

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH*Unicuique suum Non praevalent*

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Vatican City

Friday, 23 February 2018

Motu Proprio on retirement

## Learn to take your leave



In an Apostolic Letter issued Motu Proprio, signed on 12 February, Pope Francis establishes rules governing the resignation, for reasons of age, of holders of certain offices subject to papal appointment, recalling that "the conclusion of an ecclesial office must be considered an integral part of the service itself, since it calls for a new form of amenability".

PAGE 3

Pope to Maronite College

## For a suffering people

PAGE 4

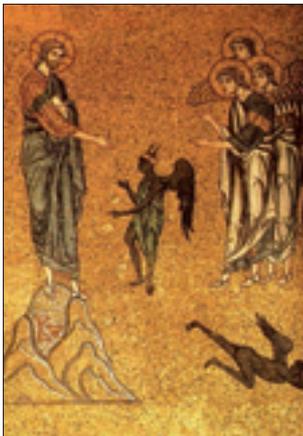
On the formation of priests

## Of and for the people

PAGE 5

At the Angelus

## A spiritual struggle



PAGE 12

## Name your fears

In the Message for World Youth Day a reflection on the Angel's words to Mary

The Holy Father's Message for the 33rd World Youth Day, which in 2018 will be celebrated at the diocesan level on Palm Sunday, is based on the theme: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God" (Lk 1:30).

It is Pope Francis' second Message to young people during the journey of preparation for WYD in Panama, which will be held from 22-27 January 2019. According to a statement issued by the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, the Holy Father wished for young people to be accompanied by the Virgin Mary on this spiritual pilgrimage. Indeed, while last year's Message centred around the words of the *Magnificat*: "The Mighty One has done great things for me" (Lk 1:49), next year's reflection will focus on Mary's response to the Angel: "I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38).

This "Marian trilogy" is the expression of Pope Francis' wish to offer the youth throughout the world a theologian's vision of life itself: "I fervently hope that you young people will continue to press forward, not only cherishing the *memory* of the past, but also with *courage* in the present and *hope* for the future" (Message for WYD 2017). This journey is linked to that of the Synod, which the Successor of Peter wishes to be in great harmony with preparations for WYD. In fact, the upcoming Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment, scheduled for October 2018, invites reflection on the reality in which the young generations are living their life of faith and on the way in which their fundamental choices mature, forging their future and that of humanity.

It is significant that this year's Message, published on the Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter, was signed by the Pontiff on 11 February, Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, the same day that the Holy Father opened registration for WYD Panama 2019.

PAGE 6/7



Mikhail Nesterov, "The Annunciation" (Marfo-Mariinsky Convent, Moscow)

For peace in Syria, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo

## A day of prayer and fasting

A day of prayer and fasting for peace, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan as well as in Syria, where the nearly 7-year-long conflict has escalated in recent weeks, growing ever more tragic in Eastern Ghouta. Convinced that religions can contribute greatly to obtaining and consolidating peace, Pope Francis called Catholics and people of all faiths to dedicate Friday, 23 February, to prayers, re-

flexion and fasting for peace in these nations ravaged by war and violence. The observance, which coincides with the First Week of Lent, recalls the 23 November 2017 prayer vigil for peace presided by the Holy Father at the Altar of the Chair of Saint Peter in the Vatican Basilica. Like then, today's day of prayer offers a concrete response, significantly during Lent, to the question: "What can I do for peace?"

# VATICAN BULLETIN



## AUDIENCES

Friday, 16 February

H.E. Mr Baek Man Lee, Ambassador of Korea, for the presentation of his Letters of Credence

Cardinal Vinko Puljić, Archbishop of Vrhbosna, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bishop Robert Francis Prevost, OSA, of Chiclayo, Peru

Saturday, 17 February

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

Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu, titular Archbishop of Acquaviva, Apostolic Nuncio in Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica, Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Apostolic Delegate in the Antilles

Archbishop Tommaso Valentinetti of Pescara-Penne, Italy

## CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Angel N. Lagdameo of the Archdiocese of Jaro, the Philippines (14 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Jose Romeo Orquejo Lazo as Archbishop of Jaro. Until now he has been Bishop of San Jose de Antique, the Philippines (14 Feb.).

Archbishop Orquejo Lazo, 69, was born in San Jose de Buenavista, the Philippines. He was ordained a priest on 1 April 1975. He was ordained a bishop on 29 December 2003, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Kalibo. On 21 July 2009 he was appointed Bishop of San Jose de Antique.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Waldemar Stanisław Sommertag, Counsellor to the Nunciature, as Apostolic Nuncio in Nicaragua, at the same time raising him to the dignity of Archbishop and assigning him the titular episcopal See of Maastricht (15 Feb.).

Archbishop-elect Sommertag, 50, was born in Węcbork, Poland. He was ordained a priest on 30 May 1993. He holds a degree in canon law. He entered the Holy See's diplomatic service on 19 June 2000, and subsequently served in the Pontifical

Representations in Tanzania, Nicaragua, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Palestine and Cyprus, and in the Section for Relations with States of the Secretariat of State.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Abbot Imre Asztrik Várszegi, OSB, titular Bishop of Culusi, from his office as Ordinary Archabbot of Pannonhalma, Hungary (16 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Cirill Tamás Hortobágyi, OSB, as Ordinary Archabbot of Pannonhalma. Until now he has served as Prior of the Archabbey of Pannonhalma (16 Feb.).

Archabbot-elect Hortobágyi, 59, was born in Nagytálya, Hungary. He entered the Benedictine Order and received the religious habit on 21 August 1977. He made his solemn vows on 14 August 1984 and was ordained a priest on 15 August 1985. He holds degrees in biology and in geography. He has served in parish ministry and as: rector of the Saint Benedict House of Studies in Budapest and of the Church of Saint Sabina; master of novices; prior of the Benedictine Community of Pannonhalma; director and professor at the Benedictine Lyceum and at the Saint Gerard Sagredo Theological School in Pannonhalma, as well as at the Sapientia School of Theology in Budapest.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Franz Jung as Bishop of Würzburg, Germany. Until now he has served as Vicar General of Speyer (16 Feb.).

Bishop-elect Jung, 51, was born in Ludwigshafen, Germany. He was ordained a priest on 10 October 1992. He earned a licence in sacred scripture and holds a doctorate in theology. He has served in parish ministry and as: private secretary to the Bishop of Speyer; head of the Vicariate for Pastoral Care; member of the Episcopal Council; episcopal vicar for Religious Life; canon of the Speyer Cathedral Chapter.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Vincenzo Manzella of Cefalù, Italy (16 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Giuseppe Marcianò as Bishop of Cefalù. Until now he has served as titular Bishop of Thagora and Auxiliary of Rome (16 Feb.).

Bishop Ugorji, 66, was born in Naze, Nigeria. He was ordained a priest on 16 April 1977. He was ordained a bishop on 1 July 1990, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Umuahia.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Bernd Joachim Uhl, titular bishop of Malliana, from his office as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany (19 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed as Auxiliary Bishop of Freiburg im Breisgau Fr Peter Birkhofer from the clergy of the same Archdiocese, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Villamagna in Tripolitana. Until now he has been director of the Diocesan office for missions, the liturgy, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, and canon of the Metropolitan Chapter (19 Feb.).

Bishop-elect Birkhofer, 53, was born in Immenstaad am Bodensee, Germany. He completed his studies in philosophy and obtained a doctorate in theology. He was ordained a priest on 11 May 1991. He has served in parish ministry and as: secondary school chaplain and rector of the vocational centre of the German Episcopal Conference in Freiburg; master of ceremonies and administrator of the Cathedral.

## ORIENTAL CHURCHES

The Holy Father granted his assent to the canonical election by the Synod of Bishops of the Maronite Patriarchal Church of Fr Rafic Warcha as Bishop of the Curia, assigning him

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## New Ambassador of Korea

H.E. Mr Baek Man Lee, 62, is married and has two children. He holds a degree in economics from Seoul National University, Korea (1978), and a specialization in mass communications from Chung-Ang University, Seoul, (2010).

