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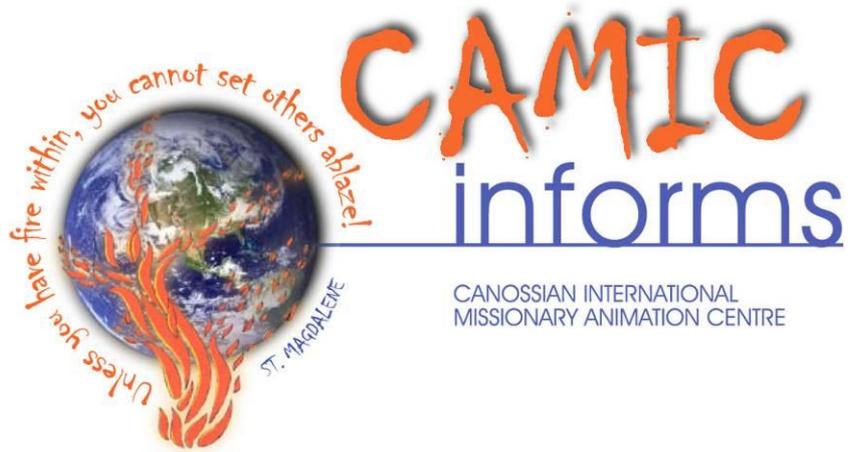
It is a monthly publication, aiming
to pass on information about the
missions and between the Canossian
Missionary Centre and the Provinces.

**We invite the Canossian Sisters
to collaborate in sharing news
and Information about
their missionary activities.**

We would like to receive the said news
not later than the 20th of each month
at the address below. Thank you!

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CANOSSIAN INTERNATIONAL
MISSIONARY ANIMATION CENTRE

missionary
church
events



2016

*A New Year is like a blank
book:*

we hold the pen in our hands.

It is the right occasion to write a new story rich in

*hope, satisfactions,
responsibility for peace and
rich in new opportunities.*

*Let us write it, everyone
walking the path
of daily ordinariness,
with courage and enthusiasm
even though fear and perplexity
for everything that happens,
seem to hinder our steps.*

*Let us mutually wish that we are able
to grasp straight away this opportunity which Providence offers us.*



This is Magdalene's wish for all of us:

*"I wish that everyone may have a very happy year, filled with
His abundant blessings.*

May God make you all according to His Heart.

This is what I wish more than ever for you."

HAPPY NEW YEAR

EVENTS for YOUNG PEOPLE



The road ...

*May the road encounter you,
dear young people,
may the wind blow at your
shoulders
and may the dew always wet
the grass on which you walk,
And may a smile always
shine on your face.
And may the tears which well
up in your eyes
be only tears of happiness.
And if there are tears of bit-
terness and sorrow, may
there always be
someone ready
to wipe them away.
May the sun enter and shine
strongly in your house,
so as to bring light,
great hope and much
warmth.*

(Don Tonino Bello)

INFORMATION

IMPORTANT DATES, EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

01.01.2016 World Day of Peace – The World Day of Peace is a day which is celebrated in the **Catholic Church** every year on **1st January**. The aim of this Day is to dedicate **time, reflection and prayer for peace**.

This celebration was established by **Pope Paul VI** with a message given on **8th December 1967** and it was celebrated for the first time on **1st January 1968**.

From that year the **Pontiff** of the Catholic Church **sends all the leaders of the nations** and all the men of good will a message which **invites them to reflect on the theme of peace**.

04.01. World Braille Day is celebrated every year on **4th January** to commemorate the birth of **Luis Braille** who **invented the braille alphabet in order to allow blind people to read and to write just like other people**.

Luis Braille was born in **France** and at the age of three he **accidentally became blind**. In spite of this disability, he desired to learn how to read and write. **At the age of 15** he developed a system of symbols composed of relief codes on paper.

These codes can be easily perceived with the hands and this gives the possibility to blind people to read and to write.

18-25. 01 A Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - The verse **“Called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord”**, taken from **I Peter 2:9** will be the guiding words for the next Week of Prayer for Christian Unity which will be celebrated throughout the world **from 18th to 25th January 2016**.

The ecumenical **international event** is promoted by the Ecumenical Council of the Churches with the Pontifical Council for the promotion of Christian unity. This proposal of prayer and reflection come **from Latvia** and it is **an appeal to join together the various voices of traditions, attitudes and different languages in order to form a “choir”** so that **we may walk together** towards full unity, keeping as our foundation, Baptism on one side and the Word of God on the other.

