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PROCLAIM

A magazine for Missionary Animation



*Education is the
formation of the
heart*

"Go into the whole world and PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS to all creation" Mark 16:15



Did you know?

The words BAPTIZED AND SENT, which accompany the image, indicate the two characteristic and inalienable elements of every Christian: baptism and proclamation. From the Cross flows baptism for the salvation of the world to which we are sent to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus.

The colors of the Cross are those traditionally attributed to the five continents: red for America, green for Africa, white for Europe, yellow for Asia, and blue for Oceania. Each color has a symbolic meaning that makes the connection between the continents possible through their peoples, in the communion of God with humanity.

Red recalls the blood of the martyrs of the American continent, seeds of a new life in the Christian faith. It is the color of the passion of the missionaries who, having arrived in a new land, are interested in the salvation of the people. Even today it is a sign of the passion of those who remain faithful to the Gospel without accepting compromises. Red recalls the earth and all that is terrestrial. It is a vivid and communicative color.

Green is the color of life, nature, and vegetation. It symbolizes growth, fertility,

youth, and vitality. Green is the color that harmonizes the whole. The African continent is called to such harmony even in the midst of the desert and suffering. It is also the color of hope, one of the three theological virtues.

White is a symbol of joy, the beginning of new life in Christ. It is the challenge for an old Europe, that it might rediscover the evangelizing force that it generated thanks to so many Churches and so many saints.

Yellow is a color of light, which feeds on light by invoking the true Light. Asia is the continent where Jesus, the Son of God and our Sun which rises from above, was born.

Blue is the color of Oceania, formed by innumerable islands scattered in the ocean. It is the color that is closest to the invisible, recalls the divine life, points to the mystery, and invites us to transcendence in relation to all that is earthly and sensitive. It is the color of the water of life that quenches us and restores us along the path to God. It is also the color of our sky, a sign of God's dwelling with us.

--- The above has been extracted from <http://www.october2019.va/>

“Go into the whole world and PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS to all creation” Mark 16:15

PROCLAIM

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Contents

(with Page Number)

- **From the DIRECTOR'S DESK** ————— (2)
- **Courage to take risk for God's promise** ————— (3)
- **Vatican Guidelines for Protection of Minors** — (5)
- **Benedict XVI on sex-abuse crisis** ————— (7)
- **Pope Francis calls for a listening Church** — (10)
- **The Sacrament of Matrimony** ————— (13)
Historical Developments
- **Scripture Reading: Why and How - III** — (15)
- **SAINT OF THE MONTH**
 - St Andrew Bobola** ————— (18)
Feast Day: 16th May
 - St Germaine Cousin** ————— (19)
Feast Day: 15th June
- **STORY CORNER**
 - The Atonement** ————— (21)
- **News Round-Up** ————— (23)

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**“I am the gate.
Whoever enters
by me will be
saved, and will
come in and go
out and find
pasture”**

- John 10:9

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

“Education for the Formation of the Heart”

While the country is busy finding its new leader, the young people of the nation will be striving to find new schools and colleges that would shape their vision of being a leader in their own capacity. We all are leaders in one way or the other. But the most important phase of human life is about forming oneself to be a good leader which happens in the young age. If the young people are formed well, the future would be safe and secure. That is why we consider youngsters as the pillars of the nation as well, for us, the Church.

The formation of a person takes place, besides in the family, through education. That is why *Gravissimum Educationis* [GE], one of the documents of the Second Vatican Council, strongly establishes that everyone, irrespective of colour and race, language and region, has the right to be educated and that they are to be formed to be messengers of peace and unity.

The purpose of education is, firstly, to focus on forming persons who would *know* and understand the reality, *use* one's knowledge to produce things by becoming a person who possess *values* and has a *concern* for the total development of the person and humanity. The educational system describes how the world is and thus informs the students to know and understand the reality. Secondly, it offers the technical skills to utilize the laws of the universe. Thirdly, it is supposed to form the students to be people of good will and character. That is, it should make an educated person someone with values and character, persons who would never lie, never be unjust, never exploit others, and so on. But sadly, educational systems do not bother about making students better students but only 'informed students'. The separation of character and knowledge has done immense damage to people today, because of which we have lost the sense of what is essential, important and true. While the educational system cannot coerce someone to follow this or that faith, it cannot shun its obligation to open the learners' mind to what is eternal and good.

Pope Francis, who addressed the Italian Educators on 10 May 2014, said that “Education cannot be neutral. It is either positive or negative; either it enriches or it impoverishes; either it enables a person to grow or it lessens, even corrupts him. The mission of schools is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful.”

Gravissimum Educationis says “... a true education aims at the formation of the human person in the pursuit of his ultimate end and of the good of the societies of which, as man, he is a member, and in whose obligations, as an adult, he will share” (No. 1).

When the secular institutions fail in helping the students and citizens to form themselves as better persons, the Christian institutions have a big role to play. They are called to make a difference by their insistence on value education, along with descriptive and practical training, to produce people of heart [love, peace and unity] not simply people of head [technicality].

It is fitting then that we as Catholics should join together to understand the youth and offer them holistic education to form them as persons of heart. This is an important mission of the Church in formation.



Fr Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu
National Director (PMO-India)

Courage to take risk for God's promise

Herebelow is the full text of the message of Pope Francis for the World Day for Vocations, which will be observed on the 4th Sunday of Easter; Good Shepherd Sunday, May 12, 2019.

The message was released by the Vatican on March 9, 2019. --- Editor

After the lively and fruitful experience of the Synod devoted to young people last October, we recently celebrated the Thirty-fourth World Youth Day in Panama City. These two great events allowed the Church to be attentive both to the voice of the Spirit and to the life of young men and women, their questions and concerns, their problems and their hopes.

Building on what I shared with the young people in Panama, I would like to reflect, on this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, on how the Lord's call makes us *bearers of a promise* and, at the same time, asks of us the *courage to take a risk*, with him and for him. I will do this by reflecting briefly with you on these two aspects – promise and risk – as they appear in the Gospel account of the calling of the first disciples by the sea of Galilee (Mk 1:16-20).

Two pairs of brothers – Simon and Andrew, and James and John – are going about their daily tasks as fishermen. In this demanding work, they had learned the laws of nature, yet at times, when the winds were adverse and waves shook their boats, they had to defy the elements. On some days, the catch of fish amply repaid their efforts, but on others, an entire night's work was not sufficient to fill their nets, and they had to return to shore weary and disappointed.

Much of life is like that. Each of us tries to realize his or her deepest desires; we engage in activities that we hope will prove enriching, and we put out on a “sea” of possibilities in the hope of steering the right course, one that will satisfy our thirst for happiness. Sometimes we enjoy a good catch, while at others, we need courage to keep our boat



from being tossed by the waves, or we are frustrated at seeing our nets come up empty.

As with every call, the Gospel speaks of an encounter. Jesus walks by, sees those fishermen, and walks up to them... The same thing happened when we met the person we wanted to marry, or when we first felt the attraction of a life of consecration: we were surprised by an encounter, and at that moment we glimpsed the promise of a joy capable of

bringing fulfillment to our lives. That day, by the sea of Galilee, Jesus drew near to those fishermen, breaking through the “paralysis of routine” (Homily for the XXII World Day for Consecrated Life, 2 February 2018). And he immediately made them a promise: “I will make you fishers of men” (Mk 1:17).

The Lord's call is not an intrusion of God in our freedom; it is not a “cage” or a burden to be



borne. On the contrary, it is the loving initiative whereby God encounters us and invites us to be

part of a great undertaking. He opens before our eyes the horizon of a greater sea and an abundant catch.

God, in fact, desires that our lives not become banal and predictable, imprisoned by daily routine, or unresponsive before decisions that could give it meaning. The Lord does not want us to live from day to day, thinking that nothing is worth fighting for, slowly losing our desire to set out on new and exciting paths. If at times he makes us experience a “miraculous catch”, it is because he wants us to discover that each of us is called – in a variety of ways – to something grand and that our lives should not grow entangled in the nets of ennui that dulls the heart. Every vocation is a summons not to stand on the shore, nets in hand, but to follow Jesus on the path he has marked out for us, for our own happiness and for the good of those around us.

