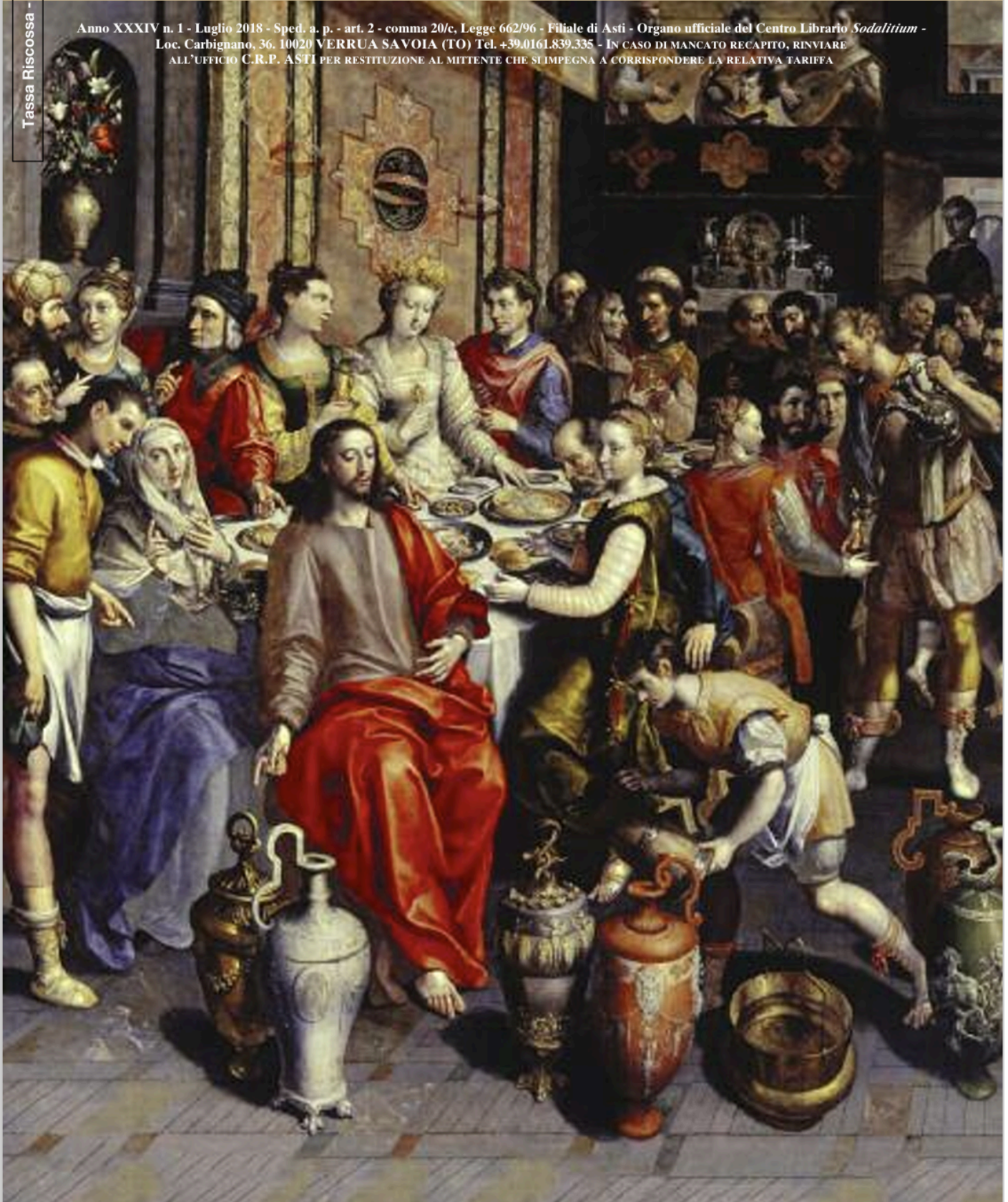


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On the Cover: The Wedding Feast at Cana
(painting by the Flemish artist Maarten de Vos,
1596, Cathedral of Antwerp).

Table of Contents

Editorial	Pag. 2
The Wedding Feast at Cana, the first miracle performed by Jesus, the mediation of Mary	Pag. 4
General Hermann Kanzler	Pag. 20
Book Reviews	
The Shame of Tradition	Pag. 28
"Baron Corvo. The sentimental voyage of Frederick Rolfe"	Pag. 29
Radio Spada: Where it came from and where it is going	Pag. 51
"Social History of the Church" by Mons. Umberto Benigni: Volume 3	Pag. 54
An astrologer for Radio Spada	Pag. 56
I don't believe it, but it's true! (Act II)	Pag. 60
A gnostic in Reggio Emilia (the afterlife according to Maurizio Blondet)	Pag. 65
The apostolate of Father Arnold Trauner	Pag. 66
Institute Life	Pag. 68

Editorial

"The gap between the statements of the 19th century Popes and the new vision that begins with *Pacem in terris* is evident, and has been much debated. It also lies at the heart of the opposition against the Council by Lefebvre and his followers." This is not the first time that Joseph Ratzinger expressed his opinion on the irreconcilability between the teaching of the Church ("the statements of the Popes of the 19th century") and the modern ones (*Dignitatis humanæ* or this one - *Pacem in terris*): we already spoke about his speech in greeting the Roman Curia on December 22, 2005, in *Sodalitium* n. 59, pp. 41-43. The gap (in the figurative sense of "interruption", "break in continuity") is therefore "evident", i.e. immediately and totally understandable.

The passage from Ratzinger which we have cited is dated September 29, 2014, but until now it

"The gap between the statements of the 19th century Popes and the new vision that begins with *Pacem in terris* is evident, and has been much debated. It also lies at the heart of the opposition against the Council by Lefebvre and his followers."

remained unpublished (it was published by *Il Foglio* on May 8, 2018) and is taken from a text sent by the "Pope Emeritus" to the former president of the Senate, the liberal Marcello Pera, commenting on his book, published in 2015, *Diritti umani e cristianesimo. La Chiesa alla prova della modernità* [*Human Rights and Christianity. The Church put to the test of modernity*]. That

there is no continuity, therefore, between the magisterium of the Popes and the new doctrine on religious freedom, is evident: it is obvious, it doesn't even need any proof; in two lines Ratzinger throws all desperate attempts at reconciliation into the theological wastebasket; all the desperate attempts at conciliation implemented by those who still strive to believe in the magisterium and its authority, such as Father Basile of Barroux, Father de Blignières, Father Lucien and so on. But this does not at all mean that Ratzinger believes for a moment that the Church's teaching against religious freedom is still worth considering! In fact, he doesn't write the word "magisterium" but "affirmation". He does not say, as we do, "of the Church", but: "of the Popes of the 19th century". The Popes of the 19th century - for Ratzinger - do not teach but affirm, and (for goodness sake!) they were confined by the cage of 19th century historicism (beware of escaping it, beware of demanding the teaching of an immutable truth, instead of just changing opinion).

Never more than in recent years, since Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected (only elected, mind you) to the Papal Throne, have voices been raised by some members (*materialiter*) of the "hierarchy" who sometimes even speak of **heresy**, or in any case question documents of his "*magisterium*". After the front opened by *Amoris lætitia* (where all Christian morality regarding sin, marriage, adultery, the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist are at stake), another has opened up concerning communion with heretics, which divided the German *episcopate*. *Cardinals* such as Burke, Brandmüller, the deceased Meisner and Caffarra, *cardinals* Pujats and Eijk, supported by *bishops* such as the three Kazakhs, Peta, Lenga and Schneider, the Italians Viganò and Negri, Bishop Laun (Auxiliary of Salzburg), theologians (always rigidly retired) like Monsignor Livi, not to mention the numerous "filial correctors" including, well imagine that!, even Bishop Fellay, who spoke of rupture, of the incompatibility with Faith and Morals, and even of heresy. However, for now, these disorganized reactions do not offer any hope. First of all, because they are called precisely "filial corrections", recognizing in J. M. Bergoglio their Father and the Vicar of Christ. Therefore they mean to oppose the Vicar of Christ, and to condemn or set aside documents from his Magisterium as if they did not exist. This is exactly

what Ratzinger does with his "affirmations of the Popes of the 19th century."

Why then have they all (except Bishop Fellay, at least until now) accepted Vatican II and its reforms: religious freedom, collegiality, ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, liturgical reform, the new code of law canonical (which admits cases in which sacraments can be given to non-Catholics: see *Sodalitium, Il nuovo codice di diritto canonico, l'amministrazione dei sacramenti e l'ecumenismo* [*The new code of canon law, the administration of the sacraments and ecumenism*], n. 57, July 2004). And so? The one whom they recognize as the Vicar of Christ with good reason replies to them that he does nothing more than apply the Council. And how can the "magisterium" of Paul VI and John Paul II, with all their canonized "holiness", be opposed to the matrimonial morality of *Amoris lætitia*? Could *Amoris lætitia* be opposed to Paul VI and John Paul II? And yet, *Pacem in terris* and *Dignitatis humanæ* are **clearly** opposed to the affirmations of the Popes of the 19th century, and all these resistant, dubious and corrective *cardinals, bishops* and theologians had no problem in accepting religious freedom, forgetting the Popes of 19th century. Even the very *Novus Ordo Missæ* of "Saint" Paul VI is, in an impressive way, as a whole as well as in detail, opposed to the Catholic theology codified at the Council of Trent (Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci), yet none of these *cardinals, bishops* and theologians considered the reformed "ordinary" rite of Paul VI to be illegitimate. The hand that signed *Amoris lætitia* is the same that signed the authorization for the priests of the Society of Saint Pius X to confess or bless weddings (they are very happy about it), as well as giving authority to its bishops to ordain priests. And even those who resisted Bishop Fellay, in the name of remaining more closely loyal to Archbishop Lefebvre (never let there be dialogue with the Pope and the "Romans"), such as Bishop Williamson and Father Nitoglia (o quam mutatus es ab illo!) no longer seem to have major problems with the liturgical reform, which they consider legitimate, valid, honored by divine miracles; so, sure for goodness' sake, one can also attend the reformed Mass (the liberal-minded Bishop Fellay has yet to speak clearly about these things). Poor "traditionalism", what a state you have been reduced to! (not to mention the laity, as

is sadly evident in the phenomenon of *Radio Spada* of which we will write in these pages).

We are always hopeful that the occupants of the Episcopal sees will finally abjure all the modernist errors spread by Vatican II and the reforms that followed it: then, and only then, will their actions be beneficial to the Church and to all of Christianity. As long as the various “filial correctors” continue to recognize the legitimacy of Paul VI and his successors, thus attributing to

themselves the mission of “correcting”, when it pleases them, what is, for them, the Pope, the magisterium, the liturgy or the discipline of the Church, they will only contribute to increasing the confusion in which we live and the gravity of the situation. May Our Lady of Good Counsel enlighten them, may Christ the King save us and reign.

Exclusive **Mons. Umberto Benigni's tomb has been found**

**Located in the monumental cemetery of Perugia, it was
photographed by one of our faithful readers**



A fianco: la tomba

Sopra: lo stemma con il motto

Sotto: l'iscrizione sulla lapide





Exegesis and Mariology

The Marriage Feast at Cana, the first miracle performed by Jesus, and the mediation of Mary

Father Ugolino Giugni

The Text of the Gospel

“And on the third day, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: ‘They have no wine.’ And Jesus saith to her: ‘Woman, what is that to me and to thee? My hour is not yet come.’ His mother saith to the servants: ‘Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye.’ Now there were set there six stone jars, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: ‘Fill the jars with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: ‘Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast.’ And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water; the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, And saith to him: ‘Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now.’ This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee; and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him. After this he went down to Capharnaum, he and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they remained there not many days.” (John II, 1-12)

Introduction

The miracle of the wedding feast at Cana is the first miracle accomplished by the Lord, and it

The miracle of the wedding feast at Cana is the first performed by Jesus, and it happened at the exhortation of his Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. For this reason it has a particular importance and it is full of spiritual meanings and hidden mysteries.

happened at the instigation of his Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. For this reason it has a particular importance, and it is full of spiritual meanings and hidden mysteries. At Cana, Jesus begins His public life, manifesting His divinity to mankind, His absolute power over matter, and it is thanks to this first miracle - the Gospel tells us - that *His disciples believed in him*, that is, they began to believe in Him. Cana is the beginning! His miracles begin, His Passion which will end on Calvary, begins, and all of this begins with the intervention of Mary, his Mother, who says “*They have no more wine...*” ; for which Jesus decides to perform His first miracle. Mary’s role as Coredemptrix of mankind stands out clearly in this mystery of the wedding feast at Cana; she, by her prayer, encourages the Son of God to act even if

The wedding feast at Cana (illustration by Gustave Doré)



“*His hour had not yet come*”: the miracle took place then, by Madonna’s intercession. In this article we will try to provide a good exegesis of this beautiful passage of the Gospel, basing it always on the Fathers of the Church and on orthodox authors, and by following them, and to see then the role of Mary as the channel of graces and the mediatrix of the human race.

St. Thomas Aquinas points out that it is here that Christ shows His dominion “over nature by the fact that He changed water into wine as a sign, both to strengthen His disciples, and to benefit the crowd, so that they would believe in Him. In this passage, three things are specified: first, the wedding is remembered; second, those present are indicated: “*the mother of Jesus was there*”; third, the miracle He performed is described “*when the wine ran out.*”⁽¹⁾

Explanation of the Gospel

The preparation

- *Cana in Galilee.* Abbot Ricciotti speaks of the place: “The Cana usually visited today in Palestine is Kefr Kenna, which is about six miles northwest of Nazareth along the highway traveling toward Tiberias and Capharnaum, while in Jesus’ time, the distance between this Cana and Nazareth was two or three miles shorter. But in ancient times there was another Cana, today a field of ruins called Kirbet Qana, lying about ten miles north of Nazareth. Archeologists are still debating which of these two places is the Cana of the fourth Gospel. There are good, though not conclusive arguments for both, and the written accounts of early visitors to the town may be applied indifferently to one or the other. The question, therefore, is still unresolved, but on the other hand, it is not essential to resolve it.”⁽²⁾

- *There was a wedding.* Our Lord is invited to this wedding. Venerable Bede tells us: “His coming to the wedding, contains yet another confirmation to our faith, and demonstrates how condemnable was the error of Tatian and Marcion and the other detractors of marriage. If there had

been any fault in the wedding bed, or a wedding celebrated with due chastity, the Lord would not have wanted in any way to assist at the wedding feast. But if conjugal chastity is good, better is the continence of widows, and best of all is perfect virginity, and to prove to all these degrees of election, He deigned to be born from the womb of the Virgin Mary; as soon as He was born He received the prophetic blessing from the widow Anna, and in His youth He honored, with His presence full of high virtue, the wedding to which he was invited.”⁽³⁾ “The wedding at Cana was the Jewish ceremony of the *nissuin*. The feast which accompanied it was certainly the most solemn occasion in the whole life of those poor folk in the lower or even the middle classes, and it could last for several days. When the bride emerged amidst the industrious ministrations of her relatives and friends, she was decked in gay and elegant finery. She wore a crown on her head, her face was made up and her eyes were bright with collyrium. Her hair and nails were painted, and she was laden with necklaces, bracelets, and other jewels which, for the most part, were either counterfeit or borrowed. The groom, also wearing a crown and surrounded by ‘friends of the groom’, went in the evening to lead his bride from her home to his. She was waiting for him surrounded by her friends, who carried lamps and cheered the groom when he arrived. All went in procession to the groom’s house, the whole town joining in with lamps, music, singing, dancing, and all the noise of merriment. The feast was held in the home of the groom, and there were songs and speeches filled with good wishes and sometimes not entirely free from suggestive allusions, especially when the dinner was well along and the guests were all more or less tipsy. In fact, the wine was unstinted, and the drinking hearty, it being so rare an occasion for people who all year long led a spare and drudging existence. The wine they drank was special, set aside a long time prior and especially saved for this feast. You may still see rows of mysterious earthen vessels in a dark corner of an Arab house today, and the head of the family will tell you with an air of great compunction that they cannot be

touched because the wine in them is for weddings. After all, one reads in Sacred Scripture that wine gladdens the heart of man, and those good people were going to obey the Scriptures, at least in the gladness of the wedding feast.”⁽⁴⁾

- *The mother of Jesus was there.* Mary’s participation at this wedding is a foundational element, since it is due to her presence that Jesus was invited, and by whom He was asked to perform his first miracle. “How did she decide to go there? A prior understanding with Jesus is hardly admissible. For about two months He had no interaction with her, since, after having descended into the Jordan Valley, He had withdrawn into the solitude of the desert. This participation of Mary in the wedding party therefore appears to be her personal decision. Even the evangelist insinuates this by writing, before saying any words about Jesus, the simple phrase: ‘and the mother of Jesus was there’. (...) At the wedding at Cana, among all her notes of charity towards others, her humility and delicacy stood out, since she presumably went – as supported by the authoritative and confident behavior she exhibited on the occasion, and which the very expression ‘*was there*’ suggest – not only to offer the gift of her presence, but also to help in the long preparations for the banquet. It was therefore an intervention and a help, not strictly of necessity, but of delicacy - towards relatives or friends we do not know - a typical expression of her humble and sweet charity. Grandiose and unexpected supernatural events took place, almost as a reward for it. (...) Mary’s emerging position, with respect to Jesus, in that family is then also demonstrated by her relationship with the servants. It is, in fact, Mary who will give the order to obey Jesus in what He tells them, thereby demonstrating that, unlike her, the Divine Master did not enjoy that confidence that would have permitted Him to give them commands with certainty.”⁽⁵⁾ The objective dependence upon the presence of His mother is clear even from the circumstances themselves. Jesus returned after many weeks of absence, He goes to find his mother (who was alone after the death of Saint Joseph) at Cana, not

having found her at Nazareth, and therefore He would not have gone to that wedding had she not been there. Father Roschini acutely points out that “Jesus and Mary, in the eternal, divine plan, are always and inextricably linked. Where the one is, the other must be: where Mary goes, early or late Jesus arrives too. He will use this occasion, foreseen and prepared *ab aeterno*, to sanctify humanity in its primitive state and make its glory to the Son of God resplendent, united with Mary, with an amazing miracle, the first in a very long series.”⁽⁶⁾

- “*Jesus was invited to the wedding, as were his disciples.*” We note that when the couple saw Mary’s son (whom they probably already knew and loved due to the intimacy of the two families) they immediately invited Him along with his disciples. But, as always, there is a deeper mystical meaning in all this. Saint Augustine says, on His presence at that wedding: “What wonder if He came to that house to a marriage, having come into this world to a marriage. Thus here He has a bride, which he has redeemed with His own blood, who was united in the womb of the Virgin Mary, to whom he has given the Holy Spirit as his pledge. For the Word was the bridegroom, and human flesh the bride, and both form the same Son of God, the same Son of man. The womb of the Virgin Mary, in which He became head of the Church, was his bridal chamber.”⁽⁶⁾ And St. Thomas: “Christ desired to participate in the wedding feast for two reasons. First, to give us an example of humility: not having regard to His dignity; but ‘He who did not disdain to take the form of a servant,’ says Chrysostom, ‘was not ashamed to be present at the wedding of servants.’ Hence the words of St. Augustine, ‘let man be ashamed of his pride, that God became humble.’ Second, to reject the errors of those who condemn marriage. (...) In a mystical sense, we take note that the mother of Jesus, that is the Blessed Virgin, intervenes in the spiritual marriage of souls as a conciliatory intermediary; because souls are united to Christ with grace through her intercession, in accordance with the application of that passage from Ecclesiasticus (24, 25) that the liturgy makes to her ‘*in me is all hope of life and*

virtue'. The disciples, rather, have the function of matchmakers, uniting the Church to Christ, of which function one of them speaks thus (2 Cor. 11, 2): *'I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ'*"

The dialogue between Mary and Jesus

- *"They have no more wine."*

Here two things must be considered: the fact that the Virgin Mary solicits Jesus to perform a miracle and why He did it, and then the kind of miracle that was requested of Him. Ricciotti writes: "Like a good mother and housewife, she was probably helping the other women to see that everything went as it should, that the food and all the many other things required in such a special occasion were ready when needed. But toward the end of the dinner, either because the host had miscalculated, or because unexpected guests had arrived, the wine, the most important thing of all, began to run short. The good housewives serving it were in great consternation; it was a disgrace for the family whose feast it was. The guests would not be sparing in their protests or their jibes, and the festivities would come to an abrupt and ignominious end, as when all the lights to a theater suddenly go out at the climax of a play. Mary immediately noticed the situation and foresaw the pained embarrassment of her hosts. To her spirit the presence of her Rabbi son said many things to her that it did not say to others; above all she associated His presence with the prediction she had made in her solitude at Nazareth. Had not His hour come? Governed by these thoughts, Mary, amidst the general distressed confusion that could barely be concealed, softly said to Jesus: *'They have no wine'*." ⁽⁹⁾ Saint Thomas asks why the Virgin had not requested Christ to perform a miracle until then; "the reason is in the fact that Christ behaved like everyone else, so she had abstained from asking for a miracle, as it did not seem to her to be the right time. Now instead, after the declarations of John and the conversion of the first disciples, she confidently exhorts Christ to



Father Gabriel Roschini,
Of the Servants of Mary

perform miracles, in this way taking up the robes of the Synagogue, which is also a mother of Christ. The Jews in fact had a system of asking for miracles." There are, in Mary's three words *"vinum non habent"* ⁽¹⁰⁾ the marvelous characteristics of her heart and mind, that reveal themselves to those who attentively meditate upon them. Take note that Mary had to break her custom, lasting for so many years, of not asking Jesus for miracles; it was an intervention in something strictly divine, a sort of placing oneself before the will of God, leveraging the fact that He was also her son, anticipating an event over which Divine Providence was watching. Landucci speaks of the Madonna's "suppliant omnipotence": "she asked only what she knew she could obtain, if Jesus desired it. And this faith of hers was great, because it was Jesus' first miracle. All of Mary's ardor and strength can be seen in the development and the result of their great conversation: the omnipotent ardor of impetration. Supplicating omnipotence will maternally triumph."

"There is no doubt of Mary's intention to obtain a miracle - Landucci says - which is implicit in her request. What other means would Jesus have had, so suddenly, and in his poverty, to remedy the deficiency she pointed out to him? Moreover, it appears from His solemn response that he understood it in this way, and if He understood it thus, so it was. Considering the miracle itself, we are at first glance astonished at Mary's request for it, and at Jesus' granting of it. The particular reason, hypothetically proposed by some, that the cause of the deficiency itself was due to the unexpected arrival of Jesus and his disciples, or, as seen by the Fathers and

commentators, its particularly symbolic Eucharistic meanings, do not detract from the singular importance of the miracle. (...) And yet Mary's sweetness of heart now shines anew, precisely because of the object of the requested miracle. It is a request that arose spontaneously from the charitable dispositions that had prompted Our Lady to go to Cana, aimed precisely at accomplishing the delicacies of charity itself, rather than the substance of it: this is a sign of its greatness, because when such delicacies are true, charity is solid and true. The tenderness of love, in fact, is not only directed to what is strictly necessary, but seeks to meet the further desires of the loved one: indeed, only by this can the fineness of a heart be judged". ⁽¹¹⁾ These were dispositions of Mary's heart that could not render her insensible to the humiliating deficiency of those poor spouses. The same characteristic of Mary's heart is found in the Divine Heart of Jesus, the infinite font of mercy: since He consents to perform the miracle on an object, secondary in itself, He reveals in turn the same qualities of this charity, that is, tenderness and delicacy. Roschini writes: "they had no wine. It is a masterpiece of prayer. Only three words! Why - Mary must have thought - spend so many words when He to whom she addressed the prayer already knew everything? From those three words, Mary's entire soul shines through. Her unshakeable faith in the omnipotence of His heart shines through; her limitless trust in the inexhaustible goodness of His heart shines through; all her enchanting simplicity and her sobriety in speaking shines through, since she limits herself to simply expounding to Jesus, without one word more, the needs of the spouses; above all, her merciful maternal charity shines through in favor of those who are struggling with indigence and pain. With those three words, she was asking indirectly, although in the most delicate and discreet way, for a miracle." ⁽¹²⁾

And Jesus answered: "Woman, what is that to me and to thee?"

"All Catholic interpreters agree in recognizing that there is nothing harsh,

unbecoming or dishonorable for Mary in Christ calling her 'woman' and not 'mother'. In fact, Jesus uses this word six times in the Gospel (Luke 2:34; 13:12; John 8:10; 4:21; 20:15; 19:26; Matthew 15:28), both to sympathize (with the Samaritan woman and the adulteress), to heal (as with the woman healed in the Synagogue), to praise (as with the Canaanite woman, full of faith), and to console (as with the Magdalene, just after He had risen). Now, in all these cases, the word 'woman' never presents even a shadow of contempt or harshness. Indeed, even on Calvary, in the very act of recommending His beloved mother to Saint John, He will call her not 'mother' but 'woman'. That 'woman' is equivalent to 'My Lady' of our fourteenth century. The Greek tragedians themselves used the appellation 'woman' to have their heroes address princesses and queens. It is therefore an honorific appellation. One may however ask: why during his public life did Jesus call Mary by the name of 'woman' rather than by the name of 'mother'? He did it, evidently, for didactic purposes, that is, to teach by example, as well as by words, detachment from all that is human and that can constitute an impediment on the path of virtue and the apostolate (Luke, 14, 26; Matthew, 10, 3-5)." ⁽¹³⁾

"Jesus spoke these words in Aramaic and they must be interpreted according to their meaning in that language. In the first place 'woman' was a title of respect, something like (my) lady in fourteenth-century Italian [or the English '(mi)lady']. A son ordinarily called the woman who had borne him 'mother', but in special circumstances he might show her greater reverence by calling her 'woman'. Jesus calls his mother 'woman' once again as he hangs from the cross (John 19:26)" ⁽¹⁴⁾

But let us come to that famous "quid mihi et tibi...?" (τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί) of Jesus' response, the value of which, it must be emphasized, very much depends on the circumstances, the gestures, the tone of voice...things that we cannot know from the evangelical context today. An introduction into the correct sense of the semitic language (pronounced in aramaic) might be this: "why are

you telling me this?”. Catholic interpreters who generally agree in giving an honorific sense to the word “woman” are divided, Roschini points out, when it comes to determining the meaning of the phrase.

Roschini, so as to give a correct meaning to this sentence, discusses it at length, citing, first, all the various interpretations of the Fathers and authors who see in it either a reproach or an assent. Since it is a very learned and acute analysis, I feel I should embrace it in its entirety. “Before making a pronouncement, we first of all believe it is indispensable to establish some criteria that should be accepted by all and upon which any respected solution must be based. These criteria, according to our modest way of viewing them, are the following:

1) The rapid paced Johannine account of the first miracle must be considered as a whole, in its entirety, in the intimate concatenation of words, ideas and facts, and not just in some of its passages or some of its details. Considered all together, it appears to us as an organically compact whole, in a clear, and not just random, succession and concatenation of causes and effects. The Evangelist, Mary’s greatly favored son - and this particular circumstance must also be kept in mind - means to recount the first miracle through which Jesus desired to manifest His glory and which was the cause of faith for His first disciples. There was, in this miracle, Mary’s intervention. The whole account, therefore - as St. Thomas already noted - is reduced to three parts: ‘Something of the miracle belongs to the Mother, something to Christ and something to the disciples... The Mother procures the miracle; Christ works it... and the disciples render its testimony...’ In Saint John’s narration all of this is marvelously connected, with a singular sobriety of words and details, reduced to what is purely essential. The fact that the miracle happened following Mary’s intervention, then, is not a logical sophism (*post hoc, ergo propter hoc*), but is a logical as well as an ontological concatenation of facts; developments of cause and effects which did not take place by chance, but in an intimate relation of cause and effect. Mary’s

intervention (the first part) causes Christ’s intervention (the second part); and the intervention of Christ causes the faith of his disciples (the third part). Not taking account of this first criterion was - it seems to us - the cause of some incorrect or even very strange interpretations, primary among all of them are those who deny the Virgin’s intention to ask her Son for a miraculous intervention, and then those who support a certain amount of time between her request (together with the order she gave to the servants) and the miracle of transformation of water into wine.

2) A second criterion: the two phrases that make up Christ’s response (that is, ‘*What is it to me and to thee, O woman*’, and ‘*My hour is not yet come*’) should be considered as connected and correlated, and not separated. The second phrase in fact (‘*not yet come...*’), gives reason to the first (‘*What is it...*’). Just as these harmonize among themselves, all interpretations must harmonize with each other. Therefore, all those interpretations that insist almost exclusively on one or the other of these two phrases, without worrying excessively about their perfect harmonization, must be discarded.

3) A third criterion consists in recognizing that the question that interests us is an eminently philological question, since it deals with a purely semitic expression. Therefore it must be interpreted according to the language and mentality of the semites, and not according to ours. In fact, it is well known that certain idiomatic expressions, certain idioms, cannot be translated into other languages. It requires, therefore - as Ricciotti rightly observes - ‘an understanding of the semitic language, which instead is often not known to interpreters’.

4) A fourth criterion consists in honestly recognizing that the first of the two aforementioned phrases (that is, the words: ‘*What is it to me and to thee, O woman*’) interpreted simply - according to the preceding criterion - does express a certain opposition.

Such a way of saying it (‘*What is it to me and to thee*’) might indicate consent or opposition according to the context. In our case, it seems to



Mons. Piercarlo
Landucci

indicate opposition, as a result of the second phrase of Christ's response ('*My hour is not yet come*'). In fact, with this phrase the reason for that opposition is indicated, that certain disagreement with what was expressed in the first phrase '*What is it to me and to thee*'.

5) A fifth criterion - which also seems indisputable - is this: the best interpreter of the Son's response was undoubtedly the Mother, incomparably better than any other interpreter who has ever arisen or can ever arise on earth. No interpreter, in fact, has had or will ever have the intelligence and penetration that Mary had. Furthermore: any interpreter, reaching to grasp the true meaning of the words of Christ, has no other means than the dead word that the Evangelist put to paper, perhaps in an excessively synthetic and incomplete way. On the contrary, to reach and grasp the meaning of the Christ's words, Most Holy Mary had something alive: the living voice, the living gesture, the living look, the living smile, the living word of Jesus, which had to express what He intended to say in a way more than sufficiently clear, perhaps more abundant than what John reported.

Given that the best interpreter of Christ's answer is Mary, we believe that the surest way to understand such an answer in its true sense is precisely to take Mary as a guide, that is, to understand the answer as she understood it. **How did Mary understand that answer? It must immediately be said: she did not understand it as a rebuke (whether real or apparent), not as a refusal (not even an initial one); nor did she understand it as a full assent, without any opposition of any kind; but she understood it as an assent following a certain opposition or**

dissent, caused not by the person asking but by the thing requested, for the simple fact that it would not have been the time to grant it: opposition and dissent are immediately overcome, however, in view of the one who had begged for it. Let us explain better.

1) The Most Holy Virgin, first of all, did not take the words of Christ as a reproach or a censure, at least not a real one. How could He have reproached or censured with words She whom He immediately honors with deeds, in such a sensational way? Furthermore, reprimand or blame supposes guilt. But what guilt could be found in the words of Mary, so modest, so measured, so discreet? Therefore, excluding any guilt from the words, could one perhaps infer it from her intention, as Chrysostom had done? But such an intention, in order to support it, must be proven. Chrysostom then - according to St. Thomas - erred, 'overstepped his bounds' in writing those things (S.T., P. III, q. 27, a. 4, ad 3). It should also be noted that Chrysostom himself proposes his interpretation using the doubtful form ('perhaps'): a clear sign that he did not feel very sure. He himself, then, hastens to say that Jesus respected his Mother so much: proof of this was even the reproach he had addressed to her, since he wanted her to be completely holy; He had wanted to express himself in this way for the instruction of those present, so that they would not believe him to be an ordinary son; He had spoken in that way also so that the miracle would not be suspect, thinking it better to wait until those interested had felt the need for it themselves, etc., etc. What is most relevant to our case is above all the conclusion reached by the Holy Doctor, namely that Jesus performed the miracle of Cana out of consideration for his Mother, that is, on the one hand, so as not to humiliate her before those at the table, and on the other, so as not to disappoint the confidence of her prayer. The true reason that prompted Mary on behalf of the spouses to turn to Jesus was his exquisite mercy. Saint Bernard detected it very well: 'Like his mother, Jesus charitably took part in the embarrassment of the spouses; since she, a spouse, a mother, has

sympathy, through experience, for these unforeseen events of domestic life; and finally she entered, along with her only begotten Son and His disciples, to take very notable part among the guests who were the cause of such embarrassment.' 'How, moreover,' Saint Bernard observes, 'could the Mother of Jesus not have been touched by sympathy and compassion? What could have come from the source of mercy, if not mercy? Does not the hand that has held a fruit for half a day retain its good smell for the rest of the day? How then could mercy not have filled Mary with virtue, in the womb which she had reposed for a good nine months? All the more so since it had filled her soul before it had filled her womb, and when she left the womb, it did not withdraw from her soul.'

Today such an interpretation must certainly be discarded, for the simple reason that the Blessed Virgin - as defined by the Council of Trent - was immune to any actual guilt, since this is the sentiment of the Church. Therefore, having been excluded from any guilt, one must exclude giving reason for any blame or reproof.

Furthermore: if the Madonna had perceived a reproach or a blame in Christ's words, would she have dared to turn to the servants and command them to obey Him? And, would Christ have rewarded this second fault, or at least this petulance, with a miracle?... We cannot, then, speak of any real reproach or fault. But it seems to me that we can neither speak of it as an apparent reproach, that is, one intended to instruct others, since it would have been imparted in a way that was too obscure, too difficult for the hearers at that time to understand, in the same way as it has been difficult for the listeners of the following centuries up to today to understand. From the words that Christ used - if they had had the appearance of a reproach - those guests, those simple people, would have more easily inferred a reproach to the Virgin instead of any instruction from them, a teaching - which the aforementioned authors would have us draw from the words of Christ - being far too superior to their intellectual capacity. One can also observe that, in all probability,

Mary's question and Christ's corresponding answer took place in secret or in a whisper (in the ear) to avoid making public what was a painful fact. All the solicitude of Mary and Jesus, in fact, was aimed at preventing the spouses' embarrassment and not remedying it. It must, therefore, have been a conversation between Mother and Son, in secret, without anyone else hearing. And if this was the case - as is very probable - what finally can be made of Christ's didactic response? We've excluded, then, any idea of reproach on the part of Christ, both real or apparent. But let's go further.