He has held the following positions: editorial writer at The Hankook-Ilbo (2001); director of the Reporting Division at Korea Business TV (2002); deputy minister, Government Information Agency (2004-2006); senior secretary to the President for Public Relations (2006-2007); special advisor to the President for Public Relations (2007); visiting professor at Mokpo National Uni-

versity (2008-2010); honorary Ambassador to the Cambodia Xavier Jesuit School (2016); Catholic missionary at the Catholic Catechetical Institute (2017).



On Friday morning, 16 February, the Pope received in audience H.E. Mr Baek Man Lee, Ambassador of Korea, for the presentation of the Letters by which he is accredited to the Holy See.

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The following is a translation of the Apostolic Letter "Learn to take your leave" issued *Motu Proprio* by Pope Francis. The Letter, dated 12 February, governs the resignation, due to age, of holders of certain offices subject to papal appointment.

APOSTOLIC LETTER  
ISSUED MOTU PROPRIO  
"LEARN TO TAKE YOUR LEAVE"

*governing the resignation, for reasons  
of age, of holders of certain offices  
subject to papal appointment.*

"Learn to take your leave" is what I asked, in commenting on a reading of the Acts of the Apostles (cf. 20:17-27), in a prayer for pastors (cf. *Homily in the Mass at Santa Marta*, 30 May 2017). The conclusion of an ecclesial office must be considered an integral part of the service itself, since it calls for a new form of amenability.

This interior attitude is necessary when, for reasons of age, one must prepare to leave his position, or when one is called to continue that service for a longer period, even though the age of 75 has been reached (cf. *Address to rectors and students of the Pontifical Colleges and Residents of Rome*, 12 May 2014).

One who prepares to submit his resignation needs to prepare himself appropriately before God, stripping himself of any aspiration to power and of the claim of being indispensable. This will allow him to calmly and trustingly take this step, which would otherwise be painful and discordant. At the same time, one who truly realizes the need to step down must discern in prayer how to experience the stage that is about to begin, by making a new plan of life, marked as much as possible by austerity, humility, prayers of intercession, time dedicated to reading, and willingness to provide simple pastoral services.

On the other hand, if exceptionally one is asked to continue to serve for a longer period, this entails generously giving up one's new personal project. This situation, however, must not be considered a privilege or a personal triumph, or a favour due to presumed obligations deriving from friendship or closeness, nor as gratitude for the effectiveness of services rendered. Every eventual deferment can only be understood in line with certain reasons that are always linked to the common good of the Church. This pontifical decision is not an automatic act but an act of governance; consequently it entails the virtue of prudence which will help one, through appropriate discernment, to take the suitable decision.

I cite only as examples some of the possible reasons: the importance of appropriately completing a very fruitful project for the Church; interest in ensuring the continuity of important works; difficulties related to the composition of the Dicastery in a period of transition; the importance of this person's contribution may lead to the application of directives recently issued by the Holy See or to the implementation of new magisterial directions.

With the provisions for the resignation of diocesan Bishops and holders of offices subject to papal appointment, contained in the *Rescriptum ex audientia* of 3 November 2014, granted to the Secretary of State, Cardinal



Lello Scorzelli, "Two Council Fathers" (detail)

Motu Proprio on retiring from offices subject to papal appointment

## Learn to take your leave

Pietro Parolin, I wished to integrate the canonical legislation and introduce several modifications, which I confirm entirely, with the exception of the sections that are explicitly reformulated by the following provisions.

Given the generous commitment demonstrated and the valuable experience accumulated by those who have for many years played several roles of particular responsibility, whether in the particular Churches or in the Roman Curia or as Pontifical Representatives, I recognize the need to update the norms regarding the times and methods of resignation from office for having reached the age limit. After having held the necessary consultations, I think it necessary to proceed as follows:

a. to further clarify art. 2 of the aforementioned *Rescriptum* relative to diocesan Bishops, Coadjutor and Auxiliary Bishops (cf. cc. 401-402, 411 CIC, and 210-211, 218, 213 CCEO);

b. to modify the canonical norms regarding the resignation from office, for reasons of age, of non-Cardinal Dicastery Heads and of Superior Prelates of the Roman Curia (cf. Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*, 28 June 1980, art. 5 § 2: *AAS* 80 [1988], 860; General Regulations of the Roman Curia, 1999 art. 3; *Rescriptum ex audientia*, 3 November 2014, art. 7), of Bishops holding other offices subject to papal appointment (cf. *Rescriptum ex audientia*, 3 November 2014, art. 7) and of Pontifical Representatives (cf. c. 367 CIC; General Regulations of the Roman Curia, 1999, art. 8, § 2.; Regulations for Pontifical Representatives, 2003, art 20, § 1).

With this *Motu Proprio* I establish:

Art. 1. Upon reaching 75 years of age, diocesan and eparchial Bishops, and those deemed equivalent to them according to canons 381 § 2 CIC and 313 CCEO, as well as Coadjutor and Auxiliary Bishops or holders of special pastoral responsibilities, are invited to

present to the Supreme Pontiff their resignation from pastoral office.

Art. 2. Upon reaching 75 years of age, non-Cardinal Dicastery Heads of the Roman Curia, Superior Prelates of the Roman Curia and Bishops holding other offices of the Holy See, do not *ipso facto* cede their office, but must present their resignation to the Supreme Pontiff.

Art. 3. Likewise, Pontifical Representatives do not *ipso facto* cede their office upon reaching seventy-five years of age, but in this circumstance must present their resignation to the Supreme Pontiff.

Art. 4. To be effective, resignation pursuant to articles 1-3 must be accepted by the Supreme Pontiff, who will decide by evaluating the concrete circumstances.

Art. 5. Once the resignation is presented, the office relative to articles 1-3 will be extended until acceptance of the resignation is communicated to the interested party, for a fixed or unspecified time, contrary to the general terms established by canons 189 § 3 CIC and 970 § 1 CCEO.

All that I have deliberated with this Apostolic Letter issued *Motu Proprio* I order be observed in all its parts, notwithstanding anything to the contrary, even if worthy of particular mention; and I establish that it be promulgated by way of publication in the daily newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano*, entering into force on the same day of promulgation and that, subsequently, it be published in the official Commentary *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's,  
on 12 February 2018,  
fifth of my Pontificate

Franciscus

Meeting members of the Maronite College in Rome the Pope recalls Lebanon's special vocation of peace

## Pastors of a suffering People

*Through its suffering and its hope, Lebanon "not only has something to say but a special vocation of peace to fulfil in the world". This was stressed by Pope Francis in a discourse to the community of the Pontifical Maronite College in Rome, received in audience in the Consistory Hall on Friday morning, 16 February. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address, which he delivered in Italian.*

Your Excellency,  
Dear Brothers,

I greet you with affection, pleased to welcome you. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the approval of the new Statute of your College. It is the occasion, other than to meet together, also to commemorate your history and to *deepen your roots*. In reality, this very time that you are spending in Rome is a time for strengthening roots. I think of roots present in the very name of your Church, which takes us back to Saint Maron – you have celebrated him just days ago – and, with him, to monasticism, to that form of life that is not content with a moderate and discrete faith, but perceives the need to go further, to love wholeheartedly. Lives poor to the eyes of the world, but invaluable to God and others. And by drawing from these wellsprings too, your ministry will be good water for today's thirsty. Our heart, like a compass, seeks where to orient itself and steers toward that which it loves; "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:21), Jesus says. In these years, helped by spiritual formation, by study, by community life, you have the grace to settle your heart well, so that you may find the enthusiasm of your great fathers and mothers in the faith.

However, today there is the risk of being absorbed by the culture of the provisional and of appearance. These years are the occasion to become antibodies against worldliness and mediocrity. They are years of exercise in the "Roman gym", where, with the help of God and of those who accompany you on the journey, you are able to *reinforce the foundations*: first and foremost those of an indispensable spiritual discipline, which is founded on the pillars of *prayer* and *interior effort*. A liturgical and personal prayer which is not satisfied by beautiful rites but which brings life before the Lord and the Lord into life. A patient interior effort which, open to discussion, helped by study and tempered by commitment, fosters a discernment that recognizes temptations and un-masks falsehoods, in order to live out the ministry in the greatest freedom, without duplicity, without hypocrisy.

