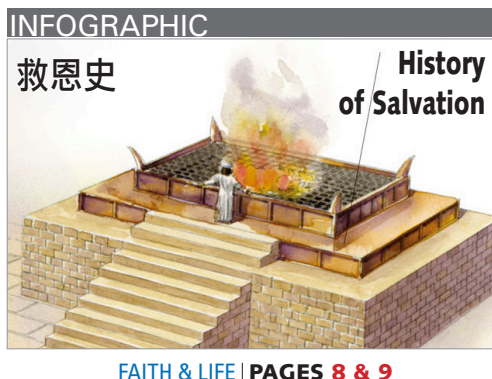




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HOLY GARMENTS

About those things priests wear



AFP Getty

(VIS & Rome Reports) – On Thursday, September 18, the Holy Father received in audience the bishops appointed during the last year, who are participating in the orientation program organized by the Congregation for Bishops and the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

AFTER AN ADDRESS made by Cardinal Marc Ouellet, the Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops, the Pope shared a light-hearted moment with the new bishops.

"The cardinal said that this was the most anticipated moment. That's why they leave it for last so that none of you will leave before it ends. It is a trick of the congregation," the Pope quipped.

Francis commented that he was happy to meet them and said that they were "the fruit of the arduous work and tireless prayer of the Church who, when she chooses her pastors, recalls that entire night the Lord spent on the mount, in the presence of the Father, before naming those He wanted to stay with him and to go forth into the world."

The Pope asked them now that they have overcome their initial fears and excitement of their consecration, never to take for granted the ministry entrusted to them, never to lose their wonder before

God's plan nor the awe of walking aware of His presence and the presence of the Church which is, first and foremost, His.

He also reminded them of "the inseparable bond between the stable presence of the bishop and the growth of the flock." Pope Francis added, "When the pastor is missing or unavailable, pastoral care and the salvation of souls is at risk. In fact, in the pastors Christ gives to the Church, He shows His love for His bride and gives His life for her."

He continued, "we do not need superficially happy bishops; it is necessary to dig deeper to discover what the Spirit continues to inspire in your Bride. You are not fixed-term bishops, who always need to change address, like medicines that lose their power to cure, or like those insipid foodstuffs that have to be thrown away because they have lost their usefulness. It is important not to block the curative force that springs from within the gift you have received, and this defends you from the temptation to come and go aimlessly, because no wind is favorable to he who does not know where he is going. And we have learned where we are going; we are always going towards Jesus". He added, "in this way, your watch over your flock will never fail to encounter the flame of the Risen Christ."

"I also beg you not to fall prey to the temptation to change the people. Love the people that God has given you, even

when they have committed grave sins, without tiring of turning to the Lord for forgiveness and a new beginning, even at the cost of having to cancel your false images of the divine face or the fantasies you have nurtured of how to ensure their communion with God." The Church, he added, is to offer "welcome to all without discrimination, offering the firmness of the authority that enables growth and the gentleness of paternity that generates. Do not fall prey to the temptation of sacrificing your freedom by surrounding yourself with courts, networks or choirs of assent, as the Church and the world always have the right to hear from the lips of bishops the Gospel that sets them free."

Pope Francis advised the bishops to imitate Moses' patience in leading his people, as "nothing is more important than introducing people to God!" He therefore urged them to begin with the young and the elderly, "because the first are our wings, and the second are our roots. Wings and roots without which we do not know what we are, much less where we are going." He added that he saw the bishops as sentinels, able to awaken their Churches; "men able to cultivate and ripen God's fields and pastors able to restore unity. Do not waste energy in conflict and disagreement, but rather use it to build and to love," he concluded, wishing them "fruitfulness, patience, humility and much prayer". ■

BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO HOLY SEE ON ISIS

“We want persecuted minorities to be able to go back home”

(Rome Reports) - The brutality and violence ISIS has used has shocked the world. Now the question is what's being done to stop them?

