



2

FABC CONFERENCE

**Asian Bishops
to launch digital
platform**

2

POPE IN MANILA

**Preparing the biggest
Mass in the world**

3

MARY'S IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

**"You are the All
Beautiful, O Mary!"**

3

FILMING A GREAT MISSIONARY

**Father Gaetano
Nicosia: a story that
needs to be told**

4

YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE

**To be joyful and
passionate lovers of
Jesus and of all**

5

RETHINKING OUR ROOTS

Why Latin?

6

SUNDAY REFLECTION

**The Church, a
prophet of hope**

7

SURPASSING ALL DESIRE

No more tears



GETTY IMAGES. Pope Francis requested Patriarch Bartholomew I to bless him.

POPE FRANCIS IN TURKEY

Peter and Andrew were brothers in blood and in spirit

(Vatican Radio) - Shortly after his arrival in Ankara Friday (November 28) for a three day pastoral visit to Turkey, Pope Francis visited the Mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first President of the modern-day Republic of Turkey.

There, the Holy Father signed The "Gold Book", where he wrote: "May the Almighty grant peace and prosperity to the dear Turkish people, with the wish that the entire Country may increasingly become a place of peaceful coexistence between cultures and civilizations, where every human person feels welcomed and his or her dignity and free expression of faith is safeguarded."

The next day, the Holy Father flew to Istanbul. A slight change in the morning's events meant that, instead of starting at the famed Hagia Sofia, he began with a visit to one of Istanbul's most important mosques, the Sultan Ahmet, also known as the "Blue Mosque."

He was then taken on a guided visit of the Hagia Sofia, a former basilica, which had been converted into a mosque in the 15th century and is now a museum. Prior to lunch, the Pope joined members of the local Catholic community in the garden of the Pontifical Delegation

to Istanbul, where he also met the president of Turkey's Catholic episcopal conference, Bishop Ruggero Franceschini, OFM Cap.

During his visit to the mosque, Fr Federico Lombardi, director of the Holy See Press Office, said the Pope paused for a "moment of silent adoration." The Pope wrote a dedication in the "Gold Book" of the Hagia Sofia. He first wrote in Greek, "Αγία Σοφία του Θεού", which means Saint Sofia of God. He subsequently wrote in Latin, "*Quam dilecta tabernacula tua Domine* (Psalmus 83)". The citation from Psalm 83 translates as, "How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord." Then, he signed his name.

In the afternoon the Holy Father had celebrated Mass in the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in the city where he urged Christians to throw off their defensiveness, and move away from their comfort zone and be led by the Holy Spirit.

On Saturday evening, Pope Francis participated at an Ecumenical prayer service with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I at the Patriarchal Church of St George in Istanbul. Follow the service they held a private meeting. Pope Francis gave Patriarch Bartholomew I a gift of a mosaic reproduction of the im-

age of Christ depicted in the confession of St. Peter inside the Vatican basilica.

In his remarks, the Holy Father expressed gratitude "to God who allows me to be here in prayer with Your Holiness and with this sister Church." He made reference to the fact that the next day, November 30, was the Feast of the Apostle Saint Andrew, Patron of the Patriarchal Church where the service was being held.

The Holy Father remarked that Andrew and Peter were blood brothers, yet their encounter with Christ transformed them into brothers in faith and charity." Francis stressed, "they became brothers in hope. What a grace, Your Holiness, to be brothers in the hope of the Risen Lord! What a grace, and what a responsibility, to walk together in this hope, sustained by the intercession of the holy Apostles and brothers, Andrew and Peter! And to know that this shared hope does non deceive us because it is founded, not upon us or our poor efforts, but rather upon God's faithfulness."

After extending "warm and fraternal best wishes on the Feast of your holy Patron," the Holy Father concluded with a request: "And I ask you one favor: to bless me and the Church of Rome." ■

ASIAN BISHOPS WANT TO CREATE A DIGITAL PLATFORM

Catholic Church goes after new trends

PEDRO DANIEL OLIVEIRA
pedrodanielhk@hotmail.com

THE 19TH ANNUAL bishops and national secretaries of social communication offices hosted in Macau between November 17th to 22nd address the need of the Catholic Church to follow new trends for a better evangelization.

The event took place in the Diocesan Pastoral Centre, in Coloane Island, and was organized by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, in cooperation with the Macau Diocesan Social Communication Centre.

"We recommend creation of a dedicated digital platform or communication system to consolidate communication program, activities among the FABC countries with a view to share communication resources, expertise and information on current activities," says the final considerations sent to O CLARIM.



"We recommend the use of the best technical open source or easy-to-use commercial platforms for simple multimedia sharing."

Among other recommendations there are "the efforts (to) be made to enhance our communication ministry with the Pontifical Council for Social Commu-

nication (www.pccs.va) so that our initiatives and efforts (can) be shared globally," which can be done "by collaborating with the Council's online Catholic directory (www.intermirifica.net) as a reliable source for contact details of all our communication offices and their activities."

As for orientations: "We underline the important and indispensable place of social communication for new evangelization."

"We emphasize the importance of the person of the Christian communicator as one who is deeply rooted in Christ and imbued with a passion for

proclaiming the Good News."

"Christian communication should be meaningful and relevant in different cultural contexts of Asia. Christian communicators should not be excessively conditioned by one's own culture," states the document.

"Christian communication should strive to become agents of reconciliation and peace, persons who build bridges through dialogue and promote understanding" and they also "should search for ways to heal hurts, including historic wounds, and fight falsehood and eschew prejudice."

