



# MICHAEL

FOR THE TRIUMPH OF THE IMMACULATE

## The Encyclical on faith *Lumen Fidei*

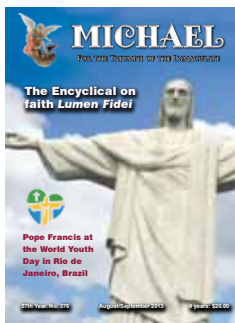


**Pope Francis at  
the World Youth  
Day in Rio de  
Janeiro, Brazil**

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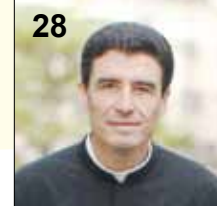
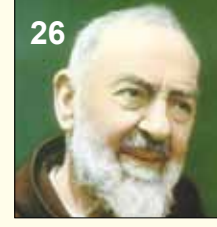
# MICHAEL

A journal of Catholic patriots  
 for the kingship of Christ and  
 Mary in the souls of families  
 and nations

For social justice through economic democracy  
 in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic  
 Church through the vigilant actions of heads of  
 families and not through political parties

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## Editorial

### *To be missionaries of the good news*

Two great events took place in the Church in July: the release of the encyclical *Lumen Fidei* on faith — the first encyclical written by two popes — and the gathering of the youth of the world in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the World Youth Day. This event also marked the first journey of Pope Francis outside Italy since the beginning of his pontificate.

In the new encyclical on faith (see page 4), Pope Francis explains that faith is more necessary than ever for today's world, for it helps us understand the plan of God for His creation and mankind: that we are all God's children, and therefore brothers in Jesus Christ, that God is Love and that we must love one another, treat others like brothers and not like enemies, and respect the rules of charity, truth and justice in our relations with others and in life in society.

In his speeches to the youth in Brazil (see page 16), Pope Francis emphasized the same theme, and in a very direct way in his speech to

the young people of Argentina on July 25: "I think our world civilization has gone beyond its limits, it has gone beyond its limits because it has made money into such a god" and he pointed out that in the Beatitudes (Blessed are the peacemakers, those who thirst for justice, etc.) and the Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 25, on Judgment Day: ("I was hungry, and you did not feed me..."), there is all we need as plan of action.

The Holy Father also insisted on the need go out and meet people, to leave our comfort zone, not to remain observers in front of today's changes and injustices, but to get involved. Young people have a great thirst for justice; that is why we invite them to read and study the writings of Louis Even and others on economic democracy (see page 11), and even to become its missionaries, to bring this good news of liberation everywhere. This is what every reader of MICHAEL should do.

*Alain Pilote,*  
**Editor**

*The statue of Christ the Redeemer with his open arms on top of Mount Corcovado in Rio de Janeiro*



# The encyclical *Lumen Fidei* on faith

Written by two Popes, Francis and Benedict XVI

*“Faith is born of an encounter with the living God who calls us and reveals his love”*

On July 5, 2013, the Vatican released the first encyclical of Pope Francis, *“Lumen Fidei”* (The Light of Faith), dated June 29, Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. What is unique about this encyclical is that it is the first one written by two Popes or, according to the words of Pope Francis, “written with four hands”: the two hands of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, and the two hands of reigning Pope Francis. Providentially, the two Popes appeared together on the same day in the Vatican Gardens for the unveiling of a statue dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel. (See page 31.) One can also add that July 5, 2013, will be remembered as the “day of the four Popes”, since, on this same day, it was announced that two previous Popes, Blessed John XXIII and Blessed John Paul II, will be declared saints during the same ceremony.



**“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.” (Psalms 119:105)**

There are three theological virtues: Faith, Hope and Charity. Benedict XVI had already written an encyclical on charity in 2005 (*Deus Caritas Est, God is love*), and on hope in 2007 (*Spe Salvi, Saved by Hope*). He had announced in 2012 that he was working on an encyclical on faith to be published in the summer of 2013, during the Year of Faith. When he renounced the papacy in February, 2013, this encyclical was almost finished.

Benedict XVI then left the text to his successor, Pope Francis who, according to his own words, made only a few additions. Speaking to members of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops on June 13, Pope Francis said: “An encyclical on faith should come out shortly... Pope Benedict, who delivered it to me, started it; it is a strong document... I have received this great work that he has done, and I

have brought it forward.” By making this text of his predecessor his own, Pope Francis has allowed us to enjoy this final text of Benedict XVI, which completes the trilogy on the theological virtues, and which would never have been published if Pope Francis had not accepted to take it as his own.

Pope Francis made sure to mention the exceptional collaboration of Benedict XVI in this new encyclical and in Paragraph 7 of *Lumen Fidei* one can read:

“These considerations on faith — in continuity with all that the Church’s magisterium has pronounced on this theological virtue — are meant to supplement what Benedict XVI had written in his encyclical letters on charity and hope. He himself had almost completed a first draft of an encyclical on faith. For this I am deeply grateful to him, and as his brother in Christ I have taken up his fine work and added a few contributions of my own. The Successor of Peter, yesterday, today and tomorrow, is always called to strengthen his brothers and sisters in the priceless treasure of that faith which God has given as a light for humanity’s path.”

With most of the text of the encyclical having been written by Benedict XVI and Pope Francis having made these thoughts of Benedict XVI his own and having signed the document, it is therefore right to say that the encyclical was written by four hands. As reported by Vatican journalist John Travis in his blog, Pope Francis recently said the following in a phone conversation with his old friend, Argentine journalist Jorge Milia:

“Today I was with Pope Benedict, and we talked a lot. It’s a pleasure for me to exchange ideas with him... You can’t imagine the humility and wisdom of this man,” said Pope Francis.



On the day the new encyclical letter was released, its two “co-authors”, Pope Francis and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI appeared together in the Vatican Gardens for the unveiling of a statue dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel. (See page 31.)

“Well, then keep him close to you,” Milia replied.

“I wouldn’t even consider giving up the counsel of a person like this, it would be foolish on my part!”, said Pope Francis.

Let us thank God for this fruitful relationship between the Pope Emeritus and the reigning Pope, and let us ask God to protect them and keep them with us for many years to come!

During a press conference to introduce the new encyclical, Cardinal Marc Ouellet, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, stated:

**“A pillar was lacking in Benedict XVI’s trilogy on the theological virtues. Providence willed that this missing pillar should be both a gift from the Pope Emeritus to his successor and a symbol of unity. For in taking up and completing the work begun by his predecessor, Pope Francis bears witness with him to the unity of the faith.”**

The following large excerpts are taken from this first encyclical of Pope Francis and deserve to be meditated upon in this Year of Faith.

**A. Pilote**

**1. The light of Faith (*Lumen Fidei*):** this is how the Church’s tradition speaks of the great gift brought by Jesus. In John’s Gospel, Christ says of himself: “I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness” (Jn 12:46)...

### A light to be rediscovered

2. Yet in speaking of the light of faith, we can almost hear the objections of many of our contemporaries. In modernity, that light might have been considered sufficient for societies of old, but was felt to be of no use for new times, for a humanity come of age, proud of its rationality and anxious to explore the future in novel ways...

3. Slowly but surely, however, it would become evident that the light of autonomous reason is not enough to illumine the future; ultimately the future remains shadowy and fraught with fear of the unknown. As a result, humanity renounced the search for a great light, Truth itself, in order to be content with smaller lights which illumine the fleeting moment yet prove incapable of showing the way. Yet in the absence of light everything becomes confused; it is impossible to tell good from evil, or the road to our destination from

▶ other roads which take us in endless circles, going nowhere.

**4. There is an urgent need, then, to see once again that faith is a light, for once the flame of faith dies out, all other lights begin to dim. The light of faith is unique, since it is capable of illuminating every aspect of human existence. A light this powerful cannot come from ourselves but from a more primordial source: in a word, it must come from God. Faith is born of an encounter with the living God who calls us and reveals his love, a love which precedes us and upon which we can lean for security and for building our lives.**

Transformed by this love, we gain fresh vision, new eyes to see; we realize that it contains a great promise of fulfilment, and that a vision of the future opens up before us. Faith, received from God as a supernatural gift, becomes a light for our way, guiding our journey through time. On the one hand, it is a light coming from the past, the light of the foundational memory of the life of Jesus which revealed his perfectly trustworthy love, a love capable of triumphing over death. Yet since Christ has risen and draws us beyond death, faith is also a light coming from the future and opening before us vast horizons which guide us beyond our isolated selves towards the breadth of communion. We come to see that faith does not dwell

in shadow and gloom; it is a light for our darkness. Dante, in the Divine Comedy, after professing his faith to Saint Peter, describes that light as a "spark, which then becomes a burning flame and like a heavenly star within me glimmers". It is this light of faith that I would now like to consider, so that it can grow and enlighten the present, becoming a star to brighten the horizon of our journey at a time when mankind is particularly in need of light.

7. In God's gift of faith, a supernatural infused virtue, we realize that a great love has been offered us, a good word has been spoken to us, and that when we welcome that word, Jesus Christ the Word made flesh, the Holy Spirit transforms us, lights up our way to the future and enables us joyfully to advance along that way on wings of hope. Thus wonderfully interwoven, faith, hope and charity are the driving force of the Christian life as it advances towards full communion with God. But what is it like, this road which faith opens up before us? What is the origin of this powerful light which brightens the journey of a successful and fruitful life?

#### **Abraham, our father in faith**

8. Faith opens the way before us and accompanies our steps through time. Hence, if we want to understand what faith is, we need to follow the route it has taken, the path trodden by believers, as witnessed first in the Old Testament. Here a unique place belongs to Abraham, our father in faith. Something disturbing takes place in his life: God speaks to him; he reveals himself as a God who speaks and calls his name. Faith is linked to hearing. Abraham does not see God, but hears his voice. Faith thus takes on a personal aspect. God is not the god of a particular place, or a deity linked to specific sacred time, but the God of a person, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, capable of interacting with man and establishing a covenant with him. Faith is our response to a word which engages us personally, to a "Thou" who calls us by name.

*"If you knew the gift of God..." said Jesus to the Samaritan woman (John 4:10). Faith is a gift from God, one must pray to obtain it.*

*This picture was taken on October 10, 2009 at the Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady in Cordova, Spain, at the baptism of Valentino Mora, son of Erica, a mom of 21. The photographer, Maria Silvana Salles, works with a traditional camera and had to send the film to be developed to a shop in Cordova. When she received the photos, she noticed with surprise that the water poured from the head of Valentino was a perfect rosary. .*



12. The history of the people of Israel in the Book of Exodus follows in the wake of Abraham's faith. Faith once again is born of a primordial gift: Israel trusts in God, who promises to set his people free from their misery. Faith becomes a summons to a lengthy journey leading to worship of the Lord on Sinai and the inheritance of a promised land. God's love is seen to be like that of a father who carries his child along the way (cf. Dt 1:31). Israel's confession of faith takes shape as an account of God's deeds in setting his people free and acting as their guide (cf. Dt 26:5-11), an account passed down from one generation to the next...

#### **Idolatry is the opposite of faith**

13. The history of Israel also shows us the temptation of unbelief to which the people yielded more than once. Here the opposite of faith is shown to be idolatry. While Moses is speaking to God on Sinai, the people cannot bear the mystery of God's hiddenness, they cannot endure the time of waiting to see his face. Faith by its very nature demands renouncing the immediate possession which sight would appear to offer; it is an invitation to turn to the source of the light, while respecting the mystery of a countenance which will unveil itself personally in its own good time... In place of faith in God, it seems better to worship an idol, into whose face we can look directly and whose origin we know, because it is the work of our own hands... Those who choose not to put their trust in God must hear the din of countless idols crying out: "Put your trust in me!"

Faith, tied as it is to conversion, is the opposite of idolatry; it breaks with idols to turn to the living God in a personal encounter. Believing means entrusting oneself to a merciful love which always accepts and pardons, which sustains and directs our lives, and which shows its power by its ability to make straight the crooked lines of our history. Faith consists in the willingness to let ourselves be constantly transformed and renewed by God's call. Herein lies the paradox: by constantly turning towards the Lord, we discover a sure path which liberates us from the dissolution imposed upon us by idols.

#### **The fullness of Christian faith**

15. Christian faith is centred on Christ; it is the confession that Jesus is Lord and that God has raised him from the dead (cf. Rom 10:9). All the threads of the Old Testament converge on Christ; he becomes the definitive "Yes" to all the promises, the ultimate basis of our "Amen" to God (cf. 2 Cor 1:20). The history of Jesus is the complete manifestation of God's reliability. If Israel continued to recall God's great acts of love, which formed the core of its confession of faith and broadened its gaze in faith, the life of Jesus now appears as the locus of God's definitive intervention, the supreme manifestation of his love for us...