2) The Blessed Virgin, moreover, did not in fact interpret Christ's response as a refusal. After all, how could the reigning Omnipotence have said 'no' to the 'supplicant' Omnipotence? If Mary had interpreted those words, practically, as a refusal, would she then have continued by immediately setting the servants in motion? And would Jesus have rewarded such insistence with a miracle? Therefore, there must have been, in Christ's words and in his gestures, something that could not have given the impression of a refusal at all. The version '*What is there in common between you and me, O woman?*' must therefore be discarded; just as with this other one: '*Why do you concern yourself with my mission?*'. Christ would never have addressed such words to Mary. Listen to Saint Bernard: '*Quid mihi et tibi est, mulier?* That is, what do You and She have in common, O Lord?... But is it not perhaps the very thing which exists between a son and his mother?... You ask what is there in common between You and Her!... But are not You the blessed fruit of Her immaculate womb? Was it not She who conceived You without detriment to Her modesty and brought You into the world while remaining a virgin? Did You not dwell in Her womb for nine months? Did You not perhaps nourish yourself with Her virginal milk? Was it not to Her, as a boy of 12 years old, that You came down from Jerusalem to live in submission to Her? Then, Lord, why do You afflict her now, saying to her: What is there in common between you and me? But very much, and under every aspect!... Thus I clearly see that it

was not with an indignant manner, nor to confound the timid tenderness of the Virgin, your Mother, that You said to her: What is that to you and to me, O woman?, since behold, seeing the servants approaching who were induced to do so by Your Mother, You wasted no time in doing what She had suggested of You.’ In short: asking what there was in common between Jesus and Mary would be like asking what there was in common between a son and his mother, between the new Adam and the new Eve, between the Redeptor and the Co-redemptrix, indissolubly united in all works, that is, in the mission of the salvation of the world, common to both. Would such questions have been any less false then, than they are now?..

3) Having then discarded all the interpretations which presuppose a reproach or a censure, both real and apparent, or a real rejection, at least initially, the choice is between those who support a certain opposition and those who exclude it altogether. We - and let us say this from the start - are for those interpretations that presuppose a certain opposition. Such opposition, in fact, is required of itself - as we have already proven - by the idiomatic expression: *‘What (is) it to me and to thee, o woman?’*, whatever the particular reason or nature of it is or may be. In our case, therefore, the context requires that this expression be rendered: **Why are you saying this to me?** The opposition or dissent, in that case, would have arisen not because of the person of the Mother who asked for the miracle, but because of the hour in which she asked for it: that would not have been the solemn hour eternally established by the Father to begin the miracles and His glorification - at a wedding banquet - had not the prayer and mediation of Mary intervened: the prayer and mediation desired and arranged by God meant to glorify, together with the Son, also the Mother, as Redeptor and Co-redemptrix. It was not then a question of the hour or moment for His public mission (which had already begun with Christ’s baptism), but the hour or moment for His first miracle, an hour which, by the grace of Mary, was anticipated.

To better understand this, Christ uttered those words which had a color of opposition to



The wedding feast at Cana (painting by Bernardino Luini)

them. From what we have said, everyone can easily understand our thoughts about the sentence, which claims to eliminate from Christ's response any kind of opposition by placing a question mark (instead of a period) after the words of Jesus: “My hour has not yet come.” What is obvious, in fact, is that it cannot be said that such a meaning is at all obvious. A meaning that is said to be, and should be, obvious is one that is instinctively understood always and by everyone. Now, such an (interrogative) meaning was not always understood, not by everyone; indeed, one can say almost never and by practically no one. The very fact is that all copyists have always reported in the text a full stop instead of a question mark; and what’s more, the very fact that all the Fathers (except St. Gregory of Nyssa) and all the interpreters of today (with very few exceptions) have interpreted the words of Christ in an affirmative sense and not in an interrogative sense, is a clear sign that this positive sense was the obvious sense always understood by everyone as if by instinct. The improbability of the interrogative sense increases if one reflects on the fact that the sentence immediately preceding it (*‘What is it to me and to thee’*) always had - as we have already proven - a common sense of a certain opposition: justified opposition, naturally, from the fact that it was not yet His time, or better, would not have

been his time had not Mary intervened with her prayer. Even if the aforementioned idiomatic sentence was translated - like the supporters of the question mark would like - as 'Leave me to do it', it still does not exclude a certain opposition, albeit reduced to its minimum terms, since it would be more or less like saying '*It's not up to you to provide*'. Finally, the famous question mark: if it eliminates any kind of opposition from the words of Christ in regard to those of Mary, it also eliminates any real and causal influence of Mary in Christ's first miracle. Mary's entire influence would be reduced to a truly occasional influence, since that first miracle was performed by Christ only in view of, and in consideration for, the intervention of Mary who asked it of Him, so as to glorify not only Himself, but also his Mother.

All other interpretations excluding any opposition do not, we believe, need specific refutation. They refute themselves - it seems to us - because, being so far distanced from the text, they cannot even be close to the truth. Therefore, following Jesus' answer, Mary turned to the servants and said to them: *Do whatever He tells you!*"⁽¹⁵⁾

Even Abbot Ricciotti goes in the same direction as Father Roschini: "More characteristic is the other expression, '*what [is that] to me and to thee . . . ?*' certainly an equivalent for the underlying Hebrew expression *mahlz wal (ak)* which occurs several times in the Bible... In short, it was an elliptic phrase which asked why two parties should have become involved in a discussion, an action, or whatever. With this answer, Jesus declined Mary's invitation and gave as His reason the fact that His hour had not yet come. Hence in Mary's simple words '*they have no wine*' (if, in fact that was all Mary said) there was a hidden request to perform a miracle, and the purpose of the request was evident from the situation itself and especially from the unspoken thinking and motherly visage of the one who made it. Jesus was aware of all this but He refused, just as in the Temple he had refused to subordinate His presence in the house of his heavenly Father to His membership in an earthly family. The time had not

yet come to prove with miracles the authenticity of His mission, for the time of His Precursor, John, was not yet ended. But the conversation between Mary and Jesus was not over. In fact, its most important words were never spoken except in an exchange of glances. Just as in the Temple after his earlier refusal, Jesus obeyed His mother immediately and left the house of His heavenly Father, so after this refusal, too, He proceeded to grant her request. In the mute dialogue which followed the spoken one, Mary was assured of her son's consent. So without wasting any time she turned to the servants and said: *Do whatever he tells you!*"⁽¹⁴⁾

- "*Do whatever he tells you!*"

Saint Thomas writes: "His mother, however, even in the face of being repelled, did not doubt the mercy of her Son; and as a consequence gave this instruction to the servants, and precisely in this counsel there consists the perfection of justice. In fact, perfect justice consists in obedience to Christ in everything."⁽¹⁶⁾

Fr. Pier Carlo Landucci, after having spoken of Mary's supplicant omnipotence, underlines her triumphal insistence on this occasion. "What is meant by this command that she gives, in apparent contradiction with Jesus' denial? First of all, what must be excluded is the implication of certainty that the miracle will be carried out (...). In fact, it is enough to consider the generality of the expression '*whatever he tells you*'. According to the common language, in addition to leaving the nature of possible orders undetermined, it also leaves indeterminate whether any orders at all will come, limiting herself to calling the servants to obedience 'for any eventuality': it is an expression that implies an obvious reservation regarding those hypothetical orders: 'if they are given to you'. The admission of such an eventuality by Mary, implies however that she had understood that it was not an absolute divine will, and that she hoped to change it (to use the usual anthropomorphic expression, which must not be misunderstood) according to her desire, so confidently as to prepare the servants to carry out

the corresponding orders. And so we certainly have, in that persistent, confident desire, the *interior* element of the ‘further impetration’ that we have been looking for. But in the words spoken to the servants, since they were also heard by Jesus, there was also clearly the appropriate, however implicit, manifestation of the desire itself, that is, its *exterior* element and therefore the full reality of the insistent supplication. This is easy to clarify with an example: if a poor man who, when begging for alms, is denied, and in response he stretches out his hand preparing to receive it, this gesture cannot be interpreted other than as a confident insistence. This is how Jesus must have interpreted Mary’s words to the servants, by which, despite the first denial, she prepared them to receive His miraculous orders. There is therefore no need to suppose other discourses: those same words of Mary are the clear expression of her insistence which transformed, so to speak, the heart of the Father and correspondingly the heart of Jesus. To give them the external character of a renewed supplication, it can be assumed that they were pronounced in such a way as to be understood by Jesus himself: this however is not necessary, because He had read her heart.”⁽¹⁷⁾

The Miracle

- *“Now there were set there six stone jars, according to the manner of the Jewish purification, containing two or three measures apiece.”*

These stone jars contained about 3 Jewish measures (39 liters), altogether making roughly 600 liters of water, which was to serve for the traditional purification and absolution of the Jews, necessary for that banquet with so many invitees. The water had already been drawn in quantity, therefore the Gospel clarifies that Jesus had them filled first and then brought to the table. St. John Chrysostom points out that the jars were used for purification and not for wine, so that it would not be believed that there was a sediment of wine that when mixed gave the water a wine flavoring. The

water for purification was very clean, so as to remove any doubt about the miracle. It was thus evident that only the power of God could have transformed it into wine.

Saint Thomas tells us that in a mystical sense the six jars of wine are meant to signify the six epochs of the Old Testament during which man prepared to receive the divine Scriptures. The specification “2 or 3 measures”, according to Saint Augustine, would refer to the Trinity of three divine persons: three because at times the persons are represented explicitly in Scripture, sometimes, instead, only two are made explicit: the Father and the Son since within them is implied the person of the Holy Ghost, who is like the nexus between the two. “Or one can say that those measures were two, because two were the (religious) conditions of men, Jews and gentiles, among whom the Church was to expand. But they were three in correspondence with the three sons of Noah, from whom the human race was propagated after the flood.” St. Thomas also explains that the reason why this miracle was not performed from nothing, but rather from pre-existing matter is due to the fact that producing something from nothing is, of itself, a greater and more wonderful thing than producing something from pre-existing matter; but for many, it is not as evident and credible. Therefore, wanting to make credible what he was doing, Christ made wine from water to accommodate the capacity of men. There is also a mystical explanation: Christ did not want to produce wine from nothing but from water, to show that he was not teaching a completely new doctrine, condemning the old; but he wanted to perfect the old; as we read *“I have not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it.”* (Matt. 5, 17)

Controversy about the Miracle

- *“And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence*

it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water.”

“Everything happened in a few minutes, even before the chief steward noticed the women’s discomfiture and realized there was no more wine; Mary’s discretion had also prevented the spread of a family scandal. When the chief steward saw a new kind of wine before him, and tasted it, as was his duty, he was astonished, so much so that he forgot his elevated position and spoke with the frankness of a commoner: *Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now!* (John 2, 10). The words of the chief steward do not allude to some current custom, which is not attested to us by any ancient document; they are intended rather as a witty compliment, which points out how unexpected that ambrosia was at the end of the meal, and in such quantity. But, at those words, the groom likely searched the chief steward’s face, wondering if he was not the most tipsy of all: he, the groom, had never dreamed of saving that surprise of the best wine for the end of the meal. A few questions addressed to the servants and to the women directed their investigation to Mary and then to Jesus, and everything was explained. Thus with this first miracle, says John, *Jesus manifested his glory and his disciples believed in him.* This is not surprising, if one thinks of the enthusiasm that his few disciples already had for Jesus. But what impression would the miracle have produced on the guests? Once the fumes of the banquet had dissipated and the taste of that mysterious wine had been forgotten, would they have thought again about the moral significance of what happened?”

(18)

We note then how faith in Christ began the conquest of the world, and how none of it happened without the cooperation of Mary, his mother, the indivisible Co-redemptrix, with him in Cana as she was in Bethlehem, on Calvary, and in heaven. As Saint Maximus of Turin comments: “The disciples believed, not in what they saw was



Abbott Giuseppe Ricciotti,
Of the Lateran Canons

happening, but in what their corporeal senses could not see. They believed not because Jesus was the son of the Virgin, which they already knew, but that he was the only begotten Son of the Most High, since he had demonstrated it with his works. Therefore, we too, brothers, believe he is the Son of God, whom we confess to be the Son of man. We believe that he participates in our nature, is equal to the paternal substance, since he took part in the wedding as man, but changed the water into wine as God. Our Lord, in proportion to this faith, will favor us in granting the sober wine of his grace”; and St. Cyril of Jerusalem: “Do we find it credible that at Cana in Galilee he changed water into wine – wine is like blood – and will we have difficulty in believing that he changed the wine into Blood? If, when invited to the wedding, he then performed such a sensational miracle, should we not confess with even greater reason that he wanted to give the children of his nuptial chamber (see Mt. 9:15) the enjoyment of his body and his blood?” (19)

- “*Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now.*”

Saint Thomas takes note by quoting Chrysostom that “All the miracles of Christ were most perfect: Peter’s mother-in-law for example was perfectly healed to the point that she immediately arose and began to serve. Just like the paralytic who took up his bed and went to his house. This is also evident in this miracle; since from water Jesus produces not just any wine, but

the best possible”⁽²⁰⁾ as the observation of the chief steward makes clear.

Mary’s Co-redemption in the wedding feast at Cana

On the question of the role that Mary played in the work of Redemption of the human race and consequently of her title of Co-redemptrix, Bishop Guérard des Lauriers wrote some beautiful passages in which he draws inspiration from the miracle of Cana to conclude the doctrine of Co-Redemption. “Thus, the first title, by which Mary is Queen, is because she is the Mother of God, the Mother of the God who is our Lord, and the Mother of Jesus Christ who is King of Kings, therefore she is Queen. The second title comes from Redemption; it is where we get the concept of Co-Redemption. Jesus is King by conquest, Mary, who is assimilated to Him and who is His partner, will also be so with Him, analogically to Him.”⁽²¹⁾ Here, Father Guérard examines the mystery of Cana. This is what he writes: “The Blessed Virgin, at the moment of the miracle of Cana, invites Jesus to perform the act that will, in some way, begin the Redemption since this first miracle involves Jesus’ confrontation with his adversaries. And Mary knows that it is precisely in this optic, in the inspiration that comes to her from the Wisdom of God itself, that the Blessed Virgin invites Our Lord to come to the aid of the embarrassed guests; beneath this modest service of fraternal charity, there is a greater design: that of the Redemption. This is why between the hour of Cana, and the hour of His agony, the hour of the Cross, there is a profound correspondence, it is, ultimately, the same hour. This is why, at Cana, Jesus says that His hour had not yet come, and yet it begins to come, since, with Mary’s prayer, He performed the miracle which set Him on the path toward the decisive hour of the Redemption. The Blessed Virgin acts at Cana from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and she owes this inspiration evidently to the very impulse of Jesus. Jesus, in His superior nature, knows what to do, but in His inferior will He seems to

deliberate, in such a way that the fullness of His operative power is not found except through the mediation of the Blessed Virgin, in whom He inspired the prayer which He moreover answers. In the act of Jesus granting the miracle and thus beginning the Redemption, we find an economy exactly similar to that concerning the mystery of the Incarnation: Mary’s operation is integrated into the bosom of the divine operation to which it is entirely subordinate. Mary is absolutely not an autonomous cause. The generative operation cannot be prior to the assuming operation of the Word. Mary does not act, and does not produce, except under the present and concomitant impulse of God; in the same way at Cana, the audacity of her prayer is explained only because the Holy Virgin knows the plan of the Wisdom of God and she finds herself moved interiorly by the very will of Jesus. But this act of the Holy Virgin, although dependent and subordinate in a sense, is also an act that occupies its very precise and necessary place in the divine economy. If Mary had not given birth to the humanity that the Word was to assume, there would have been no Incarnation; without Mary’s prayer at Cana, while it cannot be said that the Redemption would not have been accomplished, it would have been deferred; so that Mary’s intervention did have, in a certain way, an autonomy relative to the exterior order of execution, but an autonomy subordinated to the internal inspiration that comes from the Divine depths. And thus the Blessed Virgin is constituted Co-redemptrix in this way: her redemptive will is

The wedding feast at Cana (painting by Paolo Veronese)



integrated in the redeeming will of Jesus himself; there is not a Redeemer and then a redemptrix, one before the other, but a Co-Redemptrix integrated to the same being of the Redeemer, as the Redeemer. It is the same economy of the Incarnation.”⁽²²⁾

Mons. Pier Carlo Landucci gives an interpretation which is quite close to that of Bishop M.L. Guérard des Lauriers: “But let us not think, however, that the need for insistence devalues the Divine Mother’s power of impetration. Rather, it only demonstrates the difficulty of the request, and the greatness of the victory achieved. On the other hand, the Virgin’s supplication could not fail to be clothed with the characteristic note of impetration which, according to the word of Jesus, is quite precisely insistence. *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you* (Mt. 7, 7). Ultimately, if we ask ourselves what led us, in terms of consequences, to ask the question, it is easy to answer, with one word. Love, for God and for our souls. And it was a love and a prayer so strong so as to *anticipate the times of God*, that is, the work of our Redemption, which was to be accomplished with the public life and death of the Lord: just as once they were able to solicit the Incarnation which was the radical beginning of the Redemption. A significant similarity must be observed between the episode, after His flight to the Temple, of Jesus’ return along with His family to Nazareth. In both cases, the Blessed Virgin intervened: then by restraining Jesus, and now by pushing Him to work. Between the two cases, however, there is a characteristic difference that, while here Mary comes to modify and anticipate the divine decrees, we should not be allowed to think that 18 years earlier the Divine Child had not already, independently of his parents’ call, pre-established His return: indeed, this is presumable. However, in both episodes there is a significant correspondence between the will and behavior of Jesus and the presence and will of Mary: because even in the case of His being lost, her presence and call appears, to us at least, as an occasion preordained by Divine Providence for the return of Jesus to Nazareth and to the hidden life.



*The true image
of the Mother of
Good Counsel
of Genazzano*

Mary’s will therefore corresponded in some way both to the continuation of Jesus’ hidden life and to the definitive blossoming of His public life. Then she held Him back: now she pushes Him ahead, in both cases she is an instrument of the divine will”⁽²³⁾

The wedding feast at Cana and the Mother of Good Counsel

There is a connection between the Gospel passage of the wedding feast at Cana and devotion to the Mother of Good Counsel. At Cana, the Blessed Virgin Mary, after her conversation with her divine Son, said to the servants - as we have seen - these words: “*Do whatever He tells you*”. It is undeniably a counsel, or better still, good counsel par excellence, and we note that it is one of the few phrases pronounced by her in the Gospel.

In the devotion to Our Lady of Good Counsel, with the words “*fili acquiesce consiliis ejus*” which means “*son, listen to her counsel*”, we recall that Mary’s devoted Son listens to her counsel. Thus we see that Our Lady tells us “*do whatever He tells you*”, and that we, her children, must listen to her counsel; if perfection consists in doing the will of God, it is for this that Mary pushes us to always do what God tells us, thus fulfilling the will of God which is manifested to us through the commandments of God, from the words of the Divine Word in the Gospel, from the

doctrines of the Holy Church, and from the voice of those who have authority in its name, like our spiritual director to whom we owe obedience. At Cana, Mary's counsel obtained a miracle; so it will be in our life: if we listen to the counsel *do whatever He tells you*, it is here that the miracle of grace will be accomplished for us as well. Mary put this advice into practice herself in her life. Just think of the response she gives to the Archangel, St. Gabriel, in the Annunciation "*Behold the handmaid of the Lord, may it be done to me according to your word.*" But her whole life was continuous acceptance and conformity to the Divine Will in her trials and tribulations and especially in the supreme moment of the Passion, and, after having practiced these words by giving us her example, Our Lady advises us to do the same. This is the path that will most perfectly lead us to sanctity, and this is the most perfect Counsel, and therefore the only one, that Mary Most Holy gives us; she is therefore clearly the Mother of Good Counsel, to whose counsel every faithful and devoted child must conform. Just as Pope Leo XIII, a great devotee of Our Lady of Good Counsel, desired to have these words, *son listen to her counsel*, written on the back of the scapular under his papal coat of arms, so they can be applied to the Church which is docile to the counsel of Mary and, therefore, in imitation of her, every believer must be docile to the counsel and doctrine of the Church.

The same attitude found in the image of the Mother of Good Counsel, venerated in her sanctuary in Genazzano, with her sweet gaze turned toward the Divine Son, seems to repeat these words to us: *do everything He tells you*. The advice is to keep our gaze fixed on Jesus, while waiting for a sign to indicate his will.

In Scripture, the Messiah is called "*Magni consilii angelus*" (Isaiah 9, 6) and this expression is used in the liturgy during Christmas and in the office of the Mater Boni Consilii (feast: April 26th); Mary being the Mother of God is also the Mother of eternal Wisdom and she shares this Wisdom to men in some way through her counsel. She, who is the spouse of the Holy Ghost,

possesses this gift of Counsel to the highest degree and therefore communicates it to the souls of her children. Furthermore, the liturgy also applies to the Mother of Good Counsel the words "*mine is counsel and equity, mine is prudence, mine is fortitude*" (Proverbs 8, 14); in fact, the Most Holy Trinity resides in her more than in any other creature, in her too resides the humanity of the Son of God, and since this union is always so profound that according to Saint Louis Grignon de Montfort, where the Mother is, there is also the Son, one cannot go to Jesus except through Mary; Mary is the way that leads to Jesus, the road that takes us to the supreme Counselor, she is the counselor to follow to lead us to Wisdom. In fact, even at Cana we see that "*the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus was also invited to the wedding feast.*"

Conclusion

There are only six occasions in the Gospel in which Mary speaks; twice to the angel at the Annunciation (Luke 1, 34, 38), once at the Visitation when responding to Elizabeth who exalts her, the singing of the *Magnificat* (Luke 1, 46-55), once upon finding the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2, 48), and twice at the wedding feast at Cana, first addressing Jesus (John 2,3) and then the servants (2,5), as we have commented at length in this article. All Mary's words are brief, simple but incisive, never idle but profoundly meditative and they come from the depths of her Immaculate and maternal Heart. Her words, as we have seen, are always full of meaning and can elevate us to the contemplation of the Divine mysteries, impenetrable to us poor and miserable sinners, but She who "*kept all these things in her heart*" (Luke 2, 51) can reveal it to us a little, if we know how to attentively read and meditate on her words...

Footnotes

- 1) THOMAS AQUINAS, *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John I-VI*, Città Nuova Roma 1990, p. 212.
- 2) GIUSEPPE RICCIOTTI, *Life of Christ*, Oscar Mondadori 1974, vol. I § 281.

- 3) CORNELIO A LAPIDE, *Commentaria in Scripturam Sacram*, Tome 16 on St. Luke and St. John, col. 328.
- 4) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.*
- 5) PIERCARLO LANDUCCI, *Maria SS. Nel Vangelo*, Edizioni Paoline Roma 1953, pp. 225-27.
- 6) GABRIELE ROSCHINI, *Vita di Maria*, Published by l'Unione italiana ciechi, Roma 1960, p. 205.
- 7) S. AGOSTINO, *Tract. 8 on John*. See CORNELIO A LAPIDE, *op. cit.*
- 8) THOMAS AQUINAS, *op. cit.* pp. 214-15.
- 9) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.*
- 10) One can note the analogy, in a most delicate and simple way, between Mary's words "vinum non habent", and those used by Martha in asking for the healing of her brother: "he whom thou lovest is sick" (John 11:3), they are still the reflection of those used thirty years earlier to the angel: "how can this be?"; simple words but always eloquent as well as parsimonious.
- 11) P. LANDUCCI, *op. cit.* pp. 229-30.
- 12) G. ROSCHINI, *op. cit.* p. 206.
- 13) G. ROSCHINI, *op. cit.* pp. 207-208.
- 14) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.* § 281.
- 15) G. ROSCHINI, *op. cit.* pp. 208-215
- 16) THOMAS AQUINAS, *op. cit.* p. 220.
- 17) P. LANDUCCI, *op. cit.* pp. 240-41.
- 18) G. RICCIOTTI, *op. cit.* § 284.
- 19) ST MAXIMUS OF TURIN, Discorse 23, ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, Catechesis 22, 2, in the Bible Commentaries of the Fathers, New Testament 4/1 p. 156.
- 20) THOMAS AQUINAS, *op. cit.* p. 224.
- 21) On the entire question one can read the article cited here: *Mary Antithesis of Satan: The homogeneous development of Marian dogma in the time of Pius XII in the writings of Father Guérard des Lauriers*, in *Sodalitium* n. 68, pp. 4-21. Father Francesco Ricossa takes it up again on the occasion of the 14th Conference of Studi Albertariani in Milano on November 14, 2015.
- 22) M. L. GUÉRARD DES LAURIERS O.P. *Marie Reine, pro manuscripto*, pp. 10-11.
- 23) P. LANDUCCI, *op. cit.* pp. 243-44.

General Hermann Kanzler

On the 130th anniversary of the death of General Kanzler, Minister of the Armies and Supreme Commander of the Pontifical Forces at the time of Pius IX, Sodalitium remembers this figure of faithful service to the papal cause with a biographical sketch taken from the book "Le carte Kanzler-Vannutelli dell'Archivio Vaticano. Inventario" ["The Kanzler-Vannutelli Papers of the Vatican Archives. Inventory"], edited by Vanessa Polselli (Secret Vatican Archives 2013).

Hermann Kanzler (biographical notes)

Karl Leopold Hermann Kanzler was born on March 28, 1822 in Weingarten, Grand Duchy of Baden (Germany) to Markus Kanzler and Magdalena Krehmer.

He attended the military school of the Grand Duchy of Baden, graduating with the rank of second lieutenant; then he served for three years in the ranks of the fourth infantry regiment of the Grand Duke's army, meritoriously discharged with

General Hermann Kanzler, Minister of Arms and Supreme Commander of the Pontifical Forces during the age of Pius IX, was a faithful servant to the papal cause.

honor on January 23, 1844, probably for reasons of conscience.

After leaving the fourth regiment, he left for England where he remained until April 3, 1844, when he decided to travel to Italy to join the Papal Army. It was on September 1, 1845 when Kanzler, already a lieutenant, entered the service of the Holy See as a cadet in the first foreign regiment garrisoned at Bologna. His pontifical military career began at the lowest rung, in military terms "from the bottom". Stationed in Bologna, he had the opportunity to frequent the city's circles and on March 12, 1847 he married Letizia Pepoli, who belonged to the noble Bolognese family who would give illustrious personages to the Italian cause and with whom Kanzler kept a friendly and familiar relationship all his life. On that same day he was promoted to first lieutenant. His marriage



General Hermann Kanzler

did not last long, after two years Kanzler remained a widower and childless.

In 1848, he took part with his regiment in the Lombardo-Veneto military campaign fighting against the Austrian army. He participated in the battle of Vicenza at Monte Berico (March 24) under the command of General Giovanni Durando, distinguishing himself with merit, and gave proof of his military ability, but also his courage and determination during the delicate phases of combat. These merits earned him the decoration of the Order of Saint Gregory the Great (October 14, 1848).

That same year, Kanzler came to Rome, but upon arriving in the city he was forced to continue on to Gaeta where the Pope had taken refuge following the events in Rome and the birth of the Roman Republic. Named lieutenant (April 17, 1849) and then Captain of the General Staff (June 25, 1849), he was assigned to the position of aide-de-camp at the command of the Third Military Division, headed by General Carlo

Zucchi. On July 26, 1850 an order of the day from the Pro Minister of Arms destined him to “serve as orderly officer” to General Guglielmo (Wilhelm) de Kalbermatten, called upon that same year by Pius IX to reorganize the two foreign infantry regiments of the Holy See. From 1850 to 1854 Kanzler was under his command, operating between Pesaro and Ravenna.

These were the years when a reorganization of the Papal army, slow but well planned, was underway and aimed at defending the State - at least within its borders - under General Filippo Farina, named Pro Minister of Arms in August, 1851 (and responsible for the entire Ministry of the Army from December 1, 1854).

Kanzler, promoted to Major on March 1, 1854 and Lieutenant Colonel on June 21, 1855, was assigned to the garrison at Rome where, on May 1, 1859, he obtained the rank of Colonel. In Rome, frequenting the city’s salons where, thanks to his education and upbringing, he always received a warm welcome, he met his future wife Laura Vannutelli, a brilliant, intelligent and cultured woman, belonging to a Roman family of great prestige. (...) Hermann was 38 years old, Laura 24; the wedding was celebrated by Mons. Vitelleschi on May 2, 1860 at the Ruspoli Palace.

Meanwhile the political equilibrium in Europe and on the Italian peninsula was losing stability and predictability every day. Following the death of Filippo Farina on July 9, 1857 and after an interim under Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli, Secretary of State to Pius IX, who had already begun a reorganization of the Pontifical State which also included a restructuring of the army entrusted with the increasingly threatened defense of the borders, he placed the direction of Military Arms in the hands of Mons. Saverio (Frédéric-François-Xavier) de Merode (April 18) and that of Supreme Commander of the Pontifical Army in the hands of General Louis-Christophe-Léon-Juchault de La Moricière (April 11). Two brilliant and capable men, both of military training, in whose hands the little army began to acquire more and more of its own physiognomy. However, there was insufficient

time for a deep reorganization of the army which would be incisive when tested on the battlefield.

The Pontifical State was threatened on the borders of the Marche and Umbria, and the army had to intervene immediately, even though its restructuring had not been completed. On May 1, 1860, General de La Moricière sent a telegraph dispatch to Kanzler ordering him to leave without delay for Osimo; his departure was delayed a week, (May 7) thanks to the intervention of Mons. de Merode, to allow Kanzler to celebrate his marriage to Laura. It seemed this interference was not appreciated by the General in Chief, who for some months would retain an attitude of reserve toward the German Colonel. In any case, for the entire month of June, Kanzler and his column kept garrison in Perugia. His wife Laura was with him, and remained close to him. Such an attachment would be a constant characteristic of the relationship between the two. In July, Kanzler led his troops through an exhausting march to Pesaro; in August, following a series of sudden marches, he reached Loreto.

General de La Moricière sent him one order after another - to keep the troops ready for a widespread defense of the territory in the case of an attack by the Garibaldi forces or, contrarily, ready to concentrate in case of an attack by the Italian troops - while he tried in vain to obtain clear information about the possible behavior of the Italian and French troops. The dispatches that came to him from the Secretary of State and from the Pro Minister of Arms, however, due to the lack of clarity on the intentions of the two armies - whether voluntary or involuntary - did not allow him to fully organize a military maneuver. Therefore, when Cavour's ultimatum reached Cardinal Antonelli on September 11, 1860, de La Moricière directed all his troops toward the 'piazza' ['piazzaforte', urban stronghold] of Ancona, which had sufficient structures for a moderate defense. Many columns were cut off by the Piedmontese Army, which had closed almost all the gates to the city. Colonel Giovanni Battista Zappi was taken prisoner at Pesaro; General Georges Pimodan lost his life in the course of the battle of Castelfidardo in an attempt to overcome

the Italian line commanded by General Enrico Cialdini. Kanzler, with his column, after a sustained battle of more than five hours that allowed his detachment to cross the enemy front, reached Ancona late at night. It was on this occasion that General de La Moricière, already in the city, changed his opinion of the Colonel and asked for his promotion to General (September 22). Kanzler was given command of the external batteries of the fortress. The city, after ten days of siege, raised the white flag: it was September 28, 1860. As a member of the indigenous army, Kanzler was taken prisoner and taken to Genoa where he was released - as was the practice - with the promise not to take arms against the royal army for a year. At the end of October, he returned to Rome.

Having arrived in Rome, he was named Commander of Infantry depots. In his officer notes addressed to the Pro Minister of Arms dated October 19, 1860, General de La Moricière wrote this regarding General Kanzler: "There is only one of the four general officers of the army who can be usefully retained; he knows his job, he understands troop movements, he recognizes them well on a map, he knows how to maneuver and administer to his troops; he has shown himself to be much firmer than the others in the difficult circumstances that preceded the capitulation of Ancona. We should avoid his wife following him in time of war."

In January 1861, Hermann obtained Roman citizenship. In the following years, he carried out his work with precision and accuracy, dispatched several times to the detachments at Civitavecchia to verify their status. After the premature death of his first son in June of 1863, which occurred only a few months after he was born, Rodolfo Kanzler was born on May 7, 1864, destined to be the couple's only son.

After the Marche campaign, Mons. de Merode, supported and sustained by General de La Moricière, continued the work of reorganization of the Pontifical army, according to his reform policy of renewal and autonomy, which ultimately aimed to be a resistance to any French delay, dependence or interference. De Merode's way of acting was pragmatic, dynamic, and direct. In this sense the

relationship between the Pro Minister and the Secretary of State found no ground for dialogue. The Papal State was, moreover, pressed at the borders by brigandage, by Garibaldi's revolutionaries, and by the new Kingdom of Italy, and the Pro Minister considered it his duty to provide the pontiff with adequate protection. To this already delicate situation was added, in 1864, the signing of the September Convention (September 15) which committed the French army to leave Rome within the following two years, thus placing the Holy See in the need of protecting its own borders autonomously.

Upon the death of General de La Moricière (September 11, 1865), Mgr. de Merode lost his ally and supporter with the Pope, and Pius IX, despite the great esteem he had for the prelate who he would continue to keep close to him in any case, was convinced that a moderate pro-minister was more appropriate for the Holy See, one who was less disliked by political circles and by the French in particular. On October 21, under a simple order of the day, Mons. de Merode left his duties as Pro Minister of the Arms for reasons "of health". On October 27, Cardinal Antonelli communicated to Kanzler his nomination to the ministry:

From the Secretary of State, October 27, 1865, n. 38458

For health reasons, Monsig. Francesco Saverio De Merode having been released from the office of Pro Minister of the Arms, His Holiness of Our Lord has graciously deigned to name you, with the same qualifications, Signor Commendatore Hermann Kanzler, Brigade General.

The announcement of this sovereign position is made to the same General Kanzler for his intelligence and guidance.

Giacomo Antonelli.