Embracing this promise naturally demands the courage to risk making a decision. The first disciples, called by Jesus to be part of something greater, “immediately left their nets and followed him” (*Mk* 1:18). Responding to the Lord's call involves putting ourselves on the line and facing a great challenge. It means being ready to leave behind whatever would keep us tied to our little boat and prevent us from making a definitive choice. We are called to be bold and decisive in seeking God's plan for our lives. Gazing out at the vast “ocean” of vocation, we cannot remain content to repair our nets on the boat that gives us security but must trust instead in the Lord's promise.

I think primarily of the call to the Christian life which all of us received at Baptism. It teaches us that our life is not a fluke but rather a gift: that of being God's beloved children, gathered in the great family of the Church. It is precisely in the ecclesial community that the Christian life is born and

develops, especially through the liturgy. The liturgy introduces us to God's word and the grace of the sacraments; from an early age, we are taught the art of prayer and fraternal sharing. In the end, the Church is our mother because she brings us to new life and leads us to Christ. So we must love her, even when we see her face marred by human

frailty and sin, and we must help to make her ever more beautiful and radiant so that she can bear witness to God's love in the world.

The Christian life thus finds expression in those decisions that, while giving a precise direction to our personal journey, also contribute to the growth of God's kingdom in our world. I think of the decision to marry in Christ and to form a family, as well as all those other vocations associated with work and professional life, with the commitment to charity and solidarity, with social and political responsibilities, and so

forth. These vocations make us bearers of a promise of goodness, love, and justice, not only for ourselves but also for our societies and cultures, which need courageous Christians and authentic witnesses of the kingdom of God.

In encountering the Lord, some may feel the attraction of a call to the consecrated life or to the ordained priesthood. It is a discovery that can excite and at the same time frighten us since we feel called to become “fishers of men” in the barque of the Church by giving totally of ourselves in commitment to faithful service of the Gospel and our brothers and sisters. Such a decision carries the risk of leaving everything behind to follow the Lord, to devote ourselves completely to him, and to share in his work. Many kinds of interior resistance can stand in the way of making this decision, especially in highly secularized contexts where there no longer seems to be a place for God and for the Gospel. Places where it is easy



Vatican Guidelines for Protection of Minors

[Following is ZENIT's working translation of the Holy Father's Apostolic Letter in the Form of a Motu Proprio on the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons presented by the Vatican on 29 March 2019. --- Editor]



relations or in structures and places of sharing;

- the awareness matures in all of the duty to point out abuses to the competent authorities and to cooperate with them in the activity of prevention and counteraction;

- the right is recognized of those that affirm having been victims of exploitation, sexual abuse or mistreatment, as well as of their families, to be received, listened to and accompanied;

- the victims and their families are offered appropriate pastoral

care, as well as adequate spiritual, medical, psychological and legal support;

- the accused is guaranteed the right to a fair and impartial trial, in respect of the presumption of innocence, as well as of the principles of legality and proportionality between the offense and the penalty.

- the condemned be removed from his assignments for having abused a minor or a vulnerable person and, at the same time, that they be offered adequate support for their psychological and spiritual rehabilitation, also in view of social reinsertion;

- that everything possible be done to rehabilitate the good reputation of one who is unjustly accused.

- that an adequate formation be offered for the protection of minors and of vulnerable persons.

Therefore, with the present Letter, I establish that:

1. The competent courts of Vatican City State exercise the criminal jurisdiction also in order of the crimes of which Articles 1 and 3 of the N.CCXC VII Law, *on the protection of minors and of vulnerable persons*, of March 26, 2019, committed on the occasion of the exercise of their functions, by the individuals referred to in point 3

The protection of minors and of vulnerable persons is an integral part of the evangelical message, which the Church and all her members are called to spread in the world. Christ Himself, in fact, entrusted us with the care and protection of the littlest and defenseless: “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me” (*Matthew 18:5*). Therefore, we all have the duty to receive minors and vulnerable persons with generosity, to create for them a safe environment, having their interests as a priority.

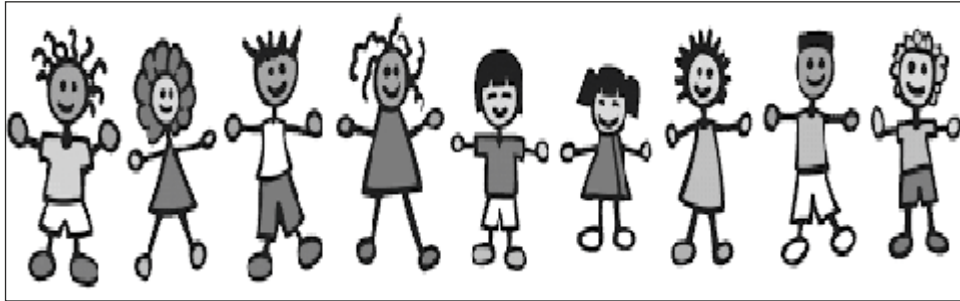
This requires a continuous and profound conversion, in which personal holiness and moral commitment can concur to promote the credibility of the evangelical proclamation and the renewal of the Church's educational mission.

Therefore, I wish to reinforce further the institutional and normative order to prevent and counteract abuses against minors and vulnerable persons, so that in the Roman Curia and in Vatican City State:

- a respectful community is maintained, conscious of the rights and needs of minors and of vulnerable person, as well as attention to prevent any form of physical or psychic violence or abuse, abandonment, negligence, mistreatment or exploitation that can occur, be it in interpersonal

of the *Motu Proprio "In Our Times,"* of July 11, 2013.

2. Except the sacramental seal, the individuals of which point 3 of the *Motu Proprio "In Our*



Times," of July 11, 2013, are obliged to present, without delay, a denunciation to the Promoter of Justice at the Court of Vatican City State whenever, in the exercise of their functions, they have information or grounded motive for holding that a minor or a vulnerable person is a victim of one of the offenses of which Article 1 of the N.CCXC VII Law, committed also alternatively:

1. in the territory of the State;
2. in detriment of the citizens or residents in the State;

3. on the occasion of the exercise of their functions, by public officials of the State or by individuals of which point 3 of the *Motu Proprio "In Our Times,"* of July 11, 2013.

3. To the persons offended by the crimes of which Article 1 of the N. CCXC VII Law, spiritual, medical and social assistance is offered, including urgent therapeutic and psychological assistance, as well as useful information of a legal nature, through the Service of Accompaniment managed by the Health and Hygiene Office of the Governorate of Vatican City State.

4. The Labour Office of the Apostolic See organizes, in concert with the Service of Accompaniment of the Health and Hygiene Office, programs of formation for the personnel of the Roman Curia and of the Institutions connected with the Holy See, about the risks in the matter of exploitation, sexual abuse and mistreatment of

minors and of vulnerable persons, as well as on the means to identify and prevent such offenses and on the obligation to denounce them.

5. In the selection and assumption of the personnel of the Roman Curia and of the Institutions connected with the Holy See, as well as those that collaborate as volunteers, the suitability of the candidate must be ascertained to integrate with minors and with vulnerable persons.

6. The Dicastries of the Roman Curia and the Institutions connected with the Holy See, to which minors and vulnerable persons have access, must adopt, with the assistance of the Service of



Accompaniment of the Health and Hygiene Office, good practices and guidelines for their protection.

I establish that the present Apostolic Letter in the form of a "*Motu Proprio*" be promulgated through the publication in *L'Osservatore Romano* and, subsequently, inserted in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*.

I decree that the provisions have full and stable value, also abrogating all the incompatible dispositions, beginning on June 1, 2019.