17. Our culture has lost its sense of God's tangible presence and activity in our world. We think that God is to be found in the beyond, on another level of reality, far removed from our everyday relationships. But if this were the case, if God could not act in the world, his love would not be truly powerful, truly real, and thus not even true, a love capable of delivering the bliss that it promises. It would make no difference at all whether we believed in him or not. Christians, on the contrary, profess their faith in God's tangible and powerful love which really does act in history and determines its final destiny: a love that can be encountered, a love fully revealed in Christ's passion, death and resurrection.

18. This fullness which Jesus brings to faith has another decisive aspect. In faith, Christ is not simply the one in whom we believe, the supreme manifestation of God's love; he is also the one with whom we are united precisely in order to believe. Faith does not merely gaze at Jesus, but sees things as Jesus himself sees them, with his own eyes: it is a participation in his way of seeing. In many areas in our lives we trust others who know more than we do. We trust the architect who builds our home, the pharmacist who gives us medicine for healing, the lawyer who defends us in court. We also need someone trustworthy and knowledgeable where God is concerned. Jesus, the Son of God, is the one who makes God known to us (cf. Jn 1:18)...



Far from divorcing us from reality, our faith in the Son of God made man in Jesus of Nazareth enables us to grasp reality's deepest meaning and to see how much God loves this world and is constantly guiding it towards himself. This leads us, as Christians, to live our lives in this world with ever greater commitment and intensity.

### Faith and truth

23. **Unless you believe, you will not understand** (cf. Is 7:9). The Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint translation produced in Alexandria, gives the above rendering of the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah to King Ahaz... Terrified by the might of his enemies, the king seeks the security that an alliance with the great Assyrian empire can offer. The prophet tells him instead to trust completely in the solid and steadfast rock which is the God of Israel...

The firm foundation that Isaiah promises to the king is indeed grounded in an understanding of God's activity and the unity which he gives to human life and to the history of his people. The prophet challenges the king, and us, to understand the Lord's ways, seeing in God's faithfulness the wise plan which governs the ages...

24. Read in this light, the prophetic text leads to one conclusion: we need knowledge, we need truth, because without these we cannot stand firm, we cannot move forward. Faith without truth does not save, it does not provide a sure footing. It remains a beautiful story, the projection of our deep yearning for happiness, something capable of satisfying us to the extent that we are willing to deceive ourselves. Either that, or it is reduced to a lofty sentiment which brings consolation and cheer, yet remains prey to the vagaries of our spirit and the changing seasons, incapable of sustaining a steady journey through life. If such were faith, King Ahaz would be right not to stake his life and the security of his kingdom on a feeling. But precisely because of its intrinsic link to truth, faith is instead able to offer a new light, superior to the king's calculations, for it sees further into the distance and takes into account the hand of God, who remains faithful to his covenant and his promises.

25. Today more than ever, we need to be reminded of this bond between faith and truth, given the crisis of truth in our age. In contemporary culture, we often tend to consider the only real truth to be that of technology: truth is what we succeed in building and measuring by our scientific know-how, truth is what works and what makes life easier and more comfortable. Nowadays this appears as the only truth that is certain, the only truth that can be shared, the only truth that can serve as a basis for discussion or for common undertakings.

Yet at the other end of the scale we are willing to allow for subjective truths of the individual, which consist in fidelity to his or her deepest convictions,

yet these are truths valid only for that individual and not capable of being proposed to others in an effort to serve the common good. But Truth itself, the truth which would comprehensively explain our life as individuals and in society, is regarded with suspicion. Surely this kind of truth — we hear it said — is what was claimed by the great totalitarian movements of the last century, a truth that imposed its own world view in order to crush the actual lives of individuals. In the end, what we are left with is relativism, in which the question of universal truth — and ultimately this means the question of God — is no longer relevant.

It would be logical, from this point of view, to attempt to sever the bond between religion and truth, because it seems to lie at the root of fanaticism, which proves oppressive for anyone who does not share the same beliefs. In this regard, though, we can speak of a massive amnesia in our contemporary world. The question of truth is really a question of memory, deep memory, for it deals with something prior to ourselves and can succeed in uniting us in a way that transcends our petty and limited individual consciousness. It is a question about the origin of all that is, in whose light we can glimpse the goal and thus the meaning of our common path.

### The Church, mother of our faith

38. The transmission of the faith not only brings light to men and women in every place; it travels through time, passing from one generation to another. Because faith is born of an encounter which takes place in history and lights up our journey through time, it must be passed on in every age. It is through an unbroken chain of witnesses that we come to see the face of Jesus. But how is this possible? How can we be certain, after all these centuries, that we have encountered the "real Jesus"?...

Faith's past, that act of Jesus' love which brought new life to the world, comes down to us through the memory of others — witnesses — and is kept alive in that one remembering subject which is the Church. The Church is a Mother who teaches us to speak the language of faith...

### The sacraments and the transmission of faith

40. For transmitting a purely doctrinal content, an idea might suffice, or perhaps a book, or the repetition of a spoken message. But what is communicated in the Church, what is handed down in her living Tradition, is the new light born of an encounter with the true God, a light which touches us at the core of our being and engages our minds, wills and emotions, opening us to relationships lived in communion. There is a special means for passing down this fullness, a means capable of engaging the entire person, body and spirit, interior life and relationships with others.

It is the sacraments, celebrated in the Church's

liturgy. The sacraments communicate an incarnate memory, linked to the times and places of our lives, linked to all our senses; in them the whole person is engaged as a member of a living subject and part of a network of communitarian relationships...

### Faith, prayer and the Decalogue

46. Two other elements are essential in the faithful transmission of the Church's memory. First, the Lord's Prayer, the "Our Father". Here Christians learn to share in Christ's own spiritual experience and to see all things through his eyes. From him who is light from light, the only-begotten Son of the Father, we come to know God and can thus kindle in others the desire to draw near to him.

Similarly important is the link between faith and the Decalogue. Faith, as we have said, takes the form of a journey, a path to be followed, which begins with an encounter with the living God. It is in the light of faith, of complete entrustment to the God who saves, that the Ten Commandments take on their deepest truth, as seen in the words which introduce them: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (Ex 20:2). The Decalogue is not a set of negative commands, but concrete directions for emerging from the desert of the selfish and self-enclosed ego in order to enter into dialogue with God, to be embraced by his mercy and then to bring that mercy to others.

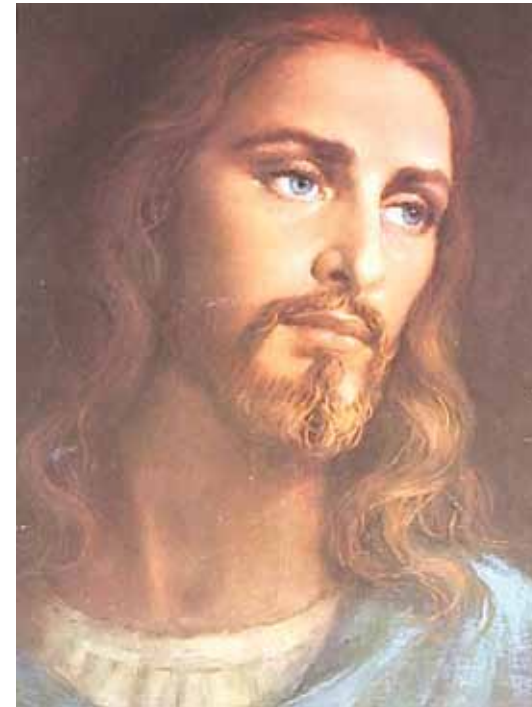
Faith thus professes the love of God, origin and upholder of all things, and lets itself be guided by this love in order to journey towards the fullness of communion with God. The Decalogue appears as the path of gratitude, the response of love, made possible because in faith we are receptive to the experience of God's transforming love for us. And this path receives new light from Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (cf. Mt 5-7).

These, then, are the four elements which comprise the storehouse of memory which the Church hands down: the profession of faith, the celebration of the sacraments, the path of the ten commandments, and prayer. The Church's catechesis has traditionally been structured around these four elements; this includes

the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which is a fundamental aid for that unitary act with which the Church communicates the entire content of her faith: "all that she herself is, and all that she believes".

### Faith and the common good

51. **Faith does not draw us away from the world or prove irrelevant to the concrete concerns of the men and women of our time. Without a love which is trustworthy, nothing could truly keep men and women united. Human unity would be conceivable only on the basis of utility, on a calculus of conflicting interests or on fear, but not on the goodness of living together, not on the joy which the mere presence of others can give. Faith makes us appreciate the architecture of human relationships because it grasps their ultimate foundation and definitive destiny in God, in his love, and thus sheds light on the art of building; as such it becomes a service to the common good. Faith is truly a good for everyone; it is a common good. Its light does not simply brighten the interior of the Church, nor does it serve solely to build an eternal city in the hereafter; it helps us build our societies in such a way that they can journey towards a future of hope.**



**"Faith does not merely gaze at Jesus, but sees things as Jesus himself sees them, with his own eyes: it is a participation in his way of seeing."  
(Lumen Fidei, 18.)**

### Faith and the family

52. The first setting in which faith enlightens the human city is the family. I think first and foremost of the stable union of man and woman in marriage. This union is born of their love, as a sign and presence of God's own love, and of the acknowledgment and acceptance of the goodness of sexual differentiation, whereby spouses can become one flesh (cf. Gen 2:24) and are enabled to give birth to a new life, a manifestation of the Creator's goodness, wisdom and loving plan...

53. In the family, faith accompanies every age of life, beginning with childhood: children learn to trust in the love of their parents. This is why it is so important that within their families parents encourage shared expressions of faith which can help children gradually to mature in their own faith...

**We have all seen, during World Youth Days, the joy that young people show in their faith and their desire for an ever more solid and generous life of**

► **faith. Young people want to live life to the fullest. Encountering Christ, letting themselves be caught up in and guided by his love, enlarges the horizons of existence, gives it a firm hope which will not disappoint.**

Faith is no refuge for the fainthearted, but something which enhances our lives. It makes us aware of a magnificent calling, the vocation of love. It assures us that this love is trustworthy and worth embracing, for it is based on God's faithfulness which is stronger than our every weakness.

### **A light for life in society**

54. Absorbed and deepened in the family, faith becomes a light capable of illumining all our relationships in society. As an experience of the mercy of God the Father, it sets us on the path of brotherhood. Modernity sought to build a universal brotherhood based on equality, yet we gradually came to realize that this brotherhood, lacking a reference to a common Father as its ultimate foundation, cannot endure. We need to return to the true basis of brotherhood.

**The history of faith has been from the beginning a history of brotherhood, albeit not without conflict. God calls Abraham to go forth from his land and promises to make of him a great nation, a great people on whom the divine blessing rests (cf. Gen 12:1-3). As salvation history progresses, it becomes evident that God wants to make everyone share as brothers and sisters in that one blessing, which attains its fullness in Jesus, so that all may be one. The boundless love of our Father also comes to us, in Jesus, through our brothers and sisters. Faith teaches us to see that every man and woman represents a blessing for me, that the light of God's face shines on me through the faces of my brothers and sisters.**

How many benefits has the gaze of Christian faith brought to the city of men for their common life! Thanks to faith we have come to understand the unique dignity of each person, something which was not clearly seen in antiquity...

At the heart of biblical faith is God's love, his concrete concern for every person, and his plan of salvation which embraces all of humanity and all creation, culminating in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without insight into these realities, there is no criterion for discerning what makes human life precious and unique. Man loses his place in the universe, he is cast adrift in nature, either renouncing his proper moral responsibility or else presuming to be a sort of absolute judge, endowed with an unlimited power to manipulate the world around him.

**55. Faith, on the other hand, by revealing the love of God the Creator, enables us to respect nature all the more, and to discern in it a grammar written by the hand of God and a dwelling place entrusted to our protection and care. Faith also helps us to devise**

models of development which are based not simply on utility and profit, but consider creation as a gift for which we are all indebted; it teaches us to create just forms of government, in the realization that authority comes from God and is meant for the service of the common good...

### **Consolation and strength amid suffering**

56. To speak of faith often involves speaking of painful testing... Christians know that suffering cannot be eliminated, yet it can have meaning and become an act of love and entrustment into the hands of God who does not abandon us; in this way it can serve as a moment of growth in faith and love. By contemplating Christ's union with the Father even at the height of his sufferings on the cross (cf. Mk 15:34), Christians learn to share in the same gaze of Jesus. Even death is illumined and can be experienced as the ultimate call to faith, the ultimate "Go forth from your land" (Gen 12:1), the ultimate "Come!" spoken by the Father, to whom we abandon ourselves in the confidence that he will keep us steadfast even in our final passage.

