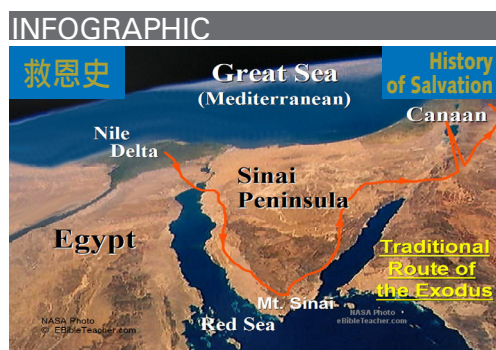




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Oclarim

DIRECTOR Rev. José Mario O. Mandía

YEAR 67 | No 23 | 02 OCTOBER 2014 | THURSDAY | Macau Catholic Weekly | PRICE MOP/HKD 5.00 IF SOLD SEPARATELY

PT EN CH

www.oclarim.com.mo

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SECRET WORDS

What are those prayers that priests say quietly at Mass?



(Vatican Radio) - A brilliantly sunlit St. Peter's Square was the scene Sunday morning for a great gathering of senior citizens – and especially grandparents – who had come to Rome to be with Pope Francis, to exchange life stories and hear the Holy Father's reflections on the importance, the struggles, and the beauty of life in the old age. People of every state in life were present: elderly clergy and religious, including Pope-emeritus Benedict XVI; single people; married couples, including a couple of elderly refugees from Iraq, Mubarak and Aneesa Hano, Christians from the country's north who have been forced to flee their home by Islamic State militants; and widows and widowers.

Following is the text of his speech.

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

I thank you for coming in such large numbers! And thank you for your festive welcome. Today this is your celebration. It is our celebration! I thank His Excellency Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, President Pontifical Council For the Family and all those who have prepared this ceremony.

I listened to the testimonies of some of you and was struck by the common experiences of many seniors and grandparents. But one was different: that of the brethren from Erbil (i.e. is the largest city and capital of the Kurdistan re-

gion of Iraq). They escaped violent persecution in Iraq. To all of them we say together, "thank you." It is really special that you have come to be with us here. This is a gift to the Church. In turn, we offer you our sympathy, our prayers and practical help. It is inhuman to abuse Elders just as it is inhuman to abuse children. But God will not abandon you. He is with you! With God's help, you are and will continue to be the memory for your people; and also for us, the great family of the Church. Thank you!

These brethren here testify that even in the most difficult tests, the elderly who have faith are like trees that continue to bear fruit. And this is true even in the most ordinary of situations where, there may be other forms of temptations and other forms of discrimination. We have heard some such witnesses today.

Old age, in particular, is a time of grace, in which the Lord will renew his call: calls us to preserve and transmit the faith, calls us to pray, especially to intercede; calls us to be close to those who maybe in need. The elderly – grandparents [especially] – have a capacity to understand the most difficult situations: a great ability – and when they pray for these situations, their prayer is strong. It is powerful.

To Grandparents, who have been blessed to see their children's children (cf. Ps 128.6), to them are entrusted an even greater task: to convey the expe-

rience of life, the story of a family, the story of a community or even of a people; to share with simplicity their wisdom and the same faith which is the most precious legacy! Blessed are those families who have grandparents nearby! The grandfather is in a way twice a father and the grandmother is twice a mother.

But it is not always the case that the elderly, the grandfather, grandmother has a family that can accommodate them or upon which they can count. So we welcome the houses for the elderly ... so that they can truly be homes, not prisons! We hope that these homes will truly serve the interests of older persons and not the interests of someone else! There must never be institutions where the elderly are forgotten, hidden or neglected. I feel close to the many elderly people who live in these institutions, and I think with gratitude of those who go to visit them and take care of them. Homes for the elderly should be the "lungs" of humanity in a country, in a neighborhood, in a parish; "sanctuaries" of humanity where those who are old and weak are cared for and taken care of like a brother or a sister. It's good for you to go and visit senior citizens! Look at young people: sometimes seem miserable and sad: Go visit an elderly person and you will become joyful!

But there is also the reality of the aban-

► SEE PAGE 2

POPE MEETS LEADERS OF FOCOLARE MOVEMENT

Francis stresses contemplation, dialogue, apostolate with the youth

(Vatican Radio) Pope Francis met on Friday, September 26, with leaders of the Focolare movement who are holding their General Assembly at Castel Gandolfo from September 1st to 28th. Half a century on from the Second Vatican Council, he said, they are called, with the whole Church, to follow a new path of evangelization, witnessing God's love to all and in particular to the poor and most marginalized.