British Ambassador to the Holy See Nigel Baker confirmed, “There's a military strategy, there's a diplomatic strategy, there's also a counter-terrorism strategy.”

Baker says an international coalition is moving forward well beyond humanitarian aid, from military action to a UN resolution to help countries tackle ISIS' financing.

He adds that there is a need “to find ways to bring some of these people to justice, collecting evidence on their crimes so that these people know that there isn't impunity. The people who murdered David Haines or the American journalists won't get away with it.”

ISIS has used Islam as a tool for violence, forcing Christians and other religious minorities out of their homes, killing innocent civilians and threatening to use force against anyone in their way. The situation is complicated even more, by the fact that some Westerners are joining them.



“I don't think anybody is quite sure how many people from Britain, France, or the states of Australia or other countries have gone out to fight with these organizations. What is clear is that these are young people in many cases who have been radicalized, be it by some extremist pastor, the internet, by what they've seen. Often even their families don't know what has happened to them,” the British Ambassador adds.

Stopping ISIS won't happen from one day to the next. But as the international coalition takes action, Baker says the goal is to make sure this doesn't turn into a permanent humanitarian crisis.

“What we want is to make sure that Christians, Yazidis, Muslims can go back to their homes and start living their lives again in safety.”

The task won't be easy, especially since ISIS is radical and well financed, but more than 1.3 million people who survived the atrocities are hoping they can simply go back to their homeland and try to start their lives again. ■

POPE ON RETURN FLIGHT FROM ALBANIA

“My travel to Albania is a message to Europe”

(Rome Reports) - Even though it was just an hour flight, Pope Francis had time to give a press conference on his way back from Albania. But he gave journalists one condition: that they could only talk about his trip to the Balkan country.

The Pope remarked, “Tomorrow, news must only focus on the trip. Nothing else.”

The Pope talked for 12 minutes. He confessed his shock after listening to the testimonies of an Albanian nun and priest who suffered the Communist persecution for years. “To hear a martyr speak of his own martyrdom was very powerful. I think that all of us who were

there were moved, all of us. And they spoke as if they were talking about other people, simply and with humility. It did me a great deal of good.”

Albania, a country deeply marked by a Communist dictatorship, was the Pope's choice for his first apostolic trip within Europe. And although it's a European country, it doesn't belong to the European Union.

“My trip is a message, it is a sign: it is a sign I wish to give,” the Holy Father stressed.

Pope Francis explained that he had studied for two months the history of Communist repression in the country.

“For two months I have been



studying that period. It was a cruel period; the level of cruelty was terrible. When I saw those photos of the martyrs, but not just the Catholics, also the Orthodox, and Muslims... and when I thought of the words said to them: ‘But you must not believe in God’, to which they responded, ‘I believe’... Boom! They killed them. This is why I say that all three religions have given witness to God and now give witness to fraternity.”

Before saying good-bye to the journalists present, the Pope added that his next trip will be to Strasbourg, where is to address the European Parliament and the Council of Europe. ■

FATHER FRANCIS HUNG ABOUT FREEDOM IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

“There are some concerns”

PEDRO DANIEL OLIVEIRA
pedrodanielhk@hotmail.com

Having many decades of experience in the educational system, Father Francis Hung showed some concerns about a change that may happen in the primary and secondary schools. He told *O Clarim* that if the implementation of a moral education subject with special characteristics will go on “we can welcome the curriculum, but from a Catholic point of view.”



FATHER FRANCIS HUNG is concerned about the possibility of Macau SAR Government being

willing to introduce, in the future, a moral education subject with special characteristics in

the curriculum of primary and secondary education, including Catholic ones.

“There are some concerns,” said the supervisor of Yuet Wah College, Father Francis Hung, adding that “the Government, so far, has given great support to schools, including grants that have been very important.” Nevertheless, he fears that “in a society with profound changes, with materialism winning more and more ground in people’s lives there is always the possibility of the unexpected changes in those schools’ educational system.”