**57. Nor does the light of faith make us forget the sufferings of this world. How many men and women of faith have found mediators of light in those who suffer! So it was with Saint Francis of Assisi and the leper, or with Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta and her poor. They understood the mystery at work in them. In drawing near to the suffering, they were certainly not able to eliminate all their pain or to explain every evil. Faith is not a light which scatters all our darkness, but a lamp which guides our steps in the night and suffices for the journey. To those who suffer, God does not provide arguments which explain everything; rather, his response is that of an accompanying presence, a history of goodness which touches every story of suffering and opens up a ray of light. In Christ, God himself wishes to share this path with us and to offer us his gaze so that we might see the light within it. Christ is the one who, having endured suffering, is "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Heb 12:2).**

**Suffering reminds us that faith's service to the common good is always one of hope — a hope which looks ever ahead in the knowledge that only from God, from the future which comes from the risen Jesus, can our society find solid and lasting foundations. In this sense faith is linked to hope, for even if our dwelling place here below is wasting away, we have an eternal dwelling place which God has already prepared in Christ, in his body (cf. 2 Cor 4:16-5:5). The dynamic of faith, hope and charity (cf. 1 Th 1:3; 1 Cor 13:13) thus leads us to embrace the concerns of all men and women on our journey towards that city "whose architect and builder is God" (Heb 11:10), for "hope does not disappoint" (Rom 5:5).**

*Pope Francis*

# **A few questions and principles about economic democracy**

*by Louis Even*

## **Questions**

**If you, Social Crediters, say that you want to reduce taxes, and with time, to ultimately eliminate them completely, then how will government departments and public bodies be able to run the nation?**

**And on top of that, if you demand a monthly dividend for each citizen, how can these dividends be financed if there are no taxes?**

**If everyone receives a periodical dividend, and if this dividend is large enough to ensure a decent livelihood, then who will still want to work?**

**If public works and dividends are to be financed by newly-created money, won't this new money cause there to be too much money in circulation and bring about inflation? Won't money then lose its value? And what will happen to the savings and pensions?**

**You also talk about a price adjustment through a discount on prices compensated to the retailers: does this mean that the Government will control prices?**

**And what about commercial banks in a Social Credit system? Would they become nationalized, or even eliminated altogether?**

## **The answers**

These questions, and many more like them, have been answered over and over in past issues of MICHAEL. However, these questions are still being asked today, either by those who come across Social Credit for the very first time or by those who did not understand the answers given in the past because they were interpreting them in the light of the present financial system.

The fact is that, the Social Credit financial principles are incompatible with the present financial system. This does not mean that Social Credit would do away with the existing financial mechanisms; Social Credit would actually all of them, or almost all of them, but these mechanisms would have to be purified, so to speak, from the false philosophy — or lack of philosophy — that poisons them.

In the present financial system the possibilities of production and distribution are subordinate to finance. In a Social Credit system, on the other hand, it would be the possibilities of production, distribution and the needs expressed by the population that the financial system would be subordinate to.

Example: A town needs a new school.

In the present financial system we would ask the question: "Can we find the money to build the school? If so, let's build it; if not, we will have to do without the school."

In a Social Credit system the question would be put differently: "Do we have the physical means to build the school? If not, we will obviously have to do without it. But, if we do have the physical means to build the school, then we will build it. How will it be financed? Instead of money being the cause to prevent the building of the school, new money would be issued (created) for its construction. In the same measure that the construction would progress, new money would be issued to pay for it.

As for the distribution of goods, the same reasoning is applied. There

are goods, on the one hand, and there are needs, on the other. In the present financial systems the question is asked: "Are those in need able to pay for their goods? If yes, then no problem. But if they cannot pay, then the goods will remain on the shelves in the stores, even though their needs remain unsatisfied."

Social Credit puts it this way: "Since goods are produced in order to fulfill the needs of man, then it is necessary that man have the required means to pay for the goods needed."

From this we can see that the present financial system maintains a position of control. Whereas, in a Social Credit system, the finance would be made to serve mankind. The two systems are totally incompatible with each other.

Who then, is right? — those who defend the present financial system, reasoning and making decisions only according to financial possibilities? Or those who advocate for Social Credit, resolving to base the decision to produce, on the actual physical possibilities and needs of society?

Which of these two systems, would you say, bet-



**Louis Even, founder of MICHAEL**



**Where does money come from? Money should be the symbol of realities (goods and services). Today, however, physical realities, and even human beings, are subjected to the diktats of money.**

► ter respects the fundamental rights of each human being? — For each human being does, in fact, have fundamental rights. We all agree, for example, that each newborn baby has the right to life. — Which group then, the advocates of the present system or the advocates of Social Credit, offers the best possibilities for each individual to exercise these fundamental rights? — Considering that the right to life implies an undeniable right to the necessities of life, which of these two groups offers to each individual the best chances of obtaining these necessities?

### A few principles

In order to prevent any accusation that we may have made up our own partisan ideas when speaking of these principles, we will quote verbatim from a few authorities with whom no one can contest the soundness of their doctrine as regards the fundamental rights of every human being.

In the Constitution on the Church *Gaudium et Spes* (n. 69), the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council wrote:

**“God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people. Thus, as all men follow justice and unite in charity, created goods should abound for them on a reasonable basis... The right to have a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one’s family belongs to everyone.”**

It is neither the governments, nor the bankers, nor the economists who are the creators of the goods of this earth. For this very reason, it is not their place to establish, approve, or try to justify rules that would ignore or deny this universal destination of the goods created by our Heavenly Father! God excludes no one from the right to a share in these earthly goods; that is why a system of purchases and sales, like the present, with rules that bind the purchasing power to employment in the production of goods, excludes all those who are not hired for production — and this represent more than half of

the population: children, housewives, the sick, the elderly, the unemployed, etc...!

Pope Pius XII put it very clearly in his famous radio address of June 1, 1941:

**“Material goods have been created by God to meet the needs of all men, and must be at the disposal of all of them, as justice and charity require.”**

**“Every man indeed, as a reason-gifted being, has from nature the fundamental right to make use of the material goods of the earth, though it is reserved to human will and the juridical forms of the peoples to regulate, with more detail, the practical realization of that right.”**

Do the present laws facilitate a practical achievement of this right of each and every individual to their share in the goods of the earth? — The Social Credit proposals would implement this right in a very direct way; by guaranteeing to each individual, without excluding anyone, whether hired or not for production, a monthly dividend.

The right of everyone to a share in the goods of the earth is a natural right, an individual right, not pertaining to any group membership. No order or legislation can legitimately suppress this individual right. As Pope Pius XII put it in the same address already mentioned above:

**“Such an individual right cannot, by any means, be suppressed, even by the exercise of other unquestionable and recognized rights over material goods.”**

Meaning that, even the property rights of those who may have ownership of the resources for production, cannot disregard the individual right of each person to their share of the goods of the earth.

A Social Credit system acknowledges private property, and even supports it, but also firmly upholds the social responsibility of this private property. Furthermore, the Social Credit mechanism of distribution (the dividend), which would allow for

the goods produced to reach those who need them, would certainly not harm the producers, since their main concern is to sell their production.

We do not offer these reflections as proof that the Popes advocate Social Credit — this is not the responsibility of the Church — rather, we wish to demonstrate how wonderfully Social Credit would facilitate “the practical realization of that individual right”, as proclaimed by these authorities.

This individual right goes back to the very creation of man. Though civil authorities, dictators of the economy, close-minded sociologists blinded by man-made laws and regulations, have been able to forget, to push aside or to minimize it, this right has continued to be affirmed by the Masters in Moral Theology.

The various social security measures — late and flawed in their application — are an admission of this right of all to a share in the necessities of life. However, the fact that the redistribution of the claims on goods (money) must be continuously adjusted, taking from Peter to give to Paul, proves that this redistribution, as presently regulated, is defective. Instead of defective “correctives”, as well as many overlooked cases, would it not be infinitely better to establish a source of purchasing power that would operate automatically in guaranteeing right from the start, the basic share to which everyone is entitled? This is something that the present system, which binds income to employment, cannot do.

### Ends and means

The social and economic sectors today suffer from a distorted concept, where the ends are taken for the means, and the means are taken for the ends.

As in the case, for example, of those who think that man was created to be employed in economic

activities. The contrary is true, it is the economic activities that exist in order to serve man, not visa-versa. If the progress in the production of material goods makes it possible to satisfy man’s needs with a minimal amount of human labour, so much the better! There are other activities for man that are far more superior than economic functions, and if people have more free time, more leisure time to devote to these other activities, we must bless God for having allowed this progress.

Similarly, man does not exist for production, but that production exists to serve man and to satisfy his basic needs. To persist in using to the full capacity every means of production when all human needs have been satisfied, is to provoke either the waste of resources through the production of goods that no one needs, or creating and stimulating new, artificial needs, causing materialism and turning men’s hearts from their true end; eternity.

The policy of full-employment is another form of distortion between the ends and the means. The purpose of industry is not to supply jobs, but to supply goods. Human labour is only a part of the means of production, it is not an end. If production can be achieved with less human labour, and still continue to maintain the proper flow of goods, this is also a good thing. Man will then be free to devote his time to other activities of his own choosing.

When money becomes the end (or goal) of a business, it is obvious that this too is a distortion of the ends and the means. It is the greatest heresy of the present economic system. When investing capital, investors try to invest in what will bring in the highest financial return, and not necessarily in what will better satisfy the basic needs of man. If there is more money to be made in alcohol and poisons, investments will go to industries that produce alco-

Here is another example where money rules instead of serving: in March, 2013, under the pressure of the IMF and the European Central Bank, and after several days of paralysis when the banks were closed and accounts frozen, the government of the island of Cyprus agreed to confiscate by force individuals’ savings in Cyprus’ banks in order to get an emergency help of 10 million euros (13 million dollars). At first, all savers were to contribute, but in the end, only the depositors of 100,000 euros and plus contributed. The text of the cartoon is in Cypriot language, and could be translated as follow: “Bank robbery Cypriot style”.



► hol and poisons. The workers themselves also give in to this distortion: they will look to be employed wherever the pay is highest, even if what they are producing is useless or even harmful. Even when this means helping monopolies to grow, and expand their economic dictatorship.

To associate income solely with employment is to forget the true purpose for which income exists. Income supplies purchasing power which, in turn, is a means to allow production to achieve its end; the satisfaction of the needs of all human beings.

When it comes to international trade, how many so-called learned people confuse ends and means, while losing sight of the only logical purpose of exportation; to allow a greater variety of goods for the population of all the countries involved — importing and exporting nations. Those who claim that the economy of a nation is successful if that nation manages to export more goods than it imports, mistake money for the actual wealth, when in actuality, the true wealth of a nation is its production! If more products are leaving our country than coming back into our country, this represents an actual impoverishment for our nation, since there are less products available for our population.

### A few more concepts

To be able to understand Social Credit, one must also admit to a few basic concepts that are almost completely ignored in the present system.

First, the concept that money, in whatever form — metal, paper, checks from bank accounts, digital data in a computer — has a social function. Social, because it is accepted by everyone, not because of its intrinsic value, which would be only the value of metal or paper, but because of its legal status. Social, because each monetary unit — one dollar, for example — can obtain up to that amount on any goods

or service offered on the market. Any goods issued from a farm, from the mines, from a factory... goods produced by anyone, and professional services of any type.

Money can therefore mobilize the productive capacity of a nation in any sector, according to the whim of he who has it. Money therefore confers a certain security over all that comes out of the national production.

However, money is not the result of a spontaneous generation. It has its beginning somewhere. The money that is presently in circulation now, has its beginning somewhere. Any new increase in the money supply of the nation, has its beginning somewhere. Wherever this money is created, and by whom it is authorized to be created, one question always arises: **To whom does this money belong when it is created?**

Social Credit's immediate response to this all-important question is: **"Money, right from its "birth" (creation), belongs to society."**

What individual, what group, what private institution can, from its own authority, pretend to own all that is produced in the country? Only society as a whole, has this right. Only society, through the Government that represents it, can issue the claims on goods.

Everyone today should know that it is not the Government that creates money, nor is it the manufacturers. All those who have taken the time to study the subject know that all new money is issued from the banking system in the form of financial credit, as loans to the borrowers.

When a bank creates this credit, it actually gives to the borrower a claim on the percentage of the national production corresponding to the amount of the loan. Since the bank lends on its own terms, it considers this issue of financial credit, as belonging to them. On what authority can the banks confer, in this way, upon the borrower, a claim on the work and products of other members of the community?

