



# MICHAEL

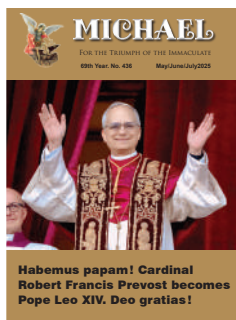
FOR THE TRIUMPH OF THE IMMACULATE

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**Habemus papam! Cardinal  
Robert Francis Prevost becomes  
Pope Leo XIV. Deo gratias!**



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# MICHAEL

A journal of Catholic patriots  
 for the Kingship of Christ and  
 Mary in souls, in families  
 and in nations

For social justice through Economic Democracy  
 in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic  
 Church through the vigilant actions of heads of  
 families, and not through political parties

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# Letter from the Editor

## *We joyfully welcome Pope Leo XIV*

The world was stunned by the sudden death of Pope Francis on April 21, especially since he had appeared in public the day before, Easter Sunday, to give his blessing from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica.

A conclave was therefore held to elect a new pope. Surprise! A cardinal no one expected was chosen—an American pope, the first in history (and no, it's not Donald Trump!). Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, 69 years old, born in Chicago, but who spent more than 20 years as a missionary and bishop in Peru, was recently made a cardinal and appointed head of the Vatican's Dicastery for Bishops. He also served two terms as superior general of his congregation, the Augustinian Friars, present in over 50 countries—an experience that allowed him to travel the world extensively.

It is said that the cardinals in the conclave were looking for someone who had lived on more than one continent, spoke several languages, had deep missionary and pastoral experience, was well-versed in doctrine and canon law, knew the Roman Curia well, and could build unity between progressive and conservative trends in the Church. Well, Cardinal Prevost met all these criteria brilliantly. He speaks English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Quechua, which he learned in Peru.

In addition to holding degrees in mathematics, philosophy, and theology, Leo XIV also earned a doctorate in canon law—showing that he takes Church law and regulations seriously and will express the Gospel's teachings clearly and without confusion, never compromising on the truth. Truly, he is a gift from Heaven, a blessing from God that fills us with hope for the future of the Church. Deo gratias—thanks be to God!

Another major surprise was his choice of papal name: Leo XIV. It has been over a century since a pope bore the name Leo—the last was Leo XIII, who served from 1878 to 1903. The choice of this name is a program in itself, and recalling the key themes of Pope Leo XIII's pontificate gives us insight into what Pope Leo XIV's agenda might look like in the coming years. It was Leo XIII who, in 1886, composed the Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel, to be recited at the end of every Mass. (Leo XIV, incidentally, was elected pope on May 8—the feast of the apparition of Saint Michael the Archangel at Mount Gargano in Italy.)

Leo XIII was nicknamed the "Pope of the Rosary," having written 11 encyclicals on the subject and encour-

aging the recitation of the Rosary as a powerful weapon in facing the challenges of our times. He promoted the philosophy and theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas, but is best known for his major encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (Latin for "new things")—a declaration of how the new pontiff hoped to orient the Church. It condemned Marxist socialism and injustices against workers and marked the beginning of what would become the Church's body of social teaching—further developed by later popes, especially from Pius XI to Francis.

On May 10, 2025, Pope Leo XIV explained his choice of name in this way:



*Pope Leo XIV*

"Pope Leo XIII, in his historic Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, addressed the social question in the context of the first great industrial revolution. In our own day, the Church offers to everyone the treasury of her social teaching in response to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence that pose new challenges for the defence of human dignity, justice and labour."

Our new Holy Father also gave a glimpse of his pastoral program on May 9, during his first Mass as pope, when he emphasized the importance of proclaiming the Gospel and bearing witness to our faith:

"Even today, there are many settings in which the Christian faith is considered absurd, meant for the weak and unintelligent. Settings where other securities are preferred, like technology, money, success, power, or pleasure.

**"These are contexts where it is not easy to preach the Gospel and bear witness to its truth, where believers are mocked, opposed, despised or at best tolerated and pitied. Yet, precisely for this reason, they are the places where our missionary outreach is desperately needed. A lack of faith is often tragically accompanied by the loss of meaning in life, the neglect of mercy, appalling violations of human dignity, the crisis of the family and so many other wounds that afflict our society."**

In closing, we make our own these words from the Archbishop of Montreal, Most Rev, Christian Lepine: website of the Diocese of Montreal: "Let us accompany our new Pope Leo XIV in prayer. May he be strengthened by grace, supported by our filial affection, and guided by the Holy Spirit in his mission of service to the Church and to the world." ❖

*Alain Pilote, Editor*

# Who is Pope Leo XIV?

Robert Francis Prevost was born on September 14, 1955 in Chicago, U.S.A. He is the son of Louis Marius Prevost (1920-1997) and of Mildred Agnes Martínez (1911-1990), both also Chicago natives. They got married on January 29, 1949 in Chicago's Holy Name Cathedral.



*The parents of Pope Leo XIV*

His father, of French and Italian descent, was a United States Navy veteran of World War II, who later became superintendent of Brookwood School District 167 in Glenwood, Illinois. His mother, librarian involved in parish life, was a Métis woman of Louisiana Creole descent, and two of her sisters were nuns. She graduated from DePaul University with a bachelor's degree in library science in 1947.

His paternal grandfather, Jean Lanti Prevost, alias John R. Prevost, born in Turin, Italy, and died in Detroit in 1960, was a professor of Romance languages. His paternal grandmother, Suzanne Louise Marie Fontaine, born in Le Havre, France, and died in Detroit in 1979, was a Frenchwoman of Normandy origin who arrived in the United States in 1915.

## Early life and schooling

Known as "Rob" to his family and "Bob" to friends as an adult, Robert Francis Prevost was raised in Dolton, Illinois, a suburb bordering the far South Side of Chicago, with his two older brothers, Louis Martín and John Joseph, respectively a Navy veteran living in Florida and a retired school principal living in Chicago.

Robert sang in the choir and served as an altar boy, aspiring to the priesthood from an early age, and performed Mass at home with his brothers, on an ironing board with candy as host. Every evening after dinner, the family would gather in the living room to recite the Rosary.



*Mrs. Prevost and her three children, from left to right: Robert (the future pope), John and Louis.*

## University

In 1973, Prevost enrolled in Villanova University, an Augustinian college located near Philadelphia, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics in 1977. He returned to his father's native Hyde Park to obtain a Master of Divinity from Catholic Theological Union in 1982 and taught physics and math at St. Rita of Cascia High School in Chicago.

He earned a Licentiate of Canon Law in 1984, followed by a Doctor of Canon Law degree in 1987, both from the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Rome. His doc-



*Robert, young Augustinian*



toral thesis was a study of the role of the local prior in the Order of Saint Augustine.

## Formation and early priesthood

On September 1, 1977, Prevost joined the Order of Saint Augustine as a novice, residing for one year at Immaculate Conception Church in St. Louis, Missouri. He moved to Chicago, and took his first vows on September 2, 1978, and made his solemn vows on August 29, 1981.



*In 1982, shortly after his ordination in Rome, Robert Francis Prevost met Pope John Paul II.*

Prevost was ordained a priest in Rome, at the Church of Santa Monica degli Agostiniani by Archbishop Jean Jadot on June 19, 1982.

Robert Francis joined the Augustinian mission in Peru in 1985, serving as chancellor of the Territorial Prelature of Chulucanas until 1986. In 1987, he is called back by his Order to the U.S.A. as vocation director and missions director of the Augustinian Province of Chicago.

Returning to Peru in 1988, he spent a decade heading the Augustinian seminary in Trujillo, teaching canon law in the diocesan seminary, serving as



*Robert Francis Prevost, missionary in Peru*

prefect of studies, acting as a judge in the regional ecclesiastical court, and working in parish ministry on the city's outskirts.

In 1998, Prevost was elected Prior Provincial of the Order of St. Augustine's Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel based in Chicago, assuming the role on March 8, 1999.



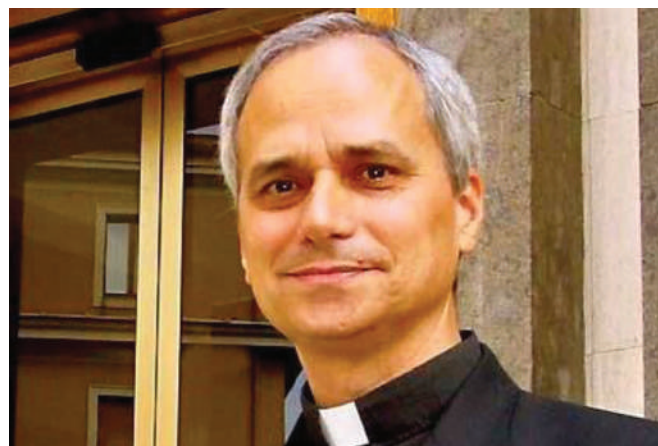
Elected Prior General of the Order of Saint Augustine in 2001, Prevost served two consecutive, six-year terms until 2013. His twenty-minute election is one of the fastest in the Order's history. From 2013 to 2014, Prevost served as director of formation at the Convent of St. Augustine in Chicago, and as first councilor and provincial vicar of the Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel.



*As Prior General of the Augustinians, Father Robert Francis Prevost meets Pope Benedict XVI*

## From Chicago to Chiclayo

On November 3, 2014, Pope Francis appointed Prevost as the apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Chiclayo in northern Peru. He was consecrated on December 12, 2014 (the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe), at St. Mary's Cathedral in Chiclayo by Archbishop James Green, Apostolic Nuncio to Peru. On Septem-



ber 26, 2015, he was named Bishop of Chiclayo. As required by a 1980 pact between the Holy See and Peru, Prevost became a naturalized Peruvian citizen before becoming bishop. On July 13, 2019, Prevost was appointed a member of the Congregation for the Clergy.

On April 15, 2020, he became apostolic administrator of Callao, Peru. On November 21, 2020, he joined the Dicastery for Bishops in Rome.

### Arrival in Rome and cardinal



*In 2023, Archbishop Prevost receives the cardinal's biretta from Pope Francis.*

On January 30, 2023, Pope Francis appointed Prevost prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops and President of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, with the title Archbishop-Bishop emeritus of Chiclayo. He replaces Cardinal Marc Ouellet, who had reached the age limit. He takes office on April 12, 2023. As Prefect, he plays an essential role in the evaluation and recommendation of episcopal candidates worldwide, gaining greater visibility within the Catholic Church.



*Louis Prevost (left) and John Prevost (right) with their brother Robert, who has just been created cardinal.*

On September 30, 2023, Francis created Prevost a cardinal with the rank of cardinal-deacon and assigned the deaconry of Santa Monica degli Agostiniani. On February 6, 2025, Francis promoted Prevost to cardinal-bishop, assigning him as titular bishop of the Suburbicarian Diocese of Albano.

### He becomes pope

Prevost, aged 69, was elected pope on May 8, 2025, the second day of the conclave, on the fourth ballot, becoming the first American and Peruvian pontiff. As the 267th Pope to be elected, he is seen as a compromise candidate, able to bridge the gap between progressive and conservative camps. But his past statements, and those of his first days as pope, suggest that he is definitively "Catholic" in tendency, i.e. faithful to the tradition of the Church.



