CONSISTORY

We can await with confidence the grace of God

Interview with the new Cardinal John Tong Hon, Bishop of Hong Kong

WHAT WE NEED MOST OF ALL IS PRAYER

Witness of Cardinal Roger Etchegaray
Valtellina reaches the milestone of 75 years of activity looking to the future with new, significant prospects for growth, in Italy and around the world: born as a company operating in the telephone network infrastructure, Valtellina is today a point of reference and system integrator in strategic areas of development and progress. In all the areas and in the countries where it operates it applies the guiding values that have always distinguished it: great working abilities, seriousness, strict adherence to agreements. Among the most important Bergamo companies in an absolute sense, it has almost 1000 employees and demonstrates concretely how tradition and innovation coexist in the principle of Quality.

Valtellina is 75 years old.
Happy birthday, future.
“Jesus will give us strength. Not you, but Him in you”

The sermon of Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio in the Basilica of Saint Lawrence Outside the Walls, in Rome, 18 February
The encounter as Grace

As editorial of this issue we publish an excerpt from Don Luigi Giussani. The excerpt is taken from Appunti di metodo cristiano [Notes on the Christian Method], published in Milan by Student Youth in September 1964, with the nihil obstat of Monsignor Carlo Figini and the imprimatur of the Ambrosian Curia, and dedicated to Paul VI with these words: “To the Pope of Ecclesiam Suam as expression of the meditated and faithful attempt of his students in Milan”

Giulio Andreotti
“What is mortal man, why do you remember him, the son of Adam, that you should care for him?” (Psalms 8, 5).

“Moses said to God: ‘But who am I?’” (Exodus 3, 11).

“And I said: Oh Lord Yahweh, look, I am not even capable of speaking; I am but a child! “ (Jeremiah 1, 6).

“Lord, I am not worthy to have you under my roof . . .” (Luke 7, 6).

The purest and most objective value of Christian life is the awareness of the absolute gratuitousness of God’s interventions in history, because there is no greater, sweeter, and more exalting truth. The encounters, which He created to make men and women – us! – part of His kingdom, are a pure gift that our nature would not have been able even to imagine or foresee. They are a deeply pure gift above and beyond any capacity of our life. They are “Grace.”

In His Mystical Body, Jesus Christ takes up again this entire Kingdom of “Grace,” of the supernatural goodness of God’s power. Just as Jesus of Nazareth’s existence among the Jews and the possibility of encountering Him on the street were grace for them two thousand years ago, so are the Church’s existence in the world and the encounter with her in society grace for us today.
Not only the encounter but also the capacity to understand that calling is a gift of Grace.

“Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! Because it was not flesh or blood that revealed it to you but my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 16, 17).

At that time, Jesus exclaimed, “I bless you Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him…” Matthew (11, 25-7) . “Because”, he replied, “the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven are revealed to you, but they are not revealed to them” (Matthew 13, 11).

And the same capacity to verify this call, to recognize its value, is a gift of Grace. “I shall ask the Father and He will give you another Advocate to be with you forever, that Spirit of truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows Him; but you shall know Him because He shall be with you and He shall be in you” (John 14, 16-17).

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you” (John 14, 26).

“I have made your name known to the men you took from the world to give me. They were yours and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now at least they know that all you have given me comes indeed from you” (John 17, 6-7).

“The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8, 16).
Jesus and the Samaritan woman
Jesus and the adultress
And the capacity to adhere to and fulfill the Christian proposal is a gift of Grace:

“I am the true vine and my father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit He cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes to make it bear even more. You are pruned already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you. Make your home in me as I make mine in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, but must remain part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in Him bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing” (John 15, 1-5).

After saying this, Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

“Father, the hour has come: glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you; and, through the power over all mankind that you have given Him, let Him give eternal life to all those you have entrusted to Him. And eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17, 1-3).

“I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and so that I may be in them” (John 17, 26).

Because our minds and hearts are never commensurate with the steps that God takes towards us. The same supernatural goodness that makes the mystery of God assume the “form of a servant and the figure of man” (Saint Paul) in Christ and in the Church, also enables our spirit and sensitivity to understand these wonders. Otherwise they would remain like light for the blind or words for the deaf, like ultrasound that remains silent to our ears.

Thus even the encounter with that small part of the Church that is the Christian community in our particular environment is “Grace,” a gift of God’s power. And we need Grace to understand the call of those who belong to that community and guide it, to commit ourselves to verify their call and to hold faithfully to their proposal.
At this point we can understand what constitutes the expression of a true availability and commitment to the Christian calling: it is the attitude of pleading, of prayer. The norm of the Christian encounter immediately makes a sincere person aware of the disproportion between his or her strengths and the very terms of the proposal, of how exceptional is the problem posed by such a message. The most elementary aspect of our natural religiosity is the sense of our own original dependence. It disposes the simple soul to acknowledge that all the initiative may come from God’s mystery and that the ultimate attitude to assume is the humble attitude of one who asks to see, understand, and adhere. This attitude of prayer is so fundamental that it belongs as much to those who do not as yet believe as to believers. It belongs as much to the Unnamed One in Alessandro Manzoni’s The Betrothed, who cries out, “God, if you exist reveal yourself to me” (Ch. 23) as to Peter, who exclaims “I do have faith, Lord, but increase the little faith I have” (Mark 9, 24).

An availability before and a commitment to the Christian fact that do not translate into a plea, into “prayer,” are not sufficiently true, because they do not take into account, with conscious faithfulness the meaning of the proposal that we are called to verify: “The hour is coming when anyone who kills you will think that he is doing a holy duty of God. They will do these things because they have never known either the Father or myself” (John 16, 2-3).
The Last Supper
Our consciousness begins to participate in the mystery of the One who creates us at the point of pleading and prayer. And our spirit thus feels the awe of this Mystery that makes everything, absolutely everything, when it considers that even this initial activity of pleading and praying is made possible only by a gift of the Creator: “No one can say, Lord Jesus, if not in the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 12, 13). “The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness, for we know not even what to ask for in prayer, nor how to ask it. But the Spirit Himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words” (Romans 8, 26).

The Liturgy of the Church educates us to look at God’s ineffably profound initiative on our behalf when it makes us say: “Lord, you who inspire our desires by anticipating them, deign to accompany them with your aid”.

Even the encounter with and the commitment to the most humble Christian community in a given setting with everyday people is not free of impurity that alters judgments and relationships, if it is not welcomed with that humble, active, vigilant availability of the heart that is the genuine impetus of prayer, albeit embryonic, vague, and confused.
Trust!
*It is the hand of Jesus that guides everything...*

Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus

Invitation to prayer

The editorial office of *30Days* invites all, and in particular the consecrated persons of the cloistered convents and monasteries, to pray for Don Giacomo Tantardini. For some months he has been undergoing treatment for a lung tumour. May the Lord grant us to pray with trust for the miracle of a cure. We ask the priests who appreciate and cherish *30Days* to celebrate Holy Mass for this intention. We ask of parents the charity of encouraging their children to pray.

Let us not grow weary of praying.
*Trust works miracles.*

Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus
**BRAZIL**

ARCHDIOCESE OF CURITIBA

*30Giorni is simply fantastic*

*Pinhais, Paraná, 21 November 2011*

Dear friends, peace and prosperity to all. With great joy I received from my friend, Father Ramiro Pastore, of the Camillians, a copy of the magazine *30Giorni*. Simply fantastic. I am a teacher of our Archdiocese of Curitiba and also sing in a choir of Italian music in our city, the Italian Choir of Paraná. I would like instructions on how to receive your magazine and some supplements to back issues: the CD of Gregorian chant, *Chi prega si salva*, the booklet of Don Giacomo Tantardini: *Il Figlio da se stesso non può fare nulla*.

Certainly for me and my students they will be a rich source of assistance for the growth of our knowledge and our faith.

If possible, I would like the Italian edition of *30Giorni*, because I’m originally from Trentino and speak our language well enough.

Fraternally,

*Luiz Antonio Lenzi*

*Pinhais, Paraná, 12 December 2011*

Health and peace to all!
This weekend I received the CDs and the magazines that I had requested. God only knows how happy I was to receive these treasures. Thank you so much!

I renew my desire to benefit from a subscription to your magazine *30Giorni*, in Italian, to enjoy a little of the Italian language and culture.

May God bless you! Always!

I wish for you a Nativity of the Lord filled with joys and successes. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

*Luiz Antonio Lenzi*

**BANGLADESH**

MISSIONARY SISTERS OF KOREA

*I work as a missionary among the disabled*

*Borogurgola, 24 November 2011*

Peace!
Dear Director Giulio Andreotti,
I am Sr. Noel M.J. Kim MSK (Missionary Sisters of Korea) and live in Bangladesh.

I’ve been working here as a missionary for the disabled.
I’d like to request to have your wonderful magazine *30Days*.
I saw it written in Italian for the first time in the PIME Fathers’ community, but today I read it in the English edition.
It’s very useful not only for my poor English but also for the members of my community and the disabled center.
Hopefully, I’m awaiting the pleasure of your reply.
With the best regards and prayers,
Sister Noel Kim, MSK

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**CHINA**

**CHURCH OF THE SACRED HEART OF NANNING**

**From China**

Nanning, 26 November 2011

Hello,
You sent us the magazine *30Giorni* which we have received. Thank you! I’m a priest of the Nanning Sacred Heart church.
God bless you,

Father Tan Jingtuang
CHAD
SAINT LUC OF BAKARA MAJOR SEMINARY

30Jours is a fundamental training tool

N’Djamena, 23 October 2011

Mr Senator,
My name is Benjamin Y. Bamani. I am a student of the third year of theology in the major seminary of Saint Luc of Bakara, near the capital of Chad, N’Djamena. I discovered your splendid magazine 30Jours when I entered the Propaedeutic year in the major seminary of Saint Mbaga Tuzinde of Sarh (a town in southern Chad) thanks to the Archbishop Emeritus of N’Djamena, Monsignor Charles Vandame, who was my spiritual director in all the years of the study of philosophy. I very much appreciate the magazine which I always read with great pleasure. In fact, not only does it have an elegant format, which makes it pleasant reading, but it also has an important content of great richness and variety of topics treated. For me, it has become I would say a fundamental training tool, to the extent that it helps me to be open to the Church and the world, to understand the events of the Church outside Africa, especially in the Middle East and China, and to know from close up about personalities that make the life of this Church.

Since I discovered the magazine, I no longer wanted to do without it. So, having entered Theology, I continued to request each issue from Monsignor Vandame who, indeed, passed them on to me very willingly. But now more than seven hundred kilometers separate us (he, in fact, is a formational instructor in the major seminary of Sarh and I’m in the Theology School of N’Djamena) and communication difficulties are such that I only get the magazine after a few months. For this reason, also following the advice of Monsignor Vandame, I have taken the liberty of writing to ask you to become part of the list of beneficiaries of the free subscription, not having the financial possibility to pay for it.

If not possible, I will be grateful for your participation in my priestly formation through the magazine. With my best wishes for the New Year, I offer you, Mr Senator, the expression of my cordial greetings.

Benjamin Y. Bamani

IVORY COAST
ARCHDIOCESE OF GAGNOA

My prayers so that 30Jours may continue

Gagnoa, 27 October 2011

Mr Director,
I just received the material requested in my letter of 24 August 2011. I express my deep gratitude and that of all the clergy of the Archdiocese of Gagnoa. Thanking you for your generosity, I assure you, Mr Director, of my prayers so that 30Jours may continue. May the Lord continue to inspire you for the good of the Church.

Monsignor Joseph Aké,
Archbishop of Gagnoa

CUBA
SANCTUARY OF THE VIRGEN DE LA CARIDAD DEL COBRE

The visit to Cuba of our beloved Pope Benedict XVI

Santa Clara, 17 November 2011

Dear Mr Andreotti,
I address you with deep humility and respect. I am a Cuban who trusts wholeheartedly in our Lord Jesus Christ and it is on the basis of faith and charity that I implore you on my knees, and I am not ashamed of it, to send me, if possible, the booklet Quien reza se sal-
and if it is not asking too much, the CD of Gregorian chants that I had the opportunity to hear only some pieces of, and once only, through Radio católica mundial. I think it’s a music that unites us and prepares us with greater inner willingness to pray.