The human, intellectual and spiritual enrichment that you receive in these years is not an award for you, much less an asset to cultivate for one's career, but a treasure earmarked for the faithful who await in your Eparchies and to whom your life waits to be given. Because you will not be called to perform a task, even well – it is not enough! – but to *live a mission*, without holding back, without many calculations, without limited availability. You yourselves will need to listen closely

to the people: God, indeed, will also confirm you through their lives, through many encounters, through his unpredictable surprises. And you, as Pastors in close contact with the flock, will taste the most genuine



joy when you bend down to them, making their joy and their suffering your own, and when, at the end of the day, you can tell the Lord of the love you have given and received.

You are called to live all this in a time not lacking in suffering and danger, but also full of hope. The people who will be entrusted to you, disoriented by the instability that unfortunately continues to impact the Middle East, will seek in you Pastors who console them: Pastors with the Word of Jesus on their lips, with hands ready to dry the tears and to caress the suffering faces;

Pastors who forget themselves and their own interests; Pastors who never become discouraged, because each day they draw from the Eucharistic Bread the sweet strength of satiating love; Pastors who are not afraid to "be consumed" by the people, as good bread offered to your brothers and sisters.

Before the many needs that await you, the temptation may come to act in a worldly manner, seeking those who are strong rather than those

in order to ward off the temptations of careerism, power, clericalism. The path that honours Christian life is not the ascent toward worldly rewards and gratifying certainties, but the humble descent in service. It is the path of Jesus; there is no other.

I would again like to share two wishes with you, considering your valuable ministry. The first: *peace*. Today fraternity and integration represent urgent challenges; they can no longer be postponed. And in this regard, Lebanon has not only something to say, but a special *vocation of peace* to fulfil in the world. Among the sons and daughters of your land, you will be called in a special way to serve everyone as brothers and sisters, first and foremost feeling that you are brothers and sisters of all. Helped by your knowledge, strive so that Lebanon may always correspond "to its vocation to be light for the peoples of the region and a sign of the peace that comes from God" (JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *A new hope for Lebanon*, 125).

The second wish is about young people. As a Church we want to keep them ever more at heart, to accompany them with trust and patience, by dedicating time and listening to them. Young people are the promise of the future, the most serious investment for your ministry. Pope Benedict, in meeting them, said: "young people of Lebanon, be welcoming and open, as Christ asks you and as your country teaches you" (*Meeting with young people*, 15 September 2012). It is your mission to help them to open their hearts to the good, so they may experience the joy of welcoming the Lord into their life.

Dear brothers, I thank you for your presence and, as I entrust you to the protection of Our Lady of Lebanon and of your great Saints, I give you my blessing and I ask you to remember me in your prayers. Thank you.

## VATICAN BULLETIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

the titular episcopal See of Apamea in Syria for Maronites (14 Feb.).

Bishop-elect Warcha, 46, was born in Okaibé, Mount Lebanon. He obtained a licence in theology and a doctorate from the Alphonsianum Academy, Rome, in 2005. He was ordained a priest in 1996 for the Patriarchal Eparchy (Vicariate of Jounieh). He founded a theological institute in Doumit-Okaibé. He has served in parish ministry and as secretary general of the Maronite Patriarchate in Bkerké; professor of moral theology in various institutes and universities, including La Sagesse and Kaslik.

The Holy Father granted his assent to the canonical election by the Synod of Bishops of the Patriarchal Church of Antioch for Syrians of

Fr Charles Georges Mrad, as Bishop of the Curia, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Zorava (19 Feb.).

Bishop-elect Mrad, 48, was born in Beirut, Lebanon. He holds licences in theology and in civil law, and a doctorate in canon law. He was ordained a priest on 18 July 1993. He has served in parish ministry and as professor and judge at the Patriarchal Tribunal.

### PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORS

On Saturday, 17 February, the Holy Father appointed as members of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors the following:

– Sr Jane Bertelsen, FMDM, Great Britain;

- Sr Arina Gonsalves, RJM, India;
- Prof. Ernesto Caffo, Italy;
- Prof. Neville John Owen, Australia;
- Prof. Benyam Dawit Mezmur, Ethiopia;
- Mr Nelson Giovanelli Rosendo dos Santos, Brazil;
- Prof. Myriam Wijlens, The Netherlands;
- Ms Sinalelea Fe`ao, Tonga;
- Ms Teresa Kettelkamp, USA.

### NECROLOGY

Bishop Juozas Preikšas, Bishop emeritus of Panevėžys, at age 91 (11 Feb.).

Bishop Emmanuel Kanyama of Dedza, Malawi, at age 55 (17 Feb.).

# Priests of the people and for the people

The Holy Father asks that seminaries carry out formation with rectitude and wisdom

*"Today's material and spiritual poverty make even more important what has always been called for: namely, that pastors be attentive to the poor, capable of being with them, with a simple way of life". Pope Francis emphasized this point in an audience held in the Clementine Hall on Saturday morning, 17 February, with future priests undergoing formation at the Pontifical Regional Seminary of Sardinia. The following is a translation of the address which the Holy Father delivered in Italian.*

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,  
Dear Teachers and Students,

I welcome you on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Pontifical Regional Seminary of Sardinia. Pope Pius XI had urged the Italian Bishops, especially of the south-central region and of the islands, to agree to concentrate on Seminaries, with the aim of properly providing for the education of aspiring priests. In your Region the Seminary had its home firstly in Cugliari, together with the Faculty of Theology; it was later transferred to the capital. I greet you all with affection, beginning with your Pastors, in particular Archbishop Arrigo Miglio of Cagliari, whom I thank for his words.

On this occasion I would like to join you in giving praise to the Lord, who in these years has accompanied with his grace the life of many priests formed in this important educational institution dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It has given the Church numerous ministers engaged in your local Churches, in the *missione ad gentes* and in other services to the universal Church. May this commemorative occasion give new impulse to your vocational ministry, to the renewed and diligent formation of candidates to the Sacred Order, to the benefit of the People of God.

Dear Seminarians, you are preparing to be future workers in the Lord's harvest, priests who know how to work together, even among

different dioceses. This is particularly valuable for a region such as Sardinia, which is imbued with faith and Christian religious traditions, and which needs, due also to its insular condition, special care for the relations among the various diocesan communities. Today's material and spiritual poverty make even more important what has always been called for: namely, that pastors be attentive to the poor, capable of being with them, with a simple way of life, so that the poor may feel that our Churches are firstly their homes. I encourage you to prepare from now on to become priests *of* the people and *for* the people, not domineering the flock entrusted to you (cf. 1 Pt 5:3), but servants. There is so much need of men of God who look at what is essential, who lead a sober and transparent life, without nostalgia for the past but able to look ahead according to the sound tradition of the Church.

In these years of preparation for the ordained ministry, you have been experiencing a special and unique moment of your life. May you be ever more aware of the grace that the Lord has granted to you by making resonate in you the invitation to leave all and follow him, to be with him in order to be sent out to preach (cf. Mt 4:19-20; Mk 3:14). In you, in a particular

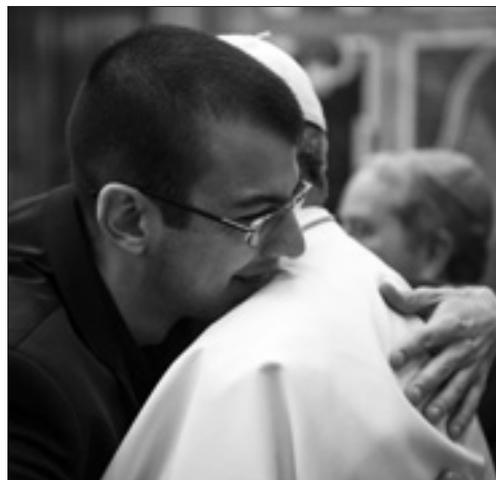
way, the hopes of the Church in Sardinia are answered! Your bishops follow you with affection and trepidation, counting greatly on you and on your aim to conform to Jesus the Good Shepherd for the good and the sanctity of the Christian communities of your region. Proceed with joy, tenacity and seriousness in this journey of formation, so as to assume the apostolic way of life, which is able to respond to the daily demands of evangelization.