Finally, the participants of the 19th annual bishops and national secretaries of social communication offices also agreed that "the rapid technological changes and expansion which had impacted social communications in Asia calls for a renewed strategy and approach on the part of Christian communicators." ■

POPE'S VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES

Biggest Mass ever is expected

POPE FRANCIS' apostolic visit to the Philippines which takes place from next January 15th to 19th is being awaited with great expectation by D. Mylo Vergara, Bishop of Pasig, since he forecasts a number greater than 5.2 million of people at the mass scheduled at the Luneta Park.

"It will be the biggest mass in the world," he said to O CLARIM. Bishop D. Mylo Vergara is in charge of the information and media committee for the Pope's visit to the Philippines.

Another key point of the apostolic journey will be the gathering with families at the Mall of Asia Arena: "It will be very good, especially for poor families."

Besides a meeting with the President of the Philippines, Noyon Aquino at the Malacañang Palace, during his stay in the country Pope Francis will also travel to Tacloban, a city that was severely devastated by super typhoon Yolanda (international name "Haiyan") in November 2013.

"His real intention (in Tacloban) is to stay with the people who have suffered.

After the Mass that he will celebrate at the airport, he is going to have a lunch with the survivors of the super typhoon," added the Bishop of Pasig.

Among other activities, Pope Francis is scheduled to gather with youths at the Pontifical and Royal University of Santo Tomas.

His apostolic visit to the Philippines follows another one to Sri Lanka from January 12th to 15th. On this occasion, His Holiness will canonize José Vaz, an Indian priest who founded the Congregation of the Oratory of Goa and a missionary in Ceylon, current Sri Lanka. In January 1995 he was beatified by Pope John Paul II.

The comments of D. Mylo Vergara were taken during his attendance at the 19th annual conference of bishops and national secretaries of social communication offices, which was held last November in Coloane Island, Macau. ■

P.D.O

ARCHITECTS FROM MACAU HELP TO REBUILD SCHOOLS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Solidarity without limits

"ARCHITECTURE Sans Frontières-Macau" (ASF-M) is promoting the "Yolanda Project" to rebuild seven elementary schools in the province of Capiz in the Philippines.

The pilot project consists in the construction of two classroom units in Punta Cogon Elementary School, Roxas City. The NGO is expecting to extend further help to other schools that were severely affected by the destruction of super typhoon Yolanda, which hit the country in November 2013.

"I'm never surprised by good things. This is natural for people to go and reach out to help others. More than anything, I feel a sense of appreciation that even if Macau locals and expats are somehow not from the Philippines they really are helping to make a difference to the people they don't even know," said Ira Micheline Valdez, vice consul general of the Philippines

in Macau. "I also feel a profound sense of appreciation and gratitude as well," she adds to O CLARIM.

Ms. Valdez attended the event "Solidarity Macau" that took place last Friday at Creative Macau. Dominic Choi, president of the ASF-M, and Sérgio Spencer, a member of the same NGO, were two of the guests.

Maria Lynz, a final year student of the Communication and Media course at the University of Saint Joseph, delivered a piano performance along while the screen images of the project were presented to the audience.

The execution of "Project Yolanda" counts on the support of the Philippine Government's Department of Education, in cooperation with OCHA, an United Nations office for coordination of humanitarian affairs. ■

P.D.O

DECEMBER 8 – MARY'S IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

“You are the All Beautiful, O Mary!”

EVERY YEAR, the Holy Father goes to Piazza Spagna in Rome to venerate the image of our Lady there. Last year, Pope Francis followed tradition, and offered the following prayer to our Lady.

THE HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER

Holy and Immaculate Virgin,
to You, who are the honor of our people
and the solicitous custodian of our city,
we turn with confidence and love.

You are the All Beautiful, O Mary!
Sin is not in You.
Awaken in all of us a renewed desire of holiness:
may the splendor of truth shine in our word,
may the song of charity resound



in our works,
may purity and chastity inhabit our body and our heart,
may all the beauty of the Gospel be present in our life.

You are the All Beautiful, O Mary!
The Word of God was made flesh in You.

Help us to remain in attentive listening to the voice of the Lord:
may the cry of the poor not leave us indifferent,
may the suffering of the sick and of those in need not find us distracted,
may the loneliness of the elderly and the fragility of children move us,
may every human life be always loved and venerated by us all.

You are the All Beautiful, O Mary!
In You is the full joy of the blessed life with God.

Makes us not lose the meaning of our earthly journey:

may the gentle light of faith illumine our days,
may the consoling strength of hope orientate our steps,
may the infectious warmth of love animate our heart,
may the eyes of all of us remain well fixed there, in God, where true joy is.

You are the All Beautiful, O Mary!
Hear our prayer, answer our supplication:
may the beauty of the merciful love of God in Jesus be in us,
may this divine beauty save us, our city, the whole world. ■

Amen.

(Translation by Zenit)

SUPPORT THE DOCUMENTARY FILMING OF OUR GREAT MISSIONARY IN MACAU

Father Gaetano Nicosia: a story that needs to be told

PAOLA CARONNI

(Beyond Thirty-Nine) I HAD the occasion of meeting Father Nicosia three years ago at the ‘Little Sisters of the Poor- St. Mary’s Home for the aged’ in Aberdeen, where he resides.