For example, in his first appearance on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica after his election, Leo XIV appeared in the traditional pontifical red stole and mozzetta, vestments Pope Francis had not worn at his election in 2013. The following Sunday, he sang the Regina coeli prayer in Latin. And on May 14, 2025, Leo XIV told participants in the Jubilee of the Eastern Churches:

**"The Church needs you. The contribution that the Christian East can offer us today is immense! We have great need to recover the sense of mystery that remains alive in your liturgies, liturgies that engage the human person in his or her entirety, that sing of the beauty of salvation and evoke a sense of wonder at how God's majesty embraces our human frailty!"**

**It is likewise important to rediscover, especially in the Christian West, a sense of the primacy of God, the importance of mystagogy and the values so typical of Eastern spirituality: constant intercession, penance, fasting, and weeping for one's own sins and for those of all humanity! It is vital, then, that you preserve your traditions without attenuating them, for the sake perhaps of practicality or convenience, lest they be corrupted by the mentality of consumerism and utilitarianism. Your traditions of spirituality, ancient yet ever new, are medicinal."**

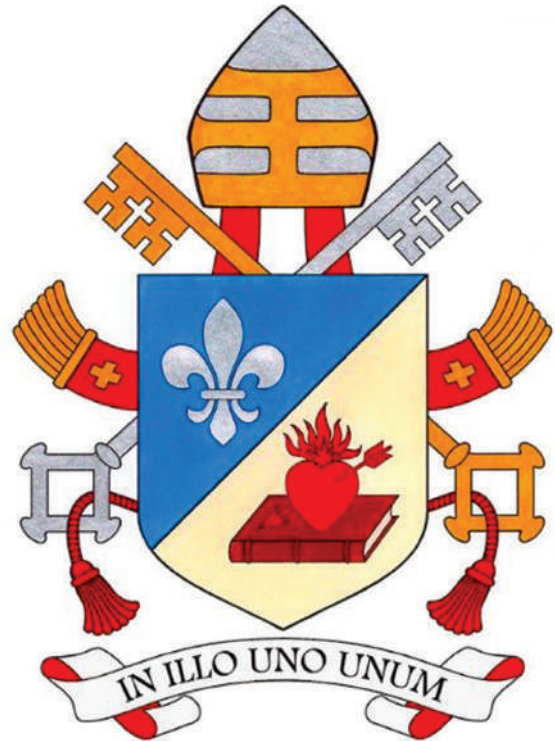
Leo XIII's first words to the crowd at his election on May 8, from the loggia (balcony) of St. Peter's Ba-





the words "*Vulnerasti cor meum verbo tuo*", "You pierced my heart with your Word".

His episcopal motto (and now his motto as pope) is: *In Illo uno unum*, an expression taken from the commentary on Psalm 127 by St. Augustine of Hippo, translated as "In Him who is One, we are One".



silica, already filled us with great hope:

**"Peace be with you all ! Dear brothers and sisters, these are the first words spoken by the risen Christ, the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for God's flock. I would like this greeting of peace to resound in your hearts, in your families, among all people, wherever they may be, in every nation and throughout the world. Peace be with you! It is the peace of the risen Christ. A peace that is unarmed and disarming, humble and persevering. A peace that comes from God, the God who loves us all, unconditionally..."**

**"God loves us, God loves you all, and evil will not prevail! All of us are in God's hands. So, let us move forward, without fear, together, hand in hand with God and with one another other! We are followers of Christ. Christ goes before us. The world needs his light. Humanity needs him as the bridge that can lead us to God and his love."**

### **His motto and coat of arms**

Leo XIV's papal emblems are those he chose at his consecration as Bishop of Chiclayo in Peru: a white fleur-de-lys on a blue background, representing the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of Immaculate Conception, patron saint of the Diocese of Chiclayo. The lower part features an image reminiscent of the Order of Saint Augustine: a closed book with a heart pierced by an arrow. This image recalls Saint Augustine's conversion experience, which he explained with

In an interview with the Vatican media in July 2023, Cardinal Prevost himself explained his motto: "As my episcopal motto shows, unity and communion are part of the charism of the Order of St. Augustine and also of my way of acting and thinking. I think it's very important to promote communion in the Church... So, as an Augustinian, promoting unity and communion is fundamental for me. St. Augustine talks a lot about unity in the Church and the need to live it".

Finally, on May 9, 2025, he ended his homily at his first Mass in the Sistine Chapel, in the presence of the cardinals, by referring to the words of St. Ignatius of Antioch:

**"The words (of St. Ignatius of Antioch) apply more generally to an indispensable commitment for all those in the Church who exercise a ministry of authority. It is to move aside so that Christ may remain, to make oneself small so that he may be known and glorified (cf. Jn 3:30), to spend oneself to the utmost so that all may have the opportunity to know and love him. May God grant me this grace, today and always, through the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church."**

This is the grace we wish our Holy Father Pope Leo XIV, and we accompany him with our most sincere prayers. ❖





# The apparitions of Mary Mystical Rose recognized by the Vatican

In a letter published on July 8, 2024, Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, authorized the promotion of the Italian Marian apparitions known as the “Mystical Rose of Fontanelle” – or the “Madonna of Montichiari.” The Dicastery thus granted the “nulla osta” (no objection – essentially, the green light) to these apparitions, and permitted public worship of the Marian devotion tied to the messages received in 1947 and 1966 by the seer Pierina Gilli. This approval also allows churches and sacred places to be dedicated to this specific devotion, along with the corresponding image. Cardinal Fernández’s letter states that there are “no negative moral or other critical aspects. On the contrary, several positive aspects can be found.”

**More recently, on April 14, 2025, a statue of the Virgin Mary—gifted by Pope Francis—was inaugurated by Cardinal Fernández in the Vatican Gardens. It depicts the Virgin with three roses, as she is said to have appeared to Pierina Gilli on July 13, 1947.**

Montichiari, a town in the Diocese of Brescia, Lombardy, was visited multiple times by the Virgin Mary in 1947. She appeared to Pierina Gilli, a young woman, asked to be invoked under the title Rosa Mystica (Mystical Rose), and delivered several messages, including the one concerning the “Hour of Grace” on December 8, 1947.

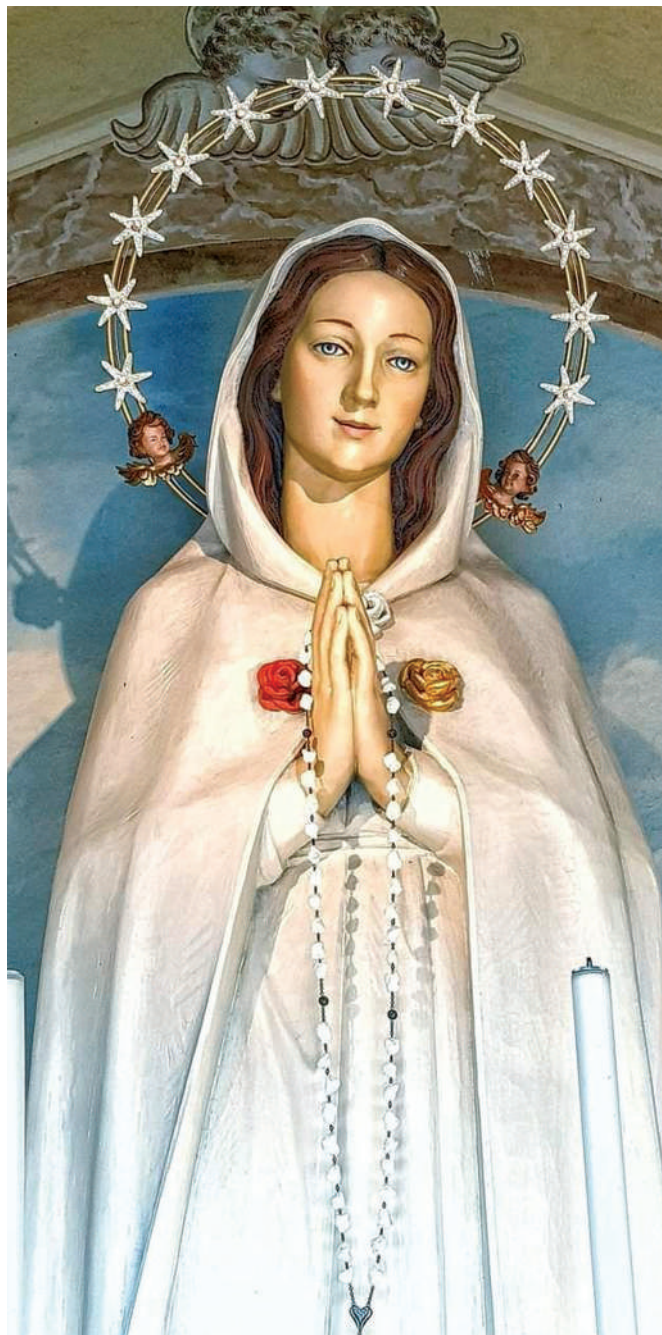
## The seer: Pierina Gilli

Pierina lived a very simple life until her death in 1991 at the age of 80. Her mystical experiences span two main periods: the first in 1947, when the Virgin is said to have appeared to her under the titles “Mystical Rose” and “Mother of the Church.” Pierina said she saw three roses—white, red, and yellow—on Mary’s white robe, symbolizing prayer, penance, and suffering.

Born August 3, 1911, in Montichiari, Pierina was the eldest of nine children in a farming family. Her father died upon returning from World War I in 1918. She was targeted with pedophilic advances by a relative of a widow and had to muster all her strength to escape her abuser, who threatened, “If you speak, I’ll kill you.” Her resistance led others to wrongly label her as disobedient and stubborn.

When her mother found out, Pierina decided to become a nun. However, her fragile health prevented her, despite numerous attempts. During World War II, she served at the Desenzano Civil Hospital, run by the Servants of Charity. On April 14, 1944, at age 33, she was accepted as a postulant with the same order and

*Left: official portrait of Pope Leo XIV*



sent to work as a nurse at the children’s hospital in Brescia.

On December 1, 1944, she contracted meningitis and was expected to die. But on December 17, 1944, Mary Crucified di Rosa (1813–1855, canonized in 1954), founder of the Servants of Charity, appeared and healed her. Her condition worsened again in July, and by December, her prognosis was dire. Yet by late April 1946, she returned to work at the Montichiari ►

► hospital. In November 1946, she suffered a relapse with a severe intestinal blockage, requiring emergency surgery.

### First Cycle of Apparitions: 1947

Once again at death's door, Pierina had a vision during the night of November 23–24. Mary Crucified di Rosa appeared to her again and pointed to a corner of the room. Pierina, fully awake and with clear perception, recounts:

"I then saw [...] a very beautiful lady, transparent, wearing violet garments with a white veil that flowed from her head to her feet. She was transparent. She opened her arms, and I saw three swords piercing her chest at heart level. 'It's the Madonna,' the foundress told me."

The apparition asked her to offer prayers and sacrifices for religious souls who betray their vocation, to make reparation for mortal sins, and for priests who dishonor their ministry. "She especially asked me for the sanctification of priests. If they are holy, many souls will be sanctified." Inviting prayer and penance, the Virgin asked to be venerated under the title "Mystical Rose."

On June 1, 1947, the Virgin appeared again. This time, she was not transparent but physically present, with three roses arranged horizontally on her chest: white, red, and yellow. When Pierina asked their meaning, she was told:

- The white rose symbolizes prayer;
- The pink (or red) rose, reparation;
- The yellow-golden rose, the spirit of sacrifice.

On July 13, the Madonna clarified further:

- The white rose symbolizes the spirit of prayer to make reparation for offenses by consecrated people who do not live their vocation sincerely;
- The red rose, the spirit of sacrifice for sins of consecrated people living in mortal sin;
- The golden-yellow rose, the spirit of immolation to make reparation for priests who betray their vocation, particularly to obtain their sanctification.

Only if these three roses are offered with love will the three swords fall from the Virgin's Heart.