Greeting especially the Focolare president, Maria Voce, who has been elected to a second term of office, the Pope said the movement was born from a tiny seed in the Church and has grown into a tree whose branches spread through all kinds of Christian families and through all different religions as well.

Pope Francis said the movement, which is also known as the Work of Mary, flowed from a particular gift of



the Holy Spirit which is the charism of unity. The Focolare founder, Chiara Lubich, he said, was an extraordinary witness to that gift which she spread to so many different parts of the world.

The Pope also offered three words upon which all members of the movement can base their efforts as they seek to contribute to the work of challenging task of evangelization today. Firstly, he said, contemplation is an indispensable condition for effective action. Secondly, he said, they must go out in a spirit of dialogue, giving freely of themselves just as Jesus gave his life for us on the Cross. Finally, the Pope stressed the importance of forming young people, so that they too can serve the needs, concerns and hopes of men and women in the world today. ■

Pope Francis: “The prayer of the elderly is strong and powerful.”

► FROM PAGE 1

donment of the elderly: how many times we discard older people with attitudes that are akin to a hidden form of euthanasia! The culture of discarding human beings hurts our world. We discard children, young people and older people under the pretense of maintaining a “balanced”, economic system the center of which is no longer the human person, but money. We are all called to counter this culture of poisonous waste!

We Christians, together with all people of good will, are called to patiently build a more diverse, more welcoming, more humane, more inclusive society, that does not

need to discard the weak in body and mind. On the contrary we need a society which measures its success on how the weak are cared for.

As Christians and as citizens, we are called to envision, with imagination and wisdom, ways of dealing with this challenge. A people who do not take care for grandparents, does not treat them well has no future: such a people loses its memory and its roots. But beware: you too have the responsibility to keep alive these roots in yourself with prayer, the reading of the Gospel and the works of mercy. It is only in such a manner that we will remain as living trees, that even in old age will not stop bearing fruit. ■

CHINA

A hundred days dedicated to the formation of young people in the diocese of Xian Xian

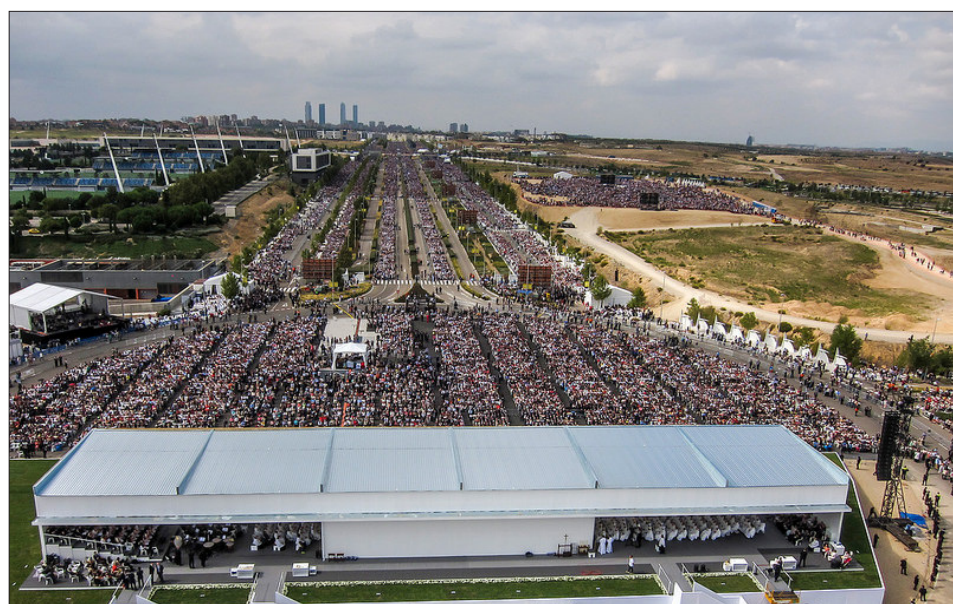
(Fides) - The young are called to be light and salt of the earth: this is the theme of the path of formation regarding the young people in the diocese of Xian Xian, in the province of He Bei, in mainland China.