He also added, “we can welcome the curriculum, but from the Catholic point of view because this is the [essence] of our schools. Actually, the Catholic schools already promote moral values through Christian teachings.”

Father Hung came to Macau in 1981 and since then he has played different roles in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, as well as several

schools in Hong Kong.

“I’ve witnessed great progress in the schools of Macau in the last thirty years, because when I came here there was almost no official support and schools survived thanks to tuition fees. Because the students’ families couldn’t afford much, so the fees could not be expensive,” he remembered.

“On the other hand, the schools had difficulties to attract teachers, especially the good ones, because of the low pay. Furthermore, some classes had fewer students, while others came to have about seventy,” he stated, adding that “now the situation is quite different, to a great extent as a result of the substantial Government support.”

Father Francis Hung was president of Macau Catholic Schools Association, and for more than two decades was a member of the Education Council. ■

BEATIFICATION OF “DON ALVARO” THIS SATURDAY

New book speaks about former Opus Dei Prelate

RUSSELL SHAW

AS POPE John Paul II was leaving Opus Dei headquarters in Rome after paying his respects at the wake of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, someone thanked him for coming. The Pope, a future saint, replied, “*Si doveva. Si doveva*” - I had to.

It was common knowledge that John Paul didn’t usually take time out for events like this. So why “I had to” in the case of Bishop del Portillo, the Prelate of Opus Dei?

Friendship was one - the two men went back a long way - but also the fact that by the time of his death in February, 1994 del Portillo, though scarcely a household name, was known, trusted and respected at the highest levels of the Church.

The incident of the wake supplies the opening for a new biography of Bishop del Portillo issued in time for his September 27 beatification in Madrid. The beatification will be an occasion for rejoicing not only by Opus Dei’s 80,000 members worldwide but by many thousands of others who revere the memory of a man whom his friends knew simply as Don Alvaro.



The biography, written by John F. Coverdale and published by Scepter, is called *Saxum* - Latin for “rock.” That was the nickname given del Portillo by the founder of Opus Dei, St. Josemaria Escriva, whom he served loyally as right hand man for nearly 40 years and eventually succeeded. It was a tribute to his steadfastness and reliability.

I visited him a couple of times at his office in the Parioli district of Rome. These were just brief courtesy calls, but even so I was struck by his visible goodness and warmth. “It was like meeting your kindly grandfather,” I told someone later.



Alvaro del Portillo was born March 11, 1914 in Madrid, third of eight children in a devout Catholic family. He prepared for a career in engineering but upon meeting the young priest Escriva was attracted to the ideal of holiness in ordinary life promoted by the lay group Escriva had founded. In 1935 del Portillo joined the Work and devoted himself to helping spread its message. He was ordained in 1944, one of the first three priests ordained specifically for Opus Dei.

Starting in the early 1940s, Escriva sent del Portillo to Rome several times to negotiate formal approval of Opus

Dei by the Holy See. When Escriva himself moved there in 1946, it became home for del Portillo too.

Rome beyond the Vatican is filled with religious institutions - headquarters of religious orders, convents and monasteries, universities and seminaries, historic basilicas and humble parish churches - all more or less focused on the Holy See and the person of the Pope. This wasn’t the place the man who’d meant to be an engineer would have chosen for himself, but it was where providence put him, and in his unassuming way he thrived on it, earning a reputation for discretion and a generous heart.

Before and during the Second Vatican Council, he served as staff or advisor to commissions engaged in planning and then carrying on the work of Vatican II and so made his mark on the great event itself. After Monsignor Escriva’s death in June, 1975 he was the obvious choice to succeed him, and when Opus Dei received the status of personal prelature in 1982 he became its first prelate. His old friend John Paul II ordained him a bishop in 1991.