The Seminary, before and even more than a functional institution for the acquisition of theological and pastoral competency and a place for a life in common and for study, is a true and proper ecclesial experience, a unique community of missionary disciples, called to closely follow the Lord Jesus, to be with him day and night, to share the mystery of his Cross and Resurrection, and to be exposed to the Word and to the Spirit, so as to confirm and mature the specific characteristics of the apostolic *sequela*. Henceforth, may your attentiveness prepare you appropriately to accept a free and irrevocable choice of total fidelity to Christ, to his Church and to your vocation and mission.

The Seminary is the school of this fidelity, which is learned first and foremost in prayer, particularly in liturgical prayer. In this time, friendship with Jesus is cultivated, centred on the Eucharist and nourished by contemplation and by the study of Sacred Scripture. The ministry cannot be exercised well if we do not live in union with Christ. Without him we can do nothing (cf. Jn 15:5).

In the journey of the Seminary the role of formators is decisive: the quality of the presbytery depends in large part on the commitment of those responsible for formation. They are called to work with rectitude and wisdom for the development of a coherent and balanced character capable of validly assuming, so as then to responsibly carry out, the presbyteral mission. In this delicate formative work, your Seminary also performs an indispensable service to the Dioceses, fostering the quality of formation of the clergy and communion among the Churches.

I entrust everyone to the maternal protection of Our Lady of Bonaria. I can tell you from experience that the Seminary is a privileged moment in which one experiences this loving presence of Our Lady in our life. She is always watching over each of you with attentive love. She is your Mother. Turn to Mary often and with trust. I assure all of you of my prayers and my blessing. And please, I ask you to pray for me.



Pope Francis and the Curia on Lenten retreat

## A spiritual thirst

Pope Francis and members of the Curia began their annual week-long Lenten retreat on Sunday afternoon, 18 February, at the *Casa del Divin Maestro* (House of the Divine Teacher) in Ariccia, 25 kilometres southeast of Rome. This year's spiritual exercises, led by Fr José Tolentino de Mendonça, vice rector of the Portuguese Catholic University in Lisbon and consultant of the Pontifical Council for Culture, focused on the theme, "in praise of thirst".

Fr Tolentino de Mendonça's introductory meditation immediately after the arrival of the Papal entourage on Sunday, centred on the narrative of Jesus who, weary from his journey, was resting at Jacob's well. Sitting at that well, Jesus was reaching out even to the people on the peripheries, the Papal preacher reflected, and suggested that we ask ourselves: how will we respond to Jesus' initiative and how will we respond to him when he asks us to quench his thirst? Will we give him and one another, something to drink?

In his second meditation, on Monday, 19 February, Fr Tolentino de Mendonça spoke about "the science of thirst". Although Jesus' invitation is open to all to "let him who is thirsty, come" (Rev 22:17), he stressed that "God knows how many inner obstacles hold us back". "There are many ways of mistaking the needs that give us life and of adopting an attitude of spiritual evasion, without ever realizing that we are running away", he explained. Conversion, the priest continued, "does not consist



CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

In his Message for the 33rd World Youth Day the Pope comments on the Angel's words to Mary

## Name your fears

The Holy Father's Message for World Youth Day 2018 was published on Thursday, 22 February. In it, Pope Francis notes that the theme of this year's Message, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God", is based on the Archangel Gabriel's words to Mary, "an ordinary girl from a small village in Galilee". The 33rd World Youth Day will be celebrated this year at the diocesan level on Palm Sunday, 25 March. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's Message.



"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God" (Lk 1:30)  
Dear young people,

World Youth Day 2018 represents another step in preparation for the international WYD due to take place in Panama in January 2019. This new stage of our pilgrimage falls in the same year that the Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will meet on the theme: *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*. This is a happy coincidence. The focus, prayer and reflection of the Church will turn to you young people, with the desire to receive and, above all, to embrace the precious gift that you are to God, to the Church and to the world.

As you already know, we have chosen to be accompanied on this journey by the example and intercession of Mary, the young woman of Nazareth whom God chose as the Mother of his Son. She walks with us towards the Synod and towards the WYD in Panama. If last year we were guided by the words of her canticle of praise – "The Almighty has done great things for me" (Lk 1:49) – teaching us to remember the past, this year we seek, together with her, to listen to the voice of God who inspires courage and bestows the grace

needed to respond to his call: "Do not be afraid, Mary, because you have found favour with God" (Lk 1:30). These are the words addressed by God's messenger, the Archangel Gabriel, to Mary, an ordinary girl from a small village in Galilee.

### 1. Do not be afraid!

As is understandable, the sudden appearance of the angel and his mysterious greeting: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Lk 1:28), strongly disturbed Mary, who was surprised by this first revelation of her identity and her vocation, as yet unknown to her. Mary, like others in the Sacred Scriptures, trembles before the mystery of God's call, who in a moment places before her the immensity of his own plan and makes her feel all her smallness as a humble creature. The angel, seeing the depths of her heart, says: "Do not be afraid"! God also reads our inmost heart. He knows well the challenges we must confront in life, especially when we are faced with the fundamental choices on which depend who we will be and what we will do in this world. It is the "shudder" that we feel when faced with decisions about our future, our state of life, our vocation. In these moments we are troubled and seized by so many fears.

And you young people, what are your fears? What worries you most deeply? An "underlying" fear that many of you have is that of not being loved, well-liked or accepted for who you are. Today, there are many young people who feel the need to be different from who they really are, in an attempt to adapt to an often artificial and unattainable standard. They continuously "photo-shop" their images, hiding behind masks and false identities, almost becoming

fake selves. Many are obsessed by receiving as many "likes" as possible. Multiple fears and uncertainties emerge from this sense of inadequacy. Others fear that they will not be able to find an emotional security and that they will remain alone. Many, faced with the uncertainty of work, fear not being able to find a satisfactory professional position, or to fulfil their dreams. Today a large number of young people are full of fear, both believers and non-believers. Indeed, those who have accepted the gift of faith and seek their vocation seriously are not exempt from fears. Some think: perhaps God is asking or will ask too much of me; perhaps, by following the road he has marked out for me, I will not be truly happy, or I will not be able to do what he asks of me. Others think: if I follow the path that God shows me, who can guarantee that I will be able to follow it through? Will I become discouraged? Will I lose my enthusiasm? Will I be able to persevere for the whole of my life?

In moments when doubts and fears flood our hearts, discernment becomes necessary. It allows us to bring order to the confusion of our thoughts and feelings, to act in a just and prudent way. In this process, the first step in overcoming fears is to identify them clearly, so as not to find yourself wasting time and energy by being gripped by empty and faceless ghosts. And so, I invite all of you to look within yourselves and to "name" your fears. Ask yourselves: what upsets me, what do I fear most in this specific moment of my life today? What blocks me and prevents me from moving forward? Why do I lack the courage to make the important choices I need to make? Do not be afraid to face your fears honestly, to recognize them for what they are and to come to terms with them. The Bible does not ignore the human experience of fear nor its many causes. Abraham was afraid (cf. Gen 12:10ff), Jacob was afraid (cf. Gen 31:31; 32:7), and so were Moses (cf. Ex 2:14; 17:4), Peter (cf. Mt 26:69ff) and the Apostles (cf. Mk 4:38-40; Mt 26:56). Jesus himself, albeit in an incomparable way, experienced fear and anguish (cf. Mt 26:37; Lk 22:44).



Liviu Dumitrescu, "The Annunciation"

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" (Mk 4:40). In admonishing his disciples Jesus helps us to understand how the obstacle to faith is often not *scpticism* but *fear*. Thus understood, the work of discernment identifies our fears and can then help us to overcome them, opening us to life and helping us to calmly face the challenges that come our way. For us Christians in particular, fear must never have the last word but rather should be an occasion to make an act of faith in God... and in life! This means believing in the fundamental goodness of the existence that God has given us and trusting that

he will lead us to a good end, even through circumstances and vicissitudes which often bewilder us. Yet if we harbour fears, we will become inward-looking and closed off to defend ourselves from everything and everyone, and we will remain paralyzed. We have to act! Never close yourself in! In the Sacred Scriptures the expression "do not be afraid" is repeated 365 times with different variations, as if to tell us that the Lord wants us to be free from fear, every day of the year.