On that same July 13, the Madonna revealed:

"I am the Mother of Jesus and your Mother. The Lord sends me to promote deeper Marian devotion in religious institutes [...] and among priests. I promise to all who honor my protection a renewal of vocations, less apostasy, and a great longing for holiness. Let the 13th of each month be a day of prayer to Mary, prepared by twelve days of devotion. I will pour out abundant graces and vocations on that day."

On November 22, 1947, Our Lady announced she would appear again in the Montichiari Cathedral. Upon hearing this, thousands gathered at the specified time.

### Francisco and Jacinta of Fatima

During the sixth apparition on December 7, 1947, before a packed cathedral, the Virgin appeared wearing a white cloak held on the right by a boy and on the left by a girl, both also dressed in white. She announced:

"Tomorrow I will show my Immaculate Heart, so little known to mankind... At Fatima, I asked for devotion to my Heart's consecration. Here in Montichiari, I want that same devotion—as Mystical Rose—joined with the veneration of my Immaculate Heart to be deepened [...], so that consecrated souls may receive more graces from my motherly Heart."

When Pierina asked, "Who are the children with you?" Mary answered: "Jacinta and Francisco [two of the three Fatima seers]. They will now be your companions in your tribulations. They too suffered greatly, though they were much younger than you. See, what I want from you is simplicity and kindness like theirs."

### The Hour of Grace

The next day, December 8, 1947, the Virgin appeared:

"On a great white staircase adorned with white, red, and golden roses on both sides," smiling and saying, "I am the Immaculate Conception."

As she began descending the steps, she added:

"I am Mary of Grace, the Mother of my divine Son, Jesus Christ. [...] Here in Montichiari, I wish to be called Mystical Rose. I desire that each year, on December 8 at noon, the Hour of Grace be celebrated for the whole world. Many graces will be granted through this devotion. Inform Pope Pius XII as soon as possible that this is my wish: that the Hour of Grace be known and spread throughout the world. Whoever cannot go to church should pray at home at noon and will receive my graces. Whoever prays here, weeping in repentance, will find a sure path and receive protection and grace from my motherly Heart."

She then showed her Heart and said: "See this Heart, which loves mankind so much, yet is burdened by their insults! When the good and the wicked unite in a single prayer, they will obtain mercy and peace from this Heart."

That day, three extraordinary healings took place:

1. A five-year-old boy with polio who had never



*Pierina Gilli*





walked suddenly stood and walked without aids or braces.

2. A 26-year-old woman, gravely ill with tuberculosis and unable to speak, was healed.

3. A 36-year-old person, suffering from serious brain issues and chronic incontinence, was instantly and permanently healed nearby.

Also on December 8, 1947, at 1 p.m. in L'Île-Bouchard, France, the Virgin Mary appeared to three children, asking them to pray for the salvation of France.

Bishop Giacinto Tredici of Brescia initially investigated quietly. Due to the crowds, he asked Pierina in May 1949 to avoid public appearances and retire to a Franciscan convent in Giglio di Brescia as a simple servant. Her exile lasted 19 years, during which she never disobeyed Church authorities.

Though it seemed the messages and apparitions had ended, the local clergy gradually assumed care of the emerging pilgrimage. As always, time proved essential. In the following months, spiritual fruits abounded: renewed faith, rosary devotion, conversions, healings, vocations... The crowds never stopped. Pierina eventually returned.

### Second Cycle of Apparitions: 1966

In 1966, the second series of apparitions took place at Fontanelle, in the Montichiari countryside. On April 17, 1966, Pierina prayed at a grotto with a spring. The Virgin appeared and said:

"My Divine Son, all Love, sends me to make this spring miraculous, as a sign of purification and penance. Let all the sick ask my Son's forgiveness with a kiss of love before drinking from this source."

On May 13, she asked that the spring be called the "Source of Grace" and that a basin be built to welcome all her children, especially the sick.

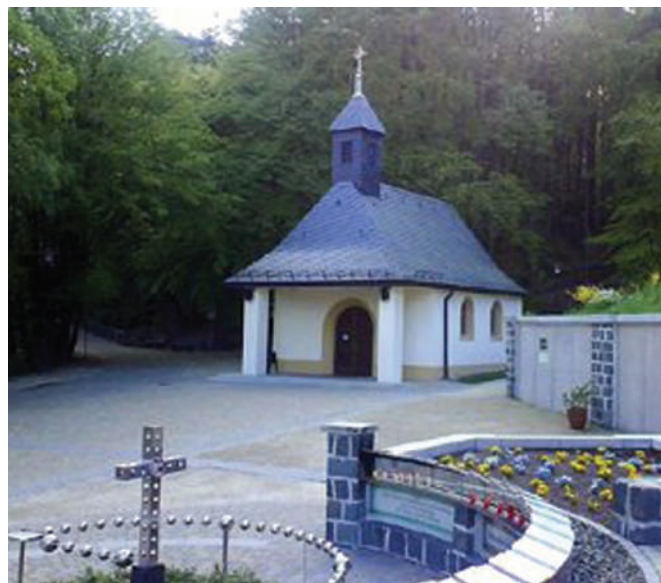
On June 9, the Feast of Corpus Domini, Pierina saw the Mystical Rose again in the wheat fields. The Virgin asked that this wheat be made into Eucharistic bread:

"How I long for this wheat to become Eucharistic Bread... through so many reparative Communion."

On August 6, Feast of the Transfiguration, Mary asked for a World Day of Reparative Communion to be celebrated each year on October 13.

Though cautious, the Bishop of Brescia eventually permitted prayer gatherings at Fontanelle and authorized the distribution of Pierina's messages.

Construction of a sanctuary began in 1966. The site was designed not as a traditional church, but as an open amphitheater, with one chapel for the Eucharist and another protecting the spring.



### Legacy and Recognition

The fame of Montichiari-Fontanelle soon spread beyond Italy. Since 1949, Bishop Zheng of Fuzhou (China) has promoted the messages as a spiritual support during his 18 years in forced labor camps. Today, there is a Rosa Mystica shrine in Fujian, China.

Since 1990, the Rosa Mystica Association of Fontanelle—under ecclesiastical oversight—has promoted this Marian devotion in some 20 countries.

Pierina's life and the messages she received have been carefully examined by the Vatican's Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. Reports unanimously affirm her psychological and physical health and the authenticity of her experiences. In 2018, a thorough theological analysis found the messages fully aligned with Catholic doctrine and exemplary in spiritual and moral content. Finally, on July 8, 2024, the Vatican officially authorized promotion of the Marian apparitions of the Madonna of Montichiari. ❖

# Money is an instrument of distribution

by Louis Even

**Why does MICHAEL always speak about money, the monetary system, a reform of the money system?**

Because most of the problems we encounter daily have to do with money — the problems of individuals, but also the problems of institutions, schools, universities, municipalities, governments, corporations and small-business enterprises.

In today's world, our life depends on obtaining products and services (goods) that are made by others, while other people depend on ours. But we cannot obtain the goods of others unless we pay for them. And to pay for them, we need money.

Thus money is a license to live. Not because we eat money when we are hungry; nor do we wear money to clothe ourselves. But without money, you have nothing except what you can produce on your own, granted you have some means of production at your disposal.

Without money, you don't go very far. Even those who are not attached to money are obliged to have some if they don't want to end up in a coffin too rapidly.

**But, some will say, money is an invention of the devil. It is a source of disorder. It is an instrument of domination. It is a tool of perdition.**

It is the misuse of money, the mismanagement of the monetary system that comes from the devil, that causes all of this, and many other horrible things.

But money, as an instrument of exchange and of distribution of products, is perhaps the most useful social invention of man; as an

instrument of distribution, since this is why it was established. Thanks to the existence of money, the farmer, who has more potatoes than his family needs, and who wants shoes for his children, does not have to find a shoemaker who has too many shoes and who needs potatoes. The same applies to the shoemaker who does not have to visit the countryside in search of a man who has too many potatoes and who would like shoes.

Each one offers, on the market, what he does not need for himself. In return, he obtains this little thing called money that takes up very little space. Then, with this money, he chooses what he wants from the market.

What he wants: This is one of money's greatest qualities. Money can either be used to choose butter or to choose a musical instrument. Everyone accepts money in return for his products or for his work, because everyone knows that this money will be accepted by everyone to buy almost anything.

In itself, money has no value, especially modern money. A simple piece of paper, on which the figure 5 is printed, allows you to buy something you want up to five dollars' worth. And if the piece of paper, not larger, not thicker, shows the number 10, it permits you to choose any products up to ten dollars' worth.

Money has practically no intrinsic value in itself. It is essentially a number that represents a value, that permits one to obtain this value in goods.

**Even so, the products have to be there!**

Of course, the products have to be there, if we are to get them.

Money is not a commodity, it is an instrument to distribute products. Products that do not exist cannot be distributed.

It would be absurd to say that we can survive using figures that represent values, when there are no products that can be obtained with these figures.

**Distribute all the money you want to a man who lives in isolation at the North Pole, or in a desert that he cannot leave: This money will be of no use to him.**



**But it is just as absurd, and even more aggravating, to run out of figures with which to obtain products that are being offered and that are needed to sustain life.**

This means that there must be a balance between the total of products marked with a certain total value, and the total figures in the hands of those who need these products.

**Is it bookkeeping?**

Exactly! On one side, there



are products, labeled with figures called prices. On the other side, there are pieces of paper, or pieces of metal, or bank accounts, with figures that represent purchasing power.

When you can put the equal sign between the two things, the goods can pass from the producer or the retailer to the consumer who needs them.

**So, is the present money system good?**

It would be good if the book-keeping was balanced, and if the figures that give a right to the products were well distributed. But the system is vitiated, because those who run it are using a distorted bookkeeping system, and also because the figures are not fairly allocated.

These accountants are neither the producers nor the governments. The figures originate in the banks, and these figures are not in relation with the production being offered, but in relation with what profits the banker thinks he might make by issuing these figures.

Instead of being a simple book-keeping system that serves, the money system has been vitiated. Its control has been privately monopolized; it has become an object of speculation, of domination, of tyranny, of daily dictatorship over our lives.

The farmer may increase his production but the accountant in charge of the money supply, the banker, does not increase the amount of cash credits and does not distribute any to those who want to buy the farmer's products.

**Does MICHAEL want to get rid of the whole system?**

Not at all. They consider the fact that money is a matter of book-keeping to be a very good thing. But they want the bookkeeping to be exact. They want money to reach its proper end, to be an instrument of exchange and distribution.

## Saying we lack money is like...

It's like a ticket collector on a train telling passengers who want to board: **"You can't get on—we've run out of tickets!"**—even though all the train seats are empty.

It's like a woman going to the post office in May to buy a stamp and being told by the clerk:



**"Sorry ma'am, we've run out of stamps—we've reached our annual quota. Please come back next year!"**

The sign (the ticket) must match reality. We should issue as many tickets as there are available seats, and as many stamps as there are items to mail.



This is easy to achieve. Since money is a claim on products, the public must have sufficient purchasing power to draw upon the products they need, as quickly as the productive system can supply these products.

Every individual must own a sufficient share of this purchasing power that is needed to buy the products, since each individual has the right to live and since it is impossible to live without money.

That is why Economic Democracy proposes:

**A. The establishment of a (national or provincial) Credit Office** that would keep a record of the total production and the total consumption (including depreciation) in the country or the province. The present Department of Statistics already gives almost all of this information; besides that, an on-going approximate estimation is quite sufficient.

