia and Herzegovina. He made his solemn vows for the Order of Discalced Carmelites on 16 July 1976 and was ordained a priest on 26 June 1977. He holds a licence in spirituality. He has served in parish ministry and as: prefect of the Minor Seminary of the Carmelite Fathers in Zagreb; first counsellor of the Commissariat and prior of the community of Remete in Zagreb; provincial superior; provincial vicar; prior of the convents of Remete and Krk; master of novices and vicar general of the Order.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Désinord Jean from the clergy of Port-au-Prince, as Bishop of Hinche, Haiti. Until now he has been director-general of Radio Télé Soleil (4 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Jean, 48, was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. He was ordained a priest on 13 November 1994. He holds a specialization in social communications. He has served in parish ministry and as: lecturer at the Major Seminary of Port-au-Prince; director-general of the Radio Télé Soleil; executive director of social communications and producer of "Étoile Radio Catholique"; spokesman of the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince; secretary to Bishop Lafontant, Auxiliary of Port-au-Prince.

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Luigi Benigno Papa, OFM Cap., Archbishop emeritus of Taranto, as Apostolic Administrator *sede vacante* of the Archdiocese of Messina-Lipari-Santa Lucia del Mela, Italy (4 Apr.).

Archbishop Papa, 80, was born in Spongano, Italy. He was ordained a priest on 25 March 1961. He was ordained a bishop on 27 December 1981, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Oppido Mamertina-Palmi. On 11 May 1990 he was appointed Archbishop of Taranto.

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Basile Mvé Engone, SDB, Archbishop of Libreville, as Apostolic Administrator *sede vacante ad nutum Sanctae Sedis* of the Diocese of Franceville, Gabon (4 Apr.).



Archbishop Engone, 74, was born in Nkolmelène, Gabon. He was ordained a priest on 29 June 1973. He was ordained a bishop 24 August 1980, subsequent to his appointment as Coadjutor Bishop of Oyem, Gabon. On 3 April 1998 he was appointed Archbishop of Libreville.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Zef Gashi, SDB, of the Archdiocese of Bar, Montenegro. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (5 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Rrok Gjonlleshaj from the clergy of the Apostolic Administration of Prizren, as Archbishop of Bar, Montenegro. Until now he has been parish priest of St Antonio Parish in Pristina,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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At the General Audience the Pope speaks about the mercy of Christ

Waiting in line with sinners

Jesus went to the River Jordan and "waited in line with sinners. He wasn't ashamed". In fact, "from the very beginning of his ministry, he manifested himself as the Messiah who takes upon himself the human condition, moved by solidarity and compassion". Pope Francis reflected on the merciful Christ at the General Audience in St Peter's Square on Wednesday, 6 April, in his series of catecheses for the Jubilee. The following is a translation of the Pope's catechesis which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

After reflecting on the mercy of God in the Old Testament, today we begin to meditate on how Jesus fulfilled it. It was a mercy he expressed, realized and communicated throughout his earthly life. Encountering the multitudes, proclaiming the Gospel, healing the sick, being close to the least, forgiving sinners, Jesus made visible the love that is open to us all: none excluded! Open to all without borders. A love that is pure, freely-given, absolute. A love that culminates in the Sacrifice of the Cross. Yes, the Gospel is truly the "Gospel of Mercy", for Jesus is Mercy!

All four Gospels testify that Jesus, before taking up his ministry, *wanted to be baptized by John the Baptist* (Mt 3:13-17; Mk 1:9-11; Lk 3:21-22; Jn 1:29-34). This event gives decisive direction to Christ's entire mission. Indeed, he did not present himself to the world in the splendour of the temple: he could have done so. He did not announce himself with the sounding of trumpets: he could have so. And he did not come vested like

a judge: he could have so. Instead, after 30 years of a hidden life in Nazareth, Jesus went to the River Jordan, together with many of his people, and there waited in line with sinners. He wasn't ashamed: he was there with everyone, with sinners, to be baptized. Therefore, from the very beginning of his ministry, he manifested himself as the Messiah who takes upon himself the human condition, moved by solidarity and compassion. As he said in the synagogue of Nazareth by identifying with the prophecy of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Lk 4:18-19). Everything that Jesus accomplished after his baptism was the realization of that initial design: to bring to all people the saving love of God. Jesus did not bring hatred, he did not bring hostility: he brought us love! A love that saves!

He made himself neighbour to the lowliest, communicating to them God's mercy that is forgiveness, joy and new life. Jesus, the Son sent by the Father, is truly the start of the time of mercy for all humanity! Those present on the banks of the Jordan did not immediately understand the full extent of Jesus' gesture. John the Baptist himself was stunned by his decision (cf. Mt 3:14). But not the Heavenly Father! He let his voice be heard from on high: "Thou art my beloved son, with thee I am well pleased" (Mk

1:11). In this way, the Father confirmed the path that Son has taken up as Messiah, as the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove. Thus, Jesus' heart beats, so to speak, in unison with the heart of the Father and of the Spirit, showing to all men that salvation is the fruit of God's mercy.

We can contemplate even more clearly the great mystery of this love by *directing our gaze to Jesus Crucified*. As the Innocent One is about to die for us sinners, he pleads to the Father: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34). It is on the Cross that Jesus presents the sin of the world to the mercy of the Father: the sin of all people, my sins, your sins, everyone's sins. There, on the Cross, he presents them to the Father. And with the sin of the world, all our sins are wiped away. Nothing and no one is left out of this sacrificial prayer of Jesus. That means that we must not be afraid of acknowledging and confessing ourselves as sinners. How many times have we said: "Well, this one is a sinner, he did this and that...", we judge others. And you? Every one of us ought to ask ourselves: "Yes, he is a sinner. And me?". We are all sinners, but we are all forgiven. We all have the opportunity to receive this forgiveness which is the mercy of God. Therefore, we mustn't be afraid to acknowledge that we are sinners, to

confess that we are sinners, because every sin was borne by the Son on the Cross. When we confess it, repenting, entrusting ourselves to him, we can be certain of forgiveness. The Sacrament of Reconciliation makes present to each one of us that power of forgiveness that flows from the Cross and renews in our life the grace of mercy that Jesus purchased for us! We must not be afraid of our defects: we each have our own. The power of the love of the Crucified One knows no bounds and never runs dry. This mercy wipes away our defects.

Beloved ones, in this Jubilee Year let us ask God for the grace to experience the power of the Gospel: the Gospel of mercy that transforms, that lets us enter the heart of God, that makes us capable of forgiving and looking at the world with more goodness. If we accept the Gospel of the Crucified and Risen One, our whole life will be formed by his renewing love.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

Today we celebrate the third International Day of Sports for Peace and Development, called for by the



United Nations. Sports is a universal language, which brings people together and can foster encounter and overcome conflict. Thus, I encourage people to engage in sports like a training field for virtue in the integral growth of individuals of communities.

I offer an affectionate greeting to all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors present at today's Audience, including those from England, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Australia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and the United States. As we celebrate the Easter Season, may our hearts be open to the Risen Lord so that, strengthened by his grace, we may share with our families and communities the Gospel of Mercy. God bless you all!

I give a special thought to *young people*, to the *sick* and to *needy*. Look to the example of the Virgin Mary in order to live this Easter Season by listening to the Word of God and practicing charity, by living with joy our membership to the Church, the family missionary disciples of the Risen Christ.



A visitor from the United States

At the General Audience, Pope Francis had a special visitor. He touched the eyes of Elizabeth Myers and embraced her with particularly warm affection. The six-year-old girl from Ohio, USA, suffers from Usher Syndrome, a rare and currently incurable degenerative disease which is causing the progressive and irreversible loss of her vision and hearing. Since Lizzy has only limited time to see, her parents Christine and Steve have drawn up something of a "visual bucket list", which included seeing the Pope. Steve told our newspaper that Lizzy is struck by the Pope's fatherly air with children, and she often watches him on TV. And so, in a battle of solidarity which even involved UNITALSI (an Italian organization which helps sick people reach Lourdes and other international shrines), Lizzy was able to embrace Francis and even introduce her little sister Kayla to him.