The path, which has just been inaugurated, will extend for a period of 100 days. According to information sent to Fides Agency, during the opening Mass, celebrated on 15 September, the Bishop of the Diocese, His Exc. Mgr. Giuseppe Li, encouraged the young people, present and absent, to be “sentinels of the Lord”. Therefore he entrusted the 100-day of formation to the merciful Father, invoking his pro-



tection and blessing. According to the organizer, “the initiative is oriented to form the Christian identity of young people, to improve the quality and knowledge

of their faith. During the course there will also be moments of spirituality, prayer, sharing, to help young people to seek God in life and to meet him in prayer”. ■



(Photo: www.opusdei.org)



POPE FRANCIS WRITES OPUS DEI PRELATE ON BEATIFICATION

“Thank you, forgive me, help me more!”

An estimated crowd of 300,000 persons from all over the world attended the beatification of Bishop Álvaro del Portillo in Madrid yesterday. Del Portillo was the successor of St Josemaría Escrivá, founder of *Opus Dei*. The ceremony was presided over by Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. At the beginning of the ceremony, a letter from Pope Francis to the present prelate of *Opus Dei* Bishop Javier Echevarría was read. Here is the full text of the letter.

Dear brother,

The beatification of the Servant of God Álvaro del Portillo, faithful collaborator of St Josemaría Escrivá and his first successor at the head of *Opus Dei*, is a moment of special joy for all the faithful of the Prelature, and also for you, who were for so long a witness of his love for God and others, and his fidelity to the Church and to his vocation. I too wish to unite myself to your joy and to thank God, who embellishes the face of the Church with the holiness of her children.

His beatification will take place in Madrid, the city where he was born and spent his childhood and youth. Here his life began to take shape in the simplicity of family life, through friendship and service to others, as when he went

to outlying districts to help provide human and Christian formation to so many people in need. And in this city, above all, there took place the event that definitively marked the course of his life: his meeting with St Josemaría Escrivá, from whom he learned to fall more in love with Christ every day. Yes, to fall in love with Christ. This is the path to holiness that every Christian has to follow: to let ourselves be loved by the Lord, to open up our hearts to his love, and to allow him to be the one who guides our lives.

I like to recall the aspiration that the Servant of God would often repeat, especially for personal celebrations and anniversaries: “Thank you; forgive me; help me more!” These words bring us closer to the reality of his interior life and his relationship with the Lord, and can also help to give a new impulse to our own Christian life.

In the first place, **Thank you.** This is the soul’s immediate, spontaneous reaction on experiencing God’s goodness. It cannot be otherwise. He always goes ahead of us. However hard we try, his love always gets there first, touches and caresses us first, He beats us to it. Álvaro del Portillo was aware of the many gifts God had given him, and thanked God for that manifestation of his fatherly love. But he did not stop at that: his recognition of Our Lord’s love awakened in his heart desires to follow him with greater commitment and generosity, and to lead a life of humble service to others. Especially outstanding was his love for the Church, the Spouse of Christ, whom he served with a heart devoid of worldly self-interest, far from discord, welcoming towards everyone and always seeking

in others what was positive, what united, what was constructive. He never spoke a word of complaint or criticism, even at especially difficult times, but instead, as he had learned from St Josemaría, he always responded with prayer, forgiveness, understanding and sincere charity.

Forgive me. He often confessed that he saw himself empty-handed before God, incapable of responding to so much generosity. But to admit our poverty as human beings is not the result of despair but confident abandonment in God who is our Father. It means opening ourselves to his mercy, his love, which is able to regenerate our life. His love does not humiliate us, nor cast us into the depths of guilt, but embraces us, lifts us up from our prostration and enables us to go forward with more determination and joy. The Servant of God Álvaro knew the need we have of God’s mercy, and devoted a lot of his own energy to encouraging the people he met to go to the sacrament of Confession, the sacrament of joy. How important it is to feel the tenderness of God’s love, and discover that there is still time to love!