One could admit money issued by banks, provided this money, or financial credit, is considered the property of society as a whole, and treated as such, and not the property of the banks. This is not the case in the present system. Today it is the exact opposite: It is society that must find a way for the borrower to pay both the capital and the interest demanded by the banks for the usage of a credit that, by rights, belongs to society.

The founder of the Social Credit school, Clifford Hugh Douglas, wrote in *Economic Democracy* (p. 120):

**"There is no doubt whatever that the first step towards dealing with the problem is the recogni-**

**tion of the fact that what is commonly called credit by the banker is administered by him primarily for the purpose of private profit, whereas it is most definitely communal property... The banking system has been allowed to become the administrator of this credit and its financial derivatives with the result that the creative energy of mankind has been subjected to fetters which have no relation whatever to the real demands of existence."**

Once this is understood, one can easily take offence in seeing the citizens of a country paying twice, and sometimes even more, for schools and other public utilities that were made by the work of society as a whole.

It is this control by private interests of a social instrument — money — that causes Canadian taxpayers to pay billions of dollars every year in interest charges on a debt that keeps growing. (Even if the debt of the Federal Government goes down, the total debt of all administrations, corporations, and individuals necessarily keeps growing year after year, since all money is created as a debt; otherwise there would be no money at all in circulation.)

Here is another concept violated by the present system and which everyone should acknowledge:

The population must not pay for what it produces, but for what it consumes, and even there, only as much as it consumes.

If this notion were applied, there would be no public debt, for one cannot consume more than what has been produced.

The present financial system is accepted with all its terms, without even wondering if it actually achieves its true purpose of a sound financial system. This purpose, or end, should certainly not be to control, rule, or dictate, but to serve; to serve the economic system and to supply a practical way to

mobilize the productive capacity of the nation, satisfying the needs of the consumers, and supplying a way to distribute efficiently the goods in order for them to reach those who need them.

Since it is the consumers themselves who know best their needs, it is they who should dictate production. This can only be done effectively if the consumers are in possession of the financial means. Consumers express their needs when they choose products and they can only make these choices as long as they have the purchasing power.

Douglas wrote in 1934 in *Credit Power and Democracy* (p. 102):

**"The business of a modern and effective financial system is to issue credit to the consumer, up to the limit of the productive capacity of the producer, so that either the consumer's real demand is satisfied, or the producer's capacity is exhausted, whichever happens first."**

One notices today that neither case exists. The demand of the consumers is not satisfied, and the producers' capacity is not exhausted; the financial credit issued to consumers does not reach either limit

Social Credit would solve this problem with the dividend to all.

As to the methods for applying the Social Credit principles, these may vary. The main thing is that these methods preserve the principles mentioned above. It must be taken into account what already exists and what we wish to achieve, making sure that the desired result will be obtained with the least amount of changes or turmoil, and establishing the goals, the objectives, the politics of these changes, right from the start.

*Louis Even*

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# Pope Francis at the World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro

**“Go and make disciples of all nations”**

For his first official journey outside Italy, Pope Francis went to Brazil, July 22-28, 2013, for the 28th World Youth Day (WYD) in Rio de Janeiro. It was an immense success, with over 3 million people from 178 countries attending the closing Mass on Copacabana beach, Sunday, July 28. (Only the World Youth Day in Manila, Philippines, in 1995, saw a larger crowd: 4 million people.)



Three million people crowded Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro on July 28, 2013 as Pope Francis celebrated the final mass of his visit to Brazil.

It is John Paul II who was inspired to launch these days (now two weeks) dedicated to the young people, which allow them to see that they are not alone believing in Jesus, and that even if there

might be just a few believers in their area, they are millions throughout the world.

The theme of the WYD for this year was: “Go and make disciples of all nations” (cf. Mathew 28:19.) It was Benedict XVI who had chosen this theme, and he had also chosen the city of Rio to hold this WYD, but Divine Providence arranged that it was Francis, the first Pope from Latin America, who went. The same “wink” from Providence took place for the first apostolic journey of Benedict XVI: it was John Paul II who had announced (in Toronto, Canada, in 2002), that the next WYD would be held in Cologne Germany, and it was a German Pope, Benedict XVI, who attended it.

Here are large excerpts from the many speeches of Pope Francis at the WYD of Rio, which electrified not only the youth of the whole world:

## Welcome ceremony, July 22



Pope Francis at the welcome ceremony

I have learned that, to gain access to the Brazilian people, it is necessary to pass through its great heart; so let me knock gently at this door. I ask permission to come in and spend this week with you. I have neither silver nor gold, but I bring with me the most precious thing given to me: Jesus Christ! I have come in His name, to feed the flame of fraternal love that burns in every heart; and I wish my greeting to reach one and all: The peace of Christ be with you!...

## The shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida

According to the official account of the Aparecida apparition, in October 1717, Dom Pedro de Almeida, Count of Assumar and Governor of the Province of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, was passing through the area of Guaratinguetá, a small city in the Paraíba river valley, during a trip to Vila Rica, an important gold mining site.

As the people of Guaratinguetá decided to hold a feast in his honour, three fishermen, Domingos Garcia, João Alves, and Filipe Pedroso went down to the Paraíba waters to fish. The fishermen prayed to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception that God would grant a good catch. The fishermen, having a run of bad luck, cast their nets in the River Paraíba. João Alves cast his net and pulled it back to find a headless statue of the Virgin Mary. Upon his next cast, he found the head. The group cleaned the statue, wrapped it in cloth, and returned to their task to find their fortunes had changed and they were able to obtain all the fish they needed.



The third Basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida was consecrated on July 4, 1980 by Pope John Paul II. It is the second largest Basilica in the world, second only to St. Peter's in the Vatican City. It can accommodate 45,000 worshippers. In 2010, over 10 million people visited it, which makes it the second most visited shrine after Lourdes.



The fishermen named the statue *Nossa Senhora da Aparecida Conceição* (in English: Our Lady of the Appeared Conception). Neighbors began to venerate the statue, which came to be known as Our Lady of Aparecida, and a cult grew. The first chapel was built in 1745. The statue in clay is less than three feet tall. The number of worshippers increased dramatically and in 1834 work on a larger church was begun, and finished in 1888. On June 16, 1930, Our Lady of Aparecida, was proclaimed the “Queen and Principal Patroness of Brazil” by Pope Pius XI.

Young people are the window through which the future enters the world. They are the window, and so they present us with great challenges. Our generation will show that it can rise to the promise found in each young person when we know how to give them space. This means that we have to create the material and spiritual conditions for their full development; to give them a solid basis on which to build their lives; to guarantee their safety and their education to be everything they can be; to pass on to them lasting values that make life worth living; to give them a transcendent horizon for their thirst for authentic happiness and their creativity for the good; to give them the legacy of a world worthy of human life; and to awaken in them their greatest potential as builders of their own destiny, sharing responsibility for the future of everyone.

## Mass in the Basilica of the Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida, July 24

When the Church looks for Jesus, she always knocks at his Mother's door and asks: “Show us

Jesus”. It is from Mary that the Church learns true discipleship. That is why the Church always goes out on mission in the footsteps of Mary.

Today, looking forward to the World Youth Day which has brought me to Brazil, I too come to knock on the door of the house of Mary – who loved and raised Jesus – that she may help all of us, pastors of God's people, parents and educators, to pass on to our young people the values that can help them build a nation and a world which are more just, united and fraternal.

## Visit to the favela (slum) of Varginha, July 25

I would like to make an appeal to those in possession of greater resources, to public authorities and to all people of good will who are working for social justice: never tire of working for a more just world, marked by greater solidarity! No one can remain insensitive to the inequalities that persist in the world! Everybody, according to his or her particular opportunities and responsibilities, should be able to make a personal contribution to putting an end to



*While leaving the Basilica at the end of the Mass, Pope Francis carries a replica of the statue of Our Lady of Aparecida which was given to him.*

► so many social injustices. The culture of selfishness and individualism that often prevails in our society is not, I repeat, not what builds up and leads to a more habitable world: rather, it is the culture of solidarity that does so; the culture of solidarity means seeing others not as rivals or statistics, but brothers and sisters. And we are all brothers and sisters! ...

The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need, those who have nothing apart from their poverty!

### **Meeting with young people of Argentina in the cathedral of Rio, July 25**

Look, at this moment, I think our world civilization has gone beyond its limits, it has gone beyond its limits because it has made money into such a god that we are now faced with a philosophy and a practice which exclude the two ends of life... the elderly and the young...

Faith in Jesus Christ is not a joke, it is something very serious. It is a scandal that God came to be one of us. It is a scandal that he died on a cross. It is a scandal: the scandal of the Cross. The Cross continues to provoke scandal. But it is the one sure path, the path of the Cross, the path of Jesus, the path of the Incarnation of Jesus. Please do not water down

your faith in Jesus Christ. We dilute fruit drinks – orange, apple, or banana juice, but please do not drink a diluted form of faith. Faith is whole and entire, not something that you water down...

The Beatitudes: What must we do, Father? Look, read the Beatitudes: that will do you good. If you want to know what you actually have to do, read Matthew Chapter 25, which is the standard by which we will be judged. With these two things you have the action plan: the Beatitudes and Matthew 25. You do not need to read anything else. I ask you this with all my heart.

### **Way of the Cross with young people, July 26**

The first name given to Brazil was “The Land of the Holy Cross”. The Cross of Christ was planted five centuries ago not only on the shores of this country, but also in the history, the hearts and the lives of the people of Brazil and elsewhere. The suffering Christ is keenly felt here, as one of us who shares our journey even to the end. There is no cross, big or small, in our life, which the Lord does not share with us.

But the Cross of Christ invites us also to allow ourselves to be smitten by his love, teaching us always to look upon others with mercy and tenderness, especially those who suffer, who are in need of help, who need a word or a concrete action; the Cross invites us to step outside ourselves to meet them and to extend a hand to them. How many times have we seen them in the Way of the Cross, how many times have they accompanied Jesus on the way to Calvary: Pilate, Simon of Cyrene, Mary, the women...

Today I ask you: which of them do you want to be? Do you want to be like Pilate, who did not have the courage to go against the tide to save Jesus’ life, and instead washed his hands? Tell me: are you one of those who wash their hands, who feign ignorance and look the other way? Or are you like Simon of Cyrene, who helped Jesus to carry that heavy wood, or like Mary and the other women, who were not afraid to accompany Jesus all the way to the end, with love and tenderness? And you, who do you want to be? Like Pilate? Like Simon? Like Mary? Jesus is looking at you now and is asking you: do you want to help me carry the Cross? Brothers and sisters, with all the strength of your youth, how will you respond to him?

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*At the end of the meeting with the young people of Argentina, Pope Francis went out and waved an Argentinean flag to greet those who could not have entered the cathedral.*

of the world, to work for a better world. Dear young people, please, don’t be observers of life, but get involved. Jesus did not remain an observer, but he immersed himself. Don’t be observers, but immerse yourself in the reality of life, as Jesus did.

### **Closing Mass of the World Youth Day, July 28**

“Go and make disciples of all nations”. With these words, Jesus is speaking to each one of us, saying: “It was wonderful to take part in World Youth Day, to live the faith together with young people from the four corners of the earth, but now you must go, now you must pass on this experience to others.” Jesus is calling you to be a disciple with a mission! Today, in the light of the word of God that we have heard, what is the Lord saying to us? What is the Lord saying to us? Three simple ideas: Go, do not be afraid, and serve....

Careful, though! Jesus did not say: “go, if you would like to, if you have the time”, but he said: “Go and make disciples of all nations.” Sharing the experience of faith, bearing witness to the faith, proclaiming the Gospel: this is a command that the Lord entrusts to the whole Church, and that includes you; but it is a command that is born not from a desire for domination, from the desire for power, but from the force of love, from the fact that Jesus first came into our midst and did not give us just a part of himself, but he gave us the whole of himself, he gave his life in order to save us and to show us the love and mercy of God. Jesus does not treat us as slaves, but as people who are free, as friends, as brothers and sisters; and he not only sends us, he accompanies us, he is always beside us in our mission of love.

Where does Jesus send us? There are no borders, no limits: he sends us to everyone. The Gospel is for everyone, not just for some. It is not only for those who seem closer to us, more receptive, more welcoming. It is for everyone. Do not be afraid to go and to bring Christ into every area of life, to the fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away, most indifferent. The Lord seeks all, he wants everyone to feel the warmth of his mercy and his love.