Swiss Dominican and Papal Theologian emeritus

Cardinal Georges Cottier dies

The Swiss Dominican Cardinal Georges Marie Martin Cottier, Papal Theologian emeritus, died on Thursday evening, 31 March. He would have celebrated his 94th birthday on 25 April. Upon learning of the Cardinal's death, the Holy Father remembered him in prayer and sent a telegram to the Cardinal's sister Marie Emmanuelle Pastore Cottier, who attended his funeral celebrated in St Peter's Basilica on Saturday, 2 April. The following is a translation of the telegram that was written in French and a brief biography of the late Cardinal.

Having learned with sorrow the sad news of the death of your brother, Cardinal Georges Marie Martin Cottier, OP, I would like to express to you my heartfelt participation in the mourning of all those who knew and loved this zealous servant of the Gospel. With deep gratitude, I remember his solid faith, his fatherly kindness and his intense cultural and ecclesial work, especially in the service of Pope St John Paul II and Benedict XVI, as Theologian to the Papal Household. I raise a fervent prayer to the Lord that, by the intercession of the Virgin Mary and St Dominic, he grant the deceased Cardinal the recompense promised to his faithful disciples and, as a sign of consolation, I warmly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to all those who appreciated his priestly zeal and his dedication to the Church and to the Supreme Pontiff.

FRANCIS PP.

A similar telegram was sent by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State.

For nearly 100 years *Georges Marie Martin Cottier* was a leader, at the forefront of pivotal turning points of the 20th century, courageously confronting the ideologies of the times, personally taking part in the work of the Council and supporting ecumenical dialogue. "I have rediscovered the Second Vatican Council in the three Popes I have served: John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis". Cardinal Cottier used these words as he looked back at his long service to the Church, which was given in the spirit of his motto, *Veritas et Misericordia*.

He did it all with the "Swiss precision", one might say, that he had acquired as a young boy, at home with his family. Cottier was born in 1922 in the small town of Carouge in the Canton of Geneva. His grandfather Emmanuel was a master watchmaker there, as was Cottier's father Louis, inventor of the World Time watch which contemporaneously marks the time in various countries and time zones. In Carouge the memory of the Cardinal's father lives on in a city park dedicated to him, and in his works which are on display in the civic museum.



After attending school in Carouge and high school in Geneva, young Georges Marie Martin enrolled at the University of Geneva in 1941, where in 1943 he spoke out against Nazism in the middle of a crowded lecture, and where he earned a degree in Classics in 1944.

He entered the Dominican Order in 1945, after which he earned degrees in philosophy and theology at the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas (known as the Angelicum) in Rome. Cottier was ordained to the priesthood on 2 July 1951.

Fr Georges returned to Geneva to continue his formation and in 1959 he defended his doctoral thesis at the faculty of literature on the topic, "The atheism of young Marx and its Hegelian origins".

In 1962 Cottier became a professor at the faculty of literature in Geneva. In 1971 he was placed in charge of courses in the same faculty, where he continued teaching until 1987. He also gave courses in the history of modern philosophy at the University of Freiburg from 1973 to 1990. He served as visiting professor at the University of Montreal (1969), the Catholic Institute of Paris (1974-75), the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan (1985-86), and the University of Padua (1986).

Vatican II marked a decisive period in Cottier's life, in which he participated in the Council work, first as the peritus of Archbishop Charles de Provençères of Aix-en-Provence, and in the last session he worked with Cardinal Charles Journet. He also served as Pontifical consultant in ecumenical dialogue and dialogue with nonbelievers, participating in a series of conferences in Ljubljana, Budapest, Strasbourg and Moscow.

In 1986 he was appointed a member of the International Theological Commission, of which he became secretary in 1989. John Paul II appointed him Theologian to the Papal Household on 18 December 1989, and the following March he preached the spiritual exercises to the Pope and the Roman Curia, on the theme "Consecrated in truth", an expression taken from the Gospel according to John (17:19), which the theologian had chosen for the meditations.

As a consultant of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he collaborated directly with Cardinal Prefect Joseph Ratzinger, and with the Pontifical Council for Culture. Cottier was a member of numerous institutions. Among them were: the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, the Pontifical Academy of St Thomas Aquinas, the Pontifical Academy of Theology, the International Summary Institute of the Görres Society, Germany, and the Cardinal Journet Foundation of Freiburg. He also served as a member of the *Cercle Jacques et Raïssa Maritain* and of the Committee for international meetings in Geneva, in addition to being president of the historical-theological Commission of the Central Committee of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 and director of the *Nova et Vetera* magazine, Geneva, founded by Cardinal Journet.

Cottier was appointed Archbishop of the titular Sec of Tullia on 7 October 2003. On the eve of being created cardinal in the Consistory of 21 October 2003, he received his episcopal ordination at the hands of Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna and his confrere in the Order of Preachers. As Cardinal, he received the title of Sts Domenico and Sisto, a deaconry elevated to a presbyterate 'pro hac vice'.

After being confirmed in his role by Benedict XVI, Cardinal Cottier continued to serve as Theologian to the Papal Household until 1 December 2005.

The funeral in St Peter's Basilica

With the eyes of faith

On Saturday morning, 2 April, Pope Francis presided at the Rite of *ultima commendatio* and *valedictio* at the Altar of the Chair, at the close of the funeral celebration for the Swiss Dominican Cardinal, Georges Marie Martin Cottier, Theologian emeritus to the Papal Household, who passed away on Thursday, 31 March. The Funeral Mass was celebrated by the Dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Angelo Sodano. In his homily, the Cardinal recalled that Cottier "was a theologian who advanced as though he could 'see who was invisible', as the Letter to the Hebrews speaks of Moses wandering in the desert (11:27)". Moreover, the Dean proceeded, he "was a bard of the Christian faith, who saw everything 'with the eyes of the faith'", a phrase he liked to use. Certainly, the celebrant observed, "as a great thomistic theologian, he recognized the value of human reason and often referred to an image John Paul II used in his Encyclical *Fides et Ratio*: 'Faith and



reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth". The Dean continued, "I wish to remember these words today, 2 April, the 11th anniversary of the holy death of Pope John Paul II". And "along this line," he said, "Cottier taught theology at various universities and

also served 15 years as the Papal Theologian. The service that he rendered to the Church was truly immense". The Dean concluded the homily with a wish that, "he might teach us too to be witnesses to the world today that Christ is always 'the way, the truth, and the life'" (Jn 14:6).

Message from the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care

An alliance for autism

"Builders and witnesses of hope" is the title of the message from Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski, President of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care, for the 9th World Autism Awareness Day (2 April). This year the event coincides with the days immediately following Easter Sunday and, as the prelate writes, the Church seeks to adopt the attitude of the risen Christ, who inspires hope in the women following the tragic days of His passion and death: "Do not be afraid".

"Very often the hardships of everyday life, loneliness and worries for the future can prevail over hope", the Message begins. "Aware of how important and necessary it is to stimulate efforts in this sector for the improvement of services and the promotion of research, just as it is essential to support autistic people and their families ... our heart cannot but feel strongly confirmed in hope.... In a time in which often we struggle to find reasons to hope, and especially when faced with problems linked to autistic spectrum disorders, that are often not easily diagnosed and also, especially in families, not easily accepted without shame or retreating into solitude, we are called to place our trust in God.... Although by definition hope looks to the future, it is rooted in the today of God, who loves us and seeks us tirelessly.... God is boundless goodness and benevolence; He cares for

His children and never abandons those whom He has called to enter into His communion, whatever difficulties there may be".

"From this perspective of faith, a neurological and behavioural disorder that until a short time ago was considered as a social stigma, is fortunately receiving ever greater consideration in the field of diagnosis and research, as well as in assistance, integration in school and in the workplace, and accompaniment in spiritual growth. This constitutes a sign of hope, as emerged also on the occasion of the International Conference held two years ago by this dicastery on the theme: "The person with autism spectrum disorders: animating hope".

"There is a need for efforts by all to favour acceptance, encounter and solidarity in a concrete work of support and renewed promotion of hope, taking into account above all the fact that autism lasts a lifetime. Therefore, only an alliance between the healthcare, social-healthcare and educational sectors, as well as inclusion where possible in work activities to increase personal independence, can ensure continuity in care throughout the life of these brothers and sisters of ours. Enabling functional integration between services specific to the phases of development and adulthood, the person with autism is thus allowed to conserve the capacities acquired through

rehabilitation interventions at a young age, thus avoiding regression and the stultification of the resources employed".