----- Libreria Editrice Vatican ♦

Benedict XVI on sex-abuse crisis

By Edward Pentin

In his most significant pronouncement since he resigned the papacy in 2013, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has written a lengthy essay on clerical sex abuse in which he explains what he sees as the roots of the crisis, the effects it has had on the priesthood, and how the Church should best respond.



Benedict XVI places the blame mainly on the sexual revolution and a collapse of Catholic moral theology since the Second Vatican Council. This resulted, he argues, in a “breakdown” in the seminary formation that had preceded the Council. Benedict criticizes canon law for initially being insufficient in dealing with the scourge, explains the reforms he introduced to deal with abuse cases, and asserts that “only obedience and love for our Lord Jesus Christ” can lead the Church out of the crisis.

The pope emeritus begins his essay, entitled “The Church and the Scandal of Sexual Abuse,” by noting that the “extent and gravity” of the abuse crisis has “deeply distressed” priests and laity and “driven more than a few to call into question the very faith of the Church.”

Recalling the Vatican's Feb. 21-24 summit on the protection of minors in the Church, he says it was “necessary” to send out a “strong message” and seek a “new beginning” so the Church could again become “truly credible.”

Benedict writes that he compiled notes from the documents and reports from that meeting that culminated in this text, which he says he has shown to Pope Francis and Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican secretary of state.

The essay is divided into three parts. The first is an examination of the “wider societal context” of the crisis, in which he says he tries to show that an

“egregious event” occurred in the 1960s “on a scale unprecedented in history.”

A second section deals with the effects of this on the “formation of priests and on the lives of priests.”

And in a third part he develops “some perspectives for a proper

response on the part of the Church.”

‘1968 Revolution’

To give an idea of the wider societal context, the Pope Emeritus recalls the “all-out sexual freedom” that followed the “1968 Revolution.” From 1960 to 1980, he says “standards regarding sexuality collapsed entirely,” resulting in a “normlessness” that, despite “laborious attempts,” has not been halted.

Drawing primarily on examples from German-speaking Europe, he remembers state-sponsored graphic sex education, lascivious advertising and “sex and pornographic movies” that became a “common occurrence” after 1968. This, in turn, led to violence and aggression, he says, and pedophilia was “diagnosed as allowed and appropriate.”

He wondered at the time how young people would approach the priesthood in this environment and says the collapse in vocations and “very high number of laicizations” were a “consequence of all these processes.”

At the same time, Catholic moral theology also “suffered a collapse,” he says, rendering the Church “defenseless against these changes in society.”

He explains that, until the Second Vatican Council, moral theology was largely founded on natural law, but in the “struggle for a new understanding of Revelation,” the “natural law was largely abandoned, and a moral theology

based entirely on the Bible was demanded.”

In consequence, Benedict says, no longer could anything be “constituted an absolute good,” but only the “relative” could be “better, contingent on the moment and on circumstances.”

This relativistic perspective reached “dramatic proportions” in the late 1980s and 1990s, when documents emerged such as the 1989 “Cologne Declaration,” which dissented from Pope St. John Paul II’s teaching, prompting an “outcry against the Magisterium of the Church.” He recalls how John Paul II tried to stem the crisis in moral theology through his 1993 encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* and creating the Catechism.

But dissenting theologians started applying infallibility only to matters of faith and not to morals, even though, Benedict writes, the Church’s moral teaching is deeply linked to the faith. Those who deny this, he continues, force the Church to remain silent “precisely where the boundary between truth and lies is at stake.”

Formation Breakdown

Turning to the second part of his essay, Benedict says this “long-prepared and ongoing process of dissolution of the Christian concept of morality” led to a “far-reaching breakdown” in priestly formation.

He notes how “various seminary homosexual cliques” had a significant impact on seminaries, resulting, in the U.S. at least, in two apostolic visitations that bore little fruit.

But he also underlines how changes to the appointment of bishops after Vatican II put an emphasis on “conciliarity,” leading to a “negative attitude” toward tradition — so much so that Benedict says even his own books were “hidden away, like bad literature, and only read under the desk.”

Pedophilia did not become “acute” until the late 1980s, he says, but canon law at that time “did not seem sufficient” for dealing with the crime. Rome believed “temporary suspension” was sufficient to “bring about purification and clarification,” but this was not accepted by U.S. bishops dealing with the emerging American clergy abuse crisis, because the alleged abusers

were still “directly associated” with their bishop. A “renewal and deepening” of the “deliberately loosely constructed criminal law” of the 1983 Code of Canon law then “slowly” began to take place.

Benedict also pinpointed another canonical problem: the Church’s perception of criminal law which so fully guaranteed the accused’s rights that “any conviction” was “factually excluded” — something he describes as “guarantorism.”

But Benedict argues that a “properly formed canon law” must contain a “double guarantee” — legal protections for both the accused and the “good at stake,” which he defines as protecting the deposit of faith. The faith “no longer appears” to be a good “requiring protection,” he says, adding it is an “alarming situation” that pastors must take “seriously.”

To help overcome this “guarantorism,” Benedict decided with John Paul II to transfer abuse cases from the Congregation for Clergy to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) — a move, he says, that was crucially important to the Church, as such misconduct “ultimately damages the faith” and that enabled “the maximum penalty” to be imposed.

But he adds that an aspect of guarantorism rightly remained in force, namely the need for “clear proof of the offense.” To ensure this, and that penalties were lawfully imposed, Benedict says the Holy See would take over investigation of cases if dioceses were “overwhelmed” by the need for a “genuine criminal process.” The possibility for appeal was also provided.

But all of that was “beyond the capacities” of the CDF at the time, leading to delays. “Pope Francis has undertaken further reforms,” Benedict notes.

What Must Be Done

Turning to what needs to be done, Benedict argues that trying to “create another Church” has “already failed” and proceeds to give a catechesis on how the “power of evil arises from our refusal to love God.”

He teaches that a world without God “can only be a world without meaning,” without

standards of “good or evil,” where “power is the only principle” and “truth does not count.” A society without God “means the end of freedom,” he continues, and Western society is one where “God is absent” and has “nothing left to offer it.”

“At individual points it becomes suddenly apparent that what is evil and destroys man has become a matter of course,” Benedict writes. “That is the case with pedophilia. It was theorized only a short time ago as quite legitimate, but it has spread further and further. And now we realize with shock that things are happening to our children and young people that threaten to destroy them. The fact that this could also spread in the Church and among priests ought to disturb us in particular.”

Pedophilia reached such proportions, he says, because of the “absence of God,” and he notes how Christians and priests “prefer not to talk about God” and he has “become the private affair of a minority.”

Therefore, the “paramount task” is to once again place God in the “center of our thoughts, words and actions,” he says, to be “renewed and mastered by the faith” rather than be “masters of faith.”

He says the Second Vatican Council “rightly” focused on returning the real presence of Christ to the center of Christian life, but today a “rather different attitude is prevalent,” one that destroys the “greatness of the Mystery.” This has resulted in declining participation in Sunday Mass, the devaluation of the Eucharist to a “ceremonial gesture,” and the reception of Holy Communion simply as a “matter of course.”

“What is required first and foremost is the renewal of the Faith in the Reality of Jesus Christ given to us in the Blessed Sacrament,” Benedict says. “In conversations with victims of pedophilia, I have been made acutely aware of this.”

The Indestructible Holy Church

He also observes that the Church today is

“widely regarded as just some kind of political apparatus,” spoken of in “political categories” as something we must “now take into our own hands and redesign.” But a “self-made Church cannot constitute hope,” he says.

Noting that the Church today is and always has been made up of wheat and weeds, of “evil fish” and “good fish,” he says that to proclaim both “is not a false form of apologetics, but a necessary service to the Truth.”

But the devil is identified in the Book of Revelation as “the accuser who accuses our brothers before God day and night” because he “wants to prove there are no righteous people.”

Today, the accusation against God is “above all about disparaging His Church as bad in its entirety and thus dissuading us from it,” he says.