In taking us to meet Father Gaetano Nicosia, the Mother Superior said that, every Sunday, he was still celebrating the Mass in their church, in Cantonese. We found Father Nicosia in a room, with a huge book opened in front of him. He was praying. Father Nicosia started speaking to us in Italian, with his beautiful Sicilian accent, now and then adding some Cantonese words to his sentences.

He almost immediately became very nostalgic and talked about his mission in Macau. He told us that he missed his village of Ka Ho, on Coloane Island, and that he had felt very sorry to leave it in 2011, because he spent his almost entire life there. Father Nicosia arrived in Ka Ho, in 1958, after a full day’s ship voyage

from Macau. He renamed the place ‘Gila Villa de Nossa Senhora’ (Village of Our Lady). At that time, patients were scared of showing their flattened faces or deformed limbs, and it took him a while to gain their confidence. The patients’ families were so horrified by leprosy, that they had banished their offspring and left them to die alone. Thanks to the use of western medicine, and to the indefatigable dedication of this priest, the patients started to receive medical treatment and the village slowly became leprosy-free. Nicosia’s relentless work helped in giving the village a respectful trait too: there were now clean, white residences for men and women and carefully tended gardens. A hospital and a church were built. Nicosia continued to take care of the patients even after they healed. The stigma and discrimination linked to leprosy, that left the patients with crippled limbs, scars and shortened fingers, would not allow them to leave the village and carry on a normal life elsewhere. Father Nicosia believed in the villagers’



Fr. Lanfranco Fedrigotti, SDB (left) interviewing a witness Mr. Fong in Coloane. Photo: Benedict Keith Ip

abilities and this allowed Ka Ho to become a self-sufficient reality: people were working, a road was built and the village became more accessible. More and more western tourists were coming to visit the place too, and this acted as a moral booster for the ex-patients, who started to feel less isolated from the world.

Father Nicosia will turn 100 years old next year. Beyond 39 feels that Father Nicosia’s incredible life needs to be told. It has to be forever remembered and become a testimony of how – with

an unfaltering faith- this man could win illness, difficulties and stigma, and dedicate his whole life to the sick and needy people, helping them in all ways with tangible assistance and medical and spiritual support.

For this reason, we have the ambitious project to create a documentary-film that will be distributed in Hong Kong and abroad. In order to complete this task, we have launched a fundraising campaign on Indiegogo, as we need everyone’s help to raise USD 3,000. (see <http://igg.me/>

at/b39-Nicosia, you will be able to find more information and to give your precious contribution. If we do not manage to reach our full fundraising objective, B39 will top up at its own expenses, and we will still carry on with the project.

The film will include interviews with Father Nicosia and with all other relevant people and religious representatives who know about his remarkable life. B39 will also visit and film Ka Ho Village, as well as other areas in and outside Macau, where Father Nicosia lived and worked in the past: Salesian House at Shau Kei Wan, St Anthony in Puk Fu Lam Road, St Louis School (West Point) and possibly more. There will be shooting of movie images of old pictures, documents, books, awards and medal, holy pictures etc, too. All related to Father Nicosia.

In a word, we would like to achieve the goal of obtaining a fine finished product that includes all the highlights of Nicosia’s unique mission in Macau. ■

OPENING OF THE YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE

To be joyful and passionate lovers of Jesus and of all

BISHOP José Lai presided over the inauguration of the Year of Consecrated Life at the Macau Cathedral on November 29, Saturday, at 7:30 PM. During the well-attended ceremony, a priest and a religious sister were asked to offer their respective reflections. Fray Fausto Gomez, OP, a member of the Pontifical Academy for Life, was first on the podium. Sister Yuen Mei Fun, principal of Colégio de Santa Rosa de Lima English Secondary followed with her testimony in Chinese. Following is the full text of Fray Gomez.

WE ARE women and men consecrated to God. We are here opening with our dear Bishop Joseph Lai the Year of Consecrated Life in the company of lay faithful, our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our Year of Consecrated Life is a marvelous opportunity for each one of us to be grateful for our vocation, sorry for our failures, faithful to our present and hopeful for the great future of consecrated life in the Church, in our Diocese of Macau.

Two biblical readings have been proclaimed to us: one from the prophet Isaiah (Is 66:10-14), and the other from the Gospel of St Luke (Lk 14:25-33). The first speaks of joy and the second, of the cost of discipleship. In the context of our religious vocation, God tells us to be joyful disciples of Jesus.

This wonderful evening of prayer and song, Jesus has two questions for each one of us: "Do you remember radically that 'I called you'? 'Do you love me?'" Our vocation is "a response to a call of love." It is a passion of love for Jesus. Pope Francis is asking us to be passionate lovers of Jesus (cf EG 209, 266). All our Founders and Foundresses point charismatically to Jesus: Jesus Christ is the center of their lives – and ours, too. We must deny ourselves by putting Jesus at the center of our hearts: by decentering, decentralizing – "unselfing"!

Moreover, our Holy Father is asking us – religious men and women – to be passionate lovers of all peoples, our neighbors: the world is our parish, and the faithful of the Diocese of Macau are our proximate neighbors! Of the first Christians, the unbelievers said, "See how they love one another."

Charity begins at home; fraternal love,



too: it starts with our brothers or sisters in the community. Jesus called you and me: He called us to live together as brothers and sisters. The Pope requests from us to be witnesses of fraternal love, to show to the world that "it is possible to live together as brothers and sisters in diversity." The Holy Father says that we should treat brothers (and sisters) with "Eucharistic tenderness" (Conversation in Rome, November 29, 2013). Our dear Pope insists on our need of continuing prayer: the Eucharist, the Hours, adoration, contemplation, the Rosary, etc.