"In this challenging but not impossible task, the effect of educational, healthcare and social interventions in support of people with autistic spectrum disorders and their families may constitute a valid incentive to identifying and promoting effective and efficient policies, thus creating throughout the country and even in low-income countries", as Pope Francis confirmed in his encounter with autistic children and adults and their families on 22 November 2014, a "network of sup-

port and services which are comprehensive and accessible", able to "help families overcome the feelings, which can sometimes arise, of inadequacy, helplessness and frustration".

"Following Pope Francis' invitation, especially in this Holy Year of Mercy, that inspires believers and non-believers alike to rediscover attitudes of acceptance and fraternal solidarity, let us take on the responsibility in our life for the acceptance and inclusion of autistic people and their families, in the certainty that in this way we will be witnesses of authentic and joyful hope in the Church and in the world".

The Pope meets with the Pontifical Biblical Commission

Freedom and the law of God



The topic of biblical anthropology is not only a matter of "believers, but of each person. Indeed, through the Bible God indicates the solid base and the certain direction for human behaviour". These were the words of Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, President of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, opening the work of the Commission's annual Plenary Assembly on Monday, 4 April, at the Casa Santa Marta. Assembly participants received encouragement from Pope Francis, who greeted them on Tuesday. Their meetings on the theme of biblical anthropology continued until Friday, 8 April. Cardinal Müller stated that "knowing God as the Father of all, discovering the tasks that he has entrusted to us, and acting with awareness of our responsibility in this regard is one of the fundamental approaches to a moral and biblical theology". He noted that "the law of God does not eliminate mankind's freedom", but instead "guarantees it", above all in the incarnation of the Jesus the Son, who is the "synthesis of perfect freedom in total obedience". Indeed, he concluded, "the original function of the Decalogue is not abolished by the encounter with Christ, but is fulfilled".

The Apostolic Penitentiary on 'Misericordiae Vultus'

A great fatherly embrace

When making confession, the penitent should find in the confessor priest a great, silent, fatherly embrace that says "welcome home". This image was offered by Bishop Krzysztof Nykiel, Regent of the Apostolic Penitentiary, at the conclusion of a conference on the *Misericordiae Vultus*. The conference on the Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee was sponsored by the said dicastery and took place on 31 March to 1 April. Thanks to this image of the confessor, the Regent emphasized, this Year of Mercy has brought back to the confessional "many people who for many years had refrained from the Sacrament of Reconciliation". Likewise, there has been a rediscovery of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, which Pope Francis has specifically asked the faithful to practice generously.

Bishop Nykiel recommended that every confessor "welcome the faithful as the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, showing the tenderness of the Father always ready to grant us his forgiveness". In so doing, the prelate explained, the confessor merely receives what God has brought to bear in peoples' hearts: "the new life of children whom God alone can lift up" and whom the confessor priest "simply assesses and welcomes". This is the reason that the Pontiff, in the Bull of Indiction of the Holy Year, asks

that "confessors be authentic signs of the Father's mercy", called as "a sign of the primacy of mercy always, everywhere, and in every situation, no matter what". The Regent explained that the entire conference was like a "great celebration" and "a hymn of praise" to the mercy of God.



Villa Farnesina (16th century)

A cultural welcome

Twenty routes for twenty centuries of history are proposed on the new website www.leviedelgiubileo.it, sponsored by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, along with public entities, associations, the Vatican Museums, the Jewish community of Rome and the Italian Islamic religious community. The website, which is divided into three main sections: "Routes", "Events" and "Music", guides tourists and pilgrims to discover the art, archaeology and history of the capital city. Themes of the itineraries might be the life of a saint or poet, the masterpieces of an artist, the works of an emperor, projects realized for past Jubilees. The routes encompass 330 steps among archaeological sites, churches, galleries, museums, historical buildings, gardens and non-Christian temples. On the "path of all the paths", you can cross the city, touching on a different route at every step, sampling the entire plan. The website also provides a list of exhibits and guided tours. Many lesser known places are suggested along the routes, particularly on the peripheries, where you can enjoy extraordinary treasures like the Arch of Malborghetto, the Aqueduct in the Mandrione district, or the Catacombs of Sts Marcellinus and Peter and the Mausoleum of St Helena in the Tor Pignattara area. Another important itinerary is "1,000 Religions in Rome. From the ancient times until today", which links the Great Mosque of Rome to St Peter's, the Diocletian Baths, the Great Jewish Synagogue and Ostia Antica.

On Sunday, 24 April, in all Catholic Churches around Europe

A collection for Ukraine

At the gathering for the Regina Caeli on Sunday, 3 April, in St Peter's Square on the Feast of Divine Mercy, before reciting the Marian prayer with the faithful, Pope Francis announced that a "special collection" for Ukraine will be taken up "in all Catholic Churches in Europe on Sunday, 24 April". The following is a translation of the Holy Father's words which were delivered in Italian.

On this day, which is like the heart of the Holy Year of Mercy, my thought goes to all the populations who thirst for reconciliation and peace. I think in particular, here in Europe, of the tragedy of those who are suffering the consequences of violence in Ukraine; of those who remain in lands shocked by the hostilities which have already caused thousands of deaths, and of those – over a million – forced to flee from the grave situation which is ongoing. It involves above all elderly people and children. Besides accompanying them with my constant thoughts and with my prayers, I have decided to promote humanitarian support in their favour. For this purpose, a special collection

will be taken up in all Catholic Churches in Europe on Sunday, 24 April. I invite the faithful to join in this initiative with a generous contribution. This act of charity, in addition to alleviating material suffering, seeks to express my personal closeness and solidarity and that of the entire Church. I sincerely hope that it may help to promote, without further delay, peace and respect for law in that land so afflicted.

As we pray for peace, let us remember that tomorrow is the International Day of Mine Awareness. Too many people continue to be killed or maimed by these terrible weapons, and brave men and women risk their lives clearing minefields. Let us please renew the commitment for a world without mines!

Lastly, I greet all of you who have taken part in this celebration, in particular the groups who cultivate the spirituality of Divine Mercy.

Let all of us together turn to Our Mother in prayer.



In Donetsk, Ukraine, Catholic faithful attend Easter service at the Church of St Joseph, the only Roman Catholic Church in the city (AFP)

At the prayer vigil the Pope proposes closeness and tenderness

Memorials for the Year of Mercy

"A hospital, a home for the elderly, for abandoned children, a school where none exists, a home for the recovery of addicts" are a "memorial" of mercy to be realized in all dioceses. Pope Francis expressed this wish at the end of the prayer vigil at which he presided in St Peter's Square on late Saturday afternoon, 2 April, on the Feast of Divine Mercy and the 17th anniversary of the death of John Paul II. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's homily.

Good evening! With joy and thanksgiving we come together to share this moment of prayer that begins Mercy Sunday. It is a liturgical feast which St John Paul II – he left us on this day in 2005 – ardently desired as a response to the request of Sr Faustina. The testimonies offered – for which we are grateful – and the readings we have just heard provide us the light and hope needed to enter the great ocean of God's mercy. How many are the expressions of mercy with which God encounters us? They are numerous and it is impossible to describe them all, for the mercy of God continually increases. God never tires of showing us mercy and we should never take for granted the opportunity to receive, seek and desire this mercy. It is something always new, which inspires awe and wonder as we see God's immense creativity in the ways he comes to meet us.

God has revealed himself, on many occasions, through his name which is "merciful" (cf. Ex 34:6). How great and infinite is the nature of God, so great and infinite his mercy, to the point that it is greatly challenging to describe it in all its entirety. Through Sacred Scriptures, we find that mercy is above all the closeness of God to his people. It is a closeness expressed essentially through help and protection. It is the closeness of a father or mother reflected in the beautiful words of the prophet Hosea: "I led them with cords of compassion, with the bands of love, and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them" (1:4). A father and mother's embrace of their



child. This image is extremely evocative: God picks each one of us up and holds us to his cheek. How much tenderness and love is expressed here! Tenderness: a word almost forgotten and one which the world today needs of all its need. I had these words of the prophet in mind when I saw the image for the Jubilee. Jesus not only carries humanity on his shoulders, but his face is so closely joined to Adam's face that it gives the impression they are one.