In fact, already in February of the same year, the proposal had been put forward for Kanzler to take charge of "the organization of the papal troops in order to form a division of 12 thousand men" (February 23, 1865). On that occasion Kanzler had refused to "accept the Ministry under any conditions" reserving,

however, the possibility of accepting a possible nomination "as general having a free hand and putting the locals on equal terms of membership as that of the Foreigners." The name of Kanzler, therefore, had already been circulating for several months as a possible replacement for de Merode at the head of the Dicastry of Arms.

After the September Convention and the progressive departure of the French troops from Rome, it became clear that the role of the Pontifical Army was taking on greater importance and that it would be called upon to face other tasks: on the one hand to maintain internal order, and on the other to resist external attacks (both by the Italian royal army and by the revolutionary front) until the arrival of help from foreign troops or in any case from abroad.

The consequence of such an objective (internal and external) called for the study, discussion and actualization of a series of reforms within various sectors of the department and the troops. The new organizational plan elaborated by Kanzler was discussed by the Council of Ministries in the sessions of November 20 and December 1, 1865 and approved by the Pontiff in his audience on December 16 of the same year, becoming enforceable as of December 1, 1866. Between March and April of that year, the new organization of the Papal Gendarmerie was presented, discussed and approved.

From the time of his appointment until 1870, for five years, the orders of the day and the

General Kanzler at Anzio in 1862 surrounded by some of his officials (2nd from left is de Charette)



decrees of the Pro Minister revealed the military strategy underlying the leadership of the Pontifical Army: a structural reorganization (centralized) that encompassed the preparation, formation and training of every component of the Army itself; a military defense plan capable of adequately defending the Pontifical State from internal and external attack.

The only reform - on which the general was particularly keen for reasons of defense - but which was not completed due to a lack of time, was that concerning the formation of a second corps made up of volunteers to support the front line on the battlefield, thus ensuring consolidation of the defenses. Such a reform required time, not so much for enlistment, as for the organic formation of the members of the corps itself. But there was not enough time.

While the work of reorganizing the Army was feverish, so too were the movements of the Garibaldians and Italians on the entire peninsula.

The first real attempt to put pressure on the Papal State aimed at its overthrow was in 1867. Both sides were aware of this. Within the Roman walls, some hotbeds of revolt were organized - a bomb at the Serristori barracks; the concentration of weapons and the Garibaldians at the Lanificio Aiani; the clash at Villa Glori - which however did not seem to gather the enthusiasm perhaps expected and hoped for by the revolutionaries. Outside of the Papal State, a real military campaign was organized, mostly by the Garibaldians - but with the tacit support of royal troops that eventually crossed the border - which

both in the south and in the north attempted to cross the boundaries of the Papal State with the aim of reaching Rome. Since news of a tentative attempt to cross the border had been arriving at the Ministry of Arms for some time, the papal troops were deployed and distributed across the territory in such a way as to stem these attempts as much as possible; in this sense, the telegraphic transmission and communication system as well as the encryption system developed by the department would prove to be extremely quick and effective.

For the Pro Minister it was clear that “the Viterbo-Aceri line on the one hand, and the Frosinone-Nicotera on the other, were only ordered to make diversions, while the majority of Garibaldi’s men had gathered in the Comarca di Roma, with the intention of attacking Rome.” The firefights began in the Viterbo area on September 28, and in the Roman countryside (the Comarca di Roma) on October 4. After numerous battles with many casualties and injuries and the proclamation of a state of siege in the city of Rome on October 25, finally came the long battle of Monterotondo (October 25) in which General Garibaldi took part, and the equally challenging battle of Mentana in which the French Expeditionary Corps took part (November 3) putting an end to the military campaign of 1867. This is what the general wrote about it in his report to the Pope:

The battle of Mentana, considered as a military event, did not, in fact, have the proportions of a battle, nevertheless it produced decisive results. Garibaldi’s defeat put an end to the current invasion of the Papal Territories, against which they had been fighting for five weeks.

The battle of Mentana, which saw the victory by the little papal army - even if supported by the French army - and the defeat of the Garibaldians, certainly did not create any illusions or changes in the Pro Minister surrounding the future direction of events. Between 1867 and 1870, the work of restructuring and stabilizing the Pontifical Army and the Department of Arms continued, as did the work of fortifying the wall and the zones proposed for its defense. Enlistments continued and the little army



*General Kanzler
on horseback
after the
Battle of Mentana*

increasingly took on the appearance of a real international force.

Meanwhile, the attempts at conciliation promoted by the Italian sovereign Victor Emmanuel II during the period between Mentana and the Porta Pia were unsuccessful. Kanzler prepared the army to defend the Holy See as much as possible according to various previously developed strategic lines and tactics tested in the campaign of 1867, namely the reinforcement of the Leonine City and the Fort of Sant'Angelo - destined to be the base of all operations - and the progressive concentration of papal troops to Rome and the stronghold at Civitavecchia to avoid exposing them to being overwhelmed in isolation and to guarantee greater protection of the capital.

In July, the definitive departure of the French Expedition Corps and international political events involving France and Prussia (with the defeat of the former in Sudan) clearly demonstrated how Rome and the Pontifical Government were left solely in the hands of its army and, as Pius IX wrote, "of God".

More than sixty days passed from July 1 to September 20. What did the Pro Minister do during this time? How did he organize the defense with respect to the orders imparted by the Pope and, above all, were the orders certain and definitive?

General Kanzler, with his military background, seemed to trust very little to chance, providence, or even to the hope of any foreign intervention; or at least he could not really take them into account in his preparations for a line of defense. He knew well that the force numbers at his disposal were not and would not be sufficient to defeat the larger Italian Army, however he was equally aware and was convinced of the possibility of an all-out defense of the city of Rome, a defense to be carried out within its walls that would have led to an honorable fall of the Army he led, and in the eyes of Europe a clear demonstration of the violence carried out against the Pope. The same opinion was held by the two generals at his side, Raffaele de Courten and Giovan Battista Zappi, as well as Lt. Col. Atanasio de Charette, commander

of the Pontifical Zouaves and Kanzler's trusted right-hand man since 1867.

As for the plans and movements for the defense, two zones dedicated to actual resistance would be garrisoned: Civitavecchia and Rome. The commanders of the various military zones had in fact been ordered to fall back on Rome - whose walls in the meantime were being equipped with cannons and entrusted to rapid restoration by the Papal Engineers - as soon as they perceived the risk of being cut off, and therefore isolated, by the Italian troops. This plan also seemed to be approved by Cardinal Antonelli who on August 20 signed off on what General Kanzler and the Papal General Staff had established on the eventuality of the Italian troops crossing the border: that is, the Papal troops were to remain, even after the Italian troops had crossed the border, in the occupied squares, and not retreat except when the enemy approached. Only the garrisons in the squares of Civitavecchia and Civita Castellana were to put up some resistance so as to verify the violence of the invasion.

(...) On September 10, Count Gustavo Ponza di San Martino went to the Pope as the King's emissary and was received by him: his purpose was to present him with a letter by Victor Emmanuel II with various concrete proposals, and to induce the Pope to allow entrance to the Italian troops into his State and into the city of Rome in particular. Pius IX, persuaded that the Italians would never enter the city of Rome with violence, firmly refused. Kanzler, received by the pontiff in the evening together with Major Fortunato Rivalta of the General Staff, began that same day to issue directives and orders of the day relating to the defense of the city of Rome, such as the closing and the burying of the entrance gates to the city, fortifying the walls and placing cannons along them, proclaiming a state of siege, recalling to Rome many detachments still operating in the province and, subsequently, establishing a Defense Committee and various observers within the city of Rome. Between 11 and 13 September, the first real border crossings by the Italian Army took place. The detachments of the Papal Army that were guarding the provinces quickly began to retreat to

Rome, with the exception of the de Charette column, which initially turned in the direction of Civitavecchia where it left a company to assist in the defense of the city. That stronghold, according to the orders received from the Pope and then from General Kanzler, was supposed to put up a partial resistance to the Italian invasion ("a few blows to be fired against the enemy"), however, following various events, it surrendered undaunted on the night between the 15th and 16th of September.

In the days following the surrender-capture of Civitavecchia, that is between the 16th and 19th of September, while the Italian troops seemed to alternately advance and remain stationary, there was an exchange of letters between General Raffaele Cadorna (general commander of the Central Italy Army Observation Corps), General Kanzler and the Pope which did not in fact change the position of the two interlocutors. And while the location of where the Italian Army would attempt to enter the city became increasingly clear, that is the area between Porta Salaria and Porta Pia, Kanzler tried to obtain from the Pope clearer and more honorable indications regarding the defense to be put up against the entrance of the enemy army. On September 19, therefore, on the eve of what everyone now knew was the date established for the attack on the indicated area, Kanzler, de Courten and Zappi spoke with Pius IX about the methods and the duration of the defense. It was in fact necessary to know exactly when to lay down arms to achieve the best possible conditions in terms of armistice and honor. The military believed that forcing the Italian army to bombard the city

Pope Pius IX blesses the pontifical troops in the Piazza San Pietro on April 25, 1870



and fight until it managed to open an effective breach in the walls could be considered a congruent demonstration of violence and usurpation, but also an honorable war clash. The city, according to Kanzler, was perfectly capable of defending itself to the bitter end. Pius IX agreed to the requests of his generals and accordingly modified the previous letter he had already written on September 14 with instructions for the defense of Civitavecchia and Rome. This letter was published in *La Civiltà Cattolica* on January 7, 1871.

(...) The attack on the city of Rome began at 5:15 and continued even after the raising of the white flag which took place in several places between 9:35 and 10:00. The clash between the two armies was violent and heated, fueled on both sides by emotion and enthusiasm for the defense of their ideals. According to witnesses, the Italian Army's entrance into Rome was accompanied by many people in its wake who were not entirely peaceful and their conduct in the city was not entirely respectful.

After the signing of the capitulation that took place that same day at the Villa Albani between 2:00 and 5:30, Kanzler, accompanied by Major Rivalla and Count de Beaumont, went to the Vatican to report to the Pope what had happened. On September 21, with the reading of his order of the day to the heads of the Corps of the disbanded Papal Army in St. Peter's Square, it can be said his ministry was concluded. At the age of 48, having decided to remain with the Pope - he resided at the Vatican with his family until the death of Pius IX, which occurred in 1878 - Kanzler had now put an end to his military career and on no occasion did he come into conflict or controversy with the Italian government, always maintaining a reserved and respectful demeanor.

In the years following 1870 and up to his death, though the Ministry of Arms no longer existed, he continued to have the title of Pro Minister and in this capacity he took care of the ex-military members of the dissolved Papal Army following their requests and supplications, and had responsibility for the distribution of subsidies granted to them by the Pope. The only memory of

his past as a general was the speech that he addressed to the Pope at the end of each year on behalf of the dissolved Papal Army, on which occasion he tried to have present in Rome at least its major representatives (General de Courten, General Zappi, Lt. Col. de Charette).

Upon the death of Pius IX, Kanzler moved outside the Vatican walls with his family to a building located at No. 3 Via San Luigi dei Francesi, living in a little apartment on the first floor. The economic condition of the Pro Minister - having refused the pension offered to him by the Italian State - was not so great as to allow him many luxuries. In this situation, he was forced to ask for an increase in the allowance he was receiving.

In the summer, escaping the heat of Rome, he used to spend a few weeks at Borgo a Buggiano (Pistoia) at the Villa Bellavista, arranged and desired more by Laura than by him, or at the Terme di Rapolano, due to a skin disorder and a fistula that recurrently opened on his foot, making it difficult for him to move around.

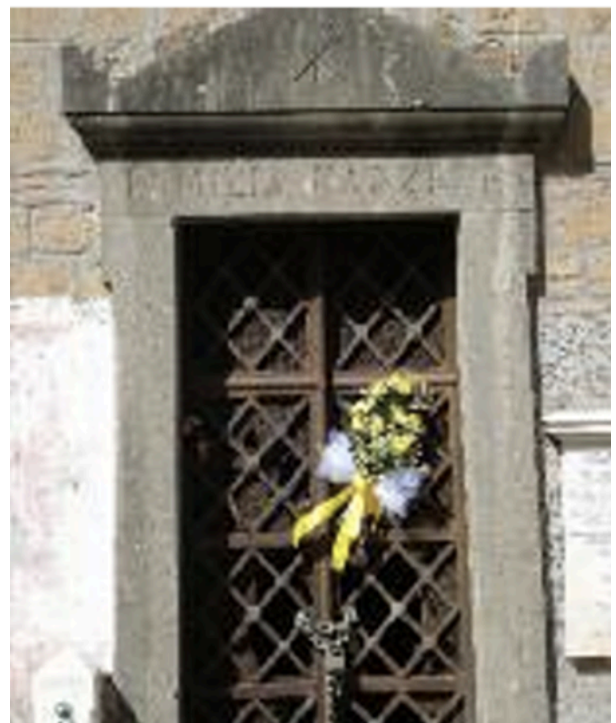
On February 1, 1887 he was named Baron by Leo XIII and this time, differently from what happened in 1867, he accepted the title, writing about it in these terms to his brother-in-law Ugo Pepoli: *Perhaps you will be surprised that I have now gratefully accepted the title of Baron while after Mentana I refused a higher one. But I hope that you will understand the reasons I will give you for my behavior. An elevated title without the corresponding means to sustain it in the greater context is a true burden. At least the title of Baron is more in line with my modest financial situation. The unexpected manifestation by the Holy Father is a proof of the Holy Father's approval of how the papal troops operated while under my command 'in the most difficult of times' as was expressed in the investiture brief. It was also welcomed in this way by my former subordinates, as you will see from the article in Fedeltà that I am sending you. Then too, I was made to reflect on a hereditary title that could be of benefit in certain circumstances to my son, and certainly what would I not have done to be useful to my son? It gave me great pleasure to see my nomination welcomed in such a cordial*

and courteous manner not only by family and friends, but by my comrades in arms and those of high Roman society affectionate to the Pope. Even the liberal newspapers which in other times bombarded me with satire and low calumnies had the good taste to maintain a dignified silence on this occasion.

His life was now coming to an end. On December 22, 1887, despite the difficulties caused by the reopening of the wound on his foot, he gave his usual speech of greeting to the Pope, on behalf of the disbanded Papal Army. Returning home, he went to bed in the hope of soon getting up again. On the night of January 5-6 1888, without ever having lost consciousness and having had the opportunity to say his goodbyes to friends and family, he died. He was 65 years old.

On January 8, 1888, according to his wishes, a sober funeral took place at the parish of Santa Maria Maddalena. The service was attended by family, friends, officials, prelates and politicians. His body was interred in his family tomb at the Verano cemetery, where it still lies today.

Kanzler family tomb at the Verano cemetery in Rome





The Shame of Tradition

“His literary sensibility,” wrote Hanson (in *Decadence and Catholicism*, p. 330, citing *Baron Corvo, il viaggio sentimentale di Frederick Rolfe*, p. 125, footnote 370) **“was a mixture of estheticism, pederasty and catholicism”**. It is precisely this mixture that disgusts us.

The Catholic “Traditionalist” world (the “Tradition” of the title) is small, but it is of vital importance for the Church. When - between 2012 and 2013 - *Radio Spada* was born (the website and the publishing house), it gave itself an ambitious program: the renewal of the “traditionalist” world by its “coming out” of the narrow spaces it occupied until now. “Coming out” from the doctrinal divisions tied to reasons of Faith, of course, proposing themes and battles capable of obtaining the consensus of all, promoting, for example, processions of reparation against homosexual parades. But “coming out” in artistic and literary interests as well. The cultural pages of *Radio Spada* present and promote to readers and Catholic militants that decadentism to which Mario Praz dedicated a book that marked an era: *La carne, la morte e il diavolo nella letteratura romantica* [*Flesh, Death and the Devil in Romantic Literature*]. For his warning against this reckless cultural opening, the author of this work was defined by *Radio Spada* as “a hardened stoner with terrible aim”. Let the reader judge from these pages if the aim was truly wrong, or whether we hit the target. A target that, for us, is not men (we are not stoners), but only ideas.

• **FRANCESCO RICOSSA**

La vergogna della tradizione
C.L.S. Verrua Savoia 2018,
176 pages, €10,00.

In presenting this new book by Father Ricossa in *Sodalitium*, we are publishing the Index and some extracts. In particular Chapter 2, concerning the figure of Frederick Rolfe, and Chapter 13 on *Radio Spada*.

INDEX

I. Introduction

Matthew 18, 15-17

Scope and limits of my intervention

II. “Baron Corvo. The sentimental journey of Frederick Rolfe”

See the extract (next page)

III. Mons. Benson (called “Bobugo”)

Integral Catholic?

Occultist “Catholic”

Homosexual “Catholic”?

IV. Bensonians and Corvians, “effeminate lovers of Liturgy” (Radio Spada calls them)

Shane Leslie

Ronald Firbank: a “Bensonian” with painted fingernails (L. Fumagalli, December 11, 2017 on FB)

John Stratford Collins aka Jack (1882-1912) and Eustace Virgo (1861-1937)

V. Bensonians and Corvians. A Catholic “Cult”?

Brocard Sewell (1912-2000): left of Paul VI

Dom Sylvester Houédard (1924-1992) a beat monk exponent of “wider ecumenism”



Aloisius, teddy bear stuffed animal (from Evelyn Waugh to Harold Acton)

VI. Oscar Wilde and his surroundings

A Freemason and a 'satanist': Saint Oscar of Oxford and his wife

Oscar Wilde: between Paolo Gullisano and Rupert Everett

The Maestro of Wilde, Walter Horatio Pater (1839-1894)

Aubrey Beardsley

Robert Ross, "Saint Robert of Phillmore"

Marc André Raffalovich (1864-1934)

Lord Alfred Douglas "Bosie" and Olive Eleanor Custance (and Marie Stopes)

Lionel Johnson, the cousin, and the Dark Angel

Gerard Manley Hopkins s.j.

VII. "Reverend" Montague Summers and Aleister Crowley": Decadentism stinking of brimstone

VIII. A jump to France

IX. From Literature to Paintings. The

Pre-Raphaelites. Simeon Solomon. Félicien Rops, William Blake, Giovanni Gasparro

X. David Jones and Eric Gill: what happened in the distributist Guilds

XI. Anthony Burgess and the justification for pornography and blasphemy

XII. From decadentism to satanism ("a bastard of catholicism" according to Huysmans)

XIII. Radio Spada: where it came from and where it is going

Appendix. Radio Spada: introduces the readers to Astrology and Theosophy, and it goes unnoticed. Why I am not tranquil at all.

Conclusions

An astrologer for Radio Spada

II. "BARON CORVO. THE SENTIMENTAL VOYAGE OF FREDERICK ROLFE"

We begin our argument from the work whose title I just cited. The author, Luca Fumagalli, presents himself as one of the founders of *Radio Spada*, and a member of the Board of Directors of the association; the work was published by *Radio Spada*; the layout is by

Ilaria Pisa, Andrea Gioacobazzi's wife. While I was writing this article, and despite the criticisms I publicly raised, the biography of Baron Corvo published by Radio Spada reached a second edition ⁽¹⁾, adequately publicized and finally proudly claimed by the current President of *Radio Spada*, Piergiorgio Seveso, who considers the work as his own child, born, according to him, "of the second generation of Italian sedevacantists (in this case 'Cassiciacum' ones)." The President of *Radio Spada* (si quid est) defines Baron Corvo as: "***a courageous and tormented convert who renounced everything for his love of the Roman Papacy and the Catholic Church, (...) a writer who was able to combine profound erudition, medievalist passion and a marked taste for the fantastic and aesthetic construction of the story***"; he describes his work as "*always interesting, often edifying, at times monumental and in great part unknown to the Italian speaking public*", and declares the purpose of the publication of Rolfe's biography: "*Fumagalli offers a reconstruction of all these works that **can stimulate our more prudent public to read and enjoy this author.***" ⁽²⁾ Our criticism, then, is legitimately directed at *Radio Spada* itself, in defense of the honor of integral Catholicism and the authentic defenders of the Thesis of Cassiciacum, abusively involved with something that has nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with it.

Integral Catholic?

The publishing house in question presents itself as Catholic, and proposes to its readers the figure of Baron Corvo as an "integral Catholic" ⁽³⁾, that is, one of those Catholics who - like Monsignor Umberto Benigni, the founder of *Sodalitium Pianum* - supported the work of Saint Pius X against modernism. Chronologically, he was there: Baron Corvo died in 1913, at the end of the pontificate of Pius X. There is, however, no hint of any interest in the modernist question by Frederick Rolfe in the entire book. Baron Corvo is completely alien to the integral Catholic movement.

Intransigent Catholic?

Can Rolfe at least be classified among intransigent Catholics, that is, those who opposed the capture of Rome by the liberal State, supporting the rights and reasons for the Pontiff's temporal power? All integral Catholics had been intransigent Catholics. ⁽⁴⁾ Fumagalli's book warns us that Baron Corvo is not only foreign to this school of thought, but opposed to it. Baron Corvo actually attributed (falsely) his expulsion from the seminary to the intrigues of "black clerics" who opposed his protectors, the Sforza Cesarini; in his book *"Il desiderio e la ricerca del tutto"* [*"Desire and Pursuit of the Whole"*] he therefore presents himself as a *"victim of their dirty and venal rancor towards the protected and unassailable princes who fought for the white Savoyard cross against the temporal power of the Roman Pontiff."* ⁽⁵⁾ He was no friend of Monsignor Benigni, therefore; if anything he was one of Monsignor Bonomelli. ⁽⁶⁾ Moreover, he was even an associate of brother Pantaleo (1831-1879), Garibaldi's defrocked "chaplain", as Rolfe wrote a short story in honor of a Roman princess who was exiled *"for having helped some poor Garibaldians"* ⁽⁷⁾: the Roman princess who was his protector (and who suggested the *nomen* de plume of Baron Corvo) was in reality Caroline Shirley, English like him, who had married Duke Sforza Cesarini, and who was related to Rolfe's friend, Mario Sforza Cesarini, whom he met at Oscott seminary college. In another short story, published in a magazine of Lord Douglas, Rolfe was inspired by a true event, which again involved the Sforza Cesarini family, hostile to a *"furious Pius IX."* ⁽⁸⁾ With a certain consistency, in his best known work, *Hadrian the Seventh*, the Pope in the novel (he himself) *"inaugurates an innovative pontificate: he invites the Church to evangelical poverty, and renounces temporal power in order to begin a collaboration with the King of Italy..."*, giving the patrimony of the Church to the Mayor of Rome and sending the golden Rose (papal homage to the Catholic queens) to the dead protestant Queen Victoria (p. 183); *"the impossibility of a peaceful solution to the so called 'Roman question' was a worry that*

plagued many English Catholic lay people", Fumagalli comments. ⁽⁹⁾ Corvo was not, therefore, an integral Catholic, much less intransigent. But was he at least Catholic?

Catholic?

Frederick Rolfe was certainly Catholic, as are almost all the authors presented on the cultural pages of *Radio Spada* edited by Luca Fumagalli. It is precisely his conversion to Catholicism from Anglicanism, which occurred in 1886, that justifies, according to his biographer, apologetic interest in Baron Corvo. Fumagalli himself admits, however, that his conversion was perhaps due to aesthetic reasons (p. 10), to his *"romantic and ritualistic temperament"* and to his desire to become a priest (p. 44). For Fumagalli himself, it is an evocative but *"problematic"* hypothesis to consider Rolfe a *"Catholic writer"* (p. 27), while some consider him a *"heterodox Catholic"* whose Pope (*Hadrian the Seventh*) has similarities with the one imagined by the modernist Fogazzaro (p. 184). We will return to Rolfe's heterodoxy when speaking of his interest in the occult. It is true that Rolfe never denied his conversion in 1886; it is also true that he expressed, with horrible words and accents, his detestation for the Church (quote, *"he detested its unbearable stench"*), for Catholics, for priests (pp. 27, 48, 65, 83, 93, 104-105, 117, 141, 164-165, 215, 251 note 797), and for religious (*"the hilarious events concerning the friars and the secular clergy - are reduced to subtle cruel caricatures of Boccaccian and Chaucerian derivation, which have to do most of all with the baseness of the human soul, with selfishness, arrogance and naivete"* p. 117. Hilarious?). *"Rolfe, like many other English or American converts, always had a love-hate relationship with Italy. Although he loved the history, art and culture of the peninsula, he shared Isaac Hecker's opinion that Catholicism needed less Italian spirit and more Anglo-Saxon spirit"* (p. 216, note 673). Since *Radio Spada* is a publishing house that claims to be integrally Catholic, it would be appropriate here to explain to readers who Isaac Hecker was, since a true, integral Catholic, Abbé

Charles Maignen, a future member of the ‘*Sodalitium Pianum*’ wrote a book about him: ‘*Le Père Hecker est-il un Saint?*’ [*Is Father Hecker a Saint?*] (1898) in reaction to a biography of Hecker written by Father Elliot. A Protestant converted to Catholicism, expelled from the Redemptorists, founder of the Paulist Fathers, theologian to Cardinal Gibbons at the First Vatican Council, Father Hecker was the inspirer of the heterodox movement that was later called Americanism, which was condemned in 1899 by Pope Leo XIII’s letter to Cardinal Gibbons “*Testem benevolentiae*”, thus giving reason for his denunciation by Abbé Maignen. Being a good precursor of Vatican II and its doctrine on Religious Freedom, Father Hecker, the “Saint” of the Americanists, is now a Servant of God close to beatification for the modernists, in the footsteps of Cardinal Newman who maintained that Hecker had done in the United States what he had done in England. But you can read all this on *Sodalitium*, certainly not in books published by *Radio Spada*...

Catholic and homosexual. Homosexual Catholic. Catholic “because” homosexual?

If Frederick Rolfe’s “*heart swollen with Faith*” (as Fumagalli emphatically wrote of it on the back cover) influenced his literature, can one think that his homosexuality did not? Fumagalli would say no ⁽¹⁰⁾, but I am forced to admit the contrary. “*To this day, however, the most prurient and delicate aspect of Corvo’s life is his homosexuality... Rolfe detested women, their forms disgusted him; in men and young men, characters who often surround the protagonists of his stories, he sought, more than physical gratification, a completely spiritual satisfaction, that ‘divine friend’ who is companion and a friend, capable of absolute devotion*” (p. 29). Fumagalli quotes Scoble: “*he wrote openly of his own homosexuality, incorporating into each of his autobiographical books a chaste love story with homoerotic overtones*” (p. 76, footnote 219). We will have occasion to return to his “chastity”: let us limit ourselves to noting how ALL of Baron

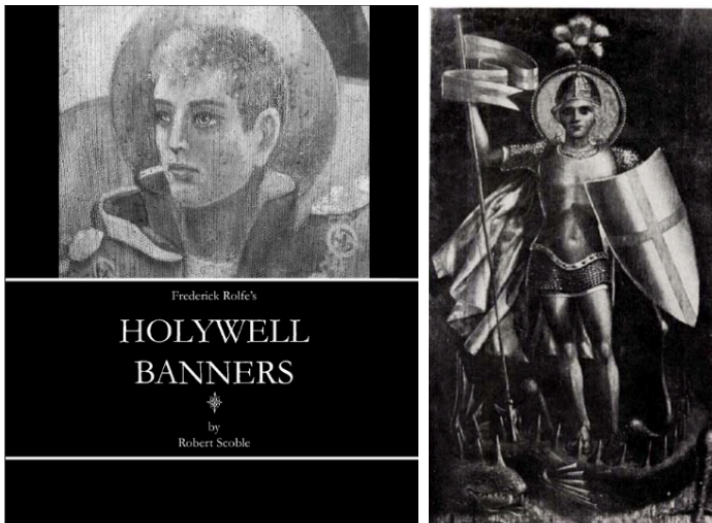
Corvo’s literary production (“*in every one of his books*”) is prejudiced not only by his faith, but by his homosexuality, and indeed in an inseparable way by both. Let’s see some examples in which life and literature are intertwined.

After receiving his tonsure on March 31, 1888, Rolfe was dismissed from the seminary at Oscott in the month of August: Fumagalli describes for us a series of people whom he then was frequenting. We begin with **John Gambril Nicholson**, his friends **Joseph William Gleeson White** and **Charles Kains-Hackson** and the latter’s lover, **Cecil Castle** (p. 55). All are homosexuals (p. 56). Nicholson is an old acquaintance of Rolfe (he met him as a student) and in 1909 he wrote to Rolfe, who was in Venice, asking him to introduce two friends “*to the homosexual underworld of the city*” (p. 241: this is the genesis of the famous “*Venetian letters*”). Nicholson was not a simple homosexual, but one of the most important of the “**uranian poets**” ⁽¹¹⁾ studied by Timothy d’Arch Smith in his book *Love in earnest* (London, 1970). But there is more. Nicholson was a member of the **Order of Chaeronea**, as was also another friend of Rolfe’s, **Charles Kains-Jackson** ⁽¹²⁾, who gave a strong homosexual imprint to the newspaper *The Artist and Journal of Home culture*. The Order was a true and proper secret homosexual Society, with rites of initiation, passwords and secrets to observe, which took its name from the battle of the same name where, in 338 BC, the “Sacred Band of Thebes” composed, according to Plutarch, of 150 homosexual couples, was slaughtered. The Order was founded in 1897 by Oscar Wilde’s friend, George Cecil Ives, and its members included Nicholson, Kains-Jackson, Oscar Wilde and Alfred Douglas, Samuel Cottam, Montague Summers, and many others. Let’s get back to us: in 1888 the ex-seminarian (who will make a second attempt at the Scots College in Rome) finds himself in Christchurch in the company of these not very commendable friends. And he writes *The ballad of Boys bathing*, “*a brilliant and innovative lyric*” writes Fumagalli. “*The description of some boys who go bathing in the bay of St. Andrews, in*

addition to Rolfe's direct experience, owed much to the many conversations he had with Kains-Jackson and Gleeson Withe (even this last, though married and with children, was likely homosexual). During one of their meetings, in fact, Kains-Jackson had indicated to his friends the artistic quality of *The Bathers*, a painting by Henry Scott Tuke that represented two young men near the sea" (Baron Corvo, pp. 56-57). And here we see the "three young men near the sea."

Looking at the painting (which was published in the book), one can understand the enthusiasm that occasioned Rolfe's "brilliant and innovative lyric". "The nudity, portrayed in poses of classical art, was typical of the work of the painter from Falmouth (Tuke) who, with an impressionist style, tickled the fantasies of the English homosexual community. Rolfe remained so surprised by the description of Kains-Jackson that he decided to accompany the poem with an analogous illustration which he also refers to in *Hadrian the Seventh*." (p. 57) Rolfe's swimming - both in real life and in his literature ⁽¹³⁾ - thus becomes a pretext for approaching or imagining nude or semi-nude adolescents and boys: in his collection *Stories Toto told me* (1898) the young Toto "goes around completely nude, happy and free" (p. 114, footnote 345); but a Toto actually existed in Rolfe's real life, where, under the pretext of being a painter and photographer, he attracted seven young boys of Genzano (after his second expulsion from the seminary in 1890). Fumagalli writes (which unfortunately I must summarize for brevity): "Their leader was the beautiful young man Toto Ephoros. They were Rolfe's preferred company (...) when he swam in the rivers or lakes and when he fell asleep in the shadow of the woods, cradled by the warmth of the sun. (...) He also studied the popular traditions of Lazio, the children of a faith that, in his eyes, seemed naive and fascinating, still full of pagan elements. Toto and his friends posed for Rolfe in some photographs that the Englishman took in imitation of the Arcadian model which was then in vogue in Italy thanks to the Germans Wilhelm 'Guglielmo' von Pluschow - whose studio was not far from the

Scots college (where Rolfe had attended seminary in Rome, ed.) - and Wilhelm von Gloeden ⁽¹⁵⁾. The boys were portrayed in pastoral settings with amphorae and costumes inspired by ancient Greece, in an aesthetic tension between classicism and the Gothic representation of the male nude. (...) Rolfe's photos reveal a homoerotic coloring both in the subjects' poses and in the play of light and shadow that sculpt and exalt the physical forms" (pp. 68-70). "Photographs like this - explains Fumagalli in a footnote - were collected and exchanged among the wealthiest members of the British homosexual community" (p. 70, note 208). The reality of Genzano 1980, became the literary work already cited, *Stories Toto told me* (1898, then expanded in 1901 with the title *In His Own Image*) (pp. 110-119). The failed priest Father Friderico (=Rolfe) travels through Italy with a cohort of young men (Guido, Ercole, Otone, Ilario, Desiderio, Vittorio) guided by the sixteen-year-old Toto: "a splendid - Rolfe writes - wild (rascal) from the Abruzzi. (...) His skin was dark, with real blood beneath, smooth as a peach, and his appearance was noble like that of a god..." (p. 113). And Fumagalli: "The Rolfian Arcadia is an exclusively virile place, where women have no citizenship. The makeup of the company, described with satisfaction in their physical attributes, refers to a new pagan sensibility, incapable of concealing a **homophilous** feeling..." (p. 112, see p. 161), "the saints and the angels are sometimes described as pagan divinities" (p. 114), "friars and the lay clergy" are "reduced to subtly cruel caricatures of Boccaccian and Chauserian derivation" (p. 117). I limit myself to quoting Fumagalli: the book should be read and cited in its entirety. And yet, despite what we have seen, despite it all, Fumagalli evaluates this work by Rolfe: "In the stories that (Toto) recalls to the master (...) high and low coexist in the name of **purity**, protected by the benevolence of God"; "they are, therefore, real and proper moral tales whose educative value cannot be escaped..."; "the sweet gaze of the author who (...) does not fail to reaffirm infinite divine mercy" or, citing from the book by Benson's biographer, Father Martindale, "he is the



Cecil Castle, Kains-Jackson's lover, portrait by Baron Corvo

spontaneous product of an absolutely living faith" (pp. 114-117). Excuse me, but I sincerely do not understand.