We are passionate lovers of all people, and primarily – Pope Francis adds – passionate lovers of the poor and vulnerable (EG 266, 268). Our witnessing demands loving others with Christ's love, a love manifested in serving others unconditionally. This loving service is shown in witnessing: what the world expects from us, our Pope says, is authentic witnessing

of a simple, humble, sober life style – the evangelical life style: "Let us live simply so that others might simply live." The Pope is asking us to leave the comfort zone and walk on the periphery of life to see the excluded and marginalized. We are asked time and again to be closed to the poor and needy: "Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others" (EG 270).

Jesus urges us to carry our cross with love and also with joy. The prophet Isaiah says, "Rejoice, Jerusalem! Rejoice all you who love her!" Pope Francis proclaims: "This is the beauty of religious consecration: it is joy, joy, joy" (To Seminarians and Novices, July 6, 2013). We are asked to show "the joy of evangelization." Joy is a blessing of the Holy Spirit, an effect of charity or love, and a characteristic of hope, the virtue of the pilgrim. Theological hope helps us to journey to a glorious future by doing what we ought to

do every day, every moment – the only thing in our hands; by doing everything, every moment with love. Indeed, "Life is a series of moments either lived or lost."

As we journey together as sisters and brothers through the Year of Consecrated Life, we pray for each other so that we all may possess what Pope Francis wants us to possess: "missionary enthusiasm," "joy of evangelization," "joy of mission," and "joy of community." The poet and mystic Rabindranath Tagore writes: "I was sleeping and dreamed that life was joyful; / I woke up and saw that life was service; / I began to serve and saw that serving was joy."

May we experience through 2015, the joy of renewal by becoming more passionate lovers of our neighbor, in particular of our community brothers or sisters, and, above all, passionate lovers of Christ, who is our priority, our love, our life. Amen. ■

RETHINKING OUR ROOTS

Why Latin?

AURELIO PORFIRI

Why it is important to know Latin? I know that when some people read this phrase they will start to think of me as a strong traditionalist. It is not true. I am a realist. And being a realist, even a pragmatist, teaches us an important lesson: Latin is one of the foundations of western culture. The Catholic Church has grown in this culture for centuries, and moreover, the church was creating many of the features that make western civilization a bright example for all the world. Latin was one of the foundations of this civilization.

Now, what is the role of Latin in today's liturgies? It has become one of the strong points in traditionalists' agenda. I am sorry, but this is not fair. Latin is heritage for each one of us, because in this language are preserved treasures of

art and faith. We need not be fanatics — and, of course, it's also important to try to work for the implementation of good music using vernacular languages — but Latin must remain always as a model of synthesis, clarity, and elegance.

I am not talking about being Latin a sacred language. It is not a sacred language perhaps, but for sure is a language for the sacred. Why? Because is not submitted to the daily consumption of ordinary languages and for its capacity of synthesis, clarity and elegance (yes want to repeat it again). Sacrosanctum Concilium never abolished Latin, quite the contrary affirmed that “the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites” (SC 36.1). It is a Catholic heritage that belongs to everyone, Italians and Germans, Koreans and Chinese etc. If we are rethinking our roots we would have to recognize that putting completely aside a so



great treasure cannot be beneficial.

And why would we desire to lose millions of compositions that have used (and continue to use) this language? The problem is always to go from one extreme to the other. Latin and the compositions in Latin must always remain a model for sound compositions

in vernacular languages. And still there is so much good material that can be used. Let us hope that one day there will be a serious meditation about what it really means to understand something in the liturgy, that is not a common gathering, but the revelation of a sacred mystery. ■

