

WHISPERS IN THE LOGGIA

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 2008

The Media Is the Message



In his first major appearance last week as the Vatican point-man on communication in the church, Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli [warned](#) against "fundamentalism" on the part of Catholic media:

It is essential to be aware, the prelate added, that "our media is directed not just to Catholics, but to all men. They are not media for Catholics,

but rather are the presence of a Catholic reality that is open to man, all men."

He offered the example of Catholic newspapers or radio. "It is undeniable," Archbishop Celli said, "that they don't exist only for -- or are directed only to -- people who already belong to the Church, rather they should also give careful attention to what exists in the soul of man, in his heart, where sometimes there can be distance from God, or many times, a deep nostalgia for God."

Our media, he summarized, "should search, and help in the search. Our media should not become, allow me to say it this way, instruments of a religious or cultural fundamentalism."

Archbishop Celli contended that Catholic media should be at the service of the culture.

He explained that media should know how to enter "in this search that man embarks upon every day [...] as instruments of this 'diaconia' of the culture [...] instruments that teach what it means to dialogue, to be men who respect others' positions, who know how to welcome, who know how to understand."

"I emphasize it again," Archbishop Celli stated, "We are not seeking a religious fundamentalism, because sometimes this is the risk. And the Church itself is not that; it is not a 'tower of marble' that proudly stands 'in its possession of the truth, but rather a Church that knows how to welcome, understand, dialogue, respect."

...and in a recent column, Maryknoll Fr William Grimm, the editor of the Japanese Catholic weekly *Katorikku Shimibun*, sounds a call for

ABOUT ME



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PHILADELPHIA, PA,
VATICAN

Rocco Palmo writes from America for *The*

Tablet, the international Catholic weekly published in London. He also authors "Almost Holy," a fortnightly column for *Busted Halo*, an online magazine on spirituality and culture run by the Paulist Fathers. Palmo's appeared as a commentator on things Catholic in *The New York Times*, *Associated Press*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *BBC*, *National Public Radio*, *The Washington Post* and *Religion News Service*, among other print and broadcast outlets. A Philadelphia native, Rocco Palmo attended the University of Pennsylvania, from which he earned the Bachelor of Arts in Political Science.

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"real journalism" in the church (tip to [NewsHub](#)):

Some news sources such as the independent [UCA News](#) and [Catholic News Service](#) (owned by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops but operating with editorial independence) hold to professional standards of timeliness, attribution, accuracy, balance and verification. There are also news "retailers" (newspapers, blogs, etc.) that hold themselves to the same standards.

However, there has been a proliferation of Catholic "news sources" that do not follow those examples. Bias, distortion, refusal to cover the "bad news," lack of balance, deference to officials and failure to verify are common.

Catholic media outlets with editorial freedom to accurately present the face of the Church to its audience rather than being mouthpieces for "Church authorities" -- Religious superiors, pastors, bishops, curial officials and popes -- are few. One diocesan newspaper I saw had 11 pictures of the bishop on its first nine pages. It was clearly not a paper that intended to present the life of the Church in all its variety.

The chief news that Catholic media must convey is the life of the men and women who are the main body of the Church, the laity. Their story is the story of the Church in the world today, and is too seldom the focus of Church journalism....

Why does it matter if the Church does not have a media voice like that which should prevail in the secular world?

One reason is that if the Church is incapable or unwilling to report on its life and activities with transparency, others will step in. However, leaving honest reporting of the Church to outside media leaves us open to misunderstanding and even sensationalism. It is hard to refute charges of "cover-up" when, in fact, Catholic journalism either consciously or inadvertently fails to present a full picture of the Church, "warts and all."

We need a trustworthy professional Catholic journalism in order to present the true face of the Church to the world and each other.

Being trustworthy means having a commitment to the truth rather than to looking good. If Church media are seen as PR rather than journalism, others will not believe us when we actually have good news -- as well as the Good News -- to convey, nor will they look to us for information and insight.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 21:51



Maciel Dead

Fr Marcial Maciel
Degollado, the controversial
founder of the Legionaries
of Christ who was forced



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from ministry by the Vatican under a cloud of sex-abuse allegations, died yesterday aged 87.

In a statement released earlier today, the Legion announced the "departure of its dear Father Founder... to the heavenly homeland." In a letter to the communities of the Legionaries and its lay arm, Regnum Christi, Maciel's successor Fr Álvaro Corcuera said that he died at an unspecified location in the United States "with the peace that always filled his soul." (Wire reports subsequently indicated the place of death as a "group home" in Houston.)



The community's formal notice said that Maciel passed away "in the bosom of the Catholic church."

A favorite of the late Pope John Paul II, the Mexican-born cleric -- known to his faithful as "Padre Nuestro" -- founded the Legion in 1941, three years before his priestly ordination. In time, particularly under the backdoor patronage of the Polish pontiff, the community known for its strict organization and staunch conservatism spread to 40 countries, its membership growing to over 750 priests, 2,500 seminarians and 70,000 laity in Regnum Christi.

Having approved the latter's governing statutes in the months before his 2005 death, the late Pope also gave the Legion its first high-profile bishop -- Brian Farrell, the secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The Irish-born curialist had previously served in the influential post of English-language desk chief in the Vatican Secretariat of State. (Farrell's brother Kevin, currently bishop of Dallas, was likewise ordained for the community, but left it in the 1980s to incardinate into the archdiocese of Washington.) Two other Legion priests had been named bishops in Mexico, the first in 1974.

Shortly before John Paul's death, the then-prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger pushed forward with a long-shelved investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct by Maciel -- an inquiry which, reportedly, found resistance in the papal apartment.

While the abuse reported by several former Legionaries could have resulted in the founder's forced dismissal from the clerical state, the Holy See -- now with Ratzinger as Pope -- triangulated its response. Issuing its [decision](#) in May 2006, the arrangement allowed the once-omnipresent Maciel to remain a priest, albeit "invited" to "a reserved life of prayer and penance, renouncing all public ministry."

The move might've spared him from a canonical trial in light of his age and health. Nonetheless, it remained a high-profile rebuke without precedent.

Interpreted as a strong signal that Benedict XVI would "clean house" following global revelations of abuse and cover-up, the judgment made international news as Maciel -- who emphatically denied the

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[theloggia\(at\)mac\(dot\)com](mailto:theloggia(at)mac(dot)com)

allegations -- became the most prominent cleric ousted on sex charges.

While at the time, the Vatican was also careful to note that "irrespective of the person of the founder," the community's "distinguished" service was "acknowledged with gratitude," recent reports in foreign media indicate that Benedict has since nullified two private vows taken by Legionaries to maintain secrecy in the order and to refrain from criticism of a superior.

In 2005, at age 84, Maciel stood down from the LC's leadership.

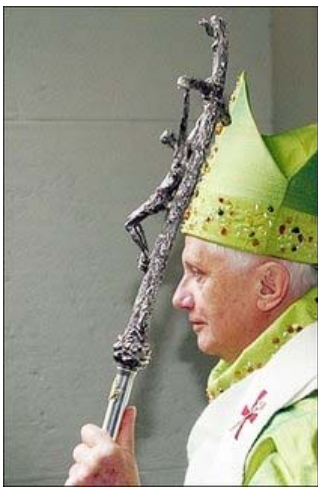
Ostensibly due to the fallout of the CDF inquest, the Legion said today that, in accordance with Maciel's wishes, his funeral would take place "within a climate of prayer, in a quiet and private manner."

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 12:05



PopeMass DC... A Showcall Production



Just when some thought recent papal liturgies couldn't get any more spectacular, a Maryland-based event firm has been selected "to produce" B16's 17 April Mass at Washington's Nationals Park...

Showcall, Inc. will provide stage and set design and layout, audio visual production, and overall show direction of the public Mass. Showcall will utilize its unique skill set in producing high-profile,

high-threat level events and will coordinate with the Washington Nationals to host the first major event in its new baseball stadium. Showcall will work closely with GEP Washington, the overall DMC firm for the visit.

"We are deeply honored to participate in Pope Benedict's visit and of course, we are delighted that the planning committee has agreed that Showcall's resume of large scale special events and lighting, audio and video equipment inventory are the right fit for executing a Papal celebration of this significance and magnitude." said Ajay R. Patil, co-founder and senior partner of Showcall, Inc.

Showcall Inc. was founded in 2001 by Ajay R. Patil and A. Blayne Candy. Since that time, Showcall has provided turnkey production services on an international basis for Summits, White House Conferences, Fortune 100 companies, associations, and national entertainment.





In other PopeTrip run-up news, the [winning designs](#) for the furnishings at the capital liturgy have been [unveiled](#).

The winners (above) are grad students in architecture at the capital's Catholic University of America... which is, of course, [running high](#) on the pontiff's schedule.

And to pique Papa Ratz's [well-tuned](#) ear, the cantor who sang then-Bishop Donald Wuerl's 1988 installation in Pittsburgh has been [tapped](#) as director of music for the Mass.

Now a DC resident, Tom Stehle starts auditions next month for a 250-voice choir, to be comprised of music ministers from the Washington archdiocese.

While the program is "still being finalized," smart money says "Out of Darkness" would be conspicuous by its absence.

PHOTO: Tony Fiorini/Catholic University of America(2)

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 10:02 

Reinhard Marx the Spot

Fresh from a private audience earlier this week with his second predecessor, Archbishop-elect Reinhard Marx of Munich and Freising formally touched down in his new charge yesterday in advance of his Saturday installation.

As rain fell on the Marienplatz -- the great square outside Munich's Cathedral of Our Lady -- the long-awaited successor to 79 year-old

Cardinal Frederick Wetter performed the traditional homage to the Mariensaule, the statue of Mary that's stood atop a pillar there since 1638 as a "monument of peace."

Joined by the city's mayor and other top politicians as a large crowd



looked on, the rite was the final "station" of the customary three-stop tour that sees each incoming head of Germany's Catholic heartland whisked to the ancient see's most venerable foundations: the 12th century Benedictine monastery at Scheyern, and Ss. Peter and Paul at Feldmoching, along the city's northern edge, where a church was first built in the 6th century.

At Saturday's installation, Marx becomes the 73rd successor of St Corbinian, the "apostle of Bavaria" who settled at Freising in the year 723, his relics still enshrined in its cathedral.



The Pope surprised most observers with his November appointment of the 54 year-old bishop of Trier to the post for which Fr Joseph Ratzinger was made a bishop and held from 1977-81.

Described as "outspoken" and a "larger-than-life" character who's shown a flair for mixing it up in Germany's political and media circles, the sociologist-by-training -- and longtime head of the episcopate's social justice efforts -- had largely been viewed as in line for the archbishopric of Berlin. After an unusually protracted yearlong vacancy, however, his dispatch instead to Papa Ratz's home diocese places an even more pointed stamp of papal approval on him, one which could well see the sometime biker (above right) riding off in mid-February with the chair of the German bishops' conference in succession to its longtime head, Cardinal Karl Lehmann of Mainz, who cited a "necessary generational shift" at the helm among his reasons for leaving the influential post midway through his fourth six-year term.



With Wetter's 80th birthday just three weeks away and the pontiff's longing for his homeland remaining strong, better still are Marx's odds of donning the red hat of a cardinal at his predecessor's next consistory.

In accord with the longstanding practice of Munich's archbishops, the post's 13th holder has incorporated the traditional Moor's head onto his [coat of arms](#), but leaving Corbinian's famous [pack bear](#) behind in Rome... with the Pope.

PHOTOS: Thomas Klinger(1,3)

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 01:49 

Teachers "Light the Way"



As many of you know, this is [Catholic Schools Week](#) here in the States, and observances are abounding in more places than they aren't.

It's an ever-needed reminder that the daily mission of Catholic education keeps on in our midst thanks to the almost 200,000 teachers, overwhelmingly layfolk, who serve in an untold number of schools and institutes at all levels.

Not for nothing has the Pope's voice on these shores [termed](#) them "the greatest artists" we've got. And whether their venue is sectarian or public, the work of teaching too often exacts a just-as-great level of sacrifice on the part of those who, day after day, "sculpt the best of [them]selves, of who you are and what you know, not in a piece of marble, but in living, breathing human beings, who are the glory of God."

Especially in these days of rising costs, falling enrollments -- and, ergo, even greater sacrifices -- theirs is just another of the many vocations in the life of the church, and its life in the world, for which we don't always give sufficient thanks, encouragement and support.

Along these lines, one nearby diocese's Catholic educators were joined by hundreds of others last night in [a call for the restoration](#) of their union, which its central administration recently announced it would no longer recognize.

Scranton Diocese Association of Catholic Teachers President Michael Milz stood in the flatbed of a red pickup truck and spoke to the throng, many holding candles or signs with slogans including, "Practice what you preach or we won't teach."

Milz recounted the strong support the Catholic Church and the local diocese have shown for unionized labor in the past, holding up a picture of former Bishop Michal Hoban, President Theodore Roosevelt and United Mine Workers

President John Mitchell together on the steps of Holy Savior Church in Wilkes-Barre during the miners' struggle for better wages and working conditions.

"Bishop Hoban was not there for window dressing," Milz said. "It was an acknowledgment that the Church in Scranton had supported the cause of the miners. And the cause for which they were fighting was nothing less than human dignity."

Milz noted Mitchell was not born Catholic but converted after the church backed the union cause, ultimately being buried in the nearby St. Peter's Cathedral cemetery.

"I'm sure the lights on his grave are shining just a little brighter tonight because we are here."

UMW representative Ken Klinkel said about 20 from his union came to show support because "it's the right thing to do." Klinkel called the diocese's rejection of the union "unjust."

He noted there were representatives from the Teamsters, pipefitters, electricians, machinists and Scranton Fire Department unions....

The union first asked the diocese for recognition as sole bargaining agent for teachers under the new system when it was announced in November 2006 but where told such recognition would have to come from the regional boards.

When the boards were formed in October 2007, the union sought recognition from three of them, including the one overseeing Luzerne County schools, but were told to wait until the boards organized and settled other pressing issues. In December, the union asked those three boards for a firm answer by Jan. 10. That answer came through an article in the Jan. 24 edition of the Catholic Light, the diocesan newspaper.

That article said the three boards had each adopted a new "employee relations program" and rejected the union's request to represent teachers. The union has insisted this runs counter to Catholic teachings dating back to 1891 when Pope Leo XIII issued an encyclical called "Rerum Novarum," which supported organized labor.

After his speech, Milz said the rejection was "very troubling" and promised the union will not give up its effort to reverse it.

"They have to change their decision because they can't change the teachings of the church," Milz said.

Among the many students in the large crowd, Joel, Tara and Paul Ignatovich stood on the curb before the rally holding candles and smiling. Tara, a senior at Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre, said their mother is a band instructor at the school, and the musical talent has been passed on. She plays the French horn while her brothers – twins in 10th grade – play trombone and trumpet.

"The church's decision doesn't make sense," Tara said. "We (our teachers) should have the same rights as other teachers."

Behind her, an adult shouted out: "United we bargain, divided we beg."

...more specs:

In the six days since the diocese announced the Scranton Diocese Association of Catholic Teachers will not be

recognized as a collective bargaining unit, teachers have expressed their discontent and have vowed to keep fighting for the union.

"What's at stake here is really the stability of the schools," said Michael Milz, president of the teachers association. "The quality of Catholic education is going to slip."

Instead of recognizing the union, the diocese will implement an employee relations program composed of employee councils and wage and benefit, health care and grievance committees.

In the year since the diocese reorganized its school system, Mr. Milz said teacher benefits have been cut and the workload and workday have increased. And although all school employees received a 3-percent pay increase, it went to insurance costs, he said.

The schools' clerical workers have also seen an increase in their workday. In the summer, instead of working half-days like the employees had in previous years, they will work a full day with no pay increase, Mr. Milz said.

In a statement released Tuesday, the diocese said it was committed to "fair and just treatment of all its employees," and that the employee relations program will fulfill the commitment.

"Implementation of this program is proceeding, and there will be no change by the diocese in this matter," according to the statement. "The provision of affordable Catholic education continues to be the diocesan goal in which all are called to cooperate."

For the record, as many of you already know, your narrator isn't a product of Catholic education -- like this work, I'm a very grateful, very proud "public." But many of my own teachers -- the folks responsible for whatever's good in me -- came from its embrace, and the years have blessed me with knowing so many great servants of the work, particularly those who, amid the difficulties of the inner-city, bring life and hope in the places where they're needed most.

Whether private, public, parochial or whatever else, to all our teachers, no words could ever say enough thanks...

[Danny](#), look out for 'em.

PHOTO: Pete G. Wilcox/ *The Times-Leader*

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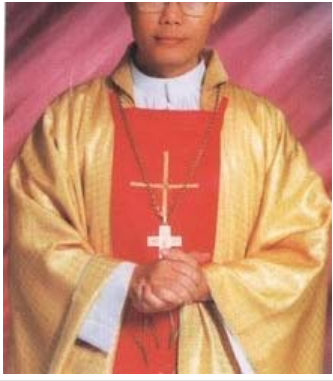
POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 01:22 

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2008

Hanoi Abp.: Jail Me for My Flock



As the [aforementioned](#) [clashes](#) continue in Hanoi -- and fears increase that the



Vietnamese military is preparing a "show of force" against demonstrators at prayer -- the shepherd's put himself [on the line](#):

Hanoi's Catholics continue their sit-in in the gardens of the ex-nunciature, despite the government ultimatum to free the area by 5pm Sunday last.

State newspapers launch a new wave of insults directed at the bishop and faithful. Some Catholics believe this slander campaign is preparing the ground for a show of force.

Since December 23 the former residence of the Vatican nunciature in the capital has been the focus of gatherings for thousands of Catholics who demand the building sequestered by the government in 1959 and set to become a restraint and night club be returned. The local government has already threatened "extreme action" if the group of faithful persists in holding prayer vigils in front of the building and in the garden and if they do not desist in "undermining public order".

Fr. Joseph Nguyen tells *AsiaNews*: "At the moment there are hundreds of religious together with many lay faithful gathered in the garden of the ex nunciature in prayer. But there are also a great many police in uniform and in plain clothes. These mix among the people taking photos and making films with video cameras. I fear an attack at any moment.

The Archbishop, Msgr. Joseph Ngô Quang Kiệt, has told us that praying is a basic human right protected by the law and that he is ready to even go to jail for his flock, if the government makes a show of force".

Meanwhile a fresh press campaign accuses the Catholic faithful of "naivety" and in trusting too much in their leader. Papers also accuse them of aiming to "illegally take possession of the building". Even the police newspaper Capital security, accuses the Hanoi clergy of "lying to their people" and of "forcing them to demonstrate against the government".

Joseph Vu Van Khoat, who has been taking part in the sit-in in the residence garden since last Friday has described the paper's claims as "nonsense". He told *AsiaNews*: "I don't care what they say. You go out and ask anyone on the streets. No one believes them. In fact, those who have written such articles know well that we have gathered here voluntarily to pray peacefully for justice. But it's their job to spread lies".

"Why don't they publish the Archbishops statement in the papers?" wonders Maria Doan Thi Tuyet. In fact on January 28th, he issued a statement explaining that the nunciature residence was never "donated" (as the local government claims). The communiqué also affirms that the gathering of the Catholics is perfectly legal.

Elsewhere in Asia, Pope Benedict this morning named Auxiliary Bishop John Tong of Hong Kong as [coadjutor](#) to the city's bishop, Cardinal Joseph Zen SDB.

Zen, 76, and Tong, 68, were ordained bishops together by the protectorate's first cardinal, the late John-Baptist Wu, in the months before its 1997 handover from British to Chinese oversight. The cardinal has been a key go-between in the Holy See's sensitive path toward rapprochement with the Communist authorities on the Chinese mainland, a role he'll likely step up in his eventual retirement.

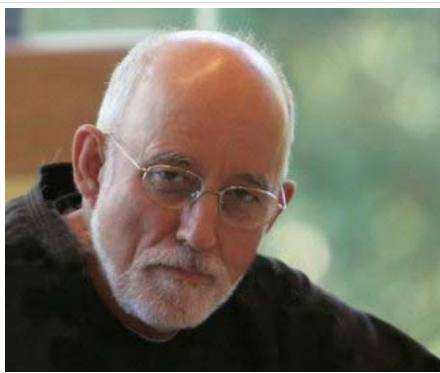
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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 20:53



For BC, A Brown Bishop

Later today, the papal nuncio to Ottawa Archbishop Luigi Ventura will ordain Br John Corriveau, the former global head of the Capuchins, as bishop of Nelson in British Columbia.



The late November appointment of the 66 year-old friar, who served two terms as minister-general of the 11,000-member community, caught quite a few of his confreres by surprise. Twice provincial of the world's smallest Capuchin province and a parish priest in Toronto before a combined two decades at the order's central offices in Rome, Corriveau returned to Canada in late 2006 and -- at his own request -- promptly headed to the heart of the Capuchin charism, serving the homeless at a TO soup kitchen.

"He is truly humble," friends say, likeable, energetic, joyful, and respected... even by those who might not see eye-to-eye with him on everything.

The ordination brings North America's delegation of Capuchin prelates to three -- the others are, of course, Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston and Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver. And in the mold of the community's tenth red-hat in its 400-year history, the bishop-elect said he's sticking with his habit.

In an extended interview ([stream](#)) with [Salt + Light](#) taped shortly after his appointment, Corriveau said that -- besides being "a very comfortable garment" -- the signature brown robe "is my identity."

"I hope it won't be offensive to anyone," the bishop-elect said, "but it's who I am."

"If Pope Benedict had appointed a Capuchin Franciscan as bishop," he added, "then I'd presume he wants me to be present in my

charism." For "formal occasions," however, Corriveau said he'll don the standard purple that comes with the office.

Its see city located about 60 miles north of the Washington-Idaho border, the Nelson diocese spans 48,000 square miles (125,000 square km) of the province's southeast corner, counting a fold of 65,000 served by 36 priests in 31 parishes.

For purposes of convenience, today's ordination will be held at a parish church in Kelowna, an outpost closer by half to Vancouver. The installation will take place at Nelson's Cathedral of Mary Immaculate tomorrow night.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 01:24 

Keeping Vigil with Vietnam

Recent peaceful demonstrations by Vietnamese Catholics seeking the restoration of church property seized by the state have entered unsettling terrain, with participants placed [under police investigation](#)...

Parishioners and priests have been holding daily vigils for over a month near Hanoi's main St. Joseph's Cathedral, demanding the return of a house and a block of church land seized by the communist government in the late 1950s.

Tuesday evening more than 100 faithful again defied authorities, praying and singing hymns on the disputed property, where they have erected a large white cross and placed candles and flowers on the building's steps and walls.

They put up rain shelters and lit fires against the winter chill on the 1.1 hectare (2.7 acre) property, which the Hanoi People's Committee has used as a community centre and for parking motorcycles.

After Friday's rallies, when the protestors placed the cross on the site, police launched an investigation into the alleged crimes of property damage, causing social disorder and obstructing officials, the An Ninh Thu Do daily reported.

Lieutenant-Colonel Nguyen Manh Hung, from the capital's central Hoan Kiem district investigative unit, signed a decision Saturday to launch the criminal investigation and sent it to prosecutors, said the police-run newspaper.

A police officer contacted at the investigative unit only told AFP: "I can confirm the signature on this decision but I do not want to exchange views or comments about this matter with you on the telephone."

The state-controlled Hanoi Moi (New Hanoi) newspaper accused leaders of the Hanoi archdiocese of "abusing the belief and trust of followers to turn them into their instruments for their own goals."

Vietnam's government last week stressed that there is no

private property in the communist nation, only land-use rights granted by the state.

...more from *AsiaNews*:

On January 26th last the Peoples Committee of Hanoi released a statement, threatening "extreme action" if demonstrations and the sit-in – ongoing since December 23rd last – were not called off by 5pm yesterday evening.

Signed by Ngo Thi Thanh Hang, the deputy chairwoman of the People's Committee in Hanoi, the statement "ordered" the Hanoi Archbishop to remove the cross and all statues of the Virgin Mary out of the site, and "to submit a report" to her "before 6pm of Sunday 27".

Meanwhile government media have begun a campaign of misinformation regarding scuffles which took place January 25th, in which some Catholics entered the residence gardens to aid a woman being beaten by police because she had entered the area to bring flowers to the statue of the Virgin present in the garden.

Press accuse Hanoi's Catholics of having forcibly attacked security forces and ask the government to restore order taking severe measures if necessary.

Fr. Joseph Nguyen, who witnessed the January 25th episode, decried the press coverage as a "shameful distortion of the facts". He tells AsiaNews: the protest prayer was held at 11:30, after the mass. During the demonstration a Hmong woman jumped over the Nunciature fence and placed some flowers at the feet of the statue which is in the grounds of the building".

"Security personnel found her there and tried to grab hold of her. Without paying any attention to her explanation they began to beat her and kick her. There were at least 2 thousand Catholics there as witnesses. A commander of the security guards even shouted orders to his men to beat her to death".

"Lawyer Lê Quoc Quan, present at the scene came to the woman's rescue accusing the guards of breaking the law. So then they turned on him dragging him off to an office inside"....

Yesterday in churches throughout the capital Catholics were informed of the ultimatum. Yet despite this they decided to demonstrate once again in front of the Nunciature, with song and prayer.

Today the office of the Archdiocese of Hanoi released a communiqué criticizing state media for not presenting the facts surrounding recent events in a "correct" manner.

State-controlled radio, television and news papers reported that the archdiocese in no way can challenge the ownership of the building because "on 24 November 1961, Fr. Nguyễn Tùng Cương..... donated the property to the government".

The archbishop has responded, setting the record straight; '.. the competent authority is the diocesan bishop with the consent of the finance council, the college of consulters and

those concerned. The diocesan bishop himself also needs their consent to alienate the goods of the diocese". The communiqué moreover clarifies "we know for sure he [Fr. Nguyễn Tùng Cường] never made any donation, as he had no authority to do so". ...

State media accuses Hanoi Catholics of attacking security personnel, disturbing public order, erecting illegally the cross in the garden of the site, and spreading distortions about the government on Internet.

Vietnam's 6 million faithful form Southeast Asia's largest Catholic population after the Philippines; on a 2005 trip there, Rome's then-Missions Czar [ordained](#) 57 new priests in one fell swoop. The energy and commitment of its diaspora in the States has led to the group's christening as the US church's "New Irish."

PHOTO: AFP/Frank Zeller

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 00:42



TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2008

In Grief, Unity

The end of ecumenism's peak week saw the passing of key interfaith partners, both at home and beyond.

First, Pope Benedict led tributes to the Greek Orthodox Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens, who [died](#) yesterday at 69.

Primate of Greece since 1998, Christodoulos made significant strides to improve his branch's relations with the Holy See, becoming the first top Greek hierarch to meet with a Roman pontiff. He received John Paul II on his 2001 visit to Greece, then calling on Benedict for a Roman audience in 2006.

A colorful prelate, wire reports noted that the archbishop was often voted the country's "most popular" public figure, despite his penchant for courting controversy.

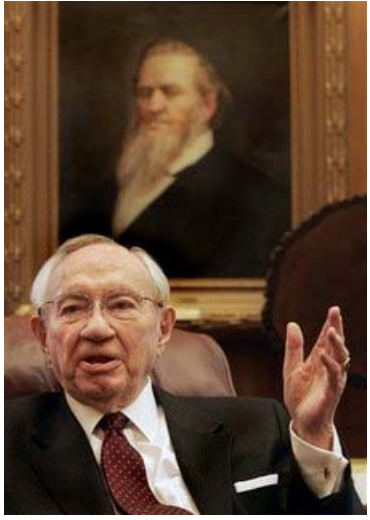
In his [telegram](#) to the interim head of the Greek church, the Pope praised Christodoulos for "open[ing] a new era of cordial co-operation" between the two churches, "leading to increased contacts and improved friendship in the search for closer communion." In an October message to an Orthodox-Catholic dialogue, the pontiff made special mention of his closeness in prayer to the Greek primate, then in treatment for liver cancer at a Miami hospital.

The spiritual leader of 90% of Greece's 11 million residents, Christodoulos will receive a state funeral on Thursday. His successor

will be elected by Greek Orthodoxy's synod of bishops on 7 February.

* * *

In the States, the six million members of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints are mourning the loss of their top leader, President Gordon Hinckley, who [died at 97](#) Sunday night in the Mormon home base of Salt Lake City.



Revered by the world's 13 million LDS as a modern prophet, Hinckley's 13 years as the church's 15th head saw not only a rapid expansion of its numbers (particularly overseas), but an increased outreach beyond the walls of its temples. While Utah's growing Catholic fold has long enjoyed a solid bond with the state's Mormon majority and their leadership, the current ties of friendship

and collaboration between the two are arguably the closest they've ever been.

Under Hinckley, the LDS lent a substantial hand to the restoration of Salt Lake's Cathedral of [the Madeleine](#), and -- often with the deployment of its own volunteers and other aid -- staunchly supported World Youth Day and the other travels of Pope John Paul II, who the president and his faithful admired as a prophet of peace. And along the Tiber, maintaining good relations with the LDS were reportedly a key factor in last year's appointment of a new bishop for Utah's statewide diocese.

A positive-thinking, [media-friendly](#) sort almost viewed by journalists as one of their own, the Mormon chief's death was publicly mourned by neighbor-bishops past and present.

In [comments](#) to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Archbishop George Niederauer of San Francisco said that "it was a challenge to us to be as open and respectful as they were being to us."

Over his 11 years in Utah, the San Fran prelate recalled that the two communities kept a "harmony of vision and purpose" that he expects will continue under Hinckley's likely successor: his first counselor and heir apparent, 80 year-old [Thomas Monson](#). On Niederauer's 2006 departure for San Francisco, the LDS First Presidency acclaimed the newly-named archbishop as its "[faithful friend](#)," "a man of quick wit and good humor, unyielding integrity and immense capacity."

Illness might've kept Hinckley from his commitment to attend Bishop John Wester's installation as Salt Lake's ninth ordinary last year, but the two still formed a friendship of their own. In his statement to the paper, the bishop [called](#) the late prophet "a real man of bridge-building. A real man of God.

"He wasn't exclusive, he wasn't insulated," Wester said. "He showed a genuine interest in me personally, and a genuine interest in our church."

Hinckley's funeral is scheduled for Saturday. While masses of mourners are expected to flock to Salt Lake, attendance at the rites is limited to the 21,000-seat capacity of the LDS' Conference Center.

PHOTOS: Reuters/Yiorgos Karahalidis(1); Deseret Morning News(2)

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 22:51



Cause on the Move

As previously mentioned, Fr Isaac Hecker's [cause](#) for canonization was [opened Sunday](#) at a Manhattan Mass celebrated by the cardinal-archbishop:

Paulist Father Isaac Thomas Hecker was "a real-life saint like you and me," Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York said Jan. 27, describing the founder of the Paulist Fathers.

"He was a person who suffered, who made his way through life bearing crosses and who taught that sanctity can be captured in many different ways," the cardinal added.

He made the comments during a Mass that marked the opening of the cause for Father Hecker's canonization and the 150th anniversary of the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, the parish he established on Columbus Avenue in New York.

More than 1,000 people attended the bilingual Mass, concelebrated by several priests. Before the processional, Cardinal Egan blessed the tomb of Father Hecker, which is inside the church in the northeast corner.

In his homily, Cardinal Egan traced the "troubles and tribulations" that led Father Hecker to found the Paulists as a distinctly "American approach to announcing the Gospel."...

Father John Duffy, president of the Paulist Fathers, said it was Father Hecker's "driving conviction that if the principles of freedom and democracy of this country were combined with the teachings of Jesus Christ as proclaimed by the Catholic Church then America could become a light to the nations."

Cardinal Egan recounted that Father Hecker's vision was incompatible with that of his religious superiors in Rome and he was dismissed from the Redemptorists. Fortunately, said Cardinal Egan, Father Hecker had the support of Pope Pius IX, who encouraged him to establish a congregation of priests dedicated to evangelizing North America.

In 1858, Archbishop John Hughes of New York gave a parish to Father Hecker and his fledgling order, formally known as the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle. It was the first religious congregation of Catholic men established in the

U.S....

Father Duffy said Father Hecker was certain the Holy Spirit would guide the Paulists to meet the church's needs in the modern age.

He said that the present-day Paulist mission consists of "evangelization, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to the unchurched; reconciliation, reaching out to those who find themselves cut off from the community of faith and/or at the margins of society; seeking unity for the body of Christ and seeking dialogue with those of other world religions."

"With Father Hecker looking over our shoulders, I am reminded of what he would say: God is not finished with us yet. The Holy Spirit has so much more to bring forth!" Father Duffy said.

The Paulist founder joins a number of New York causes long underway, among them the 19th century Haitian emigré Pierre Toussaint, the Catholic Worker foundress [Dorothy Day](#), and the city's seventh archbishop, Cardinal [Terence Cooke](#).

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 21:56



Rector's Ark.

Back around the time of November's USCCB plenary, the administrator of the nation's longest-vacant diocese [wrote](#) of being tempted "to picket the meeting with a large sign reading 'LITTLE ROCK NEEDS A BISHOP!'"

It's taken 20 months, but it seems that Msgr Gaston Hebert's prayers have finally been answered -- the seventh bishop of Arkansas' statewide diocese will be named shortly, likely within the week.

Home to 112,000 Catholics, Little Rock "opened" on Bishop Peter Sartain's May 2006 appointment to the diocese of Joliet, which encompasses the western suburbs of Chicago.

In keeping with the template favored by B16 and his [Super-Nuncio](#), the choice is reported to have fallen on a veteran pastor not lacking in administrative experience... a Texan just short of his 50th birthday. Described as a "people person," the presumptive bishop-elect is said to be "neither liberal nor conservative" and, yes, "a man of prayer."

In that light, he's currently on retreat.

With the Arkansas appointment in sight, a quick review of the docket shows eight US dioceses currently without a bishop, and another eleven with ordinaries serving past the retirement age of 75. While five more Stateside diocesans reach the milestone this year, last week's [appointment](#) to Springfield-Cape Girardeau didn't take place until almost 30 months after outgoing Bishop John Leibrecht sent his required "walking papers."

Two more US prelates born in 1930 remain in active ministry:

Bishop Carl Mengeling of Lansing and, of course, Cardinal Adam Maida of Detroit.

As always, stay tuned.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 09:09



Lent: "Spring Training" in the "Generosity of Love"

With eight days to go 'til Ash Wednesday -- on its earliest date since the mid-19th century -- the Pope's message for Lent 2008 was unveiled this morning.

(The photo at right shows the beginning of the day's traditional penitential procession along Rome's Aventine Hill, ending with the customary papal liturgy at S. Sabina....)



Full:

"Christ made Himself poor for you" (2 Cor 8,9)

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. Each year, Lent offers us a providential opportunity to deepen the meaning and value of our Christian lives, and it stimulates us to rediscover the mercy of God so that we, in turn, become more merciful toward our brothers and sisters. In the Lenten period, the Church makes it her duty to propose some specific tasks that accompany the faithful concretely in this process of interior renewal: these are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. For this year's Lenten Message, I wish to spend some time reflecting on the practice of almsgiving, which represents a specific way to assist those in need and, at the same time, an exercise in self-denial to free us from attachment to worldly goods. The force of attraction to material riches and just how categorical our decision must be not to make of them an idol, Jesus confirms in a resolute way: "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Lk 16,13). Almsgiving helps us to overcome this constant temptation, teaching us to respond to our neighbor's needs and to share with others whatever we possess through divine goodness. This is the aim of the special collections in favor of the poor, which are promoted during Lent in many parts of the world. In this way, inward cleansing is accompanied by a gesture of ecclesial communion, mirroring what already took place in the early Church. In his Letters, Saint Paul speaks of this in regard to the collection for the Jerusalem community (cf. 2 Cor 8-9; Rm 15, 25-27).

2. According to the teaching of the Gospel, we are not owners but rather administrators of the goods we possess: these,

then, are not to be considered as our exclusive possession, but means through which the Lord calls each one of us to act as a steward of His providence for our neighbor. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us, material goods bear a social value, according to the principle of their universal destination (cf. n. 2404)

In the Gospel, Jesus explicitly admonishes the one who possesses and uses earthly riches only for self. In the face of the multitudes, who, lacking everything, suffer hunger, the words of Saint John acquire the tone of a ringing rebuke: "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help?" (1 Jn 3,17). In those countries whose population is majority Christian, the call to share is even more urgent, since their responsibility toward the many who suffer poverty and abandonment is even greater. To come to their aid is a duty of justice even prior to being an act of charity.

3. The Gospel highlights a typical feature of Christian almsgiving: it must be hidden: "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing," Jesus asserts, "so that your alms may be done in secret" (Mt 6,3-4). Just a short while before, He said not to boast of one's own good works so as not to risk being deprived of the heavenly reward (cf. Mt 6,1-2). The disciple is to be concerned with God's greater glory. Jesus warns: "In this way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Mt 5,16). Everything, then, must be done for God's glory and not our own. This understanding, dear brothers and sisters, must accompany every gesture of help to our neighbor, avoiding that it becomes a means to make ourselves the center of attention. If, in accomplishing a good deed, we do not have as our goal God's glory and the real well being of our brothers and sisters, looking rather for a return of personal interest or simply of applause, we place ourselves outside of the Gospel vision. In today's world of images, attentive vigilance is required, since this temptation is great. Almsgiving, according to the Gospel, is not mere philanthropy: rather it is a concrete expression of charity, a theological virtue that demands interior conversion to love of God and neighbor, in imitation of Jesus Christ, who, dying on the cross, gave His entire self for us. How could we not thank God for the many people who silently, far from the gaze of the media world, fulfill, with this spirit, generous actions in support of one's neighbor in difficulty? There is little use in giving one's personal goods to others if it leads to a heart puffed up in vainglory: for this reason, the one, who knows that God "sees in secret" and in secret will reward, does not seek human recognition for works of mercy.

4. In inviting us to consider almsgiving with a more profound gaze that transcends the purely material dimension, Scripture teaches us that there is more joy in giving than in receiving (cf. Acts 20,35). When we do things out of love, we express the truth of our being; indeed, we have been created not for ourselves but for God and our brothers and sisters (cf. 2 Cor 5,15). Every time when, for love of God, we share our goods with our neighbor in need, we discover that the fullness of life comes from love and all is returned to us as a blessing in the form of peace, inner satisfaction and joy. Our Father in

heaven rewards our almsgiving with His joy. What is more: Saint Peter includes among the spiritual fruits of almsgiving the forgiveness of sins: "Charity," he writes, "covers a multitude of sins" (1 Pt 4,8). As the Lenten liturgy frequently repeats, God offers to us sinners the possibility of being forgiven. The fact of sharing with the poor what we possess disposes us to receive such a gift. In this moment, my thought turns to those who realize the weight of the evil they have committed and, precisely for this reason, feel far from God, fearful and almost incapable of turning to Him. By drawing close to others through almsgiving, we draw close to God; it can become an instrument for authentic conversion and reconciliation with Him and our brothers.

5. Almsgiving teaches us the generosity of love. Saint Joseph Benedict Cottolengo forthrightly recommends: "Never keep an account of the coins you give, since this is what I always say: if, in giving alms, the left hand is not to know what the right hand is doing, then the right hand, too, should not know what it does itself" (*Detti e pensieri*, Edilibri, n. 201). In this regard, all the more significant is the Gospel story of the widow who, out of her poverty, cast into the Temple treasury "all she had to live on" (Mk 12,44). Her tiny and insignificant coin becomes an eloquent symbol: this widow gives to God not out of her abundance, not so much what she has, but what she is. Her entire self.

We find this moving passage inserted in the description of the days that immediately precede Jesus' passion and death, who, as Saint Paul writes, made Himself poor to enrich us out of His poverty (cf. 2 Cor 8,9); He gave His entire self for us. Lent, also through the practice of almsgiving, inspires us to follow His example. In His school, we can learn to make of our lives a total gift; imitating Him, we are able to make ourselves available, not so much in giving a part of what we possess, but our very selves. Cannot the entire Gospel be summarized perhaps in the one commandment of love? The Lenten practice of almsgiving thus becomes a means to deepen our Christian vocation. In gratuitously offering himself, the Christian bears witness that it is love and not material richness that determines the laws of his existence. Love, then, gives almsgiving its value; it inspires various forms of giving, according to the possibilities and conditions of each person.

6. Dear brothers and sisters, Lent invites us to "train ourselves" spiritually, also through the practice of almsgiving, in order to grow in charity and recognize in the poor Christ Himself. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that the Apostle Peter said to the cripple who was begging alms at the Temple gate: "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk" (Acts 3,6). In giving alms, we offer something material, a sign of the greater gift that we can impart to others through the announcement and witness of Christ, in whose name is found true life. Let this time, then, be marked by a personal and community effort of attachment to Christ in order that we may be witnesses of His love. May Mary, Mother and faithful Servant of the Lord, help believers to enter the "spiritual battle" of Lent, armed with prayer, fasting and the practice of almsgiving, so as to arrive at the celebration of the Easter

Feasts, renewed in spirit. With these wishes, I willingly impart to all my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 30 October 2007

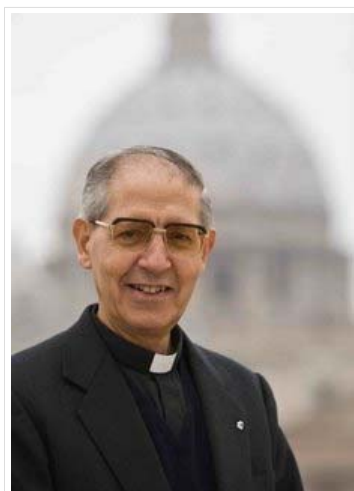
BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

PHOTO: AP/Pier Paolo Cito

-30-

POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 08:15 

Transparency as Spirituality "For the Good of Others"



Even though the [election](#) of Father-General has come and gone, wide interest in the doings of the General Congregation of the Jesuits hasn't ebbed.

While the delegates continue prayer and discussion over the Society's future course and are still preparing to elect Fr Adolfo Nicolás top governing team, the Jesuit Curia has transcribed and translated the new General's Friday statement

at his [encounter](#) with the Rome press corps.

Very interesting read... full:

First of all, I want to thank you for the interest you have shown in the Society of Jesus, in this General Congregation, and the positive view that you are taking of me.

I understand the difficulties you have in finding information. I am an unknown. Spanish journalists look for treasures where there are none; they ask people, hoping for a small bit of drama, if I actually am the third of three brothers – in reality I am the third of four; if I studied in the Balmes Institute – I did but only for one year when I was 10 years old and I was suspended from two or three subjects...

I hope that in the future it will not be so difficult to find information, since we will be able to leave aside this less interesting material and inform you about what is more important: what we do in this present world, this church, this moment in our history.

These days I have found things in the press which are helpful, but also things that are not helpful. Among those that are least helpful, for example, is the search for conflict between Jesuits and the Holy Father, between Jesuits and the Vatican. I do not believe this to be true. The Society of Jesus has

always been in communion with the Holy Father and we are happy to be so. Between spouses there are always difficulties; if any of you who are married say there are not I would not believe you. Only people who love each other can hurt each other. When as part of that relationship there is an effort to work together, difficulties can arise and that is normal. If any of you are married you know of what I speak. The Society of Jesus wants to work with the Holy See and obey the Holy Father. This has always been the common understanding among us. It has always been so, it has not changed nor do I believe it will change.

Some in the press have said that there is a theological distance between myself and Benedict XVI, which some wish to sensationalize. When I was a student I studied the works of Professor Ratzinger; in Tokyo we studied his books because he is a great professor. His books were interesting, they had creativity and inspiration which we all appreciated at that time. I speak of the years 1964-1968, when I was studying in Tokyo, and the works of Ratzinger were common among us. Later, when I came to Rome it was the same. The name of Ratzinger was that of a great teacher. And in Germany – although he did not teach in Frankfurt – all read his books.

Thus the distance is more something theoretical in people's imagination. This is about a continuing conversation, because I think that theology is always a dialogue. What is most important is the search for the truth, the search for the truth inspired in the Word of God, in the life of the Church, in the life of Christians. In this dialogue one might perhaps find differences in some matters, but always part of the mutual search for the truth.

Some journalists say that I am like Arrupe, or like Kolvenbach, half and half, up to fifty percent; it would not be a surprise if someone said I am 10% Elvis Presley. All of this is false. I am not Fr. Arrupe. I love Fr. Arrupe, I admire him, he has influenced me, I had him as my Superior for four years in Japan, and in fact I had known him earlier, in studies, when he talked to us about the atomic bomb in Hiroshima.....but I am not Arrupe. So, who am I? If you ask I will say that I have been created for the reality in which I find myself, I am in process, in fieri, until I become what God wants of me, as with all of us. This applies to the relations with the Holy Father or to what comes out of this General Congregation. All depends on the ability I have to respond or not to respond to that reality and those who are around me and that which the General Congregation asks of me. This is always the open question.

Something of interest to the press has been my relationship with Asia. Here you can see a map which we put together a month ago in Manila, in the region where I have worked in recent years. This is a region that extends from Japan to China to Australia and to Micronesia in the Pacific. The greater part of my life has been lived in Asia, where I arrived when I was 24 years old, after I studied philosophy in Alcalá. And Asia has been a challenge, a real challenge, in many ways.

The first years in Japan were not easy, not so much because of the raw fish – the Japanese diet is good – nor the language

with which there was not much difficulty, nor even writing in Japanese characters. These are external things. The difficulties were more profound. The world was not as I thought of it in Spain, nor was it my way of seeing things, including the faith. Things that I considered commonly understood in Spain were not as they were in Spain. The encounter with a world so completely different put into question matters that I had considered givens. This became a normal experience, but it was difficult.

In this context I had to study theology, and it was most interesting. The task was one of reformulating faith itself not only in the context of Vatican II but in the context of Asia, of Japan, in a context where Buddhism and Shintoism and other religions have had a profound influence.

I believe that Asia has changed me, I hope for the good – the Japanese will have to decide that – it has changed me and has helped me to understand others, to accept what is different and try to understand why it is different, in what lies the difference and how I can learn from that difference.

And then it has taught me to smile at the difficulties, at human imperfection, the human reality. In Spain I was a little intolerant, thinking in terms of order, of commands, because I thought of religion as fidelity to religious practices, and in Japan I learned that true religiosity is more profound, that one must go to the heart of things, to the depths of our humanity, whether we are speaking of God or we are speaking of ourselves and of human life. This is a way of entering into a diverse world. I have learned that I could smile before the difficulties, something that in Spain would have made me very nervous. Human life is this way, we people are this way; imperfections are so natural that it is necessary to accept them from the very beginning.

The Japanese have the reputation of working 24 hours a day; yes, but they do it slowly, slowly; they don't work like Americans, the French or much less like Spaniards, who perhaps work one hour, but very intensely. It is a different kind of rhythm, and this applies not only to work but to the way of understanding people, without imposing on them. It scandalizes them that we are so strict, intolerant, and incapable of accepting diversity; this is a scandal to them.

This was truly a challenge for us who came with the naivete of those born and educated in a country like Spain. Because of this I believe that Asia can enrich the universal church a great deal. Unfortunately we Jesuits are few in Asia and we have written little about this. Japan can contribute a great deal with her culture and her way of confronting problems with depth. If we look at Buddhism we see that it itself has changed a great deal throughout Asia; from India to Sri Lanka the south has one Buddhist tradition, but the north has another, the Mahayana which was open to a variety of situations and arrived in Japan where it found a way of entering deeply so that Zen took on Japanese citizenship. Questions were as deep as possible; all was questioned. We can all learn from this world, maintaining our own calm while facing the other as given to us.

Then there is China. China is a world with such a breadth of cultures and diversity of language, with more than 27 ethnic groups in the south of China where they speak Chinese mixed with Arabic, a world for which it is incredible to imagine a way to provide some kind of administrative unity. Then there are Korea and Vietnam, with their great diversity; the Philippines, which is sometimes called the Italy of Asia, because they have that same sense of humor and of life, and a sense of law that is a little broader than that of other countries. There is a saying that for them traffic laws are not laws but recommendations. His understanding of life I believe is good for the rest of Asia, as a kind of profound Asian humanism.

Indonesia is part of this same tradition. I also should include that Australia, with its Western character, has taken as its mission to be a bridge between Asia and the West. I have found great assistance and cooperation in Australia in the development of programs. Then we have new missions, like Burma, East Timor and Cambodia, new because they were closed; Jesuits had been expelled from Cambodia and from Burma by the military government. In Timor there had been a small group which has changed a great deal since independence. Now we have new vocations, but all is beginning anew. All of these nations bring new challenges and tasks.

About the future there is little I can say. The reason is simple: I have just begun. When in the Congregation meeting they speak of Father General, I always think they mean Fr. Kolvenbach; I do not yet realize that it is me. My current attitude is to listen, listen and obey. As you know, the General Congregation has authority over Fr. General. During the General Congregation I am subject to the Congregation. If the Congregation tells me what needs to be done, what direction to take in the future, I should obey, that is my mission. Therefore what is important to me now is to know what the General Congregation wishes; as well as how to respond to the challenges that the Holy Father has sent us, about which we are reflecting very seriously, so as to give a response that can help the Church, not ourselves. I hope to meet with the Holy Father soon whenever he calls me to have an initial meeting. After all this, when the Congregation Fathers have gone, I will begin to work, to see how to respond and make all of this into reality.

I hope that then we can have a meeting to respond to your questions. Now I have no answers; I can only respond "this depends, that depends...." In the dialogue which we will have I hope to follow the principles of Gandhi, who said that when we speak, it first must be true, because if it is not true it is not interesting; second, it must be charitable, and do good; and third, it must do good for others. Thus, news that, although true, does not do good but creates misunderstandings will not be interesting, and if it does not help people I think it is worthless.

I intend to be transparent. I have learned this in Indonesia, from a couple who were not Christians. In a context where there is fear of evil spirits, this couple took transparency as their spirituality to defend themselves against those threats, so that any evil that came passed on without leaving a trace

and the good that arrived was passed on to others. I think this is a symbol we should keep in mind. Transparency is an attitude of responsibility for the good of others, not for ourselves. It is not so important what people think of me; more important is the good of others.

So, I am happy to have met with you, and I thank you for the positive tone I have found so far. I understand the difficulties you have found but I hope in the future we can work together. Thank you.

Intriguingly, it seems that one part of Father-General's statement ended up redacted by his aides.

Early on in the session, in talking about his school-boy days, CNS [reported Friday](#) that "a Spanish newspaper had been looking for his report card" from the Balmes Institute.

"It's terrible," Nico was quoted as saying. "[T]hat year I failed two subjects -- geography and another that I don't remember."

Suffice it to say, that part doesn't appear above, its absence marked with an ellipsis.

The new General might be extolling the virtues of transparency... but just like any other boss, it seems he'll have to keep his middle-management from being his lead obstacle.

PHOTO: *Don Doll SJ*

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 08:08 

SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 2008

The Southern Preacher



It's been a good week for the [Churchman](#) of the Year.

The February edition of *Texas Monthly* hit the shelves [featuring](#) Dan DiNardo as one of its "35 People Who Will Shape [the] Future" of the Lone Star State, but not before the Cardinal of the South headlined his first high-watt event: Tuesday morning's Mass for Life in Washington's Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The archbishop of Galveston-Houston might've had to sacrifice his

usual preaching venue -- i.e. the center aisle -- for the sake of EWTN's cameras, but (even at 7.30 in the morning) kept his usual disposition -- i.e. shot out of a cannon -- in making his maiden turn before a national, even international, audience.

The homily was unscripted... while the video would be more enjoyable, below is a transcription in full (emphases original):

Sisters and Brothers in Christ, I want to thank Archbishop Wuerl and Msgr Rossi and all the staff of the National Shrine here for their kind invitation to celebrate this liturgy this morning.