Rolfe the writer, Rolfe the painter, Rolfe the photographer. But in all these artistic activities: Rolfe in search of young men. He does so by giving himself a doctrinal, principled, heterodox justification, as in this passage from his work *Chronicles of the House of Borgia*, cited by Fumagalli precisely in relation to Genzano's homoerotic photos: *"If the perpetuation of beauty (...) is not a sin, the person endowed with natural beauty does something which is not shameful but honorable in allowing it to be preserved with painting and sculpture. Perfect beauty does not seek to hide, but simply admits the world to participate in its joy, without vanity or blushes, without scruples of rank or dignity"* (p. 69, footnote 207). Do these photographs, which "constitute objects for collection and exchange among the wealthier members of the British homosexual community", fall into the category of, rather than shameful, honorable beauty, that gives joy to the observer? This is Wilde's idea of art for art's sake, concepts expressed at Malta by Burgess to justify pornography. It is a return to paganism, both ancient and Renaissance, the one theorized by Rolfe and aesthetes like him (p. 21 footnote 41, pp. 68-69, 78, 157 which is later cited, on the nocturnal bathing described in *Don Renato*, p. 159). These ideal to which he is referring are the *"ephebic loves"* of ancient Greece ⁽¹⁶⁾ sung for

example by Meleager of Gadara, the Hellenic poet of the 1st century BC, which he translated together with his failed "divine friend", the homosexual Sholto Douglas (pp. 161-163) ⁽¹⁷⁾. But wasn't Rolfe a Catholic? He combined, in an unhealthy and sacrilegious way, the "disgraceful" Greek vice (Tacitus) with sacred themes. In 1891, in Christchurch, where he took the name of Baron Corvo (pp. 75-76), we find Rolfe again in the company of Gleeson-Withe and Kains-Jackson, and the latter's lover, Cecil Castle. The photographer Rolfe wandered about the village photographing... "young people" with "a special predilection for Cecil Castle who willingly lent himself to pose as a model thanks to the approval of his cousin (Kains-Jackson, ed.), who was not jealous at all" (p. 78). From the photographs of Kains-Jackson's lover, who was a member, let's not forget, of the Order of Chaeronea, Rolfe derived the model for the paintings of Saint George and Saint Michael ⁽¹⁸⁾, destined for the village church (pp. 78-79); but Fumagalli sees nothing inappropriate in this: *"the photos taken of Kains-Jackson's lover, far from having any commercial end, responded to a greater purpose: they would serve as a model for the figures in the background of a tapestry dedicated to Saint Michael which Rolfe was painting for the local Catholic chapel"* (p. 78).

In 1892, in Scotland, he was named tutor to Father Ogilvie-Forbes' nephews: he took photos of his pupils, Malcolm and Cuthbert, as well as neighbors, the Burnett brothers, *"dressed and placed in poses like saints"*; but not in an innocent way, since the aunt chased Rolfe away and prohibited him from any further contact with the boys (p.87). In 1895, having left Nicholson (we already know who he is: another initiate in the homosexual Order of Chaeronea), Rolfe went to Holywell, in the sanctuary of Saint Winifred, a Lourdes of Wales. There, who would have thought, he became involved with the twelve-year-old altar boy Leo Schwartz; Rolfe, comments Fumagalli, *"demonstrated once again to be naturally inclined to relationships with children, capable of an affability which was alien*



Rolfe and Schwarz
at Holywell's shrine

to him when the interlocutor belonged to the ranks of adults" (p. 98).

And here is a photograph, revealing in my opinion, of Rolfe and Schwarz at the sanctuary at Holywell that Fumagalli published on his FB page.

We continue to scroll through the pages of the biography, published by *Radio Spada*. Published in 1904, *Hadrian the Seventh* (pp. 173-187) is without a doubt one of Baron Corvo's principal works, and also his autobiography: *Hadrian the Seventh* is Baron Corvo, who imagines himself being elevated to the Seat of Peter, after having been rejected from the seminary. And this imaginary Pope, whom Baron Corvo identifies himself to be, is based on Alexander VI, the second Pope of the house of Borgia, so much so that in the novel, *Hadrian the Seventh* is called "the third Borgia" (p. 177, footnote 551). Another contemporary Englishman, Aleister Crowley, identified himself with Alexander VI to the point that he reputed himself to be a reincarnation of him, and therefore inserted himself into the canon of the "gnostic mass" he had created ⁽¹⁹⁾. Now, judging from Rolfe's admirer, Luca Fumagalli, "**there persists**" in *Hadrian the Seventh* as well "**characteristic elements of decadent literature like the latent theme of sexual perversion and a magnificently**

elaborated style that complements the ritual of the Church" (p. 180, footnote 563): where Fumagalli cites - without contradiction - another author). Rolfe's Pope says of himself: "*I place no restraints on sight, hearing, taste, touch, or smell; except as much as my natural sympathies and antipathies delight me. I cultivate them, refine them and sharpen them, but never mortify them. I rarely sacrifice myself. And, if I do, I find myself deriving elements of aesthetic enjoyment from my sacrifice*" (pp. 181-182). Integral aestheticism, integral sensualism, but certainly not integral Catholicism (for which it is enough imagining oneself being a reborn Pope Borgia). Like Rolfe, *Hadrian the Seventh* is a smoker, and the image of a smoking Pope will pass from Baron Corvo to Sorrentino, for the series much loved by *Radio Spada*, *The Young Pope* ⁽²⁰⁾. And in *Hadrian the Seventh*, the "sacred and profane" (p. 183) go together, as do the "marvelous and disgusting" (p. 187).

Baron Corvo's other great work that made him famous is "*The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole*". The title is taken from the *Simposio* of Plato, where he wrote: "*Desire and the Pursuit of the Whole is called Love*" ⁽²¹⁾. For those unfamiliar with his work, I offer a brief presentation from the latest Italian edition (Castelvecchi): "*Nicholas Crabbe is an English writer who is staying in Venice. Intolerant and impatient, he decides to change the air and embarks on a boat trip to the south. Amidst the rubble of a Calabrian village devastated by an earthquake, he saves a sixteen-year-old girl, Ermenegilda. Sweet and asexual, the adolescent is an ambiguous figure whom Crabbe takes under his protection. However, once back in Venice with his androgynous companion, the writer is once again assailed by the paranoia which always makes him 'mistake a willing friend for a lurking enemy'. An undeclared autobiography of a brilliant and tormented author; 'The Desire and the Pursuit of the Whole' is the desperate confession of a man who did not know how to love and was unable to be loved, an erotic 'reverie' in which delusions of persecution and egocentrism, religious and esoteric inspirations, alternate against the languid and picturesque*

backdrop of the Venetian lagoon. The title refers to the Platonic theme of the lost half, the ideal love that makes the being complete. Written around 1909, the novel remained unpublished until Rolfe's death because of his ill-concealed allusion to a homosexual relationship and was published posthumously only in 1934."

(The cover of the latest Italian edition of *The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole* by F. Rolfe, Baron Corvo. It was reproduced on Fumagalli's



FB page, and also on *Radio Spada*, in the audio edition of the conference held by L. Fumagalli interviewed by Piergiorgio Seveso in the lecture hall at CAP, Catholic University of Milan, on 12/13/2016).

Even in this major work, therefore, real life and literary fiction are more

intertwined than ever. The setting is Venice, and Rolfe came to Venice in 1908, and died there on October 25, 1913. There he will give the best of himself, so to speak, with *"the venting of repressed inclinations, which manifested themselves with great virulence upon contact with the exotic Venetian environment"*; Rolfe, *"in the most genuine decadent tradition, had his hair dyed flaming red (it is recorded that Baudelaire dyed his green); his gondola, richly decorated, in the final period of this life aroused comments from all of Venice. Rolfe, who before had been so shy, so fearful of scandal, now offered himself shamelessly to criticism"* (pp. 214-215, footnote 669, citing Marengo Vaglio)⁽²²⁾. But how did Rolfe arrive in Venice? He went together with Richard MacGillivray Dawkins (1871-1955), *"an archaeologist of international fame, among the most important scholars of ancient Greece"* but also a homosexual who, when he met Baron Corvo on September 7, 1907 at the Pirie-Gordon's, soon realized *"the sentimental abnormality that bound him to his friend"*, as Fumagalli wrote (pp. 204-205). The two decided then to take a trip

together to Venice (January 1908, p. 206), to *"take photos"*. We already know the kind of photos the two Englishmen will take, and Fumagalli tells us: *"it wasn't long before he decided to rent a 'pupparin', a light boat, a type of 'sandolo' smaller than the gondola. As the oarsmen, he selected two boys, Carlo Caenazzo and Ermenegildo 'Zildo' Vianello (in a footnote: Dawkins 'swore that Baicolo [Zildo], was an exact copy of Lysippos's Agias of Delphi and wanted to photograph his body in the sun, against the backdrop of a whitewashed wall' F. Rolfe, An Ossuary of the Northern Lagoon, in Venice Letters. Three Stories about Venice. ... The Professor and Corvo were not the first Englishmen to fall in love with handsome Venetian gondoliers. Addington Symonds and Horatio Brown had already shown a similar predilection...).* (...) *He and the professor, also an expert photographer, on at least one occasion, portrayed the naked bodies of Carlo and Zildo, arranged in imitation of certain Greek sculptures"* (p. 217)⁽²³⁾. The more attentive readers will have already recognized in this Zildo Vianello, an underage gondolier, the Zildo/Zilda of the novel, a Zilda who dresses up as Zildo, which succeeds perfectly since in real life he was in fact Zildo. In the book, Fumagalli admits, *"the subject of the writer's homosexuality is especially latent: Ermenegilda – inspired by the homonymous 'Zildo' Vianello – has an androgynous appearance and her nickname, as well as the clothes she wears (that is, a male name, Zildo, and male clothes, ed.), are imposed on her by Crabbe to hide her femininity.*

Although the protagonist declares that his aim is to protect himself from gossip, the subterfuge that Corvo adopts to escape from censorship is clear enough" (p. 249): to have us believe in a love story between a man and a woman (even though dressed as a man) when in reality it is a love story between a man (Baron Corvo) and a seventeen-year-old boy (the gondolier Zildo Vianello): Platonically, *"the two halves of one whole"* (p. 248), a second half that *"physically, of course, must be a seventeen-year-old boy, because this is Crabbe's*

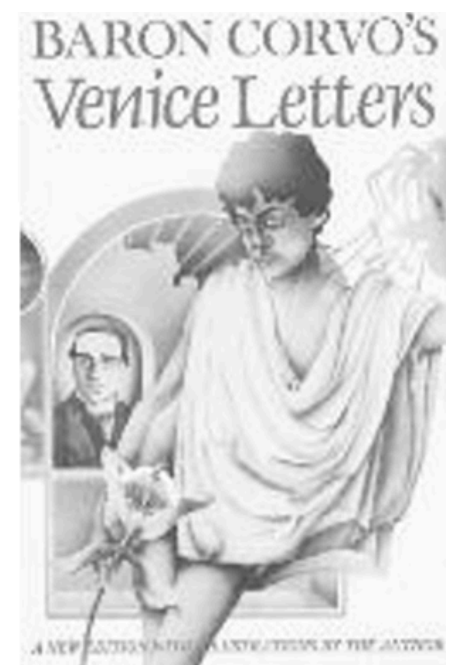
physical type; but a boy, unfortunately (...) to whom neither the Church nor the State will give its consent to marry. Consequently, Zildo the boy, is decreed Zilda the girl” (Auden, cited by Fumagalli, footnote 799, p. 252). Zildo is “a Venetian Toto” (p. 252). “This time the divine friend has Ermenegilda’s eyes, that half which, according to the Platonic myth described in the Symposium, can fulfill a man’s existence. The final marriage, not very believably describing the crowning of the heterosexual relationship, nevertheless leaves the novel unharmed in its beauty” (p. 253). Despite all this, for Fumagalli the novel “is certainly not a manifesto of homosexual propaganda”: the “relationship between the two” is “pure and angelic.” But Frederick Rolfe and Zildo Vianello (and the other Venetian boys they frequented) were surely no angels. Fumagalli’s book tries to make us believe it: yes, Rolfe was a homosexual, but “active sexuality” wasn’t demonstrated (p. 39, footnote 100). Confirming this hypothesis (the chaste life of Baron Corvo), according to Fumagalli, is the “twenty year vow of chastity” that Rolfe made with the hope of one day being able to be ordained a priest, after being expelled for the second time from the seminary, this time in Rome, in 1980 (p. 64). It occurs to me that he may have taken a vow of celibacy rather than chastity, since immediately after his vow we find him in the company of young Toto and his friends portrayed in “homoerotic” poses (as his own biographer says) despite his vow of chastity (the violation of which involves, let us remember, sacrilege). In any case, since it is neither moral nor appropriate, as Fumagalli rightly writes, to spy through the keyhole, we cannot or should not say more about Rolfe’s private life (in the absence of a trial for sodomy as in the case of Oscar Wilde or Simeon Solomon). We cannot or should not, unless the author himself throws open the door to his intimate life, and describes in great detail his homosexual activity with the young rowers or gondoliers of the lagoon, with terms that Fumagalli defines as being “on the verge of pornography” (p. 341) but which anyone who has read those autobiographical testimonies knows

them to be far beyond this limit ⁽²⁴⁾. There are about twenty letters (now collected in a volume under the title of *Venice Letters*) that Rolfe wrote between 1909 and 1910 (towards the end of his life, and therefore long since he had converted to Catholicism).

Fumagalli gives us the background to this correspondence. In the summer of 1909, “his old favorite”, John Gambriel Nicholson, wrote to Baron Corvo who was in Venice (we have already seen who he is and we recall that he was part of the secret homosexual society called the Order of Chaeronea). Nicholson recommended to Rolfe two “middle-aged acquaintances” who would soon be coming to Venice; Rolfe’s task was to “introduce them to the homosexual underworld of the city” (p. 241), which, therefore – and Nicholson knew this well – must have been quite familiar to Rolfe. The “two tourists” (today it is spoken of as “sexual tourism” with pedophilia purposes), were named Charles Masson Fox and Cockerton (1862-1919): Cockerton was the son of an English businessman (p. 241); Fox (1866-1935) was a wealthy Quaker, originally from Cornwall, famous as a chess player but unfortunately also as a pederast, so much so that he became caught up in a trial against him (for having corrupted a minor) brought about by the mother of a sixteen-year-old who was blackmailing him, a trial which destroyed his reputation (1912-13). In addition to Nicholson, Fox was also friends with the painter Tuke, of whom we have already spoken on the occasion of Rolfe’s stay in Christchurch, where we saw that the English pederasts were a little world about which everyone knew. Rolfe therefore presented to his fellow countrymen the teenagers with whom he himself frequented. It is sordid to say it, but it was dealing more or less with prostitution, and Baron Corvo was the pimp: Fumagalli himself writes of it in sweeter terms: “in those years of rampant poverty, accompanying rich foreign gentlemen for compensation meant for many young people a supplement to hard and poorly paid work” (p. 241). There is no reason to think that Fox and his friend’s wish was not accommodated by Rolfe, “accompanying” the young gondoliers

(strictly minors). But that was not enough for Rolfe. He then wrote to Fox, who had returned to England from his “tourist” trip, these aforementioned letters, and begged him to destroy them as he himself would destroy his replies (Rolfe did so, Fox did not, and that is why the ‘*Venice Letters*’ were published only in the 1970s). Rolfe then speaks to Fox about the homosexual loves of his young friends: “Fausto, Piero, Zildo, Giuspette and Giorgio ‘the Greek’ also called Zorzi” (p. 241, note 767); some have been better identified: Zildo Vianello, the protagonist of Rolfe's novel; Zildo's friend already mentioned, Carlo Caenazzo; Piero Venerando; Amadeo Amadei (who revealed to Rolfe the details of the Moltke-Eulenburg scandal known as the ‘round table’ scandal, a brothel for homosexuals located first in Venice and then in Padua, where minors, including those in Rolfe's circle, prostituted themselves), and Giorgio Cesana, the aforementioned Zorzi the Greek (in reality a Greek-Corfiot Jew)⁽²⁵⁾, at the time fourteen years old, who won the 1906 Athens Olympic Games as coxswain for the team of the Reale Società Canottieri Bucintoro, a club of which Rolfe was an ordinary member, frequenting it assiduously and finding refuge there in his wanderings (pp. 220, 222, 226-227, 253: Zildo Vianello was also a member of the Bucintoro). In two letters dated November 28, 1909 and January 20-27, 1910, Rolfe talks to Fox about the love affairs between Zildo and Piero, and their quarrels, so Rolfe ‘latched on’ to Piero by taking him to a restaurant (with Fox's money). On January 27, in Burano, Piero sells himself to Rolfe, who later recalls to Fox as usual all the details of the relationship that took place in Burano (the description, as I said, is unreportable here)⁽²⁶⁾. Rolfe suggests to Piero that they go and live together, at Fox's expense of course, on the condition that he sells himself to his English friend too. Again in exchange for the apartment, Rolfe suggests to Fox a thirteen-year-old, about whom he minutely describes his physical qualities (see Pollaud-Dulian; here too I omit the citation for decency). **This would be enough to forever**

disgust not just a Christian person, but any simply normal and honest one. But the book published by *Radio Spada* tries to diminish responsibilities for its “integral Catholic” hero (poor integral Catholics!). The question then arises as to whether what Rolfe says really happened. Mind you: no one disputes that Rolfe introduced his two “sex tourist” friends into homosexual circles in Venice, no one even disputes that Rolfe proposed to Fox to provide him with young Venetians again (the letters prove it), for a fee (payment of the young people, and payment of the mediator, i.e. Rolfe). Rolfe – to make money – even suggests to Fox to write pornographic books to sell in Paris or Antwerp, or that he might send two Venetian boys to England (but he has to make up his mind quickly, otherwise they will grow up). The whole discussion is about whether Rolfe really did what he did with Piero, or Zildo, or with the boys he offered to others. The answer seems obvious: he says so himself, and what’s more in a letter that he asks to be burned, and which therefore should not have been published. The matter is so clear that the first biographer of Baron Corvo, who is the originator of the ‘cult’ of the character, does not hesitate to believe it of Baron Corvo himself, and writes about him: “*Not only did he openly declare himself one of the patrons of those slums of homosexuality that exist in all cities,*



Cover of Rolfe's
“*Venice Letters*”

but he had also become a hardened corrupter of youths and a seducer of innocents". So says A. J. Symons in his *In Search of Baron Corvo*; but, according to Fumagalli, Symons may have exaggerated in order to make his book more palatable or to appear impartial towards Rolfe (p. 242, footnote 770). "*Symons's arguments, which speak of corruption of innocence, of dishonest trade, and of depravity, collapse, at least in part, when put to the test of facts*" "*There is no other proof, except for the very letters signed by Rolfe, that what was described actually happened*" (p. 242); in short, we shouldn't even believe Baron Corvo himself (as if an admission by the guilty party was not the ultimate evidence). "*One is led to imagine, given the lively and long descriptions, that everything is reduced to a figment of the writer's imagination, interested only in the money of a rich benefactor*" (p. 243) especially since Rolfe's writings are "*generally chaste*" (!) and Rolfe himself had made the famous vow of chastity with the intention, when it expired in 1910, of renewing it for another 20 years (p. 243, and footnote 772), despite the licentious readings that were his habit (p. 243, footnote 772) ⁽²⁷⁾. We must think that *Radio Spada*, and Baron Corvo, have a strange concept of chastity.

Luca Fumagalli, in his biography of Baron Corvo, omitted embarrassing and decidedly scandalous citations from the *Venice Letters* ⁽²⁶⁾, limiting himself to qualifying them as "*vivid and long*" (p. 243). As I said, I too decided to do the same, although the simple reading of any extract of these writings would be amply sufficient to understand what I am trying to explain to the reader of this article; but a minimum of modesty prevents me from transcribing the letters in question. Anyone who wants to get to know it in order to make an informed judgment can read the book (the references are cited in the footnote) or consult Giovanni Dall'Orto's article 'online', which contains a large excerpt, at the following not recommendable address: [\http://www.giovannidallorto.com/saggistoria/rolfe/rolfe.html ⁽²⁹⁾]. Reading these pages is sufficient to close the debate, and understand that

denouncing said articles does not mean being a Pharisee and inveterate stoner, much less with a bad aim ⁽³⁰⁾. The aim at least, unfortunately, is very correct, and Pharisees are those who pretend not to see and not to know. But let us also imagine for a moment that Rolfe "Baron Corvo" did not write the letters he wrote, did not say he did what he did, and that all that remains of him is the theory of purely ideal ephobic platonic love, without any carnal consequences. Would this return to paganism be acceptable? This theorizing of pederastic homosexual love along the lines of the ancient Greeks? To seek the divine friend, the other self, in an adolescent of the same sex? The answer for a Christian is only one, unequivocal, definitive: NO. And a Christian who discovers such inclinations in himself, should not feed them under the pretext of art, literature, philosophy, sport, photography, painting and even more so religion, but should mortify and crucify such inclinations. Unfortunately, the cultural pages of *Radio Spada* go in the diametrically opposite direction to what I have just proposed.

CONCLUSION: "*His literary sensibility,*" writes Hanson (in *Decadence and Catholicism*, p. 330, quoted by Fumagalli, p. 125, footnote 370), "*was a mixture of aestheticism, pederasty, and Catholicism.*" It is precisely this mixture that disgusts us.

Anglo-Catholicism and homosexuality

Catholic "because" homosexual, we wrote. This surely does not mean that Catholics are homosexual or that in any way the Catholic faith or Catholic morals display any weakness or complacency for the vice against nature: quite the opposite. What I mean to say is that the much vaunted decadent Catholic Faith of the characters of art and literature presented in the cultural pages of *Radio Spada* is not united to the homosexual tendency (demonstrated or at least suspected) of the artist in question by coincidence, to the point that it is legitimate to pose questions about why so many authors (of so called decadentism, or

aestheticism, or dandyism) have combined sympathy for Catholicism with their homosexual tendencies. In the novel by Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited*, so loved by Fumagalli, one of the characters exclaims: “Beware of Anglo-Catholics, they are all sodomites with disgusting accents”. For Fumagalli (p. 30) it is “a trite cliché.” As for the “disgusting accents” I couldn’t say; as for Anglo-Catholicism, there is no need to generalize (in this case it certainly is a trite - and slanderous - cliché) but neither should we avoid asking ourselves what gave birth to this “cliché”. Anglo-Catholicism is understood - in itself - to be a tendency within the Anglican Communion, both on a theological level (the Oxford Movement, the Tractarians) and a practical and liturgical level (Ritualism) which seeks to reconcile Catholicism and Anglicanism, or seeks to demonstrate that Anglicanism is the true traditional Catholicism, or one of its expressions. The **ecumenical movement** owes much to the Anglo-Catholics (Lord Halifax, *Malines Conversations*). Among the exponents of the Oxford Movement, some remained Protestant (Pusey), others converted to Catholicism (Newman). If the theological aspect of Anglo-Catholicism concerns the study of ecumenism, and in part also the roots of modernism ⁽³¹⁾, the pastoral aspect (liturgy, religious life, medievalism) has a greater relevance to our theme. In his own explanation for the attraction that the Catholic Church had for English artists between the 19th and 20th centuries (including Latin and liturgy, a decaying museum-church) Fumagalli gives, as an example, in addition to Baron Corvo, a list of converts: “among the intellectuals who became Catholic, Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley, Robbie Ross, John Gray, Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, Henry Harland and Alfred Douglas stand out for their notoriety” (p. 125, note 371). Some of them we talk about in this article; many of them *Radio Spada* presented to their readers. They all have in common their Anglo-Saxon culture, their love for the arts, their conversion to Catholicism, and

almost all, their homosexuality ⁽³²⁾. Is it just a coincidence? No, it is not a coincidence, **David H. Hilliard**, of *Flinders University* of Adelaide (Australia) seems to say in his article on *Anglo-Catholicism and Homosexuality* ⁽³³⁾ which Luca Fumagalli knows well, even quoting it in his essay on Baron Corvo and in his bibliography (p. 302). I will try to present to the reader a summary of this article, in which we find characters whom we have already met or will later meet, but also others whom we will not have to deal with further. The theme of linking Anglo-Catholicism and homosexuality - neither Hilliard nor Fumagalli ignores it - was part of the anti-Catholic polemical arsenal of the Protestants, including the “angry” Charles Kingsley, to whom Fumagalli dedicated a conference published on *Radio Spada* August 5, 2017 ⁽³⁴⁾. The practice of celibacy by some still Anglican exponents of Anglo-Catholicism, and the revival of male religious orders of common life, aroused the suspicion of the Protestant reverend, for whom this refusal of marriage was a clear indication of tendencies not only Catholic, but homosexual (although the term was not in fashion at that time). Obviously, the fact itself is only significant to Protestant prejudices; but even in our days in the “traditionalist” movement for example, we see how, alongside heroic defenders of the Faith, liturgy and Tradition, there are others (especially in the *Ecclesia Dei* and *Summorum Pontificum* movements) who, attracted not so much by doctrine as by aestheticism, have been involved in accusations and serious suspicions, or even sometimes in less than correct episodes regarding sexual morality and homosexuality. Returning to Anglo-Catholicism, and to David Hilliard, the article begins with the figure of Cardinal **Newman** and some of his collaborators such as **Richard Hurrell Froude** († 1836) and F.W. Faber. The Protestants’ suspicions against Cardinal Newman are now known to the general public, after his “beatification”, in particular because of his close friendship with the inseparable Ambrose St John: after the death of his

friend, Newman took to sleeping in his bed, and asked to be buried with him in the same tomb.

If in this regard one can only speak of ambiguity, or of sublimated tendencies, the same cannot be said, for Hilliard, in certain cases of religious (Anglican) communities that gave rise to scandals. Our author cites the case of some Anglican religious communities, such as the Society of St. Augustine of the Anglican missionary bishop Edward Twelles, or that of the Anglican “Benedictine monastery” of the “eccentric and extravagant” Father Ignatius of Jesus (born **Joseph Leicester Lyne**, 1837-1908) hit by two scandals: the first in 1864, caused by a love letter from a certain Brother Augustine to a printer, and the second in 1868 when a certain Brother Stanislaus (**James Barret Hugues**) ran away with a boy. The refounder of “monasticism” in England then ended up miserably in the circle of the ‘little churches’ (Villatte). Another monastic community examined is that of the Order of St. Augustine (1867) of the eccentric **George Nugée** (1819-1892) who founded a priory in Walworth, south London, in 1878, regularly frequented by the aesthete and Renaissance historian **Walter Pater** (to whom we will return). His close friend was **Richard Charles Jackson** (1851-1923), a lay brother of the monastery (later also involved in the ‘little churches’), who wrote him a rather ambiguous poem. Jackson did not hide the fact that the protagonist of Pater’s novel, *Marius the Epicurean*, was inspired by him. Another bizarre monastic foundation is the Anglican Congregation of Primitive Observance of the Holy Rule of St. Benedict, founded in 1896 by **Benjamin (Aelred) Carlyle** (1874-1955). The monastic name evokes that of St. Aelred of Rievaulx, a medieval Cistercian abbot († 1167), much loved by homosexuals for having sung of “spiritual friendship”⁽³⁵⁾. Carlyle founded a monastery on Caldey Island, in Wales, where he became abbot in 1906. Mass in Latin, sumptuous rites, and recreational readings of Baron Corvo’s “*Stories Toto Told me*”, with nude sea bathing in the summer months. Fumagalli also knows and cites

the episode, quoting Goldhill’s book on the Bensons: “*Benjamin Alfred (sic) Carlyle ‘founded in 1906 (an Anglican congregation) on Caldey Island, near the southern coast of Wales. (...) A practice that Carlyle introduced for his monks, little in line with the rule of St. Benedict, was that of bathing naked, in groups, while he, self-appointed abbot, read stories from Rolfe’s ‘Stories Toto told me’*”. Fumagalli’s comment? “*Even in the crowded galaxy of non-Catholics there were those who appreciated Corvo’s stories*” (*Baron Corvo*, p. 118, footnote 356). To the Rolfian or Corvinian bathing in Adamic attire, we must add to the bizarre spirituality of this “Benedictine” the unorthodox and overly enthusiastic practice of the liturgical kiss. In March 1913 he and 22 of his monks were welcomed into the Catholic Church by Dom Marmion. Later Aelred Carlyle left religious life, entertained an intimate friendship with **Peter Anson** (1889-1976), also a spiritualist and writer, also a convert to Catholicism and monk in the Carlyle’s monastery (he will be his biographer). Along with his intimate friend **Gerard Manley Hopkins** (future Jesuit, of whom we will speak again), **Digby Mackworth Dolben** is considered a Uranian poet, in the climate of Eton and Oxford. In the High (Anglican) Church, Hilliard cites the case of Henry Scott Holland and Ronald Knox, in the university circle, in the relationships between teachers and students, and that of George Douglas Tinling with Robert Gray Scurfield; George Campbell Ommanney, vicar, who also asked to be buried alongside his old pastor, as examples of the same problem in relationships between pastor and vicar in an Anglican parish. Hilliard then talks about literary and artistic magazines with homosexual sensibilities like *The Artist* (where Rolfe wrote), *The Spirit Lamp* of Lord Alfred Douglas, and *The Camaleon*, of **John Francis Bloxam** (1873-1928). The human story of John Francis Bloxam is particularly interesting for our subject. Bloxam was an Oxfordian who received sacred orders in the Anglican “church”: he was of ritualistic and Anglo-Catholic sensibility,

celebrating the “mass” in Latin: Lord Halifax, a pioneer of ecumenism, attended his parish, as did his son Lord Irwin, Viceroy of India. Bloxam was a full-fledged exponent of English decadentism (cited by Ellis Hanson in his *Decadence and Catholicism*, Harvard University Press, 1977). Like Baron Corvo, and all of them, he mixed liturgy and pederasty in his literary work. In the first issue of his magazine *The Chameleon*, in fact, he published a novella that caused a scandal: *The Priest and the Acolyte*. The altar boy in question is a 14-year-old boy, the Anglican priest’s lover. The tragic love ends up in a “liturgical” suicide: the two die embracing each other after having drunk poison from the chalice of the “mass”. In the same first issue (the only one), Bloxam published *Two Loves*, about the famous lover of Oscar Wilde, Lord Douglas (the text was presented at the trial against Wilde), and in *The Artist*, Bloxam published another novella of the same genre, *A Summer Hour*. Hilliard then cites the case of **André Raffalovich**, a Jewish author of *Uranism and Unisexuality* (Raffalovich’s principal work on homosexuality published in 1896, the year of his conversion to Catholicism, in which he explains that unisexuality or homosexuality is a normal manifestation of human sexuality, to be lived in chastity and supported by friends). We will say more about Raffalovich later. Hilliard then mentions **Rolfe (Baron Corvo)**, **Lord Douglas**, **Lionel Johnson**, and **John Gray**, who became a parish priest at Edinburg, Wilde’s first lover, and then a close friend of Raffalovich. Having spoken about Lord Douglas and John Gray, how can we not talk about Oscar Wilde, he too a convert to Catholicism, albeit *in articulo mortis*. Hilliard recalls that during his famous sodomy trial, Wilde was helped by an Anglo-Catholic ‘priest’, socialist and aesthete, **Stewart Headlam**. Hilliard’s list continues and we come to...Mons. **Benson who, still an Anglican, rejects marriage as inconceivable**; and so how does one explain his passionate friendship with Rolfe (pp. 15 ss)? The two write to each other not just every week, but every day. Many uranians who wrote to their male

lovers were Anglican clergymen, like Edwin Emmanuel **Bradford**, Samuel E. **Cottam**, George Gabriel **Scott Gillet**, Edward **Cracroft Lefroy**, Edmund **St. Gascoigne Mackie**. Cottam and Bradford were secret members of the Order of Chaeronea, founded at the end 1890, a homosexual order. Among them, **Montague Summers** (we will talk about him later), a member of the **British Society for the Studies of Sex Psychology**, whose biographer is the Carmelite Father **Brocard Sewell**. Still among the Anglo-Catholics, who later became partly Catholic, Hilliard cites the *Society of Saints Peter and Paul* founded in 1910 by **Maurice Child** and **Ronald Knox** (son of the “bishop” of Manchester, a friend of Evelyn Waugh, Ronald Knox converted to Catholicism). Maurice Child had the reputation of being a homosexual and a “sybarite”. And the list continues with Tom Driberg, Lord Bradwell, MP, Anglo-Catholic and homosexual, and then moves on to literature, where the inevitable mention of *Brideshead* is cited. Were all Anglican-Catholics homosexual? Certainly not (if anything, they were all ecumenists). Many, however, were, and this point of view can clarify the reason for a (in principle) antithetical pairing, between homosexuality and Catholicism - which is like a trademark in Rolfe.

Occultist “Catholic”?

Hugo Pratt, the creator of the characters of the Corto Maltese comic books, was initiated into the Lodge of Hermes of the Grand Orient of Venice and to the Obedience of the Grand Lodge of Palazzo Vitelleschi on November 19, 1975. In one Corto Maltese episode entitled *Favola di Venezia [Fable of Venice]*, the protagonist finds himself in a meeting of a Masonic Lodge of Venice, a city to which he had been attracted by a letter from his friend Baron Corvo in search of the “Clavicle of Solomon”, a magical talisman that features mysterious engravings. On February 13, 2016, regarding it, I wrote to Luca Fumagalli:

“*The attraction is such that you makes (almost) everything about Rolfe known to your readers and admirers, even Hugo Pratt’s comic strips on Corto Maltese, in a story that does indeed talk about Baron Corvo, but links him to the esotericism so dear to this strict observance Masonic author (the entire story is strictly Masonic: https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Favola_di_Venezia)”.*

In his biography of Baron Corvo, the author cites Pratt and the Freemasonic setting of the story with a single comment: “*Pratt was a devotee of Rolfe*” (p. 24 and footnote 53), and we have already asked ourselves how a Freemason could ever have been a devotee of an “integral Catholic” (as *Radio Spada* wants us to believe Baron Corvo was) ⁽³⁶⁾.