信 望 愛
聖誕音樂會
向莫慶恩神父致意

Faith Hope Love
Christmas Concert
in memory of Fr. Lancelote Rodrigues

21.12.2014 星期日 Sunday 晚上八時正 8:00pm
玫瑰堂 St Dominic's Church

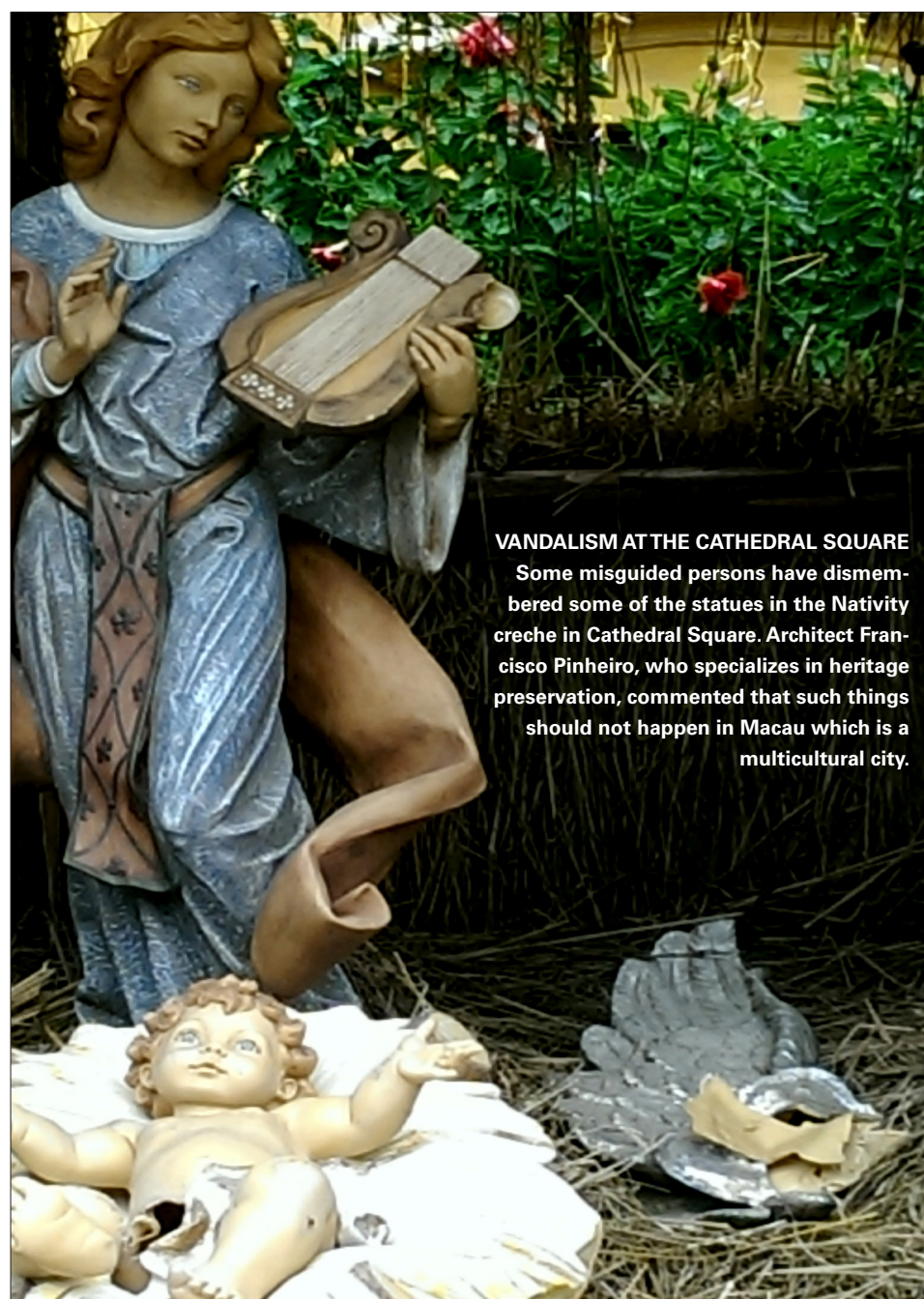
聖庇護十世音樂學院 Academia de Música S.Pio X

客席演出者及團體 Guest Artists

澳門青年管樂團 Macau Youth Symphonic Band
梁樂鳴 (小號獨奏及指揮) Nelson Leong (Trumpet Solo/ Conductor)
聖多瑪斯合唱團 Sanctus Thomas Choir
聖羅撒英文中學合唱團 Colégio de Santa Rosa de Lima English Secondary Choir
龐保羅 (指揮) Aurelio Porfiri (Conductor)

免費入場 Free Admission

主辦 Presented by: 聖庇護十世音樂學院 Academia de Música S. Pio X
協辦 Co-presented by: 澳門音樂協會 Associação de Música de Macau
贊助 Sponsored by: 澳門基金會 FUNDAÇÃO MACAU
鳴謝 Acknowledgement: TOM LEE 通利琴行



VANDALISM AT THE CATHEDRAL SQUARE

Some misguided persons have dismembered some of the statues in the Nativity creche in Cathedral Square. Architect Francisco Pinheiro, who specializes in heritage preservation, commented that such things should not happen in Macau which is a multicultural city.

主日福音
Sunday Gospel

將臨期第二主日
Second Sunday of Advent



DECEMBER 7, 2014 – 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

The Church, a prophet of hope

Is 40:1-5; 9-11; 2 Pe 3:8-14; Mk 1:1-8

THE GOSPEL for this Sunday introduces John the Baptist to us. He was the fore-runner of Jesus. He lived to announce to people that the Messiah, the Savior, was about to come, that ways and hearts needed to be prepared. What John expected was something so new that everything else would become obsolete. Nothing would be worthwhile any longer. So he went into the desert and lived in poverty. His gaze and his life were on the future, on the one who was to come. John never took the spotlight. He didn't tell those who followed him to do as he did or to follow him. He only warned them to be attentive and to get ready. John was a prophet: he was God's spokesperson for the people.

John the Baptist gives us some of the key elements that must be characteristic of the life of the Church at all times and in all places. The Church, each Christian community, must be a prophet of God for our world. Just like John, the Church is not in the world to proclaim itself, but to announce the presence of God among people. The Church doesn't exist for itself and to perpetuate itself. Its center is God. Its mission is to guide people towards God. Our lives must bear witness to the truth that God is near and that God is coming to the hearts of all men and women. Like John, the Church must know how to use its words and works in order to give



hope and life to the men and women of our world.

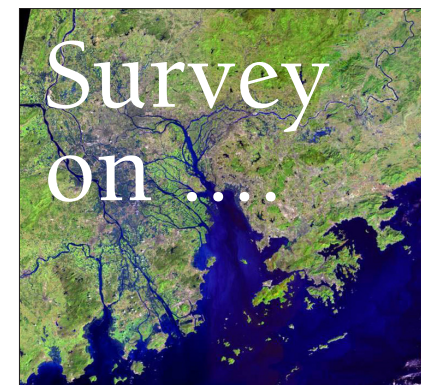
In Advent, John the Baptist is the model for the Christian community. Like him, we must know that behind us comes the one who is more powerful than we, who are only his spokespersons. The only mission of the church is to evangelize. The only reason for its existence is to announce to people that salvation is near, that it is already present in our world.