Great to see a whole group of you here... but it is 7.30 in the morning, friends. And I give you permission, if you've been vigiling all night, to *doze* through this homily. You are permitted... it is early.

Sisters and Brothers, my reflections begin in unpacking the wondrous readings of God's word that we hear this morning by a packet of information that was sent to all bishops through Cardinal Rigali's office -- the office of Pro-Life Activities for the bishops' conference. And this wonderful packet on the front has a magnificent painting, as it were.

Pictures say more than words, and this is a picture of Elizabeth greeting the Virgin Mary -- a scene we would've recalled last month in the season of Advent.

St Luke -- a great painter in words himself -- opens up his Gospel, his pages of introduction, by presenting to us two visible, and two invisible, persons. The visible persons are Elizabeth and the Virgin Mary -- the conception of John the Baptist, and then the conception of Jesus in the womb of his mother. And in a wonderful, wonderful bringing together of the main figures of this opening part of the Gospel, the Virgin Mary -- having heard that she was to be the mother of the savior, and having given her energetic acceptance of saying "yes," immediately -- without seeking the advice of PR people or without, in any fashion, even starting some independent group -- RUNS to see Elizabeth.

She fulfills what the Angel has said. And when Elizabeth sees her, JB -- John the Baptist -- stirs, and gives a kick, and that brings the Holy Spirit to gush forth from Elizabeth. And in that gushing forth, we see what the energy of acceptance does to others.

The Holy Spirit is active in Elizabeth through John the Baptist. Ah -- but Jesus is active in his mother, in a way beyond our comprehension.

What a pro-life scene, sisters and brothers! Elizabeth cries out "Blessed are you among women," and the Virgin Mary responds with one of the most joyful hymns we have in the New Testament.

I have a friend -- and you'll excuse this, it's typical of Southeast Texas... we're too far South maybe -- who claims that Mary *yodeled* the Magnificat. I don't think that's exegetically correct, but it's an interesting scene to fathom:

the country girl who cries out in joy, certainly over the birth of the Savior, but who cries out in joy over the gift of life.

That should set the scene for us today, friends. "Blessed is she who trusted," in this house of Mary, to begin to look at these readings given to us today. Human beings -- how wonderful human beings are. And, yet, if we look at the prophet Isaiah, Isaiah has just finished scolding the people of Jerusalem, the people of Judea, the people of Israel -- that they are arrogant and look to purely political solutions instead of looking to their Maker and covenant-faithful lover, God.

Oh, you must've picked up the early parts of Isaiah before, occasionally. There you can hear Isaiah telling Israel, "You're arrogant! You must repent! On second thought, don't even bother -- you're so far gone, you couldn't repent if you tried."

Why does Isaiah say that? Because it's up to the covenant-faithfulness of God to transform Israel. Even if Israel's culture is a desert, God can make flowers bloom in the desert.

What a superb reading to put our focus on this day of abstinence and fasting, but a day of joy, friends -- it's a day of abstinence, it's a day when our food and nurture are first of all God's Word and God's gift of the Eucharist. From there, we rally into action. But it's a day of joy -- and if it's not a day of joy for us, then we've mistaken something. And that's what the Gospel is all about to set us in motion today, for the wonderful action that we will do.

By the way, friends, just coming from Houston and seeing -- were some of you here last night? Did you see all those seminarians coming down? I said to myself, "I just want 10% of them for Houston, just give me -- I'm not going to be picky, ten percent!" We need vital, active witnesses for Christ among our young people in a multitude of vocations, a multitude of professions, and we need an apostolic witness among our young people in priesthood and consecrated life. God be praised -- I hope that this pro-life rally will, indeed, internalize in many of you a more distinctive sense of calling.

In any case, back to the Beatitudes. Well, the Gospel today: Chapter Five, the first great sermon of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew organizes Jesus' marvelous speeches, talks sermons and parables into five great blocks of material. I think St. Matthew must've been an architect. The great first sermon of Jesus is the Sermon on the Mount, and the opening words of the Sermon on the Mount are the Beatitudes. Friends, the Lord Jesus must've been wound up -- he talks on for two and a half chapters, this first great sermon -- but the opening of the sermon is not in the imperative. He does not put forth his hand and say "thou shalt not" -- though that will come in the sermon, and there's a good purpose for the "thou shalt not" later on. But the opening of the sermon, for those of you who are in high school, is in the indicative mood, not the imperative mood.

But I don't want to do English class, I just want to say something about the indicative mood -- means the sermon,

the Beatitudes, are first about Jesus. If one is looking at the Beatitudes for any kind of practical advice that will make you ultimately successful in the world by believing in Jesus, then they are the eight worst pieces of advice ever given! However, if our hardness of heart melts, and we let the Lord Jesus begin slowly, in trickling increments, to take us over in his grace, which he does, then in fact these eight words of Jesus -- the eight Beatitudes -- are the astatic entry into joy. And as we let them -- which means let him -- overtake us, then the movement towards preserving and saving and loving life in the midst of sometimes a desert culture here in the United States becomes all joy.

I can see it in the faces of the young people. In fact, in the ten years that I have been a bishop, one of the things that has struck me most is a line from the opening of the Gospel of St Luke that I see continuously manifest in so many of our young people, particularly those who give themselves over to witnessing for life. The line in St Luke is: "Theophilus, I'm writing what I'm writing so that you will know the kind of assurance you have in believing in Jesus." The Greek word for it -- *paresia* -- means conviction, assurance, truth!

It does not mean *arrogance*, by the way. It means *a conviction*.

Sisters and brothers, I see growing -- particularly within our young people, even in the midst sometimes of a desert culture here -- this wondrous *paresia*. I am impressed -- at times, whether in confirmations, or in meetings of young people, I am even overwhelmed. Don't get a big head, but stick with it. Because the *paresia*, the conviction, is not something you constructed, the *paresia* is not something we make -- its the gift that comes as hearts melt and as the Lord Jesus is the centerpiece: the one who is the son of the Virgin Mary, whose energetic acceptance of running from Nazareth to Galilee to greet Elizabeth and sing her Magnificat, her energetic acceptance of which takes her all through the life of her Son among us.

Now, you put those things together, friends -- you've got genuine power. But it's not a power of this world -- that's why Jesus announces the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God. what is it? The beatitudes begin to unpack it, but by the end of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke you no longer ask "what" is the kingdom of God, you ask "WHO" is the kingdom of God? And you know who that is -- it's the Lord Jesus who has given us the Beatitudes.

And the central beatitude, from my point of view, you can make an argument it's the first one -- can't disagree: poverty in spirit -- you can say it's the final one because it's witnessing for Jesus in the world, even to persecution -- can't necessarily disagree with that one either. How about being merciful? Boy, that's a good one.

Why do I put as first purity of heart? It's because in the early church, friends, the early church -- the period of the fathers of the church -- it was considered the central beatitude. What is purity of heart? Everything gets out of the way, and you only see Jesus, and the life you get from that is what makes you

witness -- by word, but by sheer... presence -- to so many facets of your personal, familiar, school and cultural life that is around.

Purity of heart... purity of heart is -- well, it's like Cardinal Rigali mentioned last night in the sermon about the Transfiguration, one of the scenes that's in the dome up there. You know, the Transfiguration is the central point of the public life of Jesus in Matthew, Mark and Luke -- it's dead center in the public life of Jesus. He goes up the mountain -- all of a sudden, he shows his true colors.

In the words of the high school students that I taught in the late 1970s, he blew their minds... He showed them who he really was -- just a glimpse, just a glimpse that was enough to make them... Why did that come through? What leads up to that? Jesus keeps telling the apostles: "We're going to Jerusalem." He keeps telling them: "I'm going obediently as my Father directs." And by the time they get to that mountain -- it's the mountain just like the mountain on the Sermon on the Mount -- once he gets up that mountain, the Father's joy can't be contained anymore and he just lets loose in his Son... and you see the Father shine. What makes the disciples at first run in fear -- because they don't have purity of heart completely yet -- but Jesus, whose purity burns away whatever is less than doing God's will, touches them, and when they look up they only see Jesus.

Sisters and brothers, you're going to rally today -- on behalf of life, on behalf of unborn children, on behalf of born children, on behalf of the elderly, on behalf of everyone who suffers from injustice, for this is indeed a justice issue we are rallying for today. But as you do it, make sure -- in the joy of the Beatitudes -- that you let the Lord Jesus shine through you in purity of heart. The more obedient you become to the Lord Jesus' face, who's looking on you, and letting it change you, the freer you are -- and the freer you are, your witness in culture becomes infectious. You'll become the Beatitudes -- the best virus that could ever be let loose in our culture.

We have some bad viruses around -- let's let loose a good virus, the virus of a purity of heart filled with the Beatitudes that lets God work in us and doesn't make us say, "God, if you're not gonna do it my way then I'm gonna find a better way than you."

That's generally our prayer: "Jesus, hear *me*! Jesus, you know *I* know best! Jesus, follow *me*!" Friends, we've got it all wrong -- even in the pro-life movement! "Jesus, *you* know best. *You're* the Beatitudes. *You're* purity of heart. In my desert heart, let the orchard grow -- that will be freedom, then I will know you and love you."

Sisters and brothers, do you realize if we get more and more people doing that what that does to the culture? It changes the culture towards one that grows in holiness -- that's what we need.

Sisters and brothers, Elizabeth and the Virgin Mary met and the joy that was unleashed of two unseen beings -- John the Baptist and Jesus, both in the wombs of their mothers --

that's power. There is much, much unseen in our own witness today. Let the unseen power of the Lord Jesus through the gift of the Holy Spirit touch you as you rally, make you joyful -- we may be fasting and abstaining today, but no, no bad looks today! Today is a day of joyful sadness or sad joy -- this is a day of remembrance of sadness, but it is joy at the Lord because we have been gathered by Jesus: first for this action of Eucharist, but then to rally, all on behalf of God's human beings -- born and unborn.

May the Lord bless you all, give you strength -- give you *paresia*, as they say -- that with conviction, you may wake the Lord alive in this culture.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 20:42



Summit of the Popes

Father-General, Holy Father... Holy Father, Father General....

Jesuit Curia statement:

Adolfo Nicolás capped an eventful week as the newly elected superior general of the Jesuits with a private audience with His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. The

Saturday audience began with a photo session and then the two sat down for a warm and friendly conversation. The Holy Father was pleased to hear that the general congregation had formed a committee to study his letter to Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, the previous superior general, and then the conversation turned to Japan, where Fr. Nicolás had served for 33 years. The Holy Father encouraged the Jesuit leader to continue with dialogue with culture and evangelization and to ensure a thorough formation of young Jesuits. It was the opportunity for the new General of the Jesuits to reaffirm his personal respect for the Vicar of Christ as well as the esteem of the whole Society of Jesus; it was an occasion also to convey the desire of the Society to serve the Church all over the world.

Then Father Nicolás told Pope Benedict that the Jesuits have a custom that the newly elected superior general should renew his vows before the pope. Father Kolvenbach had done that in writing, so Father Nicolás had written out his vows, which he had in an envelope.

The pope opened the envelope right away and read the vows; then he said, 'This is a very good custom.'

Yesterday's quote of the day came from the man called "Nico" during his address to the Rome press corps.

Citing the many comparisons made since his election between himself and the post-Conciliar General [Pedro Arrupe](#) -- a legend in Jesuit circles -- Nicolás remarked that "no one has yet said I'm 10 percent Elvis Presley, although one could say this and it wouldn't surprise me."

Well, guess what some Jesuits have since taken to calling their new boss....

In other Black Conclave redux, the provincial of Calcutta has compared the new FG to a [Jesuit John XXIII](#).

PHOTOS: *L'Osservatore Romano*

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 13:14



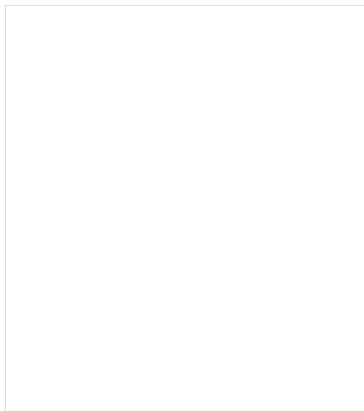
Ut Unum Sint

Last night, to mark the feast of the Conversion of St Paul and the end of the 100th annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the Pope [presided](#) at an ecumenical Vespers in the Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls:

[T]he celebration was made especially significant this year by the customary

participation, at the basilica, of representatives from other Christian confessions, beginning with the secretary general of the World Council of Churches, Samuel Kobia. The presence of Reverend Kobia, as the pope recalled, also served to celebrate the 40 year span in which "the Christian communities of the entire world have received, for this week, meditations and prayers prepared jointly by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity".

Today's feast of the conversion of Saint Paul, in the words of Benedict XVI, should prompt reflection on the fact that the apostle himself, convinced that he had been converted by divine intervention and "always motivated by the profound conviction that all of his strength came from the grace of God working within him", exhorted Christians to pray constantly. "The words of the Apostle on the relationship between human effort and divine grace resound with a meaning all their own. At the conclusion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we are all the more aware of how the work to restore unity, although it requires all of our energy and efforts, is still infinitely beyond our capacity. Unity with God and with our brothers and sisters is a gift that comes from Above". "It is not in our power to decide when or how this unity will be fully realised. Only God can do this!"



As the pope recalled in his address for the general audience last Wednesday, Paul's appeal to the Christians of Thessalonica, "pray without ceasing", gives "strength and consistency" to the exhortations contained in this same epistle, to "admonish the idle, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all. See that no one returns evil for evil; rather, always seek what is good for each other and for all. Rejoice always . . . In all circumstances give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).

Prayer concerns the ecumenical movement in a special way. "Our desire for unity must not be limited to sporadic occasions, but must become an integral part of our entire prayer life. Men and women formed in the Word of God and in prayer have been the authors of reconciliation and unity in every phase of history. It is the journey of prayer that has cleared the way for the ecumenical movement, as we know it today". In this regard, the pope recalled that "one hundred years ago, Fr Paul Wattson, who at the time was an Episcopal minister, came up with the idea for an octave of prayer for unity, which was celebrated for the first time in Graymoor (New York) from January 18 to 25, 1908". "During the 1930's, the octave of prayer went through important adaptations, above all through the initiative of Abbé Paul Couturier of Lyons, himself a great promoter of spiritual ecumenism. His appeal to 'pray for the unity of the Church as Christ wishes and according to the means that He wishes' allowed Christians from all traditions to unite in prayer for unity. Let us thank God for the great movement of prayer which, for one hundred years, has accompanied and sustained believers in Christ in their search for unity. The ship of ecumenism", he concluded, "could never have left the port if it had not been moved by this great tide of prayer and blown by the wind of the Holy Spirit".

...and earlier this week, with Paul and unity as his focus, a pan-Christian group of leaders turned out for [the General Audience](#):

The world is suffering "from the absence of God, from the inaccessibility of God; it desires to know the face of God", but how can Christians respond to this need if they are divided, "if one teaches against another, if we are pitted against one another"? This is the question that Benedict XVI posed to the six thousand persons present in the Paul VI audience hall for today's general audience, which took place during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The "necessity" of prayer for unity was precisely at the centre of the pope's reflection, which also briefly mentioned the progress of ecumenical efforts over the past 100 years. The pope recalled that in 1908, an American Anglican, Paul Watson, who later became a Catholic, launched an Octave of prayer for unity, which later became the present week-long celebration. It was a "fertile intuition", a "prophetic idea", which in 1916 Benedict XV decided to extend to the entire Catholic Church. It then spread to the entire Christian world. Today, the pope reminded his listeners to remember and acknowledge "the originator of this initiative, together with those who have turned it into a common patrimony for all Christians". The ecumenical journey has found one of its most significant realisations in this Week.

Vatican II called even more urgently for unity, and after its conclusion the search for full communion continued. The pope said that the decree "Unitatis Redintegratio" emphasised "forcefully the role and importance of prayer, which lies at the very heart of the ecumenical journey". "Thanks to this spiritual ecumenism, through holiness of life, the conversion of the heart, and prayer", "for 100 years this prayer has truly accompanied the stages of a path that, especially after the Council, has confronted the theological and historical problems that have arisen over the centuries". The "friendly relations" established in this period have allowed "the improvement of mutual understanding" and "clearer perception of the problems that divide us". But above all, Christians have prayed together to obtain "the grace" of full unity.

"It is evident", the pope added, "that it is not through our strategies that we can obtain unity among Christians, but we can produce our own willingness, which opens the way to Christ: in conversion, we can find the gift of unity". Let us accept, therefore, Benedict XVI continued, "the invitation to pray without growing weary that the apostle Paul addressed to the first Christians of Thessalonica, a community that he himself had founded". Precisely because he had learned about "dissensions among [them]", he exhorted them to "be patient with all. See that no one returns evil for evil; rather, always seek what is good . . . Rejoice always . . . In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God."

PHOTOS: AP/Gregorio Borgia (1); *L'Osservatore Romano* (2); Reuters/Tony Gentile (3)

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 12:42 

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 2008

Father-General Meets the Press



Earlier today, the newly-elected Jesuit supremo held an availability for members of the media. Yet while Fr Adolfo Nicolás sought to shirk his office's traditional moniker in his [inaugural message](#) last week, one could be forgiven for mistaking the session for a papal event -- "black" papal, sure, but still....

The Rome press corps [was addressed](#) by the 30th Father-General, but the Jesuit Curia's invitation to the "brief encounter" emphasized that Nico would "not entertain questions."

All's not lost, however -- at least, in the long-term; a full-blown press conference (with questions) is foreseen for the end of the General Congregation. The "White" Pope only does those whilst in-flight.

The work of the GC is now taking place in small groups, with the 225 delegates divided into discussion circles on specific topics ranging from obedience to the Jesuit mission to collaboration with the laity. And later today, according to the plans, final preparations will be made for the election of Nicolas' formal "inner circle" -- the four assistants *ad providentiam* who'll comprise his General Council.

From the sidelines, the newly-emeritus FG Peter-Hans Kolvenbach might be getting to enjoy the first days of his retirement, with the promise of a post-GC return to his beloved Lebanon. But even so, the one fan he's vowed to obey might just have more in store for him.

In his "Letter from Rome" for tomorrow's edition of *The Tablet*, Robert Mickens notes the considerable buzz that B16 is leaning toward conferring the red hat on Kolvenbach at a future consistory. A priest of the Armenian rite, the former General turns 80 in November.

The rumor's floated around Rome in cycles for some time, and it's no secret that Papa Ratz is quite fond of the first successor of St Ignatius to have left office on his own volition -- a prospect that, so it's said, couldn't get a positive hearing in the Apostolic Palace until Kolvenbach's longtime ally took up residence there.

Personal ties aside, the prospect of PHK with the magic letters "SER" placed before his name would keep him in the spotlight much more than if they weren't... a scenario which, given the latter's legacy of smooth relations between the Society and the Holy See, might be just what the Pope would want.

There is precedent for such a move. Well, sort of.

In 1991, John Paul II made a cardinal of Fr Paolo Dezza, who the late pontiff named as his delegate to oversee the Society a decade earlier. The 1981 "intervention" that saw the onetime confessor of Paul VI act as *de facto* General -- and led a Spanish novitiate to name its pitbull for him as a result -- ended two years later, when GC33 elected the diplomatic Dutchman to the post.

PHOTO: *Jesuit Media Office*

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 09:04 

And Speaking of Father-Generals...





It's a homecoming today in the nation's capital, as Archbishop Timothy Broglio is installed as chaplain-in-chief of the US Armed Services.

Until his November [appointment](#) as archbishop for the Military Services, the Cleveland-born Broglio, 56, served as papal nuncio in the Dominican Republic and apostolic delegate for Puerto Rico. A former chief of staff to Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Broglio was the first-ever US cleric to serve as top aide to a Secretary of State. And, in token of the increasing prominence of the military post -- last occupied by Archbishop Edwin O'Brien of Baltimore -- he's also its first holder with no ministerial background in the services.

From World War II until its 1985 spinoff and move to Washington, the "military ordinariate of the United States" was bonded *ex officio* to the archbishopric of New York, with its day-to-day governance delegated to a specially-appointed auxiliary bishop.

While not a few Stateside folks dreamed of a "trade" to the Pope's twin houses in Santo Domingo and San Juan, those hopes were dashed yesterday as Benedict XVI named Archbishop Josef Wesolowski to succeed Broglio. Until now, the Krakow native has been the Vatican's man in Central Asia's "Stan" countries -- Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgystan. (Or, if you prefer, "nuncio to Borat.")

The 2pm (1900UTC) installation Mass in DC's Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception will be shown and [streamed](#) by EWTN.

Lacking a cathedral to call its own, the military archdiocese -- which, with 1,000 chaplains, serves the 1.4 million Catholics of the forces spread across the globe -- uses the Shrine for its major celebrations. As the lone non-metropolitan jurisdiction of the nation's 34 archdioceses, no *pallium* comes with the post.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 08:14 

Italy in Chaos

After a series of perceived [death blows](#) from Italy's ecclesiastical establishment, crisis talks begin in Rome today following yesterday's [fall](#) of Romano Prodi's center-left coalition government:

Right-wing newspapers gloated over the demise of 68-year-old Prodi, the arch-rival of conservative flagbearer Silvio Berlusconi, both of them now former prime ministers twice over.

"The dream has come true," headlined *Il Libero* over a cartoon showing Prodi hanged by the Senate, where the prime minister lost a vote of confidence on Thursday, precipitating

his resignation.

Prodi "leaves the country in tatters," the paper wrote.

The left-leaning press was more sympathetic, Ezio Mauro writing in the daily *La Repubblica* that the former economic professor's exit was a "strange and unjust destiny for a politician who has twice defeated Berlusconi (and) twice cleaned up the public accounts."

Berlusconi, now 71, and right-wing National Alliance leader Gianfranco Fini immediately called for fresh elections on news of the resignation.

The flamboyant Berlusconi, Italy's richest man, clearly wants to take advantage of the left's steep drop in popularity as Prodi, struggling to keep his squabbling coalition together, was unable to address many pocketbook issues.

But observers say [Italian President Giorgio] Napolitano will resist calls for fresh polls.

"Both left and right know that this system creates instability," political scientist Franco Pavoncello told AFP.

He said he "wouldn't be surprised" if Napolitano, a former communist, asked Mario Monti, a former EU commissioner for competition, or Bank of Italy chief Mario Draghi to head an interim team of technocrats.

Prodi, crippled by the defection early this week of the centrist Catholic UDEUR party, had decided to go ahead with the Senate vote despite appeals from top leaders, including Napolitano, to resign instead.

Despite a last-minute change of heart by one of UDEUR's three senators and the support of five of Italy's unelected senators for life including Nobel medicine laureate 98-year-old Rita Levi-Montalcini, Prodi fell five votes short in the upper house.

Though relatively brief by normal standards, Prodi's 20-month-long occupancy of Palazzo Chigi falls well above average; Italians have seen the rise and fall of 61 governments in the postwar period.

PHOTO: Reuters/Tony Gentile

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 06:51 

THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 2008

Fides, Ratio... et Cielini



As previously noted, the head of *Comunione e Liberazione* Fr Julian Carrón made his first [major US appearance](#) at a Sunday conference at NYU.

Quoting de Tocqueville,



Giussani and (CL über-disciple) Papa Ratz, the [fulltext](#) of Carrón's remarks have been released by the movement.

With the topic "Can Faith Broaden Reason?" the conference's discussion took

its launch-pad from a posthumously-released work of the *cielini* founder -- a friend and confidant of three Popes -- titled *Is It Possible to Live This Way?*

Snips:

First I would like to put Giussani's book into the context of the present situation. This situation can be characterised by two things.

First of all, the reduction of religion to feeling and ethics. For a majority of people religion has nothing to do with reality. Religion has to do with a nebulous feeling in relationship with the divine. Such a feeling is difficult to identify, because what I feel in front of the Mystery is not easy to grasp and one person might have it and another might not. Therefore for a majority of people religion has nothing to do with the knowledge of reality. For them religion is not related with reason.

This can explain the second characteristic of the present situation, which is confusion. The modern world had surrendered regarding the possibility of knowing. This can seem strange at a time when science prevails. But this negative attitude with regard to knowledge and a high emphasis of science are not contradictory. Recently the Pope spoke about the resignation of western civilisation before reality.

"Our faith opposes decisively the resignation that considers man incapable of truth, as if this would be too much for him. This resignation before the truth is, in my opinion, the nucleus of the Western crisis. If there is no truth, man is incapable of distinguishing between good and evil".

What this resignation means has been clarified last Thursday by the same Benedict XVI in his talk to the Sapienza University of Rome:

"The danger facing the Western world ... is that man today, precisely because of the immensity of his knowledge and power, surrenders before the question of truth. This means that, in the end, reason gives way before the pressure of other interests and the lure of efficiency, and is forced to recognise this as the ultimate criterion".

The result is confusion.

In this state of affairs religion is thrown outside of reality. It is considered a phenomenon nearer to a virtual world than to the real one. Consequently for many people faith is like believing in ghosts.

When Giussani wrote this book, the situation was not yet as clear as it is for us now, but his genius could recognise the signs of the times, and now we are living through these times. For this reason this book can give us an amazing insight into an understanding of the context in which we are called to live our Christian faith and how to face it....

Religion, reality and reason are inseparable. These things illuminate each other reciprocally. In his lecture at the University of Regensburg, Pope Benedict XVI challenged everyone to a "broadening of our concept of reason and its application. "What does it mean to broaden reason? It means nothing other than living religion, that is, recognizing the Mystery in reality. What is religion? It is the apex of reason. Therefore, reason does not fulfill its true nature as reason if it does not open itself to religion; and religion remains a mere sentiment unless it coincides with our rational nature. John Paul II said so in an interview quoted in *Fides et Ratio*:

"When the why of things is investigated with integrity, seeking the totality, in the search for the ultimate and most complete answer, then human reason touches its apex and opens to religion. In effect, religiosity represents the most elevated expression of the human person, because it is the culmination of his rational nature."

This is what prevents us from reducing reason and religion to any of the number of reductions in use among us, in our culture, that influence us as well.

Christian faith has to do with reality. The claims of Christian faith is that the divine, the Mystery became man. In Jesus of Nazareth "the mystery which was kept secret for long ages – says Saint Paul – ... is now disclosed and ... is made known to all nations" (Rm 16: 25). Because of this reason has to do with a real person whom we can know. This is the conviction that all Christians recognise in the words of the Apostle John:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life – the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us – that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete" (1 John 1: 4)....

How can we know Christ? Among the two methods used by reason we had hinted at, the only one that applies is faith. We do not know Christ directly, neither by evidence, nor by analysis of our experience. The only method which allows us to know Christ is through a witness that makes him present now. "Christ's relevance [contemporaneity] for people of all times is shown forth in his body, which is the Church." It is Christ's contemporaneity, his presence to us today, that allows me to verify the truth of the Christian claim. This is the only hypothesis faithful to the nature of the Christian

event as we can recognise it in history.

If we look at the first time in history, in the chronological sense, when was the problem of Christ first posed?

"The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, 'Look, here is the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon." (John 1: 36-38)

For the first two that followed Jesus, John and Andrew, what is the first characteristic of the faith that they had in Jesus? The first characteristic is a fact! It is a fact that had the characteristic of an encounter. "The encounter with an objective event, absolutely independent of the person who has the encounter". The first characteristic of the Christian faith is that it starts off from a fact, a fact that has the form of an encounter.

What is the second characteristic? The second characteristic is the exceptional nature of the fact. When can we call something exceptional? Something is exceptional when it corresponds to the deepest needs of our heart. To find an exceptional man means to find a man who brings about a correspondence with what you are longing for, with the need for justice, truth, happiness, love. Something truly exceptional is something divine: it has something divine in it. If not, it doesn't really bring us to God. "Exceptional" is synonymous with the word "divine".

Andrei Tarkovsky, the famous Russian film-maker, made one of his characters in the movie "Andrei Rublev" say: "You know very well, you can't manage one thing, you are tired, you are exhausted, and at a moment you meet among the people the gaze of somebody, somebody's gaze, and it is as if you approach the hidden divine, and everything becomes easier".

The third characteristic is wonder. His first two followers, John and Andrew, became friends of Jesus and started to see Jesus' miracles. Let us imagine people who are witnesses of these things for days, weeks, months and years. Little by little they became more and more aware of the uniqueness of this man and they cannot avoid asking the question: "Who is He?"

This is the fourth factor. Christian faith begins precisely with this question: "Who is He?"

Last point: Responsibility before the fact. A fact which challenges reason and freedom.

To summarize: an encounter – strikes me in its exceptionality – solicits wonder – provokes the question "who is He?" – and challenges my reason and freedom.

I said that faith is a form of knowledge that is beyond the

limits of reason. Why is it beyond the limits of reason?

Because it grasps something that reason cannot grasp: reason cannot perceive "the presence of Jesus among us", "Christ is here now", -- reason cannot grasp this in the manner in which faith is capable of. Reason cannot *not* admit that He is here.

Why? Because there is a factor here within that decides about this companionship, certain results of this companionship, certain resonances in this companionship, a factor so surprising that if I don't affirm something other, I don't give reason to the experience, because reason is to affirm experiential reality according to all the factors that make it up, all the factors. For example, we who fill this room right now come from completely different places and backgrounds; we have quite different temperaments and sensitivities. The fact that we are here now cannot be adequately accounted for if we overlooked the fact that we were all moved by someone who made himself present in our lives and who is present among us now.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 21:23



Volunteer Vann Heads Northwest

Last year, *Crisis* magazine's survey of Stateside Catholicism [ranked](#) the diocese of Knoxville as the nation's healthiest local church.

While some saw fit to fault the study's methodology at the time, the editors were clearly on to something.

Within months, the head of East Tennessee's burgeoning fold of 50,000, Bishop [Joseph Kurtz](#), was [sent](#) to breathe new life into



the archdiocese of Louisville, the mother see of the American frontier. And now, one of the young diocese's founding clergy -- Kurtz's closest collaborator there -- has been tapped to take a diocese of his own.

This morning, the Pope named Fr James Vann Johnston, Knoxville's chancellor and moderator of the curia, as bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. Johnston, 48, succeeds Bishop [John Leibold](#), who's led the Missouri diocese of 63,000 since 1984. Leibold submitted his mandatory resignation on his 75th birthday in August 2005.

Known universally as "Father Vann" -- his paternal grandmother's maiden name -- the bishop-elect is a Knoxville native and alum of the University of Tennessee there, where he studied electrical engineering. Three years after graduation, having taken an engineering job in Texas, he returned home to his close-knit family with an eye toward studying for the priesthood. After formation at St Meinrad, he was ordained for Knoxville in 1990 -- the second priest for the newborn diocese, which had been erected two years earlier.

Following a series of parish assignments and a JCL from Catholic University, founding Knoxville Bishop Anthony O'Connell named Johnston his chancellor in 1996, with Kurtz adding the responsibility of running the diocesan apparatus five years later, all while the young curialist held parish assignments. Last year, shortly before Kurtz's departure for Louisville, he named Johnston to his first pastorate, located in a Knoxville suburb.

At a press conference earlier today alongside his now-predecessor, while the bishop-elect "pledge[d] to serve" Southern Missouri's already-churched "in generosity and charity," he also promised to "seek out those who have fallen away from the practice of their Catholic faith, reach out to the unchurched, and seek to meet brothers and sisters of other faith communities and churches on areas of common belief and shared concerns.

"I am eager to learn more about the Church in Southern Missouri, my new home," he said, "and to become a part of God's family here."

Johnston might've been observed looking unusually "somber" at last weekend's local March for Life, but Kurtz rejoiced at the elevation of his longtime lieutenant.

The bishop-elect "is a priest of outstanding integrity and goodness," the former Knoxville prelate said. "I have come to know directly of his gifts, and with confidence I pray that our Blessed Lord will continue to guide and direct him for many fruitful years of service as a bishop."

Friends of Johnston's speak highly of his qualities in both spirit and intellect. A "reasoned and fair-minded" decision-maker who "thinks things through" before moving forward, he's said to be consistently "calm, respectful... and clear," but not without "warm blood in his veins."

One fan notes that he's got "a good sense of humor but you have to get to know him a little bit to see it." As the *ad intra* goes, Johnston is described as "100% orthodox," his sacred tastes leaning toward the traditional, including a special soft spot for polyphony.

A veteran hiker and lifelong nature buff, the onetime Eagle Scout made the news in 2005 when, on an expedition, he and two friends [helped rescue](#) a family who came perilously close to being taken down a steep waterfall at Montana's Glacier National Park. For their courage, the three -- all clerics -- received the Department of the Interior's Citizen Award for Bravery at a DC ceremony.

Johnston's ordination and installation in Springfield will take place on 31 March, the deferred observance of Annunciation Day. Knoxville might remain vacant, but the appointment train is understood to be continuing its arc through the South over the coming weeks.

PHOTO: *Diocese of Knoxville*

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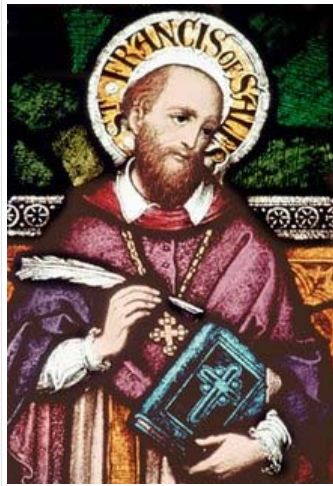
POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 20:36 

The Spirit of Media: All Things Through Ethics... Nothing Through Ideology

The headline refers to one of the more famous [exhortations](#) of St Francis de Sales (...scroll to the 22nd).

On this feast of the [patron of writers](#), journalists... and [Columbus, Ohio](#) (Go Buckeyes), the Vatican traditionally reveals the Pope's message for the church's annual World Day of Communications.

Though the observance doesn't take place until early May, this year was no exception.



Fulltext:

The Media: At the Crossroads between Self-Promotion and Service. Searching for the Truth in order to Share it with Others

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. The theme of this year's World Communications Day – "The Media: At the Crossroads between Self-Promotion and Service. Searching for the Truth in order to Share it with Others" – sheds light on the important role of the media in the life of individuals and society. Truly, there is no area of human experience, especially given the vast phenomenon of globalization, in which the media have not become an integral part of interpersonal relations and of social, economic, political and religious development. As I said in my Message for this year's World Day of Peace (1 January 2008): "The social communications media, in particular, because of their educational potential, have a special responsibility for promoting respect for the family, making clear its expectations and rights, and presenting all its beauty" (No. 5).

2. In view of their meteoric technological evolution, the media have acquired extraordinary potential, while raising new and hitherto unimaginable questions and problems. There is no denying the contribution they can make to the diffusion of news, to knowledge of facts and to the dissemination of information: they have played a decisive part, for example, in the spread of literacy and in socialization, as well as the development of democracy and dialogue among peoples. Without their contribution it would truly be difficult to foster and strengthen understanding between nations, to breathe life into peace dialogues around the globe, to guarantee the primary good of access to information, while at the same time ensuring the free circulation of ideas, especially those promoting the ideals of solidarity and social justice. Indeed, the media, taken overall, are not only vehicles for spreading ideas: they can and should also be instruments at the service

of a world of greater justice and solidarity. Unfortunately, though, they risk being transformed into systems aimed at subjecting humanity to agendas dictated by the dominant interests of the day. This is what happens when communication is used for ideological purposes or for the aggressive advertising of consumer products. While claiming to represent reality, it can tend to legitimize or impose distorted models of personal, family or social life. Moreover, in order to attract listeners and increase the size of audiences, it does not hesitate at times to have recourse to vulgarity and violence, and to overstep the mark. The media can also present and support models of development which serve to increase rather than reduce the technological divide between rich and poor countries.

3. Humanity today is at a crossroads. One could properly apply to the media what I wrote in the Encyclical *Spe Salvi* concerning the ambiguity of progress, which offers new possibilities for good, but at the same time opens up appalling possibilities for evil that formerly did not exist (cf. No. 22). We must ask, therefore, whether it is wise to allow the instruments of social communication to be exploited for indiscriminate "self-promotion" or to end up in the hands of those who use them to manipulate consciences. Should it not be a priority to ensure that they remain at the service of the person and of the common good, and that they foster "man's ethical formation ... man's inner growth" (ibid.)? Their extraordinary impact on the lives of individuals and on society is widely acknowledged, yet today it is necessary to stress the radical shift, one might even say the complete change of role, that they are currently undergoing. Today, communication seems increasingly to claim not simply to represent reality, but to determine it, owing to the power and the force of suggestion that it possesses. It is clear, for example, that in certain situations the media are used not for the proper purpose of disseminating information, but to "create" events. This dangerous change in function has been noted with concern by many Church leaders. Precisely because we are dealing with realities that have a profound effect on all those dimensions of human life (moral, intellectual, religious, relational, affective, cultural) in which the good of the person is at stake, we must stress that not everything that is technically possible is also ethically permissible. Hence, the impact of the communications media on modern life raises unavoidable questions, which require choices and solutions that can no longer be deferred.

4. The role that the means of social communication have acquired in society must now be considered an integral part of the "anthropological" question that is emerging as the key challenge of the third millennium. Just as we see happening in areas such as human life, marriage and the family, and in the great contemporary issues of peace, justice and protection of creation, so too in the sector of social communications there are essential dimensions of the human person and the truth concerning the human person coming into play. When communication loses its ethical underpinning and eludes society's control, it ends up no longer taking into account the centrality and inviolable dignity of the human person. As a result it risks exercising a negative influence on people's consciences and choices and definitively conditioning their

freedom and their very lives. For this reason it is essential that social communications should assiduously defend the person and fully respect human dignity. Many people now think there is a need, in this sphere, for "info-ethics", just as we have bioethics in the field of medicine and in scientific research linked to life.

5. The media must avoid becoming spokesmen for economic materialism and ethical relativism, true scourges of our time. Instead, they can and must contribute to making known the truth about humanity, and defending it against those who tend to deny or destroy it. One might even say that seeking and presenting the truth about humanity constitutes the highest vocation of social communication. Utilizing for this purpose the many refined and engaging techniques that the media have at their disposal is an exciting task, entrusted in the first place to managers and operators in the sector. Yet it is a task which to some degree concerns us all, because we are all consumers and operators of social communications in this era of globalization. The new media – telecommunications and internet in particular – are changing the very face of communication; perhaps this is a valuable opportunity to reshape it, to make more visible, as my venerable predecessor Pope John Paul II said, the essential and indispensable elements of the truth about the human person (cf. Apostolic Letter *The Rapid Development*, 10).

6. Man thirsts for truth, he seeks truth; this fact is illustrated by the attention and the success achieved by so many publications, programmes or quality fiction in which the truth, beauty and greatness of the person, including the religious dimension of the person, are acknowledged and favourably presented. Jesus said: "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free" (Jn 8:32). The truth which makes us free is Christ, because only he can respond fully to the thirst for life and love that is present in the human heart. Those who have encountered him and have enthusiastically welcomed his message experience the irrepressible desire to share and communicate this truth. As Saint John writes, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life ... we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete" (1 Jn 1:1-3).

Let us ask the Holy Spirit to raise up courageous communicators and authentic witnesses to the truth, faithful to Christ's mandate and enthusiastic for the message of the faith, communicators who will "interpret modern cultural needs, committing themselves to approaching the communications age not as a time of alienation and confusion, but as a valuable time for the quest for the truth and for developing communion between persons and peoples" (John Paul II, Address to the Conference for those working in Communications and Culture, 9 November 2002).

With these wishes, I cordially impart my Blessing to all.

From the Vatican, 24 January 2008, Feast of Saint Francis de

Sales.

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 17:14 

A Prayer for Indy



Confirming reports that've circulated in recent days, Archbishop Daniel Buechlein OSB of Indianapolis [announced](#) yesterday that he had been diagnosed with cancer:

During the week of Jan. 13, I underwent a series of medical tests because I had been experiencing a lot of fatigue and had noticed a swelling under my right arm.

On Jan. 18, I received a medical report that I have Hodgkin's

lymphoma, a cancer affecting the lymph nodes.

Hodgkin's lymphoma is also commonly known as Hodgkin's disease.

I am meeting this week with my oncologist to determine where I go from here concerning a course of treatment.

I already know that chemotherapy is required and I will be undergoing a complete body CT scan to determine more precisely the extent of the problem. Chemotherapy has proven to be a highly effective method for treating this disease.

I've been told that the side effects of the chemotherapy will be further fatigue. I regret the interruption this may cause in my normal obligations.

A former rector of St Meinrad -- and long one of the US bishops' key voices in the areas of catechesis, formation and interreligious dialogue -- Buechlein was named bishop of Memphis in 1987 and archbishop of Indy five years later. He turns 70 in late April.

Just as the Benedictine prelate [takes prayer requests](#) online, he's asked the same of others as he faces the road ahead.

PHOTO: Brandon A. Evans/*The Criterion*

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 00:43 

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2008

"She Became Their Mother"

Its priests and prelates might tend to dominate the news of the day, but experience shows that the church's most important and lasting story -- the chronicle of its holiness -- usually finds the headlines turned on their head.

Far too often, all the fleeting barrels of ink and reams of copy shed too little light on the reality that, more than any other force within its walls, American Catholicism literally owes its life to the energy, devotion and selfless service -- in other words, the constant "yes" -- of the generations of women religious who've built and sustained the church, not through the flashy ease of brick-laying, but where it counts most: in the unsung search for and care of its living stones.



To this day, the sisters might still outnumber the clergy by almost 2 to 1. But more often than not, the account of their works remains known but to God and the many whose lives they've each touched. What's more, there's arguably no apostolate of the church in this country -- be it chancery or classroom, health care or homeless shelter, parish or prison -- that wouldn't collapse in seconds were it not for the gifts of their presence and commitment.

In sum, they're our heart and soul, brains and backbone, the first exemplars of our compassion, competence, integrity and credibility -- and I'm sure my mother is far from alone in being named for an especially beloved and radiant one (a Sister of Mercy who's still well, kicking and on top of everything... at the youthful age of 97).

Far too often, for all they do, we have failed to appreciate our silent heroines as they deserve... even as time's shown that their knack for making the impossible happen in this life is merely the beginning.

Of the six Americans raised to the honors of the altar, five (Elizabeth Ann Seton, Frances Xavier Cabrini, Katherine Drexel, Philippine Duchesne and Theodore Guerin) have come from their ranks. And at the front of the queue to join them, today marks the feast of [Mother Marianne Cope](#) -- or, as she's now known, [Blessed Marianne of Molokai](#).

Beatified in 2005, the German-born Franciscan (who emigrated with her family to upstate New York at a young age) left behind the prestige of her provincial superior's post in Syracuse to minister in the Hawaiian leper colony founded by Fr [Damien deVeuster](#), who was himself beatified in 1995. Marianne spent the remaining 35 years of her life on the island, eventually succeeding the Belgian cleric as the colony's administrator after the disease claimed him.

At her beatification, the Vatican's chief saintmaker [summarized](#) her witness thus:

She demonstrated the beauty of the life of a true Franciscan. The encounter of Mother Marianne with those suffering from leprosy took place when she was far along on her journey to Christ. For 20 years she had been a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St Francis of Syracuse in New York. She was already a woman of vast experience and was spiritually mature. But suddenly God called her to a more radical giving, to a more difficult missionary service.



Bl. Marianne, who was Provincial Superior at the time, heard the voice of Christ in the invitation of the Bishop of Honolulu. He was looking for Sisters to assist those suffering from leprosy on the Island of Molokai. Like Isaiah, she did not hesitate to answer: "Here I am. Send me!" (Is 6: 8). She left everything, and abandoned herself completely

to the will of God, to the call of the Church and to the demands of her new brothers and sisters. She put her own health and life at risk.

For 35 years she lived, to the full, the command to love God and neighbour. She willingly worked with Bl. Damian de Veuster, who was at the end of his extraordinary apostolate. Bl. Marianne loved those suffering from leprosy more than she loved her very self. She served them, educated them and guided them with wisdom, love and strength. She saw in them the suffering face of Jesus.

Like the Good Samaritan, she became their mother. She drew strength from her faith, the Eucharist, her devotion to our Blessed Mother, and from prayer. She did not seek earthly honours or approval. She wrote: "I do not expect a high place in heaven. I will be very grateful to have a little corner where I can love God for all eternity".

Celebrations of Bl Marianne's feast are taking place today across Hawaii. Though she now rests at her community's motherhouse in [Syracuse](#) -- where her body was [moved](#) in 2005 from its original resting place at the Molokai colony -- her memory is not currently observed on the liturgical calendars of the United States.

Then again, it wasn't until 1999, four years after his beatification, that the US bishops approved Bl Damien's feast for national celebration; it's observed as an optional memorial on 10 May.

POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 18:56



Zubik on the March



If 2007 could boast
just one standout
homily from an
American prelate,
the prize would
belong to Pittsburgh.

Lasting all of 15
minutes at its core,
Bishop David Zubik's
off-the-cuff
homecoming
message at his late
September
installation
([fulltext/video](#)) was
the sort of
encouraging

challenge an incoming pastor could only give to a people he already
knew and loved... and who already knew and loved him.

Some installtees might succumb to the various temptations of going
programmatic, speaking of how they look forward to getting to know
everyone, or simply losing themselves in rhetorical flourishes. But
the native son's mantra of renewal, that the church "need[s] to be
excited about God" -- complete with the story of a plane encounter
with cradle-Catholic-gone-Buddhist who said he hadn't "really found
anybody who genuinely follows" Jesus -- raised the sights of those
who heard it as few, if any, high-profile episcopal utterances had
before or since. Suffice it to say, a few even wept on hearing it.

The opening has since fleshed itself into a [series of columns](#) in the
diocesan newspaper and a public schedule whose "chaotic" pace has
led the locals to urge the bishop to take care of himself. Away from
the spotlight, among other things, Zubik's one-on-one meetings with
members of the 850,000-member diocese have seen him consult
with priests and people alike for their thoughts on how he could be a
better bishop for the church, the diocese, and for them personally.

But while he's seen a lot at home these last four months, one thing
Zubik hadn't seen for 25 years was the DC March for Life.

As he returned to the Mall yesterday, the *Post-Gazette's* Ann
Rodgers [followed along](#):

Catholic Bishop David Zubik of Pittsburgh was running on
little more than two hours sleep when he left the Catholic
University of America at 7:15 yesterday morning to hear
confession at the youth rally and Mass for Life that the
Archdiocese of Washington was sponsoring at the Verizon
Center....

After the vigil Mass, Bishop Zubik had joined the St. Vincent
seminarians from Latrobe for a 1 a.m. Holy Hour in the
Basilica crypt, where hundreds prayed all night or slept on the
floor. Twenty-three of the diocese's 29 seminarians -- all but
those in Rome -- joined him for the Masses and march. It was

the bishop's first march in 25 years, because he had always stayed behind to work in administration so that his predecessors could attend.

He didn't remember the earlier ones as nearly so organized -- or as youthful. The vast majority of those in attendance were 25 or younger.

"This is just astounding. People often speak as if young people today are devoid of values. That clearly is not what you see here," he said....

Bishop Zubik was one of just two bishops among 125 priests to volunteer to hear confessions in an arena restaurant, while Catholic rock bands revved up the crowds in their seats. The lines to see the confessors were about 50 deep at all times, and many teens were turned away when Mass began. Thousands more were turned away from the area itself when the 22,000 seating capacity was reached at 8:25. When he emerged from confession, Bishop Zubik was astounded to see them standing outside in a freezing drizzle because even the neighboring parishes that held overflow Masses were filled.

"That was the first hint I had how huge this was," he said.

Larry Adams, 41, who entered St. Paul Seminary three weeks ago from St. Germaine parish in Bethel Park, where he used to teach catechism, said he found himself crying at the enthusiasm of the youth. "To see kids that excited about their faith, and wanting to make a difference that's what you want to see as a teacher. I kept thinking, I wish I had my class with me."

Bishop Zubik rejoined the seminarians for the walk to the more political rally on the Capitol mall. Although the bishops were expected up front on the podium, he ran late because he constantly stopped to chat with parishioners he met both from Pittsburgh and his former diocese of Green Bay, Wis. The stage that he eventually ascended was lined with people holding signs saying "I regret my abortion" or "I regret lost fatherhood." One of the latter was a fully robed monk....

As he prepared to board a van back to Pittsburgh with his seminarians at 3:30 p.m., Bishop Zubik said he was feeling good and very upbeat, even though he had had no coffee or food.

Although the March for Life marks a mournful occasion for its participants, its mood is upbeat. After 35 years, there are families that have participated for three generations, and Bishop Zubik had a sense that, if the legalization of abortion was overturned tomorrow, the marchers would return next year, in part because they enjoy it so much.

No matter what happens legally, "this is not an issue that will ever go away. It's an issue that defines us as human beings," he said.

On a wider note, Zubik recently consulted the Pittsburgh priests on possible replacements for auxiliary Bishop William Winter, who retired in May 2005.

In reality, however -- auxiliary appointments being what they are these days (i.e. an eternity in coming) -- the eventual nominee will likely end up succeeding one of the nation's top diocesan prospects: the Steel City's lone active auxiliary, Bishop Paul Bradley.

A highly-regarded career pastor who became Vice-Wuerl on Zubik's 2003 appointment to Green Bay, Bradley won [high praise](#) for his 15-month stint as diocesan administrator between The Don's departure for the capital and The Dave's return home -- a rep reinforced when, at the latter's installation, the presbyterate led a prolonged standing ovation for the auxiliary that brought tears to his eyes.

While it's said that Bradley's already popped up on a number of *ternae*, numerous ops foresee his most-likely destination as the vacant diocese of Charleston... and not just because of South Carolina's prominent Steeler Nation diaspora.

Speaking of Southern vacancies... well, more on that later.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 16:33 

Bertone's Cuban Revolution

While this week marks the 10th anniversary of John Paul II's pilgrimage to Cuba, its main commemoration will come next month as the "[Vice-Pope](#)" continues his goodwill travels in his Boss' stead and [retraces](#) Papa Wojtyla's footsteps:

"This is a visit, thanks be to God, highly awaited by the Cuban government, its authorities, which shows great willingness to facilitate everything needed (for the visit) and fulfill our expectations," Bishop Hernandez said.



He added that "the first expectation is to continue the confirmation in the faith" that was the fruit of Pope John Paul's visit. He said the goal of the 1998 visit "was to confirm this church in the faith, and that was accomplished very well."

Such confirmation "means authenticating the long, sometimes difficult process that this church has gone through, confirm the ways in which the church has been able to face difficulties without confrontations that would complicate, impede or close off dialogue (with the government), allowing the church to maintain its identity and its purpose," he said.

Bishop Hernandez said the visit from the Vatican secretary of state "follows the same line of continuity" and that Cardinal Bertone "will be awaited and received for what he is, an important person in the church hierarchy."

This will be Cardinal Bertone's second visit to the island since November 2005. While the agenda for the trip has yet to be finalized, it will include meetings with Cuban government officials, church leaders, and possibly the island nation's acting president, Raul Castro, who has led the country since his brother, Fidel Castro, delegated power to him 18 months ago when he was hospitalized with a severe intestinal illness.

Among the first things on the cardinal's tentative schedule are meetings with the Cuban bishops, another with religious, and a visit to the Diocese of Santa Clara, in the center of the island, where Cardinal Bertone will celebrate Mass in the cathedral and dedicate a monument to the late pope.

He will then travel to the Archdiocese of Santiago de Cuba on the far eastern side of the island, where he will pray the rosary in the basilica dedicated to Our Lady of Charity of Cobre, the island's patron saint, and attend a youth rally.

He also will visit the nearby Diocese of Guantanamo-Baracoa, created by Pope John Paul, and bless the new diocesan offices.

On his return to the Cuban capital, he will speak at the University of Havana, and he may visit the Latin American School of Medicine and San Carlos and San Ambrosio Seminary. Bishop Hernandez said Cardinal Bertone will not visit the Archdiocese of Camaguey because of a lack of time.