Fumagalli, devil’s advocate, wrote often of Rolfe’s estrangement from Freemasonry. Though C. Cruise (2004) believed that the Order of the Most Holy Sofia, founded by his friends Harry Luke and Charles Pirie-Gordon, to which Baron Corvo immediately joined, had a Masonic or initiatory character, Fumagalli considers this impossible, as Rolfe wrote, in *Desire and the Pursuit of the Whole*: “*I, a Catholic, do not assist at any function that is not celebrated by Catholics and I consider this interference by Freemasons and pastors with dismay combined with disgust*” (p. 200, footnote 629; it is paradoxical, however, that his largest benefactor, who will acquire the copyright to Rolfe’s works, will be none other than a pastor and a Freemason!). The same cannot be said of his hero’s estrangement from esotericism, however, which is coessential to Freemasonry. Baron Corvo firmly believes in **astrology** (pp. 34, 193, 205, 208, 233): the Crab (Cancer constellation) and the Moon became his esoteric symbols and inspired the names of his characters (Crabbe): “*Colin Cruise goes too far - according to Fumagalli - when he tries to demonstrate the existence of iconic-symbolic analogies between the cover of 'Hadrian the Seventh' – where Cancer and the Moon once again make a fine show of*

themselves – and that of 'The Book of Sacred Magic' by MacGregor Mathers, a volume of magic and theosophy” (p. 193, note 605). The author instead could have easily investigated these ties we will talk about - between certain English literary circles and occultist sects like the **Golden Dawn** which was headed by Mathers himself, brother-in-law of philosopher Henri Bergson, and an early friend and later enemy of the diabolical sorcerer Aleister Crowley, circles about which we have spoken at length in writing about Ezra Pound ⁽³⁷⁾. The very pseudonym, Baron Corvo [Corvo is the Italian for “crow”], could be derived from symbology and alchemy, Fumagalli wrote on p. 75. And Baron Corvo dabbled - as did his friend Benson about which we already mentioned - in **spiritism** (pp. 85-86, 113, 116, 230-231), to the point that Baron Corvo is spoken of as having “*a double faith: that of Christianity and that of spiritism*” (p. 116). The attempt to defend him are a bit ridiculous: Rolfe “*abhorred spiritism*” (p. 86) but his friend William Thomas Stead was able to convince him to “*participate in a magical session of evocation*” (p. 86) and “*introduced him to the world of spiritism*” (we are in 1892). Even more ridiculous is his official defense on p. 116: “*while it is true, as we shall see later, that the occult and magic played a part in Rolfe's life, they were at most a pastime to dispel boredom, far less important than the Catholic religion, which Rolfe always approached with the utmost seriousness.*” How serious is the Catholicism of a person who indulges in **magic** and the occult ⁽³⁸⁾, let the reader judge. Fumagalli himself, in treating the friendship between Baron Corvo and Mons. Benson, describes them as passing time “*between white magic, swimming competitions, and inevitable cigarettes*” (p. 195, footnote 614). Not different from his literary works. In *Don Renato* (1909) ⁽³⁹⁾, the character in which Rolfe identifies himself is Father Gherardo Pinarj, a priest (as he aspired to be) who dabbled in “*experiments of white magic*” (p. 156). “*In don Renato*” - Fumagalli writes - “*Renaissance reality*” is

“characterized by pagan reflections, in which prayer, magic and absurd superstitions coexist”: “the cult of physical beauty (...) reappears... in the unconditional admiration of the beauty, strength, and grace of don Renato and the pages of the palace. A scene in which paganism and Christianity are more clearly mixed is the one describing the expedition to Nemi lake, the night bathing, the search for magical herbs, the dancing around the bonfire like ‘furious Corybantes’⁽⁴⁰⁾, the dispersing into the woods, the waiting for dawn to dive back into the water, the trek across the countryside to assist at mass”⁽⁴¹⁾ (this final mass certainly does not render Christian the practice, so loved by Rolfe in real life, of bathing nude with the uptenth minors).

The “integral Catholic” Rolfe does not hesitate to publish a novel (*The Weird of the Wanderer*, 1912)⁽⁴²⁾ from publisher William Rider, the director of the *Occult Review* (p. 231). You will be pleased to learn that Balthazar, one of the Magi kings, is, in Baron Corvo’s imagination, ...he himself, that is, Nicholas Crabbe, who “thanks to his study of magical arts” goes back in time, first to ancient Egypt, then is reincarnated as Odysseus (Ulysses), finally becoming an Olympian divinity (pp. 231-235): the book does not please Fumagalli, according to whom however it retains a “Christian ideal”. Another of his novels is defined as an “exoteric hoax” (p. 235).

Fumagalli describes to us a Baron Corvo who is - as a Catholic - hostile to Jews, Freemasons and Protestants (truthfully, he was hostile to the whole world), but can this be so? We already saw that Giorgio Cesana, his young lover, was Jewish. Temple Scott was Jewish (1864-1939: his real name was Henry Solomon Isaacs) (p. 135) who asked Baron Corvo to translate the *Rubaiyat* into prose, “*Persian poetic compositions by Omar Khayyam, mathematician and astronomer of the XII century.*” “*The Rubaiyat ‘responds perfectly to a generation in revolt against the dogmas of religion; and Omar’s pagan thought dives a poetic form to a new materialism that later became the*

theory of Darwin’ (...) the true protagonists are impudent skepticism and epicureanism” (p. 135). “Every prohibition is mocked, every imposition is demolished by the hedonism of a man satisfied with his own ignorance, who toasts a reality whose meaning he is unable to grasp” (p. 136). Yet “even if Omar in his verses represented himself as a heretic, a decadent avant la lettre, the seriousness of his studies and his doctrinal depth have raised the suspicion among several scholars that the *Rubaiyat* actually hide esoteric religious teachings behind an allegorical language” (footnote 409). No doubt, even this literary work of Baron Corvo is certainly due to his heart being “swollen with Faith”. If Baron Corvo ended up arguing with the Jewish Scott (who then became the object of his arrows like all his former friends) the same didn’t happen, at the end of his life, with a Protestant pastor, a Rosicrucian Freemason, to whom he entrusted the rights to his works. This was the ‘Reverend’ **Justus Stephen Serjeant** (1857-1942) who was “a Freemason, of strict Rosicrucian observance” “and it is probable that” in Venice “the two also spoke of magic and esotericism” (p. 257). He wasn’t the first Protestant clergyman with whom he had formed a bond of friendship: in Venice he counted among his benefactors Mr. & Mrs. Ragg, that is, the Anglican chaplain of Venice and his wife (also mocked by Corvo in his writings). The ‘canon’ Ragg introduced him to the home of the historian Horatio Brown, a friend and the biographer of John Addington Symonds, also linked to Tuke, Gleeson White, Kains-Jackson and Nicholson (p. 225). A nice circle of homosexuals: “Professor (Dawkins) and Corvo were not the first Englishmen to fall in love with the handsome Venetian gondoliers. Addington Symonds and Horatio Brown had already shown a similar predilection (see Reade, *Sexual Heretics*, pp. 22, 45)” (p. 217, footnote 675)⁽⁴³⁾. The Rev. Freemason Serjeant fared better than Canon Ragg, since he, in the end, enjoyed the rights to Rolfe’s literary work, even though in truth it was the

English Freemason who supported the writer, rather than the other way around.

“The Song of the Crow”. A sentimental journey toward the diabolical.

The prologue of Fumagalli's book is entitled: “*The Raven's Song*” [Corvo is raven in Italian, ed]. The last lines (disturbingly) reveal its meaning: “*Kafka noted that 'no one sings more purely than those who dwell in the deepest depths of Hell; what we take for the song of angels is their song'. It is the same song of the unfortunate and the vanquished: the song of Baron Corvo*” (p. 31). I hope I am wrong, but I see in this sentence and in the reflection that concludes it, an echo of Milton's poetry. William Blake (1757-1827), a great admirer of Milton and illustrator of the epic poem, said of him that “*he was a true poet, and was on the devil's side without knowing it*”.

Describing himself in *Desire and the Pursuit of the Whole*, and making allusion to *Hadrian the Seventh*, Rolfe writes: “*He hated the gods who made him incapable of doing more. If those divine beings had had the wisdom to make him a supreme autocrat like the pope of Rome and assure for him the inexhaustible riches of a Rockefeller, he was the man capable of showing the world how to remedy disasters.*” Here, reading these words, we ask ourselves if, at times, like Baudelaire, the ‘father’ of all decadents, Rolfe hated God. The satanic is not foreign to Rolfe's prose (p. 253, footnote 802: satanic and non-satanic): a lesser known book by Rolfe, *Hubert's Arthur* ⁽⁴⁴⁾, presents a Middle Ages described as “*an unhealthy complacency 'in torments and massacres', where the obscene mixes with the holy and the diabolical...*” (p. 238). **Unhealthy, obscene, holy and diabolical:** we couldn't say it better. It is just the unhealthy mixture of the Catholic faith (the “holy”) with a homosexuality, or rather pederasty (the “obscene”) that carries with it the “diabolical”, that is, an inverted and sacreligious religiosity that also manifests itself in Rolfe's interest in the occult, and still more of the other exponents of decadentism. And on this point, we will return.

A sad death

Frederick Rolfe died on the night of October 25, 1913 in a hotel room in Venice, of a heart attack. He was discovered in the morning by a last friend, Thomas Pennefather Wade-Brown, who will commit suicide in 1918 (p. 261). He died of a heart attack while lacing up his shoes (p. 262). The English Consul, GERAL Campbell, after having recognized the body in the morgue, searched the room of the deceased for traces of a possible heir; he found, instead “*horrified*”, “*letters, drawings and diaries enough to provoke a hundred scandals (...) blackmail notes and photographs that revealed the writer's unnatural inclinations.*” The Consul “*tried to get rid of the scabrous material by throwing it directly into the Grand Canal, but he was prevented by two police officers. Later, however, he was able to destroy a large part of the documents. Stories like Campbell's fueled gossip and slander around Rolfe: Llewlyn Powys wrote that Baron Corvo died while found in bed with a boy, and Mons. Benson (...) celebrated a requiem mass believing his friend had committed suicide.*” The hypothesis of suicide was perhaps not so far fetched if the devotee of Baron Corvo, Shane Leslie, even in 1924, wrote that Corvo committed suicide (pp. 265-266 and footnote 844). And we note that it was Leslie who in 1924 took pains to move Rolfe's remains to a burial niche where they are found still today.

However, even admitting his natural death, there is cause to fear the salvation of his soul, thinking of the letters that he wrote even at the end of his life (and what they describe), by the fact that Rolfe died suddenly, without the sacraments, and that in his room was found such obscenities to make the Consul horrified enough to destroy them. The Radiospadista biographer of Baron Corvo, instead, has no doubts: Frederick Rolfe is in Paradise: “*His tormented soul has finally found that long desired repose. Perhaps it was at that moment that he met for the first time the benevolent gaze of Christ, the one, true, 'divine friend' who never betrayed him* ⁽⁴⁵⁾. Like Gustav

von Aschenbach”, a character from Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice*, “there is no doubt that Baron Corvo, too, finally wanted to ‘rise up and follow him’”: “Life ends in death, and his Paradise begun” (pp. 262 and 264). We hope so, and may God have mercy on his soul; but we are far from Luca Fumagalli’s certainty. It was a sad death, and to all appearances, a bad death.

P.S. on Lord Bradwell.

Thomas Driberg, Lord Bradwell (1905-1978) deserves a bit more mention, if only for his exceptional contradictions. An Anglo-Catholic, sensitive to ritual and liturgy, he was also a good friend of the Mage Aleister Crowley. A notorious homosexual, he married Ena Mary Binfield Lyttelton, a non-practicing Jew, after having her baptized. An English spy, he also appears to have been a Soviet spy: the noble Lord was also a member of the British Communist Party. He also frequented Evelyn Waugh and Harold Acton, in short the ‘circle’ of “*Brideshead Revisited*”.

Footnotes

1) We are not aware of how many copies of the first edition have been sold. If few, the “second edition” is due to the fact that the first edition had a very low print run. If many, the scandal is significantly aggravated.

2) PIERGIORGIO SEVESO, *Le stelle in una pozzanghera: Luca Fumagalli biografo di Frederick Rolfe*, on *Radio Spada*, September 18, 2017.

3) It is the same title of Luca Fumagalli’s conference, interviewed by Piergiorgio Seveso, on March 16, 2017 and published on *Radio Spada* the following March 20th: *Frederick Rolfe, Integral Catholic*. Luca Fumagalli then reaffirmed Baron Corvo’s qualification as an “integral Catholic” in response to my sermon in Modena and Ferrara, on March 28, 2017: *Decadentism and Catholicism: the malice of a hardened stoner with terrible aim (Radio Spada, May 30, 2017)*: “On Baron Corvo, I will limit myself here to reiterating, as I have already had the opportunity to do in the essay dedicated to him and in some short interventions published on YouTube, that in the numerous passages of his brilliant literature an **integral Catholic faith** is witnessed. Occasionally it coexists with less shareable ideas, but it is present nonetheless. His essay on the Borgias is only one of the numerous proofs that could be adduced in this regard.” Clearly, there must be a misunderstanding about the meaning of the term “integral Catholic”.

4) On this school of thought, see for example the special edition of *Sodalitium* n. 61, July 2007, or listen to the conference given by Father Ricossa at the Second *Giornata della Regalità Sociale di Cristo* on our YouTube channel: *Il movimento cattolico: dal Papa Re alla Balena bianca [The Catholic Movement: from the Pope King to the White Whale]* (Modena, October 6, 2007): *I Cattolici contro lo Stato massonico: l’Opera dei Congressi (1870-1904) [Catholics against the Masonic State: the Opera degli Congressi (1870-1904)]*; *I Cattolici contro il Modernismo: il Sodalitium Pianum di Mons. Umberto Benigni [Catholics against Modernism: the Sodalitium Pianum of Monsignor Umberto Benigni]*; *I Cattolici contro la Regalità di Cristo: il democratismo cristiano [Catholics against the Kingship of Christ: Christian Democracy]*.

5) L. FUMAGALLI, *Baron Corvo...* (op. cit., p. 64, footnote 186).

6) A liberal Catholic bishop. Saint Pius X had one of his writings, which advocated the renunciation of temporal power of the Church, put on the Index. He sympathized with the modernists.

7) FUMAGALLI, *Baron Corvo...*, p. 67, footnote 198.

8) *Ibidem*, p. 228, Footnote 720. Both Caroline Shirley and her husband, Lorenzo Sforza Cesarini, were illegitimate children (the original name of Duke Sforza Cesarini was Montani, he was a painter and didn’t have a drop of the Roman family’s blood). The two were married both in the Catholic rite, and the Anglican rite. Given these premises, it is not surprising that they supported the so-called Risorgimento, and that the couple’s sons, Francesco and Bosio, following their parents’ example, also plotted against the papal government, hiding weapons for the rebels and thus suffering exile and confiscation of their assets, only to be instead covered with honors by the Italian government, after the capture of Porta Pia.

9) *Ibidem*, p. 176 and footnote 547. Corvo idolized Victor Emmanuel III also because, he himself being a ‘Jacobite’ (supporter of the rights of the Stuarts to the English throne) he saw in the Savoyan sovereign the legitimate heir to the English throne. Fumagalli ignores this was the reason, while it is notorious that upon the death of the last of the Stuart pretenders to the throne, Henry IX Cardinal of York, the rights passed to the House of Savoy (to the first-born branch, however: not to that of the Carignano).

10) “The author, with his vices and limitations, is one thing; the work is another” (letter to Father Ricossa, February 11, 2016); “To maintain the identity between the author and the work is not only profoundly wrong (linguistics and literary criticism of the last 30 years would have much to say on this subject) but also unfair” (letter to Father Ricossa, February 14, 2016); “work and author are never” “superimposable” (Luca Fumagalli’s FB page, July 7, 2017).

11) “The pederast poets include John Gambril Nicholson, Edward Cracroft Lefroy, Frederick Rolfe (“Baron Corvo”), Aleister Crowley, Edwin Bradford, Edmund John, and many others” a citation from the Encyclopedia of Homosexuality, 1990, edited by Wayne R. Dynes, vol. 2, p. 1008. Such poets are also called “Uranians”: “The definition of uranian poetry comes from the theory of “heavenly” love

(in Greek: οὐράνιος), homosexual by nature, such as Plato exposed in his *Symposium*. But the name also refers to the fact that this theory had given rise to the term “Uranism,” which was widely used before the beginning of the twentieth century as a euphemism for homosexuality as such. The works of the circle of Uranian poets are characterized by an idealized reference to the history of ancient Greece and, in several cases, by a sentimental infatuation with adolescents (rather than with adult men); stylistically, their poetry reveals a conservative use of traditional forms of versification. The main exponents of the circle were William Johnson, Lord Alfred Douglas, John Gamlil Nicholson, Edwin Emmanuel Bradford, John Addington Symonds, Edmund John, Fabian S. Woodley, and many other authors who wrote under pseudonyms such as “Philebus” and “A. Newman.” Not all of them shared the preference for adolescents, however. The flamboyantly eccentric novelist Frederick Rolfe (self-styled ‘Baron Corvo’) was a unifying presence in their circle, both within and without Venice. (...) Historian Niel McKenna has argued, however, that Uranian poetry played a central role in the upper-class homosexual subculture of the late Victorian period, noting that poetry was the principal vehicle through which writers such as Oscar Wilde, George Ives or Rennell Rodd chose to challenge the prejudices of their age. Also marginally associated with this circle were more famous writers such as Edward Carpenter or Marc André Raffalovich, as well as the obscure but visionary poet-printer Ralph Chubb, the author of superb lithographic volumes celebrating the adolescent boy as an ideal. The Uranian poets’ attempt to revive the eroto-pedagogical ideal of Greek pederasty was, however, unsuccessful, and later homosexual poets turned instead to adult male inspiration, along the lines established by poets such as Walt Whitman and A. E. Housman. The only monographic study of the Uranian poets is Timothy d’Arch Smith’s *Love in Earnest*, although literary critics such as Richard Dellamora and Linda Dowling have recently contributed to shedding more light on this group” (Wikipedia, Uranian Poets).

12) Charles Kains-Jackson (1857-1933), a London lawyer, looked after the interests of both Geeson Withe and Rolfe (p. 82). “He was not a significant figure in the **decadent** literary landscape” (p. 77). A friend of the painter Henry Scott Tuke, Henry Oliver Walker, Lord Douglas, and John Addington Symonds. He met Rolfe in Christchurch in 1889, through Nicholson and Gleeson Withe. From 1888 he had been editor of the *Artist and Journal of Home Culture*. His work had appeared in numerous periodicals of the period, and he had collaborated for some time with Alfred Douglas on the papers *The Spirit Lamp* and *The Chameleon* (only one issue appeared). In *The Artist* he managed to slip into the pages material that reflected his homosexual orientation, which became publicly known in 1894 through the publication of the article *The New Cavalry*, for which he was removed from the editorship of the monthly (the new chivalry, unlike the old, was supposed to promote pederasty and erotic male friendship). In 1891 he published in *The Artist* Rolfe’s two homosexual poems on St. Sebastian (p. 77). Cecil Temple, his cousin and lover, served as Rolfe’s model (p. 78). As mentioned, he belonged to the order of Chaeronea.

13) To the point that the literary theme of “young swimmers” will become a Rolfian ‘trademark’: “*Rolfian echoes* – writes Fumagalli – *also return in two passages of ‘Rome without a Pope’ by Guido Morse with King Vering Bonnet’s chaste predilection for young swimmers, possibly dark-haired... is described*” (p. 187, footnote 587).

14) After his biography of Baron Corvo, Fumagalli returned to the book in an article on *Radio Spada*, “*Toto e i suoi racconti: il ‘quinto vangelo di Baron Corvo’*” [“*Toto and his stories: the ‘fifth gospel of Baron Corvo’*”] on February 11, 2018 (Our Lady of Lourdes!). If to err is human, to persevere is diabolical.

15) Wilhelm von Pluschow (1852-1930) and Wilhelm von Gloeden (1856-1931) were cousins. Von Pluschow was a photographer of nude young Italian boys: in 1907 he was convicted of homosexual pimping and the corruption of minors (he had put some clients in contact with his models) and spent eight months in prison; in 1910 he was expelled from Italy. His lover and pupil, Vincenzo Galdi, was also tried in 1907. Von Gloeden also worked in Italy as a photographer of male nudes: for those who want to understand what it is all about, look at the photos taken by the two notorious homosexuals on the internet (if you have the stomach for it: I cannot publish them because there is a limit to everything). In a note (p. 69, footnote 206) Fumagalli cites other sources of inspiration: Simeon Solomon, who we will talk about, William Blake, Richmond, Frederic Leighton and Walter Crane.

16) Pederasty, which the Romans called “Greek vice”, contemplated a relationship between an “erastès” (an adult lover) and a “eromenos” (a beloved adolescent, no younger than 12 years old). Pederasty – socially accepted in the pagan world, albeit with some exceptions – was combatted by Christianity.

17) Douglas, a private tutor and Oxford graduate, became interested in Baron Corvo because he was “fascinated” by the book *In His Own Image*, the reworking of the *Stories of Toto*, in which he had perfectly grasped “*the latent homophilic content*” since “*he himself admitted to being homosexual*” (p. 161). The two then translated Meleager, whose compositions, Fumagalli writes, are “*almost all erotic in theme, the more licentious ones describing epebic loves whose sensuality is, however, attenuated by irony and jokes*” (p. 163, footnote 501). Rolfe’s love-hate for Sholto Douglas, a failed “divine friend”, is narrated in Rolfe’s novel “*Nicolas Crabbe, or The one and the many*”, published posthumously, where the friend hides beneath the character of Robert Fulgensius Kemp (see L. Fumagalli, *Baron Corvo e la solitudine del gabbiano: un’introduzione a Nicholas Crabbe*, on *Radio Spada*, February 7, 2018). The Radiospadist article ends as usual in the pathetic: Crabbe’s story would be “*the swan song of a misunderstood writer who has now reached the autumn of his life.*”

18) Even in hagiography, Baron Corvo favored children Saints, or Saint Sebastian, whose martyrdom for some is the occasion for unhealthy thoughts (see pp. 41, 52-53, 77). “*But it is from the second half of the 19th century that the figure of Sebastian begins to increasingly assert itself in gay literature, soon becoming one of the main LGBT themes in literature, as well as an existential model:*

homosexual writers and authors such as Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde (in the last years of his life he took the pseudonym of 'Sebastian Melmoth'), John Addington Symonds, Marcel Proust, Frederick Rolfe and John Gray seem to adopt the character of the martyr, who is transformed under their pen into a representation of the 'social pariah' that they represent with their very existence. The publication in 1891 of Rolfe's 'Two Sonnets, for a Picture of Saint Sebastian the Martyr by Guido Reni' and featuring explicit homoeroticism sparked a scandal in Victorian society" (Wikipedia, entry: *Saint Sebastian in the arts*).

19) "It is not at all surprising that Crowley, whose dreams were populated by kings and popes, regarded Pope Alexander VI Borgia as one of his incarnations. This highly intelligent but pleasure-loving prelate, who was accused of crimes and incest, **was just the kind of pontiff he would have liked to be.** One of his most prized possessions was a gold coin minted by Alexander VI: on one side was his coat of arms, on the other the evangelical scene of the miraculous catch of fish. Crowley used this coin as a 'disc' (or talisman) in his magical operations to procure gold" (JOHN SYMONDS, *Aleister Crowley. The Beast 666*, Publisher Mediterranee, 2006, pp. 15-16; first Italian edition, 1972: *The Great Beast, Life and Magic of Aleister Crowley*, Pub. Mediterranee, preface by Julius Evola). On the canon of the "Gnostic Mass", see for example my article *Il Cardinale Rampolla era massone? [Was Cardinal Rampolla a Freemason?]* in *Sodalitium* n. 60, February 2007, especially p. 23 and the footnotes on p. 34. John Symonds (1914-2016), the biographer of Crowley and Madame Blavatsky, was the son of a well-known architect and a Lithuanian Jew, Lily Sapzells; he married a certain Renata Israel.

20) See the articles on *Radio Spada: Torna Lenny Belardo, in arte Pio XIII [Lenny Belardo, aka Pius XIII, is Back]* (October 30, 2016); *Il Triregno di Pio XIII [The Triregno of Pius XIII]* (November 6, 2016); *Provaci ancora Lenny [Try it again, Lenny]* (November 13, 2016, with a photo of Jude Law lighting a cigarette); "*The Young Pope*": *impressioni a caldo su Pio XIII [The Young Pope*": *first impressions of Pius XIII]* (October 23, 2016, photo of Jude Law blissfully smoking); *The Young Pope: finale di stagione per Pio XIII [The Young Pope: season finale for Pius XIII]* (November 20, 2016); see also the eccentric article in favor of smoking by Simone Petrus Basileus I.G. (Simone Gambini): *Hæc salvant homines: vinum et tesseræ* (June 22, 2017, with the usual photo of Jude smoking) where we are informed to our edification on the papal teaching regarding smoking and spitting in the churches and basilicas of the City and the World.

21) The dialogues of the Symposium or Convivium have as their object, Love, Eros, in the Platonic concept, and they expose the idea of Celestial Love (Aphrodite Urania), of Androgyny, of ephebic love, which could be nothing but attractive to someone like Rolfe.

22) In addition to the dying of his hair flaming red (p. 214, footnote 669, and p. 259), Rolfe was notable for other eccentricities: the numerous rings he wore on his fingers (p. 124), his mania of pretending to be a priest (p. 47, 97) or a nobleman (p. 75, 100), the habit of writing in fake calligraphy, colored inks, or using archaic words with a Renaissance or Medieval patina (pp. 51-52), his habit of

being accompanied in his gondola by four gondoliers and he had two boats decorated in leopard skins and extravagant colors (p. 259)...

23) A quarrel broke out between the two – Rolfe and Dawkins – precisely because of the gondoliers, and the two separated: Dawkins, like the others, ended up being mocked in Rolfe's novels under another name (Fumagalli, *Baron Corvo...*, pp. 218-219).

24) ROLFE F., *Lettere veneziane. Tre racconti su Venezia, [Venice Letters, Three Stories on Venice]* edited by P. Orlandelli, Venice, Filippi publisher, 2012. On March 22, 2018, on his FB page, the "Co-founder and collaborator of *Radio Spada*" joyfully announces to his friends (Paolo Orlandelli and Vinci Lagioia): "*I have finally managed to buy the prestigious Cecil Wolf edition (1987) of Corvo's 'Venice Letters' at a low price!*"

25) More news on Giorgio Cesana, Zorzi the Greek, in the review by the usual Giovanni Dall'Orto (*Alla ricerca del "Zorzi" del Baron Corvo [In Search of the "Zorzi" of Baron Corvo]*, which can be read at the following address: <http://www.giovannidallorto.com/LO/storia/scoble/splendid.html>) on the "saggio storico con tematiche lgbt" ["*Historical Essay with LGBT themes*"] by Robert Scoble: *The splendid Olympian* (published by the author, 2011, alias by Callum James). Giovanni Dall'Orto complains that "*Once again with this pamphlet we Italians allow ourselves to 'be owned' by foreigners, in our home-grown gay historical research.*" The foreigner in question is the Australian, Robert Scoble, to whom Luca Fumagalli sent his book on Baron Corvo as he triumphantly announced on *Radio Spada's* FB page on December 4: "*A BARON CORVO IN FLIGHT TOWARDS AUSTRALIA. A copy of 'Frederick Rolfe. The sentimental journey of Baron Corvo' - a biographical essay by our Luca Fumagalli dedicated to the eccentric English Catholic writer - is on its way to Australia. Destination: the residence of Robert Scoble, currently the most important Rolfe scholar in the world*" (Scoble, among other things, immediately got Fumagalli involved in some research).

"*This fact, however small on its own, not only testifies to the interest that Radio Spada is arousing at an international level, but it is, above all, proof that passion, seriousness and commitment can guarantee credibility and respect to the so-called 'traditionalism' even in the wider world (with concrete possibilities of an effective apostolate)*" (the President of RS, Seveso, comments: "*Compliments to our friend Luca Fumagalli: Altius, citius, fortius*"). Robert Scoble researched the young Cesana (1892 † 17 April 1967), "*a young Venetian whom Rolfe met in 1909 when Cesana was seventeen, belonging to the Jewish community of Greek-Corfiot origin at the Canottieri Bucintoro club. Rolfe was a member, and Giorgio waited tables at the bar run by the club in the basement next to the Royal Gardens, now occupied by the Tourist Board. On this occasion, if we are to believe the famous Venice Letters, the boy would have made it clear that he was 'in', and in fact from this moment on he reappears several times in the letters themselves as 'Zorzi' (Venetian dialect for 'Giorgio') or 'the young Corfiot Jew.'*" (...) *Giorgio Cesana has earned a place in the annals of history in a way that is completely independent of Rolfe, qualifying as the youngest (14 years) Olympic gold medal winner in Italian history and, until 1960, even in the world.*

In 1906 he had in fact been chosen as coxswain for a Venetian Olympic crew that had then taken first place in a rowing race. Thanks to this event, Scoble was able to put together a surprising amount of data, and even photographs, thanks to the archives of the Canottieri Bucintoro, which still exists (although in a different location). (...) He married at the age of forty-three in 1935 and somehow survived the Holocaust: his death certificate is in fact dated 17 April 1967.” The attentive reader will have noticed that some marginal data differs from what Fumagalli reported; however, interest in the characters in question does not differ.

26) This is Piero Venerando, who in his old age will be interviewed by Cecil Woolf, son of Virginia, editor of the *Venice Letters*; see Alessandro Marzo Magno, *Frederick Rolfe, memoria dei gondolieri di Baron Corvo. Venetian gay literature:*

<http://www.linkiesta.it/article/2013/11/23/frederick-rolfe-memoria-dei-gondolieri-di-baron-corvo/17933/>

27) Rolfe read and discussed with his friends the writings of “Beccadelli, Jean Lombard, Eliogabalo, Whitman and the licentious poetry of Della Casa, Castiglione, Bembo and Poliziano”, indicating a “particular sentimental sensibility” (sic) (p. 243, footnote 772). Antonio Beccadelli (1394-1471) was an Italian humanist, author of the erotic book *Hermaphroditus* (1425); Jean Lombard, French decadent (1854-1891), wrote about androgyny and paganism: his principle work is *L’Agonie* [*The Agony*] (1888) dedicated to the Emperor Heliogabalus. Walt Whitman (1819-1892), the noted American poet, friend of Wilde (who confirmed to Cecil Ives Whitman’s homosexuality). Castiglione, Della Casa, Bembo and Poliziano are too well known to be talked about. After writing this note, and thanks to it, I had the opportunity to read with interest an article by Armando Massarenti (a secularist) in the Sunday edition of *Il Sole 24 Ore*, entitled *Con l’Ermafrodito del Panormita l’Umanesimo riscopri l’erotismo* [*With the Hermaphrodite of Panormita, Humanism rediscovers eroticism*] (no. 243, Sunday September 10, 1917, p. 21). *The Hermaphrodite* is an anthology of Latin poems dedicated to Cosimo de’ Medici, “with very explicit erotic content that refers to every kind of sexuality, hetero and homo, practiced by the main characters of these verses full of irony and impudence: anecdotes of (...) pederasts and men always looking for boys (...). The culture of the Italian Renaissance, as we know, will project itself onto an idealized reality of Platonic make, but it will also not forget to tell the story of man in a realistic way: the spiritual love that Pausanias praises in Plato’s ‘Symposium’ has a carnal counterpart and this is what interests our poet from Palermo. Many appreciated the experiment, but there were also detractors, such as the Franciscan friar Bernardino of Siena who burned the work, and thus Beccadelli was forced to write pages of public apology. He defends himself by stating that his is a purely literary work, that his life cannot be judged by the fictions contained in its pages... (...) Erotic literature represents an essential aspect of human life: sex, which has however always generated embarrassed and moralistic reactions in all cultures...” Massarenti and, before him, Beccadelli, take issue with the moralists; as for me, I prefer to follow a certain Saint Bernardino of Siena, who burned at the stake the work the others read and spread, unlike that of Baron Corvo. To each his own Patron Saints.

28) “With a riot of scabrous details, bordering on pornography, Rolfe tells Fox about the homosexual liaisons he had with some young men from the lagoon, pages and pages ‘very spicy about the nights spent in a small hotel in Burano’ with his lovers, compliant and docile. I am happy that you like my descriptions, and tell me, do they really make you see, feel, and give you real pleasure?” (FUMAGALLI, *Baron Corvo...*, p. 241).

29) GIOVANNI DALL’ORTO, “*Marchette in gondola*”. *Il turismo omosessuale d’inizio novecento nelle lettere di Frederick Rolfe (1860-1913)* [“Boys for rent in gondolas”. *Homosexual tourism beginning in the 20th century in the letters of Frederick Rolfe (1860-1913)*]. Other excerpts of letters, translated into French, can be found, again online, at the address <http://www.excentriques.com/corvo/venise3.html> in an article edited by Emmanuel Pollaud-Dulian.

30) While I have not made the text of some *Venice Letters* public, I did however report them privately, first to Luca Fumagalli himself, hoping to dissuade him from writing new articles about Baron Corvo on *Radio Spada*, and then, after the reactions to my Homily in Modena and Ferrara about the ‘Procession of Reparation against Gay Pride’ organized by the Beata Scopelli Committee (i.e. by *Radio Spada*), by some exponents of Italian “traditionalism” who had publicly defended *Radio Spada* by attacking my Homily. They responded to me by demonstrating that they were unaware of these writings, and were disgusted by them, but as for the question I raised of the immorality of these writings, no one felt the need to correct the imprudent position they had taken against the Institute and in favor of *Radio Spada*.

31) The modernists mistakenly claim to follow the thinking of Cardinal Newman. On this question, and on the response by Saint Pius X to this unfounded, but not entirely unfounded, claim, see *Sodalitium* no. 66, April 2013, pp. 24-26.

32) I will talk about some of them later. For those who don’t know them, I will give some information on the subject about two others:

Ernest Dowson (1867-1900), a friend and visitor to Oscar Wilde (to the point of signing with the name Dorian) and a member of the Rhymers Club where he met Yeats and Lionel Johnson. In 1899, at the age of 22, he decided to get engaged to an 11-and-a-half-year-old girl, to whom he proposed a “platonic” love (the Pre-Raphaelite critic John Ruskin married and lived equally platonically without ever consummating the marriage with his wife Effie Gray, whom he had met when she was 12 – who then understandably abandoned him to live with J. E. Millais, while Ruskin courted a 9-year-old girl, see the book by SUZANNE FAGENCE COOPER, *Effie Gray. Storia di uno scandalo* [*Effie Gray. The Story of a Scandal*], Neri Pozza publisher, 2012). An alcoholic and drug addict, he died very young after converting to Catholicism.