Discernment is indispensable when searching for one's vocation in life. More often than not our vocation is

the voice of God that resounds within our conscience. God knocks at the door of our hearts, as he did with Mary; he longs to establish friendship with us through prayer, to speak with us through the Sacred Scriptures, to offer us mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and to be one with us in the Eucharist.

It is also important to dialogue with and encounter *others*, our brothers and sisters in the faith who have more experience, for they help us to see better and to choose wisely from the various possibilities. When the young Samuel hears the voice of the Lord, he does not recognize it immediately. Three times he runs to Eli, the older priest, who in the end proposes the right response to give to the Lord's call: "If he calls you, you shall say: 'Speak Lord, for your servant hears.'" (1 Sam 3:9). In your doubts know that you can rely on the Church. I know that there are very good priests, consecrated men and women and lay faithful, many of whom are also young, who can support you like older brothers and sisters in the faith. Enlivened by the Holy Spirit, they will help you to make sense of your doubts and understand the plan of your own vocation. The *other* is not only a spiritual guide, but also the person who helps us open ourselves to the infinite riches of the life that God has given us. It is important to create spaces in our cities and communities to grow, to dream and to look at new horizons! Never lose the enthusiasm of enjoying others' company and friendship, as well as the pleasure of dreaming together, of walking together. Authentic Christians are not afraid to open themselves to others and share with them their own important spaces, making them spaces of fraternity. Dear young people, do not allow the spark of youth to be extinguished in the darkness of a closed room in which the only window to the outside world is a computer and smartphone. Open wide the doors of your life! May your time and space be filled with meaningful relationships, real people, with whom to share your authentic and concrete experiences of daily life.

### 2. Mary!

"I have called you by name" (Is 43:1). The first reason not to fear is the fact that God has called us *by name*. The angel, God's messenger, called Mary by name. To God belongs the power to give names. In the work of creation, he calls into existence every creature by name. There is an identity behind a name, that which is unique in every single thing, in every single person; that intimate essence that only God truly knows. This divine prerogative was shared with man when God invited him to name the animals, the birds and also his own offspring (Gen 2:19-21; 4:1). Many cultures share this profound biblical vision; they recognize in a name the revelation of the profound mystery of life and the meaning of existence.

When God calls someone by name, he also reveals to the person his vocation, his plan of holiness and fulfil-

ment, through which the person becomes a gift to others and is made unique. And when God wants to expand the horizons of life, he gives a new name to the person he is calling, as he did with Simon, whom he called "Peter". From here comes the custom of taking a new name when entering a religious congregation, to indicate a new identity and mission. Since the divine call is unique and personal, we need the courage to disentangle ourselves from the pressure of being shaped by conforming patterns, so that our life can truly become an authentic and irreplaceable gift to God, to the Church and to all.

Dear young people, to be called by name is therefore a sign of our great dignity in the eyes of God and a sign of his love for us. God calls each one of you by name. All of you are *the "you" of God*, precious in his eyes, worthy of respect and loved (cf. Is 43:4). Welcome with joy this dialogue that God offers you; this appeal he makes to you, calling you by name.

### 3. You have found favour with God

The main reason why Mary need not be afraid is that she has found favour with God. The word "grace" speaks of love freely given, not owed. How much we are encouraged to know that we do not have to earn the closeness and help of God, by presenting a "Curriculum Vitae of excellence", full of merits and successes! The angel says to Mary that she has *already* found favour with God, not that she will obtain it in the future. And the same formulation of the angel's words helps us understand that divine grace is continuous, not something passing or fleeting; for this reason, it will never fail. Even in the future, the grace of God will always be there to sustain us, especially in moments of trial and darkness.

The continuous presence of divine grace encourages us to embrace our vocation with confidence; our vocation demands a commitment of faithfulness that needs to be renewed each day. Our vocational path is not without its crosses: not only our initial doubts, but also the frequent temptations that crop up along the way. The feeling of inadequacy accompanies Christ's disciple to the end. Yet he or she knows the help of God's grace.

The Angel's words descend upon our human fears, dissolving them with the power of the Good News of which we are heralds: our life is not pure chance or a mere struggle for survival, rather each of us is a cherished story loved by God. That we have "found grace in his eyes" means that the Creator sees a unique beauty in our being and that he has a magnificent plan for our lives. The awareness of this certainty, of course, does not resolve all our problems nor does it take away life's uncertainties. But it does have the power to transform our life deeply. The unknown that tomorrow holds for us is not a dark threat we need to overcome, but a favourable time given to us for liv-

A conference on 'Thomas Byzantinus'

## Hope for increased dialogue between East and West

MARÍA PANGÍA MIOLA, SSVM

In mid-December 2017, an event took place in Athens that made history both for the long and troubled relations between East and West, as well as for the nation of Greece itself: it was the first time that a conference dedicated entirely to the thought of Thomas Aquinas had been held on Greek soil.

Byzantium has in general had a notoriously antagonistic relationship to the Latin West, as well as to the archetype of Catholic theology, Thomas Aquinas. In 1204, shortly before Aquinas' birth, the Latin occupation of Constantinople exacerbated this distrust of the West. Sadly, this conflict still survives under various forms today, from Slavophile theology of the twentieth century, which paints Aquinas as a plague contaminating the East with rationalism, to Greek Orthodox leaders who summon their flocks to 'return to the Fathers' so as to heal the offense.

Nevertheless, before long, Thomas the scourge became Thomas the remedy. In the 14th century, a couple of brothers, Demetrios and Prochoros Kydones, began to translate Aquinas into Greek. These translations catalyzed a poignant encounter between East and West. Marcus Plested, a specialist in Orthodox Theology at Marquette University, has recently charted an account of this part of Byzantine history in his *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas*. He affirms: "the translations unleashed something of great power and incalculable impact onto the Byzantine and post-Byzantine world. Things would never be the same again."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, thanks to these Greek translations, many Byzantine theologians were able to access Aquinas' work. Perhaps Thomas did not make it to the Council of Lyon *in persona* (since he died at Fossanova while he was making the journey), but he certainly reached the Council of Florence *in mente*, where his thought was known and used.

The complete history of this Byzantine discovery of Thomas Aquinas still remains obscure to us, but is now beginning to come to light. An international research project, "Thomas de Aquino Byzantinus", has been formed to produce the critical editions of all extant Greek translations of Aquinas' works. The Greek *opera omnia* of Thomas will appear in a *series prima* of *Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca* (CCSG), and secondary works that were influenced by these first translations will be included in a *series altera* *Thomas de Aquino a Byzantinis receptus*.<sup>2</sup> Some observers might, justifiably, rejoin: why should anyone want to read Aquinas in Greek? Without the critical edition of these texts, however, we will never have a clear idea of how much Thomas actually influenced Byzantine theology, or the Byzantine world, for that matter. It is not a surprise that the wisdom of Card. G. Mercati had already intuited the importance of the Ky-

dones brothers and had advocated for the study of their works and their place in history. Moreover, he himself dedicated an entire volume to this endeavor, which still remains valid today (*Studi e Testi*, 56, 1931).<sup>3</sup>

With this background in mind, the international conference on "Thomas Aquinas and his Reception in Byzantium", held in Athens on December 15th and 16th, proved all the more interesting. It took place at the newly inaugurated Stavros Ni-

scholar involved in the *Thomas Byzantinus* project shared his individual research, and in addition, participated in panels that yielded collaborative reflection. As the scholars reported their progress in paleographical and textual areas, these discoveries opened discussions on the historical, philosophical, and theological level. In particular, the works shed light on the heated debate in Late Byzantium over the real distinction of essence and energies in



archos Foundation Cultural Center, under the auspices of the National Library of Greece, the University of Patras, and the Hellenic Institute of the University of London. The directors of the *Thomas de Aquino Byzantinus* project, John Demetracopoulos (U. of Patras) and Charalambos Dendrinis (U. of London), organized the program of the conference and invited over twenty-five speakers to participate, representing various institutions from all over the world: Athens, Jerusalem, Rome, Venice, Patras, Paris, London.