In the 10 years since Pope John Paul's trip, the Catholic Church has seen slow but steady improvement in its relations with Cuba's communist government, although church officials say they still need greater access to state-run media and would like a church role in education.

Meanwhile, the Revolution continues at home.

This morning, B16 named a top-ranking confrere of Bertone's, Brazilian Salesian Fr Tarcisio Scaramussa, as an auxiliary bishop of Sao Paulo, Latin America's largest archdiocese. Since 2002, the 57 year-old bishop-elect -- a theologian by training -- has served in Rome as a general counselor of the Salesians of Don Bosco.

Over 20 of the community's members have been raised to the episcopacy in the last two years, both in its traditional hub of Latin America and newer outposts including Slovenia, Angola, Australia and India. Benedict has also elevated two SDBs to the college of cardinals: Hong Kong's Joseph Zen Ze-kium, and the Vatican librarian Raffaele Farina, Bertone's former rector from their days at Rome's Salesian University.

-30-

POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 16:02 

TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2008

Sold

LA chancery bought by local developer... for [\\$31 million](#):

Staffers who oversee the archdiocese's cemeteries will move to office space on the grounds of a cemetery, [archdiocesan spokesman Tod] Tamberg said. Others will consolidate in four of the building's floors that Church officials will lease with the new owner, said Tamberg.

Tamberg did not know what would be on the building's other eight floors.

Jamison Properties president David Lee did not immediately respond to a phone message seeking details.

Cardinal Roger Mahony announced last year that the archdiocese would sell the Catholic Center and other church properties to raise money to settle hundreds of sexual abuse lawsuits. Church officials had identified about 50 other nonessential properties that could be sold to fund settlements.

The deal reached last year with sexual abuse plaintiffs settled all 508 cases that remained against the archdiocese, which also paid \$60 million in 2006 to settle 45 cases that weren't covered by sexual abuse insurance.

The Catholic Center is the archdiocese's first major sale aimed specifically at paying for the settlement, Tamberg said....

The headquarters building on Wilshire Boulevard was donated to the archdiocese in 1995 by drug store operator Thrifty PayLess after the company moved following the 1992 race riot, which hit the area.

-30-

POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 21:18



Deja Crow

In his latest brush with controversy, Archbishop Raymond Burke of St Louis marked the Roe anniversary by prodding the administration of Jesuit-run St Louis University to "deal with" its head basketball coach after Billikens honcho Rick Majerus [self-identified as pro-choice](#):

Burke said this morning that... Majerus should be disciplined over his public comments supporting abortion rights and stem cell research.

Majerus made his comments at a campaign appearance for Hillary Rodham Clinton on Saturday night during an interview with KMOV (Channel 4).

During an interview with the Post-Dispatch today in Washington, where Burke is attending the March for Life, he said the coach should be disciplined.

"It's not possible to be a Catholic and hold those positions," Burke said. "When you take a position in a Catholic

university, you don't have to embrace everything the Catholic church teaches. But you can't make statements which call into question the identity and mission of the Catholic church."

The archbishop declined to offer specifics of what discipline Majerus should face. "I'm confident it (the university) will deal with the question of a public representative making declarations that are inconsistent with the Catholic faith."

Burke declined to say if he thought Majerus should be fired, but added, "You can't have a Catholic university with one of its prominent staff making declarations" that are in conflict with the church.

A spokesman for the university, Jeff Fowler, said Majerus' comments were not related to his role at the university.

"Rick's comments were his own personal view. They were made at an event he did not attend as a university representative," Fowler said. "It was his own personal visit to the rally. The comments were his, he was not speaking for the university in whatever comments he made to Channel 4."

Last year, St. Louis U. celebrated a legal victory that affirmed it is not controlled by the Catholic church or by its Catholic beliefs.

The Missouri Supreme Court agreed with the school in handing down a decision that the city of St. Louis did not violate state and federal constitutions by granting the university \$8 million in tax increment financing for its new arena.

Opponents of the \$80 million arena sued the school in 2004, halting construction.

The Missouri Constitution prohibits public funding to support any "... college, university, or other institution of learning controlled by any religious creed, church or sectarian denomination whatever."

The debate came down to two words: "control" and "creed." Does the guiding mission of a Catholic university align with the specific system of religious faith espoused by the Catholic church? And if so, does that system of faith control the actions of the university?

In a 6-1 decision, the court said SLU "is not controlled by a religious creed."

With a lifetime record of 423-147 over 25 years of running the bench, Majerus' SLU signing last April wasn't his first with a Jesuit university; his coaching career began at Marquette, where he first spent 12 years as an assistant before making it to the head slot.

But nothing of this sort ever happened in Milwaukee.

-30-

POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 19:18



The Churchman Remains Himself

Early this morning in the capital, before a National Shrine crowd of 6,000-plus and an international TV audience, the Cardinal of the South began his first star-turn in the Klieg lights thus:

"Those of you who've been keeping vigil through the night have permission to doze through this homily."



Dan DiNardo, however, was wide awake (and the result is being transcribed).

You already knew that the [Churchman of the Year](#) wasn't letting the red hat -- nor, while we're at it, even his own [fan club](#) on Facebook -- go to his head.

Per usual, the hometown media's [playing catch-up](#):

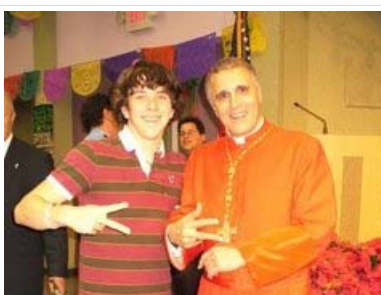
Even in the full attire required for a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, Daniel DiNardo appears completely at ease.

With a sincere smile that reaches his warm, dark eyes, he carries himself as though he is surrounded by close friends, and he speaks with an affection both for those around him and for his new position.

"I'm still the same Dan DiNardo," he said prior to baptizing and confirming nine inmates at the Wynne Unit. "While being a cardinal is a heavy responsibility, and I consider it a great honor to be a cardinal, I wouldn't want to change my personality."...

"Even though I had the title of cardinal added, I'm still the archbishop of Galveston-Houston, so it's been awful busy," he said. "Your schedule gets kind of messed up, but this is a great honor both for the diocese and for me...."

"Because I'm in the South, I have to make sure I'm paying attention to the pastoral and the human needs of people," he said. "As a cardinal, if I sign a letter, it may have some effect and I take that very seriously."



Since being elevated to his new position in the Catholic church, DiNardo said he has experienced things he may not have gotten to experience as an archbishop.



"Without being too specific, a [national legislator](#) wanted to talk with me recently," he said. "We had a very frank but a very

pleasant discussion, and I feel like we talked about a lot of issues that needed addressing.

"I don't think, if I weren't a cardinal, that it would have happened."

Overall, DiNardo said his priorities have stayed close to the same principles he has always maintained.

"My major reason to be with the church is to preach, teach, celebrate the sacrament[s] and to be with people," he said.

"Being with people is the part I love the most. In my opinion, it's the best, most wonderful part of my job."

...and, to think, it's only just beginning.

PHOTO 1: AFP/Getty

PHOTO 3: Smiley N. Pool/(Removed by order of the) *Houston Chronicle*

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 14:11 

"It Must Not Stand. It Cannot Stand. It Will Not Stand."



A rather vivid homily ([fulltext](#)) scored Pharaoh [five applause breaks](#) at last night's vigil Mass.

Snips:

You have come to our nation's capital to "give visibility" to your faith, your heritage, and your commitment to life from conception to natural death. Tomorrow you will peacefully protest the injustice of Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton, the 1973 Supreme Court cases that legalized abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy. Tomorrow you will march in

solidarity with unborn children, as well as their mothers and fathers and siblings. Tomorrow you will approach your elected officials, calling on them to protect those most at risk, the voiceless and most defenseless members of our human family.

But first, tonight! We have set this time aside to pray for an end to abortion, and to receive strength from the Lord. Millions of others are with us in spirit, watching this Mass both in the United States and abroad through the Eternal Word Television Network. Our hearts are especially with those who are homebound or serving in the military. Many others will give visible witness in their own communities at prayer vigils and walks across the country....

Those of you who were here last year will recall the scaffolding erected in the back. The pews had to be removed and individual chairs set in their place. This year you are able to see the fruit of that work, which is the Knights of Columbus [Incarnation Dome](#).

This Incarnation Dome is made up of 2.4 million pieces of colored glass cut and assembled in Italian workshops, shipped over the Atlantic in 346 boxes, and painstakingly installed over the course of five months by master mosaic artists. The whole project was a great undertaking that would not have been possible without the generosity of the Knights of Columbus and many others, and without the skills of the artists, craftsmen and scaffolding workers. It took time to craft this massive undertaking that will inspire generations of pilgrims yet unborn.

We too, dear friends, are called to a massive undertaking, to raise up, through God's grace, what Pope John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* called "a great campaign in support of life." Our task is to build a culture of life in which every person is treated with the respect due to his or her human dignity, regardless of age, physical or mental ability, or stage of development.

This urgent project is well under way. But we know it is far from complete. We are reminded daily of the many direct threats to life through abortion, human embryo experimentation, and the false mercy of assisted suicide and euthanasia. Violence against the innocent unborn also spills over into disregard for other neighbors, so often erupting in violence in our homes through domestic violence and child abuse.

Our "great campaign in support of life" requires all the resources God has given us. It will take time. It will take generosity. It will take patience and sustained collaboration among so many groups. It presupposes unity in the Body of Christ and demands prayer, penance and sacrifice.

But what else can this Dome teach us about building a culture of life? The Incarnation Dome depicts four scenes from Scripture that focus on the Son of God who takes on human flesh: the Annunciation, the Birth of Jesus, His miracle at the Wedding Feast of Cana, and his Transfiguration. Each has a lesson for us tonight....

When the Son of God took on our human flesh, He gave us the full example of compassion and humility. Even though as God He was all-powerful and all-knowing, He let Himself become powerless and completely dependent on others. From the beginning of His life to the end, He knew what it was like to grow and learn, to know joy and sorrow, and all the limitations of our human condition. Nothing in the human experience was foreign to Him, except sin. With perfect compassion, as Emmanuel, God-with-us, He suffered with us.

When we are strong and able-bodied, feeling in complete control, do we value and protect those who are weak, as Scripture calls them: the "lowly and despised of the world who count for nothing," or do they make us feel uncomfortable, uneasy? And when we become weak, will we allow others to care for us in sickness or old age? When frustrated or embarrassed by our incapacity, the helpless Christ Child helps us resist the temptation to despair. Our value does not come from being so-called "productive" members of society, but from Emmanuel, God always with us. As the psalm, so beautifully assures us, "even though I walk through the valley of darkness, I fear no evil for you are at my side."...

In a mosaic, some pieces are shiny, some matte. Some are brightly colored, others plain. But each piece plays its role, contributing to the overarching grandeur of the final work. Whether young or not-so-young, single, married or widowed, living in consecrated life or Holy Orders, you are all part of God's great mosaic, making His love visible in your families, parishes, schools, communities, work places and neighborhoods. You are the painstaking work of His hands-planned from the beginning of time and loved into existence by the Eternal Master Craftsman.

He now sends you out, thousands upon thousands strong, to do your part in forming a vibrant mosaic on behalf of life. You must be the "rich color" He created you to be. You must play your role in His overarching design, and be patient with others as they seek to do the same.

Tomorrow as you march, you will be surrounded by many courageous witnesses to the dignity of life. All the marchers are different from one another, and yet unified in one common goal: bringing an end to abortion and all attacks on life, and building a culture that always welcomes life!

Then there may be some who will taunt you from the sidelines in angry, accusatory ways. Try not to judge them or to define them by their anger and bitterness. They are fellow human beings in need of reconciliation and healing. They too are invited to a change of heart and to join in the "great campaign" for life. Many like them have already bent before the gentle power of God's grace.

The Incarnation Dome is not made of huge, impressive pieces of glass. Its beauty and impact lie in the intricate interplay of so many tiny pieces. God is good at using many humble "pieces," as we heard in our reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians. Instead of choosing "great" or

impressive people in the eyes of the world, God uses the humble, the foolish, the weak and "those who count for nothing" to accomplish His purposes....

If God can use a helpless embryo to change a human heart, He can certainly use us with all our limitations and weaknesses. Dear friends: by seeking holiness and using the gifts God has given you to accomplish His will in your life, you are contributing mightily to that Kingdom we all long for, where there will be no more crying or pain or death. Certainly no abortion. No euthanasia. No assisted suicide. No deep-freezing of embryos as though they were merchandise. And no destruction of human life in the name of science.

We are all called to make use of the graces we receive here tonight, to change the world tomorrow, and each day after returning home. We are invited to pray for the protection of human life and to ask others to do so. We are challenged to care for those around us who are in need physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually, especially those who would consider participating in an abortion. And finally we need to allow others to care for us when we can no longer care for ourselves.

All of us have an important place in conversations about the value of human life, and all of us can make a significant contribution in the political process. It is your right and duty as citizens, whether or not you are old enough to vote, to help shape society by offering to everyone the profound convictions of your faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord of life. In His name you are also called to pray for an end to abortion in the United States and throughout the world. Roe v. Wade is incompatible with human dignity. It must not stand. It cannot stand. It will not stand.

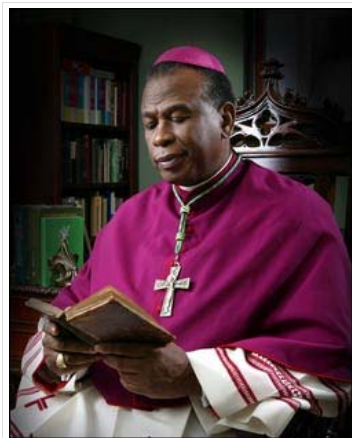
PHOTO: AFP/Getty File/Jonathan Ernst

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 13:23



From Belleville: I'm Sorry



Two days after [telling the local paper](#) that he "do[es]n't make statements to the public media because it does not help. It only muddies the water," Bishop Edward Braxton of Belleville has... released a statement to the public media apologizing for the [late unpleasantness](#) in the Southern Illinois diocese.

(Suffice it to say, "Super-

[Nuncio](#)" strikes again.)

Full:

As Bishop of the Diocese of Belleville, I have the responsibility to oversee the temporal goods and finances of the Diocese in collaboration with the Chief Financial Officer. ("It is the role of the finance officer to administer the goods of the Diocese under the authority of the Bishop..." (Cf. the Code of Canon Law #494-3) This is a very serious responsibility for each of us.

When I decided that the new table and chairs for the Chancery Office conference room and the vestments and altar linens for the Cathedral of St. Peter should be paid for out of a special fund for diocesan buildings from the Future Full of Hope campaign and a bequest for the propagation of the faith [*sic*], it was my judgment that these were funds over which I had some discretionary power. At the time of this decision I stated, in writing, that if it was determined that my judgment was incorrect in this matter, I would replenish both funds with revenues obtained from an outside benefactor. After several weeks of discussion, the Chief Financial Officer and the Diocesan Finance Council have not agreed with my judgment.

Today, I have secured a gift from a benefactor that will replenish both funds completely. While this gift resolves the immediate question concerning restricted and unrestricted funds, it does not resolve the larger question of the confusion, mistrust, misunderstanding, loss of confidence, and even anger caused by these developments. I regret this very much, and I apologize for anything I may have done, even unwittingly, to contribute to this situation. A serious effort on my part and on the part of those charged by the Church to assist me in the stewardship of our finances will be required to move forward. After discussing this matter with the Finance Council yesterday, I assured them of my desire to work closer with them to ensure that such a problem does not occur again. In order to be sure we move from words to deeds, we will discuss specific steps to be taken during our February meeting.

As a Bishop it has always been my commitment to act in complete fidelity to the doctrine and discipline of the Catholic Church and to do nothing in violation of civil law, canon law, or moral law. I renew that commitment today.

PHOTO: *Diocese of Belleville*

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 13:15 

On Day One, Father-General Looks to the "Nations"



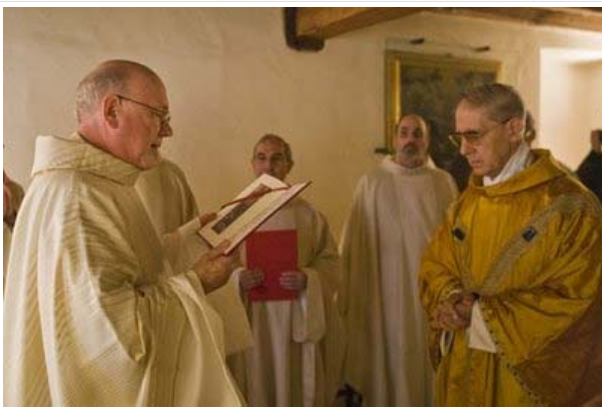


Before a horde of cameras and a packed Gesu Church, Fr Adolfo Nicolás inaugurated his mission as the "Black Pope"... by asking that he not be known as the "Black Pope."

Preaching off-the-cuff at Sunday's Mass of Thanksgiving, the [newly-elected](#) Father-General of the Jesuits said he wanted his words to be received as "a simple reflection, not a message to the world." Even so, it ended up being no less of a tone-setting "inaugural address" as the broad strokes of the Spanish-born, Asian-formed head of the church's largest religious community began to emerge for his new audience.

As the moving [statio](#) unfolded in the *camarete* of St Ignatius before the liturgy (below), Loyola's 29th successor told the congregation at the Mass' start that he "experienced a great desire to flee, but the doors were all closed," according to Italian wire reports.

"And so, I have to stay," he said.



Recorded on delivery, the homily's translation has been [released](#).

Full:

Above all I would like to say that this is not a message for the whole world. Rather, it is merely a simple homily; a prayerful reflection of today's readings for us Jesuits who are here this afternoon.

The first reading taken from the prophet Isaiah briefly describes to us Christians our mission in the world. The prophet Isaiah tells us that we have all been called to serve, that we are here precisely to serve. It is a clear message regarding our mission as Jesuits, as Christians, as the people of God. God has made us servants and, in so doing, God finds delight. The Spanish version of this first reading says that God is proud of the servant, while the Italian version says that God "is satisfied". I believe the latter is closer to what the Bible wants to say. The more we become as servants, the more pleased God is. I think this is an image we should all take home today.

Newspapers and magazines these past few days have been

toying with a number of clichés, namely, the Black Pope, the White Pope, power, gatherings, discussions...But it is all so superficial, so artificial! These are but crumbs for those who love politics, but they are not for us.

The prophet Isaiah says that serving pleases the Lord. To serve is what counts: to serve the Church, the world, our fellow men and women, and the Gospel. Saint Ignatius also has written in summary form about our life: in all things to love and to serve. And our pope, Holy Father Benedict XVI, has reminded us that God is love; he has reminded us of the Gospel's essence.

Later on the prophet Isaiah describes the servant's strength. God is the servant's only strength. We do not have any other source of strength: not the external strength found in politics, in business, in the media, in studies, in titles, nor the internal fortitude found in research. Only God. Exactly like the poor. Not too long ago I spoke to one of you regarding something that happened to me while working with immigrants. It was an experience that deeply affected me. A Filipino woman who had experienced many difficulties adapting to the Japanese society, a woman who had suffered a great deal, was asked by another Filipino woman for advice. The second woman said, "I have many problems with my husband and I do not know if I should get divorced or try to save my marriage..." In other words, she wanted advice concerning a rather common problem. The first woman replied, "I do not know what advice to give you right now. However, come with me to Church so that the two of us can pray because only God really helps the poor." This statement deeply touched me because it is so true. The poor only have God in whom to find their strength. For us only God is our strength. Unconditional, disinterested service finds its source of strength only in God.

The prophet Isaiah continues today's first reading by speaking about health. Our message is a message about health, about salvation. A bit later he stresses what has most caught my eye about this reading, namely, that our God, our faith, our message, and our health are so great that they cannot be enclosed within a container, in any one group or community, regardless of whether or not the group in question happens to be a religious community. What is at stake is the Good News of salvation for all nations. It is a universal message because the message itself is enormous; a message that in itself is irreducible.



All represented nations are gathered here today. All, everyone, is represented here. However, nations continue to open up. I ask myself today which are those "nations". Indeed, all geographic nations are here today. However, there may be other nations, other non-geographic communities, human communities, that claim our aid: the poor, the marginalized, the excluded. In this globalized world of ours the number of those excluded by all is increasing. Those excluded are diminished, since our society only has room for the big and not the small. All those who are disadvantaged, manipulated, all of these, may perhaps be for us those "nations": The nations that need the prophetic message of God.

Yesterday after the election, after the first shock, there came the moment of fraternal aid. All of you have greeted me very affectionately, offering your support and help. One of you whispered to me: "Don't forget the poor!". Perhaps this is the most important greeting of all, just as Paul turns to the wealthier churches of his time requesting aid for the poor of Jerusalem. Don't forget the poor: These are our "nations". These are the nations for whom salvation is still a dream, a wish. Perhaps it may be in their midst, but they don't realize it.

And the others? The others are our collaborators, if they share our same perspective, if they have the same heart Christ has given us. And if they have a bigger heart and an even greater vision, then we are their collaborators. What counts is health, salvation, the joy of the poor. What counts, what is real, is hope, salvation, health. And we want that this salvation, this health, be an explosion of salvation that reaches out everywhere. This is what the prophet Isaiah is talking about: That salvation may reach and touch everyone. A salvation according to God's heart, will, Spirit.

We go on with our General Congregation. Perhaps this is what we need to discern. In this moment of our history where do we need to fix our attention, our service, our energy. Or, in other words, what is the color, the tone, the image of salvation today for those many people who are in need of it, those human non-geographic nations that demand health. There are many who wait for a salvation that we have yet to understand. To open ourselves up to this reality is the challenge, the call, of the moment.

And we turn to the Gospel. This is how we can be true disciples of the Lamb of God, He who takes away our sins and leads us to a new world. And He, the Lamb of God, has shown himself as Servant, he who fulfills Isaiah's prophecies, the message of the Prophets. His identity as Servant will be his sign, the mark of our own mission, of the call which we try to respond to these days.

Let us pray together for this sense of Mission of the Church, that it may be for the "nations" benefit and not our own. The "nations" that are still far away, not geographically, but humanly, existentially. That the joy and the hope that come from the Gospel be a reality with which we can work little by little, doing it with a lot of love and disinterested service.

In short order, more insight about how Nicolás will govern the

Society's sprawling apparatus -- almost 20,000 priests and brothers spread across myriad apostolates in 103 provinces and regions -- will likely be gleaned from his choices to fill the Jesuit Curia's top posts as his general counselors and assistants. What's more, given the two-year preparatory period for the General Congregation, an unusually large backlog of provincial appointments is said to await, including the delayed successions for several of the US' ten regional heads. (Appointed for a maximum term of six years, Jesuit provincials are chosen by the General, who selects from a *terna* presented by the local consultants.)



Already on-record with his pre-electoral hope that GC35 wouldn't "become another exercise in patience" and could accomplish its work "within a reasonably short time," Nicolás is reportedly aiming to adjourn the open-ended meeting by 1 March, nine days after he leads its 226 delegates to a private audience with the Pope.

While pleasantries will likely dominate the first meeting between Benedict XVI and his new neighbor down the street, the historic tension marking relations between the Holy See and the Company never lays too far beneath the surface. According to the Milanese daily *Il Sole 24 Ore*, the pontiff's [pre-election letter](#) to the Jesuits got a notable retort from the Mexican provincial, Fr Juan Luis Orozco.

"We obey the Pope," the paper quoted Orozco as saying, "but we're not the Swiss Guard."

With the vow of obedience slated to be a major topic for the remainder of the Congregation's discussions, Nicolás said in a [2005 interview](#) that while "obedience can be very creative and very helpful when it is open, when there is inner freedom... blind obedience, I think, as a norm would be a disaster, for the Society or anybody."

* * *

From Father-General's home-region of East Asia, a confrere [shares his impressions](#):

We believe in faith that it was the Spirit who led us to choose Fr. Nico--as we fondly call him in our part of the world--as the 29th successor to St. Ignatius. This past week, the newspapers in Italy had come out with lists of possible *generabili*. It is surely significant that Fr. Nicolas was never mentioned!

Fr. Nico embodies for many of us the primary quality St. Ignatius stipulates as desirable in the man who is to become General: that he be a man "closely united with God our Lord." "Tell me," an elector from Europe asked me soon after Nico's election, "have we elected a saint?" Whatever the answer to that question, many have noticed and wondered at the serenity and joy that Nico radiates. There is a wholeness, a

centeredness, a freedom about him that point to spiritual depth.

Yesterday, we walked up the stairs of the Curia to the Aula where Nico would later be elected General. He asked me if I had slept well; I answered that I had, more or less. I asked him, in turn, if *he* had slept well, both of us knowing, as had become clear on the last day of *murmurationes*, that he was a strong possibility among the electors. He simply smiled his Nico smile, and said, "Yes. I slept very well. There is always hope." The genuine peacefulness with which he communicated this, in the face of such daunting possibilities, moved me deeply.

Yesterday afternoon, after the election, I visited him in his new quarters, the famous rooms of the General in the Curia. He said that, at lunch, he had asked Fr. Kolvenbach when *this*—that is, the reality of becoming General-- would hit him. Fr. Kolvenbach had answered: "Tonight." This morning, I was surprised to find Nico (that is, Fr. General) knocking on my door, to give me the gift of the chain he had used to hang his GC 35 ID on, since he no longer needed it. I inquired about how he slept last night. He answered with his familiar smile: "Very peacefully."

A joyous man, warm, energetic, and with whom one feels so close!" These words of Fr. Louis Gendron, the Provincial of China, summarize well a second gift Fr. Nico brings to his new office. Fr. Ben Nebres, President of the Ateneo de Manila University and elector for the Philippine Province, speaks in the same vein: "When I think of him, the feelings that come are of affection and friendship. Fr. Nico is many things, but he is above all a companion and a friend. He brings the gift of friendship and encouragement of Blessed Peter Faber. He is a leader who will walk with us and who will invite us to find together, in conversation and prayer, the way that the Lord wants us to follow in our time."

Nor is this sentiment limited to Jesuits. In his letter of congratulations to Fr. Nicolas, Fr. Gabriel Je, the Delegate of the Korean Provincial in Cambodia, describes the delighted response of a lay missionary from Hongkong working with the Jesuits in Phnom Penh. She had met and been favorably impressed by Fr. Nico when he had visited Cambodia last year. On hearing of his election as General, she spontaneously exclaimed: "There is hope for the Jesuits!"

This warm, welcoming humanity of our new Fr. General—"I feel refreshed after talking with him," one elector from India told me—is a quality that eminently fulfills the second qualification St. Ignatius mentions in his description of the ideal General: "Charity . . . should particularly shine forth from him, and in a special way toward the members of the Society; likewise a genuine humility which will make him highly beloved . . ."

Yesterday, with a glint of mischievous humor in his eyes, Fr. Nico told me that he had never experienced so many Jesuits asking him with such concern about his health. This is, of course, entirely natural. Ignatius realistically lists sufficient "physical strength demanded by his charge," as the final

qualification of the General. And Nico is 71—72 by April.

His age was, frankly, a concern. But interestingly, it became clear to many of us that chronological years were not the most reliable measure of age where Nico was concerned. Paradoxically, one of the oldest among us was also one of the most youthful in energy and spirit. “He has the mind of a young man,” someone told me in admiration. “I have never walked with anyone who walked so fast. I have to tell him to slow down when I walk with him,” a Latin American Jesuit told me.

But perhaps it is best to let the young speak. Since the announcement of his election, the seventy or so scholastics in the Arrupe International Residence in Manila have been excitedly gathering to share stories and experiences of the General who, until yesterday, was their Major Superior. Scholastics, mostly in their twenties, from East Timor, Myanmar, China, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand have expressed their delight in and appreciation of the choice of the Congregation. Isaias Caldas, a junior from East Timor, wrote to his Regional Superior, Fr. John Mace, thus: “Personally I am excited and overjoyed because this General is someone whom I know personally, a General who always passes by in front of AIR after his lunch in EAPI, a General who once told us during one of his exhortations to the community to make our religious struggles become “big,” [broad in apostolic horizons] not limited only to our worries about prayer and chastity, a General who wants us to think now about what we can do in the future, a General who wishes us to be very good at one thing for, if that is so, we would be very useful in our ministry later, a General who has good humor and is friendly to us scholastics, a General who encourages me to read more and watch good movies like a good Jesuit.”...

Yesterday morning, in the Aula, when it became clear that Adolfo Nicolas had been chosen, and when he finally left his place among the electors to stand and then kneel in our midst to make his profession of faith, I found myself, to my embarrassment, unable to control my tears. I felt such pity for Nico, as we placed the enormous burden of the governance of the Society on him, and also such gratitude to him, too, for his willingness to accept this office for the sake of the Society. As I wept, I found myself repeatedly praying a single sentence: “Lord, help Nico.”

Today, however, I am more at peace, mostly because I see that the General is at peace too. This evening, Fr. General led us in a Mass of Thanksgiving at the Church of the Gesù. His homily (in Italian interspersed with a few “Italianized” Spanish words!) was deep and moving, radiant with “Evangelical simplicity,” one European Jesuit told me, “without a single excess word.” He reflected on the Servant of Yahweh in the book of Isaiah. Where does this humble servant get his strength to serve? To answer this question, Nico shared an experience he had during his ministry to migrant workers in Japan. A woman, a Filipina, overwhelmed by her many problems, confessed to her friend her confusion and near despair. Her friend, also a Filipina migrant worker, simply said to her: “Let us go to Church. Because we are poor, God is

our only strength." Once again, when I heard these last words, I felt tears rush to my eyes, because it seemed to me that Fr. General had borrowed the words of this poor, vulnerable, faith-filled woman to speak of himself.

* * *



And, lastly, if it's true that every picture tells a story -- and it is -- then Fr Don Doll has been the GC's master storyteller.

Shown above flanked by Fathers-General past and present, this isn't the first time the award-winning shutterbug and professor at Creighton University in Omaha has played the role of the Congregation's "official photographer." But it is the first GC of the internet age, with the popular appetite for information worlds quicker and more comprehensive than it was when GC34 took place in early 1995. And so, almost daily -- and, seemingly, almost in real-time -- the priest-photog [has posted](#) comprehensive slideshows of the major events, culminating in Saturday's election (whose first images were relayed around the world within minutes).

Better still, he didn't let even the famous *murmuratio* go [unchronicked](#).



As it would on few other ecclesiastical occasions, the global media spotlight has shone on Borgo Santo Spirito these past days. Lest there was any doubt, the breadth of coverage should serve as a reminder of the unparalleled extent to which, for all the dust-ups, challenges or prophecies of doom of recent years, the Jesuits still matter, and not just to the life of the church. (Just like the conspiracy theorists who eagerly [muse](#) on how, among [other things](#), its members are "the leading force to take over Mother Earth after Planet X arrival," the fury the Society can sometimes arouse from its critics merely serves to reinforce the point.)

Away from the glare, however, there's a lesson. For the confreres and the many others watching from across the globe and waiting on the news, the camera's candid captures haven't just attracted interest, they've compelled communion.



When it's done right, the news invariably proves its ability to do that. But for a church oft in need of reminding that its effectiveness of mission lies in its communication skills (not of many fleeting words, but an Everlasting One), the photog's gift to the historical record has only been the beginning of his contribution.

Thanks to him for the tremendous work -- and, of course, the use of the shots.

PHOTOS: Don Doll SJ (1,2,3,4,7); Dani Villanueva SJ (6)

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 02:11 

Together for Life



Appropriately enough, this year's observance of Martin Luther King's

birthday provided the backdrop to the annual remembrance of this generation's defining battle for human dignity, as the traditional 8,000-plus poured into Washington's Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception last night for the opening liturgy of the national Vigil for Life.

Invariably one of the most-prominent events on American Catholicism's calendar, the Mass is but prelude to today's march marking the 35th anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*. By custom, celebration duties fall to the chair of the US bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities, now Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia.

Lacking this year's text, snips from Rigali's '07 homily:

The occasion of our yearly coming together in humble prayer and serene and peaceful witness to the value of every human life is linked to an extremely sad moment in the history of the United States: that fateful decision *Roe v. Wade* rendered on January 22, 1973. Now, thirty-four years later we bow our heads in shame as we admit that over forty-seven million human lives have been snuffed out as a result of that misguided use of judicial power exercised in the name of the authority resting in the people of the United States of America.

Each passing year confirms us in the pain of recognizing the violence inflicted upon millions and millions of unborn children and even partially born children in our land. It is important that this truth be acknowledged, that repentance be sincere, and that effective means be taken to stop this grotesque tragedy, while preventing it from being repeated in the future.

At the same time each passing year confirms us in new hope for the future. As people of prayer, we are moved by the words of Saint Paul, who says: "...we have set our hope on the living God" (1 Tim 4:10). The word of God and His commandments encourage us in our efforts, and they certainly inspire the rising generation to form new attitudes and assume a fresh commitment to the cause of life.

Tonight, our first reading from Sacred Scripture leads us to experience solidarity with the chosen people of Israel who assembled at the time of the Restoration of Jerusalem in the fifth century B.C. They came together with the priest Ezra, to listen to God's word, to be challenged by His commandments and to find strength in His presence. We hear how the people of Israel, after enduring, in hope, both suffering and captivity, offered praise to God. As they listened attentively to His holy word they were moved to tears by the challenge that God's law presented to them. At this point the prophet Nehemiah intervened, telling the people not to be overwhelmed, not to be sad. He proclaimed: "...today is holy to our Lord.... Do not be saddened this day, for rejoicing in the Lord must be your strength."

What the prophet Nehemiah told the people of Israel applies to us, dear Friends, now. Today is holy and our celebration of life is holy to the Lord. Our attitude in the wake of the immense national tragedy of abortion is our *sober rejoicing in hope*. Indeed, "We have set our hope on the living God."

What then are our reasons for rejoicing?

In the conflict that exists between life and death, between the culture of life and the culture of death we see that something very encouraging is also taking place in our society.

The rate and number of abortions in the United States continue to decline, most notably among teens. Many teenagers are wisely choosing to abstain from sexual activity—motivated both by religious and moral values, and the desire to protect themselves from the epidemic of sexually-transmitted diseases that today afflict some sixty million Americans. To be free of disease, to be free of the fear of an ill-timed pregnancy, to be free of a broken heart—this is the freedom that we want for our young people, and we rejoice that it is unfolding.

Another reason to rejoice is that the American people are becoming more pro-life. According to a very significant poll last year, general support for *Roe v. Wade* fell under fifty percent for the first time since 1973. Most Americans do *not* support *Roe v. Wade*, and are against allowing most of the abortions the Court has made legal.

We can, moreover, take heart in knowing that spiritual, educational and legislative efforts are making a big difference in the hearts and minds of so many people of good will. More and more citizens are coming to question abortion and to recognize—as a starting point for deeper conversion—that there is something radically wrong with abortion and the support given it by our laws. There is a growing realization that human life and human dignity cannot be suppressed without immense damage to the entire fabric of our nation and numerous consequences. In the midst of the enormous challenge posed by threats to life, there are new reasons to hope that *the truth of God's law* will prevail as *a great light* in our nation as our people move increasingly toward valuing human life from its earliest and most vulnerable stages onward. This is indeed cause for rejoicing in the Lord!

As we all move forward in hope as citizens confronted with the national disaster resulting from *Roe v. Wade*, we recall once more *the crucial importance of humble and persevering prayer*. We also realize how important it is to contribute to the exchange taking place among people of good will. Our position is one of profound concern for the unborn and deep compassion for all those affected by abortion. With utmost respect we express in the public debate our strong conviction that something terribly wrong has weakened our nation—something that flagrantly violates human rights and human dignity, in addition to the law of God. It is necessary for all of us to speak with lucidity in bearing witness to the truth that has such vast consequences.

A great example of this lucidity is found in the way in which Pope John Paul II spoke to Americans just eight years ago this month in the city of St. Louis. Permit me to offer you his own words:

“There are times of trial, tests of national character, in the history of every country. America has not been immune to them. One such time of trial is closely connected with St. Louis. Here, the famous Dred Scott case was heard. And in that case the Supreme Court of the United States subsequently declared an entire class of human beings—people of African descent—outside the boundaries of the

national community and the Constitution's protection.

"After untold suffering and with enormous effort, that situation has, at least in part, been reversed.

"America faces a similar time of trial today. Today, the conflict is between a culture that affirms, cherishes, and celebrates the gift of life, and a culture that seeks to declare entire groups of human beings—the unborn, the terminally ill, the handicapped, and others considered 'unuseful'—to be outside the boundaries of legal protection. Because of the seriousness of the issues involved, and because of America's great impact on the world as a whole, the resolution of this new time of testing will have profound consequences.... My fervent prayer is that through the grace of God at work in the lives of Americans of every race, ethnic group, economic condition and creed, America will resist the culture of death and choose to stand steadfastly on the side of life. To choose life...involves rejecting every form of violence: the violence of poverty and hunger, which oppresses so many human beings; the violence of armed conflict, which does not resolve but only increases divisions and tensions; the violence of particularly abhorrent weapons...; the violence of drug trafficking; the violence of racism; and the violence of mindless damage to the natural environment.

"Only a higher moral vision can motivate the choice for life. And the values underlying that vision will greatly depend on whether the nation continues to honor and revere the family as the basic unit of society: the family—teacher of love, service, understanding and forgiveness; the family—open and generous to the needs of others; the family—the great wellspring of human happiness."

For all of us, dear Friends, "the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," which we so earnestly desire, can be safeguarded and guaranteed only by prayer and constant vigilance.

The so-called *freedom* of choice, imposed on our country in 1973 by the Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade*, mocks our freedom. Today Americans are not free to halt the destruction of unborn children. Our legislators are not free to enact laws defending unborn life, laws that reflect the values and will of a majority of Americans.

In many states parents are not free to intervene in the abortion decision to protect their daughter from a decision that has lasting, even eternal, consequences. *Roe v. Wade* denies fathers the freedom to save the life of their unborn child if the child's mother chooses abortion. Siblings, grandparents—all are powerless, without freedom, to protect and nurture a vulnerable member of their family, because the Supreme Court said so....

Dear Friends, like the faithful Israelites of old, we too have been able to listen to God's law. It is so clearly articulated on Mount Sinai and in our hearts: "Thou shalt not kill." Tonight, we renew our commitment to life because we renew our commitment to the law of God, which we praise in the words of our responsorial psalm: "The law of the Lord is perfect...the decree of the Lord is trustworthy.... The precepts of the Lord are right...the command of the Lord is clear.... The ordinances of the Lord are true."

God's word lasts forever: "Thou shalt not kill."

Tonight, in the Gospel our thoughts turn to our Lord Jesus Christ and to the mission which belongs to Him and which He shares with those incorporated into His Body, the Church. In all of this, dear young people, you are called to fulfill a special role: to bring all your energy to promote the cause of life. The Lord is calling you and confirming you in strength. The Church and the nation are asking you to rise up to this challenge.

Its busiest day of the year, the basilica remains open and pulsing through the night as thousands of marchers without the luxury of hotel rooms "camp in."

At sunrise, the Vigil ends with a morning Mass, but one with an unusually high significance this time around as the [The Churchman](#) of the Year, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, makes his first major step into the national spotlight as its principal celebrant and homilist. (The liturgy -- scheduled for 7.30am Eastern (1230GMT) -- will be [streamed live](#) by EWTN.)

On a liturgical note, the rubrics state that in the dioceses of the United States, 22 January "shall be observed as a particular day of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion, and of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life," and that "the Mass 'For Peace and Justice' (no. 22 of the "Masses for Various Needs") should be celebrated with violet vestments as an appropriate liturgical observance for this day."

* * *

On a related note from the "life, marriage and family" desk, the headline on this post might've evoked thoughts of the ubiquitous [marriage-prep textbook](#) of said title written by Fr Joseph Champlin, long the US church's dominant formation tool for engaged couples.

A priest of the diocese of Syracuse and former rector of its cathedral described as one of Central New York's "most visible and beloved pastors," the good monsignor [died last week](#) at 77 after a lengthy illness. May the eternal wedding feast be his.

PHOTO: CNS/Nancy Wiechec

-30-

POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 00:55 

MONDAY, JANUARY 21, 2008

[View from "The Window"](#)





As is well known, the "Pope of the Visual" rarely did anything without a camera clicking away within a few feet. Yet while Wojtyla's successor's been a bit more reticent in terms of his close-range access, a shutterbug from *L'Osservatore Romano* was permitted to snap away from the other side of the studio window of the papal apartment during yesterday's *Angelus*.

The frame was a first in this pontificate. And given the [overflow crowd](#) to support B16 post-*Sapienza*, as you can see, the set-up proved itself a masterstroke.

In an address today to the preparatory commission for this fall's Synod of Bishops -- which'll focus on "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church" -- the Pope identified his [two top tasks](#) for modern Catholicism... both, he said, "centered on the Word":

"The great tasks facing the ecclesial community in the modern world -- and among the many I particularly stress evangelization and ecumenism -- are centered on the Word of God and, at the same time, draw therefrom their justification and support.

"Just as the Church's missionary activity [...] finds its inspiration and its goal in the Lord's merciful revelation, so ecumenical dialogue cannot base itself on the words of human wisdom or on skilful strategies, but must be animated exclusively by constant reference to the original Word, which God consigned to his Church to be read, interpreted and lived in communion."

Benedict XVI said that in this context, "St. Paul's doctrine reveals a particular strength."

The apostle's doctrine is, the Holy Father explained, "clearly founded on divine revelation but also on his own apostolic experience which, ever and anew, made it clear to him that not human wisdom and eloquence but only the force of the Holy Spirit builds the Church in faith."

He noted that the Synod will take place during the celebration of the June 28, 2008, - June 29, 2009, Pauline Year.

The meeting will provide pastors of the Church with an opportunity to reflect on "the witness of this great apostle and herald of the Word of God," the Pontiff said. "May his example be an encouragement for everyone to accept the Word of salvation and to translate it into daily life, in faithful discipleship of Christ."

...and in a weekend talk to Rome's seminarians, B16 stressed the prime import of a [living friendship](#) with Christ -- manifested in a "profound interior life" -- for their effectiveness in ministry:

The Holy Father emphasized the figure of Cardinal Domenico Capranica, who founded the institution 550 years ago, saying that a century before the Council of Trent, the cardinal was able to see "that the desired reform would not only have to involve ecclesiastical structures but, principally, the lives and choices of those people within the Church who were called to be [...] guides and pastors of the People of God."

He noted that Cardinal Capranica drew up the constitutions of the college, which regulate the various aspects of the formation of the young students.

With those "Constitutiones," the Pontiff explained, the cardinal "demonstrated his concern for the primacy of the spiritual dimension, and his awareness that the depth of a solid priestly formation -- and its consequent durability -- depend to a decisive degree on the completeness and overall structure of the educational syllabus."

"These aspects have even greater importance today," Benedict XVI affirmed, "considering the multiple challenges priests and evangelizers must face on their mission. In this context I have, on a number of occasions, reminded seminarians and priests of the urgent need to cultivate a profound interior life, a personal and constant contact with Christ in prayer and contemplation, a sincere longing for sanctity.

"In fact, without a true friendship with Jesus, it is impossible for Christians, and especially for priests, to carry out the mission with which the Lord entrusts them. For priests, it is clear that this also entails serious cultural and theological preparation."

* * *



In keeping with custom on this feast of St Agnes, the Pope blessed the two lambs whose shorn coats will be woven into the *pallia* he gives to the world's new crop of metropolitan archbishops on the 29 June feast of Ss. Peter and Paul.

While Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of

Louisville was the lone US prelate to receive his woolen band symbolizing the "fullness of the episcopal office" in 2007, it's already clear that a larger American contingent will be in evidence this year. Archbishops Edwin O'Brien of Baltimore and John Nienstedt of St Paul and Minneapolis are queued up, likely to be joined by Detroit's next ordinary and, quite possibly, those of Mobile, Omaha and the Gran Manzana itself, New York.

(Updating prior reports, the Detroit process remains at mid-stage, with revised timetables estimating the appointment of Cardinal Adam Maida's successor to take place post-Easter. Bishop Allen Vigneron of Oakland is said to remain at the head of an "open field" of possibilities.)

However the delegations shake out, the pilgrims are in for a unique treat: 29 June *pallium* festivities that mark the traditional beginning of Roman Summer will be enhanced by the opening of the Pauline Year commemorating the 2000th anniversary of the birth of the "Apostle to the Gentiles." Presented at a Vatican [press conference](#)

today, the program of the celebrations focuses on a "strong ecumenical element," including the conversion of the baptistery of the Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls into an interdenominational chapel.

Though not yet available in English, [a website](#) for the observance has been kicked off.

PHOTOS: *L'Osservatore Romano*

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 23:37



Holy Land, Foley Land

Back from his first visit to Jerusalem and its environs as Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, "His Foleyness" reports:

While he was struck by the "very distressing" living conditions of Bethlehem's residents and the restrictions on some seminarians' freedom to travel, he was also touched by the enthusiasm and faith of the area's Christians, the cardinal told Catholic News Service Jan. 18.



His Jan. 7-13 trip to Jerusalem, the West Bank, Jordan and "all the major shrines" was "a great joy" and "very necessary for me in my new job."

Pope Benedict XVI named Cardinal Foley pro-grand master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher in June. The chivalric organization is dedicated to supporting the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and to responding to the needs of Catholics in the Holy Land.

The 72-year-old Philadelphia native had not been to the Holy Land since 1977, he said, "and what a way to go as cardinal, I must say."

He met with numerous bishops, dignitaries, and local Christians and helped celebrate Mass at a number of venues, including at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher which, the cardinal said, was a very moving experience "especially given my new job."

In meetings with local pastors, the priests "were very clear and forthright" in outlining what aid they had received from the chivalric order and what now were their most urgent needs, the cardinal said.

Their No. 1 priority, he said, was additional funding for Catholic schools.

"The cost of living is going up and they can't afford to give raises to the teachers," he said.

He said Catholic school officials "don't want to lose their teachers" -- some of whom are leaving to work in better-paid public schools.

The schools are crucial for helping the minority Christians "maintain a Christian identity," Cardinal Foley said. Since Latin-rite Catholics, Melkite Catholics, Greek Orthodox and even Muslims attend the schools, these institutions also foster understanding and peace in multifaith communities, he said.

Seeing how people in Bethlehem, West Bank, were affected by the Israeli security barrier "was very, very distressing," he said. Some people cannot access their land on the other side of the barrier, a series of concrete slabs and barbed-wire fences, and while Israeli settlements have sprung up on contested lands.

"They're very unhappy, Christians and Muslims alike," he said.

The cardinal said he was struck by how enthusiastic and strong in their faith the Christians of Zerka, Jordan, were. Meeting with and celebrating Mass for "the descendents of the first Christians" was very inspiring, he said.

The neo-cardinal returns home to Philadelphia later this week for the second round of "[Foleyfest](#)" celebrations.

-30-

POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 22:40 

SUNDAY, JANUARY 20, 2008

"Pope Day" in the Piazza



Amid an atmosphere one attendee described as "electric," early estimates tip the crowd for today's *Angelus* in the 200,000 range.

Following last week's student protests that led to B16's [cancellation](#) of a planned appearance and

lecture ([fulltext](#)) at Rome's University of La Sapienza, the Urban vicar Cardinal Camillo Ruini encouraged a large turnout as a show of "affection, serenity and joy" -- and solidarity with the pontiff. A large

crowd had already been foreseen for the Rome diocese's annual "Day of the Catholic School," but Ruini's appeal served to increase the final attendance even further.

After the Marian prayer and its opening catechesis on the current observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the Pope addressed the Sapienza controversy, thanking the many who showed, Ruini for "promoting" the event and repeating his regrets over his absence from the Thursday opening of the university's academic year.



Going unusually personal, Papa Ratz said the following to the midday meeting:

"The university environment, which for many years was my world, linked for me a love for the seeking of truth, for exchange, for frank and respectful dialogue between differing positions. All this, too, is the mission of the church, charged to faithfully follow Jesus, the Teacher of life, of truth and of



love. As a professor, so to say, emeritus, who's encountered many students in his life, I encourage you, dear collegians, to always be respectful of other people's opinions and to seek out, with a free and

responsible spirit, the truth and the good. To all and each of you I renew the expression of my gratitude, assuring you of my affection and prayers."

Per usual, several attendees held signs and banners aloft. This week, however, many referred to the week's events, with one blaring in Italian that "Science Without Conscience Isn't Wisdom" -- a pun on the Italian word for "wisdom"... *Sapienza*.

PHOTO: Loggiarazzi

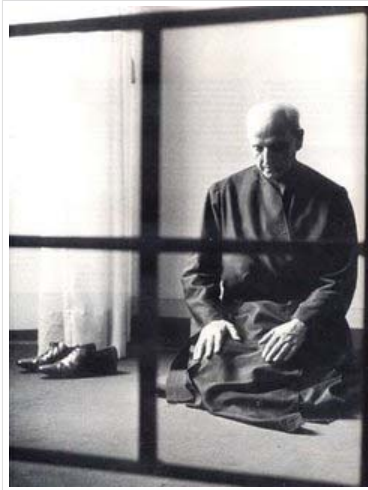
-30-

POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 07:28 

The "Second Arrupe" on the First

Given Adolfo Nicolás' almost five decades of ministry in Japan -- and their effect on his outlook -- the day since his election has seen the 30th "Black Pope" being repeatedly compared to the 28th.

That's a rather charged statement, of course, but it has its merits... and then some.



Like his fellow Spaniard, Pedro Arrupe had spent most of his priesthood as a missionary in the land of the Rising Sun, likewise rising to its provincialate. With its advocacy for a faith made manifest in "the promotion of justice," the Basque's 18-year reign at Borgo Santo Spirito (1965-83) recast the Jesuit charism, energizing the Society's ranks in the wake of Vatican II and leading to Superior's christening as the Company's "second founder," as some of the era's efforts returned the order to the Vatican's crosshairs, culminating in John Paul II's 1981 appointment of two delegates to oversee the Society after the then-Father-General suffered a debilitating stroke. Two years later, confined to the Jesuit Curia's infirmary and unable to speak, Arrupe became the first Ignatian heir to resign, and GC33 sought to assuage the Holy See by electing the finessed Eastern scholar Peter-Hans Kolvenbach to restore the Society to ordinary governance.

While Kolvenbach's quarter-century tenure of gentle, refined conciliation has won him genuine gratitude and affection, even reverence, from his almost 20,000 confreres, the Vatican's perceived "*brutta figura*" treatment of the Dutchman's venerated predecessor had, as one well-traveled Jesuit put it at GC35's convocation, "not been forgotten" among the Company. With the electors' surprise turn to a figure who so easily evokes comparisons to Arrupe, it would seem that the depth of said feeling provides a critical key to understanding yesterday's outcome.

As the global Society spent 2007 marking the centenary of Arrupe's birth, the then-head of the Jesuits' East Asian conference [offered a reflection](#) on his "eight encounters" with the 27th successor of St Ignatius.

Given its author's election in the duo's footsteps, the piece acquires a whole new significance.

Full:

The first time I did not meet him, really. I saw him. It was late 1952 or early 1953. I was 17, in my last year of high school in Madrid. He gave a lecture on his experiences at Hiroshima after the atomic bomb. The special auditorium was packed. I had to sit on a stairway. At that time I had already decided to become a Jesuit. Fr Arrupe was the great missionary, a national hero, a man on fire.

The second time was in Japan in 1961. I had him as Provincial for almost four years. I remember his talks to scholastics. He was still on fire. He tried hard to protect us against the dangers of Japan at the time, and he was trying even harder to build the Japanese Province. He had to raise funds, recruit Jesuits from all over the world. That kept him away from us, except for Visitation time. I was his personal barber at those times; so little to cut, but so much to hear. He was a warm person and a great conversationalist.