Prelate he was and “Blessed” he soon will be. “Don Alvaro” he will remain to those who loved him. ■

THE JOY OF SHARING THE GOOD NEWS (I)

Infinite gratitude

TERESA LO

THE FEAST DAY of St. Bonaventure was a day to be remembered. I went to school as usual, introduced "The Seraphic Doctor" of the Church in the morning assembly, announced to the students the news about Fr. Joseph Ha's new move, learned of something exciting from Sr. Judith and – attended the first farewell lunch prepared by my beloved catechism teachers.

Everyone in the team – Margarida, Isabel, Simona, Lucia, Sr. Bernadette, Patricia, Pauline, Anna and Virginia – gathered together to reminisce over the flavorful Cantonese fare in an exquisite restaurant. The food was sumptuous, so was their love for me.

It was actually the first lunch we have had outside the school for all these years. We had duties to fulfill, homework to correct and meetings to attend during our regular break. All the Wednesday lunch hours were dedicated to the catechism activities for the primary and secondary Catholics. We all knew the sweat and tiredness as much as we knew God's abundant grace in each of the meetings.

Isabel and Anna – the newly baptized – gave a swift and definitive yes when being invited to join the ranks. Both have been well taken care of by Margarida and Pau-



line, their partners and mentors. Sr. Bernadette entered only last December, and in the Lenten season that followed, she made more than a hundred angelic pendants for charity sale. Her artistic talent was highly appreciated too by our beautiful pregnant mother, Lucia, who offered her very best to help her new partner take up the task while attending to the spiritual needs of her Catholic girls.

Virginia, my classmate and confidant, has always touched me with her priority on the catechism class despite her tight schedule. She made an unprecedented

effort to teach the form five and six girls how to make the knot Rosaries via live demonstrations and YouTube, not to mention the many small acts of kindness shown to me and to the group.

Simona and Patricia, though playing solo, did not feel in any way hindered or, rather, saw it as a means to feel the love of God more palpably through the devotion and creativity of their girls and assistance offered by other team members.

With the entrance of Sr. Judith as the principal in 2006, the catechism team underwent a revolutionary change. The weekly gathering remained unchanged, only that there was more cooperation, diversity and dynamism. Among the team were class teachers, department heads and senior administrative staff, but they did not mind going the extra mile so as to bring the girls before Christ.

Not only did they view their lives from the perspective of faith, they understood very well the essence of unity while maintaining diversity. During the Lenten season of this year, each primary level of catechism teachers took turns each week to carry out a unique and fascinating activity for almost 60 girls.

As a secondary catechism teacher then, I enjoyed the part most when my

team members were supportive of the mission. I shared with Pauline and Anna my idea of raising funds for the Trappistine sisters in the form of art and food. In an instant, they mobilized their girls, provided the materials and accompanied each of them till the task was complete.

In the last evaluation meeting, we freely shared our observations on both the girls' spiritual growth and our faith experiences. God has undoubtedly touched each of our lives: Isabel and Margarida said their primary one and two girls miraculously lined up in single file when they were going up the stage for their performance. That was not so in their previous practices! Some of my form five girls showing little care over the catechism class simply offered their entire lunch break to sell the cookies for charity.

St. Bonaventure once said, "Let meditation of Christ's life be your one and only aim, your rest, your food, your desire, your study." God's love is seen in the person of Jesus, and all these beautiful individuals – colleagues and sisters in Christ – who exemplify His holiness in their daily arduous work have moved me closer to Christ.

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures for ever." (Psalm 118:1) ■

MASS SCHEDULE IN MACAU

SATURDAY (Anticipated Mass)

5:30 PM – St Francis Xavier (Mong Ha)

6:30 PM – Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (Taipa)

SUNDAY

10:00 AM – St Francis Xavier (Coloane)

10:00 AM – Our Lady of Mt Carmel (Taipa)

11:15 AM – Salesian Institute

12:00 NN – Our Lady of Fatima

4:30 PM – St Augustine

5:30 PM – St Joseph the Worker

6:00 PM – Cathedral

TAGALOG MASS

10:30 AM – St Augustine

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“Oh, Lady, the dream of my soul, the inspiration of men and women! My labors are now ended. Many years have I traveled far and wide to seek you and to drink in the beauty of your eyes! Do not forsake me: be my protection.”