For reflection

How do we announce that the Messiah, the Savior, is already present in our world? Are we so self satisfied, so contented in our community, that we forget that other people need to hear our message?

What signs of hope can we offer those who have lost it? What words do we use? ■

Fr Fernando Torres, CMF
CLARETIAN PUBLICATIONS



Survey on Public Environmental Consciousness in Macao — A Pearl River Delta Comparison

10 December 2014, 18:30-20:00

Speakers Hall, University of Saint Joseph

Free Admission All are welcome

SPEAKERS

Prof. Dr. Eric Tsang: Associate Director of the UNESCO UNEV-OC HK hosted by the HK Institute of Education; visiting professor of the South China Normal University.

Dr. Emilie Tran: Assistant Professor coordinating the Government Studies programme; former Dean of the Faculty of Leadership and Administration at the USJ.

Conducted in English

Organized by the Faculty of Administration and Leadership, USJ

SURPASSING ALL DESIRE

No more tears

REV. JOSÉ MARIO O. MANDÍA

jmomandia@gmail.com

LAST week, we saw that hell is to definitively shut ourselves in our own prison, allowing nothing and no one to come in. The opposite of it, to open ourselves and let ourselves be filled by the Source of all that is true, good and beautiful, is called heaven.

The theologians among you may balk at this, but when I explain heaven to children, I tell them that heaven is infinite fun – you can play anything you like for as long as you want, and mommy will not tell you, “It’s time to go home.” That’s because you’re already home. You will be simply overwhelmed with joy. Imagine a theme park extending into infinity. Awesome! I imagine that all the saints in heaven are always saying the same thing, “I never imagined it would be this good!”

Everlasting and unlimited joy is something that can never happen here on earth. We never get pure unalloyed joy. There is always some tinge of sadness in every earthly joy. And earthly joys never last. They are, as Saint Josemaría said, like fireworks that glitter and die – “hardly had they begun, and they have already ended” (*The Way* 753). When he was still archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Bergoglio (now Pope Francis) once told his faithful, “If a politician comes promising you heaven, tell him to go to confession.”

Heaven is not a cheap advertising gimmick. The One who promised it to us has a good record of keeping his Word. He said he would die for us, and die he did. He said he would rise, and rise he did. He said anyone who keeps his word will find eternal life, and you can bet, he will find it.

Earthly words fail when describing heaven. When two people speak about heaven, it is like a blind man telling another what the color “red” is. Or like deaf man trying to explain to another deaf man what polyphony means. Words just fail.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1027) affirms that heaven “is beyond all understanding and description.



... ‘no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him’ (I Corinthians 2:9).”

But there is a succinct explanation about heaven that I love to use and meditate on. It comes from two books of the Bible. The book of Isaiah (25:8) says, “He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken.” And the book of Revelation (21:4-5) uses almost the same words: “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away. And he who sat upon the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’”

No more tears! “Tears” are situations that annoy or bother us, that make us uncomfortable, sad, angry, nervous, fearful, depressed, disappointed, frustrated. Tears are pains, aches, sorrows All that will be a thing of the distant past. (I can say goodbye to my cholesterol problem.)

Pope Benedict XVI, in the Encyclical *Spe Salvi*, no 12, describes heaven as “the supreme moment of satisfaction, ... like plunging into the ocean of infinite love, a moment in which time – the before and after – no longer exists ... in which we are simply overwhelmed with joy. This is how Jesus expresses it in Saint John’s Gospel: ‘I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you’ (16:22).”

Saint Thomas Aquinas says it surpasses all human desire, goes beyond all human expectations. In heaven, we shall go from one discovery to another, from one surprise to another, and the whole adventure will never end. To be in heaven is to be with God, the Dad of all dads (cf Ephesians 3:14-15). If you are a mom or a dad, I am sure that when your son or daughter’s birthday comes around, you would like to give him the best surprise that your paycheck can afford. God is infinitely much more a father and mother than all the fathers and mothers put together. He has no budget constraints. He is infinitely magnanimous and prodigiously imaginative in his

gifts – He has prepared delights which will keep his children so awed for all eternity that – as Peter Kreeft writes – there will be no time for boredom (cf *Everything You Wanted to Know About Heaven*). This explains why Jesus thanked him every time he spoke with him: “I thank you, Father....”

Moral lesson? Heaven is worth all the trouble, yes it is.

Saint Paul tells the Romans (8:18): “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

And how does one qualify to get in? *The Catechism* (1023) gives a very simple requirement: “Those who die in God’s grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ.”

To die in God’s grace means being aware of not having one single mortal or grave sin (each mortal sin is a flat “no” to God). This is why we need regular and frequent confession.

Purification comes through the reversals, unpleasant circumstances, crosses that we encounter in life and which we offer up to God (instead of complaining about them). The saints were keenly aware of the value of these “bad things that happen to good people.” This explains their constant joy in the midst of suffering. We can also choose to be purified in purgatory (which we will talk about next time) but why wait so long?