We do not have a God who is incapable of understanding and sharing our weaknesses (cf. Heb 4:15). Quite the contrary! Precisely because of his mercy God became one of us: "For by his incarnation the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every man. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 22). In Jesus,

therefore, we are able not only to touch the mercy of God with our hands, but we are inspired to become instruments of his mercy. It is easy to speak of mercy, yet more difficult to become its witness. This is a path that is lifelong and which should not be interrupted.



Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.

(@Pontifex)

Jesus has said to us that we must be "merciful as the Father" (cf. Lk 6:36). It is a lifelong endeavour.

How many expressions there are, therefore, of God's mercy! This mercy comes to us as closeness and tenderness, and because of this, comes also as compassion and solidarity, as consolation and forgiveness. The more we receive, the more we are called to share it

with others; it cannot be kept hidden or kept only for ourselves. It is something which burns within our hearts, driving us to love, thus recognizing the face of Jesus Christ, above all in those who are most distant, weak, alone, confused and marginalized. Mercy does not remain still: it seeks out the lost sheep, and when one is found, a contagious joy overflows. Mercy knows how to look into the eyes of every person; each one is precious, for each one is unique. How much pain do we feel in our hearts when we hear: "These people... these people, these poor souls, let's throw them out, let them sleep on the streets...". Are these words from Jesus?

Dear brothers and sisters, mercy never allows us to feel satisfied. It is the love of Christ which makes us restless until we reach the goal; it impels us to embrace, welcome and include those who need mercy, so that all may be reconciled with the Father (cf. 2 Cor 5:14-20). We ought not to fear for it is a love which comes to us and involves us to such an extent that we go beyond ourselves, enabling us to see his face in our brothers and sisters. Let us allow ourselves to be humbly guided by this love; then we will become merciful as the Father is merciful.

We have heard the Gospel: Thomas was hard-headed. He did not believe. And he found his faith at precisely the moment he touched the wounds of the Lord. A faith that is not able to touch the Lord's wounds, is not faith! A faith that cannot be merciful, as the Lord's wounds were a sign of mercy, is not faith: it is an idea, an ideology. Our faith is incarnated in a God who was made man, who became sin, who was wounded for us. But if we really want to believe and have faith, we must draw near and touch those wounds, caress those wounds and even lower our head and allow others to sooth our wounds.

It is good that it is the Holy Spirit who guides us: he is love, he is the mercy that is poured into our hearts. May we not place obstacles to his life-

giving work but with docility follow the path he shows us. Let us open our hearts so that the Spirit can transform us; thus forgiven, reconciled, and sheltered in our Lord's wounds, we will become witnesses to the joy that brims over on finding the risen Lord, alive among us.

[Blessing]

The other day, speaking with the directors of a charitable agency, the following idea surfaced. I thought it would be good to share it with you this evening. How beautiful it would be to have as a reminder, a "memorial" as it were, in every diocese during this Year of Mercy, an institutional expression of mercy: a hospital, a home for the elderly, for abandoned children, a school where none exists, a home for the recovery of addicts... There are so many things that could be done... It would be very good for each diocese to consider: what can we leave as a living memory, as a work of living mercy, as a wound of the living Jesus for this Year of Mercy? Let us reflect on this and speak to the Bishops about it. Thank you.

In his homily the Pontiff invites us to witness Christ's love

Living writers of the Gospel

"The Gospel of mercy remains an open book, in which the signs of Christ's disciples – concrete acts of love and the best witness to mercy – continue to be written" because we "are all called to become living writers of the Gospel, heralds of the Good News to all men and women of today". Pope Francis celebrated Mass in St Peter's Square on Divine Mercy Sunday, 3 April. The following is the English text of the Pope's homily.

"Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book" (Jn 20:30). The Gospel is the book of God's mercy. To be read and reread, because everything that Jesus said and did is an expression of the Father's mercy. Not everything, however, was written down; the Gospel of mercy remains an open book, in which the signs of Christ's disciples – concrete acts of love and the best witness to mercy – continue to be written. We are all called to become living writers of the Gospel, heralds of the Good News to all men and women of today. We do this by practicing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, which are the hallmarks of the Christian life. By means of these simple yet powerful gestures, even when unseen, we can accompany the needy, bringing God's tenderness and consolation. Thus continues the great work of Jesus on Easter day, when he poured into the hearts

"The path that the Risen Master shows us is a one way street, it goes in only one direction: this means that we must move beyond ourselves to witness to the healing power of love that has conquered us"

of his fearful disciples the Father's mercy, bringing them the Holy Spirit who forgives sins and bestows joy.

At the same time, the story we have just heard presents an evident contrast: there is the fear of the disciples, who gathered behind closed doors; and then there is the mission of Jesus, who sends them into the world to proclaim the message of forgiveness. This

contrast may also be present in us, experienced as an interior struggle between a closed heart and the call of love to open doors closed by sin. It is a call that frees us to go out of ourselves. Christ, who for love entered through doors barred by sin, death and the powers of hell, wants to enter into each one of us to break open the locked doors of our hearts. Jesus, who by his resurrection has overcome the fear and dread which imprison us, wishes to throw open our closed doors and send us out. The path that the Risen Master shows us is a one way street, it goes in only one direction: this means that we must move beyond ourselves to witness to the healing power of love that has conquered us. We see before us a humanity that is often wounded and fearful, a humanity that bears the scars of pain and uncertainty. Before the anguished cry for mercy and peace, we hear Jesus' inspiring invitation: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21).

In God's mercy, all of our infirmities find healing. His mercy, in fact, does not keep a distance: it seeks to encounter all forms of poverty and to free this world of so many types of slavery. Mercy desires to reach the wounds of all, to heal them. Being apostles of mercy means touching and soothing the wounds that today afflict the bodies and souls of many of our brothers and sisters. Curing these wounds, we profess Jesus, we make him present and alive; we allow others, who touch his mercy with their own hands, to recognize him as "Lord and God" (Jn 20:28), as did the Apostle Thomas. This is the mission that he entrusts to us. So many people ask to be listened to and to be understood. The Gospel of mercy, to be proclaimed and written in our daily lives, seeks people with patient and open hearts, "good Samaritans" who understand compassion and silence before the mystery of each brother and sister.

The Gospel of mercy requires generous and joyful servants, people who love freely without expecting anything in return.

"Peace be with you!" (Jn 20:21) is the greeting of Jesus to his disciples; this same peace awaits men and women of our own day. It is not a negotiated peace, it is not the absence of conflict: it is his peace, the peace that comes from the heart of the Risen Lord, the peace that has defeated sin, fear and death. It is a peace that does

"Mercy desires to reach the wounds of all, to heal them. Being apostles of mercy means touching and soothing the wounds that today afflict the bodies and souls of many of our brothers and sisters"

not divide but unites; it is a peace that does not abandon us but makes us feel listened to and loved; it is a peace that persists even in pain and enables hope to blossom. This peace, as on the day of Easter, is born ever anew by the forgiveness of God which calms our anxious hearts. To be bearers of his peace: this is the mission entrusted to the Church on Easter day. In Christ, we are born to be instruments of reconciliation, to bring the Father's forgiveness to everyone, to reveal his loving face through concrete gestures of mercy.

In the responsorial Psalm we heard these words: "His love endures forever" (Ps 117[118]:2). Truly, God's mercy is forever; it never ends, it never runs out, it never gives up when faced with closed doors, and it never tires. In this forever we find strength in moments of trial and weakness because we are sure that God does not abandon us. He remains with us forever. Let us give thanks for so great a love, which we find impossible to grasp; it is immense! Let us pray for the grace to never grow tired of drawing from the well of the Father's mercy and bringing it to the world. Let us ask that we too may be merciful, to spread the power of the Gospel everywhere, and to write those pages of the Gospel which John the Apostle did not write.



A reflection on love and suffering

The breath of mercy

MARIA DEL FIAT MIOLA, SSM

A mother shouldn't have favorites, but I have often observed that she inclines more to the child who is sick or more vulnerable than the rest. The more fragile the child, the fiercer the love of the mother. The strong and healthy ones soon outgrow her solicitous nurturing, and she can do no more for them but allow them their independence and love them cautiously, as if from afar. But the child who is paralyzed or autistic continues to need her care, and her aged maternal hands bestow upon him the same thousand attentions as they did when they were young and supple.