Then it was Rome, 1970. He was already Father-General and I was struggling through a doctoral thesis at the Collegio Bellarmino. Tradition had it that the General would speak yearly to the candidates for the doctorate. The first 30 minutes were the talk of a visionary. Magnificent and inspired: the signs of the times, the post-Vatican Church, and the challenges of an emerging new world. The second half of the talk was anti-climatic; he felt that he had to justify theologically what he had presented to us, and he could not. Like Ignatius, Arrupe's vision and intuition went ahead of his theology, thank God.

We met again in Hong Kong in 1972. Colloquium II was an effort to bring together 28 'promising' young Jesuits from East and West and look ahead to the future of the Society. Actually it did not work like that. But it yielded fruit. Arrupe parachuted into the experience and stayed three days with us. He had been changed by Japan. He wanted the East to have an impact on the rest of the Society. He shared with us his concerns and, once again, he expressed very clearly his Ignatian heart and his passion for the Jesuit vocation and life.

In his key address to us, he spoke of Obedience and stated emphatically: 'If there is no Obedience, we will have "chaos" in the Society'. In his enthusiasm he pronounced 'chaos' in Spanish, which sounds very much like 'cows'. You can imagine now the confusion of the English-speakers among us. The question going around during the break was: 'Where did those cows come from?'

Next was Peninsular Malaysia in 1980. The high point of the Meeting of Major Superiors was the celebration of the Eucharist in the Church of Francis Xavier, in Malacca. The stage was perfect: a roofless and dilapidated Church with a dilapidated empty space where the body of Francis Xavier had been and from where it had been stolen (or so the story goes). Arrupe had gone through the years of misunderstandings and distrust with the Holy See. GC32 and the years after it had been rough sailing. The Homily of Arrupe on that day concentrated on the last months of Francis Xavier, his experience of abandonment, failure, loneliness in the Shangchuan Island. The Saint was going nowhere and experienced in his body the mystery of the Cross. That homily

gave us all a glimpse at his heart and at the Ignatian Spirituality we had learnt in the early years incarnated in Don Pedro. It was also a prophetic anticipation of things to come.

In 1981 he visited the Philippines. He charmed staff and participants at the EAPI who had the privilege to listen to him. The fire was still there, as well as his openness and imaginative vision of evangelisation. I had a chance to share with him a few minutes walk during one of his very few breaks. It was in Angono. He shared his concern for the Society and summed it all in his last letter on Love. This was his last word. He was ready to go. The next day he flew to Bangkok and from Bangkok to the infirmary.

I visited him in Rome three years later, 1984. I could see Francis Xavier on the shore looking at China. Don Pedro was still burning, eager to communicate, to inspire, to encourage, to continue his mission in each one of us. His warmth came through in spite of speech inability, the frustration of being in chains, the pain of the moment.

The last time was very short, in Rome again. We had a Congregation of Procurators, 1987. We could not speak with him. His light was going away, although it took still another four years to do so completely. We could only witness his passion, quietly, in prayer, in thanksgiving. We were seeing the end of a life of total consistency, of great love, of a dedication that knew nothing of conditions and reservations.

It was after this last visit that I heard the story. An old Japanese man who had received 'instruction' and baptism from a younger Fr Arrupe was sharing his memories: 'I asked to be baptised, not because he was a good catechist; not because I understood what he said (in fact I understood close to nothing); not because he tried to pull me in... But because of the Goodness of his person. If Christianity, I told myself, can produce such quality in a person, it will be good for me too.'

After Nicolás' election came to pass, *TIME* quoted an unnamed Jesuit "who said, only half-jokingly, after learning of the choice: 'He doesn't like Rome.'"

Even so, the mag wrote, the new General "will be trading in his sashimi for spaghetti"...

...just like Arrupe.

-30-

POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 06:12 

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19, 2008

"The Man God Had in Mind"

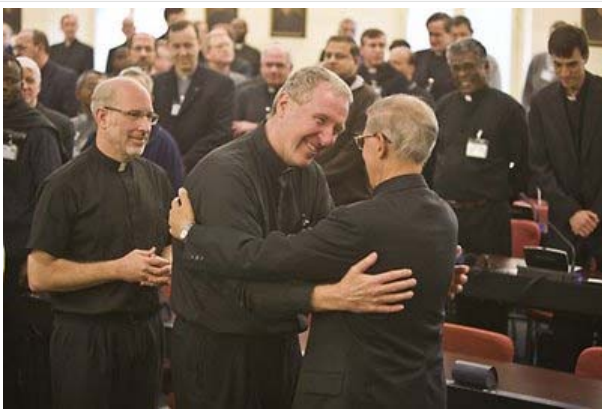




Outside the Aula, the Society's [official chronicle](#) of the day depicted the moment thus:

"Only electors were allowed in the aula; everyone else, including community members and congregation staff, had to wait in the room below and listen for the telltale applause that would signal an election. About 11:15 there was a false alarm, then at 11:45 came the loud, sustained applause let us know that we had a new Superior General. A bell in the Curia signaled that the community could enter the aula and salute the new general.

"As the door to the aula opened, the whispers swept down the stairs: "Adolfo Nicolás, it's Adolfo!" It was public Father Adolfo Nicolás, former provincial of Japan and currently president of the Jesuit Conference of East Asia and Oceania, had been selected as the 29th Superior General of the Jesuits. Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, his predecessor, read the decree formally naming him, and then Father General Nicolás placed his hand on the Holy Scriptures and professed his faith, kneeling before a crucifix in the center of the aula. Only then did the electors--beginning with Father Kolvenbach and followed by the Curia community--congratulate the new general. Many expressed their emotion and affection by a wordless hug, and some had tears in their eyes."



Much has been made of Adolfo Nicolás' absence from the commonly-held lists of *generabili*. And, candidly, that's exactly the outcome not a few Jesuits were hoping for.

Given the unprecedented length of the transition -- almost two years exactly between the first public reports of a "possible" congregation of election and today -- there were concerns that the 24 months of informal *murmuratio* would render Ignatius' foreseen 96 hours of prayer and conversation a *fait accompli*.

The five-century old process, however, proved those fears unfounded, trumping the buzzmill to produce a choice that wasn't just surprising but, in the truest sense of the word, "inspired."

As the new Father-General prepares to celebrate Sunday's [Mass of](#)

[Thanksgiving](#) -- and preach the homily that'll serve as his "inaugural address" to his Society and the wider church -- his electors have begun to speak.

Representing the Wisconsin Province, Fr David Schultenover (the editor-in-chief of *Theological Studies*) [blogged his thoughts](#):



Why Adolfo Nicolás as the new general? At age 71 (72 in April), I can imagine that the rest of the world is saying to us electors, "What were you thinking?! You couldn't find a younger man?!" Well, God alone knows the real reason. Of course, age is a factor. But there are many other factors too, factors that apparently outweigh the age factor. The first time I met Adolfo, the day he arrived, I was instantly impressed with his youthful spirit, which belied his age, and his integrity. He was clearly a man at home with himself and of good humor. In fact, I told him, kidding, that he was a marked man—kidding, because I figured that for all his personal gifts, experience, record of accomplishments, and reputation, he would be a dark horse simply because of his age. But apparently most of us—and eventually all of us, I hope—concluded that this was in fact the man God was calling to be general of the Society of Jesus. John XXIII was elected pope at age 76, and Benedict XVI at 78, so why not Adolfo Nicolás at 71? What I find especially attractive about him is that he is a professional theologian who has very broad and deep experience of a part of the world—the Far East—that is becoming increasingly important as world-hegemonies shift. He will bring that perspective to the Society of Jesus and to the church it serves. The Basque Pedro Arrupe came to us as general from Japan in 1965. Forty-three years later, the northern Spaniard Adolfo Nicolás also comes to us from Japan. I trust he'll be the proverbial wise man from the East.



And from the US Jesuit Conference, the [reflections](#) of the nation's provincials (electors all):

[USJC] President Father Thomas Smolich, SJ, who served on the Coetus Praevius (a planning committee for GC 35) with Father Nicolás, said, "The electors chose the man God had in mind." Smolich added, "Our new Father General is profoundly spiritual; when you talk to him there is a depth that is striking."

In an age where diverse cultures, religions and ways of life interact on an unprecedented scale, Father Nicolás is widely viewed as among the leading Jesuit experts on inter-religious dialogue. "His history as a scholar and theology professor, educated in both Tokyo and Rome, and his multiple language skills of east and west were also important to this international body of educators," said Father Fred Kammer, SJ, provincial of New Orleans and one of the electors. "His experiences of the dynamic emerging Church in such countries as India, Japan, China, Korea, and the Philippines and his vision for spreading the Gospel appealed to many – reminding them of the great missionary St. Francis Xavier," according to Kammer.

New York Provincial Father Jeff Chojnacki, SJ added, "his election is a bridge to all parts of the world." It is a bridge expected to reach across not only geographic divisions. Father Shogo Sumita, SJ, current provincial of Japan, recalled how Father Nicolás moved from the provincial residence to one of poorest neighborhoods. "He has a deep grace of Ignatian spirituality and a creative imagination. After serving as provincial, he decided to live and work with the poor," said Father Sumita.

Father Nicolás was born in Spain, earned a degree in systematic theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, taught at the Sophia University in Tokyo, directed the East Asia Pastoral Institute in the Philippines, served as presiding secretary of the 34th General Congregation in 1995, and speaks five languages. His visits to the United States have included stops at the Arrupe Experience, an annual preparation program for American Jesuits nearing ordination.



The Provincial of Maryland Father Tim Brown, SJ sees the election of a man with this breadth to be a "sign of unity and peace." New England Provincial Father Tom Regan adds, "We are delighted that such a holy man, one who has such a vision of the world, has been selected to lead us."

"And at 71 years old," says Father Smolich, "Nicolás walks faster than anyone I've ever seen."

PHOTOS: Don Doll SJ (1,2,4)/Dani Villanueva SJ (3,5)

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 23:36 

Habemus Papam: Jesuits Go Ad Orientem



In a dramatic echo of the Arrupe legacy, Fr Adolfo Nicolás -- the Spanish-born head of the Jesuit Conference of East Asia and Oceania -- has been elected the Society's 30th Superior-General and was rapidly confirmed in the post by Benedict XVI.

Based until now in Tokyo, Nicolás immediately takes the reins of the church's largest community of professed men.

Unlike the vast majority of those tipped for the post, the new Father-General comes short on Roman experience -- a former provincial of Japan, the theologian spent three years of study at the Gregorian University before a three decade run as a professor at Tokyo's Sofia University. He turns 72 in late April.

Hailed as "warm, bright, forward-thinking, wise, and serene" -- among other glowing attributes -- Nicolás speaks English, Italian, French, Japanese and Spanish. His election by the 217 delegates of the 35th General Congregation took place on the second ballot.

* * *

Shortly after Roman Noon, the official announcement came from the Jesuit Curia's social justice czar, Fr Fernando Franco:

We have left the election hall a few minutes ago. I am glad to announce that we have a new Superior General of the Society of Jesus. There is immense joy as the members of the Congregation approach the new General to greet and embrace him. Adolfo Nicolas SJ is a man from Asia, a theologian from Japan, but born in Palencia Spain in 1936. He represents a new generation of Spanish missionaries in Japan after Fr. Arrupe.

He joined the Society of Jesus in the novitiate of Aranjuez, a small village close to Madrid, in 1953. After completing his studies of Philosophy in Alcalá, Madrid, in 1960 he goes to Japan to immerse himself in Japanese language and culture.

In 1964 commences his Theological studies at Sophia University, Tokyo and is ordained priest on the 17th March 1967 in Tokyo.

After obtaining a Masters degree in Theology at the Gregorian Universality, Rome, he returns to Japan to become a professor of systematic theology at Sophia University. From 1978 to 1984 he becomes the director of the Pastoral Institute at Manila, Philippines and then Rector of the house for young Asian Jesuit students of Theology. From 1993 to 1999 he becomes Provincial of the Jesuit Province of Japan.

After this stint in 'power' he spent three years working in a poor immigrant parish in Tokyo. His work is difficult but he is able to help thousands of Philippine and Asian immigrants and gets a first-hand experience of their suffering. In a way, his love for the poor and downtrodden can become now, after so many years, his most important ministry.

In 2004 is called again to exercise governing functions, and is appointed responsible for the entire Jesuit region of East Asia comprising countries from Myanmar to East Timor, including the new province of China. It was during these years that he was able to support the phenomenal growth of the Jesuit presence in Vietnam and other countries.

Somebody might say that after celebrating the centenary of Fr. Arrupe, the Society has elected a General very much in his own line. It is as if the Society would like to re-affirm once more its missionary character and its commitment to all peoples and cultures.

From a [2007 profile](#):

It's been 46 years since Father Adolfo Nicolás first traveled to Japan as a missionary from Spain. His has been a long conversation, first in Japan, but also in Korea and more recently in the Philippines. It's left him convinced that the West does not have a monopoly on meaning and spirituality, and can learn a lot from the experience of Asian cultures.

'Asia has a lot yet to offer to the Church, to the whole Church, but we haven't done it yet', he says. 'Maybe we have not been courageous enough, or we haven't taken the risks that we should.'

It speaks volumes that when Father Nicolás talks about Asia, he uses the term 'we'. As President of the Jesuit Conference of South East Asia and Oceania, he's responsible for bringing Jesuits across the region together to think beyond their own countries, and confront challenges facing the globe.

The group he represents stretches from China and Myanmar in the west, to Korea in the north, Australia in the south, and Micronesia in the east. It brings together an incredibly diverse group of cultures and societies. From countries where Christianity has been strong in the past, but is on the wane, to places where Christians make up a small but vibrant minority.

Asked if people from a culture like Japan experience Ignatian Spirituality differently than those in the West, Father Nicolás says the experience was indeed different, but it had yet to be formulated.

'I think the real experience of the Japanese is different. And it should be different. But the formulation continues to be very much a Western formulation', he says.

A Japanese Jesuit, Father Katoaki, has recently translated and added comments on the book of the Exercises from a Japanese-Buddhist perspective. Father Adolfo says there has also been some discussion on whether the Exercises could be presented to non-Christians, and how that might occur.

'The question is how to give the Ignatian experience to a Buddhist', he says. 'Not maybe formulated in Christian terms, which is what Ignatius asked, but to go to the core of the experience. What happens to a person that goes through a number of exercises that really turn a person inside-out. This is still for us a big challenge.'

While some work has been done comparing the Ignatian experience with that of Hindus, he says there hasn't been a lot of work on finding similarities say in Japanese, Chinese or Korean cultures. He says East Asia has been more slow to do this in India, partly because the East Asians have a strong respect for tradition, and hence a respect for Christianity's European traditions. However, the region's remoteness also gives it more freedom to be creative.

'There is more space for experimenting, for trying, for thinking and exchanging', he says.

Essentially, he says the Exercises are about letting God guide people. This is something that those directing retreats have been wary of in the past, but something that is important when dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds.

'The fact is, if God is guiding then the Japanese will be guided the Japanese way. And the same with the Chinese, and with people from other religions', he says.

'Then the director simply has to be perceptive, to see signs that here God is saying something that I don't understand, and be humble enough to say continue as long as you keep sane and balanced etc.'

Others throughout Asia are dealing more directly with questions of cultural difference, working as missionaries in countries like Cambodia and Myanmar. Father Nicolás says he's wary of missionaries who don't enter into the lives of the people, but keep the patterns of their home cultures – Europe or Latin America - alive in their mind. For them, it's not about exchange but about teaching and imposing orthodoxy.

'Those who enter into the lives of the people, they begin to question their own positions very radically', he says. 'Because they see genuine humanity in the simple people, and yet they see that this genuine humanity is finding a depth of simplicity, of honesty, of goodness that does not come from our sources.'

That conversation must continue, if we are to learn from Asia and Asia is to learn from us.

'That is a tremendous challenge, and I think it's a challenge that we have to face. We don't have a monopoly, and we have a lot to learn.'

* * *

Prior to the opening of GC35, the new Father-General wrote of his "six hopes" for the gathering... the text follows in full:

Can we be realistic?

I can still remember GC34. They are fond, humorous and challenging memories. But we were not realistic.

Just imagine: 220 Jesuits decide to tackle 46 topics, work on them for three months, produce 26 documents and solemnly handle and approve 416 complementary norms. Thus, we were not surprised when crises emerged: crises of content, of management, and of hope. Next year we will be close to 230 members.

It is my ardent hope that we be realistic as to what a GC can do decently well, what it cannot, and what it should leave to the new Father-General and his team.

Can we be transparent?

Transparency has become more difficult in our small world. When was the last time that a great leader could confess substantial sins in public and continue leading the flock, the country, the Church?

And yet, our GCs have always started with an honest and frank acknowledgment of where we are going wrong, what is missing in our lives, what has been distorted or wounded of our spirit, what needs conversion, renewal or radical reform.

It is my sincere hope that we can do that again.

Can we be accompanied?

The best of a General Congregation is the event itself, as an 'event of the heart'. This is a time of intensive search and of exhilarating exchange, where questions and answers do not come lineally, but dance within us and around us, at the rhythm of fraternal and humble mutual openness.

My hope is that this happens to the whole Society of Jesus. I hope that we all take an active part in preparing the Congregation from inside our common issues. Prayer, reflection and exchange are the gift and the contribution.

I hope that those who do not go to Rome, will monitor and follow events closely, with the same hope, the same intensity of search, the same willingness to change and be led by the Spirit of our Lord. This will be our best accompaniment.

Can we be creative?

I have a feeling, still imprecise and difficult to define, that there is something important in our religious life that needs attention and is not getting it. We have certainly been diligent in addressing our problems whenever we have seen them: Poverty (GC32 in 1974 and 34 in 1995), Chastity (GC34), Community (Provincials at Loyola)... But the uneasiness in the Society and in the Church has not disappeared.

The question for us is: Is it enough that we are happy with our life and are improving our service and ministry? Isn't there also an important factor in the perception of people (Vox Populi) that should drive us to some deeper reflection on religious life today? How come we elicit so much admiration and so little following?

Thus, one of my hopes is that in GC35 we begin a process of dynamic and open reflection on our religious life that might begin a process of re-creation of the Society for our times, not only in the quality of our services, but also and mostly in the quality of our personal and community witness to the Church and the World.

Can we be practical?

The age in which we live and our younger Jesuits will live, is an age of very rapid change. New technologies and new communication possibilities can make a great difference. We are using some. We do not feel free to use others. Maybe a certain restraint in using new means might be good for us. Maybe not. It is so difficult to know what is going to happen seven, ten years from now.

It is my hope that the coming GC opens the way for future General Congregations, giving the new General and his Council the freedom to discern and choose the best means to prepare and to run the Congregations of the future.

Can we be short?

We would not like GC35 to become another exercise in patience. A General Congregation is not a "Panacea" for all the problems we might face. It is a help of great value, but basically oriented to the ongoing growth in the Spirit and the Apostolate of the whole Society.

Thus, my final hope is that we will be so clear as to the purposes, and so focused in our work, that we can do this service to the Society and the Church within a reasonably short time.

PHOTO: Don Doll SJ

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 06:19 

"The Election Begins" ...





...and the rest of the world -- (White) Pope included -- awaits the result.

PHOTO: Don Doll SJ

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 04:16 

FRIDAY, JANUARY 18, 2008

The Mandate of Ignatius



It's Election Day in Rome... and as you can see, the Ballot Boxes are already in place.

In about 12 hours or so (1100UTC, 6am Eastern) the church'll have a new "Black Pope" as the Jesuits of the General Congregation choose one of their own as the Society's 30th Superior-General -- a mission given under obedience to last the length of his days.

As the *murmuratio* winds down quietly, the delegates are said to be "amazed" at the wisdom, beauty, and prayerfulness of the five-century-old process. And while its resulting mandate begins immediately for the one tasked with it, a moving inaugural ritual will take place on Father-General's first full day in office.

On Sunday afternoon, just before celebrating his first Mass as leader of the Catholic world's largest, most storied and influential religious community, the 29th successor of Ignatius of Loyola will make a "*statio*," or "station stop," at the room of the Jesuit founder. Known as the *camerete*, it was there that Ignatius wrote the constitutions governing the life of his small band, the room where he spent the last years of his life. After his death within its walls, it was converted into a chapel which, though physically overshadowed by the massive Gesu church next door, stands as its humble yet towering foundation.

Joined by a small group representing his electors, the new General will spend a moment in silent prayer. A Jesuit deacon will open the Book of the Gospels to the [23rd chapter](#) of Matthew and read aloud its exhortation:

As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi.' You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers.

Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in

heaven.

Do not be called 'Master'; you have but one master, the Messiah.

The greatest among you must be your servant.

Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

That they might "continue to illumine the prayer of the Society," the opened Gospels will then be placed upon the chapel's altar.

At that point, the senior elector -- likely, in a first, the General-emeritus Peter-Hans Kolvenbach -- will turn to the Superior and read him the Ignatian exhortation, written in the same room, of the proper attributes of the good General.

Fulltext:

Your Fatherhood, the Lord has chosen you as successor of St Ignatius in the leadership of his Company.

Remember the qualities that the Constitutions recommend that the Superior General must expect of himself: be always united intimately with the Lord, for familiarity with God in prayer and in all things is the fountain of grace for the entire apostolic work of the Society.

Be for us an example of virtue, let charity for all be resplendent in you, and true humility: this will make you lovable before our Lord God and before men.

Be free from passions, live with mortification and rectitude, that you may always be pure in your justice and each one inspired by your integrity.

Know to moderate kindness with firmness, just indulgence with severity, that you might match the love of Christ the Lord.

With strength of spirit, support the weakness of the many and persevere constantly in the face of adversity, trusting not in your own strengths, but in the love and grace of God. Be firm in doctrine, wise in your judgments, prudent in your decisions, illumined in discerning the spirits, vigilant in leading to fulfillment that which is entrusted to you.

Seek not the esteem or the honors of men, but seek rather to please only the Lord, to receive from him your just reward.

Love the Company, not as your possession, but as that which has been entrusted to you, that it might bring forth countless fruits of charity and service; and when the owner of the house returns, know that from this you will make account before his just mercy.

Remember, then, that you are given to us as a guide, so that in watching and following you in the acceptance of our own vocation, all of us might persevere and grow in that way which leads to the Lord, with the end of reaching that for which we have been created and called.

May the good Father bring to completion that which he has begun in you, for the good of the church, of the Company and

of men.

In all things love and serve.

(*Whispers* translation from the Italian original.)

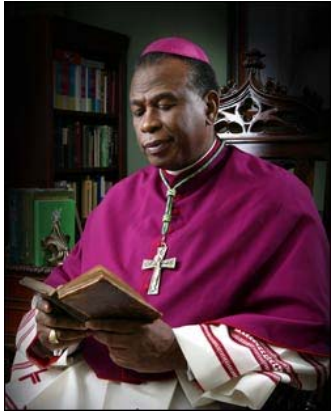
PHOTO: Don Doll SJ

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 18:00



Braxton Speaks



Issues [statement](#) to CNS:

In a Jan. 17 statement sent to Catholic News Service, Bishop Braxton said he would meet with the finance council within a few days.

"I am scheduled to meet with the finance council in the coming days to examine the question of restricted and unrestricted funds of the

diocese," he said in the statement. "It is my intention that these expenditures are paid from funds that have no restrictions on them."

Bishop Braxton told CNS that after that meeting a fuller explanation of the situation would be made available.

The statement said he regrets the "controversy caused by the media discussion" of a letter from the finance council that took issue with his purchase of items for the church. The statement did not elaborate further.

Bishop Braxton confirmed to CNS in a phone call Jan. 15 that a letter to him from the finance council questioning the purchase of vestments for the cathedral had been forwarded to the Vatican's nuncio in the United States, Archbishop Pietro Sambi....

Msgr. John Kozar, director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in the United States, told CNS the national office has no formal system of auditing collections in the dioceses, although they are required to send in financial reports.

"We trust in the integrity of the individual dioceses," he said.

Msgr. Kozar said collections for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in the Diocese of Belleville have averaged about \$50,000 in recent years.

PHOTO: Diocese of Belleville

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 17:38



Big Sky Gets its Bishop

Before Sambi, Mahony, 20 bishops, 70 priests and 1,000 of the hometown crowd, the year's first event on the national circuit saw Bishop Michael Warfel [take the reins](#) of the diocese of Great Falls-Billings.



The Montana see of 55,000 -- a fold spread across a staggering 95,000 square miles of Big Sky country -- had been waiting 18 months for a new shepherd.

Warfel came to Montana from Alaska, where he served in ministry for more than 30 years, first as parish priest and then for the past 11 years as bishop of the Diocese of Juneau.

At the start of the ceremony, clergy entered the airy sanctuary two by two as members of Montana's American Indian tribes beat on drums and sang. Tribal members also performed a smudging and purification ceremony, and the fragrant smoke from the sweet grass mingled with the incense from the Catholic censer....

The installing prelate, Archbishop John Vlazny of Portland, Ore., in opening remarks, said the bishops of several Western states, including Oregon, Idaho, Washington, Montana and Alaska, often gather. Knowing Warfel through that connection, Vlazny told the people in the crowded pews, "You indeed have been blessed."

Then Archbishop Pietro Sambi, the papal nuncio from Washington, D.C., who represents Rome, stepped forward to address the crowd.

"I am truly happy to be with you this afternoon as Bishop Warfel is solemnly installed as the seventh bishop of Great Falls-Billings," he said in a heavy Italian accent.

Sambi went on to say that there are three essential aspects to serving as a bishop. The first is the ability to model how to live a Christian life, to provide an example of holiness, charity and humility.

"Like the Lord Jesus rising early and going off on his own to pray, the bishop should be a man of prayer for himself and for his apostolic mission," Sambi said.

Second, he said, a bishop must be an authentic evangelizer, and, third, he must be a unifier of people.

Reflect on those last three grafs for a minute....

...

...

Keep reflecting...

...



....

OK, continue:

Warfel acknowledged that he was accepting the position of his own volition.

"I am here with great excitement and joy to serve the people here," Warfel said. "It is my desire to do nothing more than serve with the love of God manifested by Christ on the cross."

He then sat down in an ornate wooden chair and was handed a golden staff, signifying his installation as bishop of the Montana diocese. The room erupted in applause.



Tribal members then beat drums and sang a song of honor, and one of the singers handed a feather to Warfel.

As the Mass proceeded, Warfel injected humor when he stood to deliver the homily. Eleven years and few weeks before, he said, when he was a happy and content priest in Anchorage, Alaska, he got an early-morning phone call - "5:40 to be precise" - and was told the papal nuncio wanted to speak with

him.

"What's a nuncio?" Warfel asked on the phone, garnering laughter from his audience. "Well, it was early and I'd only been awake a minute."

That's when he learned from the papal nuncio that he had been appointed the bishop of the Juneau Diocese.

"He said the Holy Father appointed you bishop of Juneau and, of course, you accept, don't you?" Warfel said, smiling. Four weeks later, Warfel was the bishop of Juneau.

Then, 11 weeks ago and a few days, he said, he was a happy and contented bishop living in Juneau when he got another call, this time inviting him to become bishop of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings.

"Not only did I know what a nuncio was," he said, "but I recognized his voice almost immediately."

It also helped that the phone call came a little later, at 7 a.m.

"I said without much of a pause, 'Of course I accept,'" Warfel said, adding that he's learned the importance of accepting a call whenever it comes.



At a retreat 11 days ago, Warfel said, he asked for grace in his new post to be a strong, loving leader.

"I want to be your shepherd," he told his audience, "to be with you in times of celebration and in time of hardship, struggle and suffering."

His focus in the coming months will be to travel and meet as many people as he can in the diocese.

"At the same time, I will continue what I've always done as a pastor and a bishop, to do the mission of the church," Warfel said.

That mission, he said, includes providing encouragement and support to help people grow in their faith; to reach out to Catholics disenfranchised from their faith; to reach out to people without a faith; and to reach out to other faiths.

In an interview, Warfel spoke of the importance of [being relational](#):

His total time in Alaska was 33 years, and he admits it was tough to leave the state and the people he loved.

"I remember walking out of my home for the last time, my core relationships with people, and just the beauty, the lifestyle of Alaska," Warfel said. "You grow very close to people."

Part of that has to do with the size of the Juneau diocese, just 6,000 people, a number dwarfed by the 51,000 Catholics in the Great Falls-Billings Diocese. But he said he already thinks Montanans have the same values and character as the people of Alaska.

Warfel said his priority as the new head of the diocese will be to listen and observe. "I don't have any goals yet because I don't know a lot about the diocese, the concerns, the issues," he said a couple of hours before he was installed as bishop.

Over the next few months, Warfel plans to hit the road and visit as many of them as possible.

"This is my year to get out and listen, meet people and develop relationships," Warfel said. "The relationships are key."



There isn't a shortcut to connecting with people, he said, joking that he sees himself as a slow cooker, not a quick-cooking microwave oven.

"If you want all of the flavors to blend together, it takes time and there's no rushing it," he said. "Relationships, they don't just happen."

One relationship he intends to maintain is with the Rev. Jay Peterson. In the 18 months after Bishop Anthony Milone resigned, Peterson served as acting administrator of the diocese.

Warfel said Peterson will resume his previous post as vicar general of the diocese.

"One of the first things I told Father Jay is, 'Don't pack your bags,' " he said. "He's the historical memory for me."

While bishop of the Diocese of Juneau, Warfel on two occasions had to deal with sexual-abuse cases involving

priests. He said the issue is one that happens all throughout society, not just among priests.

But Warfel said should it surface in his new diocese, he won't hesitate to deal with it. Every child must be provided a safe environment, he said, an environment in which no harm can befall him or her.

"Number one, I make sure it doesn't happen," he said. "But number two, if it does happen, I handle it quickly and transparently and very honestly."

To shove it under the rug is inconceivable, he said. "To ignore it, to cast it aside - the only way to describe that is sinful," he said.

To mark his first weekend in the diocese, the new arrival will celebrate all four Sunday Masses at the co-cathedral in Billings, with receptions following each.

PHOTOS: Casey Riffe/*Billings Gazette*

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 09:50 

Protest Digest

Clearly, not even forcing a papal cancellation will make some at La Sapienza happy -- another [anti-Ratzi demonstration](#) took place yesterday:

Riot police stood guard near the loud but peaceful march at Rome's La Sapienza university, which was founded by a pope more than 700 years ago and is now at the centre of a national debate about the role of religion in secular society.

Students marched in the rain with banners reading "Freedom for the University," after decrying what they view as Church meddling in Italian affairs through its public stance on issues like abortion, gay rights and euthanasia.

The tone was different inside at the ceremonies marking the start of the academic year, with speakers warning of censorship of religious leaders in the name of secularism after the Pope decided on Tuesday to scrap his appearance.

The speech the Pontiff had been due to deliver was read aloud by a faculty member to a standing ovation and shouts of "Viva il Papa" from a group of students.

"Ideological vetoes of any kind are unacceptable. Everyone must have space and be respected, whatever their opinion," Renato Guarini, La Sapienza's chancellor, told the university.

He said he planned to invite the Pope again.

The German Pontiff decision not to attend Thursday's ceremony followed protests by a small but vociferous group of students and faculty members. Some occupied part of the campus to demand he stay away.

Rome Mayor Walter Veltroni described the episode as "unacceptable" during his address to the college.

"Intolerance can never be allowed to remove someone's right to speak. Less still if ... it is Pope Benedict -- a cultural, spiritual and moral reference point for millions," he said....

"The fight pays off: Ratzinger's visit to the university was rejected! We must continue to fight against the Vatican and its servants," read a pamphlet distributed by some students.

...and in Belleville, [the saga continues](#):

Protestors outside the Belleville chancery office Thursday demanded Bishop Edward Braxton disclose information surrounding allegations he misused money earmarked for the poor.

David Clohessy, spokesman for Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), joined seven other protestors saying Catholics deserve better than the secrecy surrounding Braxton's purchase of \$10,100 for office furniture and \$8,000 for new vestments.

Fairview Heights resident Jeff Mueller, who is a member of both SNAP and the Fellowship of Southern Illinois Laity, said such conduct would not be tolerated in any other context.

"I cannot for the life of me imagine why people keep giving them money," Mueller said.

Braxton did not respond to a News-Democrat request to comment.

The groups urge Catholics to donate elsewhere or earmark contributions for specific purposes.

The diocese's 18-member Presbyteral Council, headed by Braxton, had hoped the bishop would clarify the spending during a Monday meeting. But the Rev. Jerry Wirth, the council's chairman, said Thursday that Braxton told the group that only the diocese's finance council -- whose members are sworn to secrecy -- could deal with allegations of misuse of funds.

"I guess what we're asking for is accountability and transparency by the bishop on issues, particularly on finances. So far, it seems to be a matter of obfuscation," Wirth said, noting he's "very, very worried" the diocese's faithful, given the allegations, may curtail giving.

"It just looks very bad," said Wirth, pastor of St. Joseph parish in Olney.

Of course, the Italians have their own term for that.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 09:26 

The Prayer, Lifted

In a significant "extended hand" for the future of Catholic-Jewish dialogue, B16 has reportedly decided to change the 1962 Missal's controversial Good Friday prayer for the conversion of the Jews.

Reported today by the well-connected Andrea Tornielli of *Il Giornale*, a formal announcement of the move is expected "within days" -- the Triduum is, after all, but nine weeks away.

After its July "liberalization," the intercession of the the pre-Conciliar liturgy imploring God to remove the Jewish people "from the darkness" and "lift the veil from their hearts" came under fire from numerous Jewish leaders around the world -- including, Tornielli writes, both the Sephardic and Ashkenazic chief rabbis of Jerusalem, who wrote the Pope to request the "modification" of the text.

According to the daily, Benedict himself prepared the draft of the decision, which will be released through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. While the passages deemed viscerally offensive will be struck, the prayer's original emphasis on conversion is to be retained.

The Pope would hope to visit the Holy Land in 2009, provided the current wrinkles in Vatican-Israeli relations are smoothed out.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 01:45



THURSDAY, JANUARY 17, 2008

Marini Delayed is... Marini Denied?



Archbishop Piero Marini's scheduled book-tour of the States has been indefinitely postponed.

With stops planned in Chicago, Boston, New York and at Notre Dame, the mid-February

swing to promote the former papal MC's [newly-released treatise](#) on the liturgical reform had been highly awaited, with an unusual level of mass-media interest already piqued.

While the release has received prominent coverage in the Catholic press, including last month's [London launch](#) of *A Challenging Reform* (which took place in the Throne Room of the archbishops of Westminster), the book's press has also amplified Marini's critique of *Summorum Pontificum* -- last summer's *motu proprio* permitting wider celebration of the 1962 Missal. In a December interview, the archbishop [told the National Catholic Reporter](#) that he didn't "have any nostalgia for this older rite," while likening those given to said nostalgia to the ancient Israelites who, despite their liberation from Egypt, began to long for the "onions and melons" found there.

Marini served two decades as chief liturgist to John Paul II and Benedict XVI before being named in October to the presidency of the Pontifical Commission for Eucharistic Congresses.

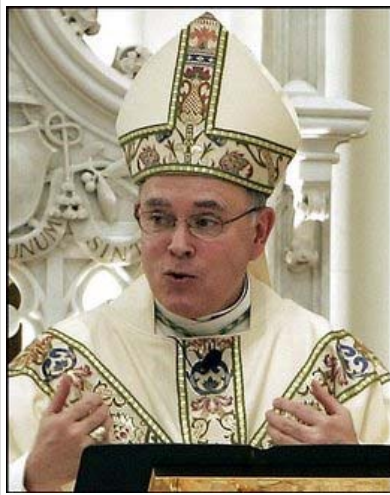
Although a rescheduling of the US tour is being discussed for a later date (most likely November), with the official line running that the archbishop had become "concerned" about coming in the run-up to the Pope's mid-April visit, another source informed of the change reported that the cancellation was sought by Benedict's Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone SDB.

-30-

POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 16:00 

"Render Unto Caesar..."

This election year's chief ecclesiastical contribution to the nation's public square will come with the release of the Doubleday volume of said title by Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver... which not a few are awaiting with bated breath.



While the exact pub-date of *Render Unto Caesar* hasn't yet surfaced, the Capuchin prelate offers something of a preview: "[10 points](#)" of faithful citizenship in his current column for the archdiocesan weekly (emphases original):

Personal witness is always the best proof of what we claim to believe. And this year, like every other year, with or without an election, we need to apply the idea of Catholic witness in a special way to our public life as citizens. We might find it useful to remember 10 simple points as we move toward November.

1. George Orwell said that one of the biggest dangers for modern democratic life is dishonest political language. Dishonest language leads to dishonest politics — which then leads to bad public policy and bad law. So we need to speak and act in a spirit of truth.

2. "Catholic" is a word that has real meaning. We don't control or invent that meaning as individuals. We inherit it from the Gospel and the experience of the Church over the centuries. We can choose to be something else, but if we choose to call ourselves *Catholic*, then that word has consequences for what we believe and how we act. We can't truthfully claim to be Catholic and then act like we're not.

3. Being a Catholic is a bit like being married. We have a relationship with the Church and with Jesus Christ that's very

similar to being a spouse. And that has consequences. If a man says he loves his wife, his wife will want to see the evidence in his love and fidelity. The same applies to our relationship with God. If we say we're Catholic, we need to *show* that by our love for the Church and our fidelity to what she teaches and believes. Otherwise we're just fooling ourselves, because God certainly *won't* be fooled.

4. The Church is not a political organism. She has no interest in partisanship because getting power or running governments is not what she's about, and the more closely she identifies herself with any single party, the fewer people she can effectively reach.

5. However, Scripture and Catholic teaching *do* have public consequences because they guide us in how we should act in relation to one another. Loving God requires that we also love the people He created, which means we need to treat them with justice, charity and mercy. Being a Catholic involves solidarity with other people. The Catholic faith has social justice implications — and that means it also has cultural, economic and political implications. The Catholic faith is never primarily about politics; but Catholic social action — including political action — is a natural byproduct of the Church's moral message. We can't call ourselves Catholic, and then simply stand by while immigrants get mistreated, or the poor get robbed, or unborn children get killed. *The Catholic faith is always personal, but never private.* If our faith is real, then it will bear fruit in our public decisions and behaviors, including our political choices.

6. Each of us needs to follow his or her own *properly formed* conscience. But conscience doesn't emerge from a vacuum. It's not a matter of personal opinion or preference. If our conscience has the habit of telling us what we want to hear on difficult issues, then it's probably badly formed. A healthy conscience is the voice of God's truth in our hearts, and it should usually make us *uncomfortable*, because none of us is yet a saint. The way we get a healthy conscience is by submitting it and shaping it to the will of God; and the way we find God's will is by opening our hearts to the counsel and guidance of the Church that Jesus left us. If we find ourselves disagreeing as Catholics with the Catholic teaching of our Church on a serious matter, it's probably not the Church that's wrong. The problem is much more likely with us.

7. But how do we make good political choices when so many different issues are so important and complex? The first principle of Christian social thought is: *Don't deliberately kill the innocent, and don't collude in allowing somebody else to do it.* The right to life is the foundation of every other human right. The reason the abortion issue is so foundational is not because Catholics love little babies — although we certainly do — but because revoking the personhood of unborn children makes every other definition of personhood and human rights politically contingent.

8. So can a Catholic in good conscience support a "pro-choice" candidate? The answer is: *I can't and I won't.* But I do know some serious Catholics — people whom I admire — who will. I think their reasoning is mistaken. But at the very least they

do sincerely struggle with the abortion issue, and it causes them real pain. And even more importantly: *They don't keep quiet about it*; they don't give up their efforts to end permissive abortion; they keep lobbying their party and their elected representatives to change their pro-abortion views and protect the unborn. Catholics can support "pro-choice" candidates if they support them despite — not because of — their "pro-choice" views. But they also need a compelling proportionate reason to justify it.

9. What is a "proportionate" reason when it comes to the abortion issue? It's the kind of reason we will be able to explain, with a clean heart, to the victims of abortion when we meet them face to face in the next life — which we most certainly will. If we're confident that these victims will accept our motives as something more than an alibi, then we can proceed.

10. Lastly, the heart of truly "faithful" citizenship is this: We're better citizens when we're more faithful Catholics. The more authentically *Catholic* we are in our lives, choices, actions and convictions, the more truly we will contribute to the moral and political life of our nation.

PHOTO: AP/Ed Andrieski

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 15:16 

On Election Eve, Pope to Jesuits: Remember the Fourth Vow



Within 48 hours -- likely early Saturday morning, Eastern time -- the (figurative) Black Smoke will rise from Borgo Santo Spirito with news that the 30th Superior-General of the Jesuits has been elected, and a scene like the above will ensue from the 217 electors.

With the 96 hours of *murmuratio* half-past and all quiet at the Jesuit Curia, made public this morning was a message sent to the General Congregation by B16 earlier this week, in which the pontiff underscored the Jesuits' mission of especial obedience to the Pope and offered his wish that the GC would reaffirm strongly the community's "total adhesion to Catholic doctrine, in particular on those neuralgic points which today are strongly attacked by secular culture, as for example the relationship between Christ and religions; some aspects of the theology of liberation; and various

points of sexual morality, especially as regards the indissolubility of marriage and the pastoral care of homosexual persons."

Dated 10 January and addressed to the General-emeritus Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, the letter provides no small amount of reinforcement to the [opening message](#) given the body by the prefect of the "Congregation for Religious" Cardinal Franc Rode CM four days earlier.

Fulltext:

On the occasion of the 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, it is my fervent desire to extend to you and to all those taking part in the Assembly my most cordial greetings, together with an assurance of my affection and of my constant spiritual nearness to you. I know how important for the life of the Society is this event which you are celebrating, and I further know that, consequently, it has been prepared with great care. This is a providential occasion for impressing upon the Society of Jesus that renewed ascetic and apostolic impulse which is wished by all, so that Jesuits might fulfill completely their mission and confront the challenges of the modern world with that faith to Christ and to the Church which distinguished the prophetic action of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and his first companions.

The Apostle writes to the faithful of Thessalonica of having announced to them the gospel of God, "encouraging you and imploring you" — Paul specifies — "to comport yourselves in a manner worthy of God who calls you to his kingdom and to his glory" (1 Th. 2:12), and he adds: "Indeed on account of this we continually thank God because, having received the divine word preached by us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it truly is, as the word of God, which works in you who believe" (1 Th. 2:13). The word of God therefore is first "received", i.e., heard, and then — penetrating all the way to the heart — it is "welcomed", and who receives it recognizes that God speaks through the agent sent to deliver it: in this way the word acts in believers. As then, so even today evangelization demands a total and faithful adhesion to the word of God: adhesion first of all to Christ and to attentive listening to his Spirit which guides the Church; humble obedience to the Pastors whom God has placed to guide his people; and prudent and frank dialogue with the social, cultural, and religious appeals of our time. All this presupposes, as we know, an intimate communion with Him who calls us to be friends and disciples, a unity of life and of action which is fed by listening to his word, by contemplation and by prayer, by detachment from the mentality of the world and by unceasing conversion toward his love so that it may be He, the Christ, who lives and works in each of us. Here is the secret of authentic success for the apostolic and missionary commitment of every Christian, and even more of all those called to a more direct service of the Gospel.

Such an awareness is certainly well present among those taking part in the General Congregation, and I am eager to honor the great work already completed by the preparatory commission which in the course of 2007 has examined the postulates sent by Provinces and indicated the themes to be faced. I would like to direct my thoughts of gratitude in the

first place to you, dear and venerated Father Superior General, who since 1983 has guided the Society of Jesus in an enlightened, wise, and prudent manner, seeking in every way to maintain it in the channel of its founding charism. For objective reasons, you have at various times asked to be relieved of so heavy a post, assumed with a great sense of responsibility at a moment in your Order's history which was not easy. I express to you my most heartfelt gratitude for the service you have rendered to the Society of Jesus and, more generally, to the Church. My sentiments of gratitude extend to your closest collaborators, to the participants of the General Congregation, and to all Jesuits scattered in every part of the world. To all and to each should arrive this greeting from the Successor of Peter, who follows with affection and esteem the multiple and appreciated apostolic works of the Jesuits, and who encourages all to continue in the path opened by your holy Founder and walked by innumerable hosts of your brothers dedicated to the cause of Christ, many of whom are inscribed by the Church among its saints and blessed. From heaven, may they protect and sustain the Society of Jesus in the mission which it carries out in this our current age, marked by numerous and complex social, cultural, and religious challenges.

Indeed regarding this theme, how can one not recognize the valid contribution which the Society offers to the Church's activity in various fields and in many ways? Truly a great and meritorious contribution, one which only the Lord will be able to rightly reward! As did my venerated Predecessors, the Servants of God Paul VI and John Paul II, I too gladly wish to take this opportunity of a General Congregation to bring such a contribution to light and, at the same time, to offer for your common reflection some considerations which might be of encouragement for you and a stimulus to implement ever better the ideal of the Society, in full fidelity to the Magisterium of the Church, such as described in the following formula which is well familiar to you: "To serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the Cross and to serve the Lord alone and the Church, his spouse, under the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ on earth" (Apostolic Letter *Exposcit debitum*, 21 July 1550). One treats here of a "peculiar" fidelity confirmed also, by not a few among you, in a vow of immediate obedience to the Successor of Peter "*perinde ac cadaver*". The Church has even more need today of this fidelity of yours, which constitutes a distinctive sign of your Order, in this era which warns of the urgency of transmitting in an integral manner to our contemporaries — distracted by many discordant voices — the unique and immutable message of salvation which is the Gospel, "not as the word of men, but as it truly is, as the word of God", which works in those who believe.

That this might come to pass, it is indispensable — as earlier the beloved John Paul II reminded participants of the 34th General Congregation — that the life of the members of the Society of Jesus, as also their doctrinal research, be always animated by a true spirit of faith and communion in "humble fidelity to the teachings of the Magisterium" (*Insegnamenti*, vol. I, pp. 25-32). I heartily hope that the present Congregation affirms with clarity the authentic charism of the Founder so as to encourage all Jesuits to promote true and

healthy Catholic doctrine. As Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, I had the opportunity to appreciate the valid collaboration of Jesuit Consultors and experts, who, in full fidelity to their charism, contributed in a considerable way to the faithful promotion and reception of the Magisterium. Certainly this is not a simple undertaking, especially when called to announce the Gospel in very different social and cultural contexts and when having to deal with different mentalities. I therefore sincerely appreciate such labor placed at the service of Christ, labor which is fruitful for the true good of souls in the measure in which one lets oneself be guided by the Spirit, remaining humble as regard the teachings of the Magisterium, having reference to those key principles of the ecclesial vocation of the theologian which are delineated in the Instruction *Donum veritatis*.

The evangelizing work of the Church very much counts on the formative responsibility which the Society has in the areas of theology, of spirituality, and of mission. And, really so as to offer the entire Society of Jesus a clear orientation which might be a support for generous and faithful apostolic dedication, it could prove extremely useful that the General Congregation reaffirm, in the spirit of Saint Ignatius, its own total adhesion to Catholic doctrine, in particular on those neuralgic points which today are strongly attacked by secular culture, as for example the relationship between Christ and religions; some aspects of the theology of liberation; and various points of sexual morality, especially as regards the indissolubility of marriage and the pastoral care of homosexual persons.

Reverend and dear Father, I am convinced that the Society senses the historic importance of this General Congregation and, guided by the Holy Spirit, wants once again — as the beloved John Paul II said in January 1995 — to reaffirm “unequivocally and without any hesitation its specific way to God, which St. Ignatius sketched in the *Formula Instituti*: loving fidelity to your charism will be the certain source of renewed effectiveness” (*Insegnamenti*, vol. XVIII/1, 1995, p. 26). Furthermore, the words my venerated Predecessor Paul VI directed to the Society in another analogous circumstance appear so very current: “All of us must be vigilant so that the necessary adaptation will not be accomplished to the detriment of the fundamental identity or essential character of the role of the Jesuit as is described in the *Formula Instituti* as the history and particular spirituality of the Order propose it, and as the authentic interpretation of the very needs of the times seem still to require it. This image must not be altered; it must not be distorted.” (*Insegnamenti*, vol. XII, 1974, pp. 1181-1182)

The continuity of the teachings of the Successors of Peter stands to demonstrate the great attention and care which they show toward the Jesuits, their esteem for you, and the desire to be able to count always on the precious contribution of the Society to the life of the Church and to the evangelization of the world. I entrust the General Congregation and the entire Society of Jesus to the intercession of your holy Founder and the saints of your Order, and to the maternal protection of Mary, so that every spiritual son of Saint Ignatius might be able to keep before his eyes “first of all God and then the

nature of this his Institute" (*Formula Instituti*, 1). With such sentiments, I assure you of a constant remembrance in prayer and in a heartfelt way I impart to you, Reverend Father, and to the Fathers of the General Congregation and to the entire Society of Jesus, a special Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 10 January 2008

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

Come Saturday, Election Day will proceed as follows (all times Rome):

The day will begin at 8:00 with the concelebrated Mass at the Church of the Holy Spirit which is across the Curia. At 9:30 the electors will convene in the aula, recite the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, listen to an exhortation by Father Jacques Gellard, Assistant *ad providentiam*, and continue in personal prayer for the rest of an hour.

As prescribed by the Formula, each elector writes in his own hand, on the ballot he has received, the name of the one whom he chooses to be Superior General. After the ballots have been completed, Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, the Secretary of the Congregation, Father Orlando Torres and his Assistant, Father Ignacio Echarte swear to God and in the presence of the electors to perform faithfully the duties of receiving and making public the votes. The votes are then collected and counted. The one who receives a simple majority of 109 votes is considered elected. The name of the one elected is immediately communicated to the Holy Father.

The Secretary of the Congregation handwrites the Decretum of election which is signed by Father Kolvenbach. Father Kolvenbach reads the Decretum in Latin: *Ego Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S.J., auctoritate Sedis Apostolicae et universae Societatis, Reverendum Patrem N...declaro electum in Praepositum Generalem Societatis Jesu, in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti*. ("I declare Father N...elected as General of the Society of Jesus, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"). The newly elected General turns to the crucifix which has been placed in the center of the aula, and makes his profession of faith: I, N... firmly believe all and each of the truths contained in the Symbol of the faith. And proceeds to read the Creed.

At this point, all the electors, beginning with Father Kolvenbach, the Secretary and his Assistant, come forward to greet the new Superior General. When all the electors have greeted the new General the doors of the aula are opened and the Curia community greets Father General. The election ends with a procession to the chapel for a short prayer of thanksgiving.

On Sunday afternoon, the new Father-General will offer a Mass of Thanksgiving in the Gesu Church.

A few minutes before the Mass, the newly elected Superior General, accompanied by four electors and a deacon, will enter the rooms of Saint Ignatius (camerette). In the place where Father Ignatius wrote the Constitutions, the group will pause for a moment of silent prayer. The deacon will proclaim the following passage from the Gospel of Saint Mathew (Mt.

2: 8-12): You must not be called "teacher" for you are all brothers and have only one Teacher, [...] Nor should be called "leader" because your one and only leader is the Messiah. The greatest among you must be your servant. [...].

The most senior member of the electors will turn to Father General and remind him of the kind of person Part IX of [the Jesuit] Constitutions says the Superior General ought to be. In the rooms where Saint Ignatius wrote these words, they will hold an especially poignant meaning.

And, lastly, the opening prayer for Election Morning's Mass of the Holy Spirit reads thus:

O God, Creator and Lord,
in your almighty Wisdom and goodness
you guide and uphold this least Society,
to undertake that which you have deigned us to commence:
enlighten, we beseech you, with the light of your Spirit,
those who have the responsibility of choosing a leader
to guide us in this way that leads to you,
and preserve in unity and love
this apostolic body which you have called to your service,
under the standard of the cross.
We ask this through Jesus Christ your only Son our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for
ever and ever.