Is it good to think about heaven all the time? Athletes always think about the medal they want to win. People separated from their loved ones always think about the persons they miss. God our Father is so eager to see us back home – we should always feel homesick for heaven. ☐

ENGLISH MASSES IN MACAU

SATURDAY (Anticipated Mass)
05:30 PM – St Francis Xavier (Mong Ha)
06:30 PM – Our Lady of Mt Carmel (Taipa)
SUNDAY
09:15 AM – Penha Hill
10:00 AM – St Francis Xavier (Coloane)
10:00 AM – Our Lady of Mt Carmel (Taipa)
11:00 AM – St. Lazarus Church
11:15 AM – Salesian Institute
12:00 NN – Our Lady of Fatima
04:30 PM – St Augustine
05:00 PM – Holy Spirit Chapel,
Sta Rosa de Lima (English Secondary)

05:30 PM – St Joseph the Worker
06:00 PM – Sé Cathedral
TAGALOG MASS
10:30 AM – St Augustine
USEFUL TELEPHONES FOR FILIPINO MIGRANTS IN MACAU
Philippine Consulate – 2875-7111
Immigration Department – 2872-5488
Labor Department – 2840-0333
Police – 2857-3333
Emergency – 999
Enquiry – 181



HISTORY OF SALVATION

Time of Israel (XX)

救恩史

以色列時代 (二)



達味
David
(1008-970)

撒羅滿
Solomon
(970-931)

► King David

David, the King that God loved (1 Samuel 16:18), became the figure of the Messiah (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiah 34:23-29; 37: 24,25; Hosea 3:5), and his kingdom symbolizes the heavenly kingdom of the Messiah (Psalms 110; 89:20-38; 72). When Jesus the Messiah is born, all the figures in the Old Testament are fulfilled in him.

► 撒羅滿

撒羅滿說：「你的僕人，我的父親達味曾以虔誠、公義及正直的心與你同行，你曾向他表示了偉大的恩德，又為給他保持這偉大的恩德，賜給了他一個兒子，坐在他的寶座上，如同今天一樣。」

上主，我的天主，現在你使你的僕人替代我父親達味為王，但我還太年輕，不知道如何處理國事。

你的僕人是住在你所選的民族中間，這是一個多得不可統計，不可勝數的大民族。

為此，求你賜給你的僕人一顆慧心，可統治你的百姓，判斷善惡；否則，誰能統治你這樣眾多的人民呢？」(第三章 6-9)

► Solomon

And Solomon said, "Thou hast shown great and steadfast love to thy servant David my father, because he walked before thee in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward thee; and thou hast kept for him this great and steadfast love, and hast given him a son to sit on his throne this day. And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people whom thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. Give thy servant therefore an understanding mind to govern thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to govern this thy great people?" (Chapter 3: 6-9)

從預像到實現

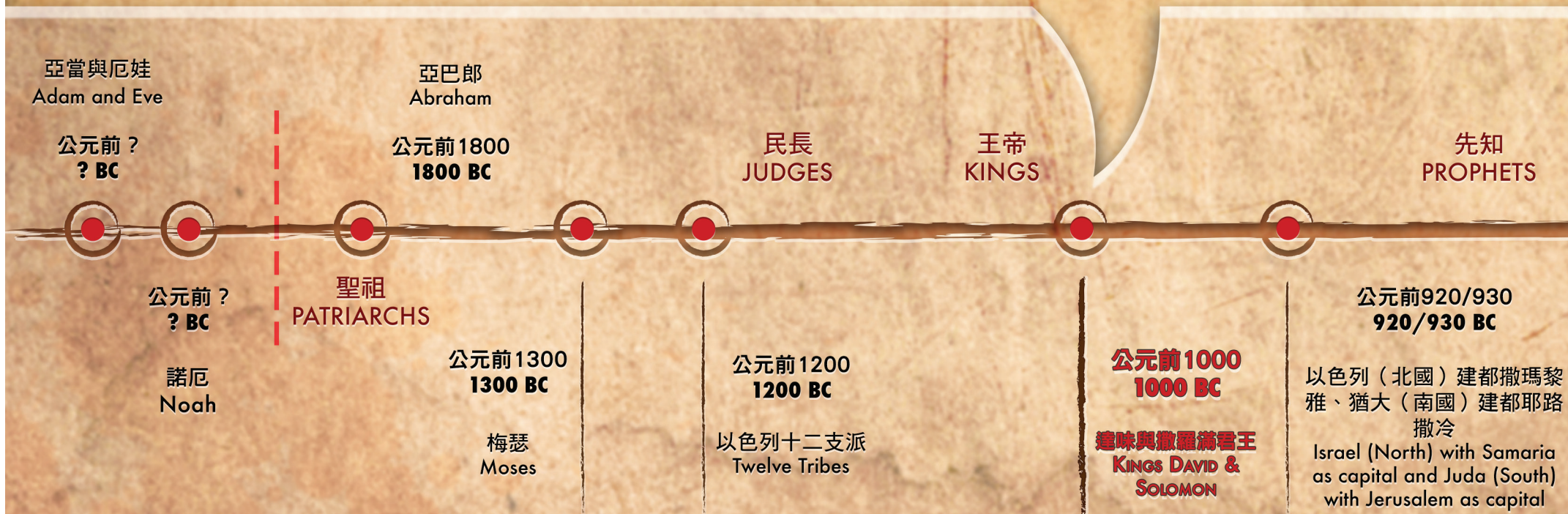
「預像」是什麼意思？預像是天主藉著一個人物、一個事實，預示未來另一個人物或另一個事實。

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.