**B. The total purchasing power in balance with the productive capacity, and justly distributed among the members of society:**

1. Through rewards for work, like today, distributed by industry itself.

2. Through a periodic dividend to each individual, whether he be employed or not, from birth to death, that guarantees every one will receive a share large enough to cover their basic needs. This dividend would be distributed by the Credit Office.

3. Through a reduction of prices, a discount that would be compensated to the retailer by the Credit Office.

**Where would the Credit Office get the money for the dividends and compensations to the retailers?**

Since money is a figure that permits us to obtain things from ►

► the production of the country, the Credit Office would simply issue these figures inasmuch as the productive capacity can answer these orders. It is only a matter of book-keeping.

These figures may well be simple writings of credit in an account opened for each citizen and a simple cheque drawn upon the national (or provincial) credit, sent to the retailer, on presentation of his discount vouchers.

There is no need here to go into technical details. The methods of application may vary. One of these methods is explained in Louis Even's booklet, *A Sound and Efficient Financial System*.

**Do you believe that such credits would circulate and be accepted as money?**

Of course! They are already being used and accepted today. The loans and the overdrafts granted to the manufacturers and retailers, the credits that allowed Mackenzie King, Roosevelt, Churchill and the others to organize a human slaughter that lasted six years, are not and were not gold, not even paper. They were mere figures entered into accounts to be mobilized by writing up cheques.

**But do you think a money system can be run just like that?**

Do you prefer money to lead mankind?

Moreover, you must notice that there is nothing arbitrary in the monetary bookkeeping proposed by Economic Democracy.

Production remains the business of the producers themselves. Consumption remains the business of the consumers themselves. The accountants of the Credit Office only note down each total amount. They mathematically deduce what is lacking on one side to make it equal to the other.

There are therefore no expropriations, no nationalizations, nor decrees that dictate what needs to be produced or consumed.

## Saying we lack money is like...

It's like a construction foreman telling workers: **"Stop working! We can't continue—we've run out of centimeters!"**

Money is also a unit of measurement—it allows us to compare the value of goods and services. Like any unit of measurement, it's a symbol, not the reality itself, and it must be adjusted to match reality.

Likewise, in the case of postage stamps, it is not the number of stamps available that should dictate how many letters can be mailed, but the opposite:

The number of stamps should be adjusted to match the number of letters.

You understand the absurdity in all three examples—the train, the post office, the construction site: everything is blocked due to a lack of numbers, of symbols.

Saying "we're out of money" when products are physically available is just as absurd.

This situation is only getting worse, because today, more and more production is done through automation and robotics, and less and less by human labor.

(As shown in the previous issue of MICHAEL, many advances in artificial intelligence are enabling the creation of robots that replace human workers.)



If fewer people are earning wages, and we continue to distribute purchasing power only to those employed in production, we are headed for disaster.

People will starve in the midst of an abundance of goods—produced by robots.

**This is why Economic Democracy proposes a monthly dividend to every citizen, based on our common heritage of natural wealth and technological progress—so people can have the purchasing power to buy what is produced by machines.**

We call it a dividend, because each citizen is a co-owner of the country's natural resources and of the inventions passed down by previous generations.

**And where will the money come from to fund these dividends? From the source of numbers itself—in this case, a National Credit Office, acting as the central bank of the nation, issuing all the money needed for the economy to function properly—interest-free.**

Social Credit (not China's Communist system, but the solution created by Scottish engineer C.H. Hugh Douglas and advocated by MICHAEL) is a perfect economic democracy.

Everything remains the business of free men. Freer than today,

because those consumers who have sufficient purchasing power would order much more freely the products of their choice than those whose wallets are always flat and often empty. ❖

*Louis Even*



# Economic wars lead to military wars

*Here are excerpts from a talk given by Clifford Hugh Douglas in November 1934 on the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation):*

The technical definition of war is any action taken to impose your will upon an enemy or to prevent him from imposing his will upon you. You will, I think, recognize at once that this definition of war makes the motive, rather than the method (Editor's note: tariffs or armies), the important matter to consider.

I suppose most statesmen at the present time would agree that their primary problem is to increase employment and to induce trade prosperity for their own nationals and there are few of them who would not add that the shortest way to achieve this would be to capture foreign markets. Once this, the common theory of international trade is assumed, we have I believe set our feet upon a road whose only end is war.

The use of the word capture indicates a desire to take away from the inhabitants of some other country something with which they, being unable also under present conditions to be prosperous without general employment, do not desire to part yet is endeavoring to impose your will upon an adversary and his economic war. And economic war has always ultimately resulted in military war and probably always will.

Now, so long as we are prepared to agree firstly that the removal of industrial unemployment is the primary object of statesmanship and secondly that the capture of foreign markets is the shortest path to the attainment of this objective, we have the primary economic irritant to military war always with us and moreover we have it in an accelerating rate of growth because production is expanding through the use of power machinery and undeveloped markets into which surplus can be poured are contracting.

Any village which has two grocer shops each competing for an insufficient and decreasing amount of business while continually enlarging its premises is a working demonstration of the economic causes of war, is in fact itself at war by economic methods...

If one of the village grocers captures the whole of the other grocer's business the second grocer and his employees will suffer, or if it remains true that if one nation captures the whole of another nation's trade, the population of the second nation will be unemployed and being unemployed they will suffer also.

To know therefore whether war is inevitable we have to know whether firstly there is enough real wealth—not money but goods and services—available to keep the whole population in Comfort without the whole of a population being employed, and secondly, if this is so, what it is that prevents this wealth from being distributed?

In regard to the first question, I believe there can

be no doubt as to the answer. We are all beginning to be familiar with the phrase poverty amidst plenty and it is generally admitted that the crisis of the past four or five years has been a crisis of surplus, and not a crisis of scarcity yet during that crisis poverty has been widely extended because unemployment has been widely extended so that we have experimental evidence that full employment is not necessary to produce the wealth that we require, it is only necessary to the end that we may be able to distribute wages, quite a different matter.

In regard to the second question therefore, we know that it is lack of money in the hands of individuals to enable them to buy the wealth which is available, and not the lack of available goods.

**So that it is not too much to say that the causes of War and the causes of poverty amidst plenty are the same and they may be found in the monetary and wage system and that broadly speaking the cure for poverty and the beginnings of the cure for war can be found in a simple rectification of the money system.**

This rectification must, I think, take the form of a national dividend, so that while there is real wealth to be distributed, nobody should lack for want of money with which to buy the real wealth...

**The practical effect of a national dividend would be firstly to provide a secure source of income to individuals which, though it might be desirable to augment it by work when obtainable, would nevertheless provide all the necessary purchasing power to maintain self-respect and health. By providing a steady demand upon our producing system it would go a long way towards stabilizing business conditions and would assure producers of a constant and home market for their goods.**

We already have the beginnings of such a system in our various pension schemes and unemployment insurance but the defect for the moment of these is that they are put forward in connection with schemes of taxation which go a long way towards neutralizing that beneficial effect. While this is inevitable under our present monetary system, it is far from being inevitable when the essentially public nature of the monetary system receives the recognition which is its due but is not yet granted to it by our bankers. ♦

**Clifford Hugh Douglas**

In short, we can conclude with Douglas: As long as nations need to fight to sell their surpluses to other peoples, trade wars will continue. But if everyone can afford to buy what is produced, then international trade becomes a voluntary and equitable exchange, not a struggle for economic survival. The national dividend is not a utopia, it's a necessity. It is, in fact, the only real alternative to war.

# Why do trade wars between countries happen?

## *To offset a lack of purchasing power*

by Alain Pilote

Today, everyone has heard of the tariff war initiated by former U.S. President Donald Trump against nearly every country on the planet. These tariffs have had direct consequences on thousands of jobs in the countries targeted — and the tariffs themselves change almost weekly, causing uncertainty in stock markets and investments. Even within the United States, it's American consumers who ultimately pay the price, as they are the ones who bear the cost of higher prices caused by these import duties.

Let's take an example of a Canadian-made product that used to sell for \$100 in the U.S. before the tariffs. If a 25% tariff is imposed, that same product now sells for \$125 in the U.S., and it's the American consumers who absorb that 25% increase. What Trump calls a "tariff" is essentially a tax for the consumer.

This tariff war was first imposed by President Trump on the U.S.'s neighboring countries, Canada and Mexico. Trump claimed that the U.S. was being treated unfairly by these two countries because they had trade surpluses (i.e., they exported more to the U.S. than they imported). Canada, for instance, had a trade surplus of over \$100 billion with the U.S., but Trump argued that the U.S. was "subsidizing" Canada to the tune of \$2 trillion, that the U.S. needed no Canadian products, and that without this "subsidy," Canada would cease to exist. He even suggested that Canada should become the 51st U.S. state to avoid this outcome.

In reality, Canada doesn't force the U.S. to buy anything; the U.S. buys Canadian goods because they're cheaper (such as oil) or because they lack the capacity to produce them, due to missing infrastructure or raw materials (like potash or aluminum).

The U.S. then imposed 25% tariffs on Canadian steel, aluminum, and automobiles, along with a 10% tariff on oil and potash (which American farmers critically need for fertilizer). But that was just the beginning — soon, the rest of the world would be affected by Trump's economic policies.

On April 2, during a White House conference, President Trump officially declared "Liberation Day," imposing tariffs ranging from 10% upwards on 185 countries (essentially the entire world), particularly targeting China, the European Union, and Vietnam. Days later, the U.S. imposed 145% tariffs on Chinese imports, prompting China to retaliate with 125% tariffs on certain U.S. goods. As a result, anything made in China now costs more than double in the U.S., discouraging Americans from purchasing Chinese-made goods.



*President Trump declaring "Liberation Day"*

Why did the U.S. launch this all-out trade war? The goal was to bring back factories that had relocated to other countries and, with them, the jobs that had been outsourced. Trump's message to companies was clear: "If you want to sell in the U.S. without tariffs, set up your factories here."

### Offshoring

On paper, this sounds logical — but in practice, it's nearly impossible. Since the 1980s, American companies have outsourced manufacturing to countries with lower labor costs, fewer regulations, and faster production. Initially to Mexico, then to China (even lower costs), and now to countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam, where wages are even lower. This trend led to the loss of millions of manufacturing jobs in the U.S. and increased reliance on global supply chains.

In 2024, the U.S. imported \$439 billion worth of goods from China and exported only \$144 billion — essentially making China the factory of the U.S. Another example: only 2% of the clothing worn by Americans is made in the U.S.; the rest comes from Asian countries.

Even if factories were to return to the U.S., production costs would skyrocket — primarily due to wages. In the U.S., the average hourly wage in manufacturing is around \$25. In comparison:

- Vietnam: ~\$3/hour
- Indonesia: ~\$2.50/hour
- Bangladesh: under \$2/hour

An iPhone that retails for \$1,000 could cost \$3,500 — more than triple — if made in the U.S.

The U.S. wants to bring back jobs but refuses the low wages and working conditions seen in Asia.





*President Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping are currently in the midst of a trade war.*

Relocating factories is also expensive and time-consuming. The only way to produce as cheaply as in Asia would be to use robots — but that wouldn't solve anything, since no salaries would be paid to the population.

In reality, the U.S. cannot currently do without China — especially for electronics and semiconductors. As a result, a few weeks later, President Trump was forced to backtrack and lift tariffs on Chinese-made electronics (e.g., phones, computers). And in May 2025, after negotiations in Geneva, the U.S. and China agreed to reduce tariffs: the U.S. lowered theirs from 145% to 30%, and China cut theirs from 125% to 10%.