Henry Harland is the “much-desired celebrity friend” to whom Corvo initially thought of dedicating his Toto stories (p. 111). Fumagalli introduces him to his readers – on his FB page – on September 9, 2017: “*Henry Harland (1861-1905), born into a wealthy American family, began his career in the world of literature by publishing some novels*

dedicated to the world of Jewish New York under the pseudonym of Sidney Luska. Having moved to London with his wife in 1889, he converted to Catholicism and joined Aubrey Beardsley in the direction of 'The Yellow Book'. Among his novels on maturity, quite distant in the themes and settings of his early years, the most successful is 'The Cardinal's Snuff-Box' (1900), which reached the prodigious figure of one hundred thousand copies sold. Harland, although not an artistic talent, was nevertheless a refined prose writer, capable of measuring out lexical flourishes and sprinkling them with the right amount of sentimentalism (a style that readers of the time liked very much and that guaranteed him notoriety that now has vanished). In the picture: my copy of 'The Cardinal's Snuff-Box' (Penguin Books, 1946)". The editor of the Yellow Book and a friend of Arthur Symons, Aubrey Beardsley and Baron Corvo, Harland converted to an aesthetic, decadent version of Catholicism (1897), he did not keep the best company.

33) DAVID H. HILLIARD, *UnEnglish and UnManly: Anglo-Catholicism and Homosexuality*, published in *Victorian Studies*, vol. 25, n. 2, Spring 1982; the article can also be found online.

34) *Kingsley e Ipazia: all'origine di un mito anti cattolico* [*Kingsley and Hypatia: Origin of an Anti-Catholic Myth*], a conference held by Luca Fumagalli, translated by Piergiorgio Seveso, in the C.A.P. halls of the Catholic University of Milan, August 2, 2017 and published on *Radio Spada* the following August 5. The gist of the Radiospadist defense thesis is that the comparison between Anglo-Catholicism and homosexuality is (only) a black slander of Protestants like Kingsley, although this comparison seems quite clear, when there is no need to defend one's positions from criticism.

35) Naturally, the interpretation given to the writings of Saint Aelred is abusive. This does not take away the fact that this (abusive) interpretation exists and is exemplarily exposed in a famous interview given by Father Gianni Baget Bozzo to *Il Foglio* on June 10, 2000 entitled *Un prete libero che vive l'amicizia in maniera molto forte* [*A free priest who lives friendship in a very strong way*] where Cardinal Siri's former pupil does not hide his ("chaste") homosexuality: "Don Gianni Baget Bozzo wrote a letter to *Il Foglio* about chaste homoeroticism. Now let's talk about it with him. Has he experienced these feelings personally? 'Certainly. And more than once. I live friendship in a very strong way, even in those terms. After all, I believe that homosexuality can be a Christian fact', says Don Gianni, and he says it with great naturalness, concluding a reasoning whose essence is: the homosexual condition does not preclude the achievement of sainthood. He touched on the issue in the letter in which he cited the pages on spiritual friendship by Abbot Aelred of Rievaulx (1110-1167), or the letters of Saint Anselm of Aosta (1033-1109), first prior and abbot of Bec, then archbishop of Canterbury. Even now he reads them, comments on them, observes them and explains. He explains that for the Church, one of the most cumbersome, most delicate and ultimately most fascinating problems concerns the possibility that a friendship between two men - or between two women - can include erotic language. Can the Church admit to it? According to Baget Bozzo, 'yes'. 'Reiterating and emphasizing the

presupposition of chastity,' two people of the same sex can 'exchange affection and use purely erotic terminology.' And the Church, adds Baget Bozzo with the expression of someone who was speaking his mind, calmly, without harshness and without the desire to argue, should allow it. 'I am also of the opinion that there are no sinful aspects in a chaste relationship between two men, who feel love for each other, have attitudes and use language generally considered to be feminine. The same goes for women: I could not condemn two women who tend to assume more virile behaviors,' adds Baget Bozzo. And he refers to Aelred." The rest of the article, equally significant, can be found online: <http://web.tiscalinet.it/rassegnales/giugno2000/foglioc10giugno2000.htm>

It seems to me that Don Baget Bozzo – and those who think like him – are mistaken in thinking that chastity consists only in external acts (thereby avoiding acts against purity and, where appropriate, against nature) but also in internal acts and affections, so it is not permissible to accept, encourage and cultivate a homosexual friendship. On the subject of spiritual friendship, see among others the articles by Simone Gambini on *Radio Spada: Ama et fac quod vis: in memoria di Gregory*, July 25, 2013; *Qui invenit amicum, ...* March 2015; *Boni sitis si potestis in Regno Christi*, July 8, 2017; *Twelve tips for living friendship in a Christian way*, March 6, 2018.

36) This part of my article had already been written when - on Luca Fumagalli's FB page of October 3, 2017 - the co-founder of *Radio Spada* wrote: *Hugo Pratt – who quotes Frederick Rolfe in the beautiful comic strip 'Favola di Venezia', starring Corto Maltese – was a fan of the Englishman's work: 'He wrote a beautiful book about Venice, and along with Baron Corvo I wanted to evoke this incredible world, in search of everything or nothing' ". A reader, Gla Saccovilla, comments: "I read on the site www.grandeoriente.it that Hugo Pratt was a Freemason... ". To which Fumagalli imperturbably replies: "Yes, it is common knowledge". In fact, it is common knowledge. Less common knowledge, however, and surprising, is the fact that a Catholic like Fumagalli praises a notorious Freemason who wrote a "beautiful comic strip" with a Masonic setting, because he was a fan of Baron Corvo.*

37) *Ezra Pound and Theosophy*, by Father Francesco Ricossa, in *Sodalitium* n. 67, December 2015. Collaborated on the magazine *The New Age* – an incubator for ideas on Guild Socialism and Social Credit – or were part of that world, Ezra Pound, his friend Yeats (he, too, an occultist from Crowley's circle) and Chesterton himself.

38) Either he claims to eat meat on Fridays (p. 95) or he accepts his homosexuality "with great serenity" because, Fumagalli explains, "having grown up in a purely male universe, he considered attraction to people of the same sex as something physiological" (p. 39).

39) To this novel Fumagalli also dedicated an article on *Radio Spada*: "Don Renato": *il Rinascimento di Baron Corvo tra cristianesimo, superstizioni e decadenza* ["Don Renato": *Baron Corvo's Renaissance between Christianity, superstitions and decadence*] (February 4, 2018) where he summarizes what he had already written in his book on Baron Corvo.

40) Priests of Cybele, the Corybantes “*honored their divinity with wild and orgiastic dances, during which they often inflicted wounds on themselves.*”

41) The last text is by Marengo Vaglio, cited by Fumagalli, footnote 483, p. 157.

42) *Radio Spada* took up the theme in an article of February 15, 2018 entitled: “*The Weird of the Wanderer: Baron Corvo strolling through time*”. Financing the work was the reverend (and Freemason) Justus Stephen Serjeant; publisher William Rider, “specializing in alchemy, philosophy and spiritualism”, the publisher of Bram Stoker, the author of *Dracula*, and by Edouard Schuré, the author of “*La sacerdotessa di Iside*” [“*The priestess of Iside*”]. The authors of *The Weird* - Rolfe and Pirie Gordon - took the pseudonyms of Prospero e Calibano. Nevertheless, according to *Radio Spada*, the novel ends with an “*example of a refined longing. Rolfe, in one of his finest moments, creates a perfect correspondence between personal realization and Christian ideal.*”

43) **John Addington Symonds**, “*the first English exponent of cultural history*” and among the greatest intellectuals of the nineteenth century is one of those northerners in love with Italy. Above all, of its inhabitants, to the point even taking with him to Switzerland, where he moved at a certain point in his life, a Venetian gondolier, Angelo Fusato. Nonetheless, he married and had four daughters. His masterpiece is *The Renaissance in Italy* (from the *Stories of the Renaissance*, in seven volumes) but he also wrote a lot about classical Greece, and was one of the few voices to be heard in defense of Richard Burton’s translation of *One Thousand and One Nights* from the Arabic, when all of England protested in horror that the “*book is full of filthiness*”. In 1877 he lost his Chair of Poetry at Oxford because he was too openly “intimate” with the students. He then left England and took refuge in Italy. For a certain period he collaborated with Havelock Ellis in his studies on sexuality, co-authoring the first volume dedicated to “sexual inversion”; he also privately published two small books on homosexuality, *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (1883, in ten copies), and later *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891, in 50 copies), to expose his ideas. One of the clinical histories of homosexuals included in Ellis’s book (case XVIII) is his personal history. After his death, however, his heirs asked that his name be removed from the work, so that subsequent editions, including the Italian translation, would all appear with only Ellis’s name. Symonds also wrote a very explicit autobiography about his homosexual loves, which was therefore published only in 1984, while his correspondence, which appeared in 1967 in three almost encyclopedic volumes, is a sort of a *summa homosexualis* of the time, given that the former Oxford student, during his life, corresponded with almost all the *Uranian* personalities of the time. For twenty years he also wrote to Walt Whitman asking him if he was an “invert”, and the American poet, receiving the last letter on his deathbed, surrounded by his family and the notables of a country that sees sodomy as the worst sin that can be committed, decides to answer that no, he has never been anything of the sort...

Curiously, Symonds died on the same day that his last book, entitled *Walt Whitman*, appeared, on April 19, 1893, in Rome, where he was buried in the non-Catholic

cemetery of Rome, a few steps from Shelley’s tomb. His tomb is the object of commemoration by activists of the gay movement in Rome (Wikipedia).

Henry Scott Tuke (1858-1929) is probably best known for his paintings of naked young men and boys, which have earned him the status of a pioneer of homosexual culture and queer art. (...) During the 1880s Tuke met ... Oscar Wilde, and other important authors and writers, such as John Addington Symonds. Many of them were homosexuals, then usually identified as proponents of Uranism... Tuke first painted some oil studies of naked young men during a short trip to Italy in 1881, when he was in his early twenties, but the theme did not become central to his artistic work until after 1885, when he moved to Falmouth, a port inhabited mostly by fishermen in a remote part of Cornwall, then very remote and rustic; here the climate was mild enough to encourage the pleasure of bathing in the nude.

He settled in Swanpool and here, after buying a fishing boat for £40, had it converted into a floating studio and temporary home. Here he was able to indulge his passion for painting boys in private, focusing increasingly on maritime scenes and settings, showing boys and young men bathing, fishing or lazing in the sun on the beaches of early summer afternoons. (...) After his death, Tuke’s reputation disappeared, and he was largely forgotten until the 1970s, when he was rediscovered by the first generation of openly gay artists and collectors. He has since become something of a cult figure in gay culture circles, with luxury editions of his work being published and his work fetching high prices at auction (Wikipedia). Note the affinities with Rolfe who in fact drew on Tuke’s paintings (FUMAGALLI, pp. 56-57).

Horatio Brown (1854-1926), was a British historian. In 1864, at Clifton College, he became closely associated with John Addington Symonds, whom we talked about in this footnote. In 1879 he moved to Italy, first to Florence and then to Venice, where he was joined by his friend Symonds, with whom he shared, among other things, an admiration for Sarpi, and of whom he would be the biographer. Brown also loved gondoliers, to the point of going to live with one of them, a certain Antonio Salin. In Venice he met Baron Corvo, and also the archaeologist Giacomo Boni, who “*developed a strong interest in the ancient Roman religion and in its possible re-implementation and adoption by the State, and attempted to influence Francesco Crispi and Sidney Sonnino in this sense, but above all Benito Mussolini with whom he sympathized because he believed that fascism could revive ancient Rome. Among the attempts made to restore the Roman religion were actual pagan rites that he performed: we recall the commemoration of the Lacus Curtius in 1903 with his friend Horatio Brown, the purification of the temple of Jupiter Victor in 1916, the construction of the ara graminea on the Palatine in 1917. Boni also prepared a program of celebrations for the first anniversary of the March on Rome, which included a series of pagan ceremonies: Cereris Mundus, Ludus Troiae, Opus Coronarium, Ludi Palatini and Lupercalia. Boni’s archaeological research itself was influenced by his relationships with the esoteric environment of the time (he frequented the salon of Emmelina De Renzi, mother of Giovanni Antonio Colonna di Cesarò, and*

corresponded with Leone Caetani) and by personal experiences bordering on the paranormal (dreams such as the one he had the night before the discovery of the Lapis Niger, visions, mysterious voices). In 1923 Boni collaborated with Ignis on the tragedy *Rumon*, designing the archaic Roman characters for the poster and for the text itself" (Wikipedia; detailed information on Boni's pagan esotericism, the theosophical circles of Colonna di Cesarò and Caetani, as well as on the magazine *Ignis in Esoterismo e Fascismo*, edited by Gianfranco de Turris, Publisher Mediterranee, 2006). Returning to Boni's friend, our Horatio Brown, he was obviously homosexual (he published some homoerotic poems in "Drift" 1900). He died in Belluno and his remains were cremated on the island of San Michele, in Venice: with decidedly vulgar expressions the site queerblog writes: upon his "death the usual idiot family members burned all the papers they could get their hands on to hide the fact that he liked sailors, soldiers and tram drivers". Amen.

44) Fumagalli dedicated an article even to this book: "Hubert's Arthur: l'ideale cristiano nel medioevo immaginario di Baron Corvo [Hubert's Arthur: Christian ideal in the Middle Ages imagined by Baron Corvo] on *Radio Spada*, January 22, 2018. Rolfe wrote the novel together with his friend Pirie-Gordon; the two called themselves with the pseudonyms Prospero and Caliban, the mage and the monster of what is perhaps a more esoteric version of Shakespeare's comedy, *The Tempest*.

45) Without a doubt, Christ is our true friend, who never disappoints us. However, knowing what Rolfe meant by "divine friend", I find it all out of place, if not worse, to think that the Lord could have been the divine friend for whom Rolfe was searching.



XIII. Radio Spada: Where it came from, and where it is going

As the patient reader will have noted in this analysis of the cultural pages of *Radio Spada*, I am interested more in the association, the blog and the publishing house rather than the people, except insofar as they are participants in this association. In concluding this examination of the cultural pages of *Radio Spada*, we can say: **Radio Spada is...what it does not seem to be, and is not...what it seems.** But where does this ambiguity come from, which many fail to grasp? And why does *Sodalitium* find it so important to once again warn the readers of *Radio Spada*?

To understand it better, it would be helpful to recall the origins of this strange movement. These origins have been repeatedly claimed by *Radio Spada*; most recently, Ilaria Pisa (Andrea Giacobazzi's wife) did so, in an interview by Cristiano Lugli on the website *Riscossa Cristiana (BUONI SITI & BUONE LETTURE - Radio Spada: le ragioni per resistere [Riscossa Cristiana (GOOD SITES & GOOD READINGS - Radio Spada: reasons for resisting]*, published on April 5, 2018 and reprinted the same day on *Radio Spada* with the title: *25 April 2018: Radio Spada in un'intervista di Cristiano Lugli [April 25, 2018: Radio Spada in an interview by Cristiano Lugli]*). Ilaria Pisa ("who takes care of the editorial part and is part of the editorial staff", but who previously was Treasurer of the publishing house, and is still a collaborator of the Treasury today) recalls: "As a blog, *Radio Spada* was born in June 2012 and later, in October 2013, took on its current configuration as a publishing house in the form of a cultural association. Its earliest shoots first sprouted within a small community of friendship and 'integral Catholic' cultural militancy, created between some current and former students of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan." Let us assimilate these data, starting from the fact that *Radio Spada* was born from a friendship, and was born in the Catholic University of Milan. The friendship is

that between three current and former students of that University: Piergiorgio Seveso, current president of Radio Spada, Luca Fumagalli, his inseparable friend and member of the Board of Directors, and Andrea Giacobazzi, to whom we must add the one who became his wife, precisely Ilaria Pisa, currently the coordinator of editorial projects (RS, July 11, 2017). First of all, Piergiorgio Seveso. His profile for *Radio Spada* publishing, informs us that he was born on May 2, 1972 and that he “*lives a quiet and secluded life under the beloved cloisters of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart where he lives, works and studies.*” “*He lives, works and studies*” there, but he does not graduate, and this is certainly not due to incompetence but by deliberate choice, preferring the life of a student who has not completed his courses, which ensures him a lot of free time to devote to his political and religious ideals. Thanks to his now past Padanian Independence activity, Seveso obtained from the local University a space (the famous “auletta”) which was formerly the seat of the CAP (*Comunità Antagonista Padana*), where he actually resides. Even today he declares his support for the *Thesis of Cassiciacum*, and this is the reason for which *Radio Spada* is so interesting to our magazine, which is the standard-bearer of the said Thesis in Italy. Over many years, Seveso has made many friends with the students of the Catholic, but the one who followed him, in the CAP, then in defense of the *Thesis of Cassiciacum*, and finally in the founding of *Radio Spada*, is his friend Luca Fumagalli, born in 1985, brilliant graduate and high school teacher. With this we have the two of three (or four) founders of *Radio Spada*, but we still do not have *Radio Spada*. For *Radio Spada* to be born, the decisive contribution of Andrea Giacobazzi was needed. He was born in 1985 in Reggio Emilia and obtained a bachelor's degree from the Catholic University in 2007, and a master's degree in 2010. In 2012 he became the sole director of the *Intermarket Diamond Business* in Ljubljana and also the sole director of *IDB Intermediazioni LLC*, which deals with the diamond resale sector on the basis of mandates

given by customers (from the *Intermarket Diamond Business IDB* website). If Piergiorgio Seveso was able to bring his full availability to the *Radio Spada* project (which is not a radio, let's remember), and the contribution of many young people who frequent our Institute and who knew about it for years (the maneuver, successful at the beginning, almost completely failed after our intervention), Giacobazzi undoubtedly had the managerial skills and economic resources that Seveso and Fumagalli totally lacked. Giacobazzi was joined by his future wife Ilaria Pisa. Welcoming her collaboration, the website “Campari e de Maistre” jokingly introduced her as follows: “*Of Genoese and Jewish origins, which explains her bad temper, but not her prodigality. PhD student in Criminal Law at the University of Pavia*”. Lawyer of the Genoa Bar Association, professor of criminal law at the Mauro De André Forensic School, Ilaria Pisa attended the FUCI, the Union of Catholic Jurists and the Pro-Life Movements. But how could a collaboration be established between Seveso and Fumagalli on the one hand, and Giacobazzi and Pisa on the other, given their irreconcilability, not so much on political ideas (Giacobazzi came from *Alleanza Nazionale* and *Terra e Tradizione*) as on religious ones? Seveso and Fumagalli in fact supported the *Thesis of Cassiciacum*, Giacobazzi and Pisa, at most, the groups around ‘*Summorum Pontificum*’ (Father Marino Neri in particular) and only later the Society of Saint Pius X (don Mauro Tranquillo). The founding idea is precisely here: friendship, as a glue between people beyond doctrinal differences, and the “ecumenical method” among traditionalists, whereby everyone is free to maintain their own religious opinions on condition of recognizing the legitimacy of those of others.

This new doctrinal and existential formulation has completely changed the perspectives of the sedevacantist co-founders of *Radio Spada*. Now, the world to which they belonged appears to them like this: “*dwarfs, dancers and madmen who, in the good old days, would have found a welcoming (and very*

adequate) home between the white padded walls of a mental asylum, today are among us. Worse: **THEY ARE US.** (...) If, in fact, Providence and Divine Grace have fortunately called us to the happy harbor of integral Catholicism, let us not forget that this harbor does not coincide, humanly speaking, with some glorious and poetic new catacombs, steeped in faith and blood, but often with decorous, narrow and **picturesque cellars**" (Radio Spada, October 13, 2017, *I sottoscala dell'esistenza* [The under-stair cupboards of existence]). A "**marginal, narrow, and at times even fetid world.**" "On the peripheries of existence, 'sedevacantists' mostly inhabit the catacombs (which we already codified as 'cellars' in last week's article) and they struggle to be an original presence in the current ecclesiological debate. (...) In recent years, which we might define as 'spiraling', it is as if one constantly felt the enemies' breath on one's neck – often amplified, sometimes imaginary – intent on planning phantasmagorical plots aimed at destroying this little plexiglass Eden of integral Catholicism. As a result, one closes oneself up like a hedgehog, and, like the emoticon monkey, one does not want to see, hear, or speak. Thus, through an inadvertent ideological transfer of **boredom**, we fall into a **cursed self-referentiality** that – as is happening – produces **rotten fruits** and, even worse, a **rancid humanity**. **When we only stare at our own navel on a protruding belly, practicing a curious form of omphaloskeptic mysticism**, reality slowly begins to dissolve, replaced by nothingness or fantasy.

Singing religious hymns at the top of your lungs in some **country tavern is just a ritual of self-consolation that, recalling 'The Great Beauty,'** should serve to fuel a myth: that of 'being there.' In truth, you risk reducing the world to the four walls of your room, to the **obsessions of a narcissistic complex.**

'Few but good', or, less prosaically, they will say that 'the Truth frightens most people', that 'if God is with us, then we are the majority' (and other similar expressions). All very true, but we forget that in the catacombs both Saints and

garbage take refuge. While it is practically inevitable today, it is useless and harmful to force oneself to believe that a *Societas Christiana* is being recreated in this way. And if this is a venial sin, to fight the prevailing and harmful logic of inclusion with **a sports bar inquisitorial exclusivity** is much closer to a mortal sin. Someone might perceive (*Quod Deus prohibeat*) **a revival of the Cathar heresy"** (Radio Spada, October 21, 2017, *Catacombs e osterie* [Catacombs and Taverns]).

"To live without a Pope, living practically without Catholic bishops, without a true teaching Church, living in a general eclipse of Roman Catholicism (of which quite large vestiges and some bastions remain) and having awareness of it, primarily exposes one to fundamental risks: habit and aberration. Of the second, the adversaries of sedevacantism have often (not without malevolence) given the same 'pastoral' and *ad auditores* arguments: essentially, our position would expose us to madness, to extremism, to a fundamental atheism and a practical nihilism which would transform us into caricatured masks, into screaming sociopathic monads who enter the competition overturning tables, hurling anathemas, threatening everything and everyone with eternal damnation. The risk is real and in some circumstances (and we hope you appreciate the frankness) some stumble into it. In these cases the subject seems to resort to increasingly ultimate solutions, to increasingly bizarre and lunar positions, minoritizing or unscrupulous, in the privacy of their virtual or actual dusty desks (since the see is vacant, there is little time for dusting): in the last analysis, aberrant sedevacantists often become cruel and self absorbed creatures, cynical and amoral (whatever their life of piety). Wrapped in the theological certainty of being right (however well founded), they begin to see in others, **ALL others** (even if it is the neighbor on the landing, or the unaware companion of misfortune in the queue at the post office) monsters and accomplices of that articulated conspiracy that brought us to the ground zero of the **Catholicism we live today"**

(*Radio Spada*, October 30, 2017, *Aberrazione e solitudine* [*Aberration and solitude*]).

This is the beautiful portrait that Seveso and Fumagalli make of the “sedevacantist” world in which they have lived for many years, until they had the idea of founding *Radio Spada* with friends who were outside of their world (a book, *Ai piedi del Trono vuoto* [*At the Foot of the Empty Throne*] attempts to collect all these counter-apologetic articles). But here - with *Radio Spada* - the “sedevacantist” can finally leave the taverns, the cellars and the mental hospitals, while paying the high price of being condemned and misunderstood by those who insist on remaining in this fetid world (that is, our Institute): “*In the same way, those who have the courage or simply the will to climb the steps out of the catacombs and test the colors and smells of the earth's surface, even if infected by neomodernism and neopaganism, will not be some plague victim to be avoided at all costs, a ‘dead man walking’ of the Oblatio Munda. Perhaps, despite all his limitations, he is rather a man who has understood that preaching in the dark (in addition to often putting people to sleep) generates shadows (and sometimes monsters). Only in this way, by stopping the spiraling of a demeaning tailspin, will it be possible to make ‘sedevacantism’ an original presence, a handful of the defeated but not tamed, a lit lantern (and not a mosquito net) in the great night of the vacant See, capable of making the world feel the full weight of an entirely Catholic judgment on the facts and on reality*” (*Radio Spada, Catacombe e osterie*).

The articles from the cultural pages that *Radio Spada* has been presenting for years, on which I have commented, are a part of this “climbing the steps of the catacombs” to “taste the colors and smells of the earth’s surface”. The intensive course in homosexual, theosophical, astrological and esoteric culture that replaced the old diatribes between traditionalists, would be the “lit lantern” of this new “sedevacantism” which is unashamed to amicably dialogue with those who authorize attending the new Mass that (God forbid) cannot be called the ‘Mass of Luther’ (even Archbishop Lefebvre was still a bit in the

catacombs, since he had not read Monsignor Gherardini). Finally “sedevacantists” have emerged from the sewers of “a sports bar inquisitorial exclusivism”, and can meet amicably with everyone, as well as freely initiate readers into the aesthetic delights of decadent culture. A breath of fresh air finally shakes up a fetid world, where only St. Thomas was spoken of, and opens minds to the pages of Baron Corvo.

Radio Spada was founded in 2012; our Institute alone has warned of a danger that risks dishonoring the entire “traditionalist world”. Will we be the only ones crying out in the desert of complicity?

“Storia Sociale della Chiesa” by Mons. Umberto Benigni Volume 3

The *Centro Librario Sodalitium*, under the watchful care of Father Ugolino Giugni, has, in May of 2016, undertaken the arduous task of reprinting the *Storia sociale della Chiesa* [*Social History of the Church*] by Mons. Benigni. The interest of our readers has not waned over time, and it allowed us to keep our intentions: after the publication of the first volume in 2016, we followed with the two books of the second volume in 2017, and, with the present publication and in keeping our work plan, we arrived at the third volume for early 2018.

The indissoluble link between the work and the author render it necessary to add at least some information on the life of Mons. Benigni with regard to the period in which he published this volume, that is, the year 1922. Seven years had passed since the publication of his preceding book (that was 1915) and many decisive events had marked the history of humanity, the Church, and our author. First of all, the Great War, the consequences of which last until today, with its unresolved problems. Then, in the Church, the pontificate of Pope Benedict XV - which lasted from 1914 to 1922 - that signalled a turning point in ecclesiastical politics, abandoning the

antimodernist fight of his predecessor, Pope Saint Pius X.

The war had also suspended the activities of the *Sodalitium Pianum*, deprived of its high protector, Saint Pius X and of Cardinal De Lai it was however forced to remain inactive, finally dissolved in 1921 after the defamatory campaign started during the war thanks to a coup by German modernists and Christian Democrats, and which then the Society of Jesus in France and Italy continued, and which achieved success thanks to their support by the Secretary of State, Cardinal Gasparri. Monsignor Benigni was busy in those years, therefore, in addition to teaching at the Accademia dei Nobili Ecclesiastici, in defending the memory of the *Sodalitium*, battling against Father Rosa of *Civiltà Cattolica*, assisted in this task by his French confrere of the *Sodalitium*, the Abbé Boulin from the pages of the RISS (*Revue internationale des Sociétés Secrètes*) and with the publication of historical studies on the Jesuits signed “I. de Récalde”. In Italy, Monsignor Benigni assisted Father Paolo de Töth on *Fede e Ragione* (which began publication in 1920), with the political page *Note internazionali* [*International Notes*]. Monsignor Benigni saw in Bolshevik Communism, which had taken power in Russia in 1917, the work of two-thousand-year-old anti-Christian Judaism (for this purpose he founded in 1920 the Anti-Semitic Bulletin, whose distributor was, among others, an unsuspected figure like Emilio Cecchi, a sign of Monsignor Benigni’s intellectual influence in every kind of environment, even the most distant ones), and he published the pamphlets *Israele e il mondo* [*Israel and the World*] (1921) and *I documenti della conquista ebraica del mondo* [*Documents of the Jewish Conquest of the World*] (1922).

Forced to the margins of the ecclesiastical world, he collaborated not only with the integral Catholic press, like *Fede e Ragione*, but also occasionally with secular ones like *Nuova Antologia* and *La Ronda*. After the terrible year of the dissolution of the *Sodalitium Pianum*, 1922 became the year of the slow but sure

reorganization of Monsignor Benigni’s “discreet” work. The year 1922 ended with two important events for the subsequent period of Benigni’s counter-revolutionary activity: the March on Rome on October 28 and the publication of the first encyclical – programmatic - of the new Pontiff, Pius XI: *Ubi arcano* (23 December). Mons. Benigni, a scholar of ecclesiastical history and, at the same time, a man of action, will find in the troubled Byzantine-barbaric past of Imperial Rome, from its fall to its rebirth, lessons for acting in the new scenario that Providence had prepared for both civil and ecclesiastical society, always at service, obviously, to the Kingship of Christ and Empire of the Church.

Father Francesco Ricossa

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An Astrologer for *Radio Spada*.

Radio Spada introduces readers to astrology and theosophy, and it goes unnoticed.

Why I am not tranquil at all.

On June 26, 2017, I wrote a brief article (*Un astrologo per Radio Spada*) about an author of this publishing house, Alessandro Guzzi, and his work *Trasformazione del Male* [*The Transformation of Evil*], published by the same *Radio Spada*. My article was not published in *Sodalitium* at the time for reasons of convenience. I now find myself forced to change my mind, and to make it known to our readers, following the publication by *Radio Spada* of a long study by Alessandro Guzzi entitled *Astrologia: il 'disturbo bipolare' dei cattolici*. [*Astrology: the 'bipolar disturbance' of Catholics*]. Guzzi's astrological essay, we are told in an introduction by Piergiorgio Seveso and published by 'Jeanne d'Arc' (i.e., Pisa Giacobazzi) on April 7, 2018, is dated November-December 2018 and "integrates some points of his beautiful essay *Trasformazione del Male* (*Radio Spada* publisher 2017)". The introduction by the current "President of *Radio Spada*" (si quid est) has a resounding title: : **ESCLUSIVO: Astrologia, una questione controversa** [**EXCLUSIVE: Astrology, a controversial question**] (https://www.radiospada.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Astrologia_Disturbo_Bipolare.compressed.pdf).

Astrology, a controversial question? Not for Catholics, and *Radio Spada* knows it, since it writes: "And while fully complying with the disciplinary decisions of the Church on this matter, authoritatively understood, we did not want to deprive our readers (by reading Guzzi's essay, which is, "a lively and interesting stimulus on the highest level of historical analysis and debate on this controversial theme of Church history") aware

Astrology, a controversial question? Not for Catholics. The Bull by Pope Sixtus V *Cæli et terræ Creator* contains its solemn condemnation.

that there can be opposing and divergent analyses on the same theme." Seveso, then, is not ignorant of the fact that the Church has pronounced itself on astrology (only deceiving readers by presenting these decisions as being purely disciplinary). He declares his respect for these decisions of the Church; after which he maintains "that there can be opposing and divergent analyses" to those of the Church. Concluding therefore that the question is "controversial". And therefore, instead of presenting to the readers of *Radio Spada*, say, a translation of the Bull of Pope Sixtus V *Cæli et terræ Creator* (5 January 1586) and its solemn condemnation of Astrology, here he publishes a 26-page essay by the *Radio Spada* author Alessandro Guzzi, in which not only is astrology defended, but also theosophy.

Let us, therefore, briefly examine the writing of Alessandro Guzzi that the author includes - risum teneatis - among his "MYSTICAL WRITINGS". From the very start, he declares the object of his study: "the difficult relationship between the Catholic Church and astrology" (p.1). Since the author is a "traditionalist" (he frequents the Priory of Albany of the Society of Saint Pius X and is esteemed by Father Maruo Tranquillo), he rejects, rightly, the conciliar "magisterium" and consequently also the new "*Catechism of the Catholic Church*" (pp. 1-2). He therefore feels authorized to condemn as erroneous what is stated in the *Catechism* at n. 2116: "All forms of divination are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, evocation of the dead or other practices that are wrongly believed to "reveal" the future [See Deut. 18, 10; Jer. 29, 8]. The consulting of horoscopes, astrology, palmistry, the interpretation of omens and the like, clairvoyant phenomena, the use of mediums concealing a desire for dominion over time, over history and ultimately over men

and at the same time a desire to make propitious hidden powers. These are in contradiction with the honor and respect, combined with loving fear, that we owe to God alone.” In this point and in its next one n. 2117, the author finds: “the truly intolerant and little inclusive face of the post-conciliar church, in a repressive work that contrasts with what we read in the conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, which should have signaled a new attitude of the church towards non-Christians: “The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions [Hinduism, Buddhism etc.]. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men.”

Dismissing then the “conciliar church” even when it still teaches the Truth, Guzzi allows himself to introduce astrology to the reader (pp. 5 ss), as practiced by a supposed, nonexistent “Christian astrologer”. But how can one claim to be a Christian astrologer if the Church condemns astrology? Starting on page 8, Guzzi prepares his sophisms, endorsed by Seveso and *Radio Spada*: the topic is controversial, the “relationships are contradictory”, ambivalent, of the love-hate kind”; there were times in which the Church “appreciated and approved astrology” and times “in which they opposed and fought against it” (p. 8). For a Lefebvrian, it is no great problem to believe in a Church that contradicts itself! For Guzzi, the Church has “become harsher, more intransigent, but also more **tyrannical** when passing through its worst moments” like the Protestant reformation, the Council of Trent, and now with Vatican II (p. 8). Acknowledging that the Council of Trent and the Church were tyrannical, we see then when the Church was not so. And we arrive at the Renaissance and its Pontiffs, so dear, in fact, to Baron Corvo, to Piergiorgio Seveso and to Father Tranquillo. The authorities cited by Guzzi in favor of astrology are Pope Sixtus IV, Pope Julius II, Pope Leo X, Pope Adrian VI (‘master’ of Erasmus of Rotterdam) and Pope Paul III (pp. 8 and 9).

Assuming, **without conceding**, that these popes effectively gave some credit to astrology, I

note that Guzzi is not able to present a single document (disciplinary or doctrinal) by these Popes in favor of astrology: if they were in favor, it is in dealing with an entirely personal weakness of the Pope as a private person, and certainly not of the Pope as ruler and teacher of the Church. One can certainly deplore the Renaissance climate that did so much damage to the Church (a climate which is instead so popular at *Radio Spada*) without admitting to doctrinal errors where there were none. Guzzi, instead, doesn’t seem happy with the Council of Trent and the climate that followed it: “One of the harshest and most severe consequences of the Council of Trent was the Bull by Pope Sixtus V (1521-1590): *Cæli et Terræ Creator of 1586*. The Pope, after having declared that ‘[God] reserved for Himself alone the knowledge of things to come and the knowledge of future things’.”