But he stresses that, also today, the Church is “not just made up of bad fish and weeds,” but continues to be the “very instrument” through which God saves us.

“It is very important to oppose the lies and half-truths of the devil with the whole truth,” Benedict says. “Yes, there is sin in the Church and evil. But even today there is the Holy Church, which is indestructible.”

And he recalls the “many people who humbly believe, suffer and love, in whom the real God, the loving God, shows Himself to us,” as well as “His witnesses (*martyres*) in the world.”

“We just have to be vigilant to see and hear them,” he says, adding that an “inertia of the heart” leads us to “not wish to recognize them” — but recognizing them is essential to evangelization, he says.

Benedict closes by thanking Pope Francis “for everything he does to show us, again and again, the light of God, which has not disappeared, even today. Thank you, Holy Father!”

----- **National Catholic Register** ♦



Pope Francis calls for a listening Church

[In his document on the youth, Christus vivit (Christ is Alive) --- addressed to young people and to the entire People of God and released to the public on April 2, the anniversary of the death of St. John Paul II --- Pope Francis calls for a listening Church. The document is composed of nine chapters. Following are the excerpts from each chapter. --- Editor]



Chapter 1: What does the Word of God have to say about young people?

Francis recalls that "in an age when young people were not highly regarded, some Biblical texts show that God sees them differently."

For him age did not establish privileges, and being young did not imply lesser worth or dignity

Chapter 2: Jesus, ever young

The pope addresses the theme of Jesus' youthful years and remembers the Gospel story that describes Jesus "as an adolescent, when he had returned with his parents to Nazareth, after being lost and found in the Temple."

Francis then speaks of the youth of the Church and writes: "Let us ask the Lord to free the Church from those who would make her grow old, encase her in the past, hold her back or keep her at a standstill."

He presents "Mary, the young woman from Nazareth," and her Yes as that of "someone willing to take a risk, ready to stake everything she had, with no more security than the certainty of knowing that she was the bearer of a promise."

Chapter 3: You are the 'now' of God

We cannot just say that "young people are the

future of our world," says Pope Francis.

"They are its present; even now, they are helping to enrich it." For this reason it is necessary to listen to them even if "there is a tendency to provide prepackaged answers and ready-made solutions."

"Many young people are taken in by ideologies, used and exploited as cannon fodder or a strike force to destroy, terrify or ridicule others" hence the pope invites young people to learn to weep for their peers who are worse off than they are.

Referring to "desires, hurts, and longings," Pope Francis speaks about sexuality and its "essential importance" for young peoples' lives and for their "process of growth in identity."

The pope writes that: "in a world that constantly exalts sexuality, maintaining a healthy relationship with one's body and a serene affective life is not easy."

The exhortation then turns to the theme of the



"digital world" which has created "a new way to communicate", and which can "facilitate the circulation of independent information."

In many countries, the web and social networks "already represent a firmly established forum for reaching and involving young people." But they can also be a place of "loneliness,

manipulation, exploitation and violence, up to the extreme case of the 'dark web.'

Digital media can expose people to the risk of addiction, isolation and gradual loss of contact with concrete reality.

The pope goes on to present "migrants as an epitome of our time" and recalls the many young people involved in migration.

He also speaks of child abuse, makes the Synod's commitment to the adoption of rigorous measures of prevention his own, and expresses gratitude "to those who had the courage to report the evil they experienced."

Pope Francis reminds young people that "there is a way out" in all dark and painful situations. He recalls the Good News given on the morning of the Resurrection.

Chapter 4: A great message for all young people

To all young people the pope announces three great truths. A "God who is love."

The second truth is that "Christ saves you."

The third truth is that "He is alive!"

"We need to keep reminding ourselves of this... because we can risk seeing Jesus Christ simply as a fine model from the distant past, as a memory, as someone who saved us two thousand years ago."

Chapter 5: Paths of Youth

"The love of God and our relationship with the living Christ do not hold us back from dreaming; they do not require us to narrow our horizons. On the contrary, that love elevates us, encourages us and inspires us to a better and more beautiful life."

Pope Francis invites young people not to observe life from the balcony, not to spend their lives in front of a screen, not to be reduced to abandoned vehicles and not to look at the world as tourists: "Make a ruckus! Cast out the fears that paralyze you... live!"

He invites them to "live the present" enjoying with gratitude every little gift of life without "being insatiable" and "obsessively seeking new pleasures."



The pope, speaking of growth and maturity, indicates the importance of seeking "a spiritual development," of "seeking the Lord and keeping his Word," of maintaining the "connection" with Jesus... since you will not grow happy and holy by your own efforts and intelligence alone."

Pope Francis proposes "paths of fraternity" to live the faith, remembering that "the Holy Spirit wants to make us come out of ourselves, to embrace others... That is why it is always better to live the faith together and to show our love by living in community."

Chapter 6: Young people with roots

Pope Francis says that it hurts him to see "young people sometimes being encouraged to build a future without roots, as if the world were just starting now."

Fundamental is "your relationship with the elderly," says the pope, which helps young people to discover the living richness of the past.

Speaking of "dreams and visions" Pope Francis observes: "When young and old alike are open to the Holy Spirit, they make a wonderful combination. The old dream dreams, and the young see visions."

Chapter 7: Youth ministry

The pope explains that youth ministry has been affected by social and cultural changes and "young people frequently fail to find in our usual programs a response to their concerns, their needs, their problems and issues."

Youth ministry has to be synodal, that is,

capable of shaping a "journey together" and this involves two broad lines of action: the first is outreach, the second is growth.

For the first, Church institutions should therefore provide "suitable environments," "places young people can make their own, where they can come and go freely, feel welcome and readily meet other young people, whether at times of difficulty and frustration, or of joy and celebration."

Pope Francis then describes "Youth Ministry in educational institutions," affirming that schools are in "urgent need of self-criticism." He said that "some Catholic schools seem to be structured only for the sake of self-preservation."

Among the areas of "pastoral development", the Pope indicates the "importance of the arts" (226), the "potential of sports" (227), and "care for the environment."

Young people need to have their freedom respected, "yet they also need to be accompanied," he says.

Chapter 8: Vocation

"To respond to our vocation, we need to foster and develop all that we are. This has nothing to do with inventing ourselves or creating ourselves out of nothing. It has to do with finding our true selves in the light of God and letting our lives flourish and bear fruit."

As for "love and family," the pope writes that: "Young people intensely feel the call to love; they dream of meeting the right person with whom they can form a family."

Pope Francis concludes this chapter by talking about "the vocation to special consecration." "In discerning your vocation, do not dismiss the possibility of devoting yourself to God... Why not? You can be sure that, if you do recognize and follow a call from God, there you

will find complete fulfilment."

Chapter 9: Discernment

The pope recalls that: "Without the wisdom of discernment, we can easily become prey to every passing trend."

"A particular form of discernment involves the effort to discover our own vocation. Since this is a very personal decision that others cannot make for us, it requires a certain degree of solitude and silence."

Three sensitivities are required of those who help young people in their discernment.

"The first kind of sensitivity is directed to the individual. It is a matter of listening to someone who is sharing his very self in what he says."

"The second kind of sensitivity is marked by discernment. It tries to grasp exactly where

grace or temptation is present."

"The third kind of sensitivity is the ability to perceive what is driving the other person", discerning "the direction in which that person truly wants to move."

The exhortation concludes with "a wish" from Pope Francis:

"Dear young people, my joyful hope is to see you keep running the race before you, outstripping all those who are slow or fearful.

Keep running, "attracted by the face of Christ, whom we love so much, whom we adore in the Holy Eucharist and acknowledge in the flesh of our suffering brothers and sisters.

The Church needs your momentum, your intuitions, your faith... And when you arrive where we have not yet reached, have the patience to wait for us."