Help me more. Yes, the Lord never abandons us, he is always at our side, he journeys with us, and every day he expects new love from us. His grace will not fail us, and with his help we can take his name to the whole world. The heart of the new Blessed beat with the desire to bring the Good News to all hearts. And so he travelled to many countries to foster new projects for evangelization, undeterred by difficulties, moved by his love for God and his brethren. One who is very immersed in God is able to be

very close to other people. The first condition for announcing Christ to them is to love them, because Christ loves them before we do. We have to leave behind our selfish concerns and love of comfort, and go out to meet our brothers and sisters. That is where Our Lord is awaiting us. We cannot keep our faith to ourselves: it is a gift we have received to give away and share with others.

Thank you, forgive me, help me! These words express the thrust of a life that is centered on God. It is the life of someone who has been touched by the greatest Love and who lives totally on that love; someone who, while experiencing their own human weakness and limitations, trusts in God’s mercy and wants all mankind, their brothers and sisters, to experience it too.

Dear brother, Blessed Álvaro del Portillo is sending us a very clear message. He is telling us to trust in the Lord, that he is our brother, our friend, who never lets us down and is always at our side. He is encouraging us not to be afraid to go against the current and suffer for announcing the Gospel. He is also teaching us that in the simplicity and ordinariness of our daily lives we can find a sure path to holiness.

I ask all the faithful of the Prelature, priests and lay-people, as well as all those who take part in its activities, to please pray for me. At the same time, I give them all my Apostolic Blessing.

May Jesus bless you, and may the Holy Virgin watch over you. ■

**Fraternally,
Franciscus**

主日福音
Sunday Gospel

常年期第二十七主日
Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time



Celebration of the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi on October 4

On Saturday, October 4 2014 at 11 am, the Solemn Mass on the feast day of Saint Francis of Assisi will be celebrated in Santa Rosa de Lima English Secondary School's Holy Spirit Chapel. The Mass will be presided by the Combonian priest Fr. Roberto. For the religious congregation in charge of Santa Rosa de Lima school, the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi is an occasion to

rethink about their vocation to serve others following the Franciscan spirit, embracing that spirit of humility that has a supreme model in the Virgin Mary, another strong inspiration for the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM), present in Macau and Hong Kong for more than a century. The choir conductor Prof. Aurelio Porfiri will assist the liturgy. All are welcome. ■



Celebration of the Feast of St. Daniel Comboni on October 10

The Comboni Missionaries present in Macau invites you to celebrate with us the feast day of our Founder St. Daniel Comboni. This year we remember the 150th Anniversary of the "Plan for the Regeneration of Africa"... This is an opportunity to give thanks to God for the gift of the Spirit who worked in the heart of St. Daniel and in the lives of many who succeeded in carrying out the "Plan" by the joyful giving of their lives in the mission and for the mission.

St. Daniel is the founder of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus – a missionary congregation present in four Continents at the service of first evangelization. St. Daniel had the intuition of an evangelization plan for Africa. The "Plan" was not merely a docu-



ment of precise rules, but a text that exudes life, intense passion and a tremendous desire to find the most suitable ways to respond to the need that men and women of every age have of encountering God. ■

DATE: October 10 (Friday) Eucharistic Celebration at 7:30 P.M.
VENUE: St. Joseph the Worker Church – Iau Hon
Reception follows

SECRET WORDS

Prayers priests whisper to Jesus at Mass

FR. JOSÉ MARIO MANDÍA

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In the Extraordinary Rite, there is a prayer called the “*Oratio secreta*”, literally meaning secret prayer. It is said at the end of the Offertory and in the Ordinary form of the Mass it is called the “Prayer over the Gifts.” The Latin word “*secreta*” comes from the verb “*secernere*”, meaning to separate or set apart. Something that is set apart is hidden. Why was it called the “secret prayer?” Because it was said in a low voice.

There are, in fact, other prayers in the Mass which are said in a low voice. They are prayers that Mother Church has included for the sake of the celebrant, to remind the priest that “he himself is beset with weakness,” says the letter to the Hebrews (5:2), that is why – the letter continues – “he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people.” As Henri Nouwen wrote, we are “wounded healers.”

In fact, all Christians should pray not only now and then or when we feel like it, but as Jesus says, 24/7 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week): “*oportet semper orare*” – “one must pray always” (Luke 18:1). Saint Paul echoes this when he says “*sine intermissione orate*,” literally “pray with no intermission” (I Thessalonians 5:17). Oops! But there is always WhatsApp, and WeChat, and Facebook Messenger, and SMS, and Candy Crush. Lots of intermissions, eh!