The competition for jobs isn't limited to international borders — it happens between provinces and regions, too. Governments offer subsidies and tax incentives to attract companies to settle in one area over another. A stark example is in Africa, where European products (especially food) are often subsidized during production or export. These subsidies allow products to be sold at prices lower than local production costs, thus undermining African producers.

### **The root cause of trade wars**

International trade tensions mainly arise from countries wanting to export more than they import — in technical terms, to have a “favorable trade balance.” Every country wants to sell more abroad than it buys, in order to earn foreign currency and offset its lack of domestic purchasing power.

But it's impossible for every country to have a favorable trade balance. If some countries succeed

in exporting more than they import, there must be others doing the opposite. Since all countries aim to sell more than they buy, trade conflicts inevitably arise — and can even escalate into armed conflict.

**The main reason countries try to export more and restrict imports is a lack of inherent purchasing power within the current financial system** (see the article *A Cannot Buy A + B* in *MICHAEL*, January–February 2024 issue).

### **The solution: a dividend for all**

The ideal approach to international trade is for each country to become as self-sufficient as possible — producing the goods and services it needs, and importing only what it cannot produce domestically. As Louis Even wrote:

**“The solution to the problem requires, as a basic principle, that each country prioritize its domestic trade over its foreign trade. This can only happen if every country asserts its sovereignty over its own monetary policy, so that all local production is consumed locally to meet local needs. A monetary policy that issues domestic purchasing power in relation to domestic production would ensure economic security for the population, and would eliminate the fierce competition for markets — both foreign and domestic.”**

**This will only be possible by breaking free from the grip of international bankers. That day — and only that day — will mark the true “Liberation Day” for every nation, including the United States. ❖**

*Alain Pilote*

# Maurice Allais, Nobel Prize in economics

**“The current ex nihilo money creation by the banking system is identical to counterfeiting.”**

Maurice Allais (born in Paris on May 31, 1911 – died October 9, 2010, in Saint-Cloud, nearly reaching 100 years old) was a French economist who received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1988. He was notable for his denunciation of globalization, and especially of the creation of money ex nihilo (out of nothing) by commercial banks. He emphasized that the right to create money should belong solely to the nation. Because of this stance, despite his Nobel Prize, mainstream media rarely invited him to speak on current issues.



*Maurice Allais*

In his later years, Allais connected with Swiss social credit advocates, expressing strong support for Douglas's theory of social credit and the idea of a monthly dividend for every citizen. Below are excerpts from two of his writings, concerning free trade, trade wars, and money creation by commercial banks.

## **Excerpts from Allais's political testament**

*Published December 5, 2009, in the French newspaper Marianne, under the form of a "Letter to the French People":*

**"Deregulating everything, as we have just seen, leads to the worst disorders. One of the many truths that remain unspoken is the real foundation of the current crisis: the organization of world trade, which must be profoundly reformed—even before we tackle the also necessary reform of the banking system."**

**"The world's major leaders once again display their ignorance of economics, confusing two kinds of protectionism: some are harmful, while others are entirely justified. Harmful protectionism occurs between countries with comparable wages and is generally not desirable."**

**"However, protectionism between countries with vastly different standards of living is not only justified—it is absolutely necessary. This is especially true regarding China, where it was madness to eliminate tariff protections."**

**"The same applies to nearby countries, even within Europe. Just consider how to compete against countries with manufacturing costs five or ten times**

lower—if not more—and you'll see that fair competition is impossible in most cases. Especially against Indian or Chinese competitors, who, in addition to their low wages, are highly competent and driven."

**"We must restore legitimate protection. For over a decade, I've proposed forming more homogeneous regional blocs, uniting countries with similar income levels and social standards. These 'regional organizations' would be allowed to reasonably protect themselves from cost disparities that unfairly benefit certain competing nations, while ensuring genuine internal competition among their members."**

## **A reasoned, justified protectionism**

**"My proposed system would not harm developing countries. Currently, major corporations exploit their low costs but would abandon them if wages rose too much. These countries would benefit from adopting my model, forming regional unions with neighbors of similar living standards. This would allow them to develop robust domestic markets—large enough to support their production, yet balanced enough so that internal competition isn't based solely on keeping wages low."**

**"This applies to several Eastern European nations hastily integrated into the EU, as well as to countries in Africa and Latin America."**

**"Without such protection, high-income countries face the destruction of their industries—especially in Western Europe. Indeed, with the G20's doctrinaire view, all French industry will eventually relocate abroad."**

**"Globalization benefits only a few privileged groups. But their interests are not those of humanity as a whole. A rushed, chaotic globalization can only bring instability, unemployment, injustice, disorder, and misery everywhere. It will ultimately prove detrimental to all nations."**

**"The globalist economy, falsely portrayed as a cure-all, recognizes only one criterion: money. It honors only one god: money. Stripped of ethical considerations, it is doomed to self-destruction."**

## **Maurice Allais on Money Creation**

The following quotes are taken from his book *The World Crisis Today: For Deep Reforms of Financial and Monetary Institutions* (1999):

**"In essence, the current ex nihilo money creation by the banking system is identical—I do not hesitate**



***How can a country in Europe or North America compete with nations like China, Bangladesh, or other Asian countries where textile industry wages are not \$38 per hour but \$38 per month—with working conditions that amount to modern-day slavery?***

*Photos on the right: a factory in China and female workers in Myanmar.*



to say it to make things absolutely clear—to the creation of money by counterfeiters, which is rightly condemned by law. In practical terms, the results are the same. The only difference lies in who benefits.” (p. 110)

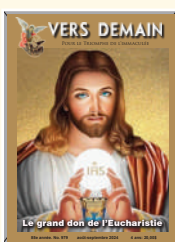
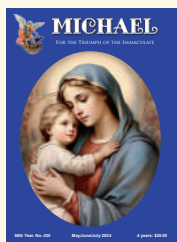
“What I advocate is a system in which money creation belongs solely to an independent Central Bank—free from the influence of the state and political parties—and where the revenues from money creation go entirely to the state.” (p. 185)

“The global economy is now built on massive pyramids of debt, propped up by one another in a fragile equilibrium. Never before has there been such an accumulation of promises to pay. Never before has it been harder to meet them. Never before has such potential instability loomed, threatening a general collapse.”

“At the core of every economic difficulty is, in one form or another, the harmful role of the current credit system and the rampant speculation it allows. Unless we fundamentally reform the institutional framework in which it operates, we will continue to face the same major issues in various forms. All major crises of the 19th and 20th centuries stemmed from excessive development of promises to pay and their monetization.”

**“What’s particularly alarming is the complete lack of questioning of the very foundation of the current credit system—namely, money creation ex nihilo by banks and the widespread practice of funding long-term loans with short-term deposits.”**

“Frankly, without exaggeration, today’s system of money creation through credit is the ‘cancer’ that is gradually destroying private-market economies.” ♦



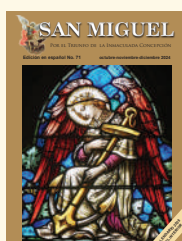
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# Why consecrate ourselves to Mary

On Good Friday, when Jesus was crucified, His Mother, the Virgin Mary and St. John, the beloved disciple, stood at the foot of the Cross. Moments before dying, Jesus said to his mother: "Woman, behold your son." Then he said to the disciple: "Behold your Mother." (John 19:27.) Since that time, all Christians are children of Mary, who desires nothing but to lead us all to her Son Jesus. The last chapter of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* on the Church, from the Second Vatican Council, is devoted to Mary's special role of intercession.

To consecrate oneself to Mary is to choose, after the example of many saints of the Church, to belong to her in a special way to follow Jesus with her and through her. We need only to think of the recent examples of Pope John Paul II and our current Pope Leo XIV. This approach is certainly not essential to salvation, since Christ crucified is our only Redeemer. However, this approach, which is recommended by the Church, is "an easy way to obtain from God the grace to become a saint," as stated by St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, in his *Treatise on True Devotion to Mary*.

It is God's Will that all Christians consecrate themselves to Mary. In her Apparitions at Fatima in Portugal in 1917, the Virgin Mary said to the three young seers, "You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart."

**The word "consecrate" means "to sanctify oneself with." So to consecrate oneself to Jesus through Mary, is to sanctify oneself with Mary. In a conference, Most Rev. Jean Ntagwarara, Bishop of Bubanza, Burundi, explained the meaning of the consecration to Mary:**

"What does consecration mean? To be consecrated is to be set apart for God, and God alone. It means to give oneself freely for his glory.

"Jesus is the first consecrated person: he consecrated himself to his Father by coming into the world: 'Behold, I come to do your will.' (Hebrews 10:9.) His consecration is animated by divine love, perfect love. And because it is perfect, it is the only act definitively approved by God.

**"All other acts of consecration refer to Jesus: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' (John 14:6.) 'And I consecrate myself for them, so that they also may be consecrated in truth.' (John 17:19.) The baptized Christian is consecrated to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.**

"The baptismal consecration is the foundation of all our other consecrations: The Profession of Faith, the consecration in an association of lay faithful, the prayer of consecration according to Saint Louis Marie



*As Jesus wanted to go through Mary to come to us, we must go through Mary to come to Jesus. — Saint Louis Marie de Montfort*

de Montfort, etc., all this is not an addition but simply a deepening, a development, an explanation of the baptismal consecration.

"You can consecrate yourself through someone on two conditions: first, that it is a consecration to God, and secondly, that the intermediary is already consecrated to God totally and permanently. This person is a model and an aid.

"Consecration to Mary can have no other purpose than being united with Jesus. We can therefore consecrate ourselves to God through Mary, since Mary is consecrated to God: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38.) **To consecrate oneself to God through Mary is also to recognize the mission that Mary received at Calvary, when Jesus said to his mother: 'Woman, behold your son'. Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother.'** (Jn 19:26-27.)

"To consecrate oneself to God through Mary is also to imitate Jesus who came and gave himself to Mary in the Incarnation. Jesus is the first one who consecrated himself to Mary. What can we do better than imitate Jesus!"



## Saint Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort

The text that best explains why we should consecrate ourselves to Mary is the *Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, written in 1712 by St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort (1673-1716), a great Marian apostle of Brittany, France, declared a saint by Pope Pius XII in 1947. According to Montfort, it is in the interest of every Christian to completely surrender to the love of the Mother of God, who constantly intercedes with Jesus and the Father on behalf of all men, and as She is immaculate, conceived without sin, God can only accept the requests that come from Mary. The heart of the consecration to Mary according to Louis-Marie de Montfort's formula is summarized in these words:

**"This day, with the whole court of heaven as witness, I choose you, Mary, as my Mother and Queen. I surrender and consecrate myself to you, body and soul, with all that I possess, both spiritual and material, even including the spiritual value of all my actions, past, present, and to come. I give you the full right to dispose of me and all that belongs to me, without any reservations, in whatever way you please, for the greater glory of God in time and throughout eternity."**

One can read, in paragraphs 120 and 123 of Montfort's book:

**As all perfection consists in our being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus, it naturally follows that the most perfect of all devotions is that which conforms, unites, and consecrates us most completely to Jesus. Now of all God's creatures Mary is the most conformed to Jesus. It therefore follows that, of all devotions, devotion to her makes for the most effective consecration and conformity to him. The more one is consecrated to Mary, the more one is consecrated to Jesus. That is why perfect consecration to Jesus is but a perfect and complete consecration of oneself to the Blessed Virgin, which is the devotion I teach; or in other words, it is the perfect renewal of the vows and promises of holy Baptism. This devotion consists in giving oneself entirely to Mary in order to belong entirely to Jesus through her.**

It follows then that by this devotion we give to Jesus all we can possibly give him, and in the most perfect manner, that is, through Mary's hands...