----- **La Croix International**
[newsletter@international.la-croix.com]
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Sacrament of Matrimony

Historical Developments

By Fr Dr S Joseph Lionel

The early Christian witness of this indissoluble bond of love between husband and wife united through marriage stood as distinct and powerful testimony of the gospel of love. For example, the family customs of the believers were not in line with their pagan neighbors. When the Greeks and Romans practiced primitive forms of artificial birth control or abortion, Christians restrained from such practices because they believed in the sanctity of life and accepted the life is a gift from God. [S. J. Lionel, "Liturgy and Life" *Kristu Jyoti* 27 (2011): 225-226.]

In an age when any father could command the death of his newborn child, Christians accepted all children, including those who were weak or handicapped. Christians even went to the street corners of cities like Rome and Corinth and took into their homes the infants that had been abandoned there. Similarly, Christians were inspired by the teachings of Jesus and apostles regarding the sanctity of marriage. Through the celebration of the sacrament of marriage believers perceived a reflection of Christ's own unity with his bride the Church (Eph 5:25); hence restrained from divorce or pre-marital sexual intercourse. A second century description testifies for this fact as follows:

Christians ...marry like all others, and beget children; but they do not expose their offspring. Their board they spread for all, but not their bed. They find themselves in the flesh, but do not live according to flesh. They spend their days on earth, but hold citizenship in heaven. [Letter to Diognetus, quoted in J. Quasten, *Patrology: The Beginnings* (Ave Maria Press, 2005), 250.]

During the early Christian period two types of groups existed: one group promoted loose morality

with divorce and pre-marital sex, while the others such as Gnostics and Encratists scorned marriage and children since matter was considered to be evil by them. Christians did not associate with any of these groups because they respected the sanctity of marriage and human life.

Christians followed the law of the land with regard to civil ceremonies for the marriage but believed that they were receiving a sacrament that bound them to each other in fidelity for all of their lives. Just like their pagan neighbors, Christians were not free from the daily ordeals of married life but believers prayed together and strengthened by their prayers they faced the troubles together. According to Tertullian, Christian married couples are

people "who sustain one another in the way of the Lord, who pray together, who go together to God's table, and who face all their ordeals together." [H D Rops, *The Church of the Apostles and Martyrs*, vol.1 (Dent, 1960), 233.] Participating in the Tables of the Word and the Eucharist during the liturgy, Christian families received strength to face the challenges of their daily lives.

It was not a rare thing to find a Christian woman being married to a pagan. Nevertheless, such women had a tremendous capillary effect on the pagan society resulting in conversion of their non-Christian husbands and other members of the family. St Monica, mother of St. Augustine, is the best example for an immense influence of a believing and praying mother on her family. Her prayers effected conversion of her son Augustine. The case of Monica was not the only one in the fifth century because the same story was lived by thousands of Christian women whose prayer and life effected conversion in their families. Thus





Christian life of prayer and living testimony produced a new race of people with completely different view of life and love, who revolutionized the ancient world.

The existing law of the land both in Rome and Greece supported strong marriage union from two dimensions: 1) marriage was part of family law, and 2) marriage was seen as a public announcement of an agreement in intention.

The beginning of common life was already subject to religious interpretation among the Romans: the familial hearth was always understood as having religious significance. In this context the Christians always considered that their marriage was a source of divine blessing. Christians came to this understanding not merely looking at the secular culture, but because of their understanding of the sacredness of marriage in the bible.

Although we do not have much evidence to trace the exact form of marriage rite in the early church, there are some indications from the early Fathers of the Church to draw some reasonable conclusions. For example, according to St. Ignatius of Antioch, Christians should marry only with the assent of the bishop. Similarly, according to Tertullian the Church appears to be an agent of conciliator in marriages and there is mention of a benediction (blessing) of the married couple at the Eucharist. Scholars speculate that the Jewish prayer of blessing was adopted by the early Judeo-Christians for this benedictio at the Eucharist.[K Stevenson, Nuptial Blessing: A

Study of Christian Marriage Rites (London: Alcuin Club, 1982).]

From this evidence at least we can draw a broad conclusion that the Church was involved in the married life with a blessing during a liturgical celebration. Although the early evidence on marriage is rather poor, from fourth and fifth centuries the exegesis of the biblical texts by the Fathers of the Church really exposes the theology of marriage. The union of man and woman mentioned in the Book of

Genesis and the union of Christ with his Church mentioned in Paul's letter to the Ephesians supplied basis for the Christian theology of marriage that it is indissoluble and marriage as a sign of God's love is way to salvation. Married life was seen by the Christians as an imitation of Christ's love for the Church. Continuing the same line of thought, based on Genesis 1:28, begetting of offspring was considered as one of the ends of marriage as willed by God.

Although some Fathers of the Church had some difficulty in speaking about sexuality in marriage, Augustine speaks about sexual fidelity in



married life. He called marriage as sacramentum both from legal and religious perspectives. He orders the goods of marriage as follows: 1) bonum proles, that is offspring based on Gen 1:28; 2) bonum fidei, that is sexual fidelity in marriage based on Gen 2:23-24; and 3) bonum sacramenti, that is the fulfillment of natural love in sanctification based on Eph 5:31-33. ♦

Scripture Reading: Why and How - III

By Fr Ralph daCosta SJ

Today we have easily available the whole text of the Old Testament in critical editions in the original languages as also translations, and a wealth of commentaries and recent studies on the whole Bible, not to mention exegetical works on the sacred text that can facilitate a deeper grasp of the Word of God.



From the sacred texts we can draw our matter for both meditation and contemplation, from either the old or the New Testament books. All these texts are in and of historical circumstances, and came through human authors but are ultimately God's self revelation in his dialogue with human beings in their history and in that of the world in which they lived. We to keep this in mind as we make the Spiritual Exercises, since we are to draw that divine-human dialogue into our moment of history, and the encounter the Living God. God is to enter into one's personal history to make it a history of salvation of the individual, and through him/her that of our world. We thus get involved in God's great deeds of love from all eternity, all through time in the history of the Chosen People, and more specifically in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and the Risen Lord, while we stand before the unfinished dialogue of love between God and ourselves in the present looking forward to the future where all human beings will have heard and responded to this Word in love.

All such dialogue will lead us to positive action, for the Word is both *noetic* and *poietic*; it is not only the spoken or written word, but is act, deed and Word made Flesh, a way of life in and with the Risen Lord, an interpersonal relationship that is mutual communion of persons and of life.

For example: The Exercises of St Ignatius are spiritual precisely because it is the exercitant who makes them in and with the Spirit of the Risen Christ in him, who teaches him all things, brings all the Words of God to his remembrance and leads him to what Jesus has done and bring him to do even greater things. This action of the Spirit brings

one to experience the mighty deed of the Father, making us share in the sonship of the Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, because of our being baptized in water and the Spirit into the three persons of the Blessed Trinity. As all God's self-revelation to man is directed to drawing us ever more deeply into communion with the Blessed Trinity, with other human beings and the whole of God's creation, so that His family be perfectly constituted. All Ignatian prayer is both contemplative and apostolic, as is the prayer of the Only Begotten of the Father, the Word made Flesh,



and is directed to the glory of the Father. Therefore Ignatius proposes the grace to be sought for in the second, through the fourth week, as our response to his question at the close of the First Week, "What ought I to do for Christ?". It is to know Christ more intimately, love him more ardently and serve him



more generously, or in other words, to be Christ-like, Children of the Father in our attitudes, value systems, lifestyle, to “live in the Spirit”, the Spirit of love, of communion, *koinonia*, brotherhood, to be the People of God that responds to the “Universal Call to Holiness”.

Vatican II in *Dei Verbum* says: “For in the sacred books the Father who is in Heaven meets his children with great love and speaks with them, and the force and power in the word of God is so great that it remains the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the peace and permanent source of spiritual life....” For the Word of God is living and efficient Heb 4:12 (*Dei Verbum* 21), thereby strengthening their wills and setting man’s heart on fire with the love of God DV 23. All the Christian faithful too, especially religious are “to learn by frequent reading of the Divine Scriptures the excelling knowledge of Jesus Christ (Phil 3.8) “For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ”. And let them remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture so that God and man may talk together for we speak to Him when we pray, we hear Him when we read the divine sayings” DV 25.