PHOTO: Don Doll SJ

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 11:16

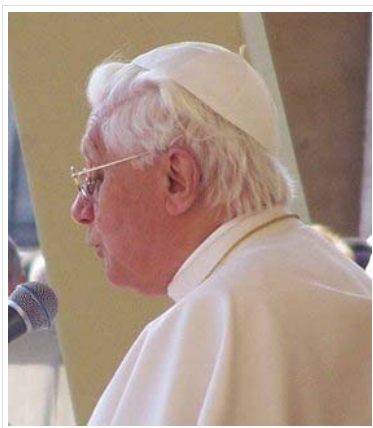


The Forbidden Text

Performing a service that the Pope's staff get paid to do (but didn't), *AsiaNews* has produced a full English translation of the lecture B16 was supposed to give (but couldn't) today at the University of Rome at La Sapienza.

Full:

It is a great joy for me to meet the community of "La Sapienza - Università di Roma" on the occasion of the inauguration of the academic year. For centuries, this university has marked the progress and the life of the city of Rome, bringing forth intellectual excellence in every field of study. Both during the period when, after its foundation at the behest of Pope Boniface VIII, the institution was directly dependent upon ecclesiastical authority, and after this, when the *Studium Urbis* became an institution of the Italian state, your academic community has maintained a very high standard of scholarship and culture, which places it among the most prestigious universities in the world. The



Church of Rome has always looked with affection and admiration at this university centre, recognising its sometimes arduous and difficult efforts in research and in the formation of the new generations. There has been no lack, in recent years, of significant instances of collaboration and dialogue. I would like to recall, in particular, the worldwide meeting of university rectors on the occasion of the Jubilee of Universities, which saw your community take the responsibility not only for hosting and organising the meeting, but above all for making the complex and prophetic proposal for the development of a "new humanism for the third millennium".

I am moved, on this occasion, to express my gratitude for the invitation extended to me to come to your university to deliver an address to you. In this perspective, I first of all asked myself the question: What can a pope say on an occasion like this? In my lecture in Regensburg, I indeed spoke as pope, but I spoke above all in the guise of a former professor of the university, seeking to connect memory and the present. But at the university "La Sapienza", the ancient university of Rome, I have been invited as "Bishop of Rome", and so I must speak in this capacity. Of course, "La Sapienza" was once the pope's university, but today it is a secular university with that autonomy which, on the basis of its founding principles, has always been part of the nature of the university, which must always be exclusively bound to the authority of the truth. In its freedom from political and ecclesiastical authorities, the university finds its special role, and in modern society as well, which needs institutions of this nature.

I return to my starting question: What can and should the pope say in meeting with his city's university? Reflecting on this question, it has seemed to me that it includes two more questions, the clarification of which should by itself lead to the answer. It is necessary, in fact, to ask: What is the nature and mission of the papacy? And again: What is the nature and mission of the university? It is not my intention here to belabour either you or myself with lengthy examinations of the nature of the papacy. A brief summary should be enough. The pope is, first of all, the bishop of Rome, and as such, in virtue of apostolic succession from the Apostle Peter, he has Episcopal authority in regard to the entire Catholic Church. The word "bishop"—*episkopos*—, which in its immediate meaning refers to "supervision", already in the New Testament was fused together with the biblical concept of the shepherd: he is the one who, from an elevated point of observation, surveys the whole landscape, making sure to keep the flock together and on the right path. This description of the bishop's role directs the view first of all to within the community of believers. The bishop—the shepherd—is the man who takes care of this community, the one who keeps it united by keeping it on the path toward God, which Jesus points out through the Christian faith—and He does not only point this out: He himself is the way for us. But this community that the bishop cares for as large or small as it may be—lives in the world; its conditions, its journey, its example, and its words inevitably influence the rest of the human community in its entirety. The larger it is, the more its good condition or eventual decline will impact all of

humanity. Today we see very clearly how the situation of the religions and the situation of the Church—its crises and renewals—act upon the whole of humanity. Thus the pope, precisely as the shepherd of his community, has increasingly become a voice of the ethical reasoning of humanity.

But here there immediately comes the objection according to which the pope does not in fact truly speak on the basis of ethical reasoning, but instead draws his judgments from the faith, and therefore he cannot claim that these have validity for those who do not share this faith. We must return to this argument later, because it poses the absolutely fundamental question: What is reason? How can an assertion—and above all a moral norm—demonstrate that it is "reasonable". At this point, I would like to note briefly that John Rawls, while he denies that religious doctrines overall have the character of "public" reasoning, he nonetheless sees in their "non-public" reasoning at least a reasoning that cannot simply be dismissed by those who support a hard-line secularist rationality. He sees a criterion of this reasonableness in, among other things, the fact that such doctrines are derived from a responsible and well grounded tradition, in which over a long span of time sufficiently strong arguments have been developed in support of the respective doctrines. It seems important to me that this statement recognises that experience and demonstration over the course of generations, the historical backdrop of human wisdom, are also a sign of their reasonableness and their lasting significance. In the face of an a-historical form of reason that seeks to construct itself in an exclusively a-historical rationality, the wisdom of humanity as such—the wisdom of the great religious traditions—should be viewed as a reality that cannot be cast with impunity into the trash bin of the history of ideas.

Let's return to the opening question. The pope speaks as the representative of a believing community, in which throughout the centuries of its existence a specific life wisdom has matured; he speaks as the representative of a community that holds within itself a treasury of ethical understanding and experience, which is important for all of humanity. In this sense, he speaks as the representative of a form of ethical reasoning.

But now we must ask ourselves: What is the university? What is its purpose? It is a huge question which I can only answer once again in almost telegraphic style by making just a few observations. I believe that it can be said that the true intimate origin of the university lies in man's craving for knowledge. He wants to know what everything around him is. In this sense the Socratic questioning is the impulse that gave birth to the Western university. I am thinking here, just to mention one text, the dispute that sets Euthyphro, who defends mythical religion and his devotion to it, against Socrates. In contrast Socrates asks: "And do you believe there is really a war amongst the gods, with terrible feuds, even, and battles . . . Are we to say that these things are true, Euthyphro? (Euthyphro, 6: b and c). In this apparently not very devout question—but which drew in Socrates from a deeper and purer sense of religiosity, one that sought a truly divine god—the Christians of the first centuries recognised their path and themselves. They accepted their faith non in a

positivist manner or as a way of getting away from unfulfilled desires but rather as a way of dissolving the cloud that was mythological religion so as to discover the God that is creative Reason as well as Reason-as-Love. For this reason, asking themselves about the reason for the greater God as well as the real nature and sense of being human did not represent for them any problematic lack of religiosity, but was part of the essence of their way of being religious. They therefore did not need to solve or put aside the Socratic dilemma but could, indeed had to accept it. They also had to recognise as part of their identity the demanding search for reason in order to learn about the entire truth. The university could, indeed had to be born within the Christian world and the Christian faith. We must take another step. Man wants to know; he wants the truth. Truth pertains first and foremost to seeing and understanding *theoria* as it is called in the Greek tradition. But truth is not only theoretic. In correlating the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mountain and the gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Isaiah 11, Augustine asserted the reciprocity of *scientia* and *tristitia*. For him just knowing is source of sadness. In fact those who only see and learn all that happens in the world end up becoming sad. But the truth means more than knowledge. The purpose of knowing the truth is to know what is good. This is also the sense of Socrates' way of questioning: What good thing makes us true? Truth makes us good and goodness is true. This optimism dwells in the Christian faith because it was allowed to see the *Logos*, the creative Reason that, in God's incarnation, revealed itself as that which is Good, as Goodness itself.

In medieval theology there was a great dispute over the relationship between theory and praxis, over the proper relationship between knowledge and action, a dispute that we must not go into further here. In fact with their four faculties medieval universities embodied this correlation. Let us begin with medicine, which was the fourth faculty according to the understanding of that time. Although it was seen more as an "art" than as a science, its inclusion in the realm of the *universitas* meant that it was seen as belonging to the domain of rationality. The art of healing was seen as something guided by reason and was thus beyond the domain of magic. Healing is a task that always requires more than simple reason but exactly for this reason it needs the connection between knowledge and power and must belong to the realm of ratio. Inevitably in law faculties the relationship between praxis and theory, between knowing and doing takes front seat for it is about giving human freedom its right shape which is always freedom in reciprocal communion. The law is the premise upon which freedom is built; it is not its adversary. But this raises another question. How can we identify what the standards of justice are, that is those that make freedom as part of a whole possible and serve mankind's goodness? Let us come back to the present. It is a question that is related to how we can find legal rules that can govern freedom, human dignity and man's rights. It is an issue that concerns us insofar as it relates to the democratic processes that shape opinions but also one that can distress us insofar as it relates to humanity's future. In my opinion Jürgen Habermas articulates a view, widely accepted in today's world of ideas, in which the legitimacy of a constitution as the basis for what is legal stems from two

sources: the equal participation of all citizens in the political process and reasonable conflict-resolution mechanisms in politics. Insofar as the reasonable mechanisms are concerned he notes that the issue cannot be reduced to a mere struggle for who gets more votes but must include a “process of argumentation that is responsive to truth” (wahrheitssensibles Argumentationsverfahren). This is well said but it is something difficult to turn into political praxis. We know that the representatives of this public “process of argumentation” are for the most part political parties which shape the formation of the public will. In fact they invariably will seek a majority and will almost always take care of the interests they pledge to protect which are very often partisan and not collective interests. Responsiveness to the truth always takes the back seat to partisan interests. To me it is significant that Habermas should say that responsiveness to truth is a necessary component of political argumentation, since it reintroduces the concept of truth in philosophical and political debates.

Pilate’s question then becomes inevitable: What is truth? How do we recognise it? If we turn to “public reason” as Rawls does, another question necessarily follows: What is reasonable? How does a reason prove to be the true reason? Whatever the case may be, it is obvious that in the quest for freedom and for living together equitably groups other than parties and interest groups must be heard; although that does not mean that the latter are any less important. Let us go back to medieval universities and the way they were set up. Along with law, philosophy and theology had their own faculty with the task of studying mankind in his totality and thus keep alive responsiveness to truth. One might even say that this is the real and enduring meaning of both faculties—they maintain responsiveness to truth and prevent man from being distracted in his quest for the truth. But how can they do this? This is a question which we must always work at and which can never be raised and answered once and for all. Hence at this point not even I can properly give you an answer. I can though invite you to keep asking this question, one that has involved all the great thinkers who throughout history have fought for and sought out the truth, coming up with their own answers and enduring their own fears, always going beyond any one answer.

Theology and philosophy are an odd couple; neither can be totally separated from the other and yet each must keep its own purpose and identity. Compared to the answers Church Fathers formulated in their day and age, St Thomas Aquinas deserves a special place in history for highlighting the autonomy of philosophy as well as that of the law. He equally has the merit of pointing out the responsibilities that fall on reason when it questions itself on the basis of its own strengths. Unlike neo-platonic ideas that saw religion and philosophy inseparably intertwined, the Church Fathers had presented the Christian faith as real philosophy, insisting that this faith corresponded to the needs of Reason in its quest for the truth, that is a faith that was a “Yes” to truth when compared to mythical religions that had ended up turning into mere custom. However, when universities were founded in the West those religions were no more—only Christianity existed. This meant highlighting in a new way reason’s own

responsibility, one that was not absorbed by the faith. Thomas lived at a special time. For the first time all of Aristotle's philosophical writings were available as were the Hebrew and Arabic text that embodied and extended Greek philosophy. Thus as Christianity interacted with others and engaged their reason in a new dialogue it had to fight for its own reasonableness. The Faculty of Philosophy, i.e. the so-called artists' faculty, was until then only a preparatory stage before moving onto theology. Afterwards it became a faculty in its own right, an autonomous partner to theology and the faith which the latter reflected. We cannot dwell on the gripping confrontation that followed. I would say that St Thomas' idea about the relationship between philosophy and theology can be expressed by the formula handed down by the Council of Chalcedon on Christology, namely that philosophy and theology must relate to each other "without confusion and without separation." "Without confusion" is understood in the sense that each will maintain its own identity so that philosophy is truly a free and responsible search for reason and aware of its own limits and thus of its own greatness and vastness. Theology must instead continue to draw from a source of knowledge that it has not invented and that is always greater than itself, and which always renews the process of thinking since it is never totally exhausted by reflection. "Without confusion" does not stand alone for there is "without separation," that is the idea that philosophy never starts from scratch in isolation but is part of great dialogue found in the accumulated knowledge that history has bequeathed and which it always critically but meekly accepts and develops. Yet it should not shut itself off from what religions, especially the Christian faith, have received and given to humanity as a sign for the path to follow. Indeed History has shown that many of the things that theologians have said in the course of time or that Church authorities have put in practice have been proven false and today they confuse us. But it is equally true that the history of the saints and the history of the humanism that has developed on the basis of the Christian faith are proof of the truth of this faith in its essential core, making it something that public reason needs. Of course, much of what theology and faith say can only be appropriated from within the faith and thus cannot be seen as a need for those to whom this faith remains inaccessible. It is true however that the message of the Christian faith is never only a "comprehensive religious doctrine" in Rawls' terms, but that it is instead a force that purifies reason itself, further helping the latter to be itself. On the basis of its origins the Christian message should always encourage the search of the truth and thus be a force against the pressures exerted by power and interests.

Well, so far I have only talked about the university in the Middle Ages, trying however to show to what extent its nature and purpose have remained the same all along. In modern times knowledge has become more multi-faceted, especially in the two broad fields that now prevail in universities. First of all, there are the natural sciences which have developed on the basis of experimentation and subject matters' supposed rationality. Secondly, there are the social sciences and the humanities in which man has tried to understand himself by looking at his own history and uncovering his own nature. From this development humanity not only acquired a great

deal of knowledge and power but also an understanding and recognition of the rights and dignity of mankind. And for this we can be grateful. But man's journey can never be said to be over and the danger of falling into inhumanity is never just ward off as we can see in today's history. The danger faced by the Western world, just to mention the latter, is that mankind, given its great knowledge and power, might give up on the question of the truth. At the same time this means that reason in the end may bow to the pressures of partisan interests and instrumental value, forced to acknowledge the latter as the ultimate standard. From the point of view of the academic world this means that there is a danger that philosophy, feeling incapable of fulfilling its task, might degenerate into positivism, a danger that theology and the message it has for reason might be confined to the private sphere of a group more or less big. If however reason, concerned about its supposed purity, fails to hear the great message that comes from the Christian faith and the understanding it brings, it will dry up like a tree with roots cut off from the water that gives it life. It will lose the courage needed to find the truth and thus become small rather than great. Applied to our European culture this means that if it wants to constitute itself on the basis of its arguments and whatever appears to it to be convincing, with concerns about its own secular nature, it will cut itself off from its life-sustaining roots, and in doing so will not become more reasonable and pure but will instead become undone and fragmented.

And so let me go back to the initial point. What does the Pope have to do or say in a university? He certainly should not try to impose in an authoritarian manner his faith on others, which can only be freely offered. Beyond his ministry as Pastor of the Church and on the basis of the intrinsic nature of this pastoral ministry, it is his task to keep alive man's responsiveness to the truth. Similarly he must again and always invite reason to seek out truth, goodness and God, and on this path urge it to see the useful lights that emerged during the history of the Christian faith and perceive Jesus Christ as the light that illuminates history and helps find the way towards the future.

From the Vatican, 17 January 2008

BENEDICTUS XVI

-30-

POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 10:57 

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2008

Recalling the Lion



Forgive the reflection, but yesterday would've marked John Cardinal O'Connor's 88th birthday... and it's hard to believe it's almost eight years since he left our midst.



He only ever wanted to be remembered for being a "good priest," but in the process he became the nation's priest. It was the ministry he was born for, one that won him a lot of scorn in life -- both *ad intra*

and outside -- but one whose grit and greatness stands even taller now than it did when a brief bout with brain cancer claimed the "happy warrior" who, eight years on, remains the last great leader we've known.

I was blessed to know him well enough to know that hagiography would drive him up a wall. So, in fairness, he wasn't perfect. His distaste for administration's more painful responsibilities left an archdiocese awash in red ink, and his occasional penchant for Old Testament-style rivalries kept several of his nemeses stalled as long as he had breath. But even for this, the goldleaver's son's qualities of conviction, courage, candor, compassion, integrity, wit and witness won more ears and souls than it lost, and a public presence and credibility whose value has only become truly known by its absence.

Much has changed since he left us. One thing that hasn't, however, is that, so far as the mind goes, the archbishopric of New York remains the *de facto* messenger-in-chief of American Catholicism -- and, arguably, the church in the English-speaking world. His successor's chosen a lower profile, and others have tried to fill the vacuum opened at dusk on 3 May 2000, but even for all their admirable efforts, they've lacked one thing: the key to 452 Madison.

Through his writings, his presence and my encounters with him, he was an icon and hero of my boyhood. I loved him much, miss him even more and count still on his prayers (and even still the occasional assist). I could go on for days about my many memories and his many kindnesses... but it might just be better to say that in finding and knowing that it had a friend in John O'Connor, the world found and knew it had a friend in the church.

Amazingly enough, for all his stream of broadcast work -- including a weekly TV show -- the bulk of the cardinal's public interventions on the web remain confined to print (a treasure gratefully preserved online in a [special section](#) of the archives of *Catholic New York*).

One rare exception, however, is the 1994 video of a half-hour conversation in 452's parlor with Charlie Rose -- the PBS interviewer not known for pulling his punches. (NB: Chuck Daly was the program's second half.)

At O'Connor's death, Rose led a [half-hour tribute](#), joined by two priests, a rabbi and an atheist.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 13:15 

"A Pastor at Heart"

The running complaint up in Boston says that the local *Globe* isn't the church's best friend.

Remember, this is an improvement -- in the grand scheme of

things, it wasn't all that long ago when the city's cardinal-archbishop of the day "call[ed] down the power of God" on his flock's paper of record....



Suffice it to say, that backfired.

Whatever the case, the Beantown daily offers a [glowing tribute](#) to retired Bishop Dan Hart of Norwich -- a "beloved" shepherd, Boston native and onetime auxiliary there who died on Monday at 80.

The mystery of faith spoke to Bishop Daniel A. Hart when he was a child trying to decide whether he was hearing a call to the Roman Catholic priesthood.

"I was fascinated with the ministry of the priests, particularly during Mass, the changing of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ," he told *The Day*, a newspaper in New London, Conn., in 2002. "I remember watching carefully and watching for that. It was a very compelling kind of experience."

Though he was trained as an administrator and spent most of the years after his ordination as vice chancellor of the Archdiocese of Boston, auxiliary bishop, regional bishop, and bishop of the diocese in Norwich, Conn., he remained devoted to parish ministry. In retirement, Bishop Hart bowed out of his family's holiday gatherings in New England and traveled to Tupelo, Miss., where he spent Christmas and New Year's Day attending to a church that did not have a priest.

Bishop Hart, who served in the Boston Archdiocese from 1953 until he became bishop of Norwich in 1995, died Monday in St. Joseph Living Center in Windham, Conn. He was 80 and had been suffering from cancer the past six months, the Norwich Diocese said.

"I think he was always a pastoral person," said his brother Leo of Windham, N.H. "His goal was to do what helped the people."...

"The two words that keep coming to mind as I think of Bishop Hart are kindness and service," [current Norwich Bishop Michael] Cote said in a statement issued by the diocese. "This was Bishop Hart. This was his nature. Bishop Hart lived these words. It was always amazing to me to witness his incredible attention to the sick and those in need. He had the true heart of a pastor."...

As a young priest, Bishop Hart had chosen the motto, "Do not be afraid," and he told *The Day* in 1996: "There are a lot of things we could be frightened about today, socially, nationally. But if we just let Jesus into our lives, we have nothing to fear."

Among the things he did not fear was stepping down from an administrative post when he was rising through the ranks of the Boston Archdiocese. After six years as vice chancellor, he became associate pastor of St. John the Baptist Church in Peabody.

"It was my own choice to move," he told the *Globe* in 1976 when he was elevated to auxiliary bishop. "I enjoy parish work very much."

The parishioners enjoyed him, too. "I can't think of anybody who deserves the honor more," Maureen Battano, who had worked with Bishop Hart on the parish council at St. John in Peabody, told the *Globe* in 1976. "He's just a warm, serene, humble man. He makes it easy to understand that Christ was and always will be a living person."

Bishop Hart was just as well received by other priests and had served as president of the Priests' Senate in the archdiocese.

"He could always find a little bit of humor in whatever he was doing," the Rev. Donald A. Dwyer told the *Globe* in 1976. "One of his favorite expressions is 'Holy Daddy.' He was one of the best companions living in a rectory. I don't think you can get by without a little of that humor."

Funeral rites for Hart begin tomorrow night at St Patrick's Cathedral in Norwich, with the final liturgy Friday morning.

PHOTO: AP File

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 11:15 

The Pack's Secret Weapon



Candidly, it seems the case that more American Catholics spend their Sundays watching football than "hearing" Mass. Not the best of stats, of course, but that's where things are these days.

Not a few of us, though, fall into the "both/and" category... and with conference championships -- the games that'll determine who makes Super Bowl XLII in Phoenix -- at hand this weekend, they might as well cancel the "late-bird" Masses in Green Bay and New York.

The Packers and Giants face off for the NFC title at Lambeau Field, with gametime forecasts seeing temperatures around 0 degrees (-17C). And for the second playoff game in a row, a Franciscan sister-superfan will be [leading the faithful](#) from midfield.

The Cowboys' loss is Sister Sean Marie Tobin's gain.

The nun won an essay contest that put her at midfield for the coin toss before last Saturday's Packer game at Lambeau Field.

Here's what the fine print says: "The winner will be asked to repeat his or her duties for a second home playoff game, if applicable."

Well, it's applicable, baby. While the top-seeded Cowboys clean out their lockers, the Packers are hosting the New York Giants this Sunday for the NFC crown and a trip to the Super Bowl.

And Tobin is returning to the tundra to do it all over again. The Packers on Tuesday FedEx'd two more free game tickets to the Holy Family Convent in Manitowoc.

Tobin, 68, belongs to the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity, and she's led them on field trips to watch the Packers practice. Former head coach Mike Sherman once visited the convent and personally bought the sisters a bigger TV after he

saw the small set they used to watch the games.

Tobin's driver and companion for Sunday's game will again be Sister Anne Turba, also from Holy Family.

As Honorary G-Force Captain, Tobin was Lambeau royalty Saturday. And she wasn't shy about using her bully pulpit as she joined Brett Favre, Donald Driver, Aaron Kampman and Nick Barnett on the field to face Matt Hasselbeck and the other Seattle Seahawks.

"I just said today the ball is ours. You're not going to get it, Matt," she said. "That tickled Favre, and he got this big grin."

Tobin explained in the essay that her love for Packers football was instilled in childhood by her father, Bernie Tobin. She was born in Milwaukee and went to Mount Mary College before joining the convent in 1960.

The last game she attended with her father was the Ice Bowl. I know, everyone claims they were at that game, but she's a nun so I believe her.

"This game was a challenge. I was stuffed, long habit and full garb, into a sleeping bag up to my nose, and almost bunny-hopped over the bleachers on the last play," she says in her entertaining entry that beat out some 5,000 other hopefuls. It helps that she used to teach English in school.

"If the game had lasted any longer, my fingers would have been permanently stuck to my rosary beads."

Their seats that day were at the 50 yard line, coincidentally very near where she and Turba sat last Saturday. Their seats this Sunday are indoors because of the expected cold temperatures.

Turba said Tobin got a rock star welcome from the crowd. The sisters had packed sandwiches for the game, but tailgaters freely offered whatever they were eating. Fans posed with her for photographs, cheered as she made her way to her seat, and wiped their car clear of snow after the game.

"They started chanting MVP for her. She said this is getting a little embarrassing," Turba said.

Be afraid, Giants fans... and start praying.

PHOTO: Kristyna Wentz-Graff/*Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 10:12 

Sapienza Storms the Vatican

Following the [cancellation](#) of the Pope's planned appearance tomorrow at Rome's University of La Sapienza, a supportive group of its students and faculty -- who, ironically enough, come from the ranks of his beloved [ciellini](#) -- came to this morning's General

Audience.

The group toted signs and, [according to AsiaNews](#), led chants as the pontiff delved into his second catechesis of his series on his "favorite" saint, Augustine of Hippo.

"Freedom, Freedom!": the shout raised by a group of university students of the Communion and Liberation movement, at the beginning of today's general audience, met with warm applause from the six thousand persons present in the Paul VI audience hall, and was an echo of the decision Benedict XVI took yesterday not to go to the La Sapienza university of Rome. The decision was due to opposition from a small group of teachers and students, against the invitation that had been extended to him to participate in the inauguration of the academic year. "So there are three places where the pope cannot go: Moscow, Beijing, and the university of Rome", commented one of the young people present at the audience. "If Benedict does not go to La Sapienza, La Sapienza comes to Benedict", read one of the banners that the young people raised.

The pope did not mention the affair, not even in the greeting that he addressed to the students. For the second week, Benedict XVI dedicated the discourse of his general audience to Saint Augustine, dwelling in particular on the last year of the life of the bishop of Hippo, who died during the Vandal assault on his city in 430. The pope emphasised in particular Augustine's call to the pastors to remain close to the faithful in moments of difficulty, as so many priests have done so often throughout history.

Benedict XVI recalled Augustine's protests against the conflict that would lead to the barbarian invasion, citing the statement that "the greater honour is that of slaying war with the word, rather than slaying men with the sword," and of "defending peace with peace". The tragic events of killing and devastation that struck the region drove some priests to ask the bishop if it were right to flee in order to save one's life. "When all are in danger", Augustine replied, in the words repeated today by the pope, "those who are in need should not be abandoned by those whose duty it is to assist them. They should be saved together, or face calamity together. This is the supreme proof of charity". "The world", Benedict XVI commented, "recognises in these words the heroic message that so many priests throughout the ages have welcomed and made their own".

In the third month of the siege, the pope continued, Augustine was confined to bed with the illness that would end his life. He affirmed that no one - bishop, priest, or layperson - can face death without doing penance. Augustine died on August 4 of the year 430. His body was brought to Sardinia, and from there to Pavia, where it still rests.

But, "when I read the writings of Saint Augustine", the pope commented, "I do not get the impression that he was a man who died about 1,600 years ago, but that he is a man of today, a friend, a contemporary, who speaks to me, who speaks to us, with his faith that is still fresh and relevant today".

PHOTO: Reuters/Dario Pignatelli

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 09:43



Belief Without Borders

In observance of the Vatican-sponsored "World Migration Day," bishops from both sides of the US-Mexico border met in the middle for Mass:

The local observance of the international event began on the steps of Laredo's San Agustin Cathedral, just a block from



the Rio Grande, the natural boundary that separates Texas and Mexico. The march followed on the heels of the Texas-Mexican border bishops' meeting held the previous day in Laredo.

A similar group from Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, began walking from the other direction. The two groups met for a balloon release, converging on the Convent Street bridge that joins the two countries. A Mass celebrated by the Texas and Mexican bishops followed on the banks of the Mexican side of the Rio Grande....

"We're here to pray for all persons who come to the U.S. to get a better life," said Imelda Guzman, who came to the event with her husband, Rafael, and their four children.

She and her immediate family are all U.S. citizens living in Laredo, but some of her in-laws and friends have traveled back and forth across the border without documentation.

"I have friends whose parents have died in Mexico and they can't go to the funeral because their families are here and they can't get back here if they go," she told a reporter from the South Texas Catholic, newspaper of the neighboring Diocese of Corpus Christi.

The impact current U.S. immigration law has on families and the church's position on the dignity of the human person were concerns shared by many of the pilgrims.

In a processionlike manner, the peaceful march made its way to the bridge and paused along the route several times as various speakers read a Scripture verse, followed by a brief reflection.

"When you turn away the immigrant, you turn away the Lord Jesus," said the speaker at the first stop.

Guzman has encountered people who crossed into Texas from Mexico and have been abused by the coyotes paid to smuggle them across the border.

The ability to have a better lifestyle in Mexico and other Latin American countries would deter many from fleeing their homeland, Guzman said, but until then people will continue to do what they feel they have to do to provide for themselves and their families.

"So, we are here to pray for both sides so God can change their hearts. He is the only one who can do that," she added.

The Migration Day event is but one of several Border Masses celebrated through the year; the photo above comes from an annual [fence-straddling liturgy](#) for the Day of the Dead/All Souls Day.

* * *

It's no secret that, more than almost anyplace else, the diocese of Brooklyn is the universal church in microcosm.

Sunday Mass is celebrated in somewhere around 80 languages in the nation's fifth-largest local church, which counts a flock of 1.6 million from (at last count) 167 countries. Now in its fourth decade, the diocese's [Migration Office](#) is world-renowned for its work with the newest additions to the melting pot, including a significant number of international priests and religious brought over to serve their respective communities and the faithful at large.

One of the import clergy -- a student-priest from Ghana working in a Brooklyn parish -- recently got an unexpected summons home... not *from* his bishop, *but as one*.

Father Dominic Yeboah Nyarko, pastoral associate at St. Columba Church, Marine Park, begins this new year celebrating a double blessing -- being recently appointed to the episcopacy and being named the first bishop of the newly created Diocese of Techiman in his native Ghana.

The Vatican announced Pope Benedict XVI's selection of Bishop-elect Nyarko on Dec. 28. Word quickly spread in his home Diocese of Sunyani and his parish, St. Paul's, in his home village of Nsuta. Announcements were also made at St. Columba's weekend Masses, Dec. 29-30....



On Jan. 4, Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio welcomed the bishop-elect to his office at the Chancery and presented him with his first purple zucchetto to denote his new status.

"As soon as he heard, he invited me. He was happy to share the joy with me," said



Bishop-elect
Nyarko, who is still
surprised by this

honor.

"He told me he'll support me with prayers and that I shouldn't be nervous. He advised me and really encouraged me."

The new prelate had no idea he was being considered for such an assignment until Dec. 19, his birthday. When he returned to St. Columba's Rectory after celebrating his 54th birthday with priest-friends, there was a DHL Express letter waiting for him.

"I opened it and the Apostolic Nuncio (to Ghana, Archbishop George Kocherry) wrote telling me the pope wanted to appoint me the first bishop of Techiman," he recalled.

Two days later, the archbishop telephoned but Father Nyarko was still praying about his response. After talking to the archbishop, he sent an affirmative reply.

The archbishop announced the creation of the new diocese and named its first bishop at a gathering of priests and Religious from the Sunyani Diocese in Techiman on Dec. 28.

Since then, the bishop-elect's cell phone hasn't stopped ringing, day or night. As of Jan. 5, he had only 50 minutes left on his 600-minute per month cell phone plan.

While he received calls from around the globe, the person the newly named bishop was most happy to speak with was his mother, Mary, who was shocked. "She couldn't understand how they're giving me this big position," he said, smiling.

He explained to her, "The Lord appointed me and He will give me the strength I need."

He also knows his father, who died last year, is watching over him. His father was "a devout Catholic who traveled 12 miles every Sunday to receive the Eucharist" and helped erect a chapel in Nsuta. His father prayed one of his eight children – five sons and three daughters – "would decide to follow the Lord."...

Four years ago, he came to Brooklyn intending to help at St. Columba for one year. After getting a feel for the parish, he decided to stay and pursue his master's degree in family counseling at Fordham University. He planned to return to Ghana after commencement exercises this coming May.

Now he will not only have to adjust to a new role in the Church, but the bishop-elect will face the challenge of building a new diocese. The Diocese of Techiman covers 8,652 square miles and is home to 695,826 people in the Brong-Ahafo region of central Ghana. Carved from the Sunyani and Konongo-Mampong dioceses, the Techiman Diocese consists of seven civil districts, namely Techiman, the capital district and major marketing center, Kintampo North, Kintampo South, Nkoranza, Atebubu, Sene and Pru. The new

diocese has 31 priests and 23 Religious serving 79,645 Catholics in 13 parishes.

As bishop, his first objective is to travel throughout the diocese and "see what's prevailing." Most people in the Brong-Ahafo region are farmers, who grow subsistence and cash crops, including cocoa, yams and maize. They raise sheep and goats primarily to feed their families.

He wants to focus on improving the quality of life for his people by increasing access to potable drinking water, schools, health clinics and chapels, particularly for deprived families in rural areas.

Fostering vocations is another goal for the bishop-elect, a former vocation director. He'd like to have vocation rallies and annual gatherings for seminarians and youngsters to meet diocesan priests.

"The zeal is there. On Sundays, people are ready to stay all day to listen to the Word of God. We have to help them," he said.

The bishop-elect will be ordained and installed in the new diocese in late March.

PHOTO 2: Marie Elena Giossi/ *The (Brooklyn) Tablet*

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 01:27 

TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2008

Niente Sapienza

Much has been made in recent days of the likelihood of demonstrations greeting B16 on his planned Thursday visit to deliver a lecture at Rome's La Sapienza University.

After students alleging the pontiff's hostility to science staged a sit-in in the rector's office earlier today, the Vatican announced that the engagement was a **no-go**:

[M]ore than 60 professors signed a letter to the university rector opposing the pope's visit. Banners decrying the pope were strung from buildings and posters plastered on walls.

Protests against the pontiff, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, are not uncommon, but "it was considered opportune to skip the event," the Vatican said in a brief statement Tuesday.

Instead, Benedict will send his speech to the university, the Vatican said. Rome's mayor and the government's minister for universities still are scheduled to speak at La Sapienza.

Such a cancellation of a scheduled papal event is extremely rare, and the few times it has happened in recent decades, the Vatican has cited security concerns. No specific reason was cited Tuesday.

Vatican Radio described the mobilization by students and professors at Europe's largest university as smacking of censorship.

The university rector, Renato Guarini, criticized the protests as "a fundamentalist attitude of great intellectual closure."

He said 63 instructors – out of a total of 4,500 – had signed the letter. He had said students would have been allowed to gather in a designated area Thursday during the pope's visit.

PHOTO: Reuters/Dario Pignatelli

-30-

POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 13:02 

End of an Era

After 20 years at the helm of the influential German bishops' conference, Cardinal Karl Lehmann of Mainz is stepping down.

Lehmann, 71, said he was resigning for health reasons, according to wire reports. The cardinal was hospitalized late last year with an irregular heartbeat and said today that he would preside over the conference's spring assembly in mid-February before departing the post on the 18th. At his election to a fourth term in 2005, he announced that the six-year renewal would be his final one.



The spring assembly will elect Lehmann's successor, the conference announced.

The early departure "makes sense," Lehmann wrote in a statement, adding the latest waves of episcopal appointments in Europe's largest country made for a "necessary generational shift" of the conference's chairmanship. He also said he wanted to devote more of his energy to the 800,000-member church in Mainz, where he marks his 25th anniversary as bishop later this year.

In the name of the conference, deputy chair Bishop Heinrich Mussinghoff of Aachen, praised Lehmann for his "indefatigable" service, "theological knowledge [and] intellectual openness."

The leader of the German episcopate's liberal-progressive wing, the Mainz prelate suggested publicly in 2000 that Pope John Paul II "would have the courage" to resign if ill health prevented him from "lead[ing] the church with authority." A year later, after Lehmann protested that his remarks were taken out of context and said he wasn't calling for John Paul's departure, the late pontiff elevated him to the college of cardinals.

Before this morning's announcement, the mantle of the chairmanship's "heir apparent" has long fallen on the incoming archbishop of Munich and Freising, Reinhard Marx. Named in November to the post held by Pope Benedict from 1977-81, Marx's installation in Munich is scheduled for Candlemas Day, 2 February.

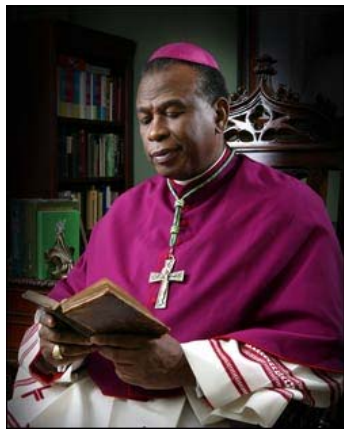
Last week, the Pope received his closest adviser on his homeland's affairs, Cardinal Joachim Meisner of Cologne, in an evening audience.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 10:32



More Charges, More Questions... More Ink



Building on Sunday's emergence of [Round Three](#) in the Belleville-Braxton Wars, a previously-scheduled meeting of the presbyteral council took place yesterday...

...and it's gotten worse: with [more developments](#), the story's spread across the Mississippi into the pages of the *St Louis Post-Dispatch*:

Bishop Edward Braxton's purchase of ceremonial garments with about \$8,000 in donations to a Vatican fund strictly dedicated to world outreach led Belleville Diocese priests to seek an explanation Monday.

"We attempted to discuss it," said one member of the diocese's Presbyteral Council. "But no progress was made. The bishop did not want to talk about it."

As long ago as a diocesan finance council meeting Nov. 17, Braxton was asked how he had paid for the vestments, according to sources who were there. Braxton told the council the cost of about \$8,000 was paid from a fund for international mission work, said the sources, who asked not to be identified because council members take an oath of secrecy.

Braxton, two deacons and two priests who were being ordained in a ceremony in May wore the new garments.

Statutes issued by the Vatican and authorized by the pope strictly govern the flow of Propagation of the Faith money from dioceses to the fund's New York headquarters, and on to Rome.

"Offerings given by the faithful for a specified purpose may be used only for that purpose," the statutes say....

Braxton has told the diocese's chief financial officer, William Knapp, that Knapp's five-year contract will not be renewed for a third time when it expires in June. Knapp is popular with many priests, and in deanery meetings last week they spoke out forcefully for the bishop to reconsider.

"We strongly recommend that Mr. Knapp's employment ... be

continued as he desires," according to the minutes of the East St. Louis deanery meeting. "This will enable him to complete the work he has begun recently on issues of financial transparency. We believe that his departure at this time will only cause more suspicion among the laity and presbyterate concerning the finances of the diocese."

Priests of the West Deanery also called recently for Knapp to be rehired and called on the finance council "to report openly and honestly the alleged misappropriation of funds reported at the November 17, 2007 meeting."

The provider of the new vestments was House of Hansen, in Braxton's hometown of Chicago, which makes "custom tailored clerical garments," according to its website. An employee there said Braxton ordered five sets of vestments, a mitre and a tunic last year.

The Rev. Benjamin Stern, parochial vicar at St. Dominic Church in Breese, was one of the two men ordained in May. He said that he didn't know whether the vestments he wore were new but that "the bishop was talking at one time about getting a new set."

Monsignor James Buerster, pastor of St. Boniface Church in Germantown, is the former pastor of the cathedral in Belleville. He said he was still working at the cathedral when the new vestments arrived last spring. The old ones were bought more than a dozen years ago, he said.

The confrontation between Braxton and some of his priests reflects tension that began with the start of the bishop's tenure. But some of those priests see Braxton's tampering with Propagation of the Faith money as crossing an inviolable line with the Vatican.

SVILUPPO: Headline from [today's Belleville paper](#) -- "Bishop ducks query on fund's handling"....

Bishop Edward Braxton did not respond to requests during a Presbyteral Council meeting Monday to answer questions about alleged misuse of money earmarked for an international fund for the poor, stating it wasn't the proper forum, the Rev. Jerry Wirth, chairman, said.

"He told us we're not the group to be asking for and receiving that kind of information," said Wirth, the pastor of St. Joseph Church in Olney.

The requests were motions for a full accounting from other priests' group that met last week -- the West Deanery and the East Deanery representing about 20 priests.

Braxton, who serves as the Presbyteral Council's president, instead read a portion of the council's bylaws aloud and interpreted them as prohibiting questions about donations to funds made locally, including the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Wirth said. This international fund, overseen by the office of Pope Benedict XVI, is not supposed to be used for purchases in the country in which the money was raised and must be sent to Rome.

Braxton did not respond to a News-Democrat request for comment.

Wirth said Braxton told the group that only the Diocesan Finance Council, whose members are sworn to secrecy, could deal with allegations of misuse of funds.

"I disagree with that interpretation," Wirth said, adding that Braxton said he would pray about the matter and might answer questions in the future.

"We are hoping he will actually do that," said Wirth, adding, "I give him the benefit of the doubt."

The Rev. David Wilke, pastor of Holy Rosary Church in Fairmont City, supported Braxton's interpretation of the Presbyteral Council's bylaws.

"He handled it superbly. The media wants to find out all sorts of smoking guns. All sorts of accusations against the bishop and they are absolutely not true," he said.

Asked how he knew the accusations were false, Wilke said, "I know the bishop. He's a wonderful bishop."

SVILUPPO 2: Running to the bishop's defense, one Belleville Catholic [opines](#) that, "to some extent," the conflict owes itself to "at least some racism on the part of angry priests and laity who wanted to install their own man (or woman?) in the See"

Lest anyone forget, Belleville's [prior ordinary](#) was also African-American. His 11-year tenure -- which began with one of the nation's first major sex abuse cleanup operations -- saw no incidents of this sort.

PHOTO: *Diocese of Belleville*

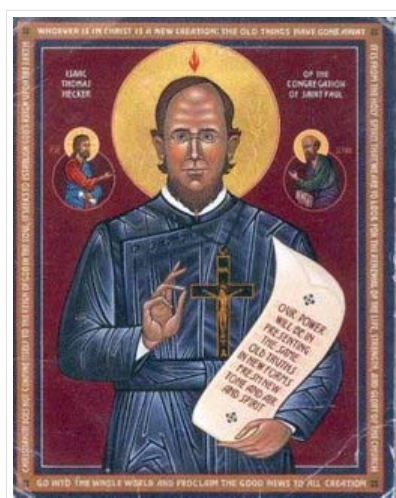
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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 09:56



MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 2008

American Missionary... "Americanist" Saint



The Paulist Fathers have adopted 13 patron saints. And as the community of communicators marks its 150th anniversary -- and the church universal preps for a [Pauline Year](#) -- they're aiming to make their founder #14.

Later this month, Gotham's Cardinal Edward Egan will open the cause for canonization of the

community's founder, Fr [Isaac Thomas Hecker](#). The 27 January kickoff liturgy formally designating Hecker "Servant of God" will take place at [St Paul the Apostle](#) on 59th Street -- the church Archbishop John Hughes entrusted the candidate and his first confreres as their first mission-field in 1858 that remains Paulist Central to this day.

A Methodist convert, Hecker lived with Thoreau, began his vocational path as a Redemptorist, was kicked out of the Reds and made his way onto a *terna* or two before founding the most prominent US-based community of men. An adviser to the church's quintessential "American prince" -- Baltimore's Cardinal James Gibbons -- he remarked after his reception that his new faith was "my star, which will lead me to my life, my destiny, my purpose."

Among many others, the constellation of Paulist apostolates includes ecumenical and interfaith work, youth ministry, *BustedHalo* and a smattering of parishes including *Santa Susanna*, the national church for Americans in Rome. Another of 'em is the St Thomas More *Newman Center* at Ohio State in Columbus... where your narrator will be a-talkin' on Thursday evening. As always with the Paulists, all are welcome.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 17:40 

Coming to America



Two months before Papa Ratzki touches down in New York, one of his closest confidants is making his first high-profile appearance this weekend in the Big Apple.

At a Sunday conference hosted by NYU, the president of Communion and Liberation Fr Julian Carron will speak on the topic "[Can Faith Broaden Reason?](#)" In 2005, the 57 year-old Spaniard succeeded the iconic Msgr [Luigi Giussani](#) as head of the movement that, by Joseph Ratzinger's own admission, "changed [his] life." (Giussani and Carron are shown above in an undated photo.)

As papal legate, the then-CDF prefect presided at "Don Gius" funeral in Milan's cathedral, and it's been said that, as it revealed a "human" side of Ratzinger, his [homily](#) (preached before a crowd of 40,000 and broadcast on Italian state television) helped pave the way for his election to the papacy seven weeks later.

Widely thought to view the CL as the "ideal" among the New Movements that've sprung up in the wake of the council, Benedict brought a community of the *Memores Domini* -- its branch of consecrated laity -- to the Apostolic Palace with him following his election. Led by one of the four laywomen (or, on occasion, by

Carron himself), the Pope and his two priest-secretaries [take part](#) in the weekly "School of Community" held in the papal apartment. Last year's annual Rimini mega-conference of the *cielini* was [opened by Bertone](#) as B16's legate and, outside the senior officials of the Roman Curia, Don Julian is one of a small handful of favorites received regularly in private audience. In 2007, Benedict also [named](#) a member of the movement's community of priests, Italian Fr Paolo Pezzi, to the politically-sensitive archbishopric of Moscow -- the global post where, given his all-out push for better relations with Orthodoxy, the pontiff had most wanted his own man.

Citing the "living encounter with Christ" that stands at the core of his own theology, the Pope received a mass-group of *cielini* last year to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the movement's formal recognition by the Holy See.

In his [address](#) to the specially-held outdoor audience, B16 offered his blessing thus:

My first thought goes to your Founder, Mons. Luigi Giussani, to whom many memories bind me and who became a true friend of mine. Our last meeting, as Mons. Carrón mentioned, took place at the Cathedral in Milan, in February about two years ago, when our beloved John Paul II sent me to preside at his solemn funeral. Through him, the Holy Spirit raised in the Church a Movement, yours, that would witness to the beauty of being Christian in an age when the opinion was spreading that Christianity is a difficult and oppressive way to live. Fr Giussani then committed himself to awaken in youth the love for Christ, "Way, Truth and Life", repeating that only he is the way towards the fulfilment of the deepest desires of the human heart, and that Christ does not save us regardless of our humanity, but through it. As I was able to recall in his funeral homily, this courageous priest, who grew up in a home poor in bread but rich in music, as he himself liked to say, from the beginning was touched, or rather wounded, by the desire for beauty, though not any sort of beauty. He sought Beauty itself, the infinite Beauty which is found in Christ. In addition, how can I fail to recall the many encounters and contacts of Fr Giussani with my Venerable Predecessor John Paul II? On an anniversary dear to you, the Pope still wants yet again to repeat that the original pedagogical intuition of Communion and Liberation lies in repositing the Christian event within contemporary culture in a fascinating and harmonious way, perceived as a font of new values and able to orient one's entire existence.

The event that changed the life of the Founder has also "wounded" a great many of his spiritual sons and daughters, and has given way to multiple religious and ecclesial experiences which form the history of your vast and well-organized spiritual Family. Communion and Liberation is a community experience of faith, born in the Church not by the will of an organized hierarchy but originating from a renewed encounter with Christ and thus, we can say, by an impulse derived ultimately from the Holy Spirit. Still today, it offers a profound way of life and it actualizes the Christian faith, both in a total fidelity and communion with the Successor of Peter and with the Pastors who assure the governing of the Church and through spontaneity and freedom that permit new and prophetic, apostolic and

missionary achievements....

In the [Message](#) to the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements, 27 May 1998, the Servant of God John Paul II had this to say: that there is no conflict or opposition in the Church between the institutional and the charismatic dimensions, of which the Movements are a significant expression. Both are co-essential to the divine constitution of the People of God. In the Church the essential institutions are also charismatic and indeed the charisms must, in one way or another, be institutionalized to have coherency and continuity.

Hence, both dimensions originate from the same Holy Spirit for the same Body of Christ, and together they concur to make present the mystery and the salvific work of Christ in the world.

This explains the attention with which the Pope and the Pastors look upon the richness of the charismatic gifts in the contemporary age. In regard to this, during a recent meeting with the clergy and the parish priests of Rome, recalling the invitation that St Paul addressed in the First Letter to the Thessalonians not to extinguish the charisms, I said that if the Lord gives us new gifts, we must be grateful, even if sometimes they may be uncomfortable. At the same time, since the Church is one, if the Movements are really gifts of the Holy Spirit, they must, naturally, be inserted into the Ecclesial Community and serve it so that, in patient dialogue with the Pastors, they can be elements in the construction of the Church of today and tomorrow.

Dear brothers and sisters, our dearly beloved John Paul II, in another very meaningful circumstance for you, was to entrust you with this mandate: "Go to all the world and bring the truth, the beauty and the peace, which is encountered in Christ the Redeemer". Fr Giussani made those words the program of the whole Movement, and for Communion and Liberation it was the beginning of a missionary season that took you to 80 countries. Today, I invite you to continue along this path, with a deep faith, personalized and solidly rooted in the living Body of Christ, the Church, which guarantees the contemporaneousness of Jesus among us. I close our meeting by turning our thoughts to the Blessed Mother with the recitation of the Angelus. Fr Giussani nourished a great devotion to her, fed by the invocation of the Veni Sancte Spiritus, veni per Mariam and by the recitation of the Hymn to the Virgin by Dante Alighieri that you have also repeated this morning. May the Holy Virgin accompany you and help you to generously pronounce your "yes" to God's will in every circumstance. Dear friends you can count on my constant remembrance in prayer, while I affectionately bless you present here and your entire spiritual Family.

Given all this, Carron's coming is a rather big deal.

* * *

Speaking of the Pope and New York, 1011 reiterates the basics of Friday's [PopeTix notice](#), with an added bit of info for dioceses far afield:

Those living in dioceses outside of the Archdiocese of New

York should submit ticket requests for the Mass at Yankee Stadium to their local Bishop, who will receive an allotment of tickets and will distribute them at his discretion. Ordinaries will receive information regarding ticket allocations during the week of January 21, 2008.

SVILUPPO: In addition to the NYU event, Carron will be presiding over the National *Diaconia* -- the annual national gathering of CL's Stateside branch -- during his Gotham jaunt.

With Archbishop Wuerl of Washington among its participants, last year's plenary was held in San Diego.... Don Julian's talks from the '07 gathering can be [found here](#).

Snip... on the "passion for destiny":

I am very happy to be here with you for these days. I am not saying it in a formal way because when we are together, we are together because we want to journey towards our destiny. It is a word that Don Giussani liked a great deal, the word "destiny", because when we are together because we want to walk to our destiny, we want life to have a destiny, to have an end, a goal, and that all of us want to walk together in order to arrive at this goal where life is fulfilled. None of us wants life to be lost. Nobody wants life to fall apart in our hands. Everyone wants our lives to be great, to be full, to be happy. It is already a miracle that we are together because life interests us, because we do not want to let it go as if it were a song, or a rock tossed about in the current. Instead we want each of us to be able to take the steps necessary for life to be fulfilled. And so it is a grace to encounter people who want to walk towards destiny like we do. When there are so many people who do not care about destiny, the fact that the Lord has awakened this desire, this love for destiny, in our lives is what unites us. None of us has selected himself to be here. Each one of us has been awakened to this interest toward his destiny in a mysterious way. If each of us was to look at the face of the person that we have next to us, we could not avoid being moved at thinking that he wants to walk to the same place that I do, that he has been touched just like I have been touched by this passion for destiny, that in him this passion for destiny has been awakened. We haven't chosen ourselves; it is not us who choose our traveling companions. We mysteriously find ourselves together. We find that someone else has awakened the interest in our life in us; because interest in destiny is nothing other than interest in life, passion for life, tenderness for ourselves. When we see so many people that do not even have an instant of this tenderness toward themselves, the fact that this tenderness has been awakened in us is truly moving. Because this does happen, and the surprising thing about it is that it happens in the midst of the confusion in which each of us lives. It is as if all the confusion that surrounds us cannot avoid the fact that this passion for life has been awakened in us. I describe it often in the following way: any person who has born in any of our cities of today and who wishes to clarify the meaning of life for himself, who desires that his life not be lost, and wants to know how to live life so that life not be lost and not vanish into thin air, if he were to go to any newsstand, any bookstore, any supermarket, he would be so confused and perplexed in front of so many things that he would not know where to go in order to clarify things. Or if that person were to

watch TV for 24 hours straight, what would he learn in order to live? Despite all this and despite the fact that each one of us lives in this context, no confusion has been able to hinder the fact that we are here with all our love for destiny. And this is the first thing that should already start to surprise us. Do not take it for granted, because this indicates to us, something greater than all the confusion; none of the confusion there is can hinder it or eliminate it. It is more resistant than all of the confusion. We can sum it up with the word we are using so often lately: "heart". We find ourselves with this desire, this need to live, this need for happiness and beauty.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 15:03 

In America

As the Black Conclave dominates Things Jesuit across the Tiber, the Society's US flagship [meditates](#) on the presidential election:

The question before voters, therefore, is what kind of change shall we have? Many, including Senators Obama and McCain, have argued that true change must transcend traditional partisan divisions. Indeed, in this final year of the Bush presidency the nation does seem polarized to the point of paralysis—to such a degree that a group of elder statesmen, both Republicans and Democrats, organized a conference at the University of Oklahoma, whose president, David L. Boren, is a former Democratic senator, to explore the possibility of launching a candidacy that would move beyond "partisan polarization." Their guest of honor was Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York, who at various times in his political career has been a registered Democrat and a registered Republican and has most recently identified himself as an independent. While consistently denying that he is considering a run for the presidency, Mr. Bloomberg has done little to discourage the efforts of his staff and supporters to arouse enthusiasm for a Bloomberg presidential campaign that would be self-financed and officially nonpartisan.