I tell you all this because I am part of a small group of people of Buen Viaje church, a diocesan sanctuary dedicated to the Virgin Mary with the title of the Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre. Next year there will be a jubilee for the rediscovery of her image that took place four hundred years ago, and also the announced visit of our beloved Pope Benedict XVI. God allows all this because the people of Cuba have a great need of it and even more our Holy Mother Church.

Since the sanctuary is united to the bishopric, I had by chance the opportunity to see in issue number 6 of 2011 references to the booklet and CD of Gregorian music in the many letters of thanks you received from different parts of the world.

If you could fulfill my humble request, I would use the same method that I followed already on previous occasions, for instance when I received a precious rosary from the convent of St Rita of Cascia, I sent them a dollar as thanks. Later, they replied to me thanking me for what I had given.

I don’t want to trouble you anymore. I offer you my prayers. If you can send me what I ask, I will send a small sum. If you can not it doesn’t matter. We remain united in Christ Jesus. May God help and accompany you always in this work that is so beautiful, and always accompany your staff.

In the peace of Jesus and Mary,

Gerardo Paz Vergara
CROATIA
POOR CLARES OF THE SVETE KLARE CONVENT

We entrust your intentions to God’s heart, especially for Don Giacomo Tantardini

Požega, 30 November 2011

Dear Mr Giulio Andreotti,
We are a small community of Poor Clares of Požega, Croatia, and write to you once again to express our gratitude for what you do for the Church and the cloistered nuns through the magazine 30Days.

Thank you very much for never having ceased to send us your wonderful magazine!

Thanks to your goodness we are made aware of the most important events in the Church and so we can feel really united to the whole world and pray with greater fervor.

We entrust your intentions to God’s heart, especially for Don Giacomo Tantardini.

In this Jubilee Year of St Clare, we ask with our prayers abundant blessings for you and your collaborators.

We wish you a holy Christmas!

Gratefully,

Your Poor Clares

UNITED STATES
CARMELITE NUNS OF CRISTO REY CONVENT

Everything is useful to us because we bring it in prayer to Jesus in the Sacrament

San Francisco, California, 30 November 2011

Praised be Jesus Christ!
Dear Mr Director,
Only a few lines to say hello and thank you deeply for sending to our convent the magazine 30Giorni in English and, recently, also in Spanish. May God reward you!

In this way, we all benefit because some know English better, others Spanish. At the same time I wish to congratulate you and all your collaborators for the publication of this so Catholic magazine that informs us of important events in the world. Everything is useful to us because we take it in prayer to Jesus in the Sacrament, so that He “to whom all power was given in heaven and on earth”, will come in his mercy to help with many needs of the Church and humanity.

I enclose our Christmas card for you, your family and collaborators. And because you are a prayerful soul, I ask you to help me give thanks to God for my fifty years of religious profession as a Discalced Carmelite in this Convent of Christ the King, an anniversary that I celebrated on 15 October this year, the Solemnity of Our Blessed Mother Teresa of Jesus. I enclose a memorial holy picture of this day.

Assuring you of our remembrance before the tabernacle, I greet you, entrusting you to the Hearts of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The Prioress,
Mother Rosa María del Carmelo, OCD

MOZAMBIQUE
MISSIONARIES OF THE CONSOLED

30Dias: love for the Church and for the Pope

Cuamba, 1 December 2011

Mr Senator Andreotti,
I allow myself to say that it would be a joy to be able to benefit from the complimentary magazine 30Dias in

The village of Sabastyia, in Samaria
Portuguese, which is the official language here, so that I could also give it to other people to read.

We are a community of four Consoled missions in this mission of Cuamba-Mitucué, in the vast diocese of Lichinga (one hundred and thirty thousand square kilometers).

We are two thousand kilometers from the capital Maputo and seven hundred kilometers from the sea. We assist one hundred and sixty-five communities, aided by youth leaders.

In other countries where I worked, sent by superiors, I became familiar with the Italian edition of 30Giorni, one of the best magazines I have read.

Mr Senator Andreotti, for many years I have followed your brilliant political career and now I do not want to offend your modesty, but let me tell you that there are so many people happy to see you and read you and that you ‘are with us’ in the magazine, alive, enthusiastic, full of experience, communicative, with a youthfulness ‘that never sets’.

30Dias is an up-to-date magazine, bright, of high aesthetic quality, with a focus on the essential, with well chosen articles, clear ideas, smooth and pleasant reading, love for the Church, for the Pope, precious memories. A magazine of values...

Please accept my esteem with best wishes for a Holy Christmas!

With great appreciation, yours,

Father José Salgueiro da Costa
Dear Mr Andreotti and collaborators,

May the peace and grace of the Infant God be with you!

We send our warm sincere thanks for sending us your magazine 30Days. It is a spiritual treasure. We are grateful for the inspiration and insights that we draw from it.

The Mother Abbess and the community join together in wishing you a happy and holy Christmas.

You will be especially remembered on Christmas Night, when we will keep watch before the Blessed Sacrament.

Be assured of our prayers for a still greater success of your service in spreading the Good News of the Gospel to all corners of the world.
As we celebrate the birthday of our Lord, the King of Peace, may God bless you abundantly with joys that will increase. And through the months to follow, may you find He’s always near to guard you with His tender love and to guide you throughout the year.

Happy Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

With assurance of our prayers,

Sister Jeanne Marie and Community

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
COMBONI MISSIONARIES

We always await and read *30Giorni* with interest

Bangui, 3 December 2011

Dear Senator Andreotti,

I receive 30Giorni as Holy Christmas approaches while I’m sending good wishes to friends and benefactors. Among them there are also you and your staff of 30Giorni. It really is with sincere gratitude that I and my fellow brothers, who await and always read your magazine with interest, send our best wishes of gratitude.

Thank you, Mr Senator: may Jesus in the New Year bring many gifts of life and peace.

I want to ask a big favor. Could you make us the gift of fifty booklets of *Qui prie sauve son âme*? Thus far I have been an ‘office’ missionary in Bangui, but next year, aged 75, I will return to be a missionary in the villages of Boganagone and I would like to engage intensely in the training of catechists, have been for several months without a priest. It would be a really nice gift and also helpful if I could give them this booklet. There are twenty-four villages, but we also have a catechist helper come.

Thanks and all best wishes.

Father Gianantonio Berti,
MCCJ

ROMANIA
BENEDICTINE NUNS OF MATER UNITATIS CONVENT

We want to thank you sincerely for the magazine that arrives punctually and that is so appreciated by us

Piatra Neamt, 3 December 2011

Dear editorial staff of 30Giorni.

We are the Benedictine nuns of the Mater Unitatis Convent of Piatra Neamt. We want to thank you for the magazine that arrives punctually and that is so appreciated by us. It keeps us in touch with the ecclesial world and with the other realities of our time. It is a real and concrete help in our cloistered life because it gives us many reasons to renew our commitment to prayer for all the brothers who are struggling or suffering in the world for various reasons and causes. This is our apostolate and our way of being in the world even if we are not of the world, as Jesus says.
Encounter as Grace

Introduction

We publish chapter I and canons 1 and 5 of the Decree on Justification of the Council of Trent Cum Hoc Tempore, which comprises a total of 16 doctrinal chapters and 33 canons.

Its preparation began in June 1546, during the first phase of the Council initiated the previous December and in addition to the inherent difficulty of formulating an appropriate text on a controversial subject in response to the objections of the Reformers, it was also influenced by the very difficult phase in relations in Germany between the Reformed Church and the Emperor Charles V and, among the Catholics themselves, the relationships between the Emperor and Pope Paul III.

Having overcome both these difficulties at least temporarily, the text was approved in the solemn session of 13 January 1547 and, once the Council of Trent ended, was promulgated by Pope Pius IV on 26 January 1564 along with all the other conciliar decrees.

History not only tells us of this process, but also of the fact that the approval of the decree in January 1547 was desired at all costs so that it would be on time for the sermons of the forthcoming
Lent. For the benefit of souls, in other words. Delay, it was feared, would result in “damage that the souls of many would suffer” (quoted in H. Jedin, *The History of the Council of Trent*).

We republish as editorial in this issue of 30Days a commentary (it was not, nor is meant to be anything else) that Don Giussani wrote in 1964, in plain and simple words taken from Sacred Scripture and from life.

The encounter: “The encounters, which He created to make men and women – us! – part of His kingdom, are a pure gift that our nature would not have been able even to imagine or foresee, Grace... But also the capacity to understand that calling is a gift of Grace... And the capacity to verify this call, to recognize its value, is a gift of Grace... And the capacity to adhere to and fulfill the Christian proposal is a gift of Grace”. Grace in the face of which you can only remain in an “attitude of pleading, of prayer... this too made possible only by a gift of the Creator”.

The risen Jesus and the apostles on the Lake of Tiberias, a fresco in the Basilica of St Angelo in Formis, Capua (Caserta)
Decree of the Council of Trent *De iustificatione*

De naturae et legis ad iustificandos homines imbecillitate

Ch. I Primum declarat sancta Synodus, ad iustificationis doctrinam probe et sincere intellegendam oportere, ut unusquisque agnoscat et fateatur, quod, cum omnes homines in praevaricatione Adae innocentiam perdissent (cf. *Rm* 5, 12; *1Cor* 15, 22), “facti immundi” (*Is* 64, 5) et (ut Apostolus inquit) “natura filii irae” (*Eph* 2, 3), quemadmodum in decreto de peccato originali exposuit, usque adeo servi erant peccati (cf. *Rm* 6, 20) et sub potestate diaboli ac mortis, ut non modo gentes per vim naturae (can. 1), sed ne Iudaei quidem per ipsam etiam litteram Legis Moysi inde liberari aut surgere possent, tametsi in eis liberum arbitrium minime extinctum (can. 5) esset, viribus licet attenuatum et inclinatum (*Denzinger* 1521).

**Can. 1** “Si quis dixerit, hominem suis operibus, quae vel per humanae naturae vires, vel per Legis doctrinam fiant, absque divina per Christum Iesum gratia posse iustificari coram Deo: anathema sit” (*Denzinger* 1551).

**Can. 5** “Si quis liberum hominis arbitrium post Adae peccatum amissum et extinctum esse dixerit, aut rem esse de solo titulo, immo titulum sine re, figmentum denique a satana invectum in Ecclesiam: anathema sit” (*Denzinger* 1555).
Decree of the Council of Trent on Justification

On the Inability of Nature and of the Law to justify man

Ch. I. The holy Synod declares first, that, for the correct and sound understanding of the doctrine of Justification, it is necessary that each one recognise and confess, that, whereas all men had lost their innocence in the prevarication of Adam (Rm 5, 12; 1Cor 15, 22), “having become unclean” (Is 64, 5) and (as the apostle says) “by nature children of wrath” (Eph 2, 3), as (this Synod) has set forth in the decree on Original Sin, they were so far the servants of sin (cf. Rm 6, 20) and under the power of the devil and of death, that not the Gentiles only by the force of nature, but not even the Jews by the very letter itself of the law of Moses, were able to be liberated, or to arise, therefrom; although free will, attenuated as it was in its powers, and bent down, was by no means extinguished in them.

Can. 1. If any one says that man may be justified before God by his own works, whether done through the teaching of human nature, or that of the law, without the grace of God through Jesus Christ: let him be anathema.

Can. 5. If any one says that, since Adam’s sin, the free will of man is lost and extinguished; or, that it is a thing with only a name, or rather, a name without a reality, a figment, indeed, introduced into the Church by Satan: let him be anathema.
With our best wishes for a continuing good Advent and a Happy Christmas, we entrust you to God in our prayers and we ask Him to bless your work.