As it is a tradition, in Italy too, the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** will be celebrated in many cities by **involving Christians of various Christian traditions**: it is foreseen that different preachers from the **Evangelical, Orthodox and Catholic Churches, will intervene**. There will also be **Vigil celebrations, Ecumenical celebrations, conferences, discussions, Choir concerts and youth meetings**.

27.01 Holocaust Memorial Day – This is an international event which is celebrated on **27th January every year** as a Day to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust. It was established on **1st November 2005** by the resolution 60/7 of the General Assembly of the **United Nations** during the 42 plenary meeting.

The resolution was preceded by a special session held **24th January 2005** in which the General Assembly of the United Nations celebrated the **60th Anniversary of the liberation from the Nazi concentration camps and the end of the Holocaust**.

On this day people celebrate the liberation from the concentration camp of Auschwitz on **27th January 1945** by the Soviet troops of the Red Army.



Charism Corner

The Canossian Charism

And our Style of Service

THE GLORY OF GOD (continuation)

In the spirituality **St. Magdalene**, the **glory of God** is a concept which indicates the apostolic aim, it is a term which underlines every apostolic action. **It is very much like 'God Alone', which means searching for God's glory.** Today, the concept of "glory" can be ambiguous and can give the idea of "triumphalism", while the Biblical concept is the opposite.

The concept of God's glory is characteristic of spirituality and yet it seems it is one of the most neglected and unheard concepts.

We are in the **central nucleus** of our reflection and this is another aspect of **Christ Crucified**. For **St. Magdalene**, God alone is like the source and the centre of her spirituality and God's glory or "**His glory**", as she called it, is like the light which illumines her journey and to which she **referred in all her actions.**

In the **Old Testament** the use of the term **glory of God** is not one of the terms which indicates transcendence, because the task of the Old Testament was that of **safeguarding God's image**, not reducing it to a deity, a human image or a statue. The risk of the Hebrew people was that of reducing the divinity to **human dimensions**. **God is different from a human being, He is: "the Great One", "the Strong One", "the Holy One"....** All these terms describe God's **transcendence**. The term "**glory of God**" does not appear in the Old Testament.

It is important to recognise the otherness of God, to understand that God is always greater than man, that He is our Father, a Father to be loved and respected. He cannot be reduced to our dimensions or considered to be inferior to us

The term "**glory**", instead, is one of the **immanent terms** which remind us that **God is close to human beings, who comes to meet them and always takes their side.** When the Bible wants us to **feel** that God is not far from us, that He is our Saviour, that He comes to meet us, **then it uses certain terms like God the Father, God the Mother, God our Saviour, God our Mercy...** The term "**glory**" is one of these. The glory of God comes about every time that God approaches the person and saves. His glory is seen in the Temple: "**the Temple of the Lord is full of His glory**"...; it is seen too on earth: "**the earth is full of His glory**"; it is fulfilled in humankind: "**the human being is the glory of God**"...

*"The Spirit
of my Institute,
has for its foundation
charity alone,
and it does not want,
or rather,
I do not want
to have any other Spirit
than sweetness
and Charity."*

(To Marquis Alessandro Carloti)



In the **New Testament**, the term **“glory”** takes on a new meaning. It is part of God’s poor, simple style and the style of Christ who made Himself a human baby. John’s prologue shows this very well: **“The Word was made flesh, He lived among us, and we saw His glory.”** We have seen a Baby born in poverty, **thus the glory of God is the poverty of a Baby.** God did not choose to come with **human glory, but the very opposite. “Glory to God in the highest heaven”** is the song of the Angels when God became flesh on this earth!

The **full realisation of God’s glory will be the cross of Christ, the lowest and highest point of the incarnation, but it will be the greatest realization of salvation.**



In John **11:4**, the death of Lazarus is defined by Jesus as a sickness with a precise aim: **“this sickness will not end in death but in God’s glory.”** This means that **the ultimate end, the aim of this sickness is not death but resurrection, which is glory.** This sickness passes through death but does end there, its aim is to come to glory.

Thus we can say that the **glory of God is the place of revelation, of the manifestation of salvation.**

If **God’s glory is the place where salvation is realised**, our apostolate **cannot have a different aim than the glory of God** and if it **does not bring about God’s glory it does not fulfil the aim of our apostolate.**

The problem is that **we often set human glory against the glory of God** and sometimes this brings us away from God’s plan and pre-

vents us to concretize it. **We often interpret the glory of God** with criteria, logic and mentality that are too human.

Jesus Himself, in John’s Gospel, **5,41-44**, says that the glory of man is set against the glory of God. We read in John’s Gospel: **“As for human approval, this means nothing to me... I have come in the name of my Father and you refuse to accept me; if someone else comes in his own name you will accept him. How can you believe, since you look to one another for approval and are not concerned with the approval that comes from the one God?”** This is a very important concept.