When we say ‘the Word of God’ we are affirming that God has spoken. The Infinite and Eternal God has chosen to break through all barriers and to enter into a dialogue with human beings, speak – listen, thus granting man a sharing in his sacred otherness. This communication of the Good News, the salvation of all creation

effected by God in the world through the centuries. Here is God making Himself known in the history of Israel and above all in his Son Jesus Christ. Thus God unfolds his will as the Lord of History in the God-directed events of history that attains its climax in the person of Jesus Christ, in everything that Jesus says and does. The Word of God goes beyond teaching and abstractly formulated truths; it is God Himself. It is not then to be just an object of meditation, but of contemplation. Hence in contemplating the historical events narrated in the Bible

we are to see the action and the person of God in directing these events according to a plan, revealing His will for mankind and the world until we see it realized in the person of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

History is the remembrance of past human experiences as accepted by the mentality and degree of culture of a given social group. This documentation through the ages is done in a diversity of methods, giving us Literary Forms. In the history recorded in the Bible it is for a didactic purpose, and that too, religious teaching, a plan of salvation directed by God which his people are to understand, accept and surrender themselves to in their context of daily life. Events thus manifest the actualization of God’s action in judgment, action of blessing and promise, etc. Thus there appears the actuality and continuity of one plan of God into which many other details, supporting events take place. Historical truth need not be recounted in anecdotal detail, but in so far as the “event” enters into the plan of salvation it all goes to present God’s world view of history to invite us to make that world view, our view. Together with facts is interwoven a theological interpretation, the narrative with theological interpretations.

The Word of God must be attested and announced in real life. It is mental prayer that facilitates this in the context of one’s going out into the world with the dynamics of salvation.

Points for reflections

- How do we understand “Scripture is the



Word of God in the words of men”

- What does this mean for you: Scripture records the spiritual experience of man in God's plan of salvation?
- What is essential in any self-revelation of God to a human being
- How do we arrive at the experience of God through the written word of God
- What does prayer on the word of God entail for the human person ♦

Continued from Page 4: Courage to take risk for God's promise

to grow discouraged and fall into the “weariness of hope” (Homily at Mass with Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Movements, Panama, 26 January 2019).

And yet, there can be no greater joy than to risk one's life for the Lord! I would like to say this especially to you, the young. Do not be deaf to the Lord's call. If he calls you to follow this path, do not pull your oars into the boat, but trust him. Do not yield to fear, which paralyzes us before the great heights to which the Lord points us. Always remember that to those who leave their nets and boat behind, and follow him, the Lord promises the joy of a new life that can fill our hearts and enliven our journey.

Dear friends, it is not always easy to discern our vocation and to steer our life in the right direction. For this reason, there needs to be a renewed commitment on the part of the whole Church – priests, religious, pastoral workers and educators – to provide young people in particular with opportunities for listening and discernment. There is a need for a youth ministry and a vocational promotion that can open the way to discovering God's plan, above all through prayer, meditation on God's word, eucharistic adoration and spiritual accompaniment.

As was made clear several times during the World Youth Day in Panama, we should always look to Mary. Also in the story of this young woman, vocation was both a promise and a risk.

Her mission was not easy, yet she did not allow fear to prevail. “It was the 'yes' of someone prepared to be committed, someone willing to take a risk, ready to stake everything she had, with no more security than the certainty of knowing that she was the bearer of a promise. I ask each one of you: Do you see yourselves as bearers of a promise? What promise do I bear within my heart to take forward? Mary's would undoubtedly be a difficult mission,



but the challenges that lay ahead were no reason to say 'no'. Things would get complicated, of course, but not in the same way as happens when cowardice paralyzes us because things are not clear or sure in advance” (Vigil with Young People, Panama, 26 January 2019).

On this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, let us join in prayer and ask the Lord to help us discover his plan of love for our lives, and to grant us the courage to walk in the path that, from the beginning, he has chosen for each of us.

----- Libreria Editrice Vatican ♦

SAINT OF THE MONTH - I

St Andrew Bobola

Birth: 1591 Death: 1657

Feast Day: May 16



Andrew Bobola, SJ, did not differ much from other priests or his fellow Jesuits in terms either of pursuing holiness in his daily life or of his missionary zeal. The argument for that is that there was a silence and nobody would remember much

about him for 50 years after his death, which happened in 1657. The history of devotion to him started in 1702, when the martyr appeared in the visions of the Rector of the Jesuit College in Pinsk, Fr Martin Godebski. The rector ordered that the body should be found. They found it after two days of search, totally incorrupt and with a “fine fragrance”, buried in one of the damp crypts of the church. Many people started to visit the martyr in the crypt asking for his intercession, and many miracles happened, including the total protection of the city and its region from plague, famine, and robbing soldiers during the Great Northern War (1700-1721). So what was it like this both exceptional and ordinary life of Andrew Bobola?

Andrew or Andrzej, was born in Strachocina, southern Poland, in 1591. He went to a Jesuit College in Braniewo. He joined the Society of Jesus in Vilnius, in 1611, and he stayed there until finished all studies. There he also was ordained a priest in 1622 and made his final vows in St Casimir Church, in 1630.

Father Bobola would spend most of his apostolate time preaching, hearing confessions, giving catechesis to the local community. (He would not be given to teach or to supervise at the college, supposedly because of a lack of skills for

such duties). He was appointed to serve the needs of people at St. Casimir Church for twelve years. He also spent 9 years in different Polish cities: Plock, Warsaw, Lomza. Every time Father Bobola would start his apostolate, he would do it with a great devotion and obligingness to the people he met. Both youngsters and adults would listen to his word and participate in his pastoral activities for the poor, the sick and prisoners.

The most successful and outstanding mission lead by the zealous father was in the eastern part of Lithuania (present Belarus). There was a unique situation at that time, because of the Union of Brest, which gave the opportunity for the Orthodox Church in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to retain the old liturgy and to join the Roman Catholic Church. To begin with, it was a fruitful process of reunification of the two Christian Churches. But after a few decades the rebellion of unsatisfied Orthodox clergy together with the armed Cossacks, guided by Bogdan Chmielnicky, and of the Orthodox Russians started to grow. Finally it broke into a war of neighbouring Russia against the Commonwealth. Andrew Bobola was martyred under these circumstances.

The dedicated missionary had already started to strengthen the faith of the Catholics while working in Nesvizh, 1622-24, and in Bobruisk, 1630-32. He also spent the final five years before his death in the same eastern part of Lithuania, in Pinsk and its surrounding area. He led missions, and helped in the parishes. Living with the Orthodox he would try to convince them that the Roman Catholic Church had not changed, after the Great schism of Christianity in 1054, whereas there had been changes in the Eastern Orthodox Church. For that reason Fr. Bobola studied the Fathers of the Church: St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Gregory, who were also acknowledged by the Orthodox believers. With these authors it was much easier to explain the role

SAINT OF THE MONTH - II

St Germaine Cousin

1579 --- 1601

Feast Day: June 15

When Hortense decided to marry Laurent Cousin in Pibrac, France, it was not out of love for his infant daughter. Germaine was everything Hortense despised. Weak and ill, the girl had also been born with a right hand that was deformed and paralyzed. Hortense replaced the love that Germaine has lost when her mother died with cruelty and abuse.

Laurent, who had a weak character, pretended not to notice that Germaine had been given so little food that she had learned to crawl in order to get to the dog's dish. He wasn't there to protect her when Hortense left Germaine in a drain while she cared for chickens -- and forgot her for three days. He didn't even interfere when Hortense poured boiling water on Germaine's legs.

With this kind of treatment, it's no surprise that Germaine became even more ill. She came down with a disease known as scrofula, a kind of tuberculosis that causes the neck glands to swell up. Sores began to appear on her neck and in her weakened condition to fell prey to every disease that came along. Instead of awakening Hortense's pity this only made her despise Germaine more for being even uglier in her eyes.