► 達味君王

天主喜愛的達味君王（撒慕爾紀上16:18）成了默西亞的預像（耶肋米亞30：9；厄則克耳34：23-29；37：24，25；歐瑟亞3：5），而他的王國正象徵默西亞的神國（聖詠110；89：20-38；72）。當默西亞耶穌誕生在人間，舊約一切的預像，在祂身上應驗、呈現。



達味與撒羅滿君王 撒慕爾紀與列王紀

KINGS DAVID AND SOLOMON THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL AND THE BOOKS OF KINGS

► 建造聖殿

以色列子民出離埃及地後四百八十年，撒羅滿作以色列王第四年「齊夫」月，【即二月，】開始建造上主的殿。第十一年，上主的殿各部分全依照計劃完成；建殿的工作共費時七年。（第六章 1, 38）

► Construction of the Temple

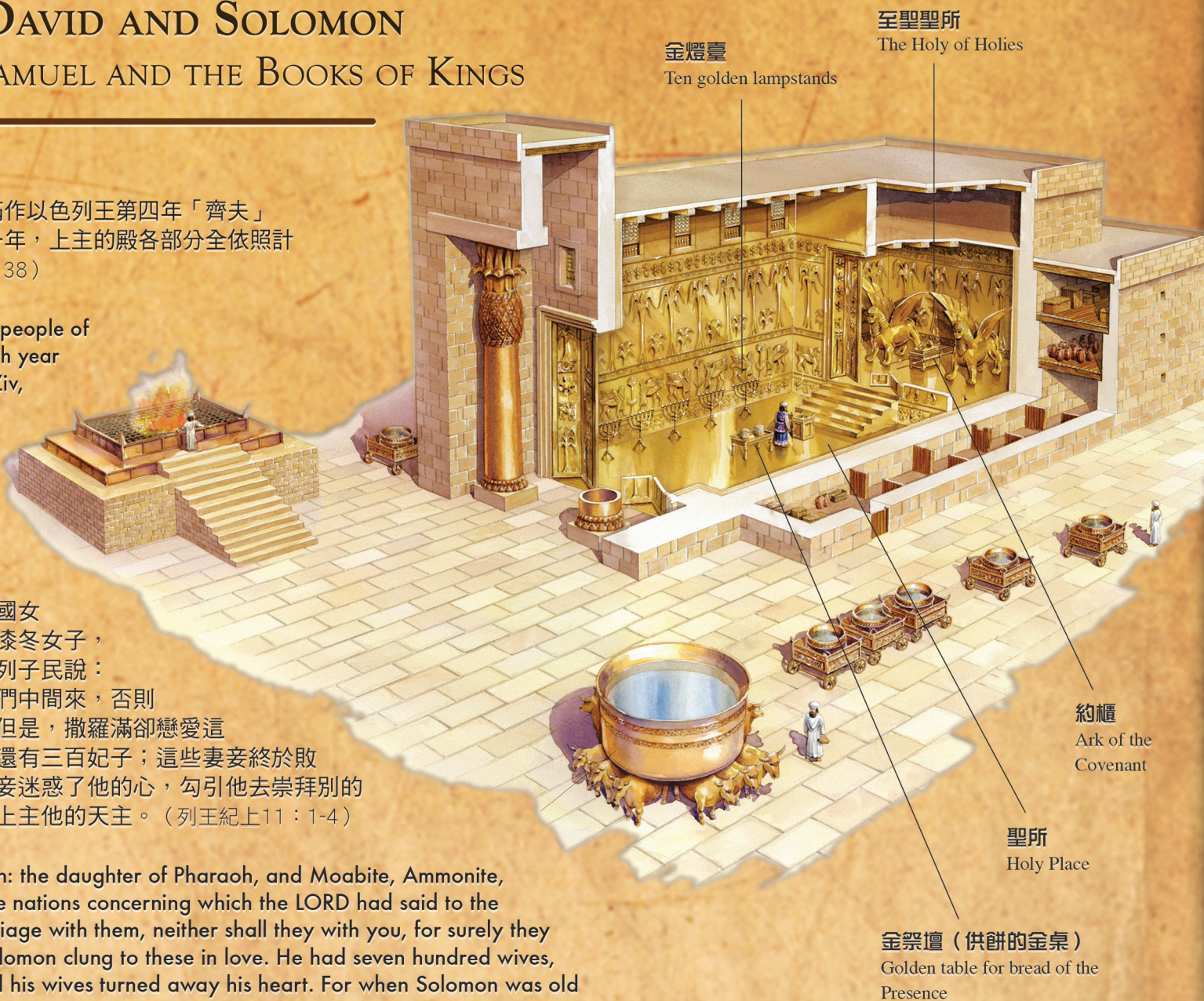
In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the LORD. ... And in the eleventh year, the house was finished in all its parts, and according to all its specifications. He was seven years in building it. (Chapter 6: 1, 38)

► 撒羅滿敬拜邪神

撒羅滿除了法郎的公主外，又愛上了許多外國女子：即摩阿布女子，阿孟女子，厄東女子，漆冬女子，赫特女子。關於這些民族，上主曾吩咐以色列子民說：「你們不可到他們中間去，他們也不可到你們中間來，否則他們必會引誘你們的心，傾向他們的神。」但是，撒羅滿卻戀愛這些女子。他有七百個各地公主為妻妾，另外還有三百妃子；這些妻妾終於敗壞了他的心。當撒羅滿年老的時候，這些妻妾迷惑了他的心，勾引他去崇拜別的神；他的心已不像他父親達味的心，全屬於上主他的天主。（列王紀上11：1-4）

► Solomon worships other gods

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women: the daughter of Pharaoh, and Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods"; Solomon clung to these in love. He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. (1 Kings 11:1-4)



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)