The Benedictine nuns of Piatra Neamț

GABON
SISTERS OF JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

30Jours nourishes our faith

Libreville, 4 December 2011

Mr Director of 30Jours, I am Sister Sonia, of the Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd, present in Libreville for the pastoral mission. I am Brazilian and I work in the Catholic school of Sainte-Marie.

For this reason I humbly ask you to send us this valuable magazine. How can we not thank you? It would be a grave sin. Last Wednesday I received issue number 7/8 of 2011. It is a time of enrichment for me, and also for those of the school: in fact, I make copies and give them to teachers and some pupils. The magazine nourishes our faith as many seeds in a garden do. Thank you for this gift. Thanks to it we are united to the universal Church and know how to feed our faith with truly profound articles, some of which make us rediscover the life of the pastors of the Church, like that on St Charles Borromeo. What richness! Thank you so very much!

We wish you as of now happy Christmas holidays,

Sister Sonia, SIBP

Libreville, 5 December 2011

Thank you for your endless patience in sending us the prayer booklets: here I distribute them to the students of the Sainte-Marie school, a Catholic school in Libreville, as I did with the catechists of Lastourville. All the material for evangelization is in the hands of the people of God to pray and be more committed before the Lord.

Thank you very much,

Sister Sonia, SIBP

IVORY COAST
ARCHDIOCESE OF GAGNOA

Appreciation for the comfort that the meditation “Le Fils ne peut rien faire de lui-même” gave me

Gagnoa, 7 December 2011

I greet you, Mr Director of 30Jours dans l’Église et dans le monde. I have received from our Archbishop Monsignor Joseph Aké, the Easter meditation of Don Giacomo Tantardini, entitled “Le Fils ne peut rien faire de lui-même”. After reading it, I think it is important to send this note of appreciation for the comfort that this meditation gave me.

I drew a really great lesson in humility from it. Although He was God, the Son does not attribute to Himself the works he accomplished, but attributes them to the Father. Thus, we can say in our turn: we...
do not do anything by ourselves, except what the Son does in us and through us, for our salvation, at least for the good works that we are enabled to do.

Another interesting point is that we are happy because we are loved. The more we are loved, the more we are happy. I understood that it is God’s love for us that enables us to accomplish great works for Him. It is a meditation to be read and reread.

Father Alain K. Kouadio

CUBA

Thanks

San Cristobal, 7 December 2011

Dear Director,
I hereby express to you and the entire editorial staff of your prestigious magazine my wishes for Christmas and New Year.

I would also like to thank you for the magazine that I receive each month and that constitutes the only relationship with the world in which we live. Thank you.

Respectfully, yours,

Gustavo del Rosario Fernández Carrillo

ITALY

SACRAMENTINE SISTERS

I received from the Little Way the sum of 1,500 euros for the orphan girls of Monkey Bay, Malawi

Bergamo, 7 December 2011

Dear friends of the Little Way,
This to tell you that on 5 December 2011 I received the sum of 1,500 euros for the orphan girls of Monkey Bay, Malawi. This gesture has the flavor of your great love for those in need. Thank you so much and I wish you all a merry Christmas and happy new year.

With appreciation,

Sister Margherita Ravelli

The desert of Judas
ITALY
BENEDICTINE NUNS OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST ABBEY

We pray for Don Giacomo Tantardini, for whom we also celebrated the Eucharist

Rome, 15 December 2011

Dearest,
I’m here to ask again the little booklet of prayers Chi prega si salva in English.

The books you sent us were ‘snapped up’, meaning they were most appreciated, so much so that other copies have been requested. We do not ask for a specific number of copies, but those that you could send will be gratefully accepted.

I must bring these copies with me on January 9, when I leave for Kenya, where our foundation goes on even if slowly; however this is a work in the hands of God and the Queen of the Angels to whom we dedicated the new house: with them in charge, everything will be just fine. We believe it!

We pray for Don Giacomo Tantardini, for whom we also celebrated the Eucharist. Jesus grant him what is good for everyone.

Thank you in advance and we take this opportunity to send you our good wishes for serene Christmas holidays in the company of the angels whom we meet daily on our walks.

Mother Ildefonsa, OSB, and Sisters

VIET NAM
CARMELITE NUNS OF CHÂU SÔN CONVENT

We bear in silence the joys and the sufferings of the Church and the whole world

Buôn Ma Thuột, 15 December 2011

Mr Director, dear brother in Jesus Christ, First, we greet you and your staff. We wish you a merry Christmas, holy and peaceful, and a happy new year 2012.

We are the small community of the Châu Sôn Carmel of Buôn Ma Thuột. We could not subscribe to a magazine of such high quality... but you send it to us free. We are very struck by your generosity. Thank you infinitely, because you think of us contemplatives who want to bear in silence the love, joys and sufferings of the Church and the whole world.

May the Child Jesus fill you with wisdom and love.

I sincerely thank you on behalf of the small community,

Sister Marie-Fatima, OC

Letters from all over the world • Letters from all over

The plateau between the Jordan valley and the Saron plain in Samaria
BRAZIL

BYZANTINE MONASTERY OF THE FILHOS MISERICORDIOSOS DA CRUZ

Preserving and sharing with simplicity the Byzantine spirituality

Votorantim, São Paulo, 15 December 2011

Dear Director,

30Dias is a gift from God for all of us and contributes to the formation of our religious brothers and sisters. Our institution of the Merciful Children of the Cross was founded canonically as an eparchial monastery with the blessing of our Greek-Melkite Catholic Archbishop for all of Brazil, His Excellency Farès D. Maakaroun (Member of the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops), and in communion with our Greek-Melkite Catholic Patriarchate in Damascus (Syria).

The two monastic communities (male and female) bloom with vocations, preserving and sharing with simplicity the broad-based Byzantine spirituality (East-West), but with a missionary spirit, being inserted in the various mission areas. Our charism is not a proselytizing imposition but a gift of the Holy Trinity in the heart of the One, Holy and Apostolic Church.

This foundation, subject to various needs, is still walking in ‘birth pangs’ but with the help of God’s people we resist and persist in the living rock and leader who is Jesus. To him the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Pray for us and all our vocations. To your editorial staff and to the dear readers our brotherly embrace and prayers.

United in the Most Holy Trinity,

The founder, Reverend Archimandrite Theodore, FMC

PHILIPPINES

BENEDICTINE NUNS OF THE EUCHARISTIC KING
OUR LADY OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE CONVENT

We pray for Don Giacomo, for his miraculous healing

Calapan City, 15 December 2011

Dear Senator Andreotti,

Greetings in the Lord!

Your beautiful magazine 30Days is very attractive to read because, in addition to the excellent articles, the pictures illustrate the happenings clearly and very reflectively. Personally I’ve used it for one of my lectio divina.

On behalf of the community, I express gratitude for your faithfulness in sending it to us. I would like to ask you a favor, if possible, to send us the CD with the liturgical chants.

Our young people are also interested. For me and also for others, who learn from the chant of the liturgy, it is another reason of enthusiasm to participate in our monastic life, not only for ourselves but also for those who often come to pray with us.

Thanks so much in advance.

With best wishes for a Holy Christmas and a Happy New Year and a happy Valentine’s Day.

With grateful heart,

Sister Perpetua, OSB

P. S. We pray for Don Giacomo, for his miraculous healing. We offer Holy Mass in our chapel.
SYRIA
ARMENIAN CATHOLIC PATRIARCHAL EXARCHATE

You know the serious crisis that Syria in particular is going through

Damascus, 15 December 2011

Mr Andreotti,
Coming near to Christmas I wish you and all your 30Giorni staff a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2012.

I take the liberty to send you the article attached to this on the theology of the apostolate of the laity, and please, if you deem it appropriate I ask you to include it in your magazine of renowned international reputation and so interesting. You know the serious crisis that the Middle East and especially Syria is going through. There is urgency to provoke thought, action and the prayers of the Christians of East and West and the international community.

A big thank you in advance,

Monsignor Joseph Arnaoutian,
Armenian Catholic Bishop of Damascus

Damascus, 14 January 2012

Mr Andreotti,
On the occasion of your happy ninety-third birthday, I express my sincere congratulations and my heartfelt wishes for long life, happiness and fruitful apostolate in the publication of your magazine 30Giorni which is so beneficial. Congratulations and thanks.

Monsignor Joseph Arnaoutian,
Armenian Catholic Bishop of Damascus

SPAIN
DISCALCED CARMELITE NUNS OF SAN JOSÉ CONVENT

The meditation “El Hijo no puede hacer nada por su cuenta” is splendid!

Getxo, 15 December 2011

Dear Mr Andreotti,
Thank you. We receive your magazine and we feel part of a large family in sharing so many items of interesting news with so many brothers and sisters around the world.

The meditation “El Hijo no puede hacer nada por su cuenta” is splendid!

In the latest issue of 30Días there was talk of a booklet and a CD of Gregorian chants: could you send them to us?

Thank you for your generosity and count on our prayers for everything. In a special way for Don Giacomo Tantardini.

May the Child who was born in Bethlehem smile on you this Nativity.

The Carmelite nuns of Getxo

ARGENTINA
DIOCESE OF OBERÁ

Thanks from a bishop

Oberá, 18 December 2011

Dear Director,
On the occasion of your happy ninety-third birthday, I wish you and all your 30Giorni staff a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2012.

I take the liberty to send you the article attached to this on the theology of the apostolate of the laity, and please, if you deem it appropriate I ask you to include it in your magazine 30Giorni which is so beneficial. Congratulations and thanks.

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On the occasion of your happy ninety-third birthday, I express my sincere congratulations and my heartfelt wishes for long life, happiness and fruitful apostolate in the publication of your magazine 30Giorni which is so beneficial. Congratulations and thanks.

Monsignor Joseph Arnaoutian,
Armenian Catholic Bishop of Damascus

Monsignor Damián Santiago Bitar,
Bishop of Oberá
Dear Editor,

May the peace and joy of the baby Jesus Christ to be born to us be with you.

I wish to continually thank you for the very inspiring and invaluable 30Days magazine that you regularly send me. A few weeks ago, I visited our seminary (the seminary I attended) in Regent, Freetown Sierra Leone and shared with the seminarians the 30Days magazine which also had enclosed “The Chants of Tradition” booklet and CD. The choir especially was thankful and have begun learning the hymns.

I am enclosing photographs of three of them learning the hymns.

On their behalf, I am also emailing you a letter of gratitude also requesting that they too would like in the future to receive the 30Days magazine.

May God bless all your services to humanity.

In Christ,

Rev. Father Henry Magbity

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Dear Editor,

May the peace and joy of the baby Jesus Christ to be born to us be with you.

I wish to continually thank you for the very inspiring and invaluable 30Days magazine that you regularly send me. A few weeks ago, I visited our seminary (the seminary I attended) in Regent, Freetown Sierra Leone and shared with the seminarians the 30Days magazine which also had enclosed “The Chants of Tradition” booklet and CD. The choir especially was thankful and have begun learning the hymns.

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May God bless all your services to humanity.

In Christ,

Rev. Father Henry Magbity

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Dear Director Giulio Andreotti,

Christmas is coming and first of all I express my congratulation to you and your friends in the office of 30 Days: may the Infant Jesus grant you and your friends rich graces, and bring his peace and happiness to you all.

Datong, 20 December 2011
I give you and you all my thanks for sending 30Days to Datong diocese. 30Days is an important magazine to us, because it has a lot of news about the Catholic Church in this world, and historical knowledge about the Church. I must say again ‘thank you very much’!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Yours faithfully,

Fr. Paul Liu

FRANCE

BRAZIL

Thanks for the regular sending of the magazine

Ruy Barbosa, Bahia, 28 December 2011

Dear brothers and sisters of the magazine 30Dias na Igreja e no mundo, many thanks for the regular sending of the magazine.

I express my heartfelt wishes. Jesus, the Savior, was born in Bethlehem.

The celebration of the Birth of the Lord renews our hope and commits us in regard to the poor and needy, in the defense and promotion of life.