The conventional wisdom, of course, says that a third-party candidate cannot win a general election, that the obstacles are too great. But 2008 is already shaping up to be an extraordinary political year; and as the campaign moves forward toward other important primary votes and state caucuses, the candidates and their consultants will have to decide whether the conventional campaign wisdom of the past remains effective. Are the citizens of the United States truly weary of the polarization that was the goal of Karl Rove and his generation of political strategists? Will the television attack ads that cost millions of dollars and insult the intelligence of the voter remain a profitable investment for the campaigns? Or have we reached a turning point in American political history, where the challenges of our time, which include international terrorism abroad and growing economic disparity at home, demand a new kind of politics that better reflects the aspirations that all Americans share rather than the particular interests that may divide them?

...and on the mag's [new blog](#), DC's *cardinale laico* Michael Sean Winters [draws a parallel](#) from the civil rights movement to the

current moment's human dignity flashpoint:

Sen. Hillary Clinton tried to trumpet her political prowess while disparaging the verbal skills of her opponent, Sen. Barack Obama, with a lesson from history. Here is what she said: "Dr. King's dream began to be realized when President Johnson passed the Civil Rights Act."...

Clinton seems not to grasp how the moral vision of King required the political action of Johnson. A feminist first, she has spent the years since Roe v. Wade insisting that "you can't legislate morality" which is precisely what the Civil Rights Movement did. Remember, it was the segregationists who invoked their right to privacy in defending Jim Crow!

Ever the provocateur, Winters' [maiden tome](#) -- focusing on "How the Democrats Lost the Catholics and How the Catholics Can Save the Democrats" -- rolls out in April.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 14:18 

Ladies and Jesuits, the General Has Left the Borgo



"And thus, the 24 year, four-month ministry of focused and single-minded care for and stewardship of the universal Society of Jesus by Father Kolvenbach has come to an end."

With those words, the Jesuit Curia announced earlier today that Father-General had officially [resigned](#).

After Peter-Hans Kolvenbach presented his unprecedented resignation to the General Congregation and its 225 delegates voted to accept it, the diplomatic Dutchman returned to thank the body "for the elegant way you have found to fire me."

Statement:

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

Today the General Congregation has thought it well to accept my resignation as General Superior of the Society of Jesus. At the end of these nearly 25 years of service, I want first of all to thank the Lord, who - to use the words of Saint Ignatius - has truly been propitious to me at Rome, in leading a Society He has called into service for his greater glory.

I am also most grateful for the privilege of having met and

accompanied so many friends in the Lord, who in their many diverse vocations have always shown themselves to be true servants of the Mission of Christ.

No single Jesuit should feel himself excluded from this profound sentiment of recognition. Nonetheless I would like to thank in a particular way those in the General Curia who have helped me day after day over many years in carrying out my responsibilities for the Society, as well as all the Major Superiors spread throughout the entire world.

Earlier I was able to express my great thanks to the Holy Father for his apostolic orientations which have allowed the Society to continue our mission "under the banner of the cross and under the Vicar of Christ on earth".

Let us be grateful to the Lord that despite a disconcerting diversity of persons and cultures, of desires and works, our union of minds and hearts has never failed, and, despite an increasing fragility, the Society retains the capacity of apostolic dialogue before the challenges of the modern world in proclaiming the one Good News.

On this eve of the election of my successor and of the many decisions that the General Congregation will have to make, I unite myself with the prayer with which Saint Ignatius finished his letters: "May God our Lord in his infinite and supreme goodness be pleased to give us his abundant grace, so that we may know his most holy will and entirely fulfill it."

Addressing the General-emeritus on behalf of the Society, Kolvenbach's top aide for Latin America Fr Valentin Menendez thanked him for showing "an example... very different from what commonly is found in a world characterized by the clinging to, and fighting for, positions of power and prestige.

"Our charism and legislation are not good merely because they propose beautiful ideals," Menendez said, "but precisely because there are people who know how to embody and live them." In his remarks, the curial counselor made sure to remind the brethren of "the difficult 1981 Pontifical intervention," while noting that Cardinal Franc Rode's blunt [opening message](#) last week constituted "the thinking of the church."

Tomorrow morning, the delegates will move to the traditional four days of *murmuratio* in preparation for Saturday's election of the new "Black Pope."

Repeat: The Election is *Saturday*.... Stay tuned.

PHOTO: Don Doll, SJ

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 12:40



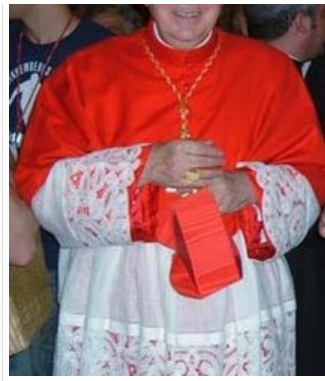
"Vice's" Vicar?

While appointments of new heads for the English-speaking world's two most



prominent sees edge their way toward B16's desk, an assignment closer to home currently stands at the top of the pontiff's personnel pecking order.

And, per usual, the "Vice-Pope" is reported to be all over it.



A well-placed leak slipped into the Italian press over the weekend relayed that the Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone has "invented" the appointment of Cardinal Agostino Vallini (right), the current "chief justice" of the church, to succeed Cardinal Camillo Ruini as papal vicar for Rome, the *de facto* shepherd of the Pope's diocese.

In a selection stakes dominated by such Italian church A-listers as Cardinal Angelo Scola of Venice and the Urb's high-flying auxiliary Bishop Rino Fisichella, the rollout of the near-invisible Vallini, 67, prefect of the Apostolic Signatura -- the church's top tribunal -- would seem somewhat unusual on its face. Then again, as *Il Riformista's* Paolo Rodari wrote on Saturday, replacing the all-prominent Ruini -- arguably the most influential Italian churchman of the last generation -- with a much quieter choice would fit "perfectly" into the Cardinal-Secretary's master plan to "direct," from the church's side, "the conduct of relations with the political world": exactly the role which, by force of personality, Ruini has held unchallenged since taking over as Rome's vicar in 1990. The cardinal turns 77 next month.

In airing the backstory, Rodari notes that "things could change" before an appointment is formally announced. That's always the case with Vatican moves, of course, but given the players and their history, it's especially true on this one.



Not long after Bertone's arrival on the scene in late 2006, Benedict's Vicar and "Vice" (both shown above in a 2007 meeting with Italian President Giorgio Napolitano and Premier Romano Prodi) memorably *clashed* over the future arrangement of the Italian hierarchy's top tier.

Seeking to deconstruct Ruini's media and policy empire -- which he had built up through his twin posts as vicar for Rome and president of the Italian episcopal conference, the CEI -- Bertone pushed for the

appointment of a low-ranking archbishop hidden away in Southern Italy to the latter office. (Given the Pope's role as primate of Italy, the head of its episcopal conference is chosen by papal appointment.)

Protesting his confrere's aim to "publicly disown" his presidency and "decapitate" the CEI, a stunned Ruini persuaded Benedict to halt the plan. In the end, the appointment went to Bertone's successor in Genoa, Angelo Bagnasco, who was deemed an acceptable balance of Ruini's drive for a prominent successor with Bertone's priority for a nominee stationed far from the TV studios and political salons of Rome. Bagnasco became a cardinal at the November consistory.

According to Rodari, the "exclusion" of Fisichella and the CEI secretary Bishop Giuseppe Betori -- a Ruini disciple -- from the shortlist leaves a *terna* composed of three cardinals: Vallini, Scola and Angelo Comastri, the archpriest of St Peter's and papal vicar for Vatican City.

A former seminary rector, auxiliary bishop and vicar-general of Naples, Vallini was born on the outskirts of Rome. The publicity-shy prelate returned to his native province in 1999 as bishop of Albano, the largest of the city's suburban dioceses, and was named to head the *Signatura* in 2004. Benedict made him a cardinal at his first consistory in 2006. Of the 120 cardinal-electors who would select a new bishop of Rome in a hypothetical conclave, Vallini is the group's closest thing to a native of the Pope's diocese.

Discussions on the appointment are so far advanced that, according to the leftist daily, the *Signatura*'s top post is already foreseen passing to the tribunal's current #2, Bishop Velasio DePaolis, a 72 year-old Scalabrinian.

Benedict received Ruini, Vallini and DePaolis in private audiences on Friday.

PHOTO 2: AFP/Getty

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 01:52 

Amid Sadness, Sound Strategy

Proving how truly different things are down in Texas -- and the lessons some of us can learn from that -- the Cardinal of the South called a press conference... on his own accord... to face down questions on a priest's removal from ministry... at his chancery... [on a Sunday afternoon](#).

If the confluence of the above terms seems unusual, it's because the scenario is without precedent.

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo said Sunday that the Rev. Stephen Horn was removed in November from his current position as pastor of St. Luke the Evangelist Church in south Houston shortly after the victim, now an adult, reported the abuse.

"This is a day of sadness for us," DiNardo said at a news conference Sunday.

Horn is accused of sexually abusing a minor between 1989 and 1993.

DiNardo declined to say where the 63-year-old Horn is now, other than to say he is receiving treatment and being monitored. He said the archdiocese will now await a decision from the Vatican before taking further action against Horn.

Horn served at Christ the King, located on the near North Side, from 1981 to 1994; he has been pastor of St. Luke the Evangelist since 1994.

DiNardo declined to give details of the sexual abuse, but said an Archdiocesan Review Board panel investigated the allegations and "thought there was credible evidence for the abuse allegations."

A letter from DiNardo, who became a cardinal in November, was read to parishioners at Christ the King and St. Luke during Masses Saturday evening and Sunday.

"An allegation is not a determination of guilt, and we each have a right to our good reputation," the letter said.

"However, the Archdiocese takes allegations of sexual abuse of minors extremely seriously. Accordingly, it is my conclusion that Father Horn should be removed from active ministry at this time."

The letter urged parishioners with any relevant information about Horn to contact the archdiocese's attorney or police.

"This is a difficult time for everyone involved, which, because a priest is the alleged wrongdoer, includes all of the Clergy and Catholic Faithful of the Archdiocese," DiNardo wrote in his letter.

The chancery presser ([video](#)) was DiNardo's first since the October announcement of his elevation.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 00:14 

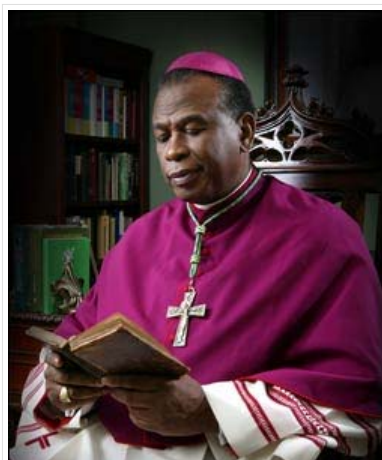
SUNDAY, JANUARY 13, 2008


Braxton v. Belleville, Round Three

Citing an alleged misappropriation of funds, the finance council of the diocese of Belleville has [petitioned the Holy See](#) to look into the propriety of some purchases made by Bishop Edward Braxton.

Here we go. Again.

The Rev. Dennis



Voss, pastor of St. 
Liborius Church in
St. Libory, said the purchases were made with money
earmarked for the international Society for the Propagation of
the Faith, a renowned fund to aid Catholic missions
throughout the world.

Saying the council is bound by an oath of secrecy, Voss said
he could only verify the complaint was made Dec. 14 to the
Papal Nuncio in Washington, D.C., and would not say how
much money was spent or what it was spent on, other than to
say the purchases were church-related.

The money in question came from a bequest from a single
individual and was not from the regular parishioner
collection, Voss said.

Braxton did not respond to written questions submitted by
the News-Democrat to the Chancery office in Belleville.

When asked whether the complaint was about Braxton, Voss
replied, "Obviously it was. ... We did this by going through the
proper channels. We are trying to do all we can to rectify this
situation."

Voss said the complaint was sent to the Papal Nuncio in
Washington, D.C., Archbishop Pietro Sambi, who is Pope
Benedict XVI's representative in the United States. A
spokesman for the office said Thursday that Sambi was
unavailable and that any questions must be in writing.

The director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in
the United States, Monsignor John E. Kozar, said that all
money collected for this fund, minus the cost of raising it,
must be sent to the New York office for transfer to Rome.
Kozar said that by papal order, money collected for this fund
since its founding in France in 1822 cannot be spent in the
diocese or even the country where it is raised.

"I will say that the priests in Belleville are extremely
concerned by this," Kozar said. He added that if the money
was spent improperly, "the public's confidence in donating to
help the poor is at stake."

On Wednesday, the West Deanery, a diocesan organization of
12 priests, met and unanimously passed a motion calling on
the Finance Council to "report openly and honestly about
alleged misappropriation of funds. ..."

According to the group's minutes, the priests want a full
accounting of expenditures from the Propagation of the Faith
Fund and from a local fund called A Future Full of Hope.

On Friday, the East Deanery met and passed a similar
resolution 7-0 with one abstention, according to their
minutes.

"The rumors that are circulating are making it more difficult
to raise funds. ... he Clergy of the Diocese of Belleville want a
full clarification of what is happening with these funds," the
minutes stated.

In December, the board for A Future Full of Hope chided
Braxton for approving spending \$10,100 from this fund for a
wood conference table and chairs for a meeting room at the
Chancery. According to minutes from this board's
teleconference of Nov. 20, members "expressed in writing

their objections to this expenditure by Bishop Braxton."

Established by former Bishop Wilton Gregory, A Future Full of Hope had collected \$12 million by 1998 and today still has about \$1.7 million to be spent on programs for children and adults.

As noted above, today's story is but the latest clash between the bishop and the natives in the Southern Illinois diocese of 115,000.

Braxton's 2005 appointment was greeted with presbyteral protest amid complaints that the clergy weren't consulted -- an outcry that grew after the bishop sought to renovate his residence. (While the diocese allotted \$25K toward the spruce-up, Braxton's friends kicked in the rest of the project's reported \$250,000 total.) Months later, frustrated over what one termed the bishop's "imperial" style of governance, a third of the priests met publicly to [sign a statement of discontent](#).

Current reports from on-ground invariably hold that the priests remain split into "defined" camps, with a significant majority -- said to be as high as 80% -- joined in opposition to Braxton.

PHOTO: *Diocese of Belleville*

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 11:41



"Foster Always the Flame of Faith"

The Pope, from this morning's homily at the [Baptism Mass](#):

"God wanted to save us by plunging to the bottom of the abyss of death himself, so that every man, even the one who has fallen so low that he can no longer see the sky, may find and take hold of the hand of God, rising up from the shadows to see once again the light for which he was made.

We all feel, we all perceive within ourselves that our existence is a desire for life that cries out for a fullness, a salvation. This fullness of life is given to us in Baptism...."

"The Son of God, who from all eternity shares in the fullness of life together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, was 'immersed' in our reality as sinners, in order to make us share in his own life. This is why Christian parents, like you are doing today, bring their children to the baptismal font as soon as possible, knowing that the life that they have given to them calls out for a fullness, a salvation that only God can give. And in this way, the parents become co-workers with God in transmitting to their children not only physical life, but also spiritual life...."

"In order to grow up healthy and strong, these children need physical care and great attention; but what will be more necessary for them, and even indispensable, is that they know, love, and serve God faithfully, that they may have eternal life. Dear parents, be for them the first witnesses of authentic faith in God!..."

"Foster always, dear brothers and sisters, the flame of faith, by listening to and meditating on the Word of God, and through frequent communion with the Eucharistic Jesus. May you be helped in this stupendous, though not easy, mission by the patron saints whose names these thirteen children will take. May these saints help above all them, the children about to be baptised, to respond to your care as Christian parents. May the Virgin Mary in particular accompany them and you, dear parents, now and forever. Amen!"

...and the subsequent *Angelus*:

"In being baptised by John together with sinners, Jesus began to take upon himself the weight of the sins of all humanity, as the Lamb of God who 'takes away' the sin of the world (cf. John 1:29). He brought this work to fulfilment on the cross, when he also received his 'baptism' (cf. Luke 12:50). By dying, in fact, he 'immersed' himself in the love of the Father, and poured forth the Holy Spirit, so that those who believe in Him might be reborn in that inexhaustible fountain of new and eternal life. The entire mission of Christ is summed up in this: to baptise us in the Holy Spirit, to free us from slavery to sin and 'open heaven to us', meaning access to true and full life, which will be 'a plunging ever anew into the vastness of being, in which we are simply overwhelmed with joy' (Spe Salvi, 12)"....

(And, for the annual observance of the World Day of Migrants:) "Many young people are for various reasons driven to live far away from their families and their countries. Young women and minors are particularly at risk. Some children and adolescents are born and raised in 'refugee camps': they too have a right to a future! I express my appreciation for those who work on behalf of young migrants and their families, and for their integration into work and schooling; I invite the ecclesial communities to extend a warm welcome to these young people and their parents, seeking to understand their lives and to foster their integration. Dear young migrants! Dedicate yourselves to building together with your peers a more just and fraternal society, fulfilling your duties, respecting the laws, and not letting yourselves be carried away by violence.

PHOTOS: Maurizio Brambatti/Pool

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 11:22 

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12, 2008

Back to the Future



In another significant liturgical turn at the very top, B16 will celebrate tomorrow's annual Sistine Chapel Mass for the Baptism of the Lord in the *ad orientem* stance -- that is, facing away from the congregation and toward the cross that stands at the chapel's back wall.

In an explanatory note from the Office for Papal Liturgical Celebrations picked up by the Italian wires, the papal MC Msgr Guido Marini announced that the Mass, to be conducted according to the post-Conciliar "Ordinary Use" approved by Paul VI, would employ the main altar of the *Sistina*. As a result, the note said, "at certain moments the Pope will have his shoulders [back] to the faithful and his gaze toward the Cross."

As the chapel's original altar is not freestanding, *versus populum* celebrations there have required the construction of a temporary altar and platform. While John Paul II celebrated his first Mass after his 1978 election using the permanent altar and no freestanding altar exists in the Pope's private chapel, a public papal liturgy has not been celebrated using the "common orientation" in recent memory.

"The celebration at the old altar is being restored so as not to alter the beauty and harmony of this architectural jewel," the note said, "preserving its structure from the celebratory point of view and using an option contemplated by the liturgical norms." The change of orientation, Marini's statement said, would seek to enhance "the attitude and disposition of the whole assembly."

The annual liturgy features the baptism of several infants by the pontiff. The contemporary baptismal font designed by Lello Scorzelli -- also the designer of the *pastorali*, the cross-topped liturgical staffs used by Paul VI and his successors -- will likewise be maintained.

* * *

Also this morning, the Pope named Alabama-born Msgr Joseph Marino as apostolic nuncio to Bangladesh, elevating him to the rank of archbishop.

A two-decade veteran of the diplomatic corps who's served until now as second-in-command at the papal mission to the UK, Marino is the first native Southerner named a bishop in the direct service of the Holy See. Ordained for the diocese of Birmingham in 1979, the archbishop-elect turns 55 later this month.

The appointment returns the number of US-born mission-chiefs to six. The others are Archbishops Edward Adams (Philadelphia) in the Philippines, Thomas Gullickson (Sioux Falls) in the Caribbean, Charles Balvo (New York) in New Zealand, Fiji and Samoa, Michael Blume SVD (Fort Wayne) in Benin and Togo, and James Green (Philadelphia) in South Africa.

A native of Cleveland, Archbishop Timothy Broglio was serving as nuncio in the Dominican Republic until his November appointment as archbishop for the Military Services USA. The former chief of staff to the Secretary of State, Broglio returns from Santo Domingo next week, days before his 25 January installation in Washington's Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 13:18 

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 2008

A Hope-Fix for PopeTix

Three months from this coming Tuesday, B16 touches down for his six-day trek to the East Coast.

Information hasn't necessarily abounded about it and plans are still being "finalized," but for the willing

who'd like to take part in what's looking to be the only US trip of Papa Ratz's reign, it isn't too late to take a shot -- but, just so you know, the window is closing quickly.



Admittedly, it's kind of ironic that for all the Vatican critiques of the Dan Brown book, it didn't take long for a curiosity-spurred attempt to merely scope out info on how to nab the coveted goods to start feeling like a quest to crack the *DaVinci Code*.

To brief: the archdiocese of New York's page for [ticket info](#) says that all requests must be received by its designated office by Tuesday (15 January)... just without noting how to get those requests in... and as an archdiocese-sponsored phone number featured a voice message promising updated information "after January 1st" -- before hanging up. And the archdiocese of Washington -- where Benedict's lone public event will be the 17 April Mass for about 45,000 at Nationals

Park -- "has not finalized" its distribution plans, merely [noting](#) its past policy of disseminating PopeTix through its parishes and unspecified neighboring dioceses.

But one thing is clear: between the octogenarian pontiff's need to conserve his energy, his preference for smaller gatherings, and the security imperatives of a post-9/11 world, the next papal swing through the densest concentration of the nation's 70 million Catholics will be vastly different from the last one.

In the fall of 1995, John Paul II's five-day journey to New Jersey, New York, Brooklyn and Baltimore included four public liturgies for a combined 325,000 faithful. This time, however, the DC Mass and New York's climactic Sunday Eucharist at Yankee Stadium will, when taken together, be able to accommodate about a third of that, with officials well aware that demand for seats will far outstrip their supply.

Aside from its spate of small events for specific groups, New York will also host a "meeting with youth" on the 19 April anniversary of Benedict's election as Pope and a morning Mass earlier that day for priests and religious in St Patrick's Cathedral. While the grounds of St Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, are expected to fit 20,000 for the encounter, priority is being given to the 5,000 major seminarians from the nation's dioceses and religious orders, all of whom have been invited. The prized invites for the St Pat's Mass will be almost entirely dominated by Gotham clergy and religious, with the 2,500 or so attendees lucky if they can find a bit of breathing room. And those with fond recollections of Papa Wojtyla's free-wheeling "walkabouts" to press the public flesh on entering and leaving ticketed events shouldn't expect an encore in this most prompt of pontificates.

OK... with the bad news aired, now for the good.

Having gotten requests from as far away as Hawaii -- and dazed from the maze of websites and phone numbers -- I turned to the most reliable oracle going: Joe Zwilling, a papal visit vet now prepping for his second PopeTrip as director of communications in New York.

While New Yorkers and Washingtonians will, through their parishes, have the easiest shot at getting spots at the ballpark liturgies, hope isn't lost for those further afield. That's not to say "you're in," but PopeWatching opportunities for out-of-towners do exist, although your chances of success depend mightily on where you're at and how your diocese decides to hand out the allotment it gets.

Bottom line: if you haven't already, contact your chancery.

Outside of the 413 parishes of the 2.1 million-member Big Apple church, the most "prominent" blocks of Yankee Stadium tickets will go to the dioceses observing bicentennials in 2008 -- Baltimore, Boston, Louisville and Philadelphia -- to distribute at their discretion; the closing Mass will observe the anniversaries in a particular way. (Three-fourths of the bicentennial dioceses have posted no ticket information whatsoever, and the one that has -- right here in Pharaohville -- has set its [application](#) deadline for this Monday, the 14th.)

After those, an unconfirmed number of seats will be heading to the suffragan sees of the province of New York -- the dioceses of Albany,

Brooklyn, Buffalo, Ogdensburg, Rochester, Rockville Centre and Syracuse -- and the neighboring archdiocese of Newark and diocese of Bridgeport. Distribution policies will vary; again, contact your chancery.

Whatever's left of the approximately 65,000 tickets for the Sunday afternoon Mass are up for grabs -- "dioceses around the country will be able to have tickets," Zwilling said, but with a warning that there'll only be "a small number for each."

Again, contact your chancery... and good luck.

For the Masses themselves, ticketholders will be required to show government-issued photo ID, or school ID in the case of students. As tickets will be each bear the name of their holder, they're non-transferable. Attendees will be searched and are to be in their seats two hours before the Masses begin.

And for those unable to make it, no worries -- you're far from out of luck.

As never before, the first Stateside papal visit of the internet age will be easier to take part in from wherever you might be. TV and web-streaming coverage will abound, Benedict's messages -- currently in drafting stages -- will be quickly disseminated, and you'll probably get a better glimpse of the Pilgrim than even most of his entourage with security clearance (and all without the logistical chaos). And, yes, *Whispers* will be on the ground, filing at the usual breakneck pace.

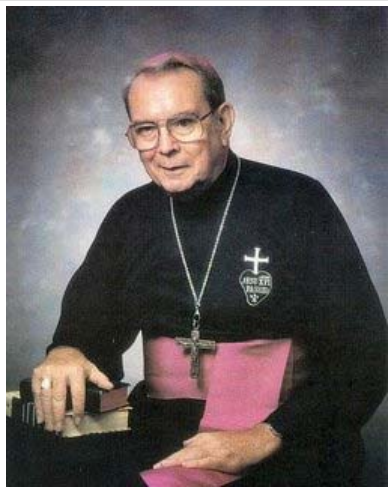
For all the rest, stay tuned.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 14:55 

THURSDAY, JANUARY 10, 2008

Ever a Missionary



Earlier today, Bishop-emeritus Paul Boyle CP of Mandeville, Jamaica died at 81 in a Louisville hospital from complications of hip replacement surgery.

Twice elected the worldwide head of the Passionists, the Detroit-born prelate also served as president of both the Canon Law Society of America and the

Conference of Major Superiors of Men.

In 1988, after wrapping 12 years at his community's helm in Rome, Boyle became a missionary in the West Indies, where he was named vicar-apostolic of Mandeville in the violence-torn Jamaican interior,

becoming its founding bishop in 1997. Following his retirement in 2004, the bishop returned to the US, traveling the country to raise funds for the poor diocese of 8,000 Catholics spread across 1,300 square miles, where the Passionists have long maintained an intense commitment.

Since the August 2006 resignation of his successor, the US Jesuit Gordon Bennett, the bishopric of Mandeville has been vacant.

Initial services are planned for Sunday in Louisville, with the final funeral liturgy scheduled for Wednesday at Boyle's childhood parish in Detroit, where he'll be buried alongside his Passionist confreres.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 16:53



Ratzinger's Revolutionary-in-Chief

"*Benedetto è il Papa, ma Bertone è il Sommo Pontefice*" --
"Benedict is the Pope, but Bertone is the Supreme Pontiff."

That's the word from Rome these days as Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone keeps consolidating the sort of all-powerful brief his recent predecessors as Secretary of State could only dream of.



Every pontificate has one figure of overarching influence: John Paul II had his private secretary of four decades, now-Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz; Paul VI's über-aide was his *Sostituto*, Giovanni Benelli, who was rewarded shortly before his master's death with the archbishopric of Florence and -- at a "snap" consistory called with the prime intent of ensuring his presence in the next conclave -- the red hat. (In a historic irony, while Benelli died prematurely at 61 five years later, one of the other three cardinals created with him was the freshly-ordained archbishop of Munich and Freising, Joseph Ratzinger.)

For all these, it's been seven decades since the official who's job is being the Pope's chief lieutenant has actually been that, the last instance being Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, who succeeded Pope Pius XI after serving as his predecessor's voice, eyes, ears and, thanks to his unprecedented global travel, his unchallenged messenger at home and abroad.

Almost 81, Benedict XVI "realizes he doesn't have the energy to do everything," as one curial hand put it. While the pontiff has devoted much of his time to teaching -- writing his catecheses, letters and homilies, to say nothing of the books -- he's reserved the appointment of bishops and, to a lesser extent, questions of liturgy

as his prime *ad intra* pursuits. The rest is largely left to Bertone, the 73 year-old Salesian who served as Cardinal Ratzinger's #2 at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (where the former is still said to keep a more-than-gentle hand) before being named archbishop of Genoa in 2002 and a cardinal the following year.

Returning to his boss' side in 2006 as the Vatican's "prime minister" and chief diplomat, the football/soccer enthusiast with no diplomatic training and a penchant for blunt talk has since carved himself a purview including facets as the pontiff's chief spokesman, loyalty enforcer, administrative delegate and, most crucially, reinventor of the Roman Curia in his own image.

Sixteen months on, the ripple-effects of the "Vice-Pope" have only increased with time, and exponentially at that.

Among other aspects, an unprecedented flood of Salesians have been called to the episcopacy from the community's ranks, the Vatican offices have become more Italianized (with international veterans said to be "feeling the chill"), his Genoa secretary and MC Guido Marini has been brought in to implement the "restoration" of papal liturgy, and after Monday's strong message to the opening of their General Congregation, one attuned Jesuit remarked that Cardinal Franc Rode's [homily](#) bore "all the fingerprints" of the Secretary of State. As concerns these shores, Bertone's credited (or blamed) with successfully persuading Benedict that the initially-planned Boston stop on his first US visit in mid-April would unwisely make the sex-abuse crisis the frame of the entire six-day trip, and it's said that his leanings have already been made known on the Stateside church's Big Story of 2008: the appointment of a new archbishop of New York.

Given the perceived resistance within the Curial ranks from loyalists of his predecessor, Cardinal Angelo Sodano -- who, after retiring, delayed his departure from the Secretary's traditional apartment in the Apostolic Palace, leaving Bertone consigned for months to St John's Tower in the Vatican Gardens -- Bertone chose a week in November to send two unmistakable signals, exiling Sodano's "favorite son" from the diplomatic corps and announcing plans for a first-ever system of "merit-based" (read: loyalty-based) pay for Curial employees.

That week in November just happened to coincide with Sodano's 80th birthday.



Made Camerlengo by Benedict last April (and thus responsible for the affairs of the Holy See in the event of its vacancy), circles close

to the papal apartment have spoken to a sense that Bertone isn't just being given the broad portfolio to carry it out for the reigning Pope, but with a thought that, like Pacelli before him, the deputy is being "groomed" to ascend even further.

In the new edition of *The Tablet*, Robert Mickens explores [the Revolution and its leader](#):

Now in his seventeenth month in the post, the northern Italian cardinal has not only had to deal with the usual diplomatic controversies that come with the territory, but he has also had to cope with negative news reports that he himself has often generated. These have mainly resulted from his own personal penchant for frequently "issuing statements" in informal press scrums only to chide reporters later for quoting him "out of context". Thus he routinely has accused the "secularist" media for waging an "orchestrated campaign" to discredit, embarrass and attack the Catholic Church. This, in turn, has helped feed a growing victim mentality among many Catholics, especially in Italy.

But Cardinal Bertone's biggest obstacles are not from the outside world. Rather, they are found among certain segments of the Roman Curia where a wall of passive-aggressive opposition to him was already forming in the weeks when his appointment as Secretary of State was still just a rumour.

The curial "obstructionists" and other critics are still convinced that the cardinal lacks essential qualifications for such an internationally important job. Some of them quietly bristle at his lack of experience as a papal diplomat; for example, he was not groomed at the prestigious Accademia Ecclesiastica, as were they and most of the cardinal's predecessors of the past 300 years. Some point to what they call the cardinal's unspectacular academic career; one of his former confrères claims that professors at the Rome-based Salesian University awarded the then-Fr Bertone (also a professor at the time) his canon law doctorate behind closed doors, rather than requiring him to defend his thesis in the more customary setting of a "public defence". And still others consider the Secretary of State's cultural background as far too limited for his post; he has only ever lived in Italy and, while he claims familiarity with several foreign languages (but not English), he is not known to speak any of them with proficiency....

The Pope probably has few genuine and long-time admirers or supporters more eager to serve him than the strapping Salesian cardinal. During nearly eight years (1995-2003) as secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), the then-Archbishop Bertone proved his worth. It is well known that he did much of the so-called "heavy lifting" for the prefect at the time - Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. And evidently the then future Pope never forgot it. As Benedict XVI approaches the third anniversary of his pontificate, it appears increasingly more plausible that he may have picked Cardinal Bertone as his Secretary of State for the very reasons the curial "obstructionists" have opposed him.

In choosing an Accademia "outsider", the Pope was perhaps

hoping for a right-hand man that would help him rid the Roman Curia of "church bureaucrats" and bring in new personnel more in line with his own theological and ecclesiological thinking. And while few people are under the illusion that the cardinal alone is making the major personnel decisions, his influence on the Pope cannot be discounted. How else does one explain the ever-increasing Italian population in the middle and upper ranks of the Curia? Or the fact that Italian continues to become more and more the only accepted language in what the Second Vatican Council hoped would be a fully "internationalised" papal curia?

Cardinal Bertone's view on this is conditioned by the fact that he is a Salesian. "I am and remain a priest of Don Bosco," he never tires of repeating. Although now present all over the world, the Salesians are undoubtedly the "most Italian" of all the major religious orders in the Church - even more so than the Franciscans. And having an especially outgoing Salesian as his top aide adds extra punch to the more cerebral Pope Benedict's main cultural project; namely, strengthening the Catholic Church's influence in Italy and, even more importantly, reawakening the Christian identity of Europe....

Cardinal Bertone has tried to emulate some of the style of Pacelli, the future Pius XII. Despite the enormous intellectual, diplomatic and temperamental differences between the two churchmen, the current Secretary of State has been playing a ubiquitous public role in the past few months in much the same way his predecessor did in the 1930s. He has carried out high-profile and much-publicised travels throughout Eastern and Western Europe. He went to Peru last summer on a scheduled visit that happened to coincide with post-earthquake clean-up efforts. And he was the keynote speaker at a Knights of Columbus convention in the United States, despite not speaking English. He has spoken at universities, business clubs, the annual gathering of Communion and Liberation, and just about any other event that his schedule permits.

He says: "In response to the critics I have to say that from the beginning of my academic activities I have never wanted to close myself in an office to study papers." He adds that even people who hold "the highest and most important roles" in the Church should be out "meeting the people".

This populist touch has won him praise from many people - certainly at the beginning of his appointment. And it has marked a major change from his most recent predecessor, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, who was seen (perhaps unfairly) as a grey Vatican statesman, formal and distant from ordinary people. Most curial officials from the Sodano school of thought - and there are many - are not comfortable with their current boss' activism and are more convinced than ever that the Holy See's diplomatic work is most effective when it is done meticulously and without attracting headlines.

As mentioned above, on his first US visit last year, Bertone served as papal legate to the 125th Supreme Convention of the Knights of Columbus.

With an intended audience of the entire church in the United States,

his [keynote address](#) to the Nashville gathering is arguably the most authoritative preview you'll find to April's papal visit, lest anyone hasn't yet read it.

In a [press conference](#) during the trip, he also gave his blessing to the burgeoning community of the [Nashville Dominicans](#), calling the "incredibly young" sisters "very beautiful and very intelligent," also hailing Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's work for peace as being "accompanied by the angels."

The "Vice-Pope" then lashed out at "the business created around" the sex abuse scandals, terming it "really unbearable" and praising the US church for "fac[ing] this trial with dignity and courage."

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 14:39



Let 'Em Be Scattered



In a significant development regarding the handling of cremains, the authoritative daily of the Italian bishops has announced a green-light for the spreading of ashes.

From [Avvenire](#), via CNS:

The Italian bishops released their new translation of Catholic funeral rites in November, for the first time adding prayers to be recited at a crematorium and for a funeral celebrated in the presence of the deceased's ashes rather than a body.

The texts, *Avvenire* reported in a series of articles Jan. 9, were relatively unknown until a secular newspaper reported that a priest in northern Italy refused a Catholic funeral for a man who had asked that his ashes be scattered in the mountains.

The Diocese of Aosta later issued a statement saying that although the priest had hesitated, in the end there was a Catholic funeral and "church funerals will be celebrated for all the faithful, including those who have chosen the scattering of their ashes as long as the choice was not made for reasons contrary to the Christian faith."

Until 2001, Italian law prohibited the scattering of ashes. The Cremation Society's international statistics noted that in 2005 just under 9 percent of Italians who died were cremated; the

percentage in the United States for the same year was about 32 percent.

Father Silvano Sirboni, a pastor and liturgist, wrote in *Avvenire* that while cremation was an ancient practice the spread of Christianity brought with it a growing desire to be buried in the ground as Jesus was....

In 1963, the Vatican issued new norms permitting Catholic funerals for those who wanted to be cremated as long as they had not chosen cremation as an expression of disbelief in the Resurrection or in other Catholic doctrines, Father Sirboni wrote.

The Italian bishops' pastoral guidelines, issued along with the new translation of the rites, said Catholic funerals should be denied to those who request their ashes be scattered if they are motivated by "a pantheistic or naturalistic mentality" which denies the existence of one God, who is separate from his creation.

Father Sirboni said this guideline was meant to "dissuade people from certain choices" and to encourage priests to discuss the choices with a family and make decisions on a case-by-case basis.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 08:33 

La Quinceañera del Norte: Rite of Mass Passage

One of the most prominent signs of US Catholicism's Latin(o) Revival is the consistent uptick in celebrations of the *Quinceañera* -- the traditional wedding-like Mass and party to celebrate a girl's entrance into young womanhood at her 15th birthday.

Much like weddings, the rite -- now with Rome-approved texts for use in the States -- has become an *ad intra* flashpoint, with an emerging handful of dioceses embracing the event not just as cultural milestone, but teaching moment.

From my spiritual birthplace, *AP* reports:

On the day she is to become a woman, Monica Reyes sits in front of the church for Mass. Her white dress — sewn in her mother's Mexican hometown — spills over her chair like an oversize lampshade.

The priest urges her to live as a daughter of God. Her parents give her a gold ring shaped like the number 15. Near the end of the service, Reyes lays a bouquet of roses before a statue of the Virgin Mary.

Then she steps through the worn, wooden doors of St. Joseph's, a Roman Catholic parish for generations of poor, Hispanic immigrants, and into a 20-seat white Hummer limo that rents for \$150 an hour. Before long, a stretch Lincoln Town Car arrives for the next Quinceanera Mass.

An elaborate coming-of-age ritual for Hispanic girls on their

15th birthday, the Quinceanera has long been divisive in the U.S. Catholic Church, where it's viewed as either an exercise in excess or a great opportunity to send a message about faith and sexual responsibility.

The latter view won an important endorsement last summer, when the Vatican approved a new set of prayers for U.S. dioceses called *Bendición al cumplir quince años*, or Blessing on the Fifteenth Birthday....

[I]n the Archdiocese of Denver, Hispanic ministry leaders view the Quinceanera craze as not just a chance to strengthen faith and family but as a weapon against teen pregnancy.

Before Reyes could get her Quinceanera Mass, she and her parents had to enroll in a four-week curriculum introduced last year at Hispanic-dominated parishes that combines Catholicism 101 with a strong pro-chastity message.

"Some girls come to the class expecting to be taught how to dance," said Alfonso Lara, the archdiocese's Hispanic Ministry coordinator.

The girls in Reyes' class gathered in a stuffy room with a map of Mexico on the wall and a crucifix on the table.

One lesson included tips for safe dating (avoid dating Web sites in favor of group outings in public places like the mall or family barbecues). Then there is an explanation of the difference between simple abstinence (a way to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases) and chastity (living like Jesus and Mary)....

A blend of European court traditions and ceremonies from Latin American countries, the Quinceanera at times has the feel of an out-of-control prom in the United States.

A \$400 million-a-year industry has sprouted up catering to Hispanic immigrants seeking to maintain cultural traditions while showing they've made it in their new countries, offering everything from Quinceanera planners and cruises to professional ballroom dancers to teach the ceremonial waltz.

At the same time, the ritual is a point of tension with the Catholic Church because Catholic families want their faith to be part of the celebration, yet it isn't a sacrament, like marriage.

The Reyes family does not attend Mass regularly but would never consider the Quinceanera legitimate without the blessing of a priest. A portrait of Our Lady of Guadalupe watches over the living room of the family's apartment.

"The reason to have the Mass is to be blessed and to say thanks to God," said Monica's mother, Luz....

It's also the American dream realized. Reyes is giving her daughters something she never got growing up in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, where her Quinceanera dress was a tattered gown and dessert was a simple layer cake.

There were perhaps 15 people at the Reyes' Quinceanera Mass. The rental hall, Martha's Golden Palace, has a capacity of 500, and Monica welcomed most of her classmates, a favorite teacher and the police officer assigned to her high school.

After an hour, the DJ turned down the deafening border music and strobe lights, and played the waltz that Monica and her court had been practicing for weeks in her apartment complex parking lot.

Later, Monica wiped away tears as she danced with her grandfather.

On the dance floor, she changed from flat shoes into heels, signaling her departure from childhood.

Her first meal as a woman was a bowl of beans washed down with strawberry soda.

"The big thing isn't to have a party," Monica said. "It's that you're going from a little girl to a woman. You're thanking God you have been in this world for 15 years."

PHOTO: AP/Ed Andrieski

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 07:58 

Hold the Champagne

Contrary to quickly-spread reports making the rounds of the 'net, the beatification of John Henry Newman is **not imminent**, *secundum* CNS Rome:

[In an interview with *L'Osservatore Romano*, Vatican saint czar] Cardinal [Jose] Saraiva Martins also mentioned the sainthood cause of Cardinal John Henry Newman, the 19th-century English philosopher, theologian and spiritual writer.

In 2006, the Vatican began studying evidence of an alleged miraculous cure in the Archdiocese of Boston attributed to Cardinal Newman's intercession. That raised expectations, but to date there's been no news.

Cardinal Saraiva Martins didn't make any promises, but he said: "Personally, I hope this beatification can occur within a short time because it would be very important at this moment for the path of ecumenism."

Cardinal Saraiva Martins also indicated that the Vatican was close to finishing the beatification process for Louis Martin and Azelie Guerin Martin, the parents of St. Therese of Lisieux, "The Little Flower." They are among the very few Catholic married couples being considered for sainthood.

Also coming from the Congregation for the Causes of Saints: new guidelines encouraging "more precision" in the opening of causes by local churches.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 07:36 

Lifting the Prayer?

While *Summorum Pontificum* and the widened permission for use the 1962 Missal have garnered *ad intra* reactions that span the spectrum, one element in particular has generated heavy attention outside the walls: the "Old Rite's" controversial Good Friday prayer for the conversion of the Jewish people.

The text, which asks God to "lift the veil from their hearts," has also come under internal scrutiny; the "Vice-Pope" Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone SDB is on-record as saying that the replacement of the '62 prayers for the Good Friday commemoration with those from the 1970 Missal of Paul VI as a potential remedy was being given "active consideration." (And if Bertone -- the *de facto* papal spokesman -- says it, well....)

With this year's Easter falling -- for the first time since 1940 -- at the earliest possible date (23 March), the *NCR's* John Allen looks at the "ticking clock" the Vatican faces:

[T]he timeline is further complicated by the fact that Benedict XVI will arrive in the United States just three weeks after Good Friday, and will meet with an inter-religious delegation expected to include Jews. The last thing organizers want is a cloud of Jewish/Catholic tension hanging over the event. It's an especially acute sentiment given memories of Joseph Ratzinger's last visit to New York, in 1988, when a handful of rabbis refused to meet him in protest over comments allegedly suggesting that Christianity is the "fulfillment" of Judaism.

If a reminder were needed of Jewish sensitivities about the Good Friday prayer, which among other things asks God to "lift the veil from their hearts," the Anti-Defamation League included it on a late December list of "Top Ten Issues Affecting Jews in 2007." The ADL called the possible revival of the prayer "a theological setback to the reforms of Vatican II, and a challenge to Catholic-Jewish relations."

(To be sure, the ADL statement did not go down well in some Catholic circles. Putting Benedict XVI on the same list of anti-Semitic offenders as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, for example, struck even some Catholics deeply committed to Jewish/Christian dialogue, and who are themselves concerned about the Good Friday prayer, as excessive. Nonetheless, it's an indicator that the prayer remains a live issue.)

At one level, this may seem an easy fix. Last July, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican's Secretary of State, said the problem could be solved by substituting the prayer for Jews found in the post-Vatican II liturgy for Good Friday, which no longer refers to conversion but rather asks that Jews "may arrive at the fullness of redemption." Since the original texts of the new liturgy are in Latin, it would be fairly simple to ask communities celebrating the old rite to use the Latin version of the more recent prayer.

(In a mid-November [consultation](#) between the U.S. bishops'

conference and the National Council of Synagogues, Fr. Dennis McManus, a liturgical expert, also floated the idea of finding another ancient prayer, or creating a new one, but most experts regard these as more complicated and long-term possibilities. Aside from questions of content, the advantage of the prayer in the post-Vatican II rite is that it's already been approved for liturgical use.)

So, why not just decree immediately that the Latin version of the more recent prayer be used by everyone, thereby defusing the bomb before it goes off?

Part of the answer, of course, is simply the normal leisurely course of affairs in the Vatican. More deeply, however, experts say the real problem is fear of a slippery slope: If church authorities are willing to revise the Good Friday prayer for the Jews on the grounds that it's not consistent with the teaching of Vatican II, what about other elements of the old rite that, according to some, raise similar questions?

For example, the Good Friday liturgy also contains prayer for heretics and schismatics (meaning Protestants) and for pagans (meaning non-Christians). Should those prayers too be revised, since they don't reflect the more sensitive argot of Vatican II? More broadly, some critics charge that much of the symbolism and language of the old Mass is inconsistent with the vision of the council. Should all that be put on the operating table? If so, one might fairly ask, what was the point of Benedict's ruling in the first place?

Creating a precedent for selective editing of the old rite, in other words, could open the door to death by a thousand cuts....

Catholics have been able to celebrate the pre-Vatican rite with permission from their local bishop since Pope John Paul II authorized it with a special indult in 1984. For the last 24 years, therefore, a handful of Catholics have been reciting the old prayer for the conversion of the Jews each Good Friday – without, in the eyes of most experts, any appreciable impact on Jewish/Catholic relations. Of course, the difference this time around is that Benedict's *motu proprio* has raised the profile of the old rite, ensuring that saying the prayer this time would be a cause célèbre.

Second, a bit of misunderstanding continues to circulate in some quarters about Benedict's ruling, one which affects the Good Friday controversy. Because the pope decreed that priests should not celebrate private Masses in the old rite during Holy Week, some have concluded that the Good Friday prayer would never be used in any event. In fact, however, the pope made a distinction between private Masses and public celebrations for stable communities. Where Catholics routinely worship according to the old rite, they will continue to do so during Holy Week, and therefore would use the old Good Friday prayers – absent any contrary instructions from the Vatican.

Good Friday is nine weeks from tomorrow -- appropriately enough, the first day of spring.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 07:14 

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 09, 2008

New Blood at the Basilica



Archbishop Edwin O'Brien's first major personnel move in the Premier See brings a changing of the guard to American Catholicism's most historic sanctuary.

After a half-century of ministry and 15 years at the helm of the nation's first cathedral -- during which he helped oversee its two-year, \$34 million [restoration](#) -- the beloved Msgr James Hobbs is [retiring](#) as rector of Baltimore's Basilica of the Assumption.

Hobbs plans to move into the Thurmont house he was born in 76 years ago and assist pastors in the area parishes, like Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Thurmont, and Shrine of St. Anthony, Emmitsburg.

"I'm looking forward to going back to my roots," he said. "I'm looking forward to retirement after 51 years, but I'm also looking forward to helping out in the parishes where there is a great shortage of clergy."

A special farewell Mass for Monsignor Hobbs will be celebrated Jan. 27 at 10:45 a.m. at the basilica to give parishioners an opportunity to celebrate their rector's tenure.

When the 50th anniversary of his ordination arrived last year, parishioners of the basilica insisted on having a celebration honoring him, even though he initially resisted any kind of fuss being made on behalf of the occasion.

"He's a very gentle man, and he doesn't ever see the need to be in the spotlight," Michael J. Ruck Sr., a longtime parishioner of the downtown Baltimore church, said in an interview with *The Catholic Review* last spring. "But, we told him that wasn't acceptable. We wanted this celebration."...

Though he said he would miss the basilica and living in the cardinal's residence on Charles Street, Monsignor Hobbs said the prospect of a more rural setting was appealing as he prepares for retirement.

"I've enjoyed every moment of my ministry," he said. "I believe I'll also enjoy this new chapter of my life."

The rectorship isn't just changing hands, but generations: 44

year-old Fr Jeffrey Dausen [takes the reins](#) on 1 February.

[The rector-designate] confesses to being a bit intimidated by his new assignment, but said he's also excited because it dovetails with his interests.

"I love history and architecture," he said. "Architecture has always been an avocation of mine. I always thought if I hadn't become a priest I would have become an architect."

He toured the dome of the basilica as it was being readied for renovations and found that experience fascinating.

Father Dausen said he is aware that he is a custodian of the church's history and meaning -- and that he's following a beloved rector.

"It's intimidating because so many people visit," he said. "I'm very humbled by it and aware I have some big shoes to fill."

Its cornerstone laid in 1806, the then-cathedral was opened in 1821. Designed to highlight the faith's comfortable fusion with the principles of the new nation, it ranks with the US Capitol as the signal works of their architect, Benjamin Henry Latrobe.

As the seat of the US hierarchy's "first among equals," the basilica played host to every national gathering of the American bishops until the 1920s, when the National Catholic Welfare Conference -- the forerunner to today's USCCB -- began its custom of meeting in the capital. Though the "New Cathedral" of Mary Our Queen became the formal seat of its archbishops in 1959, the Assumption remains a co-cathedral of the nation's first diocese.

Since reopening in November 2006, the basilica has welcomed over 150,000 visitors.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 14:18 

A Human Sea of Faith

The annual Black Nazarene festival filled the streets of Manila earlier today as the traditional "pious throng" converged to honor the ancient statue said to have healing powers.

For eight hours, the 16th century image -- brought from Mexico by Augustinian missionaries -- was processed around the capital's downtown on a cart pulled by maroon-clad men known as "debotos."

Though the festival's modern iteration commemorates the statue's

move to its basilica-shrine in 1787, the "feast of the Nazarene" -- the nation's largest annual event of any sort -- was being marked for the 401st year.

The statue was brought to Manila by a Spanish priest in 1607 aboard a ship. The ship caught fire, burning the image and thus came to be known as the Black Nazarene. Though the image was burnt, the people decided to preserve and honor it. Since then, miraculous things have been reported to those who touch the image.

The celebration starts as the huge door of Quiapo Church opens and the image of the Black Nazarene is within sight. The ocean of devotees start to yell "*Viva Señor*" while some wave white towel high in the air along with the scripture of the Black Nazarene.

The statue is placed in a gilded carriage for the procession. As the procession starts, procession participants garbed in maroon tops grab two long ropes and pull it to make the carriage move. Many will attempt to touch the image while some throw their handkerchiefs and towels in the air. People who join in the procession walk barefooted as a sign of humility.