Dear friends, let us bring to Christ’s Cross our joys, our sufferings and our failures. There we will find a Heart that is open to us and understands us, forgives us, loves us and calls us to bear this love in our lives, to love each person, each brother and sister, with the same love.

### **Meeting with Brazil’s leaders of society, July 27**

The future also demands a humanistic vision of the economy and a politics capable of ensuring greater and more effective participation on the part of the people, eliminating forms of elitism and eradicating poverty. No one should be denied what is necessary and everyone should be guaranteed dignity, fraternity and solidarity: this is the road that is proposed. In the days of the prophet Amos, God’s frequent warning was already being heard: “They sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals – they... trample down the head of the poor into the dust of the earth and push the afflicted out of the way” (Am 2:6-7). The outcry, the call for justice, continues to be heard even today.

### **Prayer vigil with the young people, July 27**

Your young hearts want to build a better world. I have been closely following the news reports of the many young people who throughout the world have taken to the streets in order to express their desire for a more just and fraternal society. Young people in the streets. It is the young who want to be the protagonists of change. Please, don’t leave it to others to be the protagonists of change. You are the ones who hold the future! You ... Through you the future is fulfilled in the world. I ask you also to be protagonists of this transformation. Continue to overcome apathy, offering a Christian response to the social and political anxieties, which are arising in various parts of the world. I ask you to be builders

# A child's innocence is a "straight shot" to Heaven

**"The future of the world and the Church passes through the family." – Pope John Paul II**

by April Helenek

I sat in the church pew listening for something to inspire me regarding my vocation as a homeschooling mother and wife. As I received the Gospel reading, I heard Jesus say to Simon, **"Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch."** Simon said in reply, **"Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets."** When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing." (Luke 5:4-6.)

Simon falls to his knees realizing his sinfulness in his doubt of our Lord. **"Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him."** (Luke 5:10-11.)

I was awestruck at the gift I had just received. "Isn't this exactly what we do when we are "called" to something by God?", I thought to myself. It's hard to see the fruits before the seed is planted but when we obey God's call, albeit hard as it is, God produces enough fruit to "fill our boat to overflowing". The call to homeschool our children, was NOT an easy decision for my family. I was almost finished with my nursing degree and we were living on only one income. We already had three children and were in financial turmoil, facing bankruptcy, and neither my husband Jae nor I knew the first thing about homeschooling. But we could see that God had given us these children to guide and nurture into whatever it was that He was calling them to, and this, despite our own "foggy" vision.

I vividly remember one day sitting on my fireplace hearth talking with my husband. I was crying, petrified at this idea of following a call that I was feeling in my heart, to begin educating my oldest at home. Society had nurtured me into needing it, and if I were to take my children out of the system, then who would I fall back on? Jae, thankfully, had much more peace about the idea than I did and comforted me by reminding me that it was perfectly fine to give homeschooling a try for a year, and if we found that this was not our calling, then we could enroll our children in a school in the fall. Jae's peaceful and rational thinking enabled me to recognize our Lord's loving and patient urgings, and that I was not alone in this venture. Jae had

come to know something about God that I didn't know, at least not yet anyway...

A few years prior, our oldest daughter Piper had been hospitalized because of a five day old ruptured appendix that had gone undetected. Misdiagnosed as the flu, she was knocking on death's door. (See story in *MICHAEL*, March/April 2013, p. 28-30.) My husband Jae, who had not been raised in the Faith, was now on his knees, and during one of the darker moments of this very frightening ordeal he had a conversation with God, desperate to save our child. Jae made a true heart felt "pact" with God, "bargaining" with Him that if He allowed Piper to live, then he would offer his own life in return. When Piper later walked out of that hospital, literally leaving the doctors scratching their heads, Jae was secretly preparing his heart to meet his end of his "bargain" with God. He had not told me anything of this and suffered silently for months. Finally one day he spoke to me, and realizing what he was going through we went for spiritual direction. Jae came to understand that God does not operate in the way we humans do. God had definitely heard Jae's prayer and it was his faith that God had rewarded. All we needed to do was to thank Him and to be grateful for this wonderful gift of Piper's healing which was just one more sign of God's great love for us. Only recently, however, I have come to realize that Jae had kept up his part of the bargain! Jae did give his life for another on that day, and as head of this family he gave mine and all of our children's lives as well. In the next few years following Piper's recovery Jae and I have continued to grow in our faith and trust in God. Together we have gone through an incredible



The Helenek family

conversion which continues to this day and have been blessed in the recognition that in having obeyed the urgings of the Holy Spirit in accepting the responsibility to teach our children at home, not only academics but most especially their faith and the catechism as well, we are all able to grow together in faith and see Christ's love for our family.

Blessed Pope John Paul the Great in his letter *Familiaris Consortio*, on November 22, 1981 said, **"The parents have been appointed by God Himself as the first and principal educators of their children... their right is completely inalienable"**, and Pope Benedict XVI speak-



ing in Croatia, June 5, 2011 stated, **"Parents commit yourselves always to teach your children to pray, and pray with them; draw them close to the Sacraments, especially to the Eucharist, ... introduce them to the life of the Church; in the intimacy of the home do not be afraid to read the sacred Scriptures, illuminating family life with the light of faith and praising God as Father. Be like a little Upper Room, like that of Mary and the disciples, in which to live unity, communion and prayer!"** Therefore every family has this opportunity to participate in their own "Domestic Church" and in Christ's mission as priest, prophet and king.

**As Priest;** we share through the reception of the sacraments, most especially the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of reconciliation. We are called to the community of prayer, and most fruitfully through the family recitation of the Most Holy Rosary. We are also called to offer spiritual sacrifices to Our Lord with the work we do on a daily bases

**As Prophet;** we are called to "welcome and announce" the Gospel message. We are meant to put the Gospel message into practice in our homes and then carry it out to the world, mostly by our example, works and our love of others. As Pope John Paul II mentioned in an address in 1979: **"The future of evangelization in great part depends on the Church of the home"**.

**As King;** the family is called to follow the second half of the greatest commandment "love your neighbor". We are called to serve. We are able to teach our children to help others in need even if just through "hospitality".

As busy families we may wonder how we could realistically live out Christ's mission of priest, prophet and king, but as homeschoolers we have the ability to design our own schedule, placing our priorities as Catholics first. We are able to monitor what influences our chil-

**"The disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, 'Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.'" (Matthew 18:1-6)**

dren. We know their friends, we can hand pick their activities...ultimately, as homeschoolers we have the freedom to ensure that our family fulfills Christ's desire and plan for us to live as priests, prophets and kings.

There is no denying today the unyielding attack on the family. At this point in our history it would seem that there are not many safe places for our children's influential developing brains, but there is still the home. When Jae and I had finally made the decision to give homeschooling a try, I began devouring books on the subject. One lovely book was called the *Catholic Homeschool Treasury: Nurturing Children's Love for Learning*, by Rachel Mackson and Maureen Wittman, which has stories of parents just like Jae and myself who went through the same doubts we did. One father's story really touched Jae in a way that he is now unmovable in his convictions to support me in homeschooling our children. The father in the story goes on to talk about the reality of keeping our children at home and the amount of influence we can have over their physical and spiritual development. He also pointed out the wonderful reality that in not being exposed to the world at such a young developmental age, their innocence could be safeguarded for much longer. We would have more opportunity to teach them about our Lord without the world getting to them first. A child's innocence is a straight shot to heaven! That is why in Matthew 18:3: he says, **"Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."** Saint Therese, the Little Flower was inspired by this bible verse realizing, **"there is no need for me to grow up: I must stay little and become less and less."** And if she needed to stay "little" in order to get to heaven, then why do our children need to grow up so fast?

As a parent swimming against this tidal wave of responsibilities: raising children, disciplining children, instilling faith in our children, etc., the idea of adding the task of homeschooling to that list can seem incredibly crippling. The beauty though about homeschooling is that every other distracting obligation gets immediately taken out of the picture and is only added in as you see fit. If you went into homeschooling your children with a goal in mind to

► keep your children's innocence for as long as possible, and making plenty of room for all the positive information that you have prioritized, then you could never fail at your task as a homeschooling parent!

Our Catholic Catechism states in this way **The Primordial Parental Responsibility.** (2221-2222) *The procreation of children brings about the duty of their moral and spiritual formation. Therefore, the parents' right and duty to educate children is primordial and inalienable. Parents must see their children as children of God and educate them in God's law. 2223. Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery-- the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the "material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones."*

**Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them.**

The Catechism therefore unmistakably confirms that not only do we have the right to educate our children but that we are encouraged to do so. One of the best parts of homeschooling in my experience is that every day I am given the opportunity to try, even to fail but also to succeed in my vocation as a mother. I am not limited to the amount of time before they leave to go to school somewhere else, and the amount of time I would have with them after school in between homework and dinner and bedtime. I have morning, noon, and night to try, fail, apologize and succeed in my self-giving love for my children. Mother Teresa of Calcutta said, **"It is very important that children learn from their fathers and mothers how to love on another — not in the school, not from the teacher, but from you. It is very important that you share with your children the joy of that smile. There will be misunderstandings; every family has its cross, its suffering. Always be the first to forgive with a smile. Be cheerful, be happy."**

### Prayer, prudence and patience

It is true that homeschooling is not for everyone; some of us have some really great options to keep our children in a healthy Catholic environment with great educational standards. But if you are feeling that homeschooling may be the only option for your family, or if you feel called to homeschool your children, there are a few things that I would recommend that you do first:

**1. Pray** with fervency! Receive the sacraments often; you will need the graces for the tidal wave of concerns and questions that will come your way. Discuss your goals and priorities with your spouse so that you can receive the support you will need, even if he may not yet have fully educated himself about homeschooling.

**2. Read!** There are some really great books, especially Catholic ones on the subject of homeschooling.

Reading even just a few pages will put your heart at ease and will help you to see if this venture is for you and your family. There must be hundreds of really great books on this subject but I do have a few suggestions and I have also included a wonderful parenting book:

- *Parenting With Grace* by Gregory K. Popcak and Lisa Popcak (Highly recommend)
- *Catholic Homeschool Treasury: Nurturing Children's Love for Learning* by Rachel Mackson and Maureen Wittmann
- *Catholic Education: Homeward Bound – Useful Guide to Catholic Home Schooling* by Kimberly Hahn and Mary Hasson
- *Catholic Home Schooling* by Mary Kay Clark

**3. Speak prudently** to others and be realistic with yourself. Get excited, be motivated and put all you've learned into action! But...also be open to what it is that God wants for you and for your family. There is a reason why He has called you to homeschool, be it for one child, or for all your children, for one year, or for many years, just remember that it is your vocation. You will need self-discipline, self-motivation and, let's face it, a lot of hard work, but once you open your heart to the idea of homeschooling, it is then that you will begin to see how incredibly blessed your family will be from it.

**4. Have Patience** with yourself, your spouse and your children. When the time comes to jump in with both feet it may seem as though you may not be cut out for the job. You are, I promise! God gave these children to you and he will give you the graces too. I have my own **"#3 rule of thumb"**:

- By **three** o'clock you're ready for the day to be done and have some tea.
- By **three** weeks you finally feel like you've got the hang of things.
- By **three** months you need a break (Christmas).
- In another **three** months you're ready to be better (Lent).
- In another **three** months you're ready for a change of pace (summer).
- By the **third** year you really feel like you know what you are doing and so do your kids.

And best of all, when all else fails:

- You have **the Holy Trinity** to call upon for help.

Above all though, trust in Our Lord and in His ability to provide for ALL your needs, whether physical, mental or spiritual. He is there for you, especially when you are trying to do His Holy Will. God bless you, and until next time I will be praying for you and for whatever upcoming adventure Our Lord has in His design for you.

### April Helenek

*April and her husband Jae reside in Massachusetts where they homeschool their four children. April is the founder of the St. Lucy's Homeschool Adventure Group, which enriches the lives of over forty homeschooling children.*

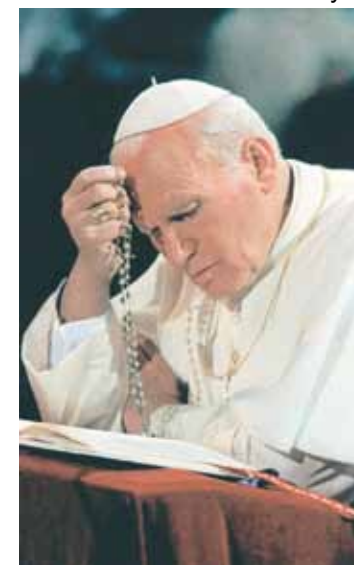
# The Rosary as Survival Manual

by Fr. Bevil Bramwell, OMI

As our moral environment becomes more challenging, Catholics shouldn't be caught flat-footed. John Paul II said that in Christianity: "Our spirit is set in one direction, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart is towards Christ our Redeemer, towards Christ, the Redeemer of man. We wish to look towards him-because there is salvation in no one else but him, the Son of God-repeating what Peter said: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life'"

To develop Christ as the focus of mind and heart in the face of so many contrary ideas we need various tools, both to keep our focus on Christ and to stiffen our resolve as we bear the cost of that focus. Praying the Rosary frequently does both.