### The Immaculate Heart of Mary

Jacinta Marto, one of the three children who received messages from the Virgin Mary at Fatima, Portugal, in 1917, died at the age of 9 on February 20, 1920, and was declared saint by Pope Francis in Fatima on May 13, 2017. Not long before her death, she said the following to her cousin Lucia, who was also

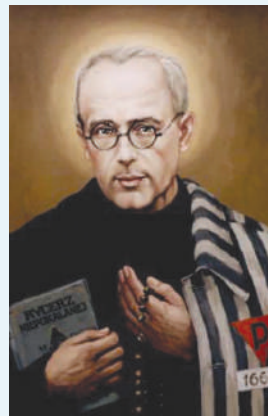


*St. Jacinta Marto*

present during the Apparitions of Mary:

"Soon I shall go to Heaven. You are to stay here to reveal that the Lord wants to establish throughout the world the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. When you start to reveal this, don't hesitate. Tell everyone that Our Lord grants us all graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary; that all must make their petitions to Her; that the Sacred Heart of Jesus desires that the Immaculate Heart of Mary be venerated at the same time. Tell them that they should all ask for peace from the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as God has placed it in Her hands. Oh, if I could only put in the heart of everyone in the world the fire that is burning in me and makes me love so much the Heart of Mary!"

### Mary requires our cooperation



Saint Maximilian Kolbe, the Franciscan Polish priest who died as a martyr and was a great devotee to Mary, wrote:

"Modern times are dominated by Satan and will be more so in the future. The conflict with Hell cannot be engaged by men, even the most clever. The Immaculate alone has from God the promise of victory over Satan.

"However, assumed into Heaven, the Mother of God now requires our cooperation. She seeks souls who will consecrate themselves entirely to her, who will become in her hands effective instruments for the defeat of Satan and the spreading of God's kingdom upon earth." ❖

*Alain Pilote*

## Monthly meetings

**House of the Immaculate, Rougemont**

**June 22, July 27**

**9:30: Mass at Rougemont's parish church**

**11:00 a.m.: Opening and lectures  
at the House of the Immaculate**

**Study session: August 27-29**

**Annual Congress: Aug. 30-31, Sept. 1**

# ***“She brought me back from Siberia”***

## **The miraculous liberation of a prisoner from the Soviet gulag a**

János had been languishing for years in a camp deep in Siberia.

Without the memory of his beloved Ilona Hélène, he would have lost hope long ago. It was thanks to her that he held on to a flicker of hope and resumed the childhood prayers he had once known. They gave him strength. His faith in God and his trust in “the great Lady of the Magyars” were rewarded in a wondrous way. Here is how.

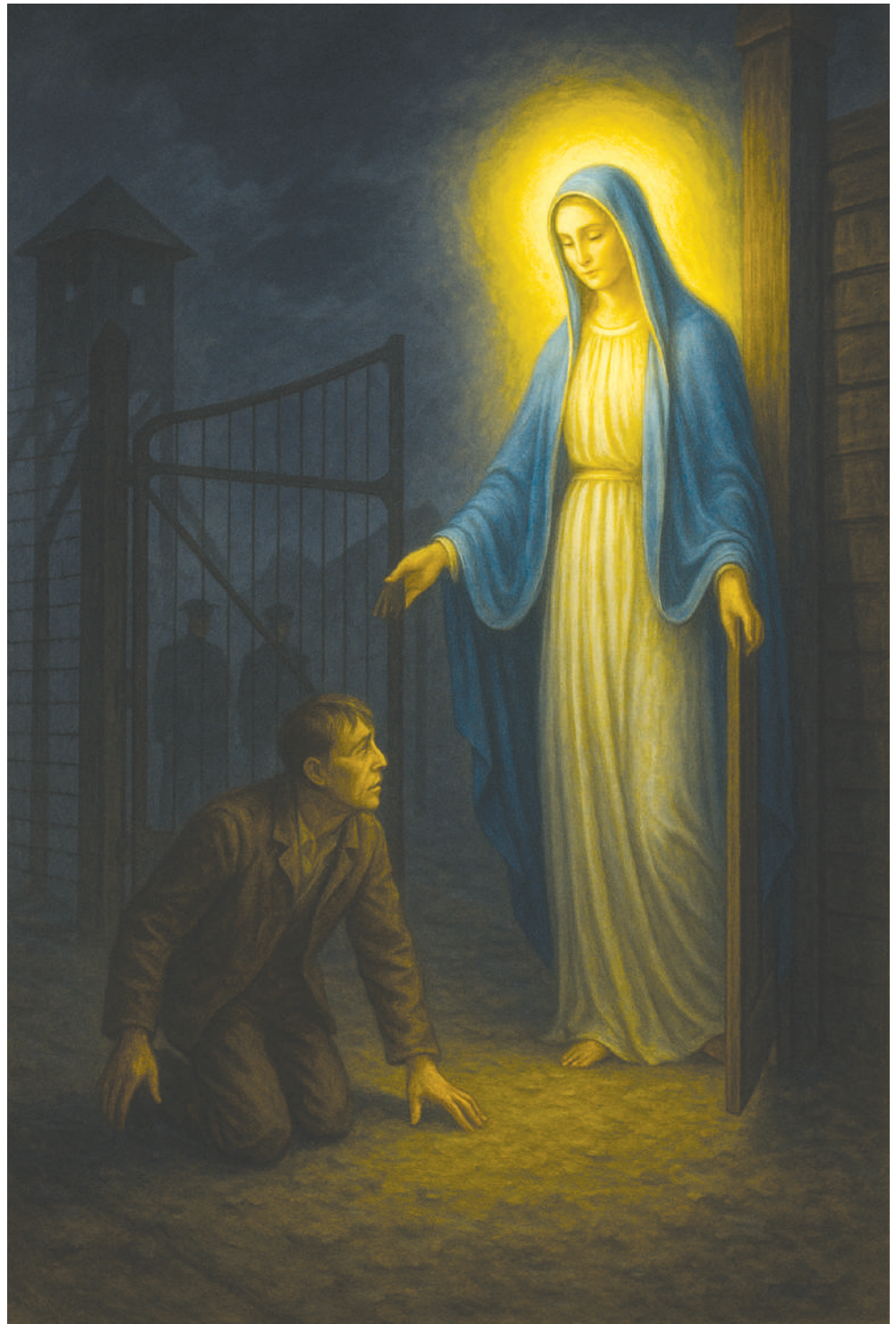
**One summer night in 1958, János felt someone tugging at his arm and heard a voice say, “Get up, put on your clothes.”**

“What did you say?” he asked.

“Get up,” the voice repeated, “get dressed. Put on your soldier’s boots.”

János obeyed... No one else in the barracks stirred. “Come,” said the voice, and he felt himself being pulled by the arm. The door creaked open. A guard stood ten paces away, rifle slung across his shoulder. He saw nothing, heard nothing... János and his mysterious guide ran toward the camp’s main gate. Spotlights swept across the camp. János was suddenly in full light—instinctively, he froze. But his guide said calmly, “Come, don’t be afraid.”

And then János saw her for the first time, bathed in the light of the searchlights—the figure leading him out of the camp: a tall Lady wearing a dark blue mantle, her face of striking and radiant whiteness.



**Suddenly, the searchlights went out, and the two guards at the entrance saw nothing. The Lady opened the large gate effortlessly. János was nearly paralyzed with fear. “Come quickly,” she said.**



She shut the gate behind them unhurriedly, as if it were broad daylight.

They moved quickly through the area toward the nearest train station. Twice they passed patrols—none of whom noticed anything unusual.

When they arrived at the station, the Lady said, "In two minutes, a freight train will arrive. Among the cars, there will be a compartment for passengers. You will board it. You don't need a ticket or identification."

Then she handed him a package, saying, "You'll need this for the journey." She added, "Everything will go well in Budapest, too."

The train arrived. As János looked in its direction, the Lady disappeared—to his great regret, as he had so wanted to thank her and say good-bye. The train stopped. János got on. There were few passengers, all asleep. A conductor came by, paused in front of János, but said nothing. János wondered if he was dreaming. Everything seemed surreal. Each time a conductor entered the compartment, János felt as if he would die of fear—but each time, it was as if he were invisible.

Gradually, János began to relax.

**He opened the package the Lady had given him: bread, cheese, meat...** There was water available in the compartment. The journey lasted four days and four nights. Finally, he reached the Hungarian border.

He had to change trains. No trouble on board, at the station, or in the streets of Budapest. No one seemed to pay him any attention—which was odd, given his prisoner's garb and heavy iron-soled boots that should have drawn notice.

Evening fell as János arrived in front of his house. Would Ilona still be there?

He rang the bell. A stranger opened the door.

"Does Madame Ilona Balogh still live here?" he asked.

"Yes, but in the attic. She'll be home in about half an hour."

Noticing the stranger's unusual appearance, she dared to ask: "Do you have any news of Mr. János Balogh? You know, he's been missing for over twelve years. But his wife Ilona still hopes he'll come back one day. Almost every day she goes to Máriamakk to pray for his return. Of course, she went there again today."

János said nothing. He didn't reveal who he was. He remained outside on the street.

After half an hour, Ilona returned. He recognized her immediately. She, composed and modest, was about to go inside...



*The church of Mária Makk*

**"Ilona!" he cried.**

**"János, oh János! I knew you would come back..."**

The next day, they went to Máriamakk to thank the Virgin, Helper of Prisoners. János had never been there before.

**When he saw the statue of the Madonna, he exclaimed: "It's her! Yes, I recognize her—it's she who brought me back from Siberia."**

To complete the story and show the extent of Mary's care for her prisoner, let us add one more detail. A few days later, János went to the police station to regularize his situation.

"Your papers?"

"I don't have any. I've just come from Russia."

The officer assumed he was a Russian agent sent to inspect operations in Hungary. He issued János identity documents on the spot and, unprompted, even referred him to a contractor who could offer him work.

Moreover, no one ever asked how he had managed to return from Siberia.

Yes, truly, as the Lady had told him: "Everything will go well in Budapest." ♦

*Excerpt from the magazine Mater Nostra, 17 rue des Fossés des Tanneurs, Strasbourg. Cited by Brother Albert Pflegerdans in Recueil Marial, 1980.*







# Pier Giorgio Frassati, a young saint who reached the heights of holiness *In*

*In this Jubilee Year dedicated to hope, two inspiring young people are set to be canonized: Carlos Acutis, tech enthusiast who died of leukemia at age 15 in 2006, and Pier Giorgio Frassati, passionate mountaineer who served the poor and died of polio at age 24 in 1925.*

*Carlo Acutis's canonization, originally scheduled for April 27, 2025, during the Jubilee for Adolescents in Rome, has been postponed due to the death of Pope Francis. The next date will be decided by Pope Leo XIV. Pier Giorgio Frassati's canonization is expected on August 3, 2025, during the Jubilee for Youth. At his beatification in 1990, Pope St. John Paul II said:*

***"Faith and charity, the true driving forces of his life, made him active in all his surroundings—family, school, university, and society. They transformed him into a joyful apostle of Christ, passionate about His message and His love. He died young, at the end of a short life but one extraordinarily rich in spiritual fruit."***

*A miracle attributed to Pier Giorgio's intercession occurred in 2017: Father Juan Gutierrez, then a seminarian in Los Angeles, was miraculously healed of a torn Achilles tendon.*

*Pier Giorgio loved climbing mountains. By his life, he reached the summits of holiness. Like him, let us aim ever higher—let us aim for Heaven. We now share with you the inspiring life of this new saint, as published in the January, 1998 spiritual letter from St. Joseph de Clairval Abbey ([www.clairval.com](http://www.clairval.com)).*

**by Dom Antoine Marie, O.S.B.**

It was Monday, July 6, 1925, in Turin, Italy. A large, pensive crowd was waiting in front of the entrance to the Crocetta Church. Crowded together were burghers and workers, ladies of the aristocracy and common women, university students and old men from the Hospice. Suddenly, there was a commotion. Then a great silence fell. A group of eight stocky, young men carrying a massive casket appeared on the steps of the church. The emotional strain could be read on the faces of the pallbearers. Weren't the mortal remains that they were carrying those of a wonderful friend? Nevertheless, in the depths of their gaze shone a flame of pride, as if their robust shoulders were triumphantly carrying the reliquary of a saint.