The first day of the conference offered a more general panorama of Thomas Aquinas, featuring presentations from a variety of disciplines relating to Aquinas' work. Highlights included a philosophical talk on the relation between Aquinas and Aristotle, Aquinas' moral and political thought, and a relatively unexplored area of study: the Angelic Doctor as exegete. Lively discussion ensued after each presentation. By the end of the day, the conference had succeeded in achieving its first objective: addressing the universal significance of Thomistic thought.

On the second day of the conference, the theme shifted from the general importance of Aquinas to his influence in Byzantium. Each

God, defended by the Palamists and contested by anti-Palamists and Thomists.

The round table discussion at the end of the conference proved to be an especially promising culmination of the event; participating in the panel were Stavros Zoumboulakis, president of the Board of Trustees for the National Library of Greece, Antonio Rigo, professor at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, president of the Italian Association of Byzantine Studies, and member of the editorial board of the *CCSG*, Marcus Plested, and John Demetracopoulos and Charalambos Dendrinis, co-directors of the research project, *Thomas Byzantinus*. Among the most important fruits of session was the support for concrete publications, such as a volume containing the "Acts", or proceedings of

the Conference. This book, to be published in Greek by the press, *Artos Zois*, in the spring of 2018, would be intended for popular distribution so as to spread accessible knowledge about the thought of Thomas Aquinas in the Eastern world. The panel members also made suggestions on how to maximize the collaboration of the members of the team and unify criteria for the critical editions of their contributions. Finally, there were intriguing questions raised about the Greek Thomas yet to be discovered and the importance of the research project for illuminating not only Thomistic theology and its proper place in history but also the world of Byzantine theology. Finally, the panel members spoke hopefully of how the Byzantine reception of Thomas Aquinas could also be an example for Orthodox theology today.

The importance of this event is multifold. First, such developments suggest a growing integration of Aquinas' thought in the Greek cultural milieu: the conference was located not only in Greece but at its most illustrious cultural center. In addition, the language of the presentations was, for the most part, modern Greek.

Second, this new understanding of *Thomas Byzantinus* will reach the modern Greek public through the more popular volume of the proceedings, and third, through the critical editions published by *CCSG*, it will enter the academic world of historians, philologists and theologians.

Finally, the conference reflects a hope in its collaborators to dissipate myths or prejudices and share knowledge. This same hope has been vibrantly shining in other recent initiatives: in 2015, a conference was held at Stockholm University on Latins and Greeks learning from each other in Byzantium, entitled, "Never the twain shall meet", in 2016, a conference in Venice had a similar objective. In late January, Ave Maria University sponsored a conference on "Thomas Aquinas and the Greek Fathers", and in June, the annual *Symposium Thomisticum* will be held in Athens on the topic "Aquinas and the Greeks".

Thomas meets the East, or the East meets Thomas, as the case may be. May such initiatives increase mutual understanding and bear fruit in bridging the gap between East and West.

<sup>1</sup> M. Plested, *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas*. Oxford (2012), p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> For more background on the theological reconciliation between East and West, the role of Thomas Aquinas in the unity of Christians, and an introduction of the *Thomas Byzantinus* project, see Christiaan Kappes' article in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 13 June 2012, p. 9. Text also available at: <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CHISTORY/dialeastwest.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Card. G. Mercati was appointed as *scriptor graecus* of the Vatican Apostolic Library, in 1898, and subsequently named Prefect (1919) and then Librarian and Archivist of the H.R.C. (1936) until his death (1957), marking over 50 years of service to the Library.

Australian embassy Honours first woman official in the Roman Curia

# A tribute to Rosemary Goldie



Centre photo: Australia's Ambassador, H.E. Melissa Hitchman (left), and Defence Minister, Hon. Marise Payne (right); flanked by two photos of Rosemary Goldie



Australia's Embassy to the Holy See has dedicated an embassy conference room in honour of the first woman to hold an official post of authority in the Roman Curia. Theologian and professor Rosemary Goldie (1916-2010), who hailed from Sydney, was the first woman to hold the title of Undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity (1967-1976) in the Vatican. In the unveiling ceremony at the embassy on Tuesday, 13 February, Australian Ambassador H.E. Melissa Hitchman was joined by Senator the Hon. Marise Payne, Minister for Defence, in recalling that Goldie was one of the first female auditors of the Second Vatican Council, and served four Popes: John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I and John Paul II.

In her remarks for the occasion, Minister Payne noted that Goldie's role as Undersecretary of the Council for the Laity made her, as a woman, "a historic figure with a legacy on which others have built. Few have followed in the fifty years since". She also noted that Goldie "would be gratified that the successor to her Council – the Council for Laity, Family and Life – has not one, but two female Undersecretaries": Dr Linda Ghisoni and Prof. Gabriella Gambino whom Pope Francis appointed last November.

Ambassador Hitchman observed that Goldie never lost "her determination to bring about change within the Holy See for women as well as all laity. I have no doubt she imagined a world in which her own nation witnessed women hold public office at the highest level.... I have no doubt she would approve the establishment of [the women's Association] *Donne in Vaticano* in 2016".

One of four children of journalists from Sydney, Goldie won a scholarship to study at Sorbonne University in Paris before and after WWII. She became involved in lay ministry in Rome, later in Switzerland, and then once more in Rome. In 1959 she became Executive Secretary of the Permanent Committee for International Congresses of the Lay Apostolate which was later to become the nucleus of the Council for the Laity created by Paul VI. Following her term as Undersecretary of the Council, Goldie

served as Vice President and Professor at the Pastoral Institute of the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome and as a consultant to the Council for Laity and to the Secretariat for the Union of Christians. She also represented the Holy See internationally.

In 1990, Goldie was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for her "service to religion and to international relations". She died in Sydney at the age of 94. Remembering her as "a protagonist for 5 fruitful decades of the contemporary historical movement of promotion of the laity", the Pontifical Council to which she had dedicated much of her life said "she left a memorable and very dear trace" not only at the Council, but also on "many people and organisations who appreciated her faithful Christian witness and her competent and untiring service to the Roman Curia".

"We pay tribute to this formidable but modest Australian who achieved so much as a role model for Church-state collaboration as a woman in leadership", Minister Payne said. "As the first woman selected as a Curial official", Ambassador Hitchman added, Goldie's "story deserves not only to be read, but to be heard, to be commemorated, to be celebrated".

## Message of His Holiness for World Youth Day 2018

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

ing out the uniqueness of our personal vocation, and for sharing it with our brothers and sisters in the Church and in the world.

### 4. Courage in the present moment

From the certainty that God's grace is with us comes the strength to take courage in the present moment: the courage to carry forward what God asks of us here and now, in every area of our lives; courage to embrace the vocation which God reveals to us; courage to live out our faith without hiding or diminishing it.

Yes, when we open ourselves to God's grace, the impossible becomes a reality. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (*Rom* 8:31). God's grace touches the "now" of your lives, "takes hold" of you as you are, with all your fears and limits, but it

also reveals his marvellous plans! You young people need to know that someone truly believes in you: please know that the Pope has confidence in you, that the Church has confidence in you! For your part, have confidence in the Church!

To the young Mary was entrusted an important task, precisely because she was young. You young people have strength as you go through a phase of your lives where energy is not lacking. Make use of this strength and this energy to improve the world, beginning with the realities closest to you. I want important responsibilities to be given to you within the Church; that there may be the courage to make space for you; and that you may be prepared to take on these responsibilities.

I invite you once again to contemplate Mary's love: a caring, dynamic and concrete love. A love full of boldness and focused completely on the gift of self. A Church permeated by these Marian qualities will always be a Church going forth, one that

goes beyond her own limits and boundaries to let the grace she has received overflow. If we allow ourselves to be truly touched by Mary's example, we will live out authentically that charity which urges us to love God above all else and above ourselves, to love those with whom we share our daily life. And we will also love those who may seem hardly lovable in themselves. It is a love that is service and dedication, above all towards the weakest and poorest, love that transforms our faces and fills us with joy.