So it was with Wassim; he was the one who most required and awakened the maternity of the sisters and all who cared for him. Wassim was 12 years old when I met him in the hot summer of 2014, during the uncertain days of war between Gaza and Israel. He was living in the home for children in Bethlehem, the appropriately named "Hogar Niño Dios" ("Home of the Child Jesus"),

A home in the Holy Land

The Home of the Child Jesus was founded in Bethlehem in 2005 by the Institute, Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matará. Its mission is to welcome and care for children who are disabled, abandoned, or in grave distress. Currently, there are five sisters, about 20 children, as well as a few adult women residents with mental disabilities. While the sisters do not legally adopt the children, the Home often becomes the children's permanent residence. The Home has become a haven for many children over the years, and fills a very real need in an area rife with poverty and political tension.

run by our sisters the Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matará. His mother entrusted him to the sisters' care when he was six, and though his doctors said he would die within the year, he lived six years more. He used to sit in his custom-made wheelchair, as delicate and helpless as a tiny baby bird, all bone, completely immobile except for parts of his face. By day the sisters fed him and wheeled him around, by night they sang him to sleep in a crib with special padding. His head was normal size for his age, but it looked inordinately big compared to the rest of his gaunt body and contracted limbs. His eyes were the most prominent and expressive part of him, large and deep brown, and they were so translucent that in my memory they seem to me the clearest blue.

My first full day at the Home was chaotic; some sisters were absent due to a retreat and other activities, and I had to jump in with little preparation. I had come to help the sisters with this work of mercy for a month, in the summer between finishing the Master's program in Greek and Latin at Catholic University and starting the doctorate. I had been excited but a little uneasy before coming to the Home, since my main apostolate in my 15 years of religious life had been studying and teaching, not changing diapers and handling the sick. Though I was confident when it came to the Greek of the *Iliad* and comfortable amidst volumes of critical editions of Augustine, here among these little ones I felt inexperienced and awkward. How could I really help, how would I know what to do?

There was no time for theoretical approaches, however, as a sister wheeled Wassim to me and asked me to bathe him. I looked at him doubtfully, and asked her "How?" She flashed an impish smile, and responded, "Just normal." I thought to myself that there was nothing normal about Wassim or the circumstance, but as I turned to voice this to the sister, she was gone and only Wassim was left blinking at me. I



Wassim two weeks before his death

inhaled, rolled up the crisp sleeves of my habit, turned on the water in the soft special bathtub, and looked back at the child. He had not turned his gaze, and was simply waiting for me to begin. So after carefully removing his clothing as from a porcelain doll, I picked him up and placed him in two inches of warm water. The sight of him so exposed and helpless trapped my breath in my chest. I could count every one of his bones. I slowly began to rub his thin limbs with a mild soap, cautious of his sore spots and continually watching his face to make sure I was not hurting him. He moved his eyes back and forth upon my face with something like trust and as the clean water rinsed and flowed over his little body I breathed out the tension. "Just normal," I thought.

I liked to watch the spontaneous and universal effect Wassim had on other volunteers who came to the Home. Visitors immediately noticed him, since he was the most gravely ill and debilitated. The Arab children would vie to push his wheelchair, the jaded Italian reporter would kneel down to get at his eye level and speak softly to him, the elderly pilgrim would even dare to caress the top of his head ever so lightly. The very fragility of this child of God demanded, or rather, inspired, humanity to realize its own humanity. One sister told me

proudly that Wassim was the best apostle in the Home, and that he was working many cases of conversion.

One morning near the end of my stay, I was doing laundry and cleaning in another part of the building. During my work, I rushed by the enclosed patio, the favorite spot of the children, glimpsed Wassim through the door, and stopped to say hello. His eyes looked duller and more vacant, there were slight creases on his brow and chin. The deep brown did not focus on me but flitted beyond my reach. Mother noticed this too, said that there was something wrong, and called the doctor. "Well, he looks fine to me, and his vitals are completely regular, but if you want you are welcome to take him to the hospital. I know you sisters can sense things that we can't. It could be something related to his brain." I carried Wassim into the van and held him in my lap with pounding heart as Mother drove to the children's hospital established by other sisters on the opposite side of Bethlehem.

As we passed the Basilica of the Nativity, I looked down at my own quiet child of Bethlehem. The head that lay on my left arm was the heaviest part of him, like a newborn babe, so I awkwardly curled my right hand around to give it extra support. As his frail body rested against my chest, I watched it delicately rise and fall to the rhythm of my breathing. His complete dependence awed me. What if I put him in a wrong position or dropped him? His limbs could snap in an instant. I twisted myself further to give him a kiss on his brow, furrowed with signs of pain. When we arrived, I gingerly carried our child into the waiting room, amidst stares of sympathy and pity from the other parents. The mystery of such extreme fragility touched everyone. How could such a creature exist in such a world of bombs exploding around us and tanks at our borders? Why did God entrust this child to us, to live among us and depend upon us? As I held him, his very life was in my breath.

I left the Home soon after and went back to the U.S. and to my stacks of books and student life. Within a week of my return, the news reached me that Wassim had left us. I was happy for him that he

Indian bishops regarding the Salesian priest abducted in Yemen

Free Father Tom Uzhunnalil

On 4 March, Salesian priest Tom Uzhunnalil of India, 56, was abducted by the jihadist group (most likely the Islamic State) that attacked a home for the sick and elderly run by the Missionaries of Charity in Aden, Yemen. The group killed four sisters of Mother Teresa as well as 12 other people. Since then there have been no official reports on the priest, who was born in Kerala. Therefore the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) sent a letter to Sushma Swaraj, Minister of Foreign Affairs in New Delhi, soliciting "urgent intervention to ensure the safety of Fr Tom". In return, the government has assured the bishops that they will receive all relevant available information on the priest's release.

The Salesian mission in Yemen was founded by the missing priest's uncle, Fr Matthew. According to the Salesian news agency, Fr Tom's brother, also named Matthew, discussed the difficult times that his family was experiencing: "I trust in the Lord. Without his

knowledge, nothing will happen". The Salesians asked for prayers for Fr Tom on Holy Thursday and dedicated Easter celebrations to him.

The Archbishop of Mumbai, Cardinal Oswald Gracias, President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences and of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India-Latin Rite, called on "prayer groups, parishes, religious institutes, chapels and monasteries, but also private homes" to pray for Fr Tom: "I pray that each of us entrust Fr Tom to the Divine Mercy," Cardinal Gracias said. "I also ask you to pray that he may safely come back to us, and I encourage all of you to partake in his suffering. Let us ask that he may soon regain his freedom". The Cardinal recalled St John Paul II's affirmation that "that only Divine Mercy is able to impose limitations on evil." Therefore, "Let us pray through Mary, Mother of Mercy, also for those who perpetrated the barbaric killing of our four Missionaries of Charity and kidnapped Fr Tom".

Holy See statement

Defend the dignity of women

The following is the statement delivered by Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, at the 60th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women: "Women's Empowerment and the Link to Sustainable Development", held in New York on 18 March.

Mr Chair,

In adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the International Community committed itself to transform our world in such a way that "no one will be left behind".

As this Commission examines the subject of women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development, it's important to keep the focus on those women who are most prone to be left behind, those whose potential is often the least appreciated and realized. These women should not only be beneficiaries, but above all, they must be empowered to become dignified agents of their own development and important drivers of sustainable development.

The world today continues to be confronted with various old and new forms of violence directed against women and girls, in particular the use of rape as a weapon of war during conflicts, the trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation, forced abortion, forced conver-

sion and forced marriage. Instead of being eradicated, some of these acts of violence have re-emerged in even more cruel forms, causing death or serious and long-lasting physical, psychological and social effects, other than being some of the most horrendous violations of human rights.

The recognition of the vital role of women in preventive diplomacy, mediation, peacekeeping missions and peace-building processes, as well as their growing presence in policy-making bodies and advocacy groups, must be translated into action to unleash skills and capacities that allow women to bring order out of chaos, community out of division, and peace out of conflict.



A common form of discrimination against women today regards motherhood, which is not adequately appreciated.

(@terzaloggia)

My delegation wishes to underline some challenges facing elderly women, mothers and girls.

An exaggerated focus on economic productivity and the decline of family values are leaving elderly women even farther behind. More often than not, their needs are over-

looked or not considered as policy priorities, leading them to feel unwanted and, in some cases, leaving them vulnerable to the pressures in favour of assisted suicide. They should, rather, feel welcome and productive in their own way by making the wisdom they have gained from their life experience useful for the whole of the society.