Germaine found no sympathy and love with her siblings. Watching their mother's treatment of their half-sister, they learned how to despise and torment her, putting ashes in her

food and pitch in her clothes. Their mother found this very entertaining.

Hortense did finally get concerned about Germaine's sickness -- because she was afraid her own children would catch it. So she made Germaine sleep out in the barn. The only warmth Germaine had on frozen winter nights was the woolly sheep who slept there too. The only food she had were the scraps Hortense might remember to throw her way.

The abuse of Germaine tears at our hearts and causes us to cry for pity and justice. But it was Germaine's response to that abuse and her cruel life that wins our awe and veneration.

Germaine was soon entrusted with the sheep. No one expected her to have any use for education so she spent long days in the field tending the sheep. Instead of being lonely, she found a friend in God. She didn't know any theology and only the basics of the faith that she learned the catechism. But she had a rosary made of knots in string and her very simple prayers: "Dear God, please don't let me be too hungry or too thirsty. Help me to please my mother. And help me to please you." Out of that simple faith, grew a profound holiness and a deep trust of God.

And she had the most important prayer of



all -- the Mass. Every day, without fail, she would leave her sheep in God's care and go to Mass. Villagers wondered that the sheep weren't attacked by the wolves in the woods when she left but God's protection never failed her. One day when the rains had swollen the river to flood stage, a villager saw the river part so that she could cross to get to the church in time for Mass.

No matter how little Germaine had, she shared it with others. Her scraps of food were given to beggars. Her life of prayer became stories of God that entranced the village children.

But most startling of all was the forgiveness she showed to the woman who deserved her hatred.

Hortense, furious at the stories about her daughter's holiness, waited only to catch her doing wrong. One cold winter day, after throwing out a beggar that Germaine had let sleep in the barn, Hortense caught Germaine carrying something bundled up in her apron. Certain that Germaine had stolen bread to feed the beggar, she began to chase and scream at the child. As she began to beat her, Germaine opened her apron. Out tumbled what she had been hiding in her apron -- bright beautiful flowers that no one had expected to see for months. Where had she found the vibrant blossoms in the middle of the ice and snow? There was only one answer and Germaine gave it herself, when she handed a flower to her mother and said, "Please accept this flower, Mother. God sends it to you in sign of his forgiveness."

As the whole village began to talk



about this holy child, even Hortense began to soften her feelings toward her. She even invited Germaine back to the house but Germaine had become used to her straw bed and continued to sleep in it. There she was found dead at the age of 22, overcome by a life of suffering.

With all the evidence of her holiness, her life was too simple and hidden to mean much beyond her tiny village -- until God brought it too light again. When her body was exhumed forty years later, it was found to be undecayed, what is known as incorruptible. As

is often the case with incorruptible bodies of saints, God chooses not the outwardly beautiful to preserve but those that others despised as ugly and weak. It's as if God is saying in this miracle that human ideas of beauty are not his. To him, no one was more beautiful than this humble lonely young woman.

After her body was found in this state, the villagers started to speak again of what she had been like and what she had done. Soon miracles were attributed to her intercession and the clamor for her canonization began.

In this way, the most unlikely of saints became recognized by the Church. She didn't found a religious order. She didn't reach a high Church post. She didn't write books or teach at universities. She didn't go to foreign lands as a missionary or convert thousands. What she did was live a life devoted to God and her neighbor no matter what happened to her. And that is all God asks.

Source: catholiconline ♦

The Atonement

By Ludwig von Gerdte



There was once a king, a true father of his country, just and gentle toward all his subjects, who had to contend with a powerful revolutionary party that wanted to raise its leader to the throne.

One day this king noticed that important state and family papers had been stolen from his desk. Beside himself because of the possibility of a political scandal which could arise through the misuse of these stolen papers, he immediately had his heralds proclaim the following decree: "I swear by God and my honor as king that I shall without fail execute the one who misuses the stolen papers against my throne and the welfare of the state, and that anyone who dares again to steal my secret papers shall be punished publicly by the executioner with a hundred strokes of the lash, no matter who it is."

To the king's great pain, a few days after this decree was published a palace guard seized the king's dearly loved mother and his two sisters, just as they were about to open the king's secret cabinet with a master key. Investigations immediately set in operation proved beyond doubt that all three were participants in the conspiracy.

The news that the thieves, in the person of the queen mother and the two princesses, were caught in the act and that their guilt was proven, was immediately published in every newspaper in the kingdom. Some spite-filled articles emphasized that His Majesty now had an unusual opportunity to show his much-vaunted justice and to prove to the opposition that he placed the laws of the kingdom above his selfish family interests.

The queen mother and the king's two sisters fell on their knees before the king and promised to give up all connection with the rebels and to be all the more faithful to him in the future. The king did not doubt the sincerity of their remorse. In his double position as son and as ruler he was thrown into terrible agitation of heart and conscience. He locked himself into his study for a whole day and did not eat or drink. The king in him became a tyrant toward the mother's son he was and demanded equal rights for all. The son and brother in him, on the other hand, became a rebel against the king and demanded pardon.

What was he to do? If he carried out his decree, he must allow his dearly loved mother, as well as his own sisters, to be publicly disgraced by the executioner. He knew that they would not survive the shame and suffering of this dreadful punishment. If, on the other hand, he did not carry out his proclamation, the king would stand perjured, unjust, and dishonored before his whole people and his enemies. And yet he knew that only the personal trust of his people in his justice, honesty, and generosity could still save his throne



and the state. Thus the conspiracy had penetrated into the heart of the king himself. What was he to do? The one was just as impossible for him as the other.

On the following morning, after a terrible night, the king ordered the executioner and the people to assemble before the palace. Many thousands crowded around the throne which had been hastily erected in the palace square.

Finally the king came, leading his trembling old mother reverently by the arm, while his sisters, burning with shame, followed them. Then the king, pale and deeply earnest, but manly and composed, stepped beneath the canopy of his throne and



Then, just as the executioner was about to strike the old lady unmercifully, the king sprang up, grabbed the executioner by the arm, and called out with a lion's voice which awakened an echo from the palace walls,

said to the crowd, which immediately became deathly still: "So that my people and my enemies may see that in my kingdom there is equal justice for all, I now hand over to you, executioner, my old mother, for the immediate execution before all your eyes of the punishment merited according to my decree."

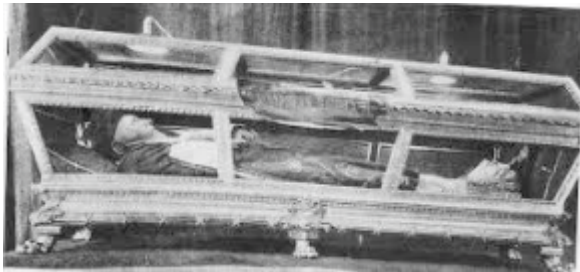
"Give me the hundred strokes! But let these three go!" And without a sound the king broke down under the hundred whiplashes, and half an hour later was carried, half-dead and streaming with blood, into his palace. Even his enemies wept.

A dreadful moment followed. Broken, the king sank down to the seat of his throne, burying his pale face in his hands to hide his tears. The princesses, their backs to the people, had broken down sobbing before the throne. For one second the humming of the whip was heard.

The king recovered but slowly from this terrible chastisement, but he had won even his opponents and was from then on beloved by all his people. In this way, through his justice, love, and a wisdom greater than Solomon's, the king saved his kingdom and his family from ruin.