As you know, in the Rosary we ponder the different events in Jesus' life from the Joyful Mysteries to the Glorious Mysteries. But why focus on Christ? John Paul II says that "through all levels of... self-awareness, and through all the fields of activity in which the Church expresses, finds and confirms herself, we must constantly aim at him 'who is the head', 'through whom are all things and through whom we exist', who is both 'the way, and the truth' and 'the resurrection and the life', seeing whom, we see the Father', and who had to go away from us that is, by his death on the Cross and then by his Ascension into heaven – in order that the Counselor should come to us and should keep coming to us as the Spirit of truth."



This is how we become beacons of clarity in a world living in a moral fog.

The Rosary's two main prayers are the Hail Mary and the Our Father. The Hail Mary captures the words of her cousin Elizabeth when she met the pregnant Mary. In this prayer, we ask Mary to intercede for us. We do this because as John Paul II explained: "The Blessed Virgin Mary continues to 'go before' the People of God. Her exceptional pilgrimage of faith represents a constant point of reference for the Church, for individuals and for communities, for peoples and nations and, in a sense, for all humanity. It is indeed difficult to encompass and measure its range."

She accompanies her son and helps us to do the same.

Mary can help us to truly appreciate what the mysteries of Jesus' life mean. His is the perfect human life and so it becomes the foundation of our perfection as human beings. The Second Vatican Council explained that: "All men are called to this union with Christ, who is the light of

the world, from whom we go forth, through whom we live, and toward whom our whole life strains." (*Lumen Gentium* 3.)

In fact in the same document, we read: "Christ Jesus, since he wills to continue his witness and service also through the laity, vivifies them in this Spirit and increasingly urges them on to every good and perfect work." (*Lumen Gentium* 34.)

This is how a life in Christ unfolds day by day. In some form or other, we live through all of the mysteries of his life. However we constantly need to be reminded that Christ is more real than the attractions and distractions around us. As the threats and the darkness gather, Christ is with us, the Christ of the Rosary and not the Christ concocted by some modern politician or theologian.

Then we also pray the Our Father. When John Paul II wrote about the divine Father, he considered Him as the Father of Mercies. Part of John Paul's study consists of a reflection on the Parable of the Prodigal Son in which Christ's image of the Divine Father begins to unfold.

It is the Father who gives us the "dignity as a son in his father's house." (Yes "son" but that is a whole story on its own.) This dignity comes from living out the will of the Father as Jesus does. We pray "thy will be done" every time we pray the Our Father.

The mention of the Father opens a whole world of meaning for us. In John Paul II's words: "The conduct of the father in the parable and his whole behavior,

which manifests his internal attitude, enables us to rediscover the individual threads of the Old Testament vision of mercy in a synthesis which is totally new, full of simplicity and depth."

So pronouncing the words of the Our Father leads us to the glorious father of the parable where: "The father of the prodigal son is faithful to his fatherhood, faithful to the love that he had always lavished on his son." (John Paul II.) And we are all his adopted sons in Christ.

Pope John Paul II prayed the rosary several times a day and now Pope Francis does the same. They both might be considered to have reasonably busy lives. Surely we can do no less, and in these times, especially with our families.

*Fr. Bevil Bramwell is a member of Oblates of Mary Immaculate and is Undergraduate Dean at Catholic Distance University. He has published Laity: Beautiful, Good and True and The World of the Sacraments.*

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# Eucharistic miracle in Buenos Aires in 1996

*The inquiry was commissioned by Cardinal Bergoglio, now Pope Francis*

by Fr. Mieczysław Piotrowski, SChr

The weakening of faith in the real presence of the Risen Christ in the Eucharist is one of the most significant aspects of the current spiritual crisis. Jesus wants to strengthen our faith in His Eucharistic presence. That is why from time to time in the history of the Catholic Church He gives us signs – Eucharistic miracles that clearly underscore the fact that He, the Risen Lord Himself in the mystery of His Divinity and glorified humanity, is truly present in the Eucharist. The most recent Eucharistic miracle recognized by the Church authorities occurred in 1996 in the capital of Argentina – Buenos Aires.

## A consecrated Host becomes flesh and blood



At seven o'clock in the evening on August 18, 1996, Fr. Alejandro Pezet was saying Holy Mass at a Catholic church in the commercial center of Buenos Aires. As he was finishing distributing Holy Communion, a woman came up to tell him that she had found

a discarded host on a candleholder at the back of the church. On going to the spot indicated, Fr. Alejandro saw the defiled Host. Since he was unable to consume it, he placed it in a container of water and put it away in the tabernacle of the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament.

On Monday, August 26, upon opening the tabernacle, he saw to his amazement that the Host had turned into a bloody substance. He informed Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, who gave instructions that the Host be professionally photographed. The photos were taken on September 6. They clearly show that the Host, which had become a fragment of bloodied flesh, had grown significantly in size. For several years the Host remained in the tabernacle, the whole affair being kept a strict secret. Since the Host suffered no visible decomposition, Cardinal Bergoglio decided to have it scientifically analyzed.

On October 5, 1999, in the presence of the Cardinal's representatives, Dr. Castanon took a sample of the bloody fragment and sent it to New York for analysis. Since he did not wish to prejudice the study, he purposely did not inform the team of scientists of its origin. One of these scientists was Dr. Frederic Zugiba, the well-known cardiologist and forensic pathologist. He determined that the analyzed substance was real flesh and blood containing human DNA. Dr. Zugiba testified that, "the analyzed material is a fragment of the heart

muscle found in the wall of the left ventricle close to the valves. This muscle is responsible for the contraction of the heart. **It should be borne in mind that the left cardiac ventricle pumps blood to all parts of the body.** The heart muscle is in an inflammatory condition and contains a large number of white blood cells. This indicates that the heart was alive at the time the sample was taken. It is my contention that the heart was alive, since white blood cells die outside a living organism. They require a living organism to sustain them. Thus, their presence indicates that the heart was alive when the sample was taken. What is more, these white blood cells had penetrated the tissue, which further indicates that the heart had been under severe stress, as if the owner had been beaten severely about the chest."



Two Australians, journalist Mike Willesee and lawyer Ron Tesoriero, witnessed these tests. Knowing where the sample had come from, they were dumbfounded by Dr. Zugiba's testimony. Mike Willesee asked the scientist how long the white blood cells would have remained alive if they had come from a piece of human tissue, which had been kept in water. They would have ceased to exist in a matter of minutes, Dr. Zugiba replied. The journalist then told the doctor that the source of the sample had first been kept in ordinary water for a month and then for another three years in a container of distilled water; only then had the sample been taken for analysis.

Dr. Zugiba's was at a loss to account for this fact. There was no way of explaining it scientifically, he stated. Only then did Mike Willesee inform Dr. Zugiba that the analyzed sample came from a consecrated Host (white, unleavened bread) that had mysteriously turned into bloody human flesh. Amazed by this information, Dr. Zugiba replied, "How and why a consecrated Host would change its character and become living human flesh and blood will remain an inexplicable mystery to science — a mystery totally beyond its competence."



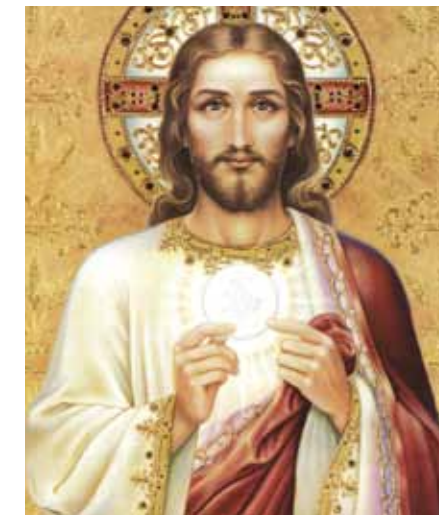
*Fr. Pezet with Cardinal Bergoglio*

Only faith in the extraordinary action of a God provides the reasonable answer — faith in a God, who wants to make us aware that He is truly present in the mystery of the Eucharist.

The Eucharistic miracle in Buenos Aires is an extraordinary sign attested to by science. Through it Jesus desires to arouse in us a lively faith in His real presence in the Eucharist. He reminds us that His presence is real, and not symbolic. Only with the eyes of faith do we see Him under appearance of the consecrated bread and wine. We do not see Him with our bodily eyes, since He is present in His glorified humanity. In the Eucharist Jesus sees and loves us and desires to save us.

In collaboration with Ron Tesoriero, Mike Willesee, one of Australia's best-known journalists (he converted to Catholicism after working on the documents of another Eucharistic miracle) wrote a book entitled *Reason to Believe*. In it they present documented facts of Eucharistic miracles and other signs calling people to faith in Christ who abides and teaches in the Catholic Church. They have also made a documentary film on the Eucharist — based largely on the scientific discoveries associated with the miraculous Host in Buenos Aires. Their aim was to give a clear presentation of the Catholic Church's teaching on the subject of the Eucharist.

They screened the film in numerous Australian cities. The showing at Adelaide drew a crowd of two thousand viewers. During the commentary and question period that followed a visibly moved man stood up announcing that he was blind. Having learned that this was an exceptional film, he had very much wanted to see it. Just before the screening, he prayed fervently to Jesus for the grace to see the film. At once his sight was



restored to him, but only for the thirty-minute duration of the film. Upon its conclusion, he again lost the ability to see. He confirmed this by describing in minute detail certain scenes of the film. It was an incredible event that moved those present to the core of their being.

Through such wondrous signs God calls souls to conversion. If Jesus causes the Host to become visible flesh and blood, a muscle that is responsible for the contraction of a human heart — a heart that suffers like that of someone who has been beaten severely about the chest, if He does such things, it is in order to arouse and quicken our faith in His real presence in the Eucharist. He thus enables us to see that Holy Mass is a re-presentation (i.e. a making present) of the entire drama of our salvation: Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. Jesus says to his disciples, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe" (Jn 4: 48). There is no need to actively seek out wondrous signs. But if Jesus chooses to give them to us, then it behooves us to accept them with meekness and seek to understand what He desires to tell us by them. Thanks to these signs, many people have discovered faith in God — the One God in the Holy Trinity, who reveals His Son to us: Jesus Christ, who abides in the sacraments and teaches us through Holy Scripture and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

## A mystery that surpasses our understanding

The Eucharist — the actual presence of the risen person of Jesus under the appearances of bread and wine — is one of the most important and most difficult truths revealed to us by Christ. Eucharistic miracles are merely visible confirmations of what He tells us about Himself; namely, that He really does give us His glorified body and blood as spiritual food and drink...

The Eucharist is Christ's supreme gift and miracle, for in it He gives us Himself and engages us in His work of salvation. He enables us to participate in His victory over death, sin, and Satan, to share in the divine nature, and partake of the life of the Holy Trinity. In the Eucharist we receive "the medicine of immortality, the antidote to death" (Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 18). For this reason, Mother Church holds that every deliberate and freely willed absence from Holy Mass on Sunday is an irretrievable spiritual loss, a sign of loss of faith, and hence a serious sin. Let us also remember that if "a Christian's conscience is burdened by serious sin, then the path of penance through the sacrament of Reconciliation becomes necessary for full participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice" (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 37).

*Fr. M. Piotrowski SChr*  
[www.ioamagazine.org](http://www.ioamagazine.org)

# Never Say Never, A Padre Pio Miracle

by Susan Brinkmann

Paul Walsh was 17 years old when the car he was driving on an icy December night in 1983 hit a tree on Chester Pike in suburban Philadelphia. One doctor described his head injuries as the equivalent of dropping an egg on a cement sidewalk. Not only was his skull shattered, every bone in his face was broken and there was a tear in his brain. Doctors at Crozier Chester Medical Center said he was irreversibly brain damaged and would never regain consciousness. But as the old saying goes, "never say never."

On Saturday, May 14, 2005, Paul Walsh received a bachelors degree in liberal arts from Neumann College in Aston, PA. "I'd like to teach special ed," said the 38-year-old graduate, who is employed as a full-time health care associate with Elwyn, Inc., a residential day program for the mentally disadvantaged. "I'd like to continue working with mentally disadvantaged persons."