We welcome Him with joy, the giver of grace and encouragement of new life, for whom all hearts long! We want to be a sign in our families and communities.

A Holy Christmas and a New Year full of blessings, also for all those entrusted to you.

A fraternal embrace, in Christ always,

Monsignor André De Witte,
Bishop of Ruy Barbosa

30Jours widens our prayer to the whole Church

Craon, 6 January 2012

Mr Director,
The period of good wishes is a favorable moment to thank you for the regular sending of your magazine 30Jours with the various supplements. We receive it always with joy because it widens our prayer to the whole Church.

For all this, may the Lord bless you with your collaborators in the eyes of his sweet Mother.

For the Mother Prioress,

Sister Marie-Hélène, OSB

With our prayers for Don Giacomo Tantardini.

ITALY

Particularly welcome was the meditation on Christmas: The humanity of Christ is our happiness

Bologna, 6 January 2012

Reverend Don Giacomo Tantardini,
We are a small cloistered community, dedicated to
solemn perpetual Eucharistic adoration for the Church, and especially for priests.

We read with great pleasure your meditations that, from time to time, 30Giorni offers us. Particularly welcome was that on Christmas, which you gave in Fidenza on 20 December 2006 and which has now been published.

Indeed The humanity of Christ is our happiness. Truly “Christmas is Paradise”.

We take the liberty of adding: truly the Eucharist is Paradise.

We who spend many hours of day and night before that Host: Christmas that continues, Easter which is continually realized, we really have to say that there is Paradise, even if now we can meet Jesus in faith alone, which however gives us the absolute certainty of His Presence.

Thank you, O priests, that you give us the Eucharist!

Together with all the brothers and sisters of 30Giorni we are praying that you get better quickly and well, certain that for the good Lord ‘nothing is impossible’.

We include the intercession of our founding mother Maria Costanza Zauli, and would like to send you two of her books as a gift hoping that they will be welcome to you.

Always in communion in Christ,

Most devout Handmaid Adorers of the Most Blessed Sacrament

FRANCE
BENEDICTINE NUNS ABBEY OF OLIVETANA
NOTRE-DAME SAINT-EUSTASE

Thanks for Don Giacomo Tantardini’s beautiful meditation on Christmas

Eyres-Moncube, 7 January 2012

Mr Director,

Thanks for sending your magazine 30Jours, a lovely reflection of the life of the Church that comes to join us in our convent.

Thanks especially for Don Giacomo Tantardini’s beautiful meditation on the Nativity. I’d like to have others know this marvelous text and offer it to people who come to the Abbey. May I ask you to send me, if possible, other copies?

With all my gratitude,

The Prioress, Sister Françoise Marie
Gratitude, patience, waiting. Three words for the Church in China

Interview with the new Cardinal John Tong Hon, Bishop of Hong Kong

by Gianni Valente

Cardinal John Tong Hon presents himself as a simple, smiling person. He prefers soft tones and a low profile. Among the new cardinals created by Pope Benedict XVI in the Consistory of 18 February 2012, his life story stands out for several reasons: a basketball player, an expert of Taoist and Confucian thought, a ‘second generation’ Christian. But now, the current bishop of Hong Kong will be for everyone above all the seventh Chinese cardinal in the history of the Church. Called on to offer with more intensity and authority his contribution of advice and balanced judgments with respect to the crucial issue of relations between the Holy See, the Church of China and the Chinese government.

You are now a bishop and cardinal. But if one looks at your biography, it can be seen that your parents did not come
from Christian families. None of your grandparents were baptized.

JOHN TONG HON: That is so. My mother was the first who had the opportunity to enter into contact with the Catholic faith. As a girl she attended a high school run by the Canossian Sisters, where there were also many Italian nuns. One day she also happened to meet the nuncio in China, who was visiting her school: the nuns had selected her to present a tribute of flowers to the representative of the Pope and she was very proud of this. She had also begun to study catechism, but without immediately receiving baptism, because there had never been a Catholic in her family. She decided to be baptized only after the Second World War, when I was already born and was six years old.

They were terrible years, those of your childhood.

When the Japanese conquered Hong Kong, we fled to Macao. Then I was entrusted to my paternal grandmother, who lived in a village in Guangdong. Only at the end of the war could I reunite with my parents in Canton. They were the years of the civil war. Communists and nationalists were fighting internally in the north. While the refugees and wounded soldiers arrived in the southern provinces. The American missionaries who were in Canton welcomed and helped whoever was in need with all-embracing love, regardless of whatever side they belonged to. My mother and I also helped them to distribute aid to survivors and refugees. Looking at the witness of my pastor Bernard Meyer and his Maryknoll brother missionaries, I began to think that I too, when I grew up, could become a priest.

It happened that you studied in Rome precisely during the years of Vatican Council II.

The Council helped me greatly to broaden and deepen my vision. I was ordained a priest, the
Council had just closed a few weeks previously, by Pope Paul VI on 6 January 1966, with another 61 deacons of 23 mission countries, all students of Propaganda Fide.

Nearly half a century later, at the last Consistory, it was you who delivered a speech in front of the Sacred College to explain the situation of the Catholic Church in China. What did you say to your fellow cardinals?

To describe the situation in China, I used three words. The first is wonderful. It is a wonderful fact that in recent decades, the Church in China has grown and continues to grow, even if it is subjected to many pressures and restrictions. This is an objective fact, it can also be verified with numbers. Catholics in China in 1949 were only 3 million, now they are at least 12 million. In 1980, after the reopening ordered by Deng Xiaoping had begun, there were 1,300 priests. There are now about 3,500. And there are also about five thousand nuns, two thirds of whom belong to the open church community registered with the government. And also 1,400 seminarians, one thousand of which are being trained in seminaries funded by the government. There are ten major seminaries recognized by the government and six similar centers related to the underground community. Since 1980, three thousand new priests have been ordained, and about 4,500 young nuns made their vows. Ninety percent of priests are aged between twenty-five and fifty.

So, all is well?

The second word with which I described the situation of the Church in China was the word difficult. And the most difficult test that the Church faces is the control imposed on ecclesial life by the government through the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (PA). I quoted a letter sent to me by a highly respected bishop of mainland China, who wrote: “In every socialist country, the government tries to come up with a method, using some nominal Christians to set up other organizations outside the Church structure itself, in order to control the same Church”. The Chinese Patriotic Association is an example of this modus operandi. And in the Pope’s letter to Chinese Catholics in June 2007 it is written that these organisms are not compatible with Catholic doctrine. It was seen again in the illegitimate episcopal ordinations imposed on the Church between 2010 and 2011.

But why does the Chinese superpower still feel the need to keep the life of the Church under such strict control?

According to analysis conducted by Leo Goodstadt – the well-known scholar in Hong Kong who was also an advisor to the last British governor, Chris Patten – there are several reasons. The communist regimes fear the competition of religion in influencing people’s minds, their ideas, and eventually their actions. They realize more and more that religions are important in people’s lives.
and are not going to disappear from the horizon of human societies, and that on the contrary the number of followers of religions is increasing and they are frightened by this. And after the event of 11 September, the anxiety has increased, since it was seen again that religious ideas can also lead people to go to war. Finally, the new leaders who are preparing to come into office in 2012 must at this time show themselves to be loyal communists.

As the Pope clearly wrote in his *Letter to Chinese Catholics*, “the Catholic Church which is in China does not have a mission to change the structure or administration of the State; rather, her mission is to proclaim Christ to men and women”. How is it possible that the government of a powerful nation like China should be afraid of the political interference of the Vatican?

We live in society and our real life has to do necessarily with the political dimension and is related to it. But certainly the Church is not a political entity. It’s not really our problem or our goal to change the political systems. And moreover, in our case, it would be quite impossible to do so.

**Let’s return to your speech at the Consistory. What was your third word?**

The third word I used to describe the condition of the Church in China is the word possible. To have the rationale behind this choice understood, I read other passages in the letter from the bishop that I have already mentioned. That bishop said he was serene, peaceful and confident with regard to the present, also because he looked at the problems of today remembering the experiences he had lived through in the turmoil of the decades of persecution, between 1951 and 1979. He, in those past ordeals he had gone through, had been able to experience that everything is in the hands of God and God arranges things very well so that the difficulties may eventually contribute to the benefit of the Church. Thus we see that in itself it is not the increase of activities of control by the government that can quench the faith. Indeed it may happen that the effect is to increase the unity and awareness in the Church. Thus, the future may also appear bright. And we can quietly await with confidence the grace of God. Perhaps the solution of certain problems will not come about tomorrow. But neither will it be necessary to wait for a far off time.

Some say that in addressing the problems it is necessary to choose between two alternative ways: either the way of dialogue, or the way...
of the defense of principles. But do you think the two are really incompatible?

I for my part am inclined to be moderate. It is better to be patient and open to dialogue with everyone, even the communists. I am convinced that without dialogue no problem can really be solved. But while we should be open to dialogue with everyone, we should at the same time firmly maintain our principles, without sacrificing them. This means that, for example, a new bishop can accept episcopal ordination only if there is papal approval. We cannot renounce these principles. It’s part of our Creed, in which we confess the Church as one, holy, catholic and apostolic. And then also the defense of the value of life, the inviolable human rights of the person, the indissolubility of marriage... We cannot renounce the truths of faith and morals as they are also outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Sometimes one gets the impression that some Catholic circles in Hong Kong have the task of ‘measuring’ the degree of catholicity of the Church of China. Is this the mission of the Church in Hong Kong?

Faith does not come from us. It always comes from Jesus. And we are not the controllers and the judges of the faith of our brothers. We are simply a sister diocese in relation to the dioceses that are on the mainland. So, if they want, we are happy to share with them our experience and our pastoral work. And if they are in more difficult situations, while we enjoy a greater freedom, our aim is only that of trying to support them. Praying that all can keep the faith, even under the pressures they are subjected to.

In certain comments, a large area of the Church in China is always described as if it were on the boundaries of fidelity to the Church. At the same time, the great devotion of Chinese Catholics is recognized. How do the two things go together?

It never seems appropriate to me to speak of China, which is so immense, in an all-encompassing as well as generic way. I am not convinced by the affirmations according to which the “faith is strong in China”, nor by those that emphasize the opposite. Everything depends on the people. There are so many good witnesses of the faith, who offer their lives and also their sufferings to Jesus, and then there are also some people who, driven also by the environmental pressure, sacrifice their principles. These are just a few. For example, those priests who have agreed to receive episcopal ordination without the approval of the Pope. This is not correct, and we must say so.

It is precisely on the young bishops that the attention of many is focused. According to some they are allegedly fragile, and there are some opportunists among their ranks. What is to be done with them? Isolate them? Condemn them? Justify them always and whatever the case?

No, no, no isolation. First of all, let us pray for them. Also for those who have committed obvious errors. And if some people can approach them, and be their friend, they can urge them to recognize what was not correct in their choices. And also to send a letter to the authorities to explain how things came about and possibly ask for forgiveness. This is simply a form of fraternal correction, of healing, not of punishment.

Do the divisions between the two groups of Catholics, the so-called ‘official’ and the so-called ‘underground’ have as the sole triggering factor the pressures and submissions imposed by the government?
Unfortunately not. There are also many other factors and reasons.

Even in China, the growing phenomenon of internet sites that attack Catholics about doctrinal and moral issues – starting with the bishops – accused of having betrayed the faith and the Church because of opportunism or cowardice, giving in to the illegal demands of the regime. What do you think of this?

I think that fraternal correction which I spoke of earlier is made through dialogue, not through internet attacks.

The difficulties experienced by the Church in China concern the bond of communion with the Bishop of Rome. Over time, do you see the danger that this bond will be perceived with less intensity?