A common form of discrimination against women today regards motherhood. In many places, women's essential contribution to the development of society through motherhood is not adequately acknowledged, appreciated, advanced and defended, often forcing women culturally and legally to choose between profession and motherhood. Their often heroic act of raising and educating future generations is sometimes seen as economically disadvantageous and antiquated. My delegation wishes to avail itself of this occasion to express grateful appreciation for all the women who have raised generations of responsible daughters and sons.

In some parts of the world, the practices of abortion and in-vitro fertilization with pre-implantation genetic diagnosis are being used to

selectively eliminate girls, leading to unnatural sex-ratio-at-birth disparities. Studies show a worldwide deficit of more than 160 million girls compared to boys (Mara Hvistendahl, *Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys Over Girls, and the Consequences of a World Full of Men*, 2011). Simply because they are girls they have been left behind; indeed, they were not given the chance to see the light of day.

Two areas in which the international community must ensure that no woman or girl is left behind are access to education and access to adequate health care.

Education is essential to unlocking human potential. If women are to become prime drivers of sustainable development, ensuring that all girls and women have access to education is indispensable. The better the education they receive, the greater the opportunities open to them. Many mothers in situations of distress are unable to send their children to school, thus entangling them in the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion. Hence improving access to education for women will not only redound to a fuller realization of their potentials and greater professional opportunities, but is also a key to better educated future generations.

In many areas of the world, women's health has been neglected with serious consequences for the well-being of children, families and societies. Authentic health care for women and girls, however, must be in accord with their feminine humanity and dignity. It would be contradictory to seek to empower women while suppressing their natural potentialities. The Catholic Church, through its vast network of 250,000 schools, 23,500 clinics and hospitals, 16,000 homes for the elderly and those with special needs, with 65 percent of them located in developing countries, making the Catholic Church the largest education and health provider in the world, is committed to promoting quality education and health care for women and girls, especially in developing countries and in areas of conflict.

Empowering women means creating the conditions necessary for them to flourish, in full acceptance of and in accordance with their natural genius as women, and in harmonious complementarity with the gifts of men. Empowering women and girls will greatly help the world community not to leave anyone behind, and their empowerment will empower us all.



Iraqi Christian refugees find opportunity as seamstresses in Amman

Eastern tradition and Western style

The Rafedin association is offering young Iraqi Christian women who have taken refuge in Jordan an opportunity to rebuild their lives using a needle and thread. Under the label "Made by Iraqi Girls", these young women make clothing that combine Eastern colours and tradition with Western style. The association – whose name is the Arabic word for "two rivers" (generally used to refer to the Tigris and the Euphrates which converge in Iraq) – began in Amman at the initiative of a priest of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and two Italian women.

The initiative includes 11 girls who fled Iraq when the Islamic State invaded Mosul a year and half ago. It all began at the request of Fr Mario Cornioli, who works with refugees in Amman. The project aims at engaging the refugees who – unable to work – have nothing to do as they await a visa.

Life isn't easy for refugees in Jordan: "they are not allowed to work, and cannot easily access health and educational services. A project like this is a good way to escape the idleness that stymies you while away from home, living under harsh conditions", explained the priest. Rosaria Diflumeri, the



owner of a boutique, and fellow Italian Carla Ladogana, an expert in the textile industry, went to Jordan to teach their profession to the young women at the offices of the Salesian Sisters in Amman. Using the sisters' old sewing machines, this work aims to give the girls autonomy. Most of them had never held a needle before. "This project is very useful", Shadad, one of the young seamstresses, stated. "Before it started many of us had never practiced sewing. We have learnt something useful, and thus created thus something beautiful".

These young Iraqis are aided by approximately 1,000 Italian volunteers who offer their support to the association in Amman. The results are astonishing. According to the website of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem on 31 March, several models were displayed in Italy on International Women's Day. The clothes, which cost from 50 to 150 euros, are attracting a lot of interest. The next step is to develop an online marketing strategy. For more information about their products and designs, see the association's Facebook page.

Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Monday, 4 April

Celebrate the 'yes'

"Yes". For a Christian there is no other response to God's call. Above all we must never turn away, pretending not to understand. On Monday, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Lord, the Pope invited a "celebration of the 'yes'" during Mass at Santa Marta.

Concelebrating with Francis were priests who, commemorating the 50th anniversary of their ordination, renewed their vows with a definitive "yes". Vincentian nuns who work at Santa Marta also renewed their vows. "It is all a history that ends and begins in this solemnity that we are celebrating today: the history of mankind, when he leaves paradise", the Pope noted at the beginning of the homily. After man sins, the Lord commands him to walk and fill the earth: "Be fruitful and go forth". However, "the Lord was paying attention to what man was doing". Thus, "several times when man made mistakes, God punished man: let us think of Babel or of the flood".

In this way, God was always "watching what man was doing: at a certain point, this God who was watching and protecting man, decided to create a people and he called our father Abraham: 'Go forth from your land, from your home'. And Abraham "obeyed, he said 'yes' to the Lord, "and he left his land without knowing where he was to go". This is "the people's first 'yes' to God". It is here, that "with Abraham, God - who watched his people - began to 'walk with'. He walked with Abraham: 'Walk before me', God said to him".

The Pope explained that God "then did the same with Moses, to whom at 80 years, God said: 'Do this'. And Moses at 80 - he was elderly - said 'yes!'. And he went to set the people free".

Then, the Pope said, God "did the same with the prophets": let us consider Isaiah, for example, when the Lord told him to go and tell things to the people", Isaiah responded that he was a man of "unclean lips". But the Lord "purified Isaiah's lips and Isaiah said 'yes!'".

The same thing also happened with Jeremiah, the Pope recalled. The prophet's first response was: "Lord, I don't know how to speak, I am a boy!". But God commanded him to go and he responded "yes!". There are really so many of those "who said 'yes'". There is truly a "humanity of elderly men and women who said 'yes' to the Lord's hope". Francis also added Simeon and Hannah to the homily.

"Today the Gospel tells us", the Pope explained, that "at the end of this chain of 'yeses' is the beginning of another 'yes' which is starting to grow: the 'yes' of Mary". It is with "this 'yes' that God", the Pontiff affirmed, "not only watches how man is doing, He not only walks with his people, but becomes one of us and takes on our flesh". In fact "Mary's 'yes' opens the door to the 'yes' of Jesus: 'I come to do your will'. And it is "this 'yes' that goes with Jesus throughout his life, up to the Cross: 'Father, remove this cup from me;

nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done". It is "in Jesus Christ that, as Paul says to the Corinthians, there is this 'yes' of God: He is the 'yes'".

"It is a beautiful day", the Pope remarked, "to thank the Lord for teaching us this way of 'yes', but also for caring about our life". Indeed, "some of us", he said, as he turned toward the priests attending the Mass, "are celebrating the 50th anniversary of priesthood: a beautiful day to think about the 'yes' of your life". But "all of us, every day, must say 'yes' or 'no', and think about whether we always say the 'yes' or if we often hide ourselves, lowering our head, like Adam and Eve, to avoid saying 'no', pretending not to understand "what God is asking".

"Today is the celebration of the 'yes', Francis said. Indeed, "in Mary's 'yes' there is the 'yes' of all of salvation history and there begins the ultimate 'yes' of man and of God: there God re-creates, as at the beginning, with a 'yes', God made the earth and man, that beautiful creation: with this 'yes' I come to do your will and more wonderfully he re-creates the world, he re-creates us all". It is "God's 'yes' that sanctifies us, that lets us go forth in Jesus Christ". This is why today is the right day "to thank the Lord and to ask ourselves: am I a man or woman of 'yes' or a man or woman of 'no'? Or am I a man or woman who looks away, so as not to respond?".

The Pope then expressed hope "that the Lord grant us the grace to take this path of men and women who knew how to say 'yes'". After sharing a thought with the priests, Francis turned to the community of Sisters of Santa Marta: "At this time, the Sisters who are in this Casa will silently renew their vows. They do so every year because St Vincent was intelligent and knew that the mission he entrusted to them is very difficult, and for this reason he wanted them to renew their vows each year. In silence, let us accompany their renewal".