*À gauche, saint Pier Giorgio Frassati*



*The funeral of Pier Giorgio Frassati*

Well, just who was being carried in this way? On April 13, 1980, Pope John Paul II said of him: "All that it takes is a glance, however brief, at the life of Pier-Giorgio Frassati, who passed away at the age of barely twenty-four, to understand how he knew to answer Jesus Christ: It was the answer of a 'modern' youth, open to cultural problems, to sports (he was a worthy alpinist!), to social questions, to the true values of life, and at the same time of a man who believed deeply, nourished by the Gospel message, with a solid and coherent character, passionate in the service of his brothers and burning with a bold charity which led him, by way of an order of absolute priority, in the midst of the poor and the sick Christianity is joy. Pier-Giorgio was of a fascinating joy, a joy which overcame so many difficulties in his life, because youth is always a time of testing one's strength."

## **One for me, one for you**

Pier-Giorgio Frassati, who would be called "the son of the Feast," was born in Turin on Holy Saturday evening, April 6, 1901. Coming from a well-off family of the Piedmontese bourgeoisie (for many years his father was ambassador in Berlin), the child inherited the good and bad qualities of his fellow countrymen. Energetic, willing, even stubborn and not terribly communicative, they are also thrifty, although not put off by family obligations, positive and realistic, with a somewhat adventurous spirit.

Pier-Giorgio's innate righteousness made him an enemy of lies, and he was slavishly loyal to his



*Pier Giorgio with his father Alfredo*

▶ given word. No force on earth, not even a wolf's hunger, could make him touch a plate of food or a snack which was within an arm's length when his mother had formally forbidden him to take anything. A deep sense of compassion compelled him to alleviate any suffering. He instantly took the side of the weak. Once, when he was on his way to nursery school with his grandfather, at lunch time, Pier-Giorgio was fascinated by the long marble tables where places for soup bowls were hollowed out. Suddenly he glimpsed a child at the back of the room who had been separated out because of a skin disease. He went up to him, passing out "a spoon for me, a spoon for you," and the look of sadness and loneliness on the little boy's face disappeared.

One day, at home, when he was only five years old, his father sent away a poor drunkard from the front door of the house, because his breath smelled of alcohol. Pier-Giorgio went sobbing to his mother: "Mommy, there was a poor hungry man and Papa didn't give him anything to eat." His mother, who believed she heard an echo of the Gospel in this complaint, answered: "Run outside, make him come in and we will give him something to eat."

### **A strong box**

But the beauty of such a temperament is not without its darker aspects. His vigorous physique and energetic personality were often exteriorized by violent reactions, above all when there were differences with his sister Luciana, who was 17 months younger than him. "Stubborn" is the term most often hung on him by the family. When he did not wish to speak, he closed up his mouth like a strong box to which he alone possessed the key.

The tough education he received at home helped

him correct these faults. Possessing a somewhat slow, but energetic, intelligence, he knew how to expand and refine himself, until he became little by little so supple and quick that he got over all his difficulties



*With his parents and sister Luciana (left)*

in his high school studies, and also later at the Engineering School at Turin. Thus, study became for him the first duty before which all other cares had to yield. This was a difficult battle for his effervescent temperament. What a torture to devote hours on end studying austere texts, when his passion for the mountains would have quickly taken him on a picturesque excursion! But difficulties were for him the occasion of moral uplifting. Facing a test, far from giving up, he gathered up his energy and put himself to the task with courage.

But it was above all in faith and prayer that he found his strength. From earliest childhood, he faithfully recited his morning and evening prayers while kneeling. He quickly learned the Rosary. Later he could be seen everywhere reciting the decades, in the train, at the side of a sick person, while taking a walk, in town and in the mountains. He loved to converse in this way affectionately with his Mother in Heaven.

The direct relationship that he established with God endowed him with exceptional maturity. He also struck others by his unique manner, simple and resolute, of living out his Catholicism. Nothing showy, a tranquil security, a pride without ostentation, a kind intransigence. In a letter to an intimate friend, he wrote:

**"How unfortunate are those who live without the faith! To live without the faith, without this heritage to defend, without this truth to uphold by a struggle at every instant, is no longer to live but to waste one's life! For us, it is not permitted to 'just manage'; to live is our duty! A truce then with all melancholy! Let's lift up our hearts and go forward, always, for the triumph of Christ in the world!"**

For Catholic students, who had problems because they believed themselves to be lesser beings



and condemned to live on the fringe of modern society, he showed, less by his arguments than by his life, that there was nothing to that; he walked surefootedly, sure of his way. In a selfish and bitter world, he overflowed with joy and generosity. Indeed, the true happiness of earthly life consists in finding the sanctity to which we are all called. That is where we find the answer to the world's unceasing call: "Take advantage of life while you are young!"

### A correct joke

The virtue of purity illuminated the seductive physical features of Pier-Giorgio in a marvelous light. It was known that he did not kid around with love. So when his friends wanted to play a joke on some female students, they came to ask his opinion about whether the joke was morally correct. Frequently his mere presence was enough to prevent indecent or inappropriate actions. Sometimes, his friends teased him concerning his sternness about certain improprieties of modern art. He smiled but didn't change his conduct one iota. He had a permanent card to gain entry to all the museums and theaters in town. In museums, he only looked at decent works which were in good taste; as for the theater and the cinema, he would go to a show only after finding out about its moral qualities.

He was not ignorant of the realities of life and appropriate moods of nature deeply moved him. In order to keep his purity, it took many hours of fierce and laborious struggle, which nobody knew about, except for a few close friends. Here is what one of them wrote: "These struggles, which were imprinted upon the physical character of our friend, lasted quite a while and required of him an energy of exceptional quality. He scrupulously controlled his actions in order to multiply his austerities and avoid occasions which could have shaken his resolutions. The words of Saint Paul fitted him quite well: I have fought the good fight. Those of us who received the grace to live close to him, during such a brief lifetime, and yet so full of light, we know with certainty that virtue and sanctity and meeting God are the fruits of a difficult and ceaseless combat."

During his time at the University, his attention



*Pier Giorgio in 1925*

**"To live as a Christian is a continuous renunciation, continuous sacrifice which however does not weigh one down when we think that these few years passed in suffering count for little with regard to eternity... It is necessary to strongly adhere to the faith. Without it, what is our entire life worth? Nothing. We will have lived uselessly."**

was attracted to a girl who had been sorely tested by recent difficulties. Her candor, her exquisite goodness, her lively faith, enlightened and active, impressed him. Little by little a sentiment welled up in him that could indeed have led to marriage. As this affection grew in him, he was overtaken by apprehension: Would his parents ever accept this union? It seemed to him that approaching his family would only end in a failure and he was not mistaken. Thus, renouncing the undertaking and, above all, a very deep natural affection, Pier-Giorgio gave priority to the love of his parents. He wished to avoid introducing a new source of tension in the household, which was already seriously threatened by a lack of understanding. Heroic virtue, fruit of a love that would "lay down his life" for those whom he loved. He said to his sister: "I will sacrifice myself, even if that must be the sacrifice of my entire life on earth."

### "In this bar"

The putting aside of oneself shown by Pier-Giorgio also appeared in his social engagements. As Pope John Paul II put it, at his beatification on May 20, 1990: for him **"faith and the events of daily**

**life come together harmoniously, so much so that adherence to the Gospel is translated into loving attention towards the poor and the needy His lay Christian vocation was realized through multiple political and societal engagements, in a society in total flux, which was**

**indifferent and even hostile to the Church."**

Starting at the age of 17, he enrolled in the Conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul and it is here above all that he learned supernatural compassion. He loved to visit the poor in order to relieve their miseries by giving them money and clothing that he kept for them at his home. Being resourceful, he knew how to economize; he collected and sold stamps and tramway tickets, and went door to door asking for donations to help the poor.

One day, a friend ran into him on the streets of Turin and invited him to take some refreshment. "If we went and took it in that bar," Pier-Giorgio said cleverly while he pointed out the Church of Saint Dominic. How could anyone resist that smile? After

► a few moments of reflection in the church, as they were leaving, young Frassati, seeing a poor-box, whispered in a low voice: "And the refreshment, do we get that here?" The friend understood and put in a coin, smiling himself. "And I'll meet that," added Pier-Giorgio, slipping in his own donation.

God alone knows all of the sacrifices that the young student imposed upon himself. Even in the heat of summer he stayed in Turin to continue helping the poor, when he could have worked in the coolness of the countryside. Indeed, at this time of year everyone left town, and nobody cared to stay around to visit the unfortunate.

### The greatest social commandment

In addition, his apostolic zeal pushed him to strive to "infuse the Christian spirit into the mentality and behavior, laws and structures of the community" (Vatican II, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, 13). In a very tense political and social situation, Pier-Giorgio felt the need to go to meet the people's needs and he participated in several social or political groups, within which he was not afraid to show that he was a convinced Catholic. He believed it necessary to work for needful reforms on the behalf of workers so that misery would disappear, and to offer an acceptable level of life to all. He understood that "the acknowledged priority of the conversion of heart in no way eliminates but on the contrary imposes the obligation of bringing the appropriate remedies to institutions and living conditions when they are an inducement to sin, so that they conform to the norms of justice and advance the good rather than hinder it (Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC, 1888).

It was a difficult task, and Pier-Giorgio realized it. He wrote: "Everywhere in the world there are evil people who are Christian in name only, and not in spirit. That is why I believe it will be necessary to wait a long time before knowing true peace. Nevertheless, our faith teaches us that we must not lose hope of seeing this peace one day. Modern society is sinking in the pain of human passion far from any ideal of love and peace."

For him, there was no solution to social questions outside of the Gospel. It really depends on grace in order to "discern the often narrow path between the

cowardice which gives in to evil, and the violence which under the illusion of fighting evil only makes it worse. This is the path of charity, that is, of the love of God and of neighbor. Charity is the greatest social commandment. It respects others and their rights. It requires the practice of justice, and it alone makes us capable of it. Charity inspires a life of self-giving: Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it" (Lk 17: 33 – CCC, 1889).

### "It's not a novel"

One day he surprised a friend about to start reading a book containing doubtful doctrine. He said, "This book is not suitable for you; do me the kindness of not continuing to read it. Even today I will bring you a better one." In fact, that same afternoon he offered him a *Life of Jesus Christ*: "It's not exactly a novel," he said, "but the ideas in it are magnificent: it will surely do you good."

He thus put into practice the recommendation of Pope Saint Pius X: "Catholic doctrine teaches us that the first duty of charity is not in the theoretical and practical indifference to error or vice when we see our brothers plunging into it, but in the zeal for their intellectual and moral betterment no less than for their material well-being" (Letter on Sillon, August



*Pier Giorgio Frassati loved mountain excursions*

25, 1910).