In the next passage, the Pope declares the absolute condemnation of any foreseeable system: “To foresee future events and future cases, excepting those that arise necessarily or mostly from natural causes, those which do not belong to divination, are neither arts nor sciences; but only fallacies and vanities, introduced by cunning of wicked men and the evil of Demons.”

For Sixtus V, the risk is that these astrologers and mathematicians: “...rashly presume to foresee, judge and affirm the state of any man, condition, course of life, honor, riches, offspring, health, death, travels, battles, enemies, prisons, occasions, various dangers, and other cases and



Pope Sixtus V

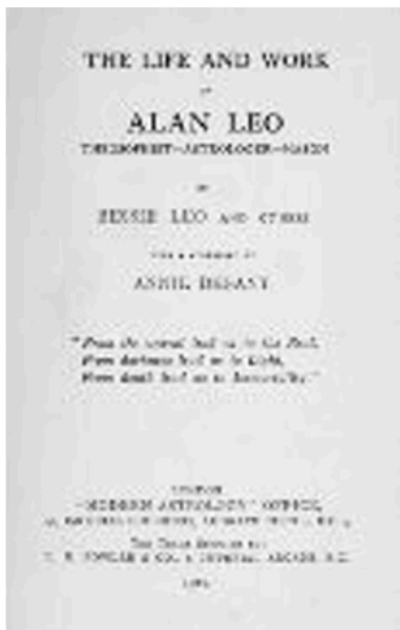
events, prosperous and adverse, not however without great danger of error and infidelity.”

Sixtus perhaps fails to say that many of his predecessors, who unlike him had had faith in the science of the stars, turned to it precisely for the reasons he deprecated, and it would have been out of place, in fact, in the case of this Bull like it was common with Pontiffs, to invoke the unanimous opinion of his predecessors in support of the theses he was expounding...

But Sixtus V goes even farther, and affirms that: “...nor was man made [by God] to serve the stars, but the stars to serve man. And if it were said that a star held man’s fate, it would still be said that man is subject to his own ministrations...”

Guzzi comments: “Here Sixtus is completely wrong...” (p. 11). It is at this point the time comes to introduce the reader to the “*Esoteric Astrology*” of Alan Leo, the “*famous English astrologer from the end of the 19th century: who substantially affirmed by his so-called Astrologia Esoterica which, steeped in oriental doctrines, had a fundamental role, especially in England from the end of the 19th century*” which is ultimately - for Guzzi - equivalent to what was even better supported by Saint Thomas, or the ‘Christian’ astrologer, Bishop Luca Gaurico (p. 11), whose *Tractatus Astrologicus* was put on the Index of

*The Life and Work of Alan Leo, theosopher,
Astrologer, Freemason with a preface by Annie Besant*



prohibited books by Paul IV. Guzzi, however, takes pains to say that Alan Leo, his preferred astrologer, was a member of the diabolical Theosophical Society of Madame Blavatsky and Annie Besant!

Turning to the question of the Church, Guzzi concludes: “*In concluding this study, entirely insufficient with respect to such a vast subject, I would like to quote from the Constitution of Urban VIII (1568-1644): Inscrutabilis Judiciorum Dei Altitudo promulgated on April 1, 1531. The document can be considered a continuation, but also a further hardening with respect to the severe intransigence of Sixtus V’s Cœli et Terræ Creator, and in fact it provides very severe penalties for those who exercise the profession of astrology, divination, haruspicy, etc. of ipso facto excommunication, demotion from public office, loss of all benefices, up to the death penalty in the case in which the predictions concern the State, the Pope or his blood relations to the third degree (...).*”

In fact, Urban does not question the credibility of astrologers nor does he claim that their science is just deception: indeed, those who speak the truth are even more to be avoided because they are in league with demons. Everything is to be condemned.

For Sixtus V, what is saved, however, is what is called Natural astrology or Astronomy, that is, that modern science which, paradoxically, would prove over time to be a much more dangerous and radical enemy of faith than astrology had ever been, having succeeded in breaking the inner union of man with creation” (p. 12). Guzzi, however, wants to demonstrate that the question is a matter of debate since Urban VIII himself would have, in private, practiced astrology and magic, with the help of the famous Friar Tommaso Campanella (pp. 12-13) (tried and imprisoned several times by the Holy Office and, I would add, a good friend of the Rosicrucians). These facts authorize Guzzi to speak of a “*contradictory and zigzagging trend of the Church towards the science of the stars*” (p. 13) while in reality the Church, in its official documents, following Scripture and the Fathers of the Church (read for example St. Augustine against the



Alan Leo

Priscillanists) is always AGAINST astrology, and any contrary attitude can only be attributed to the private life of some prelates or even Popes as private persons. Instead, for Guzzi the personal sins of some Popes become "tradition of the Church" while the Magisterium of the Church, binding for Catholics, can be calmly (it must be said) rejected: *"As for the 'Bulls' or the hostile, repressive, and censorious 'catechisms,' these are alternating positions in contrast with centuries of Tradition of the Church, and are therefore superficial, momentary, motivated by political or personal reasons, or conveniences of another nature, which should be considered separately, and which do not state anything spiritual, nothing that concerns God and what men should believe or do, so as to remain in the realm of good"* (p. 14). The following pages (pp. 15-25) contain photographs and off-topic writings against the modernists, *"the faggots and the lesbians,"* to conclude on p. 26 with a poem by Georg Trakl (1887-1914), who was incestuous (with his sister), a drug addict, an alcoholic, who died of a cocaine overdose, and is the tutelary deity of Alessandro Guzzi.

Conclusion

If I hadn't read it with my own eyes, I would never have believed that a so brazen defense of astrology and even of theosophy was possible

on a Catholic website, along with correlated injury to the Church and its Magisterium. Even less do I understand how the publication by *Radio Spada* did not arouse scandal and proportionate reaction, but was passed by unnoticed. Do they have eyes to see? Are they all complicit? *Sodalitium*, no.

And here for you is the article I had prepared in June 2017

An Astrologer for Radio Spada

(article of June 26, 2017)

Our reporting on the esotericism of Maurizio Blondet (*Uno gnostico a Reggio nell'Emilia* [*A Gnostic in Reggio Emilia*]) irritated not a few in the *Radio Spada* environment. But if, as they say, to err is human, to persevere is diabolical.

Recently the publishing house of Radio Spada in its column "*La spada dell'Arcangelo*" [*The sword of the Archangel*] published the book by Alessandro Guzzi, *'Trasformazione del Male'* [*Transformation of Evil*]: you can read the presentation released by the same publishing house here: <http://www.edizioniradiospada.com/componen/virtuemart/ecommerce/trasformazione-del-male-detail.html?Itemid=0>

At first reading, how can one not share, and how can one not support a book intended to be against Freemasonry, the New World Order, the Illuminati? (provided the latter still exist). The fact is that a favorable book review to an earlier work by Alessandro Guzzi, *'Il Regno dell'Anticristo e altri scritti'* [*The Reign of the Antichrist and Other Writings*] that previously appeared on *Radio Spada* August 20, 2014, attracted my attention. After having praised and recommended the fascinating book, the reviewer allowed himself a criticism for a "slight flaw".

"If one can present a criticism of Guzzi's book, it is that a slight lack of clarity on the concept of tradition is inherent in it, which does not frighten 'insiders' who know how to move agilely between the pages of this fascinating book, but which could raise some doubts among neophytes. Georg Trakl and René Guénon, for example, have fully grasped the concept of 'tradition', they have dissected it in all its

metaphysical, esoteric, symbolic, mythological components, but is all this enough to enlist them in the fight against the dissolution and against the Antichrist? Not at all. After all, even the Antichrist is traditional. The reading of this fascinating work, therefore, can and must be completed with a lucid and serene reflection on how the love for symbols, gestures, and the imagery dear to Tradition is nothing more than the most immediately perceptible form of love for discipline, order, and harmony that God has infused into matter, creation, and our soul: 'You created all with measure, number, and weight.' That, then, is the best antidote for the Antichrist."

I might be a 'neophyte' and not an 'insider', but anyone who enlists Guénon and Trakl, stinks of hell to me. So I went to visit the internet page of Alessandro Guzzi, not only a writer, but also and above all a painter (not very chaste) about whom you can find his biography at these addresses: www.alessandroguzzi.com#12F9E0A And to the people to whom he feels intellectually in debt: www.alessandroguzzi.com#12F9EF2

From his biography we learn - among other things - as follows:

"For many years, Alessandro Guzzi busied himself with astrology, taught as a refined system of interpreting reality. In the 1990s he published two books in Milan, the first of them on the Solar Return, and the second on the Horoscope of Conception (Trutina Hermetis). A third volume: 'L'Equivalente Lunare' ['The Lunar Equivalent'] is published in electronic format. In May 2004, the historic Federico Capone Publishing House of Turin published his last volume 'I Ritorni Solari in Astrologia'.

Alessandro Guzzi has also edited the first Italian translation of three masterpieces of the great Alan Leo, the English occultist and astrologer of the end of the 19th century, close to the theosophical circles and a friend of Annie Besant."

Among the people who inspires him, we note - among the painters - (a passion shared by Luca Fumagalli) the pre-Raffaellites (Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and John William Waterhouse); the occultist Alan Leo, the anthroposophist Rudolf Steiner, the astrologer Dane Rudhyar (Daniel Chénnevière), Carl Gustav Jung, and precisely Georg Trakl, to whom he dedicated part of the

book published by *Radio Spada*, an incestuous poet and cocaine addict, who died by suicide, and called an esoterist by the same *Radio Spada* in 2014. In 2014 the "slight lack of clarity" was still being criticized * ; in 2017 rather it is published.

But perhaps there is an *imprimatur* by Mauro Tranquillo...

* P.S.: The anonymous editor then left *Radio Spada* in 2014 and authorized me to write that he regrets having reviewed the book in question and having presented it to Rome, together with Father Mauro Tranquillo. Among other things, we might follow, in this, his good example.

While maintaining the documented criticisms that *Sodalitum* magazine has repeatedly made to Father Ennio Innocenti, we recommend reading the work *La gnosi spuria* [*Spurious Gnosis*] (Vol. 1 from its origins to the 18th century. Third edition, *Fratinitas Aurigarum*, Rome 2009). In particular chapters IV, V, and VI explain how during the Renaissance astrology and magic had been able to infiltrate gnostic elements especially in Medici Florence, and also in upper ecclesiastical circles.



Events in the Church

I don't believe it...But it's true! (2nd Act)

Father Piero Frascchetti

In the last issue we noted and commented on certain "ecclesiastical" facts, trying to demonstrate their incoherence and absurdity, which inspired the title (which we paraphrase) from a comedy by Peppino de Filippo. Since a play is composed of three acts, could we perhaps stop at the first act? Did we perhaps miss other cases similar to the above in terms of absurdity, contradiction, and bewilderment? No, unfortunately no, indeed as the adage says: 'the more the merrier'! We don't write these lines with

This crisis comes from the fact that it is the authority itself that is no longer ruled by the Truth...

superficiality, or with mockery towards anyone, but rather with regret and sadness, since “*only the truth will set you free*” (John VIII, 32) and certainly not compromising with error and evil, as Pius XII reiterated (this year marks the 60th anniversary of his death): “whatsoever does not respond to the truth and to moral norms, has no objective right to either existence or publicity, or action (see the Speech “*Ci riesce*” of 12-06-1953 to the Fifth National Congress of the Union of Catholic Italian Jurists.

In this regard, it seems interesting very useful to propose a passage from a theological article entitled *Libertà e Verità*, in which Father Guérard des Lauriers (we celebrated the 30th anniversary of his death on February 27), expressed himself with masterful depth of analysis and thought surrounding the situation (even now and always more current) in the Church:

“In this time of ‘crisis’, and as in all times, to be free means to be the instrument through which God realizes His design, it means to be conformed to this design, and therefore to be regulated by the Truth: to be free, in practice, therefore means to submit to everything that God manifests as being His will. In time of ‘crisis’, as always and everywhere, but in a very particular way when this crisis comes from the fact that it is the authority itself that is no longer regulated by the Truth, being free means not asking as a favor what is only a sacred right, a right whose necessary principle is Truth itself. In fact, it would only serve as flattery to the Authorities, to recognize indirectly that they have the right to forge false laws, contrary to the Truth; in the final analysis it would be a question of recognizing, as a legitimate fact, that Truth is not the sole regulator of liberty, but that it can be replaced by any compulsion: and this would be a sin against Truth, and a renunciation of Freedom. In times of ‘crisis’ and particularly in the current crisis, it is the Truth that

sets us free. Freedom of ‘favor’ can betray the hunger of those who dine with ‘*the father of lies*’ (John. VIII, 44); but it cannot possibly satisfy all those whom ‘*God has called from the darkness to conduct them to His incomparable Light*’ (1 Peter II, 9), and who, under pain ‘*of being cast out, must remain with Him*’ (John XV, 6), ‘*who is the Truth*’ (John. XIV, 6). There is no other true freedom than that of ‘*knowing the Truth*’ (John VIII, 3), there is no other freedom than that which makes its light shine in all its splendor, making Truth triumph.”⁽¹⁾

Moving on to some references specific to our topic, we recall that reading the Salesian Bulletin of May of this year⁽²⁾ and, arriving at the feature *WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE THINK*, which we noticed addressed the topic of the “End of Life Laws”⁽³⁾ and subsequently it gave the floor to some young Christians who frequented the Salesian Oratory of don Bosco for years, and several were selected, which we imagine were certainly not the majority, to be published in the historic monthly magazine of the Salesians:

Eleonora (19 years old) states: “As a believer, I see life as the greatest and most precious gift that the Lord could ever have given us. In Italy, it is now possible through the DAT (Disposizioni Anticipate di Trattamento [Advance Treatment Directives]), to express one’s own preferences and one’s own consent or refusal for healthcare treatment in anticipation of one’s future eventual incapacity for self determination... But, faced with such issues as euthanasia, of “sweet death”, and biological wills, it is my very love for life that pushes me to reflect... The words that accompany that gesture often are the same: “This is not life”. I repeat, I love my life; but what kind of life is that which only continues thanks to a machine? What kind of life is that which confines you to a bed? The one that takes away the possibility of going out into the open air, to go to work, to hug your children or your parents, to





Propaganda signs for end of life laws

dance, to play sports, to eat your favorite dish? What life is it that condemns you to wait for the discovery of a new therapy, an experimental cure, which might make you better? *What life is it that gives you so little joy and so much suffering?* Could I love it, even like this? In these cases it is so difficult to see life as a gift, *it is so difficult to understand what our purpose is, what is God's design for us.* I don't know what I would think, how I would feel, what I would do in a situation like that, or what I would want my family to do..."

Roberta (20 years old) clearly states: "It is right that every individual, within the limits of their own cognitive faculties, *can decide their own future...* Even Pope Francis, an emblematic religious figure, opened up the debate on the law governing the end of life. The result, therefore, is that it is impossible to remain inert in the face of such a question, balanced between individuality and ethical spirituality. To what extent are we really free to choose? Are we really able to choose in such a condition? I am, first of all, absolutely in favor of treatment, since it is very different from a form of therapeutic obstinacy that is harmful to the dignity of the person. It is right that every individual, within the limits of their own cognitive faculty, can decide their own future. It is not wrong to believe that man does not have control over his own life and cannot decide when the moment has arrived for him to leave the earthly world, rather I believe it is necessary to free the sick person from unhappiness, enslaved in an infirm body that does not belong to him."

Unfortunately, these considerations do nothing but show the disaster and the terrifying consequences of modernism, which in fact for more than 50 years has spread its own errors, and

has renounced, having agnosticism at its base, the teaching and transmitting, among its various omissions, of the Catholic morality of the Church, limiting itself to re-proposing feelings as the common base among all men of all languages, nations and religions. Let us ask ourselves if these young Salesians have the slightest idea of what Saint don Bosco believed and taught, what the twelve year old Domenico Savio meant by "death, but not sins", who accepted death with its suffering in imitation of a certain Jesus of Nazareth who came not to do His will, but that of His Father. (see John VI, 38) "*becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross*" (Phil. II, 8)

"*Jesus Christ is the same: yesterday, today and forever*" (Heb. XIII, 8) and that which he revealed and taught is Eternal, as He, who is God, is eternal. Obviously, we would add. But alas, it is no longer so obvious today. In fact, one of the most terrible aspects of these past decades is not only all that has been said, done, spread and repeated by **non-Catholics**, but also all that has been said, done, spread and repeated by **Catholics**; for this reason, **Kaos** reigns (but from the beginning of creation, the Holy Ghost has transformed *kàos* into *kòsmos*) and how could all this drama have happened, and is still happening today, if Jesus Christ governs, teaches and sanctifies His Church daily by means of His Vicar?

Many people have asked themselves this question in recent decades and to this day it remains for many (especially among the so-called traditionalists) the question of questions, and unfortunately the most widespread answer in this regard is the one that would like to save 'the goat and the cabbage' [the baby and the bathwater], often reducing it to a 'let's just do as before' (their *leitmotif*) and ignoring (deliberately?) everything else, moreover, not taking into account that "before", good Catholics (as they would like to be) obeyed the Roman Pontiff and submitted to the judgment of the legitimate authority of the Church.

Three decades have now passed since on July 2, 1988 the "*Lettera Apostolica in Forma di Motu proprio Ecclesia Dei*" was promulgated⁽⁵⁾ in which John Paul II condemned "Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, whose efforts made during the previous years to ensure the full communion with

the Church of the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X were frustrated”, and for his “disobedience to the Roman Pontiff in a very grave matter and of supreme importance for the unity of the Church, such as is the ordination of bishops whereby apostolic succession is sacramentally perpetuated. Hence such disobedience - which implies in practice the rejection of the Roman primacy - constitutes a schismatic act. In performing such an act, notwithstanding the formal canonical warning sent to them by the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops on 17 June last, Archbishop Lefebvre and the priests Bernard Fellay, Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, Richard Williamson and Alfonso de Galarreta, have incurred the grave penalty of excommunication envisaged by ecclesiastical law. ⁽⁶⁾

From that day, much water has passed under the bridge, and yet nothing has fundamentally changed for many belonging to the SSPX, or defectors, or more or less outcasts, or resisters ⁽⁷⁾, or in any case the influence of Lefebvism: the conviction that with and since the Second Vatican Council, the Church, whose invisible head is Christ, teaches through His visible Vicar, false and damaging doctrines, even what is contained in Sacred Scriptures (!), the Divine Revelation also, therefore, preserved and interpreted by the infallible Magisterium of the Church today would be in practice devoid of any value, or questionable or optional (!). All this while recognizing the legitimacy of those who have taken turns on the Cathedra of Saint Peter (at least from Paul VI) and have promulgated Magisterium, law, discipline, liturgy, canonizations...! How can one support and spread the idea, even in 2018, that the work of the Church is not guaranteed by Christ, and that its legitimate authorities can in a way both habitual (now almost 60 years!) and real (with official acts of Magisterium, exercising their Petrine Ministry in various environments of the Church), systematically err, deceive, teach error, and condemn truth, leading souls to damnation instead of salvation? We have personally heard some Lefebvrists object that if (today) Francis is not (in act) the Pope, then the Church is finished; instead the exact opposite is true: if Bergoglio is the

legitimate supreme authority (Pope) of the Church, then the Church no longer exists. Our Lord Jesus Christ would then have wanted Peter as head of His Church, assuring it also of His assistance, only to destroy it, corrupt it, sink it...!

Furthermore, every Catholic has the duty to also adhere, among the pronouncements of the Church, to the following teaching of the infallible and irreformable Magisterium, which concerns precisely, among the various legitimate authorities of the Church, the Supreme one of the Vicar of Christ: “This authority, however, (though it has been given to man and is exercised by man), is not human but rather divine, granted to Peter by divine word and reaffirmed to him (Peter) and his successors by the One Whom Peter confessed, the Lord, who said to Peter himself, ‘Whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in Heaven’ etc. Therefore whoever resists this power thus ordained by God, resists the ordinance of God, unless he invent like Manicheus two beginnings, which is false and judged by us heretical, since according to the testimony of Moses, it is not in the beginnings but in the beginning that God created heaven and earth. Furthermore, ***we declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.***” ⁽⁸⁾

We conclude (‘dulcis in fundo’) with another pronouncement by the Magisterium, this time by Pope Saint Pius X, who certainly deeply inspires the Society of Saint Pius X founded by Archbishop Lefebvre (to the point that his name was given to the denomination), whom all traditionalists consider to be a very great and holy Pope, and who look to him with admiration and devotion, therefore willingly wanting to listen and obey with joy and promptness to his voice, through whom Christ Himself speaks (as indeed has happened and will always happen through the voice of every one of His legitimate Vicars): “And how must the Pope be loved? *Non verbo neque lingua, sed opere et veritate.* [Not in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth] When one loves a person, one tries to adhere in everything to his thoughts, to fulfill his will, to perform his wishes. And if Our Lord Jesus Christ said of Himself, ‘*si quis diligit me, sermonem meum servabit,*’ [‘if any

one love me, he will keep my word'] therefore, in order to demonstrate our love for the Pope, it is necessary to obey him.

Therefore, when we love the Pope, there are no discussions regarding what he orders or demands, or up to what point obedience must go, or in what things he is to be obeyed; when we love the Pope, we do not say that he has not spoken clearly enough, almost as if he were forced to repeat to the ear of each one the will he clearly expressed so many times not only in person, but with letters and other public documents; we do not place his orders in doubt, adding, by those unwilling to obey, the facile pretexts - that it is not the Pope who commands, but those who surround him; we do not limit the field in which he might and must exercise his authority; we do not set other persons above the authority of the Pope, however learned, who dissent from the Pope, who, however learned, are not holy, because whoever is holy cannot dissent from the Pope.”⁹⁾

We sincerely hope that this latest contribution may help someone to consider seriously and in accordance with faith the current situation in the Church and perhaps clarify, and better understand, the causes and the appropriate solution to maintain the integrity and Catholic faith today, without which it is impossible to please God (Heb. XI, 6); without any pretension it seems to us that our Institute, thanks to the invaluable work of

the late Father Guérard des Lauriers, can advise and propose precisely this as well.

Footnotes

- 1) See the article in *Sodalitium* n. 43, pp. 33-36.
- 2) <http://biesseonline.sdb.org/editoriale.aspx?a=2018&m=5&doc=9715>
- 3) On this subject we report on a talk given by Father Ricossa: <http://www.centrostudifederici.org/omelia-sul-testamento-biologico>
- 4) http://w2.vatican.va/content/johnpaulii/it/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_02071988_eclesia-dei.html
- 5) http://w2.vatican.va/content/johnpaulii/it/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jpii_motuproprio_02071988_eccllesia-dei.html
- 6) *Ibidem*.
- 7) “In reality, the four bishops consecrated by Archbishop Lefebvre are less distant from each other than they seem: they do reach opposing conclusions, but all start from the same principles. All four have, at least in fact, as their first, last and supreme reference, the authority of Archbishop Lefebvre – to which they proclaim themselves heirs rather than that of the Church. All four say they are in communion with Joseph Ratzinger Benedict XVI. All four consider, at least in fact, that the Church and its visible Head, the Pope, are fallible and, in the last 50 years (if not even constantly from Saint Peter onwards, as Roberto De Mattei claims in his essay *Apologia della Tradizione*), have fallen into error. Their differences are attributable to the fact that they highlight one or another aspect of the doctrine and practice of Archbishop Lefebvre: the existence of errors in the Second Vatican Council, on the one hand; the legitimacy of the “Popes” who spread and confirmed these errors on the other (with the consequence, common to both, that the Church and the Pope would be – sometimes yes, and sometimes no – a source of error)” taken from: http://www.sodalitium.biz/opportuneimportune_pdf/oi25.pdf
- 8) See the Encyclical ‘*Unam sanctam*’: https://la.wikisource.org/wiki/Unam_sanctam
- 9) Speech of Saint Pius X to the Priests of the Apostolic Union, November 18, 1912.

*Propaganda of the radical association
“Luca Coscioni”*





A Gnostic in Reggio Emilia (the afterlife according to Maurizio Blondet)

On April 15, 2017, only ten days before he came to Reggio Emilia as conference speaker on 'Radiospadist day' the 25th of April, Maurizio Blondet published this review of a book by Gianluca Marletta on the afterlife, published by *Irfan edizioni*, a publishing house that is openly inspired by Shiite Islamist esotericism. It is a laudatory review, in which Blondet makes Marletta's thoughts on the afterlife his own.

Blondet calls himself a Catholic, and that is the reason we are dealing with him (who, moreover, has never been hostile to us) and he is considered a traditionalist Catholic by the Society of Saint Pius X and by *Radio Spada*, who regularly invite him to their own educational conferences, thus endorsing his qualifications. We, instead, have repeatedly denounced Blondet's doctrine as not being Catholic, even though we remain, even in this regard, 'a voice crying out in the desert'.

Blondet has repeatedly said he was hostile to René Guénon, even if there was reason to doubt his statements; and in fact after Gurdjieff, Guénon too (a freemason, gnostic and apostate but author of reference in Marletta's book), becomes an 'obligatory reference' for Blondet.

According to Blondet, bless him, the Catholic Church is 'still the depositary' (certainly not the exclusive one) of the entirety of knowledge, but it is so 'without knowing it'. It took Marletta and Blondet and Guénon to make known the Catholic doctrine that the Church ignores, or that it presents (even before the Council) with a 'flat and summary' teaching: 'death, judgment, hell and heaven', the Last Things of the catechism, which are a good teaching for the exoteric faithful, who do not know true wisdom except through formulas that are precisely flat and summary, while the Gnostic knows well that true

Christian doctrine, which the Church possesses but ignores, is a 'common heritage of all traditional doctrines': the pagan, the Jewish, the Islamic: various exoteric versions of a common and primitive esoteric knowledge, or gnosis, in whose light the Gospel, the Fathers of the Church and even St. Teresa and St. Thomas must be interpreted, but not the Fourth Council of Constantinople, the Eighth Ecumenical, which was recognized as such by the Church, however not by Blondet.

The fact is that for Blondet 'the common patrimony of all traditional doctrines' teaches about man and his ultimate destiny, that he is composed of the body, which returns to the earth (no resurrection of the flesh), of the soul, which wanders around the tombs or at most ends up in the 'bosom of Abraham' for Jews and Arabs, in the biblical sheol, in the pagan Ogre, and then is exhausted, and finally of spirit which would be a divine spark within us, imprisoned in man who would return to reunite with 'God' by identifying itself with Him. These are the doctrines of the ancient Gnostic heresy, disguised as a primitive tradition, which totally destroys Christian Revelation, supplanting it with an 'esoteric Christianity' that can deceive only the unsuspecting, to whom the conclusion 'Heart of Mary, who will triumph' is enough to reassure themselves. On the other hand, if Baron Corvo is an integral Catholic, why not call Blondet a traditional Catholic? And even if he isn't, it still fills the halls of the Radiospadisti and Lefebvrist conferences.

P.S.: Marletta draws heavily on Kabbalistic tradition by quoting Gershom Scholem; this is enough to throw some light on Blondet's alleged anti-Judaism.



Maurizio Blondet



Institute Life

The Apostolate of Father Arnold Trauner, member of the Istituto Mater Boni Consilii

Father Arnold Trauner

Since April 26, 2017, the feastday of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Reverend Father Arnold Trauner, Austrian, has been a member of our Institute. But how and where does he direct his apostolate?

• Austria

Father Trauner has lived in Austria since 2013, in Altenburg. This area is in the north-east of the country and is well-known in the region thanks to a Benedictine monastery founded there in 1144. The reverend settled there after leaving the Society of Saint Pius X, just twenty kilometers from where he was born. His brother's family is there, which currently is made up of fifteen souls, father, mother, and their thirteen children: a little parish of its own, we might say! Some people who search for the truth, or have found it, come to Altenburg each Sunday, or almost, and often even during the week for Mass, which is celebrated in Father Trauner's little private chapel. Just when Father Trauner thought he had passed the threshold of his old age to then lead a quiet life, with no great prospects for any apostolate, Divine Providence has decided otherwise.

• Hungary

Only a few months after his return to the land of his birth - after eleven years spent in foreign countries - a small group of Hungarian Catholics came to him. The priest who officiated at the chapel of the Society of Saint Pius X in Budapest had just separated from the Society. However, he maintained his "Lefebvrist" doctrinal position, while this group had already decided to recognize the evidence that the occupants of the Apostolic See since Vatican II are not Popes. At this stage,

Father Trauner was still in the opinionist arena on the question of the Pope. The meeting with the Hungarian group was for him the decisive motivation to probe the complexity of the problem, in the interests of all the people affected by the issue. The "non-SSPX Lefebvrist" priest took his leave, and therefore it fell to Father Trauner to assume the pastoral duties for this group of about twenty souls. A good half of these people left the group having taken poorly the doctrinal explanations of Archbishop Donald Sanborn during his first visit in 2014.

For six months things continued to stagnate: there were only nine souls, four of them very young children. The future seemed quite unfavorable. But, as happens in Christian life in general, patience produced a perfect work there too (see James 1:4). Only four years later, this group has grown by about forty people. Mass is currently celebrated in the center of Budapest, about every three weeks, on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. A larger chapel is now needed because the faithful are ever more numerous and also because rent prices in the city are rising exponentially. Arrangements are being organized to move this chapel to the outskirts of the city. It will be able to accommodate double the current number of people. In addition, the group has founded a publishing house that has already reprinted several dozen titles. It is a difficult job that progresses slowly, but it allows a much greater range of action in this country, isolated because of the language. The priest, on the other hand, communicates with this group not in Hungarian or even in German but... in English! At almost fifty years old, it is difficult to learn a new language, especially Hungarian which has nothing in common with other European languages. In Hungary today English is taught more than German.

In addition to confessions and Holy Mass, the Hungarian group has shown itself to be very fervent in learning about Christian life. It must be said that they have come from the Novus Ordo to the traditional Mass. The Novus Ordo still retains a conservative appearance in many respects,



Bishop Stuyver administers Confirmation and celebrates Holy Mass in Budapest in Hungary

especially in the countryside. For this reason, the faithful realize, more and more every day, how much they had ignored the truly Catholic doctrine and customs. Over time, some faithful from neighboring countries have approached this Mass center; in fact, every now and then, a small group of people from Slovakia comes, and sometimes also from Croatia and Poland.

There is no hiding from the reader that the priest will not experience any lack of work in the near future, because half of the group is composed of young people, the oldest of whom is now sixteen years old... and four newborns are expected this year!

Bishop Sanborn has come twice to give confirmations and lectures. Recently Bishop Stuyver made the trip to give confirmation to fourteen people, mostly young people and children, and almost as many conditional confirmations of adults from the Novus Ordo.

Several baptisms have been administered in the last three years, and first communion has also been given to a good number of children. There was also a wedding.

• **And in the rest of the world...**

Since “*non una cum Bergoglio*” priests are rare in Central and Eastern Europe, and since Father Trauner speaks three languages, German, French and English, a small part of his apostolate is done in countries he would never have imagined.

In **England**, Bishop Sanborn for several years tried to establish a regular Mass in the London capital. Since 2015, Father Trauner has offered his availability to work in England. Bishop Sanborn, after having also obtained the support of Father Nathanael Steenbergen, then established a monthly Mass in London, the two parties committing to make the trip four times a year. In the first two visits by Father Trauner, in February and March, there were only about twenty people. One might wonder if it was worth it... but even here, perseverance paid off. Today, about forty people on average assist at Holy Mass. Two baptisms, several confirmations and first communions were administered in this period. Since London is, as everyone knows, a place for meeting and trips on a global scale, many people from nearby countries often come to assist at Mass, from Ireland, France and Norway...at times one can count people of more than a dozen different nationalities!

To help Father Rafal Trytek (Krakow, **Poland**), Father Trauner sometimes goes to Norway and Sweden where some souls of good will ask for the sacraments.

The reader will have realized that everywhere the harvest is great, but the workers are few. Pray, therefore, that the Master sends more workers into his harvest!

The vesting of seminarian Coradello in 2017





Ordination to the sub-diaconate and first tonsure on April 26, 2018

Institute Life from 5/15/17 to 6/24/18

Verrua House and the Institute

On September 26, after the priestly exercises, the lessons for the year 2017-2018 began, with 2 new seminarians and a religious postulant. At Verrua, we are now 21 (7 priests, 5 seminarians, 2 brothers, 5 sisters, and a family member). In February, seminarian Nicolas Benegas, who had begun his lessons with Father Sergio, arrived from Argentina to complete his studies.

On January 28, 2018, while traveling to Turin for the sung Mass, four nuns of Christ the King from the *San Giuseppe* house in Moncestino had a serious car accident near Verrua Savoia. Two of them suffered very serious injuries, for which they were hospitalized and operated on at the Chivasso hospital and at the CTO in Turin.

The convalescent nuns were very edifying in bearing so much suffering with patience, and the nuns of the Institute did not spare themselves in helping the sisters of Moncestino and Serre-Nerpol in assisting them. In a word: Charity triumphed in sacrifice.

We report on the visit to our mother house by our confreres: Father Trauner, together with some Hungarian faithful (March 3-8, 2018); Father Raffalli (Jan 8-9, 2018); Bishop Sanborn and Bishop Selway with some seminarians on the occasion of the ordination of Father Dutertre (May 23-28, 2018).

On April 11, 2018, some members of the community of Verrua made a trip to Trivero, in the Biella mountains, where the memory of the devastation and arrest of the heretic Dolcino is preserved (it goes without saying that we side with the Holy Inquisition...). On May 8, the priests and seminarians visited the church of San Pietro Martire in Morano on the Po, led by Mattia Rossi, the Mayor of Morano, the *Pro Loco*, and the historian Gian Carlo Vanni.

• **Entrants to the Institute.** Here are the new entrants to the Institute: the seminarian Nicolas Benegas (05/15/17 in Rosario Argentina); Miss Marina Inglese (06/23/2017 in Verrua); seminarian Piergiorgio Coradello (10/20/2017 in Verrua); postulant brother Audric Lefebvre, now Fra' Paolo Tomasso (06/08/2016 in Verrua). On April 26, 2018, the general chapter of the Institute was held, with all capitulators present.