I would like to end with the beautiful words Saint Bernard used in a famous homily on the mystery of the Annunciation, words that express the anticipation of all humanity for Mary's response: "You have heard, O Virgin that you will conceive and bear a son; you have heard that it will not be by man but by the Holy Spirit. The angel awaits an answer... We too, O Lady, are waiting for your word of compassion... In your brief response we are to be remade

in order to be recalled to life... This is what the whole earth waits for, prostrate at your feet... Answer quickly, O Virgin" (*Sermon* 4, 8-9; *Opera Omnia*).

Dear young people, the Lord, the Church, the world are waiting for your answer to the unique call that each one receives in this life! As World Youth Day in Panama draws closer, I invite you to prepare yourselves for our gathering with the joy and enthusiasm of those who wish to participate in such a great adventure. WYD is for the courageous! Not for young people who are searching only for comfort and who withdraw whenever difficulties arise. Do you accept the challenge?

From the Vatican, 11 February 2018  
 VI Sunday of Ordinary Time  
 Memorial of the Blessed Virgin  
 Mary of Lourdes

Franciscans

A view of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, 1956



## History and destiny of the city thrice holy

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

“If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!” (Ps 137[136]:5-6). The heartrending words of an anonymous poet banished from the city – perhaps in exile to Babylon in the sixth cen-

in) were probably sung by Jewish pilgrims who climbed the hill to Jerusalem, where the ancient shrine stood; the Temple, attributed to the mythical King Solomon, was destroyed by the Babylonians and rebuilt much later: “Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem, built as a city which is bound together, to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord ... Pray for the peace of Jer-

the Christian era. It owes its fame to the narrative – attributed to 72 translators and hence called “The Septuagint” (from the Latin *septuaginta*, “seventy”) – about the historically rooted legend of how the Greek version of the Hebrew Sacred Scriptures came about. The words describing the City and the Temple (the second shrine, rebuilt after the Babylonian destruction) are put in the mouths of astonished Alexandrian ambassadors: “When we arrived in the land of the Jews we saw the city situated in the middle of the whole of Judea (...) On the summit the Temple had been built in all its splendour (...) The whole of the floor is paved with stones and slopes down to the appointed places, that water may be conveyed to wash away the blood from the sacrifices, for many thousand beasts are sacrificed there on the feast days (...) The ministrations of the priests is in every way unsurpassed both for its physical endurance and for its orderly and silent service (...) The most complete silence reigns so that one might imagine that there was not a single person present, though there are actually seven hundred men engaged in the work, besides the vast number of those who are occupied in bringing up the sacrifices. Everything is carried out with reverence and in a way worthy of the great God (...) Their appearance created such awe and confusion of mind as to make one feel that one had come into the presence of a man who belonged to a different world. I am convinced that any one who takes part in the spectacle which I have described will be filled with astonishment and indescribable wonder and be profoundly affected in his mind at the thought of the sanctity which is attached to each detail of the service” (83-99).

Two centuries later, it was all over: at the end of the terrible Jewish War narrated by Flavius Josephus in 70 AD, the great Temple, magnificently restored by

Herod the Great, was burned down. Then in 135, with the suppression of the last revolt against the Roman Empire, the City was razed to the ground and its name obliterated, substituted with “Aelia Capitolina”, the pagan name chosen by Emperor Hadrian and repugnant to Jewish ears. Its memory (and its name) was preserved by Christians, who, by around the year 170, as evidence shows, were already making pilgrimages, such as that of Bishop Melito of Sardis, who wished to obtain information about the Hebrew Scriptures in “the place where these things were preached and done” (Eusebius of Caesarea, *Church History*, IV, 26:14). Eusebius observes that in his time – the early fourth century – “believers in Christ all congregate from all parts of the world, not as of old time because of the glory of Jerusalem, nor that they may worship in the ancient Temple”, but “that they may learn both about the city being taken and devastated” and, above all, “that they may worship at the Mount of Olives opposite to the city”, in the place where “the feet of our Lord and Saviour” had stood (Eusebius of Caesarea, *Proof of the Gospel*, VI, 18:23).

The protagonist of the religious rebirth of Jerusalem and of the entire region was Constantine, Emperor between 306 and 337, after the pro-Christian turnabout of 312 and thanks to an impressive policy of enlightenment which emanated from the places of worship throughout Palestine, transforming it into the “holy land” of Christians and evermore a pilgrimage destination, as recounted – again by Eusebius – with a clear anti-Jewish sentiment: “No sooner had he written than the commands were put into effect. New Jerusalem was built” in the very place where the Saviour had been entombed, “facing the famous Jerusalem of old, which after the bloody murder of the Lord had been overthrown in utter destitution” (Eusebius of Caesarea, *Church History*, III, 10:16).

### Capital of Religions

The ever-tormented history of the Holy City is the focus of books by Eric H. Cline – *Jerusalem Besieged: From Ancient Canaan to Modern Israel* (University of Michigan Press, 2005; Italian edition: *Gerusalemme assediata: Dall'antica Canaan allo Stato d'Israele*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2017) – and by Giovanni Brizzi – *70 d.C. La conquista di Gerusalemme* (Roma-Bari, Editori Laterza, 2015). The accompanying text is a translation of an article entitled *SOS for Jerusalem, Capital of Religions*, which was published in the Italian journal “Vita e Pensiero” (86, 2003, n. 6, pp. 17-21).

tury before the Christian era – echo those of the so-called “Gradual Psalms” or the “Song of Ascents”. These 15 texts (120-134 in the Hebrew version, 119-133 in the more widespread Greek and Lat-

in) were probably sung by Jewish pilgrims who climbed the hill to Jerusalem (122[121]:2-4, 6). In these words – later also uttered by Christians, thanks to whom the expressions spread far and wide, considering the liturgical, musical and poetic success – one can perceive the strong and undeniable bond of the ancient religion of Israel and later Judaism with the then tiny centre, called to unparalleled symbolic importance and to a fascinating and tragic historical destiny.

The *Letter of Aristeus* dedicates a long digression emblematic of the City’s special role among Jews rooted in other nations. The Judeo-Hellenistic text is a beautifully written piece of propaganda from the late second century preceding



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

tion, and paid the penalty of its wicked inhabitants. Opposite this then the Emperor erected the victory of the Saviour over death with rich and abundant munificence, this being perhaps that fresh new Jerusalem proclaimed in prophetic oracles, about which long speeches recite innumerable praises as they utter words of divine inspiration. As the principal item he first of all decked out the sacred cave". Because Constantine thought of it as the ideal centre of the entire world. "It was a tomb full of age-long memory, comprising the trophies of the great Saviour's defeat of death, a tomb of divine presence, where once an angel, radiant with light, proclaimed to all the good news of the rebirth demonstrated by the Saviour" (*Life of Constantine*, III, 33).

In the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, Eusebius – a seemingly incredulous witness to the overturn of the Christian destiny in fewer than three decades, from the violent Diocletian persecution which raged with fury in Palestine to the birth of the "holy land" – thus identified the eschatological Jerusalem which had been foreseen by the prophets and thereafter remained ever in the background of Jewish Apocalypticism. But history had not finished, and Jerusalem would see new wars and victories: the brief Persian season in the seventh century and then, after the reconquest by the Byzantines, the beginning of Muslim domination in 638, supported by the Islamic



Damascus Gate, 1935

## History and destiny of the city

sanctification of the City. Islam's third holy place – after Mecca (destination of the great Muslim pilgrimage) and Medina – thanks to Mohammed's mysterious Night Journey narrated in the Koran (17:1), Jerusalem in fact recalls in its Arabic name, *al-Quds*, the absoluteness of divine holiness. The nearly 13 centuries of Islamic domination – which ended in 1917 with the entry of the British troops into Jerusalem – saw a succession of often tragic events in which East and West, sacred and profane, miseries and dreams, ideals and political interests were inextricably mingled, as shown emblem-

atically by the advent of the Crusades in history, in propaganda, and in the collective consciousness.