Who the new Chinese Cardinal is

John Tong Hon was born on 31 July 1939 in Hong Kong of non-Catholic parents, the eldest of three children (with a sister and a brother who is currently living in Canada). At two years of age the Japanese invasion forced his family to move to Macao. Then his parents, to remove him from the dangers of war, entrusted him to his paternal grandmother, who lived in a village in Guangdong province. At the end of the war the family was reunited in Canton and he started elementary school. Meanwhile his mother received baptism first, soon followed by all the other members of the family. When his father fell ill with tuberculosis, it was she who maintained everyone with her teaching job.

At twelve years John Tong entered the seminary of St Joseph in Macao. After high school, in 1957, he went on to the Holy Spirit Seminary in Hong Kong to study philosophy and theology. In 1964 he was sent to Rome, where the Second Vatican Council was still in progress. In Rome he obtained his licentiate and doctorate in dogmatic theology at the Pontifical Urbanian University. He received his priestly ordination from the hands of Pope Montini on 6 January 1966, together with members of his course of study. When he returned to Hong Kong he took up residence at the seminary, where he continued to live after his episcopal appointment.

In 1980, Tong was placed in charge of the new Holy Spirit Study Center, the renowned center for documentation on the life of the Church in China, which also published the magazine Tripod. In 1992 he became Vicar General of Archbishop Cardinal John Baptist Wu of Hong Kong. In 1996, John Paul II appointed him auxiliary bishop of Hong Kong a year before the return of the former British colony under the jurisdiction of China. With his spirit of mediation, in that delicate situation Tong participated also in the negotiations conducted in view of the transition. In January 2008 he became first of all bishop coadjutor and then (15 April 2009), bishop of the diocese where he was born. In August 2008 he participated at the opening of the Olympics in the stadium in Beijing, as an official invitee.

With his elevation to cardinal, the Sacred College of Cardinals numbered three Chinese for the first time: along with him, there are the Salesian Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, his predecessor, and the Jesuit Paul Shan Ku-hsi. John Tong is however the only one who is less than eighty years old.

G.V.
among the clergy and the faithful?

In China I continue to register a great devotion to the Pope. They love the Holy Father, this is certain. They are under pressure on this point. They are hindered in their desire to have normal contact with the Successor of Peter. It is also for this reason that their desire becomes stronger. I would say that it is almost normal.

I want to ask you a question about an event of a long time ago. Is it true, Your Eminence, that you were present at the episcopal ordination of Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian, that occurred twenty-seven years ago?

Yes, I was present at that mass. It was 1985. I was then a priest of the diocese of Hong Kong and since 1980 was directing the Holy Spirit Study Center [the influential research center on the life of the Church in China, ed.] Jin asked me to be present. He asked me to show my support, at that time. He told me that he had been in prison, that he wanted to keep his own faith and his communion with the universal Church and that he would send letters to Rome to confirm his submission to the Apostolic See and the primacy of the Pope. He said he had weighed all in conscience, and that at that historical moment it seemed that there was no other way except to accept the episcopal ordination. Given the circumstances, it seemed to him an obligatory choice to sustain the diocese of Shanghai and save the seminary there. Seven years ago the Holy See accepted his requests and recognized him as the legitimate bishop of Shanghai. But these are things of the past. Now we must look to the future...

Precisely looking at the present and future, what have you learned from the experiences of those times?

I learned that time can tell, can prove, time can give an account of things. Sometimes only in the long term can you see clearly whether something is right or wrong, whether a choice was dictated by good reasons or not. In the transitory immediacy of the moment you can not clearly judge how things are. But in the long run it emerges whether the intention of the heart was at least good. Sometimes situations are complicated in China. One is put under pressure, you do not find people to discuss things with. But if you make the choices having the love of Jesus and the Church in your heart, the right intention at the end can be verified by all, in the long run.

And what, with respect to the controversial events in which Chinese catholicity is involved, does this imply?

We can not fix on a single point, can not attempt to review every decision, and expect that every action and every decision made by members of the Church in China are always perfect in every moment and every situation. We are human, we are human beings! We all make mistakes and fall many times along the way. But then you can ask for forgiveness. But if each error is isolated and becomes a reason for condemnation without appeal, who can be saved? It is in the long run that you see whether a priest or bishop has a good intention in his heart. You see whether what they do is done for the love of God, the Church and the people, even with all their human errors. This is important: to discover that people persevere in fidelity because they are moved by the love of Jesus, also in difficult situations. In the end, in the long run, everyone will see it. And certainly God sees it, who searches the hearts of all of us.
CONSISTORY/1
Cardinal Dolan: to speak of the faith to the world like children

“What keeps us from the swagger and arrogance of triumphalism is a recognition of what Pope Paul VI taught in Evangelii Nuntiandi: the Church herself needs evangelization! This gives us humility as we confess that nemo dat quod non habet, that the Church has a deep need for inner conversion.” This is a passage from the talk given on 17 February by the Archbishop of New York, Cardinal Timothy Michael Dolan, who introduced the day of prayer and reflection called by the Pope for the members of the College of Cardinals and the cardinals created in the Consistory of 18 February. Afterwards, pointing to the importance of Christian joy, he said: “A man dying of AIDS at the Gift of Peace Hospice, administered by the Missionaries of Charity in Cardinal Donald Wuerl’s Archdiocese of Washington, asked for baptism. When the priest asked for an expression of faith, the dying man whispered, ‘All I know is that I’m unhappy, and these sisters are very happy, even when I curse them and spit on them. Yesterday I finally asked them why they were so happy. They replied “Jesus”. I want this Jesus so I can finally be happy. A genuine act of faith, right?’”. And, finishing his talk, the prelate said: “Thank you, Holy Father and brethren, for your patience with my primitive Italian. When Cardinal Bertone asked me to give this address in Italian, I was worried, because I speak Italian like a child. But, then

Allow the children to come to me, Carl Vogel von Vogelstein, Gallery of Modern Art, Florence

I recalled, that, as a newly-ordained parish priest, my first pastor said to me as I went over to school to teach the six-year old children their catechism, ‘Now we’ll see if all your theology sank in, and if you can speak of the faith like a child’. And maybe that’s a fitting place to conclude: we need to speak again as a child the eternal truth, beauty, and simplicity of Jesus and His Church”. The cardinal’s speech was reported in L’Osservatore Romano on 18 February with the title To speak of the faith to the world like children.

CONSISTORY/2
Cardinal Filoni: “It’s Jesus who puts us under the protection of Our Lady”

On 19 February, at the beginning of the Eucharistic celebration with the new cardinals, created in the consistory of 18 February, Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, first on the list of new cardinals, addressed a greeting to the Pope on behalf of the other new cardinals. This is the conclusion reported in L’Osservatore Romano of 20-21 February: “We put our service as cardinals under the protection of Mary Mother of Grace; indeed it is Christ Himself who, from the Cross, places us under her maternal protection, ‘Woman, behold your son! (John 19, 26)’. And we ask you, our Mother, to come and live with us”.

CHURCH/1
The nuncio Viganò meets with Obama

L’Osservatore Romano of 6-7 February gave news of the “beginning of the mission of the apostolic nuncio to the United States”, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò. The article explains that on 18 January, the new nuncio met US President Barack Obama at the Oval Office.

Mary and John at the foot of the Cross, detail of the Crucifixion, Giotto, the Scrovegni Chapel, Padua
In late January, at the Shrine of the Holy House of Loreto, the third symposium for penitentiaries was held, organized by the Centro Studi Lauretani. We publish excerpts from the talk of Monsignor Gianfranco Girotti, regent bishop of the Apostolic Penitentiary, which appeared in *L’Osservatore Romano* on 28 January. “I was always struck by the attitude that the Saint Curé of Ars took with the various penitents. Those who came to his confessional drawn by a deep and humble longing for God’s forgiveness found in him the encouragement to plunge into the ‘flood of divine mercy’ which sweeps away everything in its vehemence. If someone was troubled by the thought of his own weakness and inconstancy, and fearful of sinning again, he would unveil to him God’s secret in a beautiful and touching expression: ‘The good Lord knows everything. Even before you confess, He already knows that you will sin again and yet He forgives you. How great is the love of our God who goes so far as to voluntarily forget the future, in order to forgive us!’ We know that the Curé of Ars, in his time, was able to transform the hearts and lives of many people because he enabled them to perceive, through the ability to listen, the merciful love of the Lord. What matters most in the Sacrament of Reconciliation is the personal encounter with Christ the Savior and, in Him, with the merciful Father. In this light we should perhaps reconsider certain rigidities and incrustations in ways of understanding and celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Is it not true that sometimes confession takes the form of a court of accusation, rather than a celebration of forgiveness? Is it not perhaps true that sometimes the penitential dialogue takes on an inquisitorial tone, or in any case a somewhat indecent one? A certain way of understanding the Sacrament of Reconciliation has led, in fact, to overestimate unilaterally the moment of accusation and the list of sins, with the result of pushing into the background what is – instead – absolutely central in listening to the sins, that is the blessing embrace of the merciful Father. Too many times we consider first the sin and then grace. Whereas above all there is God’s gratuitousness, there is His boundless merciful love. It is not our sin that is at the center of the sacramental celebration, the sacrament is at the center of God’s mercy, which is infinitely greater than all our sins... The sacrament of Penance is not a ‘psychoanalytic session’; it is a sacrament, an efficacious sign of forgiveness to those who have repented, not to those who decided to undergo analysis or the treatment of their psyche. The confessor knows that God alone scrutinizes the heart to its very depths and that the objective judgment and the gift of mercy belong to Him, who initially absolves and of whose grace the confessor is only a carrier. What matters most is not the analysis and confession, but the repentance that dwells in the soul... One must always bear in mind that the confessor should never express surprise, whatever the gravity of sins the penitent accuses himself of; he must never utter words that sound like condemnation of the person, rather than of the sin, must never instill terror rather than fear, must never investigate aspects of the life of the penitent, knowledge of which is not required for the evaluation of his actions, must never use terms that violate even the delicacy of feeling, even though, strictly speaking, they do not violate justice and charity; a priest must never show himself to be impatient and jealous of his time, mortifying the penitent with the invitation to be quick (except in the case where the self-accusation is made with unnecessary verbiage)... In conclusion ‘acceptance and truth’ should distinguish the attitude of the confessor – who is judge, doctor and teacher on behalf of the Church – in what is a moment of reconciliation with God. And every priest who sits in the confessional must be the image of the meekness of Christ, because, bringing the penitent into connection with the merciful heart of God, through his mild and friendly face, he will with joy and confidence rediscover this sacrament and understand more and more that the love God has for us does not cease in the face of our sin, or recoil before our offenses.”
of the White House, who “received him very kindly, asking him immediately to convey his greetings to His Holiness along with best wishes for his lofty mission. The president then underlined his respect for the work of the Catholic Church, not only in the United States of America, but worldwide. In particular, he noted how the voice of the Holy Father and the Catholic Church’s attention to those afflicted by poverty, hunger and war, make the Holy See an important partner of the United States”.

CHURCH/2
The new Patriarch of Venice: prayer first of all

What are your plans for the new mission? “To pray first of all”. So said the new Patriarch of Venice, Monsignor Francesco Moraglia, in an interview given to Avvenire on 1 February. In the same interview, when asked how he had received the news of his appointment the previous day, he replied: “The first feeling was of finding myself ‘flung’ into a totally new situation, so that it was impossible even to ‘imagine for myself’ the future. Because of this I can say that I accepted the nomination with a little trepidation. But then, before the Lord, I said to myself, with Him, with His help, everything becomes possible”.