In the book of Leviticus, the priests were instructed: “The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it, it shall not

go out; the priest shall burn wood on it every morning” (Leviticus 6:12). The fire is, of course, only a symbol of the prayer that should be going on in the heart of the priest, and in the heart of every believer, a prayer that we should feed with our own words and with words of Scripture.

So let us examine some of these secret prayers, if only to learn something about how we ought to pray.

Before the Gospel, the celebrant bows before the Tabernacle or the Crucifix, and whispers, “Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God, that I may worthily proclaim your holy Gospel.” This prayer tells us many things. One of them is that purity in heart and speech is needed to proclaim the Gospel. Otherwise, people will only hear us and not Christ. We are channels of Christ’s grace, but we can become obstacles through selfishness, arrogance, impurity, anger, lust, greed, ambition, or apathy.

After offering bread and wine, the priest bows once more and says, “With humble spirit and contrite heart may we be accepted by you, O Lord, and may our sacrifice in your sight this day be pleasing to you, Lord God.” Again an admission of guilt. Once more a confession that one is stained and wounded and in need of help. Only then will we appreciate the infinite value of what is about to take place on the altar.

Then, as he washes his hands, the priest whispers, “Wash me, O Lord from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.” One more reminder, a few moments before he utters the words “This

is my Body,” and “This is my Blood.” Not even the Blessed Virgin had the power to summon God again and again with just a few words. Once these words are said, God obeys his sinful creature, and comes down to the altar – truly, really, substantially.

Then very close to communion time, there are two prayers that help the priest prepare to receive Jesus. The first one goes, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit, through your death gave life to the world; free me by this your most holy Body and Blood from all my sins and from every evil; keep me always faithful to your commandments, and never let me be parted from you.” Keep me always faithful. How beautiful fidelity is – in marriage and in the priesthood. Never let me be parted from you, keep me close to you (ahem, that means asking him to keep us close to his Cross as well!).

In the present rite of the Mass, the following prayer is an alternative to the previous one (the two are always recited in the extraordinary form): “May the receiving of your Body and Blood, Lord Jesus Christ, not bring me to judgment and condemnation, but through your loving mercy be for me protection in mind and body and a healing remedy.” How can it bring “judgment and condemnation”? Because receiving Jesus means being free of grave sin. If we receive him in a state of mortal sin, that means we have not yet decided to reconcile with him. In a previous article, I remember quoting Pope Benedict who said that there is a sacrament of rec-

onciliation (Confession), and another sacrament for those already reconciled (Communion). Receiving communion would be a hypocrisy, and it would “bring judgment and condemnation.” Oh yeah? Does the Bible say anything about this? Well, yes. Saint Paul wrote, “Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself.” (I Corinthians 11:27-29) The prayer also says communion is a “healing remedy,” because it heals us of venial sin, it cures our imperfections, it fires us up with the charity that only God can give.

Finally, as he is about to receive Communion, the priest whispers to his Lord and Savior, “May the Body of Christ keep me safe for eternal life.” “May the Blood of Christ keep me safe for eternal life.” The Eucharist is also a guarantee, a pledge, a promise. For those who receive worthily, Jesus promises unending joy. “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:53)

There are indeed more things to learn from these prayers, but I leave it to the reader to read them unhurriedly, thoughtfully, prayerfully, with or without intermission. ■

OCTOBER 5, 2014 – 27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

A love story: God and the vineyard

Is 5:1-7; Phil 4:6-9; Mt 21:33-43

ONLY THOSE who have spent their lives working on the land can understand the poignant feeling God expresses through this parable of the vineyard. For a farmer, the earth is part of life. It is almost an extension of one’s body. The laborers are almost like the arms of the owner. To find the land neglected or not cared for, or to have laborers who deny the owner the fruits of the vineyard, the farmer might feel, practically, like a threat to one’s life, particularly when the laborers are the owner’s own beloved children.

God feels the same way. He has

placed the vineyard (this world) in the hands of humanity (God’s beloved children). He is surprised to find out that the fruits are not harvested on time. The children are not able to get fruits from the vineyard that God so carefully planted. If God were a business executive, concerned only with the largest possible profit, God would simply close down the vineyard (this world).

But God is a Creator. God loves this world passionately. God created it and continues to maintain it day after day and year after year. God loves the world as the house, the home of God’s beloved children: men and women.