Paul's recovery from massive head injuries in 1984 was "unexplained, on a purely medical and scientific basis" said one of the physicians who treated him, Michael Ryan, M.D. In a written statement, Dr. Ryan said: "It is my feeling that without the help of the supernatural influence, Paul would today be dead or continue to be in a comatose state."

Although he recalls little of his four-month ordeal following the accident, his mother, Betty Walsh, remembers every detail, from the moment she got the phone call on the night of the accident. "The nurse told me to come to the hospital right away," said the mother of ten from Ridley Park, PA. "It was hard to even recognize Paul. His face was so swollen, like a pumpkin, and totally wrapped in bandages. It didn't look very good but he did recognize my voice because he moved when he heard me."

After ten hours of surgery the following day, during which Paul lost four and half times the amount of blood in his body, he was transferred to Crozier

Chester Medical Center where his condition remained critical.

At first, he seemed to be improving and was even talking a little, but there was a suspicious fluid dripping out of his nose. Everyone thought he had a cold and a month went by before doctors discovered the fluid wasn't from nasal congestion - it was spinal fluid. A cat scan revealed a tear in Paul's brain.

"That's when they realized he was worse off than they thought," Betty said.

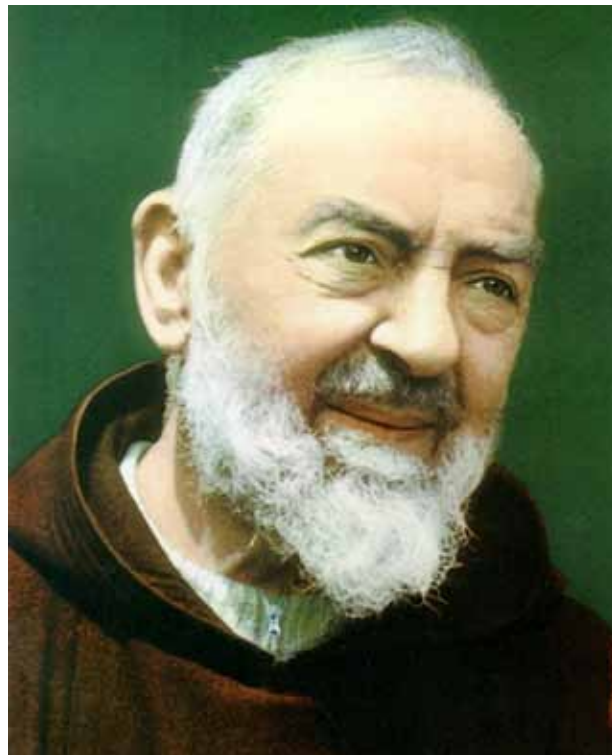
Doctors tried to repair the tear but the inside of Paul's head was too shattered. They resorted to draining the fluid with spinal taps and then a catheter, but Paul's condition continued to deteriorate. He began slipping in and out of consciousness.

Another cat scan revealed that he had hydrocephalus and the ventricles of his brain were filling with fluid. Doctors prepared him for emergency surgery to put a shunt in his head to drain the fluid when they discovered yet another serious complication - he had also developed spinal meningitis. "At this point, there was no hope," Betty said. "The ventricles just kept filling with fluid and it flattened the frontal lobe of his brain which one doctor told me was his whole personality."

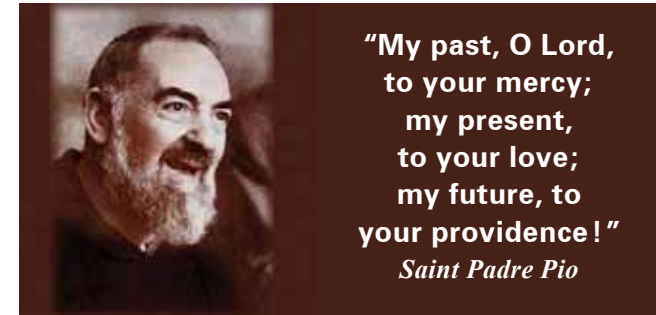
Even though Paul was alive, in essence, he was gone. "They kept saying 'you have to stop hoping... the way he is now is the way he's going to be. He is permanently and irreversibly brain-damaged.'" But Betty was not about to give up on her son. Even though she had nine other children at home, she felt like the woman in the Bible who had ten coins but lost one and could not stop searching until she found it.

"We just decided Paul needed a miracle," Betty said. "In the end, if Paul didn't get better, I would accept it, but in the meantime, I was really going to believe I could have a miracle and I would at least pray with faith."

A woman from St. Madeline's in Ridley Park, gave



**Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina (May 25, 1887 – September 23, 1968) was a Capuchin Catholic priest from Italy who became famous for bearing the stigmata. He was born Francesco Forgione, and given the name Pius (Italian: Pio) when he joined the Capuchins. On 16 June 2002, he was canonized by Pope John Paul II.**



her five prayer cards for people who were in the process of beatification and needed a miracle. Every day after Mass, she and her mother would go to the hospital and pray the rosary over Paul, then say the five prayers. "Whenever I came to the Padre Pio prayer, Paul blessed himself, even though he was totally unconscious," Betty said.

Several people witnessed the phenomena, including a few nurses. Betty decided to call a local group of Padre Pio devotees and report what was happening. They decided to send someone to the hospital with one of the gloves worn by Padre Pio over the bloody stigmata wounds in his hands. On Monday, March 12, Paul was blessed with the relic and within days, one of his many serious ailments had miraculously vanished.

Betty called the group again and on April 6, 1984, the glove was once again brought to Paul and laid on his head. "I knew immediately something happened because it was like an electric shock went through him," Betty said. "He opened his eyes and looked around the room, very clear-eyed. Then he fell back into the coma again but I just knew something had happened."

She was right. The next day, when she returned to the hospital she was shocked to find her son sitting in a chair and watching television. He turned and said "Hi Mom."

The nurse rushed in and told Betty: "He's been talking all day!" When she called the neurosurgeon to tell him Paul Walsh was talking, the doctor said, "It's not possible" and hung up on her.

But it was true. "They gave Paul another cat scan

"Pray, hope, and don't worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayer."

- Saint Padre Pio



and all the doctor kept saying was, 'I don't believe this. I don't believe this.' The frontal lobe of his brain wasn't smashed anymore."

Even more inexplicable was what happened days later, on Easter Sunday morning, when Paul and his roommate woke up to find a man standing at the foot of Paul's bed. Described as "an old priest in a brown robe," Paul thought it was Betty's brother, Charley, who bears a remarkable resemblance to Padre Pio.

"I remember being very certain that my Uncle Charley had been in to visit me," Paul said. "I did see him. He was very happy and smiled at me. And then he left the room."

Betty knew it couldn't have been Charley because he lives in Boston. She folded up a picture of Padre Pio, hiding the name, and showed it to Paul. "That's who visited me," he said. "Isn't that Uncle Charley?"

Weeks later, Paul Walsh walked out of Crozier Chester Medical Center, completely healed.

If there was any doubt in their minds that Padre Pio interceded in Paul's healing, those doubts were put to rest a year after the accident when the family received an unexpected phone call from Bill Rose, who lived on the property where Paul hit the tree. Rose claimed he heard the crash the night of the accident and ran outside to find Paul laying on the ground with his face in a gutter. He knew the person was dying and while someone called for an ambulance, he held Paul's head up out of the gutter and prayed for his soul.

"Within three to five minutes of your son's accident," he told Betty, "I dedicated him to Padre Pio."

To this day, Paul admits he still wonders "why me?" But that doesn't stop him from telling his story whenever he can. "I'm not doing this for myself," Paul said. "I want to give other people hope."

*This story written by best-selling author Susan Brinkmann was one of the collection of survivor stories in Amazing Grace for Survivors*

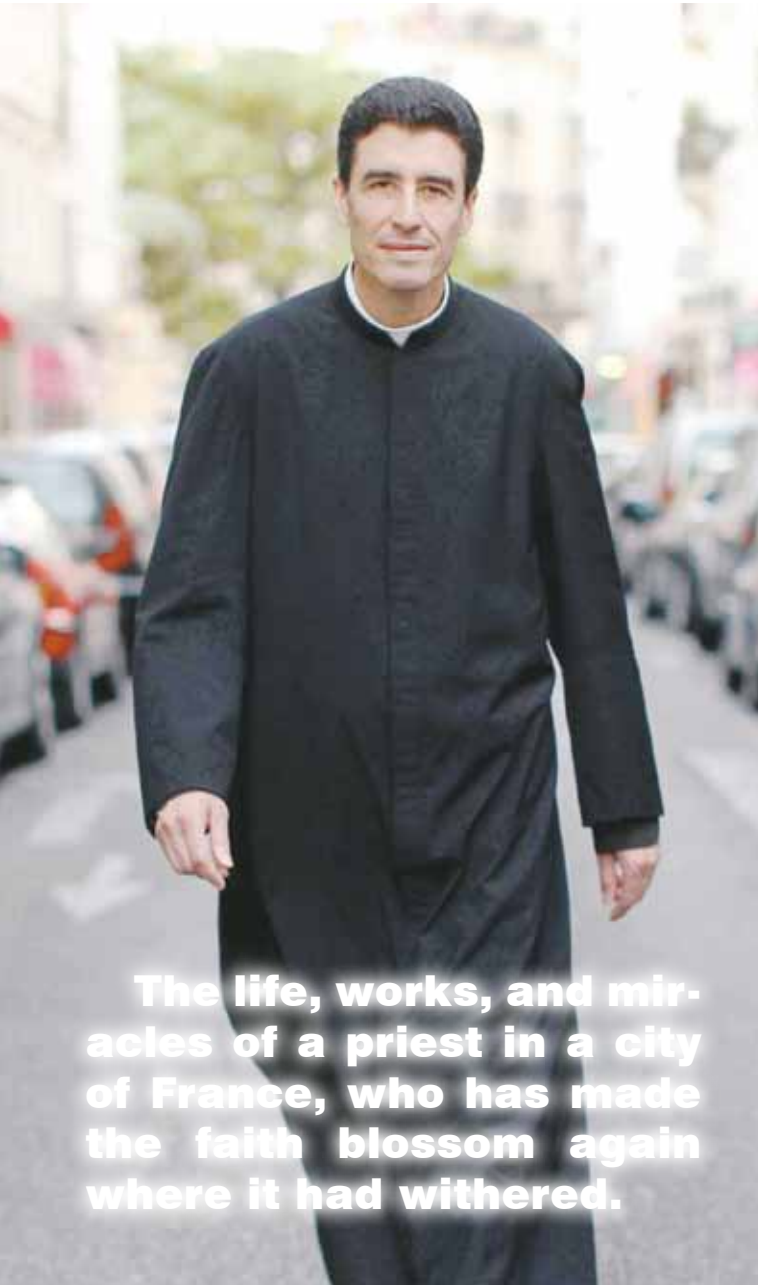
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October 13, December 8, 2013**

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**Rosary at 2:00 p.m. — Meeting at 2:30 p.m.**  
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# Fr. Michel-Marie Zanotti-Sorkine, a cassock in deep Marseille



The life, works, and miracles of a priest in a city of France, who has made the faith blossom again where it had withered.

by Sandro Magister

The title of this article is the same one that the Italian newspaper *Avvenire* gave to a feature report from Marseille by its correspondent Marina Corradi, in the footsteps of the pastor of a neighbourhood behind the old port.

A pastor: whose Masses are crowded with people; who hears confessions every evening until late at night; who has baptized many converts; who always

wears the cassock so that everyone may recognize him as a priest even from far away.

Michel-Marie Zanotti-Sorkine was born in 1959 in Nice, to a family a bit Russian and a bit Corsican. As a young man he sang in the nightclubs in Paris, but then over the years there emerged the vocation to the priesthood he had had since his childhood. His guides were Fr. Joseph-Marie Perrin, who was Simone Weil's spiritual director, and Fr. Marie-Dominique Philippe, founder of the congregation of Saint John. He studied in Rome at the Angelicum, the theological faculty of the Dominicans. He was ordained a priest in 2004 by Cardinal Bernard Panafieu, the archbishop of Marseille at the time. He writes books, the latest of which is entitled *Au diable la tiédeur (To the devil with lukewarmness)*. This book is dedicated to priests. He is pastor at Saint-Vincent-de-Paul.

And in this parish located around Rue Canabière, which leads from the old port through ramshackle houses and shops, with many homeless, immigrants, gypsies, where tourists do not venture to go, in a Marseille and in a France where religious practice is almost everywhere at the lowest levels, Fr. Michel-Marie has made the Catholic faith blossom again.