The Church should not want to be the sun, but should be joyful to be the moon

“Also in the light of the foregoing, we can easily understand why, in the presentation that Cardinal Kasper makes of Catholic ecclesiology, the ecclesiological thought of Vatican II appears a little like a leading thread. This is apparent in particular from the fact that his ecclesiological approach takes seriously the title of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. In fact, according to the conciliar ecclesiology, Lumen gentium is not the Church, but is Christ, the light of peoples, and the Church is only His reflection, that is the sign and instrument of God, who revealed Himself definitively in Jesus Christ. The Church, therefore, should not want to be the sun, but must be glad to be the moon, to receive all its light from the sun and let it shine in the night. As the moon has no light of itself, but reflects the light that comes from the sun, so the Church can transmit and shine in the night of humanity only the light that it has received from Christ. The book on the Catholic Church by Cardinal Kasper is at the service of the coherent deployment of a lunar ecclesiology”. Thus Cardinal Kurt Koch (President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Commission for Religious Relations with Judaism) wrote in a review of the book by Cardinal Walter Kasper (President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity) Chiesa cattolica. Essenza – Realtà – Missione [Catholic Church. Essence – Reality – Mission] (Queriniana, Brescia 2012), (584 pp., Euro 35.00), published in L’Osservatore Romano on 27 January. Cardinal Koch’s review concludes as follows: “Cardinal Kasper knows that the spiritual renewal of the Church, which we need so much today, is ‘only possible through a new Pentecost’. As happened then, when the disciples were reunited with the women who followed Jesus and they prayed incessantly and unanimously for the coming of the Holy Spirit, so also today a new Pentecost can be prepared only through intense prayer, because ‘the Church of the future will be mainly a praying church’ (p. 550). Indeed, prayer is the place where that joy for God that the Old Testament book of Nehemiah describes as ‘our strength’ originated. Only from this joy for God can the joy for the Church also grow, which is not that kind of joy that we procure for ourselves and which has therefore rare consistency. The joy experienced in the Christian faith is that joy that, ultimately, only the Spirit can give us. This joy is the distinctive hallmark of every Christian situation to the point that we can say: there where there is a lack of joy and depressed irritability, the Spirit of Jesus is certainly not at work”. The prelate’s article was published under the title Lunar Ecclesiology.
MIDDLE EAST

Attacking Syria would be a catastrophe for Turkey

The rumors of a U.S. military attack on Syria? They’re just a bluff. So says Patrick Seale, British journalist and expert on the Middle East, and particularly on Syria, in an interview with Corriere della Sera on 9 February. Thus we read in the Via Solférino newspaper: “The withdrawal from Iraq, the commitment of ten years in Afghanistan, the continuing raids in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, East Africa. Washington cuts the cost of Defense and shifts the focus to the Asia-Pacific region to contain China. Believe me, those rumors are a bluff: no one is ready to put a finger into a conflict that would ignite the whole region. Turkey has also said so: it would be a real catastrophe”.

IRAN

Deterrence is less disastrous than a preventive war

“Israeli officials tell us that we Americans cannot understand their fears: Iran poses an existential threat to their country. But in reality we understand them very well, because we too have faced a very similar experience. After the Second World War, when the Soviet Union equipped itself with atomic weapons, the United States was invaded by a panic that dragged on for years. Everything that Israel says now of Iran we said of the Soviet Union. The USSR represented in our eyes a radical and revolutionary regime, contrary to our values, determined to overthrow the Western governments to establish global communism. For us, Moscow was irrational, aggressive and totally contemptuous of human life. Just as Israel is now openly considering pre-emptive military action against Iran, many in the West called for similar action against Moscow in the late forties”. These are the words of the authoritative American journalist Fareed Zakaria in an article in Corriere della Sera on 19 February. The text concludes as follows: “Over the last decade, there have been thousands of suicide bombers of Saudi, Egyptian, Lebanese, Palestinian and Pakistani origin, but not a single attack was carried out by an Iranian citizen. Even if it could acquire a crude nuclear explosive device in the coming years, are we confident that Iran intends to launch a suicide attack first?” Israel finds itself faced with the choices that the United States and Britain were facing more than sixty years ago”, says Gideon Rose, Director of Foreign Affairs. “Israel will also admit, it is hoped, that it is impossible to guarantee absolute safety in the nuclear age, and that if it is not able to delay or damage the nuclear programs of its enemies, deterrence is less disastrous than a preventive war”.

Don Luigi Giussani’s process of beatification initiated

On 22 February, the seventh anniversary of his death, the request to begin the process of beatification of Don Luigi Giussani was presented. Don Matteo Fabbi, vicar of the Prelature of Opus Dei, commented on the news with a note that we publish in full: “The announcement of the beatification of Monsignor Luigi Giussani is a source of great joy and makes us grateful to God. He knew how to show by his words and his example that all human aspirations find fulfillment in Christ, bringing many young people, families and people of all kinds close to the faith. There are many who owe the discovery of their vocation to Don Giussani. Still today his message, centered on the beauty of the Christian life, brings and continues to bring abundant apostolic fruit throughout the Church, as was evident in the wonderful celebration last night, in Milan Cathedral, in which I had the honor of participating”.

CURIA

Appointments to the Penitentiary, Bishops, Religious and to the Roman Rota

On 5 January the 74-year-old Portuguese Archbishop Manuel Monteiro de Castro, was appointed Penitentiary Major; he had been secretary of the Congregation for Bishops since 2009.

On 11 January the 71-year-old Tuscan Archbishop Lorenzo Baldisseri, was appointed secretary of the Congregation for Bishops; he had been nuncio to Brazil since 2002.

On 25 January the 52-year-old German Monsignor Udo Breitbach, was appointed undersecretary to the Roman Rota, and to the Penitentiary, Bishops, Religious and to the Roman Rota.

On 17 December 63-year-old Sister Nicoletta Vit- toria Spezzati, a native of San Severo (Foggia), was appointed undersecretary in the same department.

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On 30 December Benedict XVI appointed two new auditors of the Roman Rota Tribunal. They are the 40 year-old Italian Don Davide Salvatori, previously judicial vicar adjunct at the Ecclesiastic Flamino Regional Tribunal in Bologna, and the 47 year-old German Salesian Markus Graulich, until now the promoter of justice at the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signet.

ITALY
Appointments in Venice, Cagliari, Cassano all’Ionio and Rome

On 9 December the 63 year-old Monsignor Nunzio Galantino was appointed bishop of Cassano all’Ionio, in Calabria. Originally from Cerignola in Apulia, in 1972 he was ordained priest for the diocese of the same name. From 2004 he was responsible for the CEI’s National Service for higher studies in Theology and Religious Sciences.

On 31 January the Bishop of La Spezia 54 year-old Francesco Moraglia, was promoted Patriarch of Venice.

Also on 31 January the Bishop of Sora 54 year-old Filippo Iannone, a Carmelite, was appointed viceregent of Rome. On the same date the monsignors 56 year-old Matteo Maria Zuppi, and 56 year-old Lorenzo Leuzzi, were appointed auxiliaries of Rome.

On 25 February Monsignor Arrigo Miglio, 70 years old in July, Bishop of Ivrea since 1999 (and for the previous seven years Bishop of Iglesias), was promoted Archbishop of Cagliari.

DIPLOMACY
New nuncios to the Netherlands, Armenia, Trinidad, Argentina, Brazil, Zambia, Rwanda and the Solomon Islands

On 15 December the 72 year-old French Archbishop André Dupuy was appointed apostolic nuncio to the Netherlands. From 2005 he was pontifical representative to the European Union and since 2006 at the Principality of Monaco.

Also on 15 December the 50 year-old archbishop-elect Marek Solczynski, appointed nuncio to Georgia on 26 November, was also nominated pontifical representative in Armenia.

On 21 December 54 year-old Archbishop Nicola Girasoli, appointed nuncio to various countries of the West Indies on 29 October, was appointed papal representative also in Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados.

On 5 January the 65 year-old Swiss Archbishop Emil Paul Tscherrig was appointed apostolic nuncio to Argentina; he had been representative in Scandinavia since 2008.

On 27 January monsignors Julio Murat (a 50 year-old Turk, destined as representative in Zambia), Santo Gangemi (a 50 year-old Sicilian, destined for the Solomon Islands) and Luciano Russo (a 49 year-old Campanian), who on 16 February was appointed pontifical representative in Rwanda, were appointed nuncios.

On 10 February the 57 year-old Campanian Archbishop Giovanni d’Aniello, was appointed nuncio to Brazil; he had been the pontifical representative in Thailand since 2010.
It is prayer that is the keystone of the Christian life

“We need much humility, we need to recite the Rosary and the simplest prayers, like those of popular devotion; one understands there that it is very often the people who hand on the faith to the learned”.

An Interview with Prosper Grech, the Augustinian created cardinal by Benedict XVI in the recent Consistory
The walls of the second floor of the Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum are hung with black and white photos. The discrete frames hold glimpses of squares and churches at sunset, silvery seascapes, profiles of men and women in the sun. At mid-morning, the students glance...
at them as they drink coffee in the break between classes. Perhaps they take a little breather, letting their gaze – until a few minutes before fixed on a page of theology or patristics – rest for a while on the lights and shades of these splendid scenes from daily life.

The creator of this particular permanent exhibition of photography is one of the most popular teachers at the Patristicum and currently one of the most distinguished experts in Sacred Scripture: the Augustinian Monsignor Prosper Grech, who was made a cardinal by Benedict XVI in the recent Consistory. Born in Malta in 1925, Grech was, along with Father Augustine Trapè, the founder of the Patristicum – a highly specialized center with the power to grant a baccalaureate in theology, the licenciate and a doctorate in Theology and Patristic Science – which stands next to St Peter’s Basilica. In his long career of teaching, Grech also taught Biblical Theology for twenty years at the Lateran University and Biblical Hermeneutics for thirty years at the Pontifical Biblical Institute. Author of many books and articles in learned journals, consultant for over twenty years of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he is currently a member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission.

We met in Santa Monica International College, in the complex that houses the Patristicum.

PROSPER GRECH: Malta has a long Catholic tradition, and Birgu, the old town in which I was born was, and is, full of churches. I attended that of San Lorenzo – where I was baptized and where I later frequented Catholic Action – and that of San Domenico. As a child I was educated by the Sisters of St Joseph, in a village near Birgu, and with them I made my first communion. My memories from childhood and my youth are filled with images of popular devotion, such as the processions that wound, come rain come shine, along the streets of the small town, or the sound of church bells filling the air when the priest carried the viaticum through the streets...

How did your vocation to the priesthood come about?

When I was a boy I felt something in my heart, something not clearly defined, that made me think about the priesthood as the way to my salvation. Then, of course, as often happens, you change your mind as you grow, and that happened to me also. But that sort of secret hint resurfaced during the war, in my last year of school. It was around that time that the seed of vocation gave its fruit. I looked back over all my life up till then and I said yes to that call.

Those war years were hard ones...

Malta went through devastating air raids, Birgu was bombed day and night and so I was forced to evacuate with my family to Attard, a town in the middle of the island, far from the arsenal, but close to an airfield constantly strafed. I was seventeen and had started medical school. They called me up into the anti-aircraft corps and so I went to lectures in uniform so as to be always ready to run for the battery when the enemy planes arrived. After an attack, should the university be still standing and me still alive, I went back to lectures with my classmates...

Why did you choose to join the Augustinian Order?

Well, quite simply because I had an Augustinian cousin whom I went to for advice. In
Malta there was already then a province of the Order, which I joined in 1943.

And how did your love of St Augustine arise?

I knew very little of him, but in our novitiate there was an elderly professor, Father Antonino Ton-nya-Barthet, of French origin, an expert in St Augustine, who got us to love him very much. He had edited a fine anthology of his spiritual writings, entitled *De vita Christiana*, which was also translated into Italian, and would merit a new edition. That was my first encounter with Augustine. Then I went into it more deeply studying philosophy in Malta, and also, of course, at the Santa Monica International College, here in Rome, where I arrived in 1946 to study theology and where I met Father Augustine Trapè, who was my teacher: he was a fan of Augustine, of whom I myself, however, am no expert. I’ve gone more into the thinking of the Fathers of the second and third centuries.

In Rome you continued your studies ...

Yes, at the Gregorian for a doctorate and the Pontifical Biblical Institute for a licentiate in Sacred Scripture. And I was ordained priest in Rome in 1950, in Saint John Lateran. Then, in 1954, I went away for a while, to study and teach...

Where?