The devotion to the Black Nazarene is long time practice of the Filipino Catholics and they believe that through their faith with Jesus Christ, there will be peace and harmony among families, long life and good health among people, deliverance from all calamities and disasters, and prosperity, joy and love among nations.

Ceremonies began with a dawn Mass celebrated by Manila's Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales, with Filipino Vice-President Noli De Castro in attendance.

By the time the icon had returned to the church, two pilgrims were reported dead, with scores of others hospitalized from the crush.

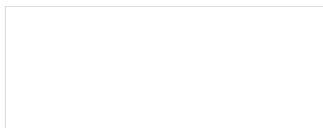
PHOTO: AP/Aaron Favila

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 10:17 

The Doctor is In

At this morning's General Audience, the Pope announced that his upcoming catecheses will draw on the life and



writings of the topic of his doctoral dissertation -- St Augustine.

Today, [the intro...](#)

Augustine, a figure of "singular relevance" in the history of the Church and of Christian literature, and not only in these, was a bit like the young people of today - he had "extremely robust intelligence, but was not always a model student"; he had widely varied experiences; he sought, at first, moral rules that were not too burdensome; he was anxious to know the Truth....

The pope today said of Augustine - who was an object of special study for him as a theologian, and the subject of his thesis - that "all the roads of Latin Christian literature lead to Hippo, where he was bishop", and he recalled the assertion of Paul VI, for whom "it may be said that all the thought of antiquity converges" in his work, and from this there branch out many of the roads travelled by Western culture, so much so that "he is known even by those who ignore Christianity"....

His search for a religion that could satisfy his desire for truth and bring him close to Jesus made him "fall into the snares of the Manichaeans". Among other things, their morality left their members relatively free, something that, the pope observed, also happens today.

He went to Italy, first to Rome and then to Milan, where, disappointed by his experience with Manichaeism, he was fascinated by the preaching of Ambrose, "not only for its rhetorical style, but also for its contents". For Augustine, Ambrose "resolved the question of philosophical sophistication" in the Bible, with his reflection on the presence of the mystery of Christ in the Old Testament, and his meditation "on the Logos who became flesh".

...and, as a bonus, Cardinal Ratzinger's [2004 message](#) at the close of celebrations for the doctor's 1,650th birthday:

The "emptiness of ideologies" prompted St. Augustine to seek the Truth of Christ, says Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger....

During a solemn Mass in the Basilica of St. Aurea in Ostia, a city near Rome, the cardinal spoke about the "two obstacles" on the path to Augustine's conversion: "the spirit of independence and his intellectual pride, which led him initially to follow Manichaeism, a 'material' religion."

"Augustine experienced freedom profoundly to the point that he became its slave, as the prodigal son, who ended up by taking care of pigs and eating pods," Cardinal Ratzinger said in his homily. "If we are honest with ourselves, we cannot deny that that parable fully reflects our existential condition. Authentic freedom lies only in friendship with the Lord."

"Words like eternal love and wisdom are not fashionable

today. Augustine, who lived in an age very similar to our own, went so far as to describe wisdom as a 'foreign word.'"

The cardinal continued: "Experiencing the great emptiness of the ideologies of his time, Augustine felt a great thirst for that Truth that opens the way to Life. He understood that no one is able to reach God by his own efforts and he discovered in the end that Christ is the true Wisdom."

"Christianity is not moralism, but rather a gift of the love of God," Cardinal Ratzinger explained, summarizing the thought of Augustine, who lived from the years 354 to 430.

PHOTO: Reuters/Max Rossi

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 09:21



TUESDAY, JANUARY 08, 2008

"Black Conclave" Update



Shortly after yesterday's candid message from the papal legate to its opening, the first working session of GC35 was held in the Aula of the Jesuit Curia. As the body doled out its initial round of appointments, the front rank of the *generabili* were much in evidence.

It'll be another ten days or so before one of the 226 delegates emerges as the 29th

successor of Ignatius Loyola and new "Black Pope," but after the outgoing Father-General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach relinquished the chair, the representatives of the church's largest religious community placed two potential candidates at the center of the spotlight. The Puerto Rican Orlando Torres -- a Kolvenbach favorite currently running the Society's formation desk -- was elected to preside over the assembly until the election, with Basque Fr Ignacio Echarte, head of the Jesuit houses in Rome, chosen as his deputy.

Two committees were also established. The first, compiled by seniority, keeps watch to ensure that no Jesuit has "aspired to the office of General." Representing Western Europe, Kolvenbach -- the region's senior delegate -- is among its ten members, as is the longest-tenured US delegate, Fr Vincent Cooke, the president of Canisius College in Buffalo and the Spanish provincial Elias Royon, cited as a possible "compromise candidate" for the top post.

The second committee, charged with preparing the *De statu Societatis* report on the "State of the Society," includes several of the

oft-mentioned, including Royon (the only Jesuit to serve on both of the sub-groups), the rector of Mexico City's Iberoamericana University (and former global head of formation) Jose "Pepe" Morales, and the European super-provincial Mark Rotsaert.

After a week of preparing the report that'll form the "job description" for the new General, the body will move to the four-day period of the formal *murmuratio*; the Society's chief spokesman, Fr Jose DeVera, said last week that the election is expected to take place on or about 19 January.

Conspicuously absent from the first-day mix was the Australian provincial Mark Raper. Once the Rome-based head of Jesuit Refugee Services, Raper -- along with Morales and Torres, among others -- was a mainstay among the most-mentioned names *even before* the congregation was convoked in early 2006, and has since remained among the widely cited.

While, in the run-up to the GC, his "maverick" tendencies had been viewed in some Jesuit quarters as too provocative given the sensitivity of the Society's relations with the Holy See, yesterday's public rebuke from the Vatican's "prefect of Religious" Cardinal Franc Rode CM just might've given new life to a mindset that sees the electors responding in kind.

Unlike the conclave that yields a "white" Pope, the Jesuit chosen as Father-General is not asked whether he accepts the post. As the choice comes from the community's supreme authority -- the congregation -- it is considered a mission under obedience and cannot be declined.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 13:23



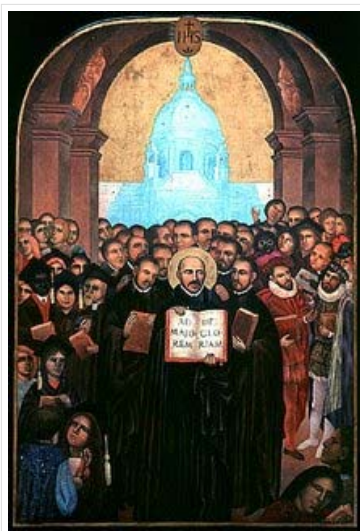
MONDAY, JANUARY 07, 2008

In Charism and Tradition

Following is the fulltext homily of the papal legate Cardinal Franc Rode CM, prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, given at the opening of GC35 earlier today in Rome

* * *

Dear Members of the
XXXV General
Congregation of the
Society of Jesus,



St Ignatius considered the General Congregation "work and a distraction" (Const. 677) which momentarily interrupts the apostolic commitments of a large number of qualified members of the Society of Jesus and for this reason, clearly differing from what is customary in other religious Institutes, the Constitutions establish that it

should be celebrated at determined times and not too often.

Nevertheless, it must be called principally on two occasions: for the election of the Superior General and when things of particular importance or very difficult problems which touch the body of the Society must be treated.

This is the second time in the history of the Society wherein a General Congregation gathers to elect a new Superior General while his predecessor is still living. The first time was in 1983, when the XXXIII General Congregation accepted the resignation of the much loved Fr. Arrupe, for whom the exercising of the role of governance had become impossible, due to a serious and unforeseen illness. Today it gathers a second time, to discern, before the Lord, the resignation presented by Fr. Kolvenbach, who has directed the Society for nearly twenty-five years with wisdom, prudence, commitment and loyalty. This will be followed by the election of his successor. I wish to express to you, Fr. Kolvenbach, in my name and in the name of the Church, a heartfelt thanks for your fidelity, your wisdom, your righteousness and your example of humility and poverty, Thank you Fr. Kolvenbach.

The election of a new Superior General of the Society of Jesus has a fundamental value for the life of the Society, not only because its centralized hierarchical structure constitutionally concedes to the General full authority for good governance, the conservation and growth of the whole Society, but also because as Saint Ignatius says so well, "the wellbeing of the head resounds throughout the whole body and as are the Superiors so in turn will their subjects be." (cf. Const 820) For this reason your founder when pointing out the qualities which the general must have places first of all that he must be "a man very united to the Lord our God and familiar with prayer" (Const 723). After having mentioned other important qualities which are not easily found in a single person, he ends by saying "if any of the above qualities should be missing, at least may he not lack much goodness, love for the Society and good judgment" (Const 735).

I join you in your prayer that the Holy Spirit, the father of the poor, giver of graces, and light for hearts will assist you in your discernment and your election.

This Congregation also gathers together to treat important and very difficult matters which touch all members of the Society, such as the direction which the Society is presently taking. The themes upon which the General Congregation will reflect have to do with basic elements for the life of the Society. Certainly you will deal with the identity of today's Jesuit, on the meaning and value of the vow of obedience to the Holy Father which has always defined your religious family, the mission of the Society in the context of globalization and marginalization, community life, apostolic obedience, vocation recruitment and other important themes.

Within your charism and your tradition you can find valuable points of reference to enlighten the choices which the Society must make today.

Certainly and necessarily, during this Congregation you are carrying out an important work but it is not a "distraction" from your apostolic activity. As St Ignatius teaches you in the Spiritual Exercises you must with the same vision of the three Divine

Persons, look at “the entire surface of the earth crammed with men” (n 102) Listening to the Spirit, the creator who renews the world and returning to the fonts to preserve your identity without losing your own lifestyle, the commitment to discern the signs of the times, the difficulty and responsibility of working out final decisions are activities which are eminently apostolic because they form the base of a new springtime of being religious and of the apostolic commitment of each of your brothers in the Society of Jesus.

Now the vision becomes broader. It is not only for your own Jesuit brothers that you provide a religious and apostolic formation. There are many institutes of Consecrated Life who, following an Ignatian spirituality, pay attention to your choices; there are many future priests in your Colleges and Universities who are preparing for their ministry. There are many peoples from both within and outside the Church who frequent your centers of learning seeking a response to the challenges which science, technology and globalization pose to humanity, to the Church, and to the faith, with the hope of receiving a formation which will make it possible for them to construct a world of truth and freedom, of justice and peace.

Your work must be eminently apostolic with a universal human, ecclesial and evangelical fullness. It must always be carried out in the light of your Charism, in such a way that the growing participation of laity in your activities does not obscure your identity but rather enriches it with the collaboration of those who, coming from other cultures, share your style and your objectives.

Once again I join in your prayer that the Holy Spirit may accompany you in your delicate work.

As a brother who is following your works with great interest and expectation, I want to share with you “the joys and hopes” (GS. 1) as well as “the sorrows and anguish” (GS. 1) which I have as a man of the Church called to exercise a difficult service in the field of Consecrated Life, in my role as Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

With pleasure and hope I see the thousands of religious who generously respond to the Lord's call and, leaving all they have behind consecrate themselves with an undivided heart to the Lord to be with him and to collaborate with him, in his salvific desire to “conquer all things and thus enter unto the Glory of the Father” (Spiritual Exercises, 95). It is clear that consecrated life continues to be a “divine gift which the Church has received from the Lord” (LG 43) and it is for this very reason that the Church wants to carefully watch over it in order that that the proper Charism of each Institute might be evermore known, and, although with the necessary adaptations to respond to the present time, it keeps its proper identity intact for the good of the whole Church. The authenticity of religious life is characterized by the following of Christ and by the exclusive consecration to Him and to his Kingdom through the profession of the evangelical counsels. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council teaches that “this consecration will be the more perfect, in as much as the indissoluble bond of the union of Christ and His bride, the Church, is represented by firm and more stable bonds” (LG 44) Consecration to service to Christ cannot be separated from consecration to service to the Church. Ignatius and his first companions considered it thus when they wrote the Formula of your Institute in which the essence of your charism is spelled out: “To serve the Lord and his Spouse the Church under the

Roman Pontiff" (Julio III, Formula I). It is with sorrow and anxiety that I see that the *sentire cum ecclesia* of which your founder frequently spoke is diminishing even in some members of religious families. The Church is waiting for a light from you to restore the *sensus Ecclesiae*. The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius are your specialty. The rules of *sentire cum Ecclesiae* form an integral and essential part of this masterpiece of Catholic spirituality. They form, as it were, a golden clasp which holds the book of The Spiritual Exercises closed.

You hold in your very hands the elements needed to realize and to deepen this desire, this Ignatian and Ecclesial sentiment.

Love for the Church in every sense of the word, – be it Church people of God be it hierarchical Church – is not a human sentiment which comes and goes according to the people who make it up or according to our conformity with the dispositions emanating from those whom the Lord has placed to direct the Church. Love for the Church is a love based on faith, a gift of the Lord which, precisely because he loves us, he gives us faith in him and in his Spouse, which is the Church. Without the gift of faith in the Church there can be no love for the Church.

I join in your prayer asking the Lord to grant you the grace to grow in your belief in and love for this holy, catholic and apostolic Church which we profess.

With sadness and anxiety I also see a growing distancing from the Hierarchy. The Ignatian spirituality of apostolic service "under the Roman Pontiff" does not allow for this separation. In the Constitutions which he left you, Ignatius wanted to truly shape your mind and in the book of the Exercises (n 353) he wrote "we must always keep our mind prepared and quick to obey the true Spouse of Christ and our Holy Mother, the Hierarchical Church". Religious obedience can be understood only as obedience in love. The fundamental nucleus of Ignatian spirituality consists in uniting the love for God with love for the hierarchical Church. Your XXXIII Congregation once again took up this characteristic of obedience declaring that "the Society reaffirms in a spirit of faith the traditional bond of love and of service which unites it to the Roman Pontiff" You once again took up this principle in the motto "In all things love and serve".

You must also place this XXXV General Congregation, which opens with this liturgy, celebrated close to the remains of your founder in this line, which has always been followed by the Society throughout its multi-century history in order to show your desire and your commitment to be faithful to the charism which he left you as an inheritance and to carry it out in ways which better respond to the needs of the Church in our time.

The service of the Society is a service "under the banner of the Cross" (Formula I). Every service done out of love necessarily implies a self-emptying, a *kenosis*. But letting go of what one wants to do in order to do what the beloved wants is to transform the *kenosis* into the image of Christ who learned obedience through suffering (Hebrews 5, 8). It is for this reason that St. Ignatius, realistically, adds that the Jesuit serves the Church "under the banner of the Cross" (Formula I).

Ignatius placed himself under the orders of the Roman Pontiff "in

order to not err in via Domini" (Const 605) in the distribution of his religious throughout the world and to be present wherever the needs of the Church were greater.

Times have changed and the Church must today confront new and urgent necessities, I will mention one, which in my judgment is urgent today and is at the same time complex and I propose it for your consideration. It is the need to present to the faithful and to the world the authentic truth revealed in Scripture and Tradition. The doctrinal diversity of those who at all levels, by vocation and mission are called to announce the Kingdom of truth and love, disorients the faithful and leads to a relativism without limits. There is one truth, even though it can always be more deeply known.

It is the "living teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ" (DV 10) which is the voucher for revealed truth. The exegetes and theological scholars are involved in working together "under the watchful care of the sacred teaching office of the Church, to an exploration and exposition of the divine writings (DV 23). Through your long and solid formation, your centers of research, your teaching in the philosophical-theological-biblical fields you are in a privileged position to carry out this difficult mission. Carry it out with study and in-depth examination, carry it out with humility, carry it out with faith in the Church. carry it out with love for the Church.

May those who, according to your legislation, have to oversee the doctrine of your magazines and publications do so in the light of and according to the "rules for sentire cum ecclesia", with love and respect.

The feeling of ever growing separation between faith and culture, a separation which constitutes a great impediment for Evangelization (*Sapientia Cristiana*, proemio) also worries me.

A culture immersed with a true Christian spirit is an instrument which fosters the spreading of the Gospel, faith in God the Creator of the heavens and of the earth. The Tradition of the Society, from the first beginnings of the Collegio Romano always placed itself at the crossroads between Church and society, between faith and culture, between religion and secularism. Recover these avant-garde positions which are so necessary to transmit the eternal truth to today's world, in today's language. Do not abandon this challenge. We know the task is difficult, uncomfortable and risky, and at times little appreciated and even misunderstood, but it is a necessary task for the Church. The apostolic tasks demanded of you by the Church are many and very diverse, but all have a common denominator: the instrument which carries them out, according to an Ignatian phrase must be an instrument united to God. It is the Ignatian echo to the Gospel proclaimed today: I am the vine, you are the branches. He who remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit (Jn.15, 15). Union with the vine, which is love, is realized only through a personal and silent exchange of love which is born in prayer, "from the internal knowledge of the Lord who became man for me and who, integral and alive, extends himself to all who are close to us and to all that is close to us". It is not possible to transform the world, or to respond to the challenges of a world which has forgotten love, without being firmly rooted in love.

Ignatius was granted the mystic grace of being "a contemplative in action"(annotation to the Examine MNAD 5, 172). It was a special

grace freely given by God to Ignatius who had trodden a tiring path of fidelity and long hours of prayer in the Retreat at Manresa. It is a grace which, according to Fr. Nadal, is contained in the call of every Jesuit. Guided by your Ignatian *magis* keep your hearts open to receive the same gift, following in the same path trodden by Ignatius from Loyola to Rome, a path of generosity, of penance, of discernment, of prayer, of apostolic zeal of obedience, of charity, of fidelity to and love for the hierarchical Church.

Despite the urgent apostolic needs, maintain and develop your charism to the point of being and showing yourselves to the world as "contemplatives in action" who communicate to men and women and to all of creation the love received from God and to orient them once again toward the love of God. Everyone understands the language of love.

The Lord has chosen you to go and bear fruit, fruit that lasts. Go, bear fruit confident that "all that you ask the Father in my name, he will give you (cfr. Jn 15, 16).

I join with you in prayer to the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit together with Mary, Mother of Divine Grace, invoked by all the members of the Society as Santa Maria della Strada, that he may grant you the grace of "seeking and discovering the will of God for the Society of today which will build the Society of tomorrow".

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 12:38 

The "Black Conclave" Opens



After more than two years of preparations, the General Congregation of the Jesuits began this morning in Rome with a papal delegate's call for enhanced fidelity from the church's largest religious community.

Representing Pope Benedict, Slovenian Cardinal Franc Rode CM, the Vatican's prefect of the Congregation for Religious Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, celebrated the opening liturgy of GC35, which'll shortly see the election of the Society's new superior-general to replace the retiring Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach.

In his homily at the Mass, held in the Jesuit mother-church of the Gesu, Rode said that "with sadness and apprehension," he noticed an

increasing lack of "*sentire cum ecclesia*" -- the "thinking with the church" -- on the part of "some members of the religious families."

What's more, the cardinal added that, with "sadness and apprehension," he sees "a growing detachment from the hierarchy" among the Jesuits.

"The Ignatian spirituality of apostolic service 'under the Roman pontiff' does not accept this separation," he said.

"Your work must be eminently apostolic with a universal, human, ecclesial apostolic breadth," Rode said. "It must always be accomplished in the light of your charism, in which the growing participation of the laity in your activities must not obscure your identity, but rather enrich it."

Led by Kolvenbach, the 226 delegates concelebrated the Mass, most of which was said in Latin. Following the liturgy, the outgoing Father-General lit the traditional lamp at the tomb of Ignatius of Loyola to burn for the duration of the gathering. While the delegates' rooms have been booked for two months, the GC will remain in session until its business is finished.

The increasing presence of laity in Jesuits apostolates is high on the congregation's agenda, as is its vow of obedience, and how its "true spirit... [can] be renewed in the Society today."

Representing the community's Italian province (which he once headed), among the delegates is the "papal spokesman" Fr Federico Lombardi. Led by the new Father-General, the congregation's audience with Pope Benedict has been scheduled for 21 February, the eve of the Feast of the Chair of Peter.

SVILUPPO: [More](#) from CNS:

"Consecration in service to Christ cannot be separated from consecration in service to the church," Cardinal Rode said....

"Love for the church in every sense of the word -- be it the church as the people of God or the hierarchical church -- is not a human sentiment, which comes and goes" depending on who its leaders and members are at any given moment in history, Cardinal Rode said.

"Love for the church is a love based on faith, a gift of the Lord which, precisely because he loves us, he gives us faith in him and his spouse, which is the church," he said....

"The fundamental nucleus of Ignatian spirituality consists in uniting love for God with love for the hierarchical church," Cardinal Rode said.

The cardinal said the world urgently needs to hear the proclamation of the truth revealed in Scripture and tradition and authenticated by the official teaching of the church.

"The doctrinal diversity of those who ... by vocation and mission are called to announce the kingdom of truth and love, disorients the faithful and leads to a relativism without limits," he said.

The cardinal also urged the members of the General Congregation to continue and to strengthen the work of the Jesuits and their institutions in stemming and reversing a separation between faith and culture, especially by being men of deep prayer as well as highly educated.

"It is not possible to transform the world or to respond to the challenges of a world which has forgotten love, without being firmly rooted in love," Cardinal Rode told them.

As they elect a new superior and make decisions for the order's future, the Jesuits must give priority to imitating St. Ignatius, whose life was marked by generosity, penance, apostolic zeal, obedience, charity, fidelity and "love for the hierarchical church," Cardinal Rode said.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 10:34



The "State of the World" '08

This morning, B16 received the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See for the group's traditional exchange of New Year's greetings with the pontiff... and the latter's customary speech, known as the "State of the World."

Snips:

Official translation
(remarks delivered in French):

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I extend cordial greetings to your Dean, Ambassador Giovanni Galassi, and I thank him for the kind words that he has addressed to me in the name of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See. To each of you I offer respectful greetings, particularly to those who are present at this meeting for the first time. Through you, I express my fervent prayers for the peoples and governments that you represent with such dignity and competence. Your community suffered a bereavement some weeks ago: the Ambassador of France, Monsieur Bernard Kessedjian, ended his earthly pilgrimage; may the Lord welcome him into his peace! My thoughts today go especially to the nations that have yet to establish diplomatic relations with the Holy See: they too have a place in the Pope's heart. The Church is profoundly convinced that humanity is a family, as I wanted to emphasize in this year's World Day of Peace Message.

2. It was in a family spirit that diplomatic relations were established last year with the United Arab Emirates. In the

same spirit, I was also able to visit certain countries that I hold dear. The enthusiastic welcome that I received from the Brazilians continues to warm my heart! In that country, I had the joy of meeting the representatives of the great family of the Church in Latin America and the Caribbean, gathered at Aparecida for the Fifth General Conference of CELAM. In the economic and social sphere, I was able to note eloquent signs of hope for that continent, as well as certain reasons for concern. We all look forward to seeing increasing cooperation among the peoples of Latin America, and, within each of the countries that make up that continent, the resolution of internal conflicts, leading to a consensus on the great values inspired by the Gospel. I wish to mention Cuba, which is preparing to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the visit of my venerable Predecessor. Pope John Paul II was received with affection by the authorities and by the people, and he encouraged all Cubans to work together for a better future. I should like to reiterate this message of hope, which has lost none of its relevance.

3. My thoughts and prayers are directed especially towards the peoples affected by appalling natural disasters. I am thinking of the hurricanes and floods which have devastated certain regions of Mexico and Central America, as well as countries in Africa and Asia, especially Bangladesh, and parts of Oceania; mention must also be made of the great fires. The Cardinal Secretary of State, who went to Peru at the end of August, brought me a first-hand account of the destruction and havoc caused by the terrible earthquake, but he spoke also of the courage and faith of the peoples affected. In the face of tragic events of this kind, a strong joint effort is needed. As I wrote in my Encyclical on hope, "the true measure of humanity is essentially determined in relationship to suffering and to the sufferer. This holds true both for the individual and for society" (Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi*, 38).

4. The international community continues to be deeply concerned about the Middle East. I am glad that the Annapolis Conference pointed towards the abandonment of partisan or unilateral solutions, in favour of a global approach respectful of the rights and legitimate interests of all the peoples of the region. I appeal once more to the Israelis and the Palestinians to concentrate their energies on the implementation of commitments made on that occasion, and to expedite the process that has happily been restarted. Moreover, I invite the international community to give strong support to these two peoples and to understand their respective sufferings and fears. Who can remain unmoved by the plight of Lebanon, amid its trials and all the violence that continues to shake that beloved country? It is my earnest wish that the Lebanese people will be able to decide freely on their future and I ask the Lord to enlighten them, beginning with the leaders of public life, so that, putting aside particular interests, they will be ready to pledge themselves to the path of dialogue and reconciliation. Only in this way will the country be able to progress in stability and to become once more an example of the peaceful coexistence of different communities. In Iraq too, reconciliation is urgently needed! At present, terrorist attacks, threats and violence continue, especially against the Christian community, and the news

which arrived yesterday confirms our concern; it is clear that certain difficult political issues remain unresolved. In this context, an appropriate constitutional reform will need to safeguard the rights of minorities. Important humanitarian aid is necessary for the peoples affected by the war; I am thinking especially of displaced persons within the country and refugees who have fled abroad, among whom there are many Christians. I invite the international community to be generous towards them and towards their host countries, whose capacities to absorb them have been sorely tested. I should also like to express my support for continued and uninterrupted pursuit of the path of diplomacy in order to resolve the issue of Iran's nuclear programme, by negotiating in good faith, adopting measures designed to increase transparency and mutual trust, and always taking account of the authentic needs of peoples and the common good of the human family.

5. Turning our gaze now towards the whole of Asia, I should like to draw your attention to some other crisis situations, first of all to Pakistan, which has suffered from serious violence in recent months. I hope that all political and social forces will commit themselves to building a peaceful society, respectful of the rights of all. In Afghanistan, in addition to violence, there are other serious social problems, such as the production of drugs; greater support should be given to efforts for development, and even more intensive work is required in order to build a serene future. In Sri Lanka it is no longer possible to postpone further the decisive efforts needed to remedy the immense sufferings caused by the continuing conflict. And I ask the Lord to grant that in Myanmar, with the support of the international community, a season of dialogue between the Government and the opposition will begin, ensuring true respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

6. Turning now to Africa, I should like first of all to reiterate my deep anguish, on observing that hope seems almost vanquished by the menacing sequence of hunger and death that is unfolding in Darfur. With all my heart I pray that the joint operation of the United Nations and the African Union, whose mission has just begun, will bring aid and comfort to the suffering populations. The peace process in the Democratic Republic of Congo is encountering strong resistance in the vicinity of the Great Lakes, especially in the Eastern regions, while Somalia, particularly Mogadishu, continues to be afflicted by violence and poverty. I appeal to the parties in conflict to cease their military operations, to facilitate the movement of humanitarian aid and to respect civilians. In recent days Kenya has experienced an abrupt outbreak of violence. I join the Bishops in their appeal made on 2 January, inviting all the inhabitants, especially political leaders, to seek a peaceful solution through dialogue, based on justice and fraternity. The Catholic Church is not indifferent to the cries of pain that rise up from these regions. She makes her own the pleas for help made by refugees and displaced persons, and she pledges herself to foster reconciliation, justice and peace. This year, Ethiopia is marking the start of the third Christian millennium, and I am sure that the celebrations organized for this occasion will also

help to recall the immense social and apostolic work carried out by Christians in Africa.

7. And finally, focussing upon Europe, I rejoice at the progress that has been made in various countries of the Balkan region, and I express once again the hope that the definitive status of Kosovo will take account of the legitimate claims of the parties involved and will guarantee security and respect for the rights of all the inhabitants of this land, so that the spectre of violence will be definitively removed and European stability strengthened. I should like also to mention Cyprus, recalling with joy the visit of His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos II last June. It is my earnest wish that, in the context of the European Union, no effort will be spared in the search for a solution to a crisis that has already lasted too long. Last September, I made a visit to Austria, partly in order to underline the essential contribution that the Catholic Church is able and willing to give to European unification. On the subject of Europe, I would like to assure you that I am following attentively the new phase which began with the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon. This step gives a boost to the process of building the "European home", which "will be a good place to live for everyone only if it is built on a solid cultural and moral foundation of common values drawn from our history and our traditions" (Meeting with the Authorities and the Diplomatic Corps, Vienna, 7 September 2007) and if it does not deny its Christian roots.

8. From this rapid overview it appears clearly that the security and stability of the world are still fragile. The factors of concern are varied, yet they all bear witness to the fact that human freedom is not absolute, but is a good that is shared, one for which all must assume responsibility. It follows that law and order are guarantees of freedom. Yet law can be an effective force for peace only if its foundations remain solidly anchored in natural law, given by the Creator. This is another reason why God can never be excluded from the horizon of man or of history. God's name is a name of justice, it represents an urgent appeal for peace.

9. This realization could help, among other things, to give direction to initiatives for intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. These ever increasing initiatives can foster cooperation on matters of mutual interest, such as the dignity of the human person, the search for the common good, peace-building and development. In this regard, the Holy See attaches particular importance to its participation in high-level dialogue on understanding among religions and cultures and cooperation for peace, within the framework of the 62nd General Assembly of the United Nations (4-5 October 2007). In order to be true, this dialogue must be clear, avoiding relativism and syncretism, while at the same time it must be marked by sincere respect for others and by a spirit of reconciliation and fraternity. The Catholic Church is deeply committed to this goal. It is a pleasure for me to recall once again the letter that was addressed to me, on 13 October last, by 138 Muslim Religious Leaders, and to renew my gratitude for the noble sentiments which were expressed in it.

10. Our society has rightly enshrined the greatness and dignity of the human person in various declarations of rights,

formulated in the wake of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted exactly sixty years ago. That solemn act, in the words of Pope Paul VI, was one of the greatest achievements of the United Nations. In every continent the Catholic Church strives to ensure that human rights are not only proclaimed but put into practice. It is to be hoped that agencies created for the defence and promotion of human rights will devote all their energies to this task and, in particular, that the Human Rights Council will be able to meet the expectations generated by its creation.

11. The Holy See for its part never tires of reaffirming these principles and rights, founded on what is essential and permanent in the human person. The Church willingly undertakes this service to the true dignity of human persons, created in the image of God. And on the basis of these considerations, I cannot but deplore once again the continual attacks perpetrated on every continent against human life. I would like to recall, together with many men and women dedicated to research and science, that the new frontiers reached in bioethics do not require us to choose between science and morality: rather, they oblige us to a moral use of science. On the other hand, recalling the appeal made by Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the Jubilee Year 2000, I rejoice that on 18 December last the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution calling upon States to institute a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, and I earnestly hope that this initiative will lead to public debate on the sacred character of human life. I regret, once again, the disturbing threats to the integrity of the family, founded on the marriage of a man and a woman. Political leaders, of whatever kind, should defend this fundamental institution, the basic cell of society. What more should be said? Even religious freedom, "an essential requirement of the dignity of every person [and] a cornerstone of the structure of human rights" (Message for the 1988 World Day of Peace, Preamble) is often undermined. There are many places where this right cannot be fully exercised. The Holy See defends it, demands that it be universally respected, and views with concern discrimination against Christians and against the followers of other religions.

12. Peace cannot be a mere word or a vain aspiration. Peace is a commitment and a manner of life which demands that the legitimate aspirations of all should be satisfied, such as access to food, water and energy, to medicine and technology, or indeed the monitoring of climate change. Only in this way can we build the future of humanity; only in this way can we facilitate an integral development valid for today and tomorrow. With a particularly felicitous expression, Pope Paul VI stressed forty years ago in his Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, that "development is the new name for peace". Hence, in order to consolidate peace, the positive macroeconomic results achieved by many developing countries during 2007 must be supported by effective social policies and by the implementation of aid commitments by rich countries.

13. Finally, I wish to urge the international community to make a global commitment on security. A joint effort on the

part of States to implement all the obligations undertaken and to prevent terrorists from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction would undoubtedly strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and make it more effective. I welcome the agreement reached on the dismantling of North Korea's nuclear weapons programme, and I encourage the adoption of suitable measures for the reduction of conventional weapons and for dealing with the humanitarian problems caused by cluster munitions.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

14. Diplomacy is, in a certain sense, the art of hope. It lives from hope and seeks to discern even its most tenuous signs. Diplomacy must give hope. The celebration of Christmas reminds us each year that, when God became a little child, Hope came to live in our world, in the heart of the human family. Today this certainty becomes a prayer: May God open the hearts of those who govern the family of peoples to the Hope that never disappoints! With these sentiments, I offer to each one of you my very best wishes, so that you, your staff, and the peoples you represent may be enlightened by the Grace and Peace which come to us from the Child of Bethlehem.

PHOTOS 1-2: Alessandra Tarantino/Pool

PHOTO 3: L'Osservatore Romano

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 09:27 

SATURDAY, JANUARY 05, 2008

THE CHURCHMAN OF THE YEAR: The Reluctant Prince



2007 CHURCHMAN OF THE YEAR -- US

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo
Archbishop of Galveston-Houston

"Se ve. Se siente. DiNardo está presente."

"You see it. You feel it. DiNardo is here."

Just six weeks ago, that was the word from Rome. The surroundings might've been Italian, the chant Spanish, but its voice was catholic as, by the hundreds, a diverse group from the American South stormed the Vatican to mark their arrival on the stage of the global church.

From relative obscurity (at least, in the public mind), the Pope had tapped Archbishop Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston -- head of the US' youngest archdiocese, 31st in rank of the 34 archbishops -- to enter the papal senate. In a church where seniority and precedent often trump all else, the move has continued to find not a few of its establishment claiming "surprise," as states of shock or confounded silences continue to linger on the scene.

From every angle, however, it was a destiny years in the making.

In barely three decades, the mother see of Texas -- home to the nation's fourth-largest city, an emerging capital of international transport, migration and commerce -- had rocketed to a place among the nation's ten largest dioceses by population, its Catholic presence quadrupling to 1.5 million. The last American see to receive its first cardinal was Washington, where Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle received his red hat in 1967. The scarlet hadn't traveled to a new region of the country since 1953, when Los Angeles' James Francis McIntyre became the "Cardinal of the West." And among the chronicle of American Catholicism's 46 princes of the church since New York's John McCloskey was called to the college in 1875, a Southern prelate's induction into the Roman clergy joins the elevations of McCloskey, McIntyre and the 1924 rise of the first "Western" cardinal -- Chicago's George Mundelein -- as the watershed moments when the faith's pilgrimage across a continent earned its vanguards a place on the universal scene.

At the audience for his newly-created lieutenants, Benedict XVI might've told DiNardo that "Texas needed a cardinal." But its fruition was the climactic stroke of a Roman design a decade in the works.

Its script: to catapult the Curialist who picked parish ministry over a Vatican post from his founding pastorate in suburban Pittsburgh to an elector's seat in the conclave.

It all happened before his 60th birthday. And little of it as the wiry, unassuming cleric would've wished.



Lone Star Country needed a cardinal before 2007. Rome just bided its time 'til its choice got there. And, in a rare triumph of Vatican clairvoyance, the bet has paid off spectacularly.

They say that "everything's bigger in Texas," and the customary bounce of energy that a local church gets from the red hat is no exception. According to the locals, the elevation "has breathed new life" into an already booming, energized fold. Since arriving home, the new cardinal has been welcomed by crowds of thousands at

every turn, his post-liturgical reception lines running into the early hours of the morning. A stronger sense of identity and unity is already being felt among the multiethnic mega-flock, and several parishes have noticed a curious uptick of calls about RCIA programs in the weeks following the November consistory.

The Houston press -- which had, according to one local, primarily "covered [the archdiocese] when the news was bad" -- provided acres and hours of the finest, most enthusiastic elevation coverage ever seen on these shores. And most significantly of all, in the very city where the first Catholic president sought to assuage panicked Protestant clergymen that the White House wouldn't take its lead from the Apostolic Palace, some of the most effusive testimonies to the advent of a Roman prince have come from H-Town's ecumenical and interfaith communities.

Texas -- and Houston in particular -- likes to view itself as the "New America," and not without reason. With Catholics recently edging out Evangelicals as the state's largest religious group, the new America has bred a model of American Church gaining in strength, size and reputation, an ascendancy now recognized with the elevation of a new breed of American Cardinal -- the post-institutional prince of the church.

Some might still be stunned, but it all happened in plain view. It just took a flash of scarlet to emerge to the fore.

And to think: it's only just beginning.

* * *

"This is Sambi. Sit down."

At mid-morning on 15 October, DiNardo was checking out of an Oklahoma City hotel when the papal nuncio to Washington, Archbishop Pietro Sambi, reached the Texas prelate on his cell-phone.

Due to a calcium buildup that requires hearing-aids in both his ears, DiNardo rarely uses his mobile; it mostly collects his messages, which he checks intermittently on a land-line.

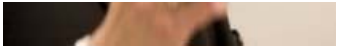
Seeing the nunciature number, however, he picked up.

Having sat, Sambi dropped the bomb, telling him to return immediately to Houston. And everything afterward became a blur.



The announcement would be made 40 hours later. He told no one. By 11am Wednesday, five hours after Benedict revealed his list of 23 new cardinals during his weekly General Audience, the phone messages had already piled up by the hundreds at the Houston chancery.

Literally overnight, the quiet, relatively low-key life DiNardo loved was over.



Slight but intense, in
contrast to some of his

more overpowering peers, the cardinal cuts an inconspicuous figure. This was the prelate who, after a long day at last year's November Meeting, sat quietly with his usual Pinot Grigio in a corner of the Baltimore Marriott lounge, clad in a plaid button-down shirt and khaki Tommy Hilfiger windbreaker as, at the center of the room, a score of his confreres held court in their day-dress of collars, suits and pectoral crosses.

The hearing-aids were turned down, and the lone figure -- indistinguishable were it not for the same iconographic gold band he'd worn since his episcopal ordination -- almost seemed to be at prayer.

He's not one to seek out attention. But seek him out and, like a light switch, the "nervous energy" jump-starts itself.

He's a figure of wild contrasts: the Basselin Scholar given to earthy, dynamic preaching from the middle of church aisles; fluent in Latin but devoted to the spirituality of the Eastern tradition; loved in the Curia but wary of the trappings of high office; the staunch defender of *Summorum Pontificum* who spent a whole week last summer "singing his head off" and mixing with attendees at the Indianapolis conference of the National Pastoral Musicians, of which he's episcopal liaison. (A music fan who's spoken of singing as "the elevation of the human voice," DiNardo's motto -- "*Ave Crux Spes Unica*" ("Hail, O Cross, Our Only Hope") -- is taken from a sixth-century Roman hymn.)

The catch-all nature has baffled more than a few. At his 1997 ordination as coadjutor-bishop of Sioux City, the clergy of the Iowa diocese attempted the standard practice of figuring out their boss-in-waiting from his choices of co-consecrators and attending chaplains.

The "read" might usually be a reliable indicator. On this occasion, however -- and to the frustration of the local clergy -- the exercise proved futile.

Assisting then-Siouxland Bishop Lawrence Soens were DiNardo's former ordinary, then-Bishop Donald Wuerl of Pittsburgh, and the new bishop's classmate and longtime friend, then-Bishop Raymond Burke of LaCrosse.

The chaplains made for an even harder read. At one side stood the delicate, straight-laced Msgr Leonard Blair of Detroit, the onetime secretary of Cardinal Edmund Szoka and current bishop of Toledo. On the other was his best friend since high school -- the ponytailed, Harley-riding Fr Lou Vallone of Pittsburgh, known in the South for his proficiency at giving Black church revivals.

In the place he's spoken of as "14,000 square miles of cornfields, that just happened to contain 93,000 Catholics," the Iowans eventually came to recognize their bishop as "the most gifted man of the church we have ever experienced."

It was something they only would learn, however, once he hit the ground running.

* * *

In a column for Sioux City's diocesan paper, DiNardo once wrote of learning what true darkness was as he drove down Iowa roads to get home.

The straight, unlit drags through cornfields were a far cry from his hometown of Pittsburgh, and even further removed from the cramped and winding streets of Rome. But, so he says, it was in the Heartland that the onetime director of the English desk at the Congregation for Bishops actually learned how to be one.

In 1984, the newly-arrived bishop of Pittsburgh, Anthony Bevilacqua, found a request from the Vatican dicastery requesting one of his priests for a five-year tour of duty.

Bevilacqua's predecessor, Bishop Vincent Leonard -- who ordained DiNardo six years earlier -- invariably refused the feelers from Central Office. But the Brooklyn-born, Rome-trained canonist -- who would, in time, go on to become cardinal-archbishop of Philadelphia -- was more given to the bigger picture of the church than Leonard, a native son who, DiNardo said, "taught me the value of being local, of belonging to a place."

After a canvass of his senior staff, the bishop offered the assignment to DiNardo, then 34 and doing double-duty as vice-chancellor and a professor at St Paul Seminary.

Marked out from his high school days as a standout talent, he was no stranger to the Eternal City, having spent his seminary days at the Pontifical North American College, studying in turns at the Gregorian and the Augustinianum, where he earned his licentiate in Patristics. The timing of his return, however, would prove fortuitous.

In a historic move months earlier, Pope John Paul II had appointed Cardinal Bernardin Gantin to head the congregation. Born in Benin, Gantin was the first African ever named to lead one of the nine top-level offices overseeing the internal matters of the worldwide church.

As *minutante*, or desk officer, DiNardo was responsible for processing the case-files pertaining to episcopal appointments in the US, Canada, Britain and Australia. The reports would then go to the body's membership of cardinals, who would vote on a nominee to recommend to the Pope.



Since the dicastery's work was a topic of intense focus around the globe, the job didn't just require a work ethic diligent enough to pore through ceaseless reams of documentation -- the 1985 selection of a new archbishop of Los Angeles, for example, saw a dossier that

measured some two feet high dropped on his desk -- but the utmost discretion, to boot.

Every public, and some not-so-public, details of candidates' lives and careers lay on the junior cleric's desk, and whatever he saw would have to go with him to the grave. And, day after day, the files gave their reader a unique glimpse into the church's universality. Even more usefully for the road ahead, it allowed him to see that the church in the States was less a monolith than a tapestry of cultures, administrative models, pastoral ideas and the faithful's needs. As if the day job (on the usual curial schedule of six days a week) wasn't enough, he took on two other commitments: the directorate of Villa Stritch, the residence for American priests in the Vatican apparatus, and an adjunct position on the faculty of the NAC.

Both on the job and off, DiNardo's qualities of mind and spirit won a keen admirer in Gantin, among other curial chiefs and staffers. As 1989 approached and the early birds outside the walls began speculating on possibilities for John Paul's successor, the African cardinal had appeared on not a few lists of *papabili*. More concretely, however, his American aide's five-year term was ending.

It could've been renewed, and seemingly would've been without a flinch. If not, that is, for one minor issue: having served his stint, the Pittsburgher wanted to go home, back to the life of a parish priest.

"Dan will obey, but he'll say what he wants," a friend noted. The almost unheard-of wish to bolt Rome for the trenches was something of a *brutta figura* move -- if anything, most curialists would give anything to spend their lives in the Vatican offices, a quality especially true of non-Italians. Then again, honesty was one of the traits that won him his superiors' regard to begin with, even if it cut both ways.

It took a year of resisting the attempts to keep him from leaving, but his bosses realized he wouldn't be changing his mind. In 1990, Wuerl -- who had succeeded Bevilacqua in the Steel City two years earlier -- named DiNardo co-pastor of an Italian parish, Madonna del Castello, on the outskirts of Pittsburgh.

At the time, friends recall him saying that "I've got everything I want in my life."

But there was more. Alongside the parish duties, he was named the diocese's #2 official in Wuerl's specialty area: education. DiNardo shared his bishop's devotion to catechesis -- one that, the former said, could only be rooted in "knowing the face of Christ" if it sought to be effective -- and to the formation of the young.

While Wuerl built a national following as the "education bishop," the younger official who ended up leapfrogging him to the Sacred College was honing his approach on ground level.

After four years juggling his first pastorate and the office, the teacher-prelate handed his lieutenant a new lesson.





Twenty miles outside Pittsburgh, the suburban community of Marshall Township was expanding at a rapid clip. In early 1994, Wuerl announced that 12 acres there would be home to a new parish, Saints John and Paul. Named in tribute to the then-pontiff -- who had ordained Wuerl to the episcopacy eight years earlier -- it also evoked the Passionist church on Rome's Coelian Hill (which, since 1946, has been the titular parish of the archbishops of New York). Appropriately, DiNardo was tapped to found it.

In his *Whispers* interview, the newly-named designate said that, among his models of ministry, one of the most powerful came from the pastor of his first parish assignment.

Fr Tom Marpes would always be on the lookout out for regulars who were missing from Sunday Mass. Without fail, the next afternoon found the Lebanese priest at the table in the rectory kitchen as he called the absentees -- not to chide, but simply to make sure they were OK.

"It might sound unusual today," his former associate said, "but it was his way of showing that he cared."

The example proved particularly useful in keeping tabs on a new community's growth. No buildings existed on the parish plot, so "Father Dan" -- though made a monsignor in Rome, he shirked the title -- and a core group from his 650 families began tracking down a starter site for Masses and offices, eventually nabbing a 300-seat makeshift "chapel" and two smaller rooms on the lower level of a local office complex.

While DiNardo came to realize the one easy part of founding a parish -- "you don't hear 'But, Father, we've done it this way for years' for the first six months" -- every so often, the ghost of Rome would reappear and see if he was still enjoying himself at home.

Just in case he wasn't, "something" -- most likely an episcopal appointment in the Curia -- could always be arranged. Gladly.

The pastor was happy and the parish was growing -- a return trip wasn't wanted or needed. But his fans along the Tiber hadn't given up finding something he'd finally see fit to accept.

* * *

By 1997, it was no secret in Rome that Gantin's 13-year stewardship of the Congregation for Bishops was nearing its end. He had been elected Dean of the College of Cardinals some years earlier, but longed to pull a DiNardo of his own and return to his homeland (a request John Paul would only approve when, after his 80th birthday in 2002, he retired from the latter post).

No curial don leaves office without shepherding a handful of

cherished projects to fruition, and the Dean from Benin was no exception. His friend from Pittsburgh had been given seven years to live the dream and work quietly on the ground at home, but the reserved cardinal known for his prayerful spirit and gentle touch wouldn't go until he ensured that his former aide's talents had been put to the church's wider service.

By then, the task DiNardo once performed alone required not one Pennsylvanian, but two. The staff was on board, as were the four American cardinals who sat on the congregation's voting membership. And, in a facet that wouldn't come to full bloom until a decade later, undoubtedly aware of -- and sharing in -- the departing prefect's esteem for the Pittsburgher was the cardinal who was the congregation's best-prepared, most observant member: Gantin's closest ally in the Curia's top rank, the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Joseph Ratzinger.

Knowing of the candidate's fondness for intense study before acting, the pitch was sweetened by making his appointment not a direct one to the bishop's chair, but as successor-in-waiting to a cooperative 71 year-old ordinary, providing a learning period that would allow for the most seamless transition possible.

In the dead of summer, as much of Pittsburgh was making its annual pilgrimages to South Carolina and Stone Harbor, the call was placed to Marshall.

A year earlier, Fr Dan had overseen the completion of a multi-use building of classrooms, offices, a temporary church and pastor's apartment, and had the project's debt paid off within months.

The nominee had to check his atlas to find Sioux City. But this time, he accepted.



"We knew he wouldn't be here long," one Siouxlander said. As for what the new arrival brought to the table in a place that was "certainly not the center of the universal church," a local priest brimmed to overflowing.

"His intelligence, wit, and ability to passionately and persuasively preach the Gospel are unmatched," the cleric said.

"He is also a genuinely humble man -- there's no way that he could be unaware of his gifts, [but] he never made a fuss over himself, and was visibly uncomfortable when other people did.

"Before all else, he is a shepherd."

Without fail, the bishop criss-crossed the diocese relentlessly: present at every function, taking time with every person, sometimes getting an earful (and doing what he could about it), keeping contacts across the turf, and sticking around 'til the last person had gone. (The only people he was known to avoid: politicians... who tend to be especially abundant in Iowa every fourth winter.) The priests' monthly deanery meetings would be a double-bill of business and down-time with the Boss, small-group dinners were routine at the simple house in a suburban development he called home and, with his distaste for handlers, his entourage was never more than himself.



The mark of the pastor, however, lay away from the big-print. While churchfolk can easily be tempted to measure leadership by the yardsticks of grand initiatives, big numbers or public flourishes, the record shows none of these. A pastor knows that the commission to teach and preach -- to lead and give life -- isn't done in the wholesale, nor through policies, nor at the desk, but one by one, person to person. The policy is the Gospel, the most priceless asset is faith; live by and invest in those, and the rest just has a way of working itself out.

(The closest thing to a diocesan initiative DiNardo sought in Sioux City was an effort to train his priests in spiritual direction, with the hope that his clergy and the people could easily find regular, sound guidance.)

The bishop's interest in a low profile extended practically to everything outside his diocese. The congregation, however, kept its eye on Iowa, and barely five years after succeeding Soens as diocesan bishop, another phone call was being prepared.

By late 2003 -- after a spate of rumors had the Siouxland prelate in the mix for the bishopric of Brooklyn -- Gantin had gone home, replaced by his former second-in-command, Giovanni Battista Re. Ratzinger was still at the table, as were the four Americans. In the wake of the abuse earthquake of 2002, the nation's bishops felt under siege and, with American cases being placed under a closer microscope, the appointment process had started to go beyond the usual six to nine month time frame.

One succession, however, was settled before it could even be broached.

A leader of the US church's "good-governance" wing, as Bishop Joseph Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston approached his 73rd birthday in early 2004, he sent a letter to the congregation advising that it might want to start considering the appointment of a coadjutor for Texas' largest diocese.

The flock was booming at a staggering rate, with domestic transplants and an international mix of immigrants pouring in to an extent that the church was hard-pressed to keep pace with. A former president of the US bishops, Fiorenza often mused that he could open seven parishes the next morning -- if he had the priests to staff them. Religious and foreign clergy outnumbered the incardinated presbyterate by about 2 to 1. And on top of all that, already sharing the episcopal duties with two auxiliaries, the coming of an heir apparent would make the burden easier still.

Just two months after Fiorenza's note to Re, the native-son bishop was reportedly taken aback when the congregation sent word that his coadjutor had been named.



The bishop of Sioux City had never set foot in the Lone Star State. Heading to the home of the nation's second-largest Hispanic community, he couldn't speak Spanish extemporaneously.

But yet again, the vote of confidence was there where it counted -- and, yet again, the chattering circles registered barely a ripple as the design to make Houston the church's Southern hub had rolled into full gear.

There would be no dark roads in Southeast Texas. If anything, quite the opposite.

* * *

As in Sioux City, the *deja vu* coadjutor used the time to quietly visit each parish, take mental notes, get a feel for his new turf -- and, most importantly, dig in with the people. Or try to -- it was, after all, a mission-field with 15 times the faithful of Northeast Iowa.

Nine months after DiNardo's Texan welcome -- held in a large parish church as the 600-seat Houston co-cathedral was deemed too small -- the future came into an even wider view.

During the Christmas Octave of 2004, as John Paul's declining health loomed ominously over the Catholic world, the state's longtime metropolitan, Archbishop Patrick Flores of San Antonio, retired, with the Denver auxiliary Jose Gomez (a longtime Houston hand before his appointment to the Rockies) named to succeed him. But simultaneously, for the first time since 1980, an American province was split up -- San Antonio would keep the western seven suffragans of what had been the global church's largest metropolitan jurisdiction as the eastern six were siphoned off to the newly-elevated archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

Within a matter of years, a chain of events unseen in US Catholicism since the overnight explosions of the dioceses of Los Angeles and Detroit in the early 1940s quickly became evident: first, the population rose, then the caliber of leadership, a *pallium* appeared... and the rest -- i.e. the red -- would soon follow.