Where do our uncertainties and our crises come from? **Lack of love, lack of feeling loved is the basis of insecurity.** The person who does not experience love, will always be an insecure and empty person. Jesus is sure of Himself, He does not need the glory of people, because He knows He is loved by His Father. And He is sure of His Father, because He came in the name of His Father...

Instead, the one who is not sure of God’s love feels a heavy inner emptiness that needs to be filled with the approval of others ... Approval becomes the **idol** that keeps people satisfied only when they are praised for what they do, for their abilities and not for what they really are.

Regarding this attitude, Jesus’ conclusion, as we read in John’s Gospel, is: **“How can you believe, since you look to one another for approval?”** He would like to say: **“you do not live in faith ... because you are searching for human glory and not that which comes from God alone ... you are working simply on a human level ...”**

If we seriously reflect, this attitude **marks our apostolate tremendously.** When we work according to human criteria, to our talents and abilities ... when we are envious and jealous ... this means we are looking for human glory, we are not walking the path of faith, but we follow a false objective. **The only true objective is to search for the glory which comes from God alone....** Thus apostolate is **effective**

and fruitful only when it is directed towards God alone and His glory.

And yet this requires a **journey of asceticism.**

We must ask ourselves:

- How far do we succeed in really directing our action towards God?
- How far do our human limits: **need of glory, success, results and affective re-**



turn, invade our apostolate?

We are conditioned by a mixture of feelings and of fear: **if I act like this, what will the others say? If I do not say If I do not go If I say ... how will the others judge me?** ... Others become our point of reference and our reason for action. Thus we lose the real orientation of our actions.

If we are honest with ourselves we must recognize that we depend on ourselves too much regarding human judgment.

It is important to believe that it is the **Lord who rewards us and**, even if there may be human reward, it is not a bad thing, because even Jesus was praised and did not withdraw before recognition. It is natural to receive approval and recognition, but it is a great mistake to consider them as the goal of our apostolate. We must be more honest with ourselves.

In the apostolate, when we consider our success, others' support, recognition as our

primary and prevailing aim, we completely miss the sole aim, that is the search and the realization of God's glory.

When **St. Magdalene** told us that we must do **everything and only for the glory of God, she wanted to point out the necessary aim of our apostolic activity:**

- *... this Institute of ours, the least one, is solely directed towards the Divine Glory and the good of our neighbours.* (Lett. To Viceroy G. Ranieri, 3.9.1818, p. 113);
- *... it will be a great joy for me to be able to dedicate myself to something that is completely directed to the Divine Glory.* (Lett. to Fr. G. Gaspari, 20.11.1817, p. 934);
- *... I would like you to be an instrument for the Glory of God.* (Lett. to E. Renzi, 10.3.1834, p. 1192);
- *... let us trust in God and let us open our heart seeking His glory always more and more.* (Lett. to E. Renzi, 16.8.1826, p. 1148);
- *... My dear Betta, please take care of yourself and do it only for the Glory and the service of God.* (Lett. to E. Renzi, 26.11.1830, p. 1185);
- *... it is better to do God's will and to seek His kindness and glory rather than our inclination.* (Lett. to G. Terragnoli, 30.8.1823, p. 668)

It is essential to try to understand the **central value** of **St. Madgalene's** proposal: **to seek only for the glory of God and rediscover it as the supporting value of our Canossian spirituality.** Through the rediscovery of the Biblical value of this term and the connected asceticism, we may certainly value it evermore. **(to be continued)**



MISSION:

RECOUNTING GOD'S MERCY

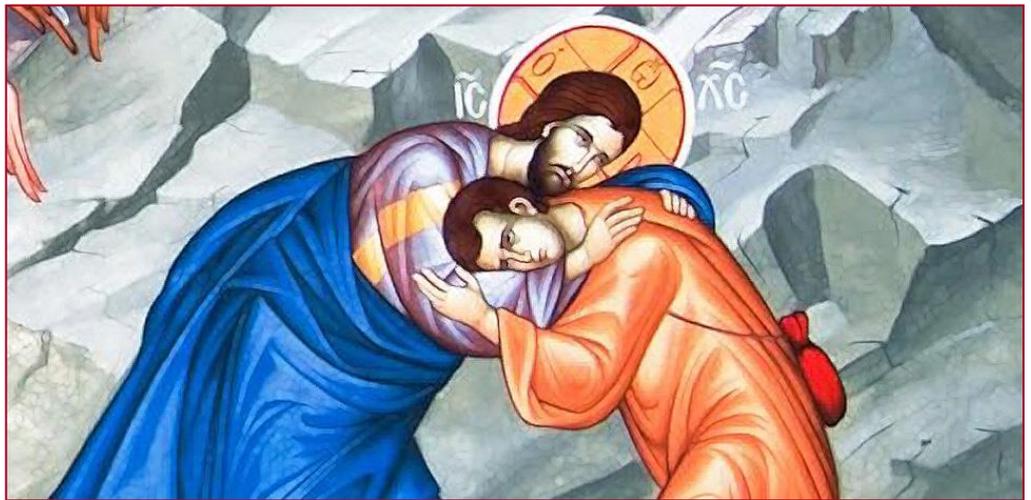
by Giampietro Casiraghi

Like Pope Francis, John Paul II underlined the theme of mercy: *«Outside God's mercy, there is no other source of hope for human beings»* and he added: *«In Christ Jesus, God really took on a divine heart, rich in mercy and forgiveness, as well as a human heart, capable of every vibration of love.»*

The primacy of mercy, referred to one of the Beatitudes, *«Blessed the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.»* (Mt 5:7), has also been pointed out by the Pope as the theme of the World Youth Day which will be held in 2016 at Cracow, the Polish city where John Paul II was Bishop during the years 1964-1978.

The theme, chosen by Pope Bergoglio suggests that those who are merciful **are those men and women** who are **capable of feeling miseries and difficulties of others as their own, who take interest in others and help them in their sufferings. This is a grace, a pure gift from God.** He who

receives this gift is radically steered to do as God does with everyone, men and women, of every country, every age and social status. There is an interesting passage in the Book of the prophet Hosea: *«I myself taught Ephraim to walk. Yet they have not understood that I was the one looking after them. I led them*



with reins of kindness, with leading strings of love. I was like someone who lifts an infant close against his cheek; stooping down to him I gave him his food. Ephraim how could I part with you? My heart recoils from it, my whole being trembles at the thought for I am God, not man: I am the Holy One in your midst and have no wish to destroy.» (Ho 11:1-9)

Ephraim is Joseph's second son, born in Egypt, brother of Manasse. The prophets used this name to point out the whole kingdom of Israel. But what is this text telling us?

- ☐ *God looks after us and teaches us to walk, guides us like a father.*
- ☐ *He uses reins of kindness and strings of love in our regard.*
- ☐ *He takes us in His arms and brings us close against His cheek.*
- ☐ *He stoops down to us and does not abandon us.*
- ☐ *He is touched and trembles with compassion.*

All this happens because He is Holy and does not get angry against us. We are facing the incomprehensible paradox of God's love for us. God is holy, transcendent: His holiness, His mysterious nature is the only possible foundation of His mercy towards those who go away from Him and abandon Him by sin. (Jr3:12-19; 31:20)

There is another passage of the prophet Hosea which highlights God's loving goodness: «She will chase after her lovers and never catch up with them, she will search for them and never find them. Then she will say, ***“I will go back to my first husband, I was happier then than I am today.”*** [...] ***That is why I am going to lure her and lead her out into the wilderness and speak to her heart. [...]. I will betroth you to myself forever, betroth you with integrity and justice, with tenderness and love. I will betroth you to myself with faithfulness, and you will come to know God.***» (Ho 2:8-9. 16. 21:22)

Hosea experienced a love which betrayed him; His woman left him. Through the experience of sin, Israel gradually penetrated the depth of God's goodness and mercy. God is always ready to love His ungrateful son; He is the spouse always faithful, ready to welcome his unfaithful wife. God is close to His people, helps them to face their sin and provokes them to repentance.

To what point can God tie himself to His people?

Does God's forgiveness and mercy have a limit? Only Jesus can answer these questions. In fact, He has the task of revealing His Father's mercy. From the beginning of his Gospel, Luke proclaims God's mercy which reaches from age to age, from generation to generation; it reveals itself at the birth of John Baptist; Zechariah proclaims that God showed mercy to our ancestors and, with John's birth, begin His work of mercy.

All the actions of Jesus demonstrate this attitude: ***«I want mercy, not sacrifice», «I have come for sinners, not the just»***. This is His programme of life and proclamation.

Jesus' true disciple follows the same programme: **he goes, he proclaims through words, gestures of goodness and the gift of self; the Father is tenderness and mercy and welcomes everyone.**

For this reason Jesus **loves the poor, He is the friend of publicans, He sits at their table**, He allows the sinful women to approach Him and He forgives her with infinite tenderness. ***Jesus came to «search for and save that which was lost.»*** (Lk 19:10; cf. Lk 4:18; 7:22.34.39; 19:5)
(to be continued)