First the Holy Land, then back on Malta, where I taught Sacred Scripture for a couple of years to our Augustinian students. In 1957 I won a scholarship and went to Oxford to learn Hebrew well, and a year later I was in Cambridge as a research assistant of Professor Arberry... I returned to Rome in 1961.

Always to study and teach?

Yes, also to write a thesis in Biblical Sciences. But as soon as I was back I was appointed secretary to Bishop Pietro Canisio Van Lierde, who was sacristan of the Apostolic Palace and vicar general of His Holiness for Vatican City. With him, we prepared the Conclave of 1963, the one in which Pope Paul VI was elected.

What do you mean?

As sacristan, Van Lierde oversaw the liturgical functions of the Pope, preparing the vessels, vestments and altars for the celebration of Masses. The Conclave also needed to be organized in its 'logistical' aspects. For example, since at that time there was no usage of concelebration, we had to prepare all the altars so each of the cardinals could say Mass privately.

Did you meet Montini on that occasion?

Of course. I heard his last confession as cardinal...

How did that come about?

I bumped into him in the Apostolic Palace and he asked me if I was the confessor of the Conclave. "No, Your Eminence, not me", I replied, "I’ll go and find him for you…". “No, no, it doesn’t matter … Can’t you confess me?”. So we went to the Matilde chapel, that is now called Redemptoris Mater, and I confessed him. After a few hours he was Pope. I hope I didn’t give him too severe a penance...

You didn’t stay very long in the Vatican Palace...

No, because in 1965, Father Trapè, newly elected Prior General of the Order, said to me: “Instead of wasting time in the Vatican” – which was true, for that matter – “come and head the Institute,” which then became the Studium Theologicum Augustinianum.

A few years later along with Trapè you founded the Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum...

Yes, the Patristicum was something of our dream, namely to have a place to nurture and deepen the sacred sciences, the thinking of the Fathers of the Church, of St Augustine and his heirs. Since there were many...
doubts about its feasibility and simultaneously a haste to establish it. Father Trapè asked for an audience with Paul VI, who blessed him with both hands and urged him to go ahead. It was inaugurated in May 1970. At first there were difficulties, but in time it settled down.

In Rome you also met Albino Luciani...

When he came to Rome he would stay in our College. He was really good and likeable, a humble man, who kept himself hidden... But also affable, we laughed a lot together. When he was here, we celebrated Mass together every day at seven in the morning.

He stayed with you also before the Conclave that elected him Pope?

Yes, with two other cardinals. At that time I was acting as ‘Substitute Prior’ of the College, because the Prior was absent, and the night before they went into the Conclave I didn’t know what words to use in saying goodbye: “Well, now I don’t know how to say goodbye, because a ‘see you again’ is in bad taste, good wishes are even worse... “. Immediately after his election, the evening before going to sleep, Pope Luciani wrote us a letter, addressed to me as pro tempore head of the College, thanking us for our hospitality and mentioning Brother Franceschino in particular.

Who was Franceschino?

The old lay brother who straightened up his room. I remember on one of the occasions when Luciani was with us, Franceschino said to me, “We must take proper care of this cardinal, because one day he’ll be Pope”. There was even some risk of me becoming deputy secretary of John Paul I...

How come?

His secretary, who had to go to Venice to pick up his things and bring them back to the Vatican, asked me to replace him for a while. But I was hesitant, because at that moment I was under public attack by some ultra-conservative quarters upset by the fact that I was teaching Biblical Theology at the Lateran: “Biblical theology is Protestant, it doesn’t exist, we have Dogmatic Theology”, they said. Well, I didn’t want to cause any embarrassment. So Monsignor Magee went with the Pope.

On the subject of Biblical Theology: you taught it for twenty years at the Lateran University and for thirty years held the chair of Bibli-
cal Hermeneutics at the Pontifical Biblical Institute. How did this passion for the Sacred Scriptures arise?

I’ve had it since childhood. Along with other things the schools in Malta taught Scripture seriously and I remember that as homework for the secondary school examinations we were given a Gospel passage and asked to explain the source and interpret it in its proper context. But I also loved the reading of the New Testament on my own, and was particularly fond of St Matthew and St John. Already in the time of the seminary I told the novice master of my wish to dedicate myself to the study of Scripture, and he certainly didn’t encourage me: “It’s difficult, you need to know many languages... And as for exegesis, then, overdoing the concentration on every comma...”. In fact, he didn’t over-exaggerate. Nevertheless, later, my project went through.

In teaching biblical hermeneutics, you have also gone into issues in contemporary philosophy...

Theologians like Bultmann and his disciples – Käsermann and Bornkamm – addressing the issue of the separation of the historical Jesus from the Jesus of faith and that of the de-mythologizing of the New Testament, also relied on the thinking of Heidegger, whom I studied, as I also studied what Gadamer asserted on the subjectivity of interpretation, interpretation as a ‘continuous process’. I had to get inside the heads of those philosophers, going into the influence Kant had on their thinking, and while not accepting all the ideas they affirmed, I must say that I learned a lot from them.

Your passion for the written word will probably have led you to love literature also...

Yes, naturally, I love Shakespeare, Eliot, Wordsworth and Pound. Apart from Anglo-American literature, I remember in school we read Italian poets and writers such as Dante, Manzoni and other classics, and I particularly like Montale and Quasimodo, while of those in German I’m fond of Rilke and Hölderlin. When I was at Cambridge I also went into Maltese literature, in which Professor Arberry was interested. With him I edited a collection of Maltese poems with facing English translations, and an anthology of verses by Malta’s national poet, the priest Dun Karm Psaila. But I’m not a literary man, let’s say I consider myself a simple amateur. I’m more versed in art, I was a friend of Lello Scorzelli, the painter and sculptor Paul VI called to work in Rome, and with whom I also went to take a bust of Pope Montini to St Patrick’s Cathedral in New York.

And there’s also photography...

There you have it, art is also important for me because I use some works as a model for my photos. I also started using digital cameras some time ago.

You’ve written a large number of scholarly papers and books on biblical theology and hermeneutics. The most recent work you edited, however, is a small book on prayer: Lord, teach us to pray.

It’s a collection, edited by the Augustinian nuns of Lecceto and published by Lev, of meditations that I dictated to my brothers of the College of Santa Monica during the spiritual exercises which were held in Cascia in 1995. I think it’s prayer, and certainly not hermeneutics, that is the keystone of the Christian life. We need to come down off our pedestals, empty ourselves of intellectualism and pride. We need much humility, we need to recite the Rosary and the simplest prayers, like those of popular devotion; one understands there how it is very often the people who hand on faith to the learned.
I was invited on 13 February 1976 to Rome to give a witness of my ‘daily life as a bishop’ in a meeting at the Centre Saint-Louis de France. For six years I had been leading the diocese of Marseilles, entrusted to me by Pope Paul VI. I was ordained bishop at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris, on 27 May 1969. That day in Rome I began my own witness by rereading to those present, but with the intention of revivifying them again in my heart, the commitments expressed in the Ritual of Episcopal ordination.

Those commitments are always with me. Likewise I have also always considered my ‘mission order’ – not least because of a coincidence of dates – to be the apostolic exhortation Paul VI addressed to all bishops five years after the close of the Council (the Quinque iam anni of 8 December 1970).

Pope Paul VI asked us to consider the serious and urgent duty to preach the Word of God to people, so that they grow in faith and understanding of the Christian message and bear witness with their lives to the salvation of Jesus Christ. “We had to be”, said the Pope, “determined that no impediment halt the wave of abundant heavenly graces which today gladdens the City of God”.

Mankind expects, so Paul VI expressed himself, “not a surplus of words as much as a word in tune with a more evangelical life”.

Here, I shall resume for you excerpts of my witness of back
then, but I ask the reader not to forget that it was 36 years ago!

**The Bishop in his particular Church…**

Every bishop knows he must be in the service of the ‘particular’ Church and the ‘universal’ Church. They are two categories that make appeal to the light of one reality that encompasses them, that is the catholicity of the Church. A catholicity that Vatican II expressed in a surprising way when it declared that it is from the particular Churches that the Church exists, “in quibus et ex quibus una et unica Ecclesia catholica existit”, (*Lumen Gentium* n. 23)... In the eyes of a bishop of the early centuries the Church was in fact first and foremost local: not in the geographical sense of the term, but in a vital sense, where around the bishop a portion of the people of God sees the most complete manifestation of the mystery of the Church.

My diocese, completely urbanized, is made up of Marseilles and the immediate suburbs, and yet it is easy to discover its cosmopolitan character, through the presence in such a small space of minorities as important as the Jewish, Muslim and Armenian Orthodox; and even the Marseilles Catholics who were the ‘majority’ lived in harmony with these minorities in a city called the ‘Athens of the West’ and that, evangelized from the beginnings of Christianity, had given the Church a pope, Urban V.

Marseille was already experiencing the advance of secularization: Sunday churchgoing wavered between 10% and 0.5% of the working-class neighborhoods. Few have a correct idea of the daily life of a bishop. Father Bouyer, in his book *L’Église de Dieu*, writes that a bishop today “ordains priests to make them suitable for apostolic functions that in fact, he himself, for the most part, no longer performs!”. A pungent observation, from a celebrated theologian who loved exaggeration. I did not recognize in it the reality of what I habitually lived: all the days started with prayer and ended in the silence of Eucharistic adoration, which conferred all its cohesion and paschal dynamism on the fragmentation of a truly apostolic day.

My life in the diocese was made up of contacts and personal communications and that means a great deal in a Mediterranean city, where however, allowing oneself to become overexposed, one risks letting oneself be devoured... It was necessary to defend oneself a bit, but without imposing a rigid agenda, however, that leaves no room for the unexpected. So every week, I allowed myself a whole morning to receive anyone who wanted to see me, with no need of appointment. I assure you that
learned a great deal from those meetings.

Speaking of priests, we live in a period when a bishop has to dedicate much of his time to them. Finding themselves as they do on the crest of the double evolution of the world and the Church, they need to be acknowledged, comforted, reassured, by their bishop first of all. I had to keep the bishop and his episcopal council from getting bogged down in a maze — increasingly more complicated — of nominations, that sought not only to meet objective needs but also take into account consultations with the teams of priests and groups of Christian militants... I wonder if certain internal issues do not absorb too much of a bishop’s efforts at the expense of his apostolic work and the ever fresh renewal of the Gospel.

As for the relationship with public authorities, I can say that in Marseilles I participated only sparingly in official events. That was not because of an attitude of detachment and much less of reservations toward the temporal power, but simply to defuse any possible ambiguity about the spiritual significance of the episcopal ministry. However I did wish to maintain a tradition unique to Marseilles: the Votive Mass – celebrated since 1722, following the plague of that year – and that since then brings together all the active city authorities for the feast of the Sacred Heart. I always took the opportunity to focus my sermon on some subject of interest concerning the political, economic and social responsibilities of Marseilles. On the other hand, I always very willingly met in private those in public office who, led by their faith, sought to deepen their understanding of their own activity.

... and in the Universal Church
One becomes a bishop by entering the communion of bishops. I cannot exercise my episcopal ministry except within a ‘We’, which alone can give sense to the individual ‘I’.

But how does one keep alive this reciprocal and communitarian bond? It was an ‘affectus collegialis’, according to the definition of Lumen Gentium. For me, it was realized primarily

Finally I would like to recall – it’s the last point but in fact it’s the first! – that the Eucharist holds the central place in the life and ministry of a bishop. It establishes and nourishes true unity, since all the particularities are overcome in the face of Christians who affirm their expectation in the Lord’s glorious return.
The Eucharist is the place where the gratuity of God’s absolute love is fully revealed.
The truth of mankind lies in this action of grace
with the neighboring bishops, those of Aix-en-Provence and then those in my own region Provence-Méditerranée which grouped together 10 dioceses. Then there was the Episcopal Conference of France. Seen from the outside, this sometimes presented itself in the form of a new feudalism which, because of its effectiveness, seemed to be more than just a simple connection to the universal authority of the Pope. Cardinal Saliège declared with a lapidary definition: ‘We certainly have an episcopate, but we no longer have bishops’.