Source: <https://www.plough.com/en/topics/culture/short-stories> ♦

Continued from Page 18: St Andrew Bobola



Bobola did not only work in the cities, but he would go frequently into the villages, and towns, which were situated in very swamp areas and were difficult to visit. He continued to work this way even when the ravages of the Cassocks began. It is said that just before his death two entire villages returned to the Catholic faith through his preaching. His opponents called him "the soul-hunter". In 1657, when the Cassocks appeared in the Pinsk region, the resentful Orthodox sent them to chase the missionary. He was caught in Peredil, and threatened with the purpose of making him deny the catholic faith. Since Bobola remained

steadfast in his resolve, they started to ridicule him and to torture:

"The hateful Cossacs tore his skin from his hands and head, and in imitation of chasuble that the priest wears at Mass, they tore the skin from his chest and back. Then in imitation of Jesus' wounds, they cut holes in the palms of his hands. After two hours of his torture, during which he continually prayed for his tormentors, they jabbed a butcher's awl into his chest near the heart. They then strung him up by his feet and finally gave him a blow with a sabre that mercifully brought an end to his passion."

Not only Andrew Bobola, but also other 49 jesuits, other lay Catholics were tortured and killed in that savage time, 1655-1661. He was beatified on the 30th of October, 1853, canonized on the 17th of April, 1938. Later Bobola was named as a patron of Poland.

Source: www.jesuit.org.uk; www.catholic.org www.newadvent.org ♦

News Round-Up

Court rules change of religion doesn't alter tribal status

Bhopal [UCAN] --- The High Court in Chhattisgarh state has ruled that the tribal status of a person will not alter if they change their religion to Christianity, stressing they can still enjoy state concessions aimed at improving the life of indigenous people.

The ruling was handed down as the court dismissed an election petition against Amit Jogi, who won a seat reserved for tribal candidates in the 2013 state elections. The petition was filed by Sameera Paikara, a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party. ♦

Police charged over cash seized from priest

Delhi [UCAN] --- Catholic officials in Jalandhar Diocese say that they have been vindicated by the charging of two police officers for allegedly looting some Rs 75,000,000 in cash seized from a priest's residence.

Police in Punjab state announced that they had filed cases against assistant sub-inspectors Joginder Singh and Rajpreet Singh, who have gone missing. Senior police officer Dhruv Dahiya said the two police officers accused of stealing the funds have been suspended and that investigators are searching for them.

It was reported that on March 29 that a priest named Father Antony Madasserry, director of Navjeevan (new life) Charitable Society, along with three others, had been arrested for alleged possession of Rs 135,000,000 unaccounted cash. However, the police officers responsible allegedly presented to tax officials some 69 million rupees less than this. ♦

Christians, Muslims protest over cow vigilantes

Delhi [UCAN] --- Five days after a mob of Hindus beat to death a Catholic man for suspected cow slaughter in Jharkhand state, Christian and Muslim activists joined in New Delhi on April 15 to protest about violence against minorities.

A mob attacked Prakash Lakra and three others on April 10 after suspecting them of slaughtering a cow in Jhurmu village in the eastern state's Gumla district. Lakra died from his injuries hours after the attack, church sources said. ♦

Income tax order upsets Indian priests, nuns

New Delhi [UCAN] --- Church people in Tamil Nadu state are seeking legal ways to counter a High Court order that asked priests and nuns to pay income tax if they draw a salary from state-funded educational institutions.

The March 20 order in the southern state ended a long-time practice that exempted Catholic priests, brothers and nuns from paying tax on their salaries on grounds that they donate their salaries to religious homes or dioceses engaged in social services.

The High Court order said salaries are received by individuals and that surrendering salaries can only be treated as “application” of their income. Their choice of application would not merit tax exemption, it said. ♦

Indian police protect convent, school following mob attacks

Hyderabad:[UCAN] --- Police are protecting a Catholic convent and a school two weeks after mobs attacked and injured several people, including four nuns, in Tamil Nadu state.

Indian bishops on April 6 appealed to political leaders in New Delhi and Tamil Nadu "to deal sternly" with criminals who attacked the convent of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and its Little Flower Higher Secondary School in Chinnasalem town on March 25-26.

Mobs attacked the school and convent after a grade 10 student committed suicide in the school hostel on the afternoon of March 25, hours after she had taken her mathematics exam after expressing fears of failing it.

Local police officer N Ramanathan told ucanews.com that the violence began after the school management refused to entertain a demand for 1 million rupees in compensation. ♦

Indonesian churches tighten Easter security

Jakarta [UCAN] --- Churches, particularly those considered high risk, will be tightly guarded by thousands of police, troops and Muslim groups during the Easter Triduum that runs from Thursday to Easter Sunday, church officials have confirmed. These churches are located mostly in Java and Sumatra, considered home to many Muslim hard-liners.

Churches in Jakarta will also be guarded by police and military, as well as Muslim volunteers. Paternus Telyohud, security coordinator at St. Joseph's Church in Matraman, East Jakarta, said a metal detector will be placed at the entrance to the church which was one of several targeted in Jakarta in a Christmas Eve bombing blitz in 2000.

Santa Maria Church in Surabaya, East Java, was one of three struck by bomb attacks in May last year. St. Paul's Church in Pringgolayan too has made similar arrangements. Recently, some hard-line Muslims forced a Catholic family in this parish to cut off the upper part of a burial cross before allowing them to bury a relative in a local cemetery. ♦

Number of Christians has reduced drastically

Aleppo, Syria [CNA] --- The number of Christians in Aleppo, Syria, has fallen dramatically during the civil war, from 180,000 before the war to 32,000. Maronite Archbishop Joseph Tobji of Aleppo is the shepherd of a small community of about 400 families. He recently confirmed this when he spoke with Aid to the Church in Need. ♦

Church attackers sentenced

Cairo, Egypt [CNA].--- A court in Cairo sentenced Saturday 30 men to between 10 years and life imprisonment. They were charged with planning to bomb a church in Alexandria, an attack which was not carried out. Of the 30 men sentenced March 30, only 20 were in court. Ten remain on the run. Prosecutors said they had been trained abroad and were influenced by Islamic State. ♦

Japan church to investigate sex abuse by clergy

TOKYO — The Catholic Church in Japan is preparing to investigate allegations of sexual abuse against minors by its priests, including accusations from 20 years ago, officials said Thursday.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference in Japan said it has established a committee in each diocese to take claims and consultations related to sexual abuse but details of an investigation haven't been decided. The decision comes after Pope Francis convened a bishops' summit in February in response to worldwide scandals involving Catholic clergy. He is expected to visit Japan in November in the first papal visit to the country since John Paul II in 1981. ♦

Holy Father's Prayer Intentions

MAY 2019: The Church in Africa, a Seed of Unity

That the Church in Africa, through the commitment of its members, may be the seed of unity among her peoples and a sign of hope for this continent.

JUNE 2019: The Mode of Life of Priests

That priests, through the modesty and humility of their lives, commit themselves actively to a solidarity with those who are most poor.

Prayer for the Extraordinary Missionary Month OCTOBER 2019

*Heavenly Father,
when your only begotten Son Jesus Christ
rose from the dead,
he commissioned his followers
to “go and make disciples of all nations”
and you remind us that through our Baptism
we are made sharers in the mission of the Church.*

*Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit
to be courageous and zealous
in bearing witness to the Gospel,
so that the mission entrusted to the Church,
which is still very far from completion,
may find new and efficacious expressions
that bring life and light to the world.*

*Help us make it possible for all peoples
to experience the saving love
and mercy of Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God, forever and ever. Amen.*

**Come! Join us to make the
EMM OCT 2019 truly fruitful in INDIA!**

**Feel free to tell us what you would like to do to help increase
MISSIONARY ZEAL in your diocese...**

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“Go into the whole world and PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS to all creation” Mark 16:15

Come! Make MISSION A MOVEMENT!

Saint Anthony, perfect imitator of Jesus, who received from God the special power of restoring lost things, grant that I may find (mention your petition) which has been lost. At least restore to me peace and tranquility of mind, the loss of which has afflicted me even more than my material loss. To this favor I ask another of you: that I may always remain in possession of the true good that is God. Let me rather lose all things than lose God, my supreme good. Let me never suffer the loss of my greatest treasure, eternal life with God. Amen.

(Feast Day: 13th June)



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