• **Ordinations and vows.** In Verrua, seminarian Piergiorgio Coradello was vested with the cassock on 06/24/2017 and received the tonsure on 04/26/18. Seminarian Bernard Langlet received the sub-diaconate on 04/26/2018 by Bishop Stuyver. Bishop Stuyver went to the USA in Florida on 02/22/2018 for the episcopal consecration of Bishop Joseph Selway conferred by Bishop Sanborn; Bishops Stuyver and Dolan were co-consecrators. The new bishop, Joseph Selway was born in 1978 in Walnut Creek, California. In 1996 he began his studies at the Seminary of the Istituto Mater Boni Consilii in Verrua Savoia, and completed his formation at



Above: The Episcopal Consecration of Bishop Selway in the USA
The 4 Bishops Stuyver, Selway, Sanborn and Dolan

Below: The priestly Ordination of Father Damien Dutertre on 05/26/18 at Verrua
Some of the priests present at the ceremony together with two Bishops

Most Holy Trinity Seminary in Michigan under the direction of Bishop Donald Sanborn. He was ordained a priest by Bishop Robert McKenna on December 8, 2001, the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. In 2003, Father Selway was transferred to Brooksville, under the direction of Bishop Donald Sanborn to teach at *Queen of All Saints Academy School* and assist the sisters of *Saint Thomas Aquinas*. Currently he is vice-rector of *Most Holy Trinity Seminary*, and teaches at *Queen of All Saints Academy* in Brooksville, Florida. On 05/26/2018, again in Verrua, took place the priestly ordination of Father Damien Dutertre of Most Holy Trinity Seminary in Florida, by Bishop Donald Sanborn, in the presence of Bishop Joseph Selway. On 06/09/2018, seminarian Vincent Gastin, Louis-Marie Chuilon and postulant Audric Lefebvre, now Fra Paolo Tommaso, received their cassocks.

On 04/28/2018 in Verrua, sister Gemma Margherita pronounced her perpetual vows and Miss Marina Inglese took the religious habit with the name Sister Maddalena Maria.

Apostolate in various countries

• Argentina

In Rosario, the *Centro studi e biblioteca Hugo Wast* organized several conferences on various topics such as methods of praying the Rosary, meditation, and on Pontifical infallibility. A Catholic formation course on Catholic philosophy and theology is also held regularly and catechism courses for adults and children as well.



Vesting and Vows of our sisters on 04/28/18



Vesting of a religious and 2 seminarians on 06/09/18



• Italy

Casa San Pius X - The Romagnola house, where Father Carandino resides, assisted by his confreres in Verrua, takes care of the apostolate in the oratories of Rome, Rimini, Pesara, Potenza and Bari. An increase in the faithful is recorded everywhere, particularly in Rome and Pescara: in these cities, on some Saturdays of the month, it is possible to ensure some religious instruction during the year and the Via Crucis in Lent. In the Oratory in Rimini, some singers ensure the singing for functions, as for example in the Sacred Triduum. In Potenza and Bari, with the opening of places of worship, the celebration of Mass is more regular.

In Milan, starting in the month of October, the nine First Fridays of the month were celebrated, with Holy mass and Eucharistic Benediction by a good number of faithful. On December 7, for the feastday of Saint Ambrose, like every year Father Ugolino celebrated Mass in the ancient Ambrosian rite. Catechisms for children continue, with two children making their First Communion in 2017 and one in 2018. An increase in attendance at Sunday Mass is noted.

In Veneto, in addition to the Mass at Abano Terme (2nd Sunday of the Month), to meet with the needs of the Veronese “non una cum” faithful who in different months are found without a Mass, Father Giugni began to celebrate a Mass in the area of Soave - San Bonifacio, on a monthly basis, the 4th Sunday of the month. The influx of the faithful is good, and encouraging.



Camp Blessed Imelda for girls with the sisters of the Institute 2017

The first celebration was on Feb 25. We are searching for a stable place where we can meet, and despite the “persecutions”, interesting prospects are opening up.

In Emila we report on the Rosary to Our Lady of San Luca in Bologna on 10/28/2017, and the *Via Crucis* of the Observance in Bologna on 03/24/2018.

- **France**

Father Andriantsarafara went to Corsica (March 6-9, 2018) to visit and to give the sacraments to some families of the faithful. In **Paris**, the growing number of faithful has forced us to foresee, as far as possible for one Sunday per month, the presence of a second priest to allow for a decidedly greater number of confessions. This additional priest then went to Raveau to celebrate Mass in the evening. At **Les Mans**, the priest who habitually serves Paris goes there twice per month (or on rare occasions at Mayenne). Since 2015 the Mass was celebrated once a month, but this frequency became bimonthly for about a year now. In Sarthe, on April 30, 2018 we blessed the Meat-Doria France factory. In **Raveau**, the Mass scheduled for once per month becomes bimonthly starting in January 2018.

- **Belgium, Holland and Germany**

In 2018, the Institute celebrated the twentieth anniversary of its presence in Dendermonde. The house was purchased, in fact, in 1998. A heartfelt thanks to the faithful who have shown us their trust over these years, both with regard to the priestly ministry and with their offerings. From the house in Dendermonde, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is regularly celebrated in Belgium (**Tournai, Bioul**),

Germany (**Lierfeld**), Holland (**Lepelstraat** and **Zwartemeer**) and **London**. In these locations, only the Mass is celebrated, rarely are there other activities. Still alive is the hope of being able to purchase a chapel in the region of **Tournai-Lille**. In Dendermonde, Father Steenbergen organizes each month a meeting as part of the Eucharistic Crusade and a catechism course for adults. In Dendermonde (and elsewhere) some faithful expressed the desire to live as Franciscan tertiaries. There were several meetings and some adults have received the habit and are making their novitiate, and a statue of Saint Francis was purchased. Let us not forget that in the carpentry shop, the machines of Fra Christ, faithful collaborator of the Bishop from the earliest years, are working more than ever at full speed.

Summer Activities, Camps and Eucharistic Crusade

- **Blessed Imelda Camp 2017.** Registrations for Blessed Imelda camp grows year after year, and to be able to welcome all children, beginning with the summer of 2017, the sisters organized two summer camps, one in June and one in July; the walk to the San Gervasio Gorge in Clavière, with the longest Tibetan bridge in the world made its impression on everyone, young and old. The elderly at the nursing home nearby were happy once again this year for the Provençal dances and the singing of our children. The first round of camp for this year concluded with a procession in honor of the Sacred Heart and with a visit to the places sanctified by the presence of Saint Domenico Savio and Saint don Bosco.

• Summer Camp Saint Aloysius Gonzaga

The camp at Raveau, which was its twenty-seventh edition (July 10-24, 2017), gathered together 38 children, supervised by priests, seminarians, religious and youth monitors. The children spent their time between works of piety, games and catechism, and they visited the Abbey of Saint-Benoît-sur Loire, where the important relics of the Saint, founder of the Order, are preserved. There was also the treasure hunt in the forest, and the theater during the final vigil. The winner of the camp was an Italian boy. The summer camp with the sisters of Christ the King for 2017 occurred on July 27 in Val di Susa, with visits to enchanting places to the great joy of the girls, who promised to meet again next year.

• From July 30 to August 11 the **mountain camp** was held for boys from 14 to 21 years old at the National Park des Ecrins in Hautes-Alpes at 1300 meters. There were about twenty boys from four areas of France, and some from Italy, supervised by priests, seminarians, religious, and entertainers from the Institute, under the direction of Father Cazalas. The program included beautiful mountain trips with magnificent views, sightings of wild animals, games, exhortations and visits, all in an environment of Christian friendship. Mass was celebrated in the magnificent little church in the village near Prapic.

Conferences

On November 26, 2017 in **Paris**, the annual conference by Father Ricossa was held: *“The Freemasonic Sect: 1717-2017, 300 years of modern Freemasonry”* which is now a regular and

always welcome event. The three parts of the conference presented the origin of the sect, the response by the Church and then underscored the ramifications between Freemasonry, modernism and even certain fringes of Traditionalism. On December 2, 2017, a conference was held in **Bologna** organized by “Virtute e Canoscenza”: *“Of that Rome where Christ is Roman. Rome and the Pagans in the Holy Scriptures”*, with the speaker Father Francesco Ricossa. [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6omUx9FAuk&t=1666s>]. On 01/19/2018, Father Ugolino Giugni held a conference at **Fornace (TN)**, organized by the locale “Scuola di Filosofia” on the theme: *“Saint Pius V: the Pope of the Holy Mass and of Lepanto”*; introduced by mayor Mauro Stenico. On 01/20/2018 at the University Library of **Sora (FR)**, Father Ugo Carandino spoke on *“The Liturgical Reform: from the Mass of Padre Pio to the Mass of Luther?”*. On 01/26/2018 at **Francavilla al Mare (PE)**, the first volumes of the republished *Storia Sociale della Chiesa* of Mons. Umberto Benigni was presented, with contributions by Marco Solfanelli (*Amicizia Cristiana*) and Father Carandino. At **Lille** on 04/07/2018, Father Steenbergen held a conference on the Thesis of Cassiciacum.

• Centro Studi Federici

Day for the Social Kingship of Christ - Saturday 10/14/2017 in Modena, the XII day for the Kingship of Christ took place with the study seminar which had as its theme the foundations of modern Freemasonry. In the first lesson Father



Group photo of the Camp at Raveau and of the mountain camp for boys

Ricossa spoke of the origins of the sect, while in the second he commented on the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII *Humanum genus* and some pages from the *Saggio sulla Massoneria Americana* [*Essay on American Freemasonry*] by Arthur Preuss. Finally, in the third lesson, the relationship between Freemasonry and Modernism was dealt with, as well as between sectarians and “traditional Catholics”. The audience was particularly numerous, with a record number of attendees compared to previous sessions. The lessons can be heard on the YouTube channel: <http://www.centrostudifederici.org/video-della-giornata-la-regalita-sociale-cristo/>

• **Centro Studi Davide Albertario e Giacomo Margotti**

In **Milan** on 11/18/2017, in the splendid and renovated Hotel Andreola, the *XVI Albertarian Studies conference* was held, which had as its theme: “Saint Charles Borromeo against Luther. The true Catholic Reformer”. The speaker was again Father Francesco Ricossa, who divided the day into two presentations. The 1st: “Saint Charles. The Bishop of the Counter Reformation against the Protestant heresy” and the 2nd: “Borromeo’s Catholic Counter-reform and Bergoglio’s doctrine of Lutheran justification: a comparison 500 years after the Reformation.” The presentations served to make clear how a Catholic who is both a true reformer behaves in unmasking the Lutheran imposture, which finds its emulators and admirers in our time in modernists like J.M. Bergoglio. The good press table was present as always. The conference can be heard on the internet:

[<https://www.gloria.tv/video/AbyXP6irX8jU4FqqsSMN4Bmaa>].

In **Turin** on 02/09/2018, at the Educatorio della Provvidenza, the Centro Studi Giacomo Margotti organized a conference on “*The Holy Shroud of Turin. Between science and faith*” The presenter was Professor Marco Ginatta, the author of the book *La Sindone a Torino* [published by Ontogensi.it], with an introduction by Father Ugolino Giugni.

The Institute and the press and other means of communication

Centro Studi Federici - Albertario - Margotti



- *Day for the Social Kingship 2017 in Modena*
- *16th Albertarian convention 2017 in Milan*
- *Conference on the Holy Shroud in Turin*

• **The Press.** On 09/25/2017, the website www.riminiduepuntozero.it interviewed Father Carandino: “*Bergoglio? He occupies the papal throne without having the authority. The Church devastated by modernism*”. We report on an interview with Father Ricossa by the French magazine *Rivarol* (n. 3305, November 15, 2017: *Communique 96/17 of the Centro Studi Federici*).

• **Radio Spada.** On May 28, 2017: In Modena and Ferrara, the homily by Father Ricossa in which the celebrant explained the reasons for which the Istituto Mater Boni Consilii advised against participation in the reparation against Gay Pride in Reggio Emilia organized by the Comitato B. Giovanna Scopelli (Radio Spada): (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bANk7eQ0GUM&list=PLPV8HFQ0V0si0TlyU8HGgOuo5L7eTnIvI&index=2>). Radio Spada lost no time reacting to this homily with an article by Piergiorgio Seveso (*Radio Spada, five years of battles*, on Radio Spada, June 15, 2017), one by Luca Fumagalli (*Decadentismo e Cattolicesimo: le malizie di un lapidatore incallito dalla pessima mira*, on Radio Spada, May 30, 2017), one by Gabriele Colosimo (*Processione 3 giugno. Il pagellone*, on Radio Spada, June 4, 2017) and one by Cristiano Lugli (*Risposta ad una omelia critica di don Francesco Ricossa*, in *Inter multiplices Una vox*).

Again with regard to Radio Spada, we report on an article *Uno gnostico a Reggio Emilia (l'aldilà secondo Maurizio Blondet)* published on the website Centro Studi Giuseppe Federici (communiqué n. 58/17 of 06/12/17), and the article *Un astrologo per Radio Spada*, again by Federici (communiqué 38/18 of 04/19/2018) and both newly published in this same issue of our magazine.

• **The internet site.** During this last year, the internet site of *Sodalitium*, in addition to the Italian, French, Spanish, English and Dutch versions, has been enriched with a German version (<https://www.sodalitium.biz/de/>), edited by Father Trauner.

• **Centro Librario Sodalitium.** Our publishing house edited volume three of the “*Storia Sociale della Chiesa*” by Mons. Umberto Benigni, and also reprinted with new covers “*Tesori spirituali. Le fonti della grazia*” [“*Spiritual Treasures. The Source of Grace*”] and “*Il mio libro di preghiere*” [“*My Prayer Book*”]. We also report on the reprinting, by the Association Sursum Corda, of the excellent book by Father Lemius “*Catechismo sul Modernismo*” [www.sursumcorda.cloud].

Spiritual Exercises

• **In Italy.** From June 2017 there were three rounds given in Verrua in August and in January, with a total of 56 practitioners (preachers: Father Ricossa, Father Carandino, and Father Giugni). From Sept. 18-23, 2017 there were exercises for priests, seminarians and religious (17 participants).

• **In France.** There were 7 rounds in Serre-Nerpol and Raveau with a total of 110 practitioners. From September 5-13, Father Ricossa gave the exercises to the sisters of the Maison Saint-Joseph of Serre-Nerpol, with religious of Cristo Re, the Opera dell'Etoile (Father Raffalli) and the Institute. The day of retreat for perseverance took place: at Serre-Nerpol on March 4, 2018 and at Raveau on the first of November of every year, as is now the tradition.

Pilgrimages

• **In Italy.** On August 19, 2017, as in every year, the Tuscan-Emilian pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of **Bocca di Rio** took place. From Sept 4-7, 2017, about twenty pilgrims, accompanied by Father Ugolino, went on a pilgrimage to **Prague**, where they were able to visit the splendid city and venerate the famous Baby Jesus in the church of the Carmelites. The celebration of Mass at the tomb of Saint Wenceslaus was particularly moving. A heartfelt thank you to Silvie Coradello, our guide and one of our faithful, who was able to wisely organize everything and conduct us on our visit to her city. On 10/21/2017 for the month of the Rosary, the Institute organized its usual regional pilgrimage to Piedmont and Lombardy, this year under the guidance of Father Ugolino Giugni, who took us to **Arona** (NO), the birthplace of Saint Charles Borromeo, with a visit to the famous statue of Saint Charles, and the charming lakeside town.

The Oratory of Saint Gregory VII of **Rome**: On 6/17/17 at the Basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme and at the main church in Trastevere; on 03/04/18 at the Holy Stairs; On 06/16/18 at the church of Aventino: Saint Prisca, Saint Sabina, Saint Alessio, Saint Anselm. It was possible, inside the Dominican convent of Santa Sabina, to access the cell of Saint Pius V and to stop in prayer. The Oratory of the Most Precious

Pilgrimages:



• Osimo-Loreto 2018



• Prague Holy Mass in the Basilica of St. Wenceslaus



• Arona Saint Charles

Blood in **Pescara**: 09/09/2017 to the Holy Face of **Manoppello (PE)**, XIV edition; on 02/24/2018 at the Holy Stairs in **Campoli (TE)**.

Pilgrimage from Osimo to Loreto - Not forgetting our 2017 edition, which went in the best possible way, we focus on the 15th edition of the pilgrimage, which took place a few months ago. The 2018 edition of the pilgrimage (May 12-13) recorded the highest number of people who participated on both days in all these years. The number of families with children, the many young people, and the new faces were for everyone a clear proof of the favorable moment that our small Institute is going through, despite the many adversities that affect the Church and society. Another element that caught everyone's attention is the harmony existing between priests and faithful, the fruit of mutual trust and esteem. Having left with the blessing imparted in Osimo by Father Francesco with a relic of Saint Joseph of Cupertino and having arrived at the Holy House to kneel at the feet of the Holy Virgin of Loreto, for two days the pilgrims raised prayers and sacred praises to Heaven, amended their souls with confession and strengthened themselves with Holy Communion, publicly testifying to their Faith in Christ the King. At the sight of the processional Cross that opened the pilgrimage, many passers-by and motorists crossed themselves, as well as in front of the statue of the Madonna in the final procession.

• **Belgium.** On 08/25/2017 was the pilgrimage to **Amettes**, the birthplace of Saint

Benoît-Joseph Labre. On 09/10/2017 another pilgrimage to **Our Lady of Gaverland**, where Alessandro Farnese prayed before a battle against the Protestants.

• **France. The Holy Land** On Nov 13-22, 2017: for this third pilgrimage to the Holy Land organized by the IMBC (the second for the French pilgrims), a group of about forty faithful took a ten day trip to Palestine. This formula of ten days allowed us to add other themes to the more emblematic places, like the Epic of the Crusades (Saint John of Acre) or Carmel (Mount Carmel) because there was an epic there too! Pilgrimage to the Holy Tunic of **Argenteuil** on 03/17/2018.

Pilgrimage to the **Carmelites** of **Compiègne**: in a short interlude of time we had the grace to visit two important places of their history: on 05/12/2018 where their bodies were thrown after their execution, and on 05/21/18 in Compiègne itself going to different places where the Carmelites resided (after their dispersion from the convent).

On 05/08/18, the pilgrimage to **Notre-Dame de l'Osier**, this year concluded with a visit to the Basilica. The theme of the pilgrimage: the words of the Madonna of Port-Combat: "I will protect you before God". True devotion to Our Lady for our salvation"

On 05/20/18, for Pentecost, about ninety faithful gathered in front of the sanctuary of **Our Lady of Grace** in Var to attend Holy Mass celebrated outdoors before going, in the afternoon, together with the Reverends Cazalas and

Andriantsarafara, to the place of the apparition of Saint Joseph. The town of **Cotignac** is unique in the world because in this blessed land, a century apart, first the Holy Virgin and then Saint Joseph appeared. Every year the faithful of Provence are happy to gather for this pilgrimage that also attracts some faithful from the Maison Saint-Joseph of Serre-Nerpol and even from Paris. A beautiful day of prayer and graces!

• **Switzerland.** We report on the pilgrimage to Saint Nicolas de Flüe with the Swiss faithful that took place on 09/30/17.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

• **Baptisms** Year 2017

04/16 in Sarthe, Aurore d'Osten-Sacken
 05/01 at Raveau, Nolann-Gérard Bebon and Paul Carré
 05/25 at Dendermonde, Giuseppe Filotto and Lucie Riley
 05/27 at Saint-Honoré, Égide Cazalas
 06/03 at Paris, Cécile Moulaï (with the rite of adults)
 06/11 at Vigonovo (VE), Anita Risato
 06/18 at Potenza, Osvaldo Zippo
 07/02 at Modena, Vita Pacenza
 07/15 at Verrua, Matilde Raimondi
 07/22 at Verrua, Klara Lesbros
 07/30 at Serre-Nerpol, Irène Allemann
 08/18 at Serre-Nerpol, Cyrienne Estellon
 08/19 at Annœullin, Marie-Anne Blanchard
 09/02 at Serre-Nerpol, Constance Bonnel
 09/14 at Moncalieri, Sofia Lorenzi
 09/15 at Rueil, Keziah-Louis-Marie Poli Madeleine
 09/16 at Parigi, Anaëlle and Erwan Autret
 09/16 at Rovereto, Athena Cappelletti
 09/27 at Moncalieri, Edoardo Lorenzi
 10/07 near Orléans, Cyriaque Blanquet de Rouville
 10/15 at Serre-Nerpol, Étienne Vezin
 11/01 at Rovereto, Ginevra Ferigolli
 11/12 at Paris, Kaïs-Calixte and Christophe Telga
 11/21 at Frasnès-lez-Anvaing, Aurore Salmon
 12/09 near Nantes, Ivan Le Gal
 12/24 at Parigi, Pierre-Emmanuel K/ Bidi

Year 2018

01/07 at Rovereto, Agata Manara
 02/18 at Rovereto, Pietro Cesare Prandi
 03/31 at Serre-Nerpol (during the Easter

Vigil), Valérie Allegrini (with the rite of adults) and her daughter Dolorès (Lola) and Marie-Salomé (Salima) Azzaoui (with the rite of adults)

03/31 at Dendermonde, Hanne De Grave
 04/02 at Dendermonde, Antoine Dupont
 04/02 at Modena, Cloe Maria Bertaglia
 04/04 at Ellezelles, Katrijn Van Overbeke
 04/08 at Raveau, Romain Langlet
 04/15 at Rosario (Argentina), León Leguizamón Núñez
 04/21 at Antwerpen, Verena Moreau
 04/30 at Dendermonde, Ilya Sergeysse
 05/04 at Gualdo Tadino (PG), Manuel Tommaso Ceccanti (with the rite of adults)
 05/05 at Wanlin, Célestine Dumortier
 05/05 at Dendermonde, Kasper De Ridder
 05/18 at Santarcangelo (RN), Giuseppe Felice Antonio D'Arco
 05/19 at Paris, Jean Badri Choulak (with the rite of adults)
 05/20 at Potenza, Leo Vittorio Messina
 05/20 at Turin, Rebecca Lucano
 05/24 at Paris, Christophe and Céline Autret (with the rite of adults)
 06/03 at Rovereto, Cesare Tito Armanini
 06/24 at Rimini, Nicole Malvisi

• **Weddings** Year 2017

05/27 at San Bonifacio (VR), Mattia Girlanda and Martina Costantini
 05/27 at Verrua, Mattia Rossi and Katya Falcon
 06/02 at S. Silvestro (PE), Yuri Sablone and Maria Cristina Solfanelli
 06/05 at Luynes, Christophe Bertolino and Sophie Ripert
 06/17 at Verrua, Yannich Lesbros and Jaroslava Pantoflicova
 06/24 at San Giovanni Marignano (RN), Riccardo D'Arco and Luana Tura
 07/29 at Castelgomberto (VI) Alessandro, Tasinato and Anna Santagiuliana
 09/09 in Campania, Massimo Molinari and Marianna Caruso
 10/07 at Jette, Axel Lesueur and Marie-Colombe Brabant
 12/30 in Portogallo, Benoît Herrouin and Viviane Pereira

Year 2018

02/10 in Friuli, Hervé de Gantès and Diana Ferroli

04/01 at Serre-Nerpol, Salima Azzaoui and
Éric Garcia
04/21 at Modena, Fabio Bolognini and Isabella
Selleri
05/05 at Verrua, Umberto Portaluri and Sara
Marchisio
05/05 at Gualdo Tadino (PG), Manuel Ceccanti
and Elisa Fratini
06/02 at Verrua, Stefano Andreozzi and Raquel
Garcia de Alba

• **Wedding Anniversaries**

06/20/17 at Selva di Fasano (BR). the 15th
anniversary of Francesco and Mimma Schiavone
09/24/17 at Rimini, the 40th anniversary of Luigi
and Gabriella De Capua of Forlì

• **Confirmations**

Bishop Stuyver administered
Confirmations at the following places:
10/15/17 at Paris (23 confirmations)
02/04/18 at Budapest (27 confirmations)
04/28/18 at Verrua Savoia (18 confirmations)
04/29/18 at Serre-Nerpol (39 confirmations)

The Bishop also administered about ten
confirmations at Dendermonde over the course of
last year.

• **First Communions** Year 2017

06/11 at Milan, Isabella Coloru and
Isabella Fazio
06/25 at Serre-Nerpol, Léa Bojarski, Luce
Chiocanini, Marie-Élisabeth Cazalas
06/25 at Annecy, Clotilde, Marion and Thibaut
Larfaillou; Lilli Marie Saugneaut
07/02 at Parigi, Privat Vigand, Lina Federici and
Elsa K/Bidi
07/08 near Orléans, Grégoire Blanquet de Rouville
07/22 at Verrua, Klara Lesbros
09/10 at Potenza, Asia Carretta
12/17 at Serre-Nerpol, Valentin Bousige

Year 2018

01/20 at Roma, Margherita Pulitelli
01/31 at Corciano (PG), Antimo Mazzasette
04/01 at Serre-Nerpol, Valérie Allegrini, Dolorès
Allegrini, Marie-Salomé Garcia (Azzaoui)
04/08 at Serre-Nerpol, Lauren Bousige
04/22 at Modena, Lorenzo Bonardi
04/28 at Holland, Michael Maria Romano Pulitelli
05/01 at Verrua, Nathanel Pizzocchi

06/10 at Rovereto, Ascanio Giuliana and
Gabriella Fattor
06/17 at Milano, Francesco Chiarello
06/24 at Torino, Maddalena Chasseur

• **Anniversaries**

On July 24, 2017 Father Sergio Casas-Silva
celebrated his 30th anniversary of ministry. On
09/10/17 at Modugno, Holy Mass for Pino Tosca.
On 10/28/17 and 05/05/18 Father Giugni
celebrated Mass at the cemetery of Bergamo for
the fallen of the RSI. On 11/05/17 was celebrated
the 150th anniversary of the victory of the
Pontifical army in their military campaign of Agro
Romano, which ended with the battle of Mentana
on November 3, 1867. Father Piero Frascetti
celebrated Mass in the morning at the Oratory of
Saint Gregory VII. In the afternoon, despite the
downpour that hit Rome, homage was paid at the
Verano cemetery to the chapel where General
Kanzler and his family are buried, praying for their
souls, and to the monument commissioned by Pius
IX to remember the papal fallen in the battles of
1867. On 06/23/18 at the Maison Saint-Joseph in
Serre-Nerpol, Holy Mass was celebrated on the
anniversary of the death of Father Georges Vinson,
founder of the Sisters of Cristo Re.

• **Deceased** Year 2017

On 05/15 in Turin, **Franca Petrazzini**
Wid. Miletto; she confessed to Father Ricossa.
On 05/30 **Maria Anna Beltramino Wid.**
Meritano (mother of Dario Meritano); she
received the sacraments from Father Piero. On
06/09 **Rosalba Chiossone**; her funeral was
officiated by Father Ugo in the church at Paderno
(FC). On 06/10 **Gabriel Grelin** passed away, one
of the founders of the Chambéry chapel, where for
many years was celebrated the non una cum Holy
Mass, and the priests of the Institute officiated
there often. With great generosity he cared for the
chapel, which owed much to him. On 07/30 **Rosa**
Candida Celli, of Villa Verucchio (RN), the Mass
of Trigesima was celebrated at the oratorio at
Rimini. On 08/11 **Georges Wiotte**, passed away
near Creil, equipped with the sacraments, the
funeral was celebrated on 08/17. On 10/02 **Fausto**
Proli of Forlì, a Mass of the week at the Oratory at
Rimini. On 08/14 at Montevarchi, **Gaetano**
Rennella (sacraments on July 24 by his nephew
Father Ricossa); our priests were welcomed at his
house for years in Levanella. His funeral was on
August 15 at Castelnovo ne' Monti. Il 28/08/17,
Olga Esther Silva, the mother of Father Sergio
CasasSilva. She was born in 1941 in Arrecifes. She
was a dedicated collaborator in the work of the

Fondazione San Gaetano and of the Oratorio of Casa San José. After suffering from a respiratory ailment for years, and a heart attack in her last three months, she succumbed having received the sacraments three times. Her funeral was celebrated by her priestly son. On 12/16 in Milan, the funeral was held for **Ione Donelli**, age 95.

Year 2018

On 01/13 in Acqui Terme (AL), strengthened with the sacraments he received the previous day, **Jacques Morin** passed away. He is owed a particular debt of recognition by the Institute, since it was thanks to him and his wife that their home on the Viale Tunisia in Milan was placed at our disposal, in which we began to celebrate the Holy Mass in the Ambrosian city on 11/23/1997. After about a year at the Morin home, we rented the premises on Via Vivarini, which we were able to arrange also thanks to their help. Originally from Normandy, Morin, an engineer, was a cultured and affable person, he regularly followed us in our varied activities; as his health allowed, he was always present at Sunday Mass in Milan or Paris. Father Giugni celebrated his funeral on 01/18 in Verrua with his burial in Venaria Reale. On 01/17 **Marie-Françoise Mahé**, mother of Sister Marie-Gabrielle, at the age of 82. On 03/05 in Asnières **Colette Jeancolas** passed away; she had received the sacraments on 12/24 and the viaticum on 02/14. On 02/09 the death of **Dr. Roberto Armenia** at the Policlinico in Modena, after receiving the sacraments from Father Ricossa (at the request of Pasquale Esposito). On 02/14 in Saint-Etienne, **Antoine Malécot**, who had received the sacraments from Father Murro. On 03/03 **Franco Cellamare**, 51 years old, in Martina Franca (TA), where Father Ugo celebrated a Requiem Mass on 03/21. On 03/31 in Turin **Pietro Bichiri**, 91 years old, who



*Engineer
Jacques Morin*



*Olga Esther Silva
Father Sergio's mother*

had received the sacraments from Father Murro, the last time on March 28. The funeral was celebrated in Turin on April 5. On 04/03, the funeral of **Marie-Thérèse Limouzin** was held in Serre-Nerpol, she was the mother of Sister Marie-Madeleine, who during her life, together with her husband, helped non una cum priests in their ministry, and in particular, the Reverend Saffré. On 04/09 the Rosary and blessing of the body of the deceased **Argentina Dionigi** in Formigine. On 5/04: death of **Henri de la Fonchais**, after a long illness. On 05/17 **Arnaldo Bertolini**, born in 1932, secretary of the National Association of Fallen and Missing Relatives of the RSI, his funeral was on 05/24 at the Oratory in Rimini, he was buried in the cemetery of Alessandria. On 06/01 in Berck-sur-Mer, **Dr. Serge Olender**, after a long illness, and after having piously received the last sacraments on 05/11.

Finally, we recommend to your prayers the souls of some priests who have died: **Bishop Hesson**, died August 27, 2017. On October 22, 2107 at the age of 92, **Father Josef von Zieglaue** passed away. Born May 11, 1925 in Bolzano and ordained a priest on June 29, 1952 in Bressanone, he is best known for having preserved, after the reform of Paul VI, the Mass of his ordination, first in the parish of Selva dei Molini and then, from 1983, at Spinga, in Val Pusteria. **Father Jean Siegel**, parish priest of Thal-Drulingen (Alsace), who died on March 20, 2018: all of them celebrated the Holy Mass "non una cum". We also remember some scholars we have known. On October 15, 2017, **Serge Thion** passed away in the hospital of Créteil, France: he was 75 years old. His Marxist and anti-colonialist writings earned him wide support in French society, to the point of joining the CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique). His stance in favor of historical revisionism, since 1979 (in this regard he

founded the first Francophone revisionist website, called Aaargh), earned him the harshest ostracism. **Serge Thion** was our guest several times, and he attended the conferences held by Father Ricossa in Paris every year, manifesting a true and profound friendship toward him. On December 2, 2017, **Gianni Vannoni** passed away, whose principal work (but not his only one) is *Massoneria, fascismo e Chiesa Cattolica*, published by Laterza in 1980. Father Ricossa was his guest in Florence in September 1975, after having taken the Spiritual Exercises at Fiesole with Father Barrielle during our common militancy in *Alleanza Cattolica*. At that time, Vannoni was particularly interested in integral Catholicism, and to the figure of Father Paolo de Töth, director of *Fede e ragione*, and of Mons. Umberto Benigni, founder of *Sodalitium Pianum*. A great Italian expert on Freemasonry, the Jesuit Father Florido Giantulli, left his “Masonic” archives to Vannoni (whose aforementioned book owed much to this archival

source). Later, Vannoni left not only *Alleanza Cattolica*, but also the traditional Catholic environment. However, Father Ricossa saw him again at a conference in Florence in November, 2005, and on that occasion he surprised him by receiving from Vannoni the gift of the entire archive and library which today is preserved in Verrua as the “Giantulli-Vannoni Fund”. It was a shame that I received word of his death too late, he was 69 years old: born in Rosignano Marittimo on December 25, 1949.

On March 22, 2018, at the age of 93, **Professor Eugenio Corsini** died during the night; professor of Ancient Christian Literature at the University of Turin. He honored us with his friendship following the article that *Sodalitium* dedicated to his exegesis of the Apocalypse (n. 49, April 1999). Before undertaking university studies, Professor Corsini had attended the diocesan seminary, preserving the faith of his youth throughout his life.

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Upcoming Conventions

• XIII DAY FOR THE SOCIAL KINGSHIP OF CHRIST

with the study seminar:

“WE WILL NOT SERVE: ‘68 AGAINST THE PRINCIPAL OF AUTHORITY”

1st Lec.: “The bases of the new family law against the father’s authority”.

2nd Lec.: “‘Humanae Vitae’ and Contraception: the desistance of authority”.

3rd Lec.: “The Vatican in anticipation of ‘68: the question of authority in the Church”

Presenter: Father Francesco Ricossa
Modena, Saturday October 20, 2018, 10:30 am
 at the “Ristorante Vinicio”
 Via Emilia East n. 1526, Fraz. Fossalta



For information:
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• XVII STUDI ALBERTARIANI CONFERENCE

ALL SAINTS...FROM “SAINT” JOHN XXIII TO “SAINT” PAUL VI, THE CANONIZATION OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

1st Lec.: The canonization of saints according to the traditional doctrines of the Church

2nd Lec.: “The smoke of Satan in the Church” the “Canonization” of G.B. Montini and the current situation in the Church

Presenter: Father Francesco Ricossa
Milan, Saturday, November 17, 2018, 3:00 pm
 at the Andreola Central Hotel
 Via Domenico Scarlatti 24



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