- Simon Vela's words at the apparition of Virgin Mary with the Child Jesus.

Filipinos celebrate the feast of Our Virgin Lady of Peñafrancia

- By Oswald Vas



Entrance procession of the Virgin Lady of Peñafrancia

On 21st of September, Sunday, many Filipino devotees gathered at St. Augustine's Church, Marau to celebrate the feast Our Virgin Lady of Peñafrancia. It's one of the biggest celebrated feasts in the Philippines. Filipinos have a great devotion to the Blessed Mother, and Our Lady of Peñafrancia is the Patroness of the Bicol Region in the Philippines.

The Eucharistic celebration began at 10:30 AM. The main celebrant of the mass was Rev. Fr. Jay Gapayan, SOLT, along with Rev. Fr. Artemio Balana Jr., SOLT as co-celebrant. "The gospel tells us to be generous, to give without expecting anything in return. We must always see the goodness given by

God to all of us and we must share these to others," explained Fr. Jay in his homily.

"I have a strong devotion to our Blessed Mother, 'Inay' (which means 'mother') the Virgin of Peñafrancia, because whenever I have problems I ask for her intercession to God," said one of the devotees. "My problems are always solved. I thank 'Inay' for all the blessings I receive through her intercession."

The feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is celebrated on the third Saturday of September in Naga City, Bicol, Philippines. According to locals, a Spanish government official from Peñafrancia, Spain, a native of San Martin de Castañeda, settled with his family in Cavite in 1712. One day, Miguel Robles de Covarrubias, a son of that Spanish official and a seminarian studying at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila became seriously ill. He and his family prayed to Our Lady of Peñafrancia whose picture he clutched to his breast as he hoped for recovery. Miguel vowed that if cured, he would construct a chapel on the banks of the Pasig River in Manila, in gratitude to Her. Miraculously cured, he was ordained a priest not in Manila but in the Ciudad de Nueva Caceres (now Naga City) where he built the chapel consecrating it to Our Lady of Peñafrancia.

The story goes that while the place where the image was found was Spanish territory, the one who found it was a French citizen. Simon Vela, the man singled out with this special favour by heaven, was the sole heir to a rich French family. With his heart burning in great anxieties to dedicate

himself to the service of God, he turned his back on the turmoil of the world and entered the convent. Simon became famous very soon among the members for his exceptional devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. One night he heard a voice saying "Simon, do not sleep, go to the Peña de Francia, on the part where the sun sets (a la parte del poniente) and there you will find an image of the Virgin which shall be afterwards an object of great devotion."

Simon lost no time and after putting on the clothes of a pilgrim, he began to search for the image. The words "Peña de Francia" and on the part "where the sun set" induced Simon to believe that the image was to be found on a place situated in the western part of France. So to this place he directed his steps. After 5 long and weary years of futile quest in these parts, he decided to write "Finish" to his mission and give it up. One night however, he heard again the divine

voice saying: "Simon, do not stop. A great reward awaits a great sacrifice and yours will be great." So Simon renewed again his trips. After visiting all the western part of France, torn and tired, without any success, he was again tempted to give up. But the voice was so inspiring and the message so sublime that he deemed it wise to obey rather than to ignore it. So he went on with his mission. When he reached San Martin de Castañar, Spain, a village at the foot of Peña de Francia, he immediately approached some people and fortunately, he was able to get information about the exact place of Peña de Francia, the very place where afterwards he found the object of his pilgrimage.

As the devotees still seek her, just as Simon Vela did, the love story between our Lady of Peñafrancia, whom they lovingly call "Inay," and them, her children, is never ending.



Catholic Pastoral Center Manila Ministry