Having visited all but a few of the new archdiocese's 149 parishes over the course of his two-year apprenticeship, on Mardi Gras 2006 -- ironically enough, also Opening Day of the city's biggest annual event: the renowned Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo -- DiNardo became the second archbishop as the newly-elected Benedict XVI accepted Fiorenza's retirement. To mark the transition, the new chief issued a video message via the archdiocesan website and set out immediately to work.

His journey to the corner office completed, the mental notes he'd been taking quickly became action items. Gently, but firmly, they came to light: insufficiently reverent tabernacle placements were to be rectified, and liturgical norms adhered to more faithfully; permanent deacons would start receiving assignments to archdiocesan ministries in addition to their parish duties; even more resources would be poured into young adult ministry -- and, especially given the dearth of homegrown clergy, priests belonged in the parishes, not the chancery.

The venue might've changed, his profile raised mightily, but the man and his hallmarks stayed the same: never an MC, driver, or priest-secretary hovering over him, no desire for a national profile or responsibilities outside the diocese (except NPM), out among the people whenever possible, appraised of the doings in the office but not immersed in them; and, when his presence was sought, seldom (if ever) saying "no."

As in Sioux City, following his succession the archbishop took up residence at another simple, small house, this time at St Mary's Seminary. (His first Houston home, however, was humbler still; Fiorenza had allotted his coadjutor a spartan two-room flat on the chancery's top floor.) Reflecting its occupant's Eastern affinity, iconography now decorates the chapel of the traditional Archbishop's Residence, which boasts just one accoutrement not often seen in his parishes -- a chalice veil.

His collaborators have described him in turns as "a gift of God," "a truly holy man," and "one who personifies Christ's love for the church." But that doesn't mean the experience has been without its bumps.

At a priests' gathering shortly after taking the reins from Fiorenza, DiNardo made a point of underscoring his seriousness about rubrics and well-celebrated liturgy. Channeling Dirty Harry, those who did otherwise were, he said, welcome to "make my day."

The remark sparked outrage among segments of the presbyterate. When asked about it at a subsequent convocation, he apologized. In the end, his ability to admit an error ended up earning more goodwill than the initial quote could've drained. Two years later, after pressure from his staff forced the naming of a priest-secretary on his elevation, he apologized again to his presbyteral council for drawing on the archdiocese's clerical resources. (The choice of aide fell on Fr Gerald Goodrum, who Fiorenza ordained in 2005.)

Not the greatest enthusiast for the administrative end of the office, the reshuffle of the archdiocese's central staff is ongoing. Keeping with the aim to not place any further strain on the already-stretched demand for clergy, Bishop Joe Vasquez -- the lone active auxiliary -- serves as chancellor and, in a first, DiNardo named a laywoman, Christina Deajon, as Vasquez's deputy on his first day in office. (A former assistant counsel to the archdiocese, Deajon is believed to be the highest-ranking African-American layperson serving in a US chancery.) At present, the archdiocese's top two financial posts are in the process of being filled.

He delegates authority willingly and expects the best -- and as one aide who's seen him in office mode put it, were anything less delivered, "I wouldn't want to be on his bad side."

That firmness, however, finds its flip-side in creativity. While many of his confreres either panicked at or turned a blind eye to the 2006 Vatican ruling revoking the permission for lay liturgical ministers to participate in the purification of vessels, the now-cardinal came up with a "third way" solution that both complied with the policy while avoiding post-Communion chaos, establishing a diocesan program for the formation of acolytes. Married men can be admitted to the order, and instituted acolytes were still permitted to care for the vessels by universal law.

While the predominant response sought to criticize the policy-change as pastorally insensitive or excessively rigid, a practical solution was present in the rubrics all along, it just took a bit of investment at the outset.

The Houston prelate saw the opening and ran with it. How many others did is anyone's guess.

* * *

As he was in 1997 and 2003, Joseph Ratzinger was back at the personnel table earlier this year when DiNardo's name came up. This time, however, his was the lone vote that mattered.

Never one to forget a name or face, Benedict XVI first met the young priest from Pittsburgh as he took notes for Gantin at the bilateral meetings between the top officials of the CDF and Bishops. The staff's job was to remain inconspicuous. Clearly, though, enough of an impression had been made.

Back in the States, the names proffered for the red hat were primarily the old guard of the church: Washington, St Louis, Baltimore. Not a few advocated San Antonio -- US Catholicism's Hispanic seat -- and Gomez as the more likely choice should a red hat travel. But in the end, alongside the chiefs of the Curia and the heads of the marquee sees of Paris, Bombay, Nairobi and Barcelona, it was Galveston-Houston's chief pastor who got the nod, completing its rapid ascent to the top tier of the global church.





But some things were still more important -- at least, for the figure at the center of the storm. As the chaos of Announcement Day bore down and cameras swarmed the chancery for a hastily-called, exuberant press conference ([full video](#)), DiNardo kept a commitment to attend the installation of a Protestant pastor in the city. The following afternoon, with the frantic plans for the unprecedented consistory pilgrimage just beginning to take shape, he refused to miss a priest's funeral.

Twice a coadjutor, one thing DiNardo never had was a proper installation as a diocesan bishop. He ended up with a coronation instead as, over Thanksgiving Weekend, the threads of his life converged in the Eternal City.

To the amusement of Vallone's longtime sidekick, the sight of a cassocked cleric with a ponytail provided enough of an attraction to keep the crowd under control as almost a thousand well-wishers queued up for a moment with the new cardinal at the traditional post-consistory reception in the Apostolic Palace. And earlier that day, as the bareheaded cardinal-designate processed down the main aisle of St Peter's with the other 22 honorees, another pilgrim took to shouting "Hey, DiNardo!" over the basilica's barricades.

On his way to be inducted into the Roman clergy, the voice of Marshall was calling.

Since departing his founding pastorate for Sioux City, Fr Dan's initial flock of 650 families had more than tripled at Sts. John and Paul, and Fr Joe McCaffrey had been tasked with the construction of a permanent church.



Spotted by his onetime spiritual director, "he shouted back," McCaffrey told a local paper, "asking how things are at the parish."

Led by his twin sister, Peg, his three siblings and their families were there, as was his ordination classmate David Zubik, now Pittsburgh's 12th bishop, with a planeload from the Steel City. A low-profile retirement couldn't keep Bevilacqua from seeing the first of his proteges to don the "sacred purple" alongside him, and from the Heartland where he learned what episcopal ministry was all about, a

group of 40 from Sioux City -- including his successor, Bishop Walker Nickless -- descended to honor the first American cardinal whose road wound through Iowa.

But for all these, the week belonged to the upwards of 700 Texans. The group's diversity and excitement turned heads even among their fellow cheering-sections, and as their chants bounced off the city's walls, one longtime Vatican hand said the "radiant" Houston crowd had provided the natives with a much-appreciated sign -- that, for all the bad headlines of recent years, "the church in America is still very much alive."

The show of unity wasn't a one-off occurrence. "Everyone really gets along here," DiNardo said shortly after the elevation was announced, ticking off a list of the archdiocese's cultural groups: the Hispanic majority, a historically prominent African-American contingent, vibrant Vietnamese and Filipino communities, the world's largest concentration of Nigerians outside their home country, and more.

Almost since the beginning, tensions between rival ethnic factions have been a mainstay of the church's American journey... that is, until the Southwest.

The region's newest honor isn't just papal recognition of a metropolis and its momentum, but of the energized, collaborative model that, following generations of Establishment suspicion, earned Southern Catholicism a place at the civic table not through confrontation, coercion or compromise, but a commitment to the common good and the credibility of its witness.

* * *

Returning home exhausted from the feeding frenzy of Consistory Week, the new cardinal received a card from a grade-schooler that summed up the expectations ahead.

"Congratulations, Cardinal," it said. "Now get to work."

Just when he thought his 2008 plans were "worked out," DiNardo told his flock that "a number of things have now been turned topsy-turvy."

"It should be an interesting time in the year ahead," he said. "I really need your prayers!"

As it wasn't just a matter of weeks ago, the ecclesiastical spotlight now rests squarely on what its new prince has termed the "happy chaos" of Houston, of Texas and the wider South.

The archdiocese's marquee event of the year -- the early April dedication of its first permanent Houston hub, the \$64 million, 2,000-seat Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart -- now takes on the dynamics of a national, even international, event.



From near and far, the invites and requests have already increased, as has his public prominence on the local circuit, the once-averted political niceties included.

Earlier this week, DiNardo offered the invocation as Houston Mayor Bill White was sworn in for his third term. In mid-December, as Texas Gov. Rick Perry hosted a "private" lunch for 400 to welcome the new cardinal home, the guest of honor used the statewide coverage of the Austin event to tackle the controversial topic of immigration, advocating the moral imperative of family reunification and saying that "punitive measures alone" to the end of protecting the nation's borders "are going to be ultimately ineffective and, I think, counterproductive."

But, again, the ride is just beginning.

At 58, the youngest American cardinal elevated in nearly two decades has another 22 years of eligibility in a conclave. With 15 of the US' 17 red-hats now older than 71, his seniority in the top rank will accrue quickly. What's more, as the undisputed head of the Stateside church's most dynamic region and leader of the second-largest state grouping of the nation's Catholics, his potential degree of national influence -- already evidenced by the deference accorded him at November's USCCB plenary -- could be without peer.

Well, to the degree he seeks to use it. Time is, after all, on his side.

Seemingly overnight, much has changed for the pastor-turned-"Cardinarado." But the mind and approach of his parish roots remain unscathed.

Keen to put one on his rectory wall, a Houston priest recently asked his boss when his formal portrait in the scarlet would be ready. Never a fan of flashbulbs, DiNardo told him there were bigger things to think about -- even in the purple, he said "it's still me." (Six weeks since the consistory, the shot has remained untaken.)



And as he preached from the aisle to a group of young people, another of his clerics was overheard muttering that "This guy should be teaching high school religious ed., not running a diocese."

The line was intended as a slight. But as the nation's hierarchy struggles to restore its credibility, an American cardinal couldn't ask for a better compliment.

PHOTOS: AP/Pier Paolo Cito; Getty Images; Sts. John and Paul Parish, Marshall Pa.;

Loggiarazzi; Smiley N. Pool/(Removed by order of the) *Houston Chronicle*

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 18:00



The First Prince



In 1875, the emergence of American Catholicism on the universal stage was heralded by Pope Pius IX's appointment of Archbishop John McCloskey of New York as the nation's first cardinal.

Forty-six US prelates have since joined the college, including six of McCloskey's Big Apple successors.

In the current *Catholic New York*, Gotham's reigning red-hat, Cardinal Edward Egan, [reflects on](#) the pioneer prince:

The future Cardinal was born on March 12, 1810, two years after his newly wed parents arrived in New York from Northern Ireland. He was a studious youngster who received his elementary education in a highly esteemed "classical school," thanks to the generosity of a friend of the family who became his guardian after his father's death. From there he went on to complete his college and seminary studies at Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Md. On Jan. 12, 1834, he was ordained in the original St. Patrick's Cathedral, the first native-born New Yorker to be ordained for the diocesan priesthood.

Father McCloskey's first assignment was as a professor of philosophy in the seminary of New York in Nyack-on-the-Hudson, which at the end of his first year on the faculty burned to the ground. Because of chronic health problems, it was decided that he should go to live for a couple of years in Rome, where the climate would be less rigorous and he might pursue further studies in both philosophy and theology. This too was made possible by his generous guardian.

In Rome, Father McCloskey lived in a monastery attached to the Church of Sant'Andrea della Valle and took courses at the "Roman College" of the Jesuit Fathers, which is now called the Gregorian University. There he became a close friend of the famous Dominican preacher, Lacordaire, and well-known to a number of the most celebrated clergymen of his time, such as the future Cardinal Wiseman of England, the future Cardinal Cullen of Ireland, and several of the key advisers of Pope Gregory XVI, many of whom he came to admire greatly.

After traveling throughout Europe for almost a year, he returned to New York to be named pastor of St. Joseph's parish in Greenwich Village. The assignment was his first real

test as a member of the clergy, and he passed it with flying colors.

At the time, "trusteeism" was in full sway throughout the nation. Prominent laity, known as "trustees," controlled the finances of their parishes, paid the clergy if they wanted to, and dismissed any who said or did anything to displease them. Father McCloskey's appointment was made without consultation with the trustees of St. Joseph's, and they accordingly ordered the parishioners to boycott him.

Without uttering a word of complaint in public or even showing disappointment, the young priest offered Mass and delivered a long sermon every Sunday to an empty church. This went on for nine months until the parishioners finally began to file back into their pews and the trustees resigned themselves to allowing the pastor to do his work. None of this was out of character. As one priest put it many years later, "John McCloskey never fought a battle, or lost a war."

While remaining pastor of St. Joseph's, Father McCloskey served as the first president of St. John's College, which is now Fordham University, a post he held until 1844, when he was appointed Coadjutor to Archbishop John Hughes "with the right of succession." Some expressed surprise that the exuberant, controversial Hughes would have chosen the quiet, self-effacing McCloskey to succeed him. Others count Hughes' choice to be among the best he ever made.

Whatever of this, three years later Bishop McCloskey was named the first Bishop of the newly created Diocese of Albany, where without fanfare he increased the number of parishes from 25 to 113, increased the number of priests from 34 to 84, built the splendid Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, and founded a host of extraordinary schools and charitable institutions.

With the passing of Archbishop Hughes in January of 1864, McCloskey was appointed Archbishop of New York with the unanimous support of the the bishops of New York and New Jersey, despite his having begged his friends in the Roman Curia to impede the nomination. "I possess neither the learning, nor prudence, nor energy, nor firmness, nor bodily health or strength," he wrote to Carl Cardinal von Reisach, who was a member of a number of key offices in the Holy See. Happily, von Reisach knew better. Thus, after 17 years in Albany, the Archbishop-elect left for New York, having declined "any public demonstration" in his honor.

In 1864, the Archdiocese of New York was beset with accusations regarding draft riots in the City, criticism of its stand on abolition, tensions with the Italian and German communities, an unfortunate diplomatic involvement concerning the Civil War, long-term antagonisms over public schools, spiraling deficits and ongoing conflicts with the media, both Catholic and secular. The new Archbishop dealt with all of it gracefully and effectively. As calm was slowly restored, the number of churches and chapels rose from 85 to 229, the number of priests rose from 150 to 400, and extraordinary institutions of charity such as the Protectory for neglected youth, the New York Foundling for mothers and

children, and the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin on State Island came into being.

In addition, the new Archbishop assumed the debt of numerous failing parishes, raised the funds to pay for St. Patrick's Cathedral, and by a deft intervention with President Chester Alan Arthur saved the Pontifical North American College in Rome from being confiscated by the Italian government. It was not therefore surprising that in March of 1875, he became the first citizen of the United States to be named to the College of Cardinals, receiving his "birettum" a month later in St. Patrick's Old Cathedral, inasmuch as the new one was still under construction.

Cardinal McCloskey participated in the First Vatican Council from beginning to end, voting in favor of the declaration on papal infallibility when it came to the floor even though he had made it known that he felt it "untimely." He was a leading voice in the Second and Third Plenary Councils of Baltimore, especially in the area of Catholic education. He managed to keep the Irish Fenians from wreaking havoc when they threatened an uprising in New York. He even avoided controversy with the troublesome Father Edward McGlynn, who caused his successor, Archbishop Corrigan, years of grief.

There are many more achievements of the first American Cardinal that could be listed here. However, in the interest of understanding the kind of person he was, perhaps it is best to recall just two anecdotes about him. The first comes from the pen of the second American Cardinal, James Cardinal Gibbons, who wrote of McCloskey: "A few minutes before he was to ascend the pulpit to deliver the opening address at the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore, a telegram was handed to him announcing the destruction of his Cathedral by fire. His Eminence preached in his usual tranquil and unruffled manner. When I expressed to him the next morning my surprise at his composure, he replied: 'The damage was done, and I could not undo it.'"

The second anecdote is perhaps even more revealing.

William Tecumseh Sherman, the Civil War general who led the bloody "March to the Sea," had a son who wanted to study to be a Jesuit. Sherman wrote a letter to McCloskey telling him to dissuade his son from such an unthinkable course of action. The Cardinal met with young Sherman, listened to his story and encouraged him in his vocation. The General contacted the editor of a St. Louis newspaper, condemned the Cardinal in the most offensive terms and accused him of robbing him of a son. The editor telegraphed the Cardinal for a comment. The reply was classic McCloskey: "General Sherman's letter was marked 'personal and confidential.'" And he never mentioned the matter again.

While McCloskey and Baltimore's James Gibbons each enjoyed the distinction of being the country's lone prince of the church, the increasing size and clout of the fold on these shores was met with a consistent increase of its representation in the papal senate.

Currently, the American cardinals number a record-high 17, all but four of whom are under age 80 and, thus, may vote in a conclave.

Only Italy's 22 electors comprise a larger bloc.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 09:51



Farewell, Father-General... Hello, Murmuratio

As you know, the 35th General Congregation of the Jesuits begins in Rome on Monday, and with it the end of Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach's 25 year reign at the helm of the church's largest religious order.

Elected the 29th Superior General in 1983, the Dutch cleric who devoted his ministry to studying the East was not atop the list of favorites going into GC 33, but Kolvenbach's finesse and quiet spirit made him the

trusted broker both his confreres and the Vatican needed to buff up relations in the wake of the tumultuous post-Conciliar tenure of his legendary predecessor, Fr Pedro Arrupe.



Not since the Austrian-born Włodzimierz Ledóchowski died in 1942 after 27 years at the helm has a successor of Ignatius of Loyola enjoyed a similar length of tenure; only six Fathers-General have held the lifetime post for over two decades.

To mark his departure from the Jesuit headquarters on Borgo Santo Spirito, Kolvenbach (shown at right on a 1985 trip to India, now home to the Society's largest national bloc) received a top-flight Vatican send-off:

"Choosing one from among the thousands of Jesuits capable (of being general), the society will say what it expects for its future: a prophet or a wise man, an innovator or a moderator, a contemplative or an activist, a point man or a man of unity," Father Kolvenbach said in a joint interview with [Vatican Radio](#) and the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*.

The election, which will take place after formal presentations on the strengths and challenges facing the more than 19,200 Jesuits in the world, must point to the Jesuit who will help the order "progress on the path of God," he said.

In the interview, released Jan. 4, Father Kolvenbach was asked about the Jesuits' commitment to interreligious dialogue and particularly to dialogue with Islam.

"For a dialogue to be possible, it is necessary to begin with a sincere mutual respect that goes beyond mere courtesy," he said. "Without this there will not be dialogue, but confrontation."

Father Kolvenbach said the starting place is the "dialogue of

life," in which members of different religions share their hopes and dreams for their lives, their families and communities, including "the desire to live in peace, in security and in an environment free from pollution." ...

Father Kolvenbach also was asked what it would be like to answer to a provincial superior after being the top Jesuit for so long.

"After almost 25 years of listening to almost 20,000 Jesuits, obedience to just one should mark a time of peace," he said.

At about mid-month, once the *Status Societatis* -- the delegates' global report on the "State of the Society" -- has been presented, the GC's 226 electors will move to accept the Kolvenbach's retirement and proceed to finding his successor.

Before a ballot is cast, the assembled will undertake the traditional four days of "*murmuratio*," during which they may discreetly inquire as to a prospect's qualities. Given the exceptional two-year preparation period for this election, in a first, the delegates were invited to send names of *generabili* to the Jesuit Curia so they could be better briefed in the run-up to the voting (and the Holy See could vet a list of the more-mentioned names).



Once the election begins in the *Aula* shown above, as many ballots as necessary are held until one name acquires a simple majority; the departing superior was chosen in the "Black Conclave's" first scrutiny, Arrupe on the third.

The choice can't take effect, however, without papal confirmation. While the current "White" Pope will likely be waiting anxiously for the traditional message to arrive with the name of his "Black" counterpart-in-waiting, the last instance wasn't as seamless.

In his "Letter from Rome" for today's edition of *The Tablet*, Robert Mickens recounted the backstory of Kolvenbach's ascent.

As the Dutchman was being elected in Septembr 1983, Mickens wrote, John Paul II was *en route* back to Rome from a visit to Austria. Since the electors can't adjourn until the pontiff's approval is relayed back to them -- at which time the appointment becomes public -- the congregation remain sequestered as the *Volo Papale* touched down at Fiumicino.

"When [John Paul] was finally told," Mickens wrote, the late Pope "asked who Kolvenbach was."

"You appointed him rector of the Pontifical Oriental Institute two years ago," an aide replied. According to the story, Wojtyla said, "Well, in that case, I confirm him."

A favorite of Benedict XVI, Kolvenbach will open the gathering on Monday by lighting the traditional lamp at the tomb of Ignatius and [praying](#) that "in this time of grace we may seek and find in all things God's divine presence and know his sovereign will."

As similar lamps are lit in Jesuit chapels around the world, each will burn for the duration of the months-long meeting.

SVILUPPO: Alongside its appearance in the Letter, GC [gets a feature](#) in the current *Tablet*.

Snip:

[Kolvenbach's] period of office, said [UK provincial] Fr [Michael] Holman, has taken the Society "to new geographical frontiers, to Albania, for example, to Kosovo, Russia and to many other places by promoting the Jesuit Refugee Service ... he has encouraged us in whatever ministry to meet the challenge of secularism and unbelief with a witness to the Gospel made credible by our witness to the poor, to use effectively the tools of technology and the media, to adopt new forms of ministry with young people and young adults"....

After the problems of the early 1980s, the Jesuit powers-that-be hope that the person selected [as Superior-General] will be acceptable to the Pope. It is said that a long list of some 60 names of likely candidates has already been submitted to the Vatican, just in case there are problems. And there is another issue where Pope Benedict has had an input. The Society's various provinces send in *postulata*, or topics they would like to be debated at the Congregation. Several provinces made the suggestion that in future the General should retire, perhaps at 80. Discussion on this, which would be a major change to the Society's Constitution, has been vetoed by the Holy See. Benedict XVI, a Rome-based Jesuit suggested to me, was alarmed by the thought that if the "black pope" was obliged to retire at 80, people might start to expect the same of the "white" one....

The Jesuit Constitution distinguishes between Ordinary and Extraordinary General Congregations. The former meet, like this one, to elect a General, before going on to other matters proposed for discussion. The Extraordinary ones are called by the General to debate particular problems facing the Society. One Jesuit commentator has recently remarked that, in terms of giving the Society direction, the Extraordinary Congregations have been the more successful.

But this Ordinary Congregation is extraordinary in its own way. Some of the *postulata* have already been mentioned - recruitment, and governance. Whatever delegates' wishes, it will not discuss the arcane subject of "grades" (status) within the Jesuits, a topic banned at previous Congregations by Popes Paul VI and John Paul II. It will instead talk about such traditional topics as community life, Jesuit identity and obedience. Never before, however, has the Congregation

discussed ecology. Yet no other single subject drew so many postulata from around the world. One may not be able to predict who the next General of the Society will be, but one thing looks certain: the Jesuits are going green.

PHOTO 1: *30 giorni*

PHOTO 2: Don Doll, SJ

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 08:09 

FRIDAY, JANUARY 04, 2008

How Much More on Olmsted's Plate? Pelotte More

Some might remember the strange doings of late in New Mexico's diocese of Gallup....

In the latest developments of the saga (now in its seventh month), it was announced yesterday that the Holy See has granted Bishop Donald Pelotte a year's "medical leave," effective immediately.

However, the 62 year-old prelate -- who said he fell (but might not've) back in July... then called 911 in late September to report that "gentle little people" wearing Halloween masks were, he said, walking around his home as he hid in a closet -- had already announced his departure for such a leave in mid-December, saying at the time that he had "informed Vatican officials" about it.

For the interim, Rome [has tapped](#) Bishop Thomas Olmsted of Phoenix as apostolic administrator of the New Mexico diocese...

...and, for you trivia buffs out there, the last time Rome tapped an administrator for a US diocese that *wasn't* vacant was???

Feel free to send your guesses along.

SVILUPPO: You folks sure like the trivia.... It's a good thing to keep in mind.

Thanks for the scores of e-mails with your guesses. For all of 'em, though, only three correctly noted that the last *sede plena* apostolic administrator (i.e. one appointed to oversee a diocese whose ordinary remains in office) was named in September 2001, when The Mort -- i.e. Bishop John Smith of Trenton -- took the reins of the diocese of Metuchen as the Holy See figured out a game plan in light of Bishop Vincent Breen's battle with Alzheimer's disease.

Less than four months later (six years ago this week), John Paul II accepted the Brooklyn-born Breen's resignation from the post, naming then-Newark auxiliary Paul Bootkoski as the Central Jersey diocese's third head.

While *sede vacante* administrators (appointed to oversee a vacant see) have been turned to frequently in recent years -- mostly following sudden, potentially destabilizing resignations, e.g. post-Law Boston, Santa Fe (1994), Atlanta (1990) and Phoenix (2003) -- the last twenty years have seen but two Rome-tapped prelates have stepped in to guide a "filled" diocese: The Mort and Bishop Dale Melczek of Gary.

A Detroit auxiliary, Melczek was named administrator of the Indiana church in 1992 due to the illness of Bishop Norbert Gaughan. The arrangement was only made permanent three years later, when the interim prelate was formally transferred to Gary as coadjutor, then succeeding to the chief post within months.

Intriguingly, far and away the most common answer sent to the above question was Donald Wuerl's yearlong sojourn in Seattle amid Vatican scrutiny of then-Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen. Thing is, though, Wuerl was never administrator, but an auxiliary bishop entrusted with "special faculties" -- read: the last word -- over several areas, among them the archdiocese's tribunal, liturgy office, priestly formation and ministry to gays and lesbians.

It may sound like a canonical hair-split, but the difference is vast. While an appointed administrator enjoys all the rights and authority normally held by the diocesan bishop, an auxiliary with Roman directives may exercise the enhanced powers solely within the areas of his mandate.

As the once and future Pittsburgher's arrival stoked controversy in the Northwest, a similar arrangement was unfolding in the East as David Foley, a priest of Washington, was named to assist then-Bishop Walter Sullivan of Richmond, likewise with an expanded brief.

For some reason, no one recalled that appointment.... Suffice it to say, it's interesting what people remember.

-30-

POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 17:20 

Musical Vacancies



As Bishop Patrick Zurek [introduced himself](#) yesterday in Amarillo...

"This will be a big change for me here in Amarillo," he said.

"The song, 'Amarillo By Morning,' will have new meaning for me."

He said he is looking forward to meeting people and settling into his new position and home.

"I do come with no agenda," he said. "I don't know the diocese. You don't know me, and I don't know you."

He said he wants to learn about the people and needs here in the coming months....

Zurek told the gathering that God must have a sense of

humor, as this is the second time he had been assigned to a post just before Christmas, but required to keep the news secret until after the holidays. He said it was really hard at Christmas to be home with all his family and not being able to say anything.

"I love working with my priests, deacons, religious men and women and lay leaders who are the core of the church," he said.

Zurek speaks five languages and slipped fluently between English and Spanish while introducing himself.

...the San Antonio media [noted](#) that its 700,000-member archdiocese faces a short-term future with no active auxiliary bishops:

Bishop Thomas Flanagan, who was named with Zurek in 1998, retired in December 2005. Retired auxiliary bishop Bernard Popp turned 90 last month and is recovering from knee surgery.

Age and infirmity have limited their availability and that of [Archbishop-emeritus Patrick] Flores to officiate at confirmation liturgies in the next few months, and Zurek now will have to tend to his new flock in Amarillo.

Deacon Pat Rodgers, director of communication for the archdiocese, said [Archbishop Jose] Gomez expects an announcement soon on a successor to Flanagan, which he had requested long before learning of Zurek's pending promotion.

"This leaves Archbishop Gomez with quite a task ahead," Rogers said. "Even with three bishops available, the schedule keeps them all very busy. Now he won't have much help."

While a good bit of attention has been devoted to the lengthening searches for diocesan bishops -- a time-frame which has more than doubled in recent years, currently averaging 18 to 24-months from start to finish -- US dioceses keeping vigil for an auxiliary or two have been waiting even longer.

For example, last week marked three years since the elevation of Gomez, then auxiliary of Denver, to the San Antonio post. Though Archbishop Charles Chaput started the process for Gomez's replacement in the Rockies [within weeks](#), the wait continues.

Across Texas, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston has but one active auxiliary, Bishop Joe Vasquez, aiding him at the helm of its 1.5 million Catholics. With DiNardo's recent elevation to the College of Cardinals forcing a sudden rework of his schedule to reflect the wider commitments that come with the red hat, the word's gone out that some confirmations might have to be taken by priests in the Southwest's quickly-expanding hub.

And along the coasts, the prospect of months, even years, of waiting led both Archbishop Donald Wuerl of Washington and Bishop Tod Brown of Orange to start taking soundings almost immediately after each lost an auxiliary to a diocesan appointment.

As with appointments to diocesan bishoprics, it would appear that three factors have contributed to the backlog: intensified research of

candidates' backgrounds, a talent pool viewed as thin by the process' key players, and the increased instances of nominees who, informed of their selection, have declined appointment.

While years past saw upwards of 15 to 20 auxiliaries named in a given year to the larger Stateside dioceses, 2007 boasted the appointment of but three new assistant bishops: Shelton Fabre in New Orleans, Peter Libasci of Rockville Centre and Bill Callahan OFM Conv. in Milwaukee.

Signs are popping up that the pressure on the heaviest appointment docket in the US church's recent history is beginning to ease. But, sizing up the waiting periods, some ordinaries are averse to even try their hand at getting help.

"I've thought about asking," the head of one large flock recently mused. "We've had [auxiliaries] before and I could use one immensely."

However, "I just don't want to do all that [paper]work to find myself with the Lord before the appointment finally comes."

For the record, the prelate quoted is in good health.

PHOTO: Michael Lemmons/*Amarillo Globe-News*

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 08:23 

The Door to Dialogue

Following the Pope's open-door [response](#) to the request for dialogue from 138 Muslim leaders, plans for a top-level summit are quickly [taking shape](#):

The top Vatican official in charge of relations with Islam, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, said he expected an advanced group of three Muslim representatives in February or March to lay the groundwork for the meeting.

"In a certain sense, (the meeting) can be defined as historic," Tauran told the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano*, in an edition published earlier this week.

[The] 138 Muslim scholars wrote to Pope Benedict and other Christian leaders in October, saying "the very survival of the world itself" might depend on dialogue.

The Pope... responded in November by welcoming their call and inviting them to Rome....

Tauran raised eyebrows last year by expressing doubt over whether the two faiths could agree on issues such as God, love and how to read sacred scripture.

But he told *L'Osservatore Romano* that the Muslim scholars' call for dialogue in their October open letter may have marked a turning point.

"It's still true that, for some Muslims, inter-religious dialogue

is neither a reality nor a priority. But it's also true that we're perhaps seeing an interesting development in the open letter," Tauran said. "The 138 signatories effectively represent 43 countries."

Among the items on the agenda were respect for an individual's dignity and teaching tolerance to new generations, Tauran said.

...meanwhile, in Malaysia, a Catholic paper's use of the term "Allah" for God -- a practice frequently adopted by Christian communities elsewhere in the Arab world -- has led to [government scrutiny](#):

Malaysia has ruled that a Catholic newspaper cannot use the word Allah, clarifying reports it had reversed an earlier ban on the use of the word by non-Muslims.

The move deepens fears the government is trying too hard to please the more extremist sections of its Muslim majority at the expense of other religions.

Father Lawrence Andrew, the editor of Kuala Lumpur-based "Herald - the Catholic Weekly" was reported this week as saying the government had renewed its publishing permit, without restrictions, after earlier ruling that non-Muslims are forbidden from using the word Allah.

But Abdullah Md Zin, a minister for religious affairs, said on Friday the ban on the use of the word remained despite the renewal of the permit.

"It was just the priest's interpretation that there was no restriction on the use of the word," Abdullah told Reuters.

This is the latest in a series of disputes that is feeding fears of a gradual erosion of the rights of non-Muslims.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 07:13



THURSDAY, JANUARY 03, 2008

Panhandle Handover



Three days in, the first Stateside appointment of the year is in the bag.

This morning, the Pope named Auxiliary Bishop Patrick Zurek of San Antonio as bishop of Amarillo. Zurek, 59, succeeds Bishop John Yanta, who reached the retirement age of 75 in October 2006.

Zurek (left) served 21 years in the trenches as a priest of Austin, including

assignments on both sides of the UT-A&M Divide and founding a parish. The incoming head of the 39,000-member church in the Texas Panhandle led the National Conference of Vocation Directors before being named an auxiliary of the state's elder archdiocese ten years ago this week. He speaks four languages, including his ancestral Czech.

A Rome-trained moral theologian who was a chaplain at the Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital during his seminary days, Zurek is the third Stateside appointee in the last ten months who Pope Paul VI ordained to the priesthood on 29 June 1975.

Named last year, new Bishops Michael Hoeppner of Crookston and Glen John Provost of Lake Charles further upped the mitre quotient of an ordination class that, among others, also includes Archbishops Raymond Burke of St Louis, the Vancouver coadjutor Michael Miller CSB, *Culto Divino* prefect-in-waiting Malcolm Ranjith and James Harvey, the Milwaukee-born prefect of the Papal Household, not to mention a smattering of cardinals. All told, Papa Montini [ordained 359](#) in that one sitting to commemorate the 1975 Holy Year.

Under its retiring bishop, the Panhandle diocese -- which still considers itself mission territory -- saw a distinct shift of emphasis.

While his predecessor Bishop Leroy Matthiesen garnered a rep for his social-justice protests and was one of three prelates to attend last year's Minneapolis conference of New Ways Ministry (the Rome-banned apostolate to gays and lesbians), Yanta wrote pastoral letters advocating "modesty in dress" and the denial of the Eucharist to politicians whose public positions defied church teaching. In 2005, the prelate incardinated the prominent pro-life activist Fr Frank Pavone into his diocese and announced the [founding](#) of a community of priests and brothers dedicated to the cause under the leadership of the native New Yorker.

The Amarillo church was among the US dioceses hardest hit by the sex-abuse crisis. According to [published reports](#), the Dallas Norms forced the removal of a quarter of its 32 active priests, leaving 16 of its 35 parishes without a resident pastor. As settlements, counseling and other costs left the diocese in a six-figure budget deficit, the accused later saw their diocesan subsidy [slashed](#) from \$1,600 to \$100 a month.

Per the norms of the canons, Zurek's installation as the Panhandle's eighth bishop must take place within two months.

SVILUPPO: Installation scheduled for 22 February.

[Statements:](#)

Zurek: "I was a little shocked at the suddenness of the announcement, my acceptance and how life would change quickly. I was very happy that he had the confidence in me to appoint me a diocesan bishop. I started to realize that a new chapter in my life was about to unfold. It was exciting!"

Yanta: "Bishop Zurek has great experience in evangelizing, shepherding, teaching, sanctifying and serving the People of God...He has earned through experience a reputation for his respected, ecclesial and pastoral relationship with all."

SA Archbishop Jose Gomez: "Bishop Zurek has been a blessing in many ways to me personally and to all the people of the Archdiocese of San Antonio. All who have worked alongside him will miss a good friend and a talented and dedicated bishop. However, I am happy that the Diocese of Amarillo will now benefit from his inspired leadership and dedication."

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 06:14 

"State of the World," Bertone Edition

Yet again, the Pope has spoken through Vice -- his deputy, that is.

In an interview with *Famiglia Cristiana* -- Italy's largest magazine -- the Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone outlined his Boss' '08, and the pontiff's priorities and plans in the New Year.



While Italian affairs dominated Bertone's sit-down with the Pauline journal, the Salesian cardinal whose penchant for candor has made him Benedict's *de facto* chief spokesman didn't resist the temptation to delve into the affairs of the global church and the wider world.

Confirming reports that the drafting of Papa Ratz's talks for his mid-April visit to the UN headquarters in New York and the East Coast are well underway, the SegStat -- whose office has particular responsibility for the 18 April UN address -- offered a preview, announcing that Benedict "will confirm the irreplaceability of the United Nations."

"The Pope's concerns" regarding the global body "are the same as those of the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon," Bertone said, adding that he saw the South Korean diplomat as "a man of great spirituality." (Asked about his religious beliefs and how they informed his decisions at a press conference following his 2006 appointment, Ban said that the question was inappropriate and a "personal matter.")

Separating Benedict from pockets of church conservatives who've targeted the UN, the cardinal reaffirmed that "the Catholic church has always supported the work of the United Nations and will not change [its] policy."

"The address of Benedict XVI," he said, "will confirm the need to focus on the values that underpin [its] historical international declarations, simply from a concern over the difficulty of holding together in a sole world assembly almost 200 countries with different political and ideological backgrounds."

As the April visit to New York and Washington will be the first papal trip to the States occurring against the backdrop of a presidential election year, Bertone said that "the Pope is above factions."

"Somebody said that the US is always in campaign season," the cardinal noted. Even so, he admitted that "eventual exploitations" of the pontiff's presence and message "cannot be controlled."

Widely viewed as the Vatican's most powerful "prime minister" since Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli (the future Pius XII) stood alongside Pope Pius XI, Bertone returned to his Pope's most controversial document -- the July *motu proprio* allowing wider use of the pre-Conciliar 1962 Missal.

Noting the impending publication of a further instruction to "set the criteria" for the application of *Summorum Pontificum*, the cardinal said that the varying reactions to the document have reflected "discomposure." "Some arrived at accusing the Pope of having reneged" on Vatican II's liturgical teaching, he said, while others "have interpreted the *motu proprio* as the authorization of a return toward the sole [use of] the preconciliar rite."

"Both positions are erroneous," he said, terming them "exaggerated episodes that do not correspond to the intentions of the Pope."

As regards the international situation, Bertone said that the Holy See is pursuing ever more "openings and contacts" in its relations with China, praising its Communist leaders for "recognizing the positive value of religion" in 2007. Concerning Israel, while noting that the Vatican's "understand[s] the problem of [its] security," safety concerns cannot morph into "a negative attitude" toward its Catholic population. And Latin American leaders, he said, always need to "learn from and listen to the people."

To mark the 10th anniversary since Pope John Paul II's trip there, Bertone said he will visit Cuba in February, where he hopes to meet with interim President Raul Castro. Benedict will get to address the international situation in his own voice next week during the Pope's traditional "State of the World" speech to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See.

An appeal for a "revived synergy" among the Catholic press also came up in the cardinal-secretary's remarks. Mentioning that certain agencies -- with *Zenit* cited by name -- "hold an important place in the media," Bertone said that "more needs to be done: connections between Catholic publishers, communication faculties, newspapers, radio and television." As with church-affiliated non-governmental organizations, he said that the goal must be "common actions, not separated -- or, worse still, pitted against each other."

"The conciliar idea of 'church-as-communion,'" he said, "must be translated into the daily work of the NGOs and the Catholic media: [either] work together more effectively, or otherwise risk decline and lose the challenge of engagement with modern society."

As the Pope's talking points have been veering more decidedly of late toward appeals to natural law and a common sense of morality, Bertone took up the papal push in his interview.

Recalling how the controversial lobbying by the Italian church against legislation for unmarried partners made 2007 a "demanding

year" for the country's Catholics, the cardinal cited the natural law in declaring that "the church's position is not a partisan one."

"The concept of secularism opposed to religiosity is antihistorical," he said, bringing the president of "the most secularized" France, Nicolas Sarkozy, into his point. On the French leader's Vatican visit last month, the cardinal quoted Sarkozy as saying that "the Catholic church is a resource and not an obstacle or a threat to the development of the country. It doesn't differ with republican ideals."

"I've personally known great Communist and Socialist intellectuals who have had a secular, yet moral, vision," Bertone said, noting that despite their differences with the church, the thinkers were still able to "believe in an authentically moral and ethical project."

Benedict's natural law tack -- which, some observers expect, will result in a magisterial text on the concept sometime this year -- isn't just getting attention in Italy. High on the Pope's radar screen is said to be a [Washington conference](#) on "A Common Morality for the Global Age" that's been arranged at his personal request.

Three years in the planning, an [international A-list](#) of academics and other experts are slated to attend the four-day symposium in late March at the capital's Catholic University of America. The gathering's keynote will be delivered by a member of Benedict's "kitchen cabinet": the patriarch of Venice Cardinal Angelo Scola, and the pontiff -- who'll be spending a day on the university's campus two weeks later -- is reportedly keen to get a full briefing on the proceedings.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 01:49 

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 02, 2008

In the Marketplace. Literally.

Your eyes deceive you not: the end of 2008's first day of trading at the Manila stock exchange ended with Mass.

Suffice it to say, it's one thing you won't see in New York.

In what the wires termed a "sluggish session," the Filipino market's main index fell 0.1 percent. Next week will see a slowdown of a different sort as hundreds of thousands pack the grounds of a basilica in the Asian capital for the annual festival of the [Black Nazarene](#).

PHOTO: AP/Pat Roque

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 09:43 

The "Romish Chapel" at 275



While this New Year sees the [bicentennial](#) of American Catholicism's first expansion, the



River City landmark that laid much of its groundwork will spend its 2008 marking an even more venerable, and hard-won, milestone.

A morning liturgy yesterday opened the 275th anniversary of the nation's first urban parish -- [Old St. Joseph's](#).

Founded in 1733 by Jesuit Fr Joseph Greaton and still in the Society's care, a plaque inside its courtyard notes its beginnings as "the only place in the entire English speaking world where public celebration of the Holy sacrifice of the Mass was permitted by law."

Though the "holy experiment" of Pennsylvania, established a half-century earlier by William Penn and his Quaker brethren, had sought to foster religious tolerance, the lingering suspicion of "Romish" settlers inhibited that freedom, a climate that restricted their first gatherings to private homes. Accordingly, the founding venue for public worship was hidden away in "a place of quiet seclusion" on Willings Alley, a narrow passageway off 4th Street two blocks from the future site of the "State House," as Independence Hall was then known. Despite the discretion of Greaton and his flock, the sheer existence of a "Romish chapel" stoked enough paranoia that its first years saw a number of high-placed attempts to shutter it.



The parishioners initially numbered around fifty, but grew sufficiently within three decades for a larger chapel to be built and a new Jesuit mission -- St Mary's -- to rise, this time in the open on 4th Street, barely 500 feet away.

Still invisible from the street, the present St Joseph's was dedicated in 1838. It was eventually named a "National Shrine," one uniquely dedicated not to the patronage of a saint, but in tribute to the witness of the nameless few who braved much to build the church by living the dream of free worship.

(On a side note, later to become the largest US parish of the Federal period and the diocese's first cathedral, St Mary's (left) provided the backdrop of the "Hogan Schism" -- the battle that pitted



Philadelphia's first three bishops against elected boards of trustees



for control of the parish's affairs.

(The most prominent theatre of the national outbreak that became known as "trusteeism," the row's first salvos came in 1821, when the lay board banned

Bishop Henry Conwell from entering his cathedral after the prelate excommunicated its trustee-backed pastor, William Hogan, who Conwell sought to oust from the body's chairmanship. Nine conflict-ridden years later, the appointment of the Irish-born, *Propaganda*-bred theologian Francis Patrick Kenrick as coadjutor to the aged Conwell and apostolic administrator of the diocese began the "Romanization" of the Stateside church and its first significant strides toward a centralized institutional apparatus with the ordinary as chief executive.

(As Hogan's charisma and its effects birthed a culture tailored to ensure that their circumstances could never be repeated -- a dynamic that continues practically untouched into the present -- the insurrectionist cleric who went on to marry twice and manage a traveling circus remains the dominant figure in the life of the Philadelphia church.

(This has been your "Tidbit of the Day"; end of term paper.)

With no diocese existing on these shores until 1789 -- and formal jurisdiction of any kind coming just five years earlier, when the clergy of the 13 states elected John Carroll their mission superior -- the first century and more of the church's activity in the new land was almost entirely shepherded by religious communities. Among these, none approached the investment of the Jesuits, who first arrived in Maine in 1611 and, more prominently, in Maryland in 1634.

Yet over the century of passage between Andrew White and Willings Alley, the adverse mood

of the Anglican-friendly establishment forced the early missionaries to remain under the radar. While the period saw some attempts at establishing public missions far from the cities, the clandestine chapel off 4th Street marked the first time the faithful enjoyed the confidence to emerge in the context of an urban center.

For decades, that status -- coupled with the Jesuits' near-monopoly of the mission-work -- rendered St Joseph's the central crossing of the colonial church. Though the Society was suppressed by the Holy



See from 1773 to 1814, key figures of both the secular and professed clergy dot its ministerial record.

The second archbishop of Baltimore, Leonard Neale, served a stint as pastor in the 1790s. A decade later, Willings Alley saw the arrival of the Fr Anthony Kohlmann, who then headed to New York, where a Dominican's death in Naples would make the German Jesuit the first resident head of the newborn diocese there. By 1830, it would also be the first urban charge of a young Fr John Hughes, the Irish-born street-fighter who went on to consolidate his people's presence to the north as New York's first archbishop and the builder of "new" St Patrick's Cathedral in Midtown.

Along the way, its parishioners supported the foundation of a hospital, what would become the city's dominant Catholic university, and the high school that's produced generations of leaders both civil and ecclesiastic, including seven living bishops (a cardinal and papal nuncio among them) and, come Monday, its first-ever mayor of Philadelphia.



The world outside its gates has changed drastically since 1733, but the Alley remains a cherished haven of grace. The parish counts 1,200 families on the books, but its reputation for warmth, top-notch worship and preaching have kept St Joe's a draw beyond its boundaries and one of the city's most energetic, diverse and youthful communities.

The anniversary will be marked with a host of events throughout the year, beginning with a symposium on the city's early Catholic history this coming Sunday.

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 07:36 

Toward the Black Conclave

With five days and counting 'til the opening of the General Congregation of the Jesuits in Rome, it'd be a bit of understatement to say that anticipation is building.



Convening its top body for only the 35th time in its 470-year history -- the first since 1995 -- the meeting will chart the course of the church's largest religious order, whose numbers have shifted decisively to the global south as lay cooperation becomes ever more crucial to the future of its influential apostolates in Europe and North America.



All told, 226 delegates will represent the world's 19,000 Jesuits, including 34 Americans, 69 Europeans and 64 from the community's new largest regional bloc -- Asia and Oceania.

The marquee order of the three-month event's business will be the unprecedented transition of the Society's leadership from a living "Black Pope" to his successor as Father-General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach steps down after a 25-year reign. The acceptance of Kolvenbach's resignation and election of the 30th Superior-General are expected to take place around mid-month.

The Society's Fr Raymond Schroth offers a [preview](#) of the agenda in *NCR*:

[D]elegates will consider 262 postulates (proposals), from which the new general and the delegates will set priorities for the new generation. Soon the leadership of Jesuits will belong to men born after the 1960s, with no memories of Vatican II, Vietnam, civil rights marches, the movement in those years of the Jesuit seminaries from remote suburbs into the big cities, and the thrill of turning the altar around and saying Mass in English.

This year the American assistancy ordained only 16 men. By 2021 the 10 geographical provinces will be five. For example, the New England, New York, and Maryland plus the South Carolina and Georgia provinces will all be one.

The new general, says Fr. Howard Gray, former rector of John Carroll University and now adviser to Georgetown's lay president, will be in the mold of Fr. Pedro Arrupe, who served from 1965 until 1983 and whose influence and skills set the tone of the modern Society. Kolvenbach has continued Arrupe's priorities, while he improved relations with the Vatican by keeping a low personal profile and establishing links between the Jesuit curia and Vatican offices....

They are expected to reaffirm the sometimes controversial statements of Congregations 32-34 on the relationship between faith and justice, inculturation and the Society's relationship with lay men and women. But of the 262 proposals, 42 concern justice, and the next 41 are on ecology, the new generation's Vietnam.

Dedication to the environment, said Fr. Roger de la Rosa, a California Jesuit chemist, will move the Society into the 21st century, in dialogue with culture and science. The other issues -- governance and lay collaboration -- are linked. How

will new initiatives be received?

The following assessment of what can be expected in the upcoming General Congregation is based on the planning documents, a lecture by historian Jesuit Fr. John Padberg and interviews with a cross section of American Jesuits from different age groups and different parts of the country, including: Frs. Howard Gray, George Coyne, Ross Romero, Paul Mueller, Thomas Greene and Roger de la Rosa -- the last four of whom are young.

* The delegates will elect a general with international experience and vision. Americans must start thinking internationally. More Third-World young Jesuits will be getting degrees in the United States and living in American communities. In California, with the most vocations, half the scholastics were born outside the United States, including de la Rosa. A high percentage of men in formation have already spent many months in Latin America and the Third World. The East will teach the West about dialogue, said de la Rosa. Some older Jesuits must quickly adjust to the fact that the Jesuit complexion will darken and the new generation will be sensitive to any whiff of racism.

* Lay leadership of Jesuit institutions will be the norm. Leaders will have to experiment in training laypersons in the Jesuit ethos. From novitiate to final vows, it takes about 13 years to "form" a Jesuit. Now the hope is that through a series of experiences -- doing the Spiritual Exercises, attending workshops on Jesuit identity and international tours or pilgrimages, such as those run by Gray and Fr. Patrick Samway of St. Joseph's University, to visit St. Ignatius' birthplace in Paris, and the Jesuit-founded AIDS orphanage-hospice-and village in Nairobi -- lay leaders will emerge with a Jesuit "brand."

* Jesuit leadership will think nationally more than locally. The new governance structure will likely give powers to a national superior who can override province structures and decide that this school will be closed or handed over to lay leadership and that school will get Jesuit personnel.

* Local communities will be asked to face their weaknesses. A provincial's statement, "Responding to the Call of Christ," says successful communities have a weekly community Eucharist and meal where all are expected to be present; regular community meetings for prayer and conversations; days of reflection twice a year; and regular hospitality, especially for apostolic partners.

Mueller notes that some Jesuits see their community as a "place of refuge," away from apostolic obligations. This, he said, is no way to reestablish our credibility. We must deliberately design our communities, he said, for both hospitality and prayer, where visitors see us at home and are attracted to our way of life.

There's a story about 16th-century Pedro Martinez, the first Jesuit to land and die in North America. He was a Spanish swordsman who disdained religion, but accompanied friends to a Jesuit community one day just to mock them. Instead, he was so impressed that he wanted to join. Could that happen today?

For further background, Omaha's Creighton University has a comprehensive [GC35 page](#) up and running.

And, of course, stay tuned later this month for word that black smoke has been spotted in the Roman sky.

PHOTO: Don Doll SJ/Creighton University

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 06:38



TUESDAY, JANUARY 01, 2008

Sempre Avanti

*I said to the man who
stood at the gate of the
year
'Give me a light that I
may tread safely into the
unknown.'*

*And he replied,
'Go into the darkness and
put your hand into the
hand of God
That shall be to you
better than light and
safer than a known way!'*

*So I went forth and
finding the Hand of God
Trode gladly into the night
He led me towards the hills
And the breaking of day in the lone east....*

At the dawn of a New Year, may all its blessings, good health and great things be yours and with your loved ones (alongside the continued wishes for a Merry Christmas -- Octave ends tomorrow).

Lest anyone be wondering, the Year-End Package is in edits -- the pieces ran a bit longer than anticipated and want to be sure they're up to snuff. So just enjoy the Champagne, bask in the Bowl Games, and get through the final swing of Holy Day liturgies and you'll find 'em soon enough.

Earlier tonight, in the church where this scribe made his sacraments, the traditional Mummern's Mass was held, and shortly after daybreak, The Parade (ten hours, all told) steps off for the 107th time.

So, yet again, a Blessed and Happy New Year from Mummerville....

Should any be confused, Mummery is a predominantly [Catholic tradition](#) here.

PHOTO: AP/Ricardo Moraes

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POSTED BY ROCCO PALMO AT 00:00 