In fact, I asked myself some questions. For example, how to give a more personal face to the collective statements? Because – this remains true – the word of a bishop still counts: I remember the pastoral letters of Cardinal Suhard, whose vigor of thought continues to give me comfort, or the personal letter from Paul VI to Cardinal Roy on the problems of justice.

Another question is that of the tasks of bishops. They are overburdened with commitments and must pronounce on a number of issues without the necessary detachment. Isn’t this ‘ever-presence’ in danger of becoming in reality an ‘ever-absence’?

A further question might be asked about how to remedy the greater risk, that is the lack of time devoted to doctrinal reflection, to a reflection so matured as to perceive everything from the starting point of a life constantly inspired by the breath of the Spirit. The teaching authority of the bishop must ensure that the witness that the Church gives to Jesus continues to be the same as that given by the Apostles. There is no statement of faith that is not the result of the intelligence of the faith within a given culture. A daunting task, much more so because study has become difficult due to the unification of the seminaries and the dwindling number of theologically and biblically well-trained teacher-priests...

Returning now to the episcopal communion, I would like to add that unity with the Bishop of Rome is what gives the individual bishop a Catholic dimension and at the same time a guarantee. Because the faith of the Successor of Peter comforts our own. All the local Churches have need of the Pope’s magisterium because they are often made fragile by countless pressures.

The bishop, servant of evangelical clairvoyance
Evangelical clairvoyance... has nothing to do with any form of “visionary activity”! This term was suggested to me by the ancient epitaph of Abercius, conserved in Rome, originally in the Lateran, now in the Vatican Museums that describes Christ as ‘the shepherd with big eyes that see everywhere’. It is thus that the (‘episcopus’) ‘bishop’ exercises his mission of spiritual discernment.

Poor and holy Church! There’s certainly never been so much talk about it as today, and in all tones, unlike the days when, instead, so many generations simply lived in it without even thinking that one could...
begin discussing the Church any more than a child could discuss its mother. Those who have faith can’t approach the Church as if it were a party ‘apparatus’ and not a living presence instead. God has taught us to contemplate it through the very simple images that the Bible shows us in great abundance, taken from our lives as living beings.

It is true that Vatican II favored the image of the ‘People of God’, as one of the most dynamic and, thanks to it, some realities of the Church that had been dormant for some time have found new momentum and a happy outcome. But there were those in the years following who wanted to give a political interpretation to this image and sought – within the Church – to exploit this theme, itself so theologically and pastorally rich, by over-stretching it. This led to criticism of the authority of the Church in the name of prophesying, and all this happened in a context in which the reference points tended to disappear.

But the liberating sense of the authority of the Church has gradually begun to re-emerge, especially when the threat of more intolerant, tyrannical and ruthless pressure groups rather than the old, somewhat affable, voice of Holy Mother Church began to be felt!

**The Bishop, servant of communion within the Church**

There is a trait that characterizes the daily life of the bishop of our day, and it is being in the service of communion within the Church. As Saint Ignatius of Antioch wrote to the community of Tralles, ‘the Bishop, the man for unity’. The modern temptation of Christians is to measure the strength of their faith on the basis of how much energy they expend in living out their conflicts. If yesterday’s disease was the obsession with unity, today’s disease is the defence of difference.

In other eras, people in the world and Christians in the Church had previously established points of reference, which facilitated their behavior and united them in the face of what was recognized as essential by all; and so they could fight without fear over minor things. Today everyone claims to have their own way forward, and grope to work out their own rule and doctrine of action. It’s from this that there comes that sense of religious war that envelops current conflicts: each individual or group of people, when they seek to endow themselves with their own dogma and their own ethic soon become sectarian and intolerant. In particular, nothing is more fearful than the absolutist claims of political action, especially at a time when the absolute of faith weak-
ens; by acceding to them without reservations, men expose themselves to sacrificing their own integrity, as Solzhenitsyn on the occasion of the awarding of the Nobel Prize remembered with such anguish.

Faced with such reflections on unity in the Church we cannot but ask ourselves the big question which is that of faith. The Church is not a jigsaw puzzle of believers. The awareness that the church community is a fraternal and hierarchical communion brought together by Christ, the spontaneous communication in the confession of the faith, are things that today struggle to find expression. The experience of the first Christian communities is exemplary: when it was a matter of safeguarding or propagating the faith, unity came before everything else. St Paul dared to say that “even if we or an angel from heaven should preach (to you) a gospel other than the one that we preached to you, let that one be accursed!” (Gal. 1, 8). Christians or Christian groups that did not feel the necessary desire to check the unity of their faith through exchange and communication would be in danger of becoming sects or ghettos.

Let me say a word about unity between a bishop and his priests. Visiting first one then another group of priests, I sometimes had the impression of shifting from one continent to another... So great were the pastoral differences, the result of the different underlying human situations in which each priest was immersed. All this has a right to being recognized in a positive manner by the bishop, but on a condition: that the missionary proposals of a group should be open to comparison and be ready to be enriched by the discoveries of others, that there be something vital to communicate and that at the basis, in fact, there be a similarity of vocation and mission. Each real difference can only exist on a basis of unity.

Finally I would like to recall – it’s the last point but in fact it’s the first! – that the Eucharist holds the central place in the life and ministry of a bishop. It establishes and nourishes true unity, since all the particularities are overcome in the face of Christians who affirm their expectation in the Lord’s glorious return. The Eucharist is the place where the gratuity of...
God’s absolute love is fully revealed. The truth of mankind lies in this action of grace. The contemplative life and the prayer-praise groups that are forming today, especially among younger people, are for a bishop the points of reference and hope that he scrutinizes and protects as the heart of the life of the Church.

I conclude here, knowing however that a witness is never definitively concluded, and that the ‘martyrion’ of a bishop is a martyrdom on a low flame: they don’t cut off his head anymore, but he has become almost a target...

How the figure of the bishop has changed over the centuries, from the time of St Ambrose, St Gregory, St Charles Borromeo, St Francis de Sales... Each bishop is led to reflect on the fact that one is no longer judged by the idea commonly held of the episcopal function, but on what he himself gives of it. The function no longer covers the man or,
“Jesus will give us strength. Not you, but Him in you”

Homily by His Eminence Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, Archbishop of Buenos Aires, during the Holy Mass in which he administered the Sacrament of Confirmation

Rome, 18 February 2012
Basilica of St Lawrence Outside the Walls
First Reading (Is 43, 18-19. 21-22. 24b-25)
From the book of the prophet Isaiah
Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not; See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the desert I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers. The people whom I formed for myself, that they might announce my praise. Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob, for you grew weary of me, O Israel. Instead, you burdened me with your sins, and wearied me with your crimes. It is I, I, who wipe out, for my own sake, your offenses; your sins I remember no more.

Second Reading (2 Corinthians 1, 18-22)
From the Second Epistle of the apostle St Paul to the Corinthians
As God is faithful, our word to you is not “yes” and “no”. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was proclaimed to you by us, Silvanus and Timothy and me, was not “yes” and “no,” but “yes” has been in him. For however many are the promises of God, their Yes is in him; therefore, the Amen from us also goes through him to God for glory. But the one who gives us security with you in Christ and who anointed us is God; he has also put his seal upon us and given the Spirit in our hearts as a first installment.

From the Gospel according to Mark (Mk 2, 1-12)
When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it became known that he was at home. Many gathered together so that there was no longer room for them, not even around the door, and he preached the word to them. They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Child, your sins are forgiven.” Now some of the scribes were sitting there asking themselves, “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?” Jesus immediately knew in his mind what they were thinking to themselves, so he said, “Why are you thinking such things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, pick up your mat and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth” - he said to the paralytic, “I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home.” He rose, picked up his mat at once, and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this”.

The Spirit is always new, always comes to renew.
That's what we heard in the first Reading, the prophecy:
"I am doing something new ". So does God, so does the Spirit.
So we ask God's help to be attentive to the voice of the Spirit, to the new things
In the prayer at the beginning of Mass we made an appeal to God the Father: “May your help, merciful Father, make us ever attentive to the voice of the Spirit”. We need the help of God to understand the voice of the Spirit, the newness of the Spirit. The Spirit is always new, always comes to renew. That’s what we heard in the first Reading, the prophecy: “I am doing something new”. So does God, so does the Spirit. So we ask God’s help to be attentive to the voice of the Spirit, to the new things.

Making everything new. The Gospel tells the story of the paralytic who was renewed by the power of the Spirit and of Jesus. The Spirit was in Jesus. Jesus is the one who sends the Spirit to renew everything. Jesus is the only one capable of starting everything anew, of beginning life again. Let us think about the life of this paralytic, the physical life, and also the inner life – because the Lord heals the soul first: “Your sins are forgiven”. Jesus has the power, with the strength of His Spirit, to renew the heart. We must have confidence in this. If we do not have confidence in the power of Jesus Christ as the only salvation, the only one who can make all things new, we are fake Christians. We are not true Christians.

Jesus does not force you to be a Christian. But if you say you are a Christian you must believe that Jesus has all the strength – the only one who has the strength – to renew the world, to renew your life, to renew your family, to renew the community, to renew everybody. This is the message that today we must take with us when asking the Father to make us attentive.
You are not fake Christians, Christians only in name. You are Christians with your words, with your hearts, with your hands. Feel like Christians, talk like Christians and do the work of Christians. But you alone could not do it.

It is Jesus who will give you this Spirit, will give you the strength to renew everything: not you, but Him in you.
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“When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (Lk 18, 8)

Sermon by Don Giacomo Tantardini on the seventh anniversary of the death of Don Luigi Giussani

Padua, 21 February 2012, Basilica of St Anthony

Just a word, a brief thought to remember Don Giussani on the seventh anniversary of his death. Many times in these days my mind has gone back to the words of Jesus that Giussani – picking them up from Paul VI – would repeat at the decisive moments of life: “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (Lk 18, 8). When Jesus returns, will he still find faith on earth? Because it is of this gift that, first and foremost, we have need: faith. When the Lord returns, will he still find faith on earth? We need faith instant by instant, moment by moment. And how splendid it is, how real, that, having such need of faith, faith is the grace of God, is God’s gift. Gratia facit fidem, St Thomas says: Grace creates faith, and not only when faith begins, but grace creates faith instant by instant, moment by moment. At bottom the life of Don Giussani was testimony and example of this reality: that grace creates faith instant by instant.

What is given to us – because this, too, is given – is expressed in today’s Gospel and the Epistle of James with the word humility. What is given to us is to be humble, because God stands against the proud, to the humble he gives His grace. What is given to us is to be like children.

Here, in this sanctuary of St Anthony, let us ask him, who as a pure gift carried the baby Jesus in his arms and by the baby Jesus was carried, let us ask St Anthony to be like children. Let us ask him and let us ask Giussani, now that he sees in Paradise, as he had already glimpsed and communicated on earth, how splendid it is to be like children expecting everything from the Lord.
First reading (James 4, 1-10)
Where do the wars and where do the conflicts among you come from? Is it not from your passions that make war within your members? You covet but do not possess. You kill and envy but you cannot obtain; you fight and wage war. You do not possess because you do not ask. You ask but do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. Adulterers! Do you not know that to be a lover of the world means enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wants to be a lover of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose that the scripture speaks without meaning when it says, “The spirit that he has made to dwell in us tends toward jealousy”? But he bestows a greater grace; therefore, it says: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” So submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you of two minds. Begin to lament, to mourn, to weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection. Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you.

Gospel (Mark 9, 30-37)
They left from there and began a journey through Galilee, but he did not wish anyone to know about it. He was teaching his disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death he will rise.” But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him. They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.” Taking a child he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it he said to them, “Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the one who sent me”.

Let us ask St Anthony to be like children.
Let us ask him and let us ask Giussani, now that he sees in Paradise, as he had already glimpsed and communicated on earth, how splendid it is to be like children expecting everything from the Lord.
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