Even in the modern and contemporary age, however, the mingling of religious myths and political aims have scarred the city, and the reason is ultimately the eschatological significance of Jerusalem for the three great monotheistic religions that grew one upon the other, one against the other, one with the other, indissolubly. Thus, in seventh-century Anglican England – just as now among protestant fundamentalists in the United States – this is how one reflect-

ed on the Jews' return to Palestine and on their final conversion, the prelude to the final coming of Christ. However, Jewish religious critics were the first to oppose the theories of political Zionism that arose near the end of the 19th century and were achieved in the 20th, the century shattered by the European catastrophe of the Shoah. Zionism and the Shoah were the historical harbingers of the birth of the State of Israel in 1948. And in the second half of the 1900s – due to the wars and the unscrupulous power politics of each of the contenders and of their supporters, who never considered the interests of the peoples, of the Palestinians in particular – the peace invoked for Jerusalem by the psalmist seemed but a distant mirage.

The terrorist offensive on the global scale – which reached a climax in the horrific 11 September 2001 attack on the United States but which perpetrates appalling acts almost every day – has appreciably complicated the international landscape on which the now 50-year-old issue of the Near East and Jerusalem is always to be situated. And the very condition of the City today stands as a symbol of the tragic stalemate into which every hope seems to sink, and from which voices invoking a negotiable solution are expelled. For the City, annexed by Israel in two phases (in 1948 and 1967), the Holy See – which has had normal diplomatic relations with Israel since 1994 – remains favourable to the resolution of the United Nations Organization which in 1947 hoped for a special internationally guaranteed statute for Israel. In the broader context of the Palestinian issue, which calls for an urgent solution, the Holy See's concern is for peace and for the support of the Catholic and Christian presence in the region. Political extremism and religious fundamentalism are indeed progressively reducing the strength of the various Christian communities and even of pilgrimages. After more than half a century of bloodshed and hatred – limiting ourselves to recent history – resentment and revindication must be abandoned, at least in Jerusalem. The City's true destiny, in the three monotheistic religions, is an eschatological one. Believers must be conscious of, pray and work for it; and those who do not believe must bear it in mind. In the interest of a finally tolerant and peaceful coexistence.

## A spiritual thirst

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

in beautiful theories, but in decisions that result from the true realization of our needs", the acknowledgement of our thirst.

On Tuesday, 20 February, Fr Tolentino de Mendonça used the example of Jonah to reflect on lethargy, "the thirst for nothing". Seen in its wider and existential context, thirst "teaches the art of searching, learning, collaborating, the passion to serve", he said. However, if we neglect this thirst, then we "begin to die" and this danger occurs not simply on an individual level, but also in institutions and in communities. "The Church herself can be led adrift by this desire for nothing", he warned.

It is crucial to remember, the preacher cautioned, that "the human heart is fragile and vulnerable". It is only when we accept ourselves as we are that "we discover we are loved by God and precious in his eyes". In this way, the "existential hole" of lethargy, in which we do not realize the extent of our thirst, can be filled by the "therapy of desire", which is the

"desire for life", and by inviting Jesus to quench our thirst, he explained. "Perhaps we Christians, and in particular we pastors, should value the spirituality of thirst more so than the structures".

On Wednesday morning, 21 February, Fr Tolentino de Mendonça's meditation turned to the role of women, which, he stressed, "we cannot ignore". In them, "we can glimpse a unique style of seeking Jesus and of genuine discipleship: the world of women and their actions evangelize us and they do so with their own language, with a vital grammar, with a thirst"; it would behoove us to heed this thirst, "as it is the way that those on the peripheries, the simple and the least, express themselves". The women in the Gospel express themselves mostly through gestures; their faith is not abstract, he explained. "There is a flow of reality which shapes the faith" and, rather than trying to play a leadership role, they dedicate themselves to "serving", which, in "the grammar of Jesus, is the most noble and religious of words".

Ary Scheffer, "The temptation of Christ" (1854)



At the Angelus

## A time of spiritual struggle

*"Experience the Lenten Season as an occasion for reconciliation and for the renewal of your own lives". Pope Francis offered this encouragement to inmates after the recitation of the Angelus on Sunday, 18 February. Before reciting the Marian prayer with the faithful gathered in Saint Peter's Square, he commented on the day's passage from the Gospel of Mark. The following is a translation of the Pope's reflection, which he delivered in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

This first Sunday of Lent, the Gospel recalls the themes of temptation, conversion and the Good News. Mark the Evangelist writes: "The Spirit immediately drove Jesus out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan" (cf. Mk 1:12-13). Jesus goes into the desert to prepare himself for his mission in the world. He does not need conversion, but as a man, he must go through this trial, both for himself, to obey the Father's will, and for us, to give us the grace to overcome temptation. This preparation consists in the battle against the evil spirit, that is, against

Rather, we must entrust ourselves to the Lord, to his goodness and to his project of love for each of us. Lent is a time of repentance, yes, but it is not a time of sorrow, but it is not a time of mourning. It is a joyous and serious commitment to strip ourselves of our selfishness, of our "old man", and to renew ourselves according to the grace of our Baptism.

Only God can give us true happiness: it is useless to waste our time seeking it elsewhere, in wealth, in pleasure, in power, in a career... The Kingdom of God is the realization of all our aspirations because at the same time, it is the salvation of mankind and the glory of God. On this first Sunday of Lent, we are invited to listen carefully and to hear Jesus' appeal to convert, and to believe in the Gospel. We are exhorted to begin the journey towards Easter with commitment, to embrace evermore the grace of God who wishes to transform the world into a kingdom of justice, peace and fraternity.

May Mary Most Holy help us to live this Lenten Season with fidelity to the Word of God and with unceasing prayer, as Jesus did in the desert. It is not impossible! It means living each day with the desire to embrace the love that comes from God and which seeks to transform our life and the entire world.

*Following the Marian prayer, the Pope recalled the preparations for the Synod on youth scheduled for October, and added the following remarks:*

Dear brothers and sisters, in a month, from 19 to 24 March, some 300 young people from all over the world will come to Rome for a preparatory meeting for the October Synod. However, I firmly wish that *all* young people can be protagonists in this

preparation. Therefore, they will be able to participate online, through language groups moderated by other young people. The contributions of the "Internet groups" will combine with those of the Rome meeting. Dear young people, you can find the information on the website of the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops [<http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/en.html>]. I thank you for contributing to our journey together!

I greet you, families, parish groups, associations and all the pilgrims who have come from Italy and from different countries. I greet the faithful from Murcia, Vannes, Warsaw and Wrocław; as I do those from Erba, Vignole, Fontaneto d'Agogna, Silvi and Troina. I greet the young people from the Deanery of Baggio, Milan, and those from Melito Porto Salvo.

At the beginning of Lent, which, as I said, is a journey of conversion and a battle against evil, I wish to extend a special greeting to inmates: dear brothers and sisters who are in prison, I encourage each of you to experience the Lenten period as an occasion for reconciliation and for renewal of your own lives, under the merciful gaze of the Lord. He never tires of offering forgiveness.

I ask everyone to remember me and the personnel of the Roman Curia in your prayers as we begin the week of Spiritual Exercises this evening.

I wish you all a nice Sunday. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*



*I wish you all a fruitful Lenten Journey, and I ask you to pray for me and my collaborators as we begin our week of Spiritual Exercises*

(@Pontifex)

the devil. For us too, Lent is a time of spiritual "contest", of spiritual struggle: we are called to confront the Evil One through prayer in order to be able, with God's help, to overcome him in our daily life. We know that evil unfortunately is at work in our existence and around us, where there is violence, rejection of the other, closure, war, injustice. All of these are the work of the Evil One, of evil.

Immediately following the temptations in the desert, Jesus begins to preach the Gospel, that is, the Good News, the second word. The first was "temptation", the second, "Good News". And this Good News demands man's conversion – the third word – and faith. He proclaims: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand"; and then he cautions, "repent, and believe in the gospel" (v. 15), that is, believe in this Good News that the kingdom of God is at hand. In our lives, we always need to convert – every day! –, and the Church invites us to pray for this. In fact, we are never sufficiently orientated towards God and we must continually direct our minds and our hearts towards him. In order to do this, we need to have the courage to reject all that takes us off course, the false values which deceive us, by subtly flattering our ego.