Even though he was full of life, Pier-Giorgio did not lose sight of eternity. He wrote: **"To live as a Christian is a continuous renunciation, continuous sacrifice which however does not weigh one down when we think that these few years passed in suffering count for little with regard to eternity, where joy will be without limit and without end and where we will enjoy a peace that is impossible to imagine. It is necessary to strongly adhere to the faith. Without it, what is our entire life worth? Nothing. We will have lived uselessly."**

He enjoyed thinking frequently about death, which he awaited as the meeting with Jesus Christ. When he had to go to the mountains, he made sure he was ready for everything. He often said: "It is always necessary to have your conscience at peace before leaving, because you never know." The death of a friend suggested these lines to him: **"How does one prepare for the great trip? And when? Since no one**



knows the hour at which death will come for him, it is quite prudent to prepare every morning to die that day."

After the passing away of another friend, he wrote, "Actually, he has reached the true goal of life: we should not mourn his loss, but we should envy him." He often astonished his close friends with this reflection: "I believe that the day of my death will be the most beautiful day of my life."

### In four days

On Tuesday, June 30, 1925, he went boating on the Po River with two friends. It was a delightful outing, but after a while Pier-Giorgio complained of a sharp pain in his back muscles. Upon returning home, he had a severe headache. The next day, fever set in. Nobody paid any attention, since on the same day his maternal grandmother went to God. The day after, a doctor examined him. Suddenly he became quite serious. He asked Pier-Giorgio, who was lying on his back, to get up. "I can't!" he answered. His reflexes did not work, he couldn't feel the pinpricks in his legs

Three eminent physicians were brought in by the family to examine the patient, and they all confirmed the fatal diagnosis: acute infectious poliomyelitis. Exhausted with fatigue, Pier-Giorgio asked for a shot of morphine so that he could sleep. But the doctor thought that would be imprudent. His mother told him: "Offer up your suffering to God for your sins, if you have any, and if not, for those of your mother and your father." He agreed by nodding his head.

On July 4, about three o'clock in the morning, a very serious crisis occurred. A priest came to adminis-

ter the last rites to him. The paralysis had reached the respiratory organs little by little. At four o'clock in the afternoon, the final moments began. There was continuous prayer around the bed. The priest recited the prayers for the dying. Mrs. Frassati held her son in her arms, helping him to die at the names of Jesus, Mary Joseph With the words: "May I breathe forth my soul in peace with you," he breathed his last. It was about seven o'clock in the evening. An unearthly atmosphere reigned over the bedroom where death had just passed. Everyone, on their knees, overwhelmed with grief, watched the eyes of the dead young man, as if to follow his very pure soul to its meeting with God. True life had started for him!



*The mortal remains of Pier Giorgio*

### Interior strength

Jesus promised: He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day (Jn 6: 55). Daily Mass and Holy Communion gave Pier-Giorgio the necessary wherewithal to confront all the difficulties of life. He wrote to some children: "Eat this Bread of Angels and there you will find strength for the interior struggles, the combat against

the passions and trials, because Jesus Christ has promised eternal life and the grace necessary to obtain it to those who receive the Holy Eucharist. When you are completely consumed by this Eucharistic fire, then you will be able, in good conscience, to thank God that he called you to take part in His struggle and you will know a peace the fortunate ones of this earth have never known. Because true happiness, my young friends, is not found in the pleasures of this world, nor in earthly things, but in the peace of conscience: it is only given to those who have a pure heart and mind."

Such is the grace we ask on your behalf from the Blessed Virgin, Saint Joseph and Blessed Pier-Giorgio Frassati. ❖

### Dom Antoine Marie, O.S.B.

*Reprinted with permission from the Abbey of Clairval, France, which every month publishes a spiritual newsletter on the life of a saint. Their postal address is Dom Antoine Marie, Abbe, Abbaye Saint-Joseph de Clairval 21150 Flavigny sur Ozerain, France. The website is <http://www.clairval.com>*

*Left: the tomb of the new saint in Turin's cathedral*



# Economic Democracy would end the squandering of resources and promote the dignity of the human person

by Alain Pilote

One of the late Pope Francis' most striking documents remains his encyclical letter *Laudato Si*, published in June 2015, to raise awareness about the urgency for an "integral ecology" that would care for both human beings as well as nature – both of which are now being sacrificed on Mammon's altar; the altar of profit at all costs regardless of the consequences.

## Planned obsolescence

Pope Francis addressed a financial system that **"tends to promote extreme consumerism in an effort to sell its products", and of people who "can easily get caught up in a whirlwind of needless buying and spending"** (n. 203).

"Planned obsolescence": is a term used to describe the process whereby goods are designed and manufactured to last as short a time as possible. This forces consumers to replace goods frequently. Marketing campaigns encourage frivolous consumption. The public are urged to replace working goods with their newer incarnations in order to stay on the cutting edge of fashion and social approval.

Inkjet printers are a good example. When the ink cartridge is empty it is more cost-effective to purchase a new printer than to simply replace the cartridge. The same reasoning applies to most electronic devices. Stores will not make repairs or else it is cheaper to buy a newer model even when a replacement part could suffice.

Studying the problem one can see that it is the rules of the present financial system that cause such a useless degradation of the earth's resources – especially the rule that ties the distribution of purchasing power to employment. This leads to situations such as when pro-environmental groups advocate that a particular industrial sector stop polluting the environment but government replies that changes would not be possible. Government argues that environmental responsibility could cost the sector too much money and might force it to close its doors. Sadly, it is preferable to keep those precious jobs even if at the expense of a healthy environment.

**The environment is something real that is sacrificed to money, a symbol. Jobs are created so that people will be employed at the expense of our planet's survival. Worry not that people be poisoned**

**just as long as it is profitable!**

Pope Francis wrote: **"The principle of the maximization of profits, frequently isolated from other considerations, reflects a misunderstanding of the very concept of the economy. As long as production is increased, little concern is given to whether it is at the cost of future resources or the health of the environment"** (n. 195).

**There is an old Cree saying that goes like this: "Only when the last tree has died, and the last river has been poisoned, and the last fish has been caught will we realise that we cannot eat money."**

And what can be said of the artificial needs created for the sole purpose of keeping people employed? Consider all the people kept busy pushing paper in offices and the goods that are manufactured to last the shortest time possible in order to increase sales. All of this leads to waste and to the destruction of the natural environment.

The basic cause of environmental pollution and the squandering of natural resources is the chronic shortage of purchasing power that is inherent in the present financial system. That is, consumers do not have enough money to buy all available production. People do not have the means to buy the products they themselves have made! Artificial needs are created to distribute more wages and salaries to purchase products that have already been made and many of these products are neither essential nor desirable.

## Re-defining growth

Bearing this in mind, one can imagine the effect these disastrous economic policies have on the environment. For instance, when we speak about economic growth and the importance for nations to be more competitive, the need to increase production is generally stressed. In reality, a country should be able to increase, stabilize or even reduce its production levels according to the needs of its population. In many cases a decrease in production would be the most appropriate decision.

If it takes two years to manufacture enough washing machines for every household that can function for twenty years it is insane to continue producing more washing machines. Henry Ford once said that the goal of a good car manufacturer should be to build a car that lasts a lifetime. This is technically



***A mountain of computers that have become obsolete***



possible but the auto industry occupies an important place in our economy. If cars that could last a lifetime were manufactured there would be economic chaos! How would we keep auto workers employed in the name of the sacrosanct principle of full employment if cars did not need to be replaced regularly?

If one considers financial terms alone, economic growth appears to be a necessity, but from a realistic or practical point of view, it does not make sense.

Toward the end of *Laudato Si*, the Holy Father wrote about the need to change our lifestyles and reduce our habits of consumption. But voluntary simplicity and consuming less are contrary to the tenets of the current financial system. Such a strategy would lead to factory closures and thousands of workers being laid off. Pope Francis explained that before such a shift could be made the financial system would first require being changed so that it responded to the real economy and to the common good.

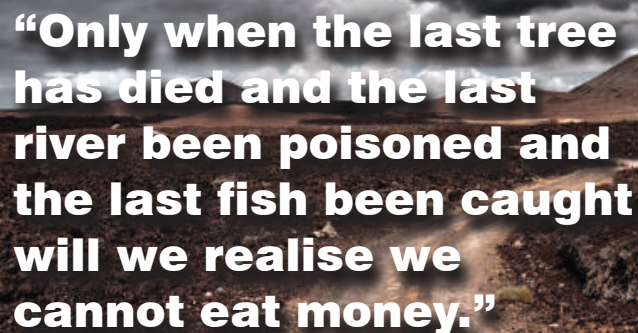
Our entire environment would be different if the financial system was adapted to the needs of the population. We would not need huge factories nor would people leave rural communities in search of employment in the cities. (Douglas observed that large plants are not necessarily more productive than smaller ones, and if they exist it is simply because banks prefer to finance large firms instead of family businesses.) We could return to producing goods and offering services at a human scale and in local communities.

### **Machinery at Man's Service**

The Pope is not against the use of machinery and progress, but man must come before profit. For example, he wrote, in paragraph 114: "Nobody is suggesting a return to the Stone Age, but we do need to slow down and look at reality in a different way, to appropriate the positive and sustainable progress which has been made, but also to recover the values and the great goals swept away by our unrestrained delusions of grandeur."

In paragraph 112, he said: "Yet we can once more broaden our vision. We have the freedom needed to limit and direct technology; we can put it at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral... for example, when cooperatives of small producers adopt less polluting means of production, and opt for a non-consumerist model of life, recreation and community. Or when technology is directed primarily to resolving people's concrete problems, truly helping them live with more dignity and less suffering."

What place should be given to machinery? When should it replace human labour, and in which cases is it better to employ people rather machinery? What constitutes the dignity of work? When does a job become dehumanizing and no longer respect the



**"Only when the last tree  
has died and the last  
river been poisoned and  
the last fish been caught  
will we realise we  
cannot eat money."**

dignity of workers? These are all questions to ponder. Some jobs such as a doctor, teacher and workers who care for the elderly require a human touch. Other jobs can be better performed by machinery, especially repetitive assembly line work, where there is no opportunity to express human creativity.

Robots are not an end in themselves; they exist to accomplish difficult tasks, to help human beings and provide relief. The problem arises when incomes are linked solely to employment. In these cases, the introduction of a machine means the loss of all income for a worker who loses his job. As it has been explained many times, Social Credit would solve this problem by allocating a Dividend to all, based on the dual legacy of natural resources and progress. The individual would then be in a position to choose the activity that appeals to him most. Under a Social Credit system there would be an outburst of creative activity.

Societal choices must be made, but the fact is that under the current economic conditions, all basic goods can be produced despite unemployment rates of 10, 20 percent or more. Moreover, large companies move their factories to countries where labour is cheaper and where environmental regulations are less stringent. (This is called offshoring.) How can a country in Europe or North America compete with countries like China, Bangladesh or other Asian nations where salaries in the textile industry are not \$38 per hour but \$38 per month! On top of that working conditions are slave-like.

The introduction of a Dividend to all does not mean that people would stop working or will all be replaced by machinery. On the contrary, this additional purchasing power would stimulate personal initiative and the creation of local jobs.

All people who care for the environment, and consequently for the future of mankind on earth; all those who want to "save the planet" should study and spread Economic Democracy. This system would put money at the service of the human person while putting an end to the wasting of resources. ❖

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# ***Pope Francis — 1936-2025***



**A champion of social justice, a friend of the poor, a shepherd of hearts, the Holy Father has left us, leaving behind him a world in mourning and a Church forever marked.**

**With his voice, he carried the forgotten, awakened consciences and sowed hope. May God welcome him into his eternal peace. Vers Demain salutes with respect and prayer this great servant of God and humanity.**