Tuesday, 5 April

How harmony is created

In order to live in harmony and in mutual support, the Christian community must be reborn in the Holy



Spirit. There are two signs to help us understand whether we are on the right path: disinterest in money and the courage to bear witness to the Risen Christ. Pope Francis made this point during Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday morning. He accompanied that suggestion with a warning not to confuse true harmony with a negotiated or hypocritical tranquillity.

"Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be reborn, but reborn by the Spirit: it is the Spirit who gives us a new identity, gives us strength, a new way of acting". The Pontiff offered this key to understanding the day's passage from the Gospel of John (3:7-15). This line, he pointed out, is seen "in the first reading, one of three or four summaries contained in the Acts of the Apostles" (4:32-37), a passage which recounts "how the first community lived, those who were 'reborn' by the Spirit".

Francis indicated that they "lived in harmony", but that it was "the harmony which only the Holy Spirit can give". Indeed, "we can make agreements, a certain peace, but harmony is an interior grace which can only be made by the Holy Spirit". Thus, these first "communities lived in harmony". This can be understood from two distinct signs of harmony, the Pope explained.

The first sign is that "no one lives in need, that is, everything is held in common". The authentic meaning is explained by the very passage taken from the Acts of the Apostles: they were "of one heart and soul and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common.... There was not a needy person among them".

Indeed, Francis affirmed, "the true harmony of the Holy Spirit has

a very strong relationship to money: money is the enemy of harmony, money is selfish". And "this is why the sign he gives is that everyone gave what was theirs, so that no one would be in need".

In particular the Acts give "the example of Joseph, who was surnamed by the apostles Barnabas (which means, Son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, a field owner". Joseph sold his field "and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet". This, in a word, is the true "harmony" which then "is related to the spirit of poverty, the first of the Beatitudes".

On the contrary, however, there is "the case of the couple, Ananias and Sapphira. They sold their field and gave everything, they said they gave everything to the Apostles, but they secretly stole so as to make an account on the side, for themselves". This story is also narrated in the Acts of the Apostles (5:1-11). However, Francis recalled, "the Lord punishes these two with death, because Jesus clearly said that one cannot serve both God and money: they are two masters whose service is irreconcilable".

However, the Pontiff pointed out, "harmony, which only the Holy Spirit can create, should not be confused with tranquillity". Because "a community can be quite tranquil and get along well" yet not be in harmony. Once, the Pope shared, "I heard a bishop say something wise: 'There is tranquillity in the diocese. But if you touch upon this problem or this problem or that problem, a war breaks out immediately'".

However, this is "a negotiated harmony", he explained, "and not that of the Holy Spirit: it is a hypocritical harmony, so to speak, like that of Ananias and Sapphira after what they had done". Instead, "the harmony of the Holy Spirit gives us the generosity of having nothing of our own, as long as there is someone in need".

Then there is a second attitude that arises from the harmony of the Holy Spirit, which Francis presented by repeating the words from the Acts: "with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all".

In short, the second sign of true harmony is "courage". Therefore, "when there is harmony in the Church, in the community, there is courage: the courage to witness to the Risen Lord".

From this perspective the Pontiff recommended that we "read and re-read this passage from the Acts of the Apostles: chapter 4, from verse 32 onward". The reason is, he said, "because it is what Jesus asked of the Father at the Last Supper: that they be 'one', that there be harmony among them". This is why, the Pope concluded, "it will do us good to read this passage today, and see the things that it says and how each of us can help our family, our neighbourhood, our city, coworkers, classmates, all those who are nearby, in order to create this harmony that is made in the name of the Risen Lord Jesus and which is a grace of the Holy Spirit".

The breath of mercy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

had gone from this valley of tears to the abode of angels, yet I felt an indefinable loss. With his look, he smote my heart. What other brown eyes could express at once humble trust and admission of complete fragility? It was his utter weakness that attracted me, not his strength. This weakness cried out for love and called forth the mother in me. It is the same weakness of a helpless Infant King in a gentle Virgin's arms, which was revealed to the world in that same Bethlehem. It is the

same weakness of the Crucified One exposed to buffets and spitting, bound and nailed, naked on a tree. It is the same weakness of the elevated white Host, thin and fragile, on our altars today. It is the heavenly Wisdom hidden from the wise and given to the simple, the logic of a God who becomes weak so that we might learn to be strong in love. And above all, it is the mercy of a God who sends a child to us so we might become his mother. In the end, I was the one who depended on Wassim. It was my life that was in his breath.

Memorial Mass for Mother Angelica

God works in unexpected ways

A Mass was celebrated for Mother Angelica on Friday evening, 1 April, at St Anne's Church in Vatican City. The Mass, at which Cardinal Pell presided, was timed to coincide with her funeral in Alabama, where in 1981 she founded the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN). Other celebrants included Msgr Dario Eduardo Viganò, Prefect of the Secretariat for Communications, Fr Federico Lombardi, SJ, Director of the Holy See Press Office. The following is an abridged version of Cardinal Pell's homily.



Friday's memorial Mass in the Vatican (Daniel Ibáñez / @catholicnewsagency)

Mother Angelica's public personality was so boisterous that we can be tempted to forget that she was a contemplative Franciscan nun, a Poor Clare from the age of 21. I still feel her religious name is somewhat incongruous, as she was not angelic in any conventional sense. The Little Flower's parents were both canonized, but Mother Angelica had no such blessing. Born into a poor family in Ohio's Rust Belt, Rita Rizzo's father abandoned her when she was five, and she was brought up by her mother, who suffered from depression. She did poorly at school – at the McKinley High School – although she was the drum majorette in the school band. Her life story brings a message of encouragement for all those who were or are children from broken homes. Some, perhaps many, from such backgrounds are tempted to be resentful, short of self-confidence, uncertain of their ability to contribute or build a good family. Mother Angelica is one more example of what can be achieved from difficult beginnings. She knew what it was to struggle. She wasn't a 'milk and water' character, but a triumph of God's grace through, and perhaps despite, her nature. She truly cast fire upon the earth.

God works in unexpected ways, as Mother Angelica promised him that she would found a monastery deep in the Protestant south, in Irondale, Alabama. She arrived there with four companions in 1962. An unlikely launching pad for an international television network, al-

though probably not quite as unpromising a spot as Bethlehem and Nazareth. Mother began in a small way by recording video tapes of her homilies in the 1970s until she founded EWTN with Deacon Bill Steltemeier. Eventually EWTN pioneered the digital revolution in broadcasting, and many experts visited to examine just what they were doing. There was an enormous development and progression.

Mother Angelica spoke truth to authority, as strong women in the Church have always done, to their families, their priests and bishops, and sometimes to the public; just think of Catherine of Siena. She didn't find another church, and while she spoke bluntly to a number of Church officials, she recognized the offices of Pope and bishops and priests.

The Catholic world was very different back when she unleashed her withering attack on those who presented a female Christ figure at the 1993 Denver World Youth Day. There were not, then, as there are now, so many signs of hope; not so many young, orthodox and vital priests and religious. And this paralytical abuse provoked her to un-

leash frustration that had been pent up for many years. It was powerful and eloquent, something of a diatribe, certainly over-the-top in some ways. But thank God she spoke that way. When I read her words, I remember thinking 'yes, she's right'. One Australian activist has written to me recently, and told me that he changed his life's direction after hearing what she said. It wasn't discreet – in fact it was massively imprudent. But it was great copy for the journalists, and a great witness to the Christ that we follow.

She slowed down the drift toward destruction, turned away many from damaging themselves. We pray for her soul, despite the long years of penance through suffering which occurred after her strokes in 2001. May she be liberated from the effects of her weakness and sins.

Above all we thank God for her message, her courage and her faith. And we pray that the Church in the United States will produce other giants equally unexpectedly to help strengthen our faith and lead us to Christ.

VATICAN BULLETIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Kosovo, and treasurer of the Apostolic Administration of Prizren (5 Apr.).

Archbishop-elect Gjonlleshaj, 55, was born in Velezh, Prizren, Kosovo. He studied philosophy and theology. He was ordained a priest in 1987. He has served in parish ministry and as: director of *Radio Maria* and co-editor of *Drita*, a religious-cultural magazine.

RELATIONS WITH STATES

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Francisco Montecillo Padilla, titular Archbishop of Nebbio, as Apostolic Nuncio in Kuwait and Apostolic Delegate in the Arabian Peninsula. Until now he has been Apostolic Nuncio in Tanzania (5 Apr.).