Wars, violence, injustice, pollution: all these hurt the heart of God, who must be looking half in shock at how we destroy and spoil creation; how God’s children continue to die absurd deaths; how, the house that God dreamt for us, we are making a sort of jungle where only the strongest survive. Of course God also sees the many good things that we have done with what we received, but, as a good parent, God must be more concerned with the problems.

God might not take the vineyard away from us, but urges us on to produce fruits of life, justice, and love for all those who live on this earth. That would

be God’s joy, gladness, and desire. In the meantime, God continues waiting for us and trusting in us.

For reflection

The vineyard is in our hands. What do we do to take care of it and improve it?

How do we collaborate to give better and more abundant fruits?

God has placed His trust in us, the laborers, even though we have often disappointed him. Do we also maintain our hope and trust in our brothers and sisters? ■

Fr Fernando Torres, CMF
CLARETIAN PUBLICATIONS

HISTORY OF SALVATION

Time of Israel (XI)

救恩史

以色列時代 (十一)

從預像到實現

「預像」是什麼意思？預像是天主藉著一個人物、一個事實，預示未來另一個人物或另一個事實。

From type (symbol) to reality

What does "type" mean? Through types or symbols, God uses a person or an event to represent a future person or event.

罪 Sin

『當時人民怨聲載道，怨聲已傳入上主的耳中；上主聽見，遂發怒；上主的火在他們中燃起，焚燒了營幕的邊緣。』 (11:1)

"And the people **complained** in the hearing of the Lord about their misfortunes; and when the Lord heard it, his **anger** was kindled, and the fire burned among them, and consumed some outlying parts of the camp." - 11:1 ▼



代禱 Intercession ▲

『梅瑟對上主說：「求你大發慈悲，就如從埃及一直到現在，你寬宥他們。」』
"Moses said to the Lord, 'Parade thy anger, O Lord, as thou hast forgiven them from Egypt even until now.'" - 14:19

『在與天主親密的交往中，梅瑟以堅韌不拔的毅力為以色列民代禱，成為唯一中保基督耶穌為我們代禱的預像。』
(天主教教理簡編 537)

"In this **intimacy** with God, Moses **intercede tenaciously** for the people, **prefigured** the intercession of Jesus."

- Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church



亞當與厄娃
Adam and Eve

公元前？
? BC

亞巴郎
Abraham

公元前1800
1800 BC

民長
JUDGES

王帝
KINGS

先知
PROPHETS

公元前？
? BC

諾厄
Noah

聖祖
PATRIARCHS

公元前1300
1300 BC

梅瑟
Moses

公元前1200
1200 BC

以色列十二支派
Twelve Tribes

公元前1000
1000 BC

達味
David

公元前920/930
920/930 BC

以色列（北國）建都撒瑪黎雅、猶大（南國）建都耶路撒冷
Israel (North) with Samaria as capital and Juda (South) with Jerusalem as capital

史

流落曠野：罪，代禱，慈悲與寬恕 - 戶籍紀

MARCH THROUGH THE DESERT:
SIN, INTERCESSORY PRAYER, MERCY & FORGIVENESS - Numbers



慈悲與寬恕 Mercy and Forgiveness

『上主回答說：「我就照你所求的寬赦他們。」』 (14:20)

"Then the LORD said, 'I have **pardoned**, according to your word.'" - 14:20 ▼

發仁慈，寬恕這人民的罪過，寬赦了他們一樣。」』 (14:19)
lon the iniquity of this people, greatness of thy steadfast love, given his people, from Egypt

主中，梅瑟汲取力量，以子民代禱：他的祈禱遂為人代禱的預象。」

Moses attained the strength to for his people: his prayer thus of the one mediator, **Christ**

f the Catholic Church, 537



告白
CONFESSION ▶



耶路撒冷及聖殿被毀
Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple
巴比倫侵略猶大（南國）
Babylon invades Kingdom of Juda

公元前586/587
586/587 BC

Temple rebuilt
重建聖殿

歸國
RETURN

羅馬人
Romans

公元前63
63 BC

放逐巴比倫
EXILE

公元前721/722
721/722 BC

亞述侵略以色列
（北國）
Assyrians invade
Kingdom of Israel

公元前538
538 BC

波斯滅巴比倫
Persians defeat
Babylonians

公元前300
300 BC

馬其頓人（希臘）
Macedonians (Greeks)