How? Marina Corradi went and saw. And she tells us what she found.

The feature was published in *Avvenire*, the newspaper of the Italian episcopal conference, on November 29, 2012. It was the first in a series that presented witnesses of the faith, known and less well-known, capable of generating evangelical astonishment in those who meet them.

**"The Pope is right: everything must start afresh from Christ"**

by Marina Corradi

That black tunic fluttering along Rue Canabière, among a crowd more Maghrebi than French, makes you turn around. Check it out, a priest, and dressed like once upon a time, on the streets of Marseille. A dark-haired man, smiling, and yet with something reserved and monastic about him. And what a story behind him: he sang in the nightclubs in Paris, was ordained only eight years ago and since then has been pastor here, at Saint-Vincent-de-Paul.

But in reality the story is even more complicated: Michel-Marie Zanotti-Sorkine, 53, is descended from a Russian Jewish grandfather who immigrated into France and had his daughters baptized before the war. One of these daughters, who escaped the

Holocaust, brought into the world Fr. Michel-Marie, who on his father's side is half Corsican and half Italian. (What a bizarre mix, you think: and you look with amazement at his face, trying to understand what a man is like who has such a tangle of roots.) But if one Sunday you enter his packed church and listen to how he speaks of Christ with simple everyday words, and if you observe the religious slowness of the elevation of the host, in an absolute silence, you ask yourself who this priest is, and what it is in him that draws people, bringing back those who are far away.

Finally you have him in front of you, in his white, monastic rectory. He seems younger than his years; he does not have those wrinkles of bitterness which mark the face of a man with time. There is a peace upon him, a joy that is astonishing. But who are you?, you would like to ask him immediately.

During a frugal meal, the highlights of an entire life are revealed. Two splendid parents; the mother, baptized but only formally Catholic, allows her son to go to church. The faith is imparted to him "by an elderly priest, a Salesian in a black cassock, a man of generous and boundless faith." The desire, at the age of eight, to be a priest. At thirteen he loses his mother: "The pain devastated me. And yet I never doubted God." Adolescence, music, and that beautiful voice. The piano bars of Paris, which may seem little suited to discerning a religious vocation. And yet, while the decision slowly ripens, the spiritual fathers of Michel-Marie tell him to keep to the nightlife of Paris: because there as well a sign is needed. Finally the vocation pays off. In 1999, at the age of 40, his childhood wish comes true: a priest, and in a cassock, like that elderly Salesian.

**Why the cassock? "For me" – he smiles – "it is a work uniform. It is intended to be a sign for those who meet me, and above all for those who do not believe. In this way I am recognizable as a priest, always.** In this way on the streets I take advantage of every opportunity to make friends. Father, someone asks me, where is the post office? Come on, I'll go with you, I reply, and meanwhile we talk, and I discover that the children of that man are not baptized. Bring them to me, I say in the end; and I often baptize them later. I seek in every way to show with my face a good humanity. Just the other day" – he laughs – "in a cafe an old man asked me which horses he should bet on. I gave him the horses. I asked the Blessed Mother for forgiveness: but you know, I said to her, it is to befriend this man. As a priest who was one of

my teachers used to tell those who asked him how to convert the Marxists: 'One has to become their friend,' he would reply."

Then, in church, the Mass is stark and beautiful. The affable priest of Canabière is a rigorous priest. Why take so much care with the liturgy? **"I want everything to be splendid around the Eucharist. I want that at the elevation, the people should understand that He is here, truly. It is not theater, it is not superfluous pomp: it is inhabiting the Mystery. The heart too needs to feel."**

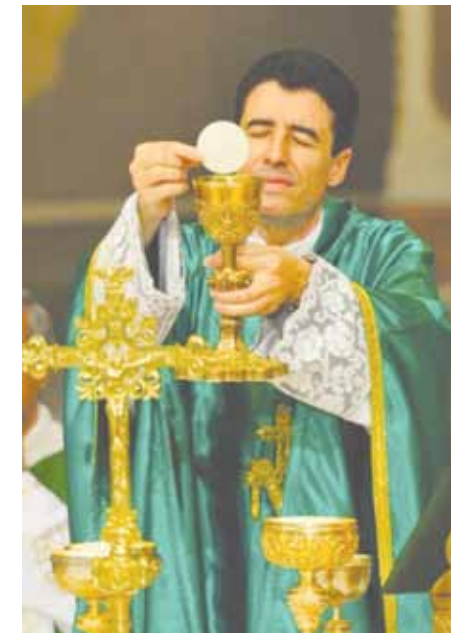
He insists a great deal on the responsibility of the priest, and in one of his books – he has written many books, and still writes songs sometimes – he affirms

that a priest who has an empty church must examine himself and say: "It is we who lack fire." He explains: "The priest is 'alter Christus,' he is called to reflect Christ in himself. This does not mean asking perfection of ourselves; but being conscious of our sins, of our misery, in order to be able to understand and pardon anyone who comes to the confessional."

Fr. Michel-Marie goes to the confessional every evening, with absolute punctuality, at five o'clock, without fail. (The people, he says, must know that the priest is there, in any case). Then he remains in the sacristy until eleven o'clock, for anyone who might want to go to him: "I want to give the sign of an unlimited availability." Judging by the constant

pilgrimage of the faithful, in the evening, one would say that it works. Like a deep demand that emerges from this city, apparently far removed. What do they want? "The first thing is to hear someone say: you are loved. The second: God has a plan for you. One must not make them feel judged, but welcomed. They must be made to understand that the only one who can change their lives is Christ. And Mary. There are two things that, in my view, permit a return to the faith: the Marian embrace, and impassioned apologetics, which touches the heart."

"Those who seek me out," he continues, "are asking first of all for human assistance, and I try to give all the help possible. Not forgetting that the beggar needs to eat, but also has a soul. To the offended woman I say: send me your husband, I will talk to him. But then, how many come to say that they are sad, that their lives are no good... Then I ask them: how long has it been since you went to confession? Because I know that sin is a burden, and the sadness of sin is a torment. I am convinced that what makes





all priests have an absolute dedication, almost like saints? "I am not a saint, and I do not believe that all priests must be saints. But they can be good men. The people will be attracted by their good face."

Are there any problems, in streets with such a strong presence of Muslim immigrants? No, he says simply: "They respect me and this garment." In church, he welcomes everyone with joy: "Christ came for sinners, and I have the anxiety, in withholding a sacrament, that he could bring me to account for it one day. But do we still know the power of the sacraments? I have the misgiving that we have excessively bureaucratized the admission to baptism. I think of the baptism of my Jewish mother, which in terms of the request of my grandfather was merely a formal act: and yet, even from this baptism there came a priest."

And the new evangelization? "Look," he says as we say goodbye in his rectory, "the older I get, the more I understand what Benedict XVI says: everything truly starts afresh from Christ. We can only return to the source."

Later, I glimpse him at a distance, on the street, with that black garment ruffled by his rapid stride. **"I wear it," he said, "so that I may be recognized by someone I might never meet otherwise. That stranger, who is very dear to me."**

*Sandro Magister's website: <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/?eng=y>*

► many people suffer is the lack of the sacraments. The sacrament is the divine within the reach of man: and without this nourishment we cannot live. I see grace at work, and that people change."

Days are given in their entirety, on the streets or in the confessional, until nighttime. Where does he get the energy? He – almost shyly, as one speaks of a love – talks of a deep relationship with Mary, of an absolute confidence with her: "Mary is the act of total faith, in the abandonment beneath the Cross. Mary is absolute compassion. She is pure beauty offered to man." And he loves the rosary, the humility of the rosary, the priest of Canabière: "When I hear confessions, I often say the rosary, which does not prevent me from listening; when I give communion, I pray." You listen to him, intimidated. But then, should

## The Vatican consecrated to St. Michael the Archangel by Pope Francis, in the presence of Benedict XVI

On July 5, 2013, a new 5-meter (16-foot) statue dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel was unveiled at the Vatican Gardens and blessed by Pope Francis. Notably present was Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI who, according to communique released by the Holy See, "was specially invited by Pope Francis." For this occasion, Pope Francis also consecrated Vatican City State to St. Joseph and St. Michael.

"Benedict XVI was greeted with great affection by the assistants and staff of the Governorate," the communique stated. "The two pontiffs remained united throughout the ceremony and sat together in front of the monument."

This statue was commissioned by the former president of the Governate of Vatican City State, Cardinal Giovanni Lajolo, to celebrate the Archangel Michael, defender of the Faith and protector of the Catholic Church. This bronze statue was created by Italian artist Giuseppe Lomuscio.

Around the globe that supports the statue, one can read in Latin: "That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Mt 16:18.) The hand bears

the mark of the nail of the Crucifixion, and also has the ring of St. Peter, worn by the popes.

Pope Francis recited two prayers of consecration to both Saints (*one can read the prayer of consecration to St. Michael on the next page*) and he explained his gesture with the following address:

"We have gathered here in the Vatican Gardens to inaugurate a monument to Saint Michael the Archangel, patron of Vatican City State. It is an initiative planned some time ago, with the approval of Pope Benedict XVI, to whom always go our affection and gratitude and to whom we wish to express our great joy to have him present here in our midst today. My heartfelt thank you!

"There are several artistic works in the Vatican Gardens; however, this one, which is added today, assumes a place of particular importance, be it for its location, be it for the meaning it expresses. In fact, it's not only a celebratory work, but an invitation to reflection and prayer, which is well inserted in the Year of Faith. Michael – which means: 'Who is like unto God?' – is the champion of God's pri-



**Cardinal Maradiaga with our pilgrim Maria Fretres of Paraguay at Rio's WYD in July 2013**

### "Break the cycle of poverty"

His Eminence Óscar Andrés Cardinal Rodríguez Maradiaga, SDB, President of Caritas Internationalis, wrote in July 2013 in the 2012 annual report of this organization:

"This is a world where about 300 children die every hour from malnutrition and where nearly a billion people have no access to clean water. At the same time, there are over 1200 billionaires in the world, the highest number ever recorded.

"We are scandalised that millions of our brothers and sisters live in extreme poverty in a world of riches. But we are filled with hope because we are the first generation with the tools to change the system that keeps them poor... Providing aid is not enough. We must break the cycle of poverty.

"Our greatest challenge is not poverty or the economic crisis. It's the growth of secularism in many parts of the

world, especially in the richest. When people do not believe in God, individualism triumphs over community and we lose sight of our ethical principles.

Only through living the truth of the word of God can we overcome the spiritual poverty of our age and build a fraternal world in which we live united as brothers and sisters in peace."



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► macy, of His transcendence and power. Michael fights to re-establish divine justice; he defends the People of God from its enemies and above all of the enemy par excellence, the devil. And Saint Michael triumphs because it is God who acts in him.

“This sculpture, then, reminds us that evil has been vanquished, the accuser is unmasked, his head is crushed, because salvation was accomplished once and for all in the Blood of Christ. Even if the devil always tries to scratch the Archangel’s face and man’s face, God is stronger; the victory is His and His salvation is offered to every man.

“We are not alone in life’s journey and trials; we are accompanied and sustained by the Angels of God who offer, so to speak, their wings to help us

surmount so many dangers, to be able to fly high in regard to those realities that can weigh down our life or drag us down. On consecrating Vatican City State to Saint Michael the Archangel, we ask him to defend us from the Evil One and to cast him outside.

“Dear brothers and sisters, we consecrate Vatican City State also to Saint Joseph, the custodian of Jesus, the custodian of the Holy Family. May his presence make us stronger and more courageous in making space for God in our life to always overcome evil with good. We ask him to guard us, to take care of us, so that the life of grace will grow every day more in each of us.”

*Pope Francis then recited the following prayer of consecration of Vatican City to St. Michael the Archangel:*

**O glorious Archangel St. Michael  
You who announces to the world  
the consoling news  
of the victory of good over evil  
open our lives to hope.**

**Watch over this City and the Apostolic See,  
the heart and center of the Catholic Church,  
so that it may live in fidelity to the Gospel  
and the exercise of heroic charity.**

**The Lord of the universe made you powerful  
against the forces of the enemy:  
unmask the traps of the devil  
and of the spirit of the world.  
Make us victorious over the temptations  
of power, wealth and sensuality.**

**Be our safeguard against all machinations  
that threaten the serenity of the Church;  
be the sentinel of our thoughts, who delivers  
us from the assaults of a worldly mentality;  
be our spiritual guide,  
who supports us in the good fight of faith.**

**O glorious Archangel St. Michael,  
who always contemplates the Holy Face of God,  
keep us firm on the path to Eternity.  
Amen.**