PAPAL LEGATE

The Holy Father appointed Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, as his Papal Legate to the celebrations to be held in Gniezno and Poznań from 14 to 16 April, on the occasion of the 1,050th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland (2 Apr.).

SPECIAL ENVOY

The Holy Father appointed Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, Prefect emeritus of the Congregation for Catholic Education, as his Special Envoy at the inauguration of the Shrine of Toruń, Poland, dedicated to Most Holy Mary Star of the New Evangelization and to St John Paul II, to take place on 18 May (2 Apr.).

START OF MISSION

On 12 January, Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti, titular Archbishop of Ravello, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Ukraine with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine.

On 3 March, Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía, titular Archbishop of Italica, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in the Republic of Moldova with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr Nicolae Timofti, President of the Republic.

PENSION FUND

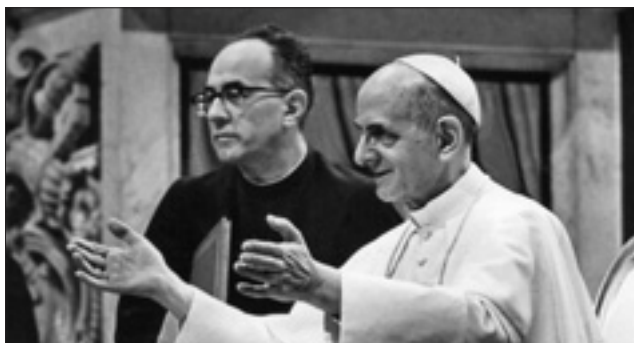
The Holy Father appointed Prof. Nino Savelli, Ordinary at the Faculty of Banking, Finance and Insurance Sciences of the Catholic University of Milan, as President of the Board of Directors of the Vatican Pension Fund (31 Mar.).

NECROLOGY

Bishop Timothée Modibo-Nzockena of Franceville, Gabon, at age 66 (24 Mar.).

A decade after the death of Montini's personal secretary

In memory of Archbishop Macchi



Ten years ago, on 5 April 2006, Archbishop Pasquale Macchi, personal secretary to Giovanni Battista Montini from 1954 to 1978, died. Macchi worked with Montini when he was Archbishop of Milan and then Pope. On the anniversary of Archbishop Macchi's death, Archbishop Pier Giacomo Grampa, Archbishop emeritus of Lugano, celebrated a Mass of suffrage for him, who also served as Archbishop-Prelate of Loreto from 1988-1996. The rite was held in the chapel of the Monastery of the Romite Ambrosiane in Nemus, in the Province of Lecco, Lombardy.



The Church online

At the invitation of the Secretariat of State, an office – “DotCatholic” – has been established by the Secretariat for Communications. The goal is to share the teachings and values of the Catholic Church with the faithful and the online community around the world. The new Vatican office was announced on Monday, 4 April. The bureau will

utilize a generic top-level domain name (.catholic). The domain will provide an authoritative network for the exclusive use of the Catholic Church and its various institutions, primarily dioceses, institutes of consecrated life and other organizations, and is expected to be fully functional sometime in 2017.

Film produced by Sky and the Vatican Television Centre

Roman Basilicas in 3D

It is a cinematic tour which captures never-before-seen angles of Rome's papal basilicas. Following the success of *The Vatican Museums 3D* and of *Florence and the Uffizi Gallery 3D*, *St Peter's and the Papal Basilicas of Rome 3D* is coming to theatres in Italy from 11 to 13 April and is set to premiere in more than 50 countries around the world. Produced by Sky 3D and the Vatican Television Centre (CTV) and distributed by Nexo Digital, the film rediscovers some of the great treasures of the Eternal City for the occasion of the Jubilee of Mercy. It has been recognized by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism and by the General Directorate of Cinema. Among the jewels of the 90-minute film is its rare look at Michelangelo's *Pietà* minus the protective glass which usually covers it, and close-up shots of the dome of St Peter's. It also gives viewers a unique look at each basilica without their usual crowds.

On this fascinating journey which perfectly combines art and culture the audience is guided by Antonio

Paolucci, Director of the Vatican Museums (through St Peter's Basilica); architect Paolo Portoghesi (through St John Lateran); art historian Claudio Strinati (through St Mary Major) and Micol Forti, Director of the Contemporary Art Collection of the Vatican Museums (through St Paul Outside-the-Walls). These experts describe the basilicas in an original and engaging manner, explaining how they transformed throughout the centuries. They also illustrate the works of art held in the basilicas and the salient features of the artists who produced them, including Giotto, Bramante, Michelangelo, Francesco Borromini, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Domenico Fontana, Arnolfo di Cambio and Jacopo Torriti.

The guided tour of the four basilicas begins with excerpts from *Passeggiate romane* written by French author Stendhal, who traveled extensively throughout his life and chose Italy as his final destination. At the beginning of the 19th century the writer made his first visit to Italy at the age of 17. He was enchanted



3D version
of St Peter's Basilica

by the four Roman basilicas during his grand tour. Significantly, he noted that “Nothing in the world can compare to the interior of St Peter's”. Stendhal also witnessed the great fire of 1823 that destroyed much of St Paul Outside-the-Walls.

The film will be distributed in more than 50 countries, including Mexico, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Canada, United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands, Russia and Hong Kong. Using state-of-the-art film making techniques, the audience is presented with astonishing images obtained by helicopter and mechanical arms. And, thanks to the

power of 3D, the viewer is placed at centre stage and in direct contact with the works of art. The film is also enriched with the 3D reconstruction of original designs, some of which are kept in the Vatican Apostolic Library, such as Bernini's plans for St Peter's Square and the colonnade, as well as Borromini's designs and original drawings of the nave of St John Lateran. In short, a vast arsenal of technology has been put to use to enable the audience to see and appreciate the hidden details of the various treasures visited in the film, such as Michelangelo's signature on the *Pietà*.

Photo exhibit in the Vatican Museums

The life of a Swiss Guard

On 1 April, a photo exhibit opened in the Vatican Museums: “The Life of a Swiss Guard: A Private View” featuring 86 photographs by Fabio Mantegna. At the inauguration of the exhibition, Commandant Christoph Graf spoke about the choice of the title, which wasn't meant to “raise specific expectations” but instead “points to normal aspects of life”. In fact, he explained that the purpose of the exhibition is “to show the visitor just how a guard lives in his normal day-to-day life”.

Familiar with the classic image of a guard, the faithful and pilgrims who come to the Vatican have “the impression that it is the norm” for guards to be in full uniform. But, Graf said, “that's not true”, there are days “marked by ordinary, daily activities and by internal services”, which, he said, “are always a challenge and a duty for the guards who carry them out”. The Commandant pointed to the experience of the night shift which runs from midnight to six in the morning. It is a service, he said, that “involves study-

ing Italian, reading newspapers and books, preparing for exams and prayer”.

So who are the Swiss Guards? “They are young Swiss men”, the Commandant explained, “20 to 23 years old who, after an apprenticeship or military service, are looking for another activity for at least two years”.

Graf also listed motivations to become a Swiss Guard. These include, he said, “tradition, honour, service in a military organization, language study, studying Italian culture, discovering the Vatican and the Catholic Church, serving the Pope”. But he added, there are also reasons of faith. “Many guards”, he said, “wish to grow spiritually and there are guards who have vocations. Almost every year we have at least one guard who decides to enter the seminary or a religious order”.

Graf then brought to light the familiar element of the Swiss Guard. We are a family, he said, “that is in need of care and support”, adding also that the main objective “is to

make these young men feel at home”. In this way, he explained, “we can carry out our mission. We do not want to be superheroes and we are not called to be the Holy Father's guardian angels”. Rather, what should be highlighted is the willingness to work “quietly, with dedication and humility” and a spirit of service. “I am thoroughly convinced that there is no more noble or beautiful task than that of the Swiss Guard”.

Among those present at the opening of the exhibition – which was the brainchild of Romina Cometti and realized by the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums – were Cardinal Giuseppe Bertello, President of the Governorate of Vatican City State; Archbishop Georg Gänswein, Prefect of the Pontifical Household; Pierre-Yves Fux, Ambassador of Switzerland; Fr Thomas Widmer, the Guard Chaplain; and Antonio Paolucci, Director of the Vatican Museums.

The exhibition will run until 11 June.

