

fraternitas

Ars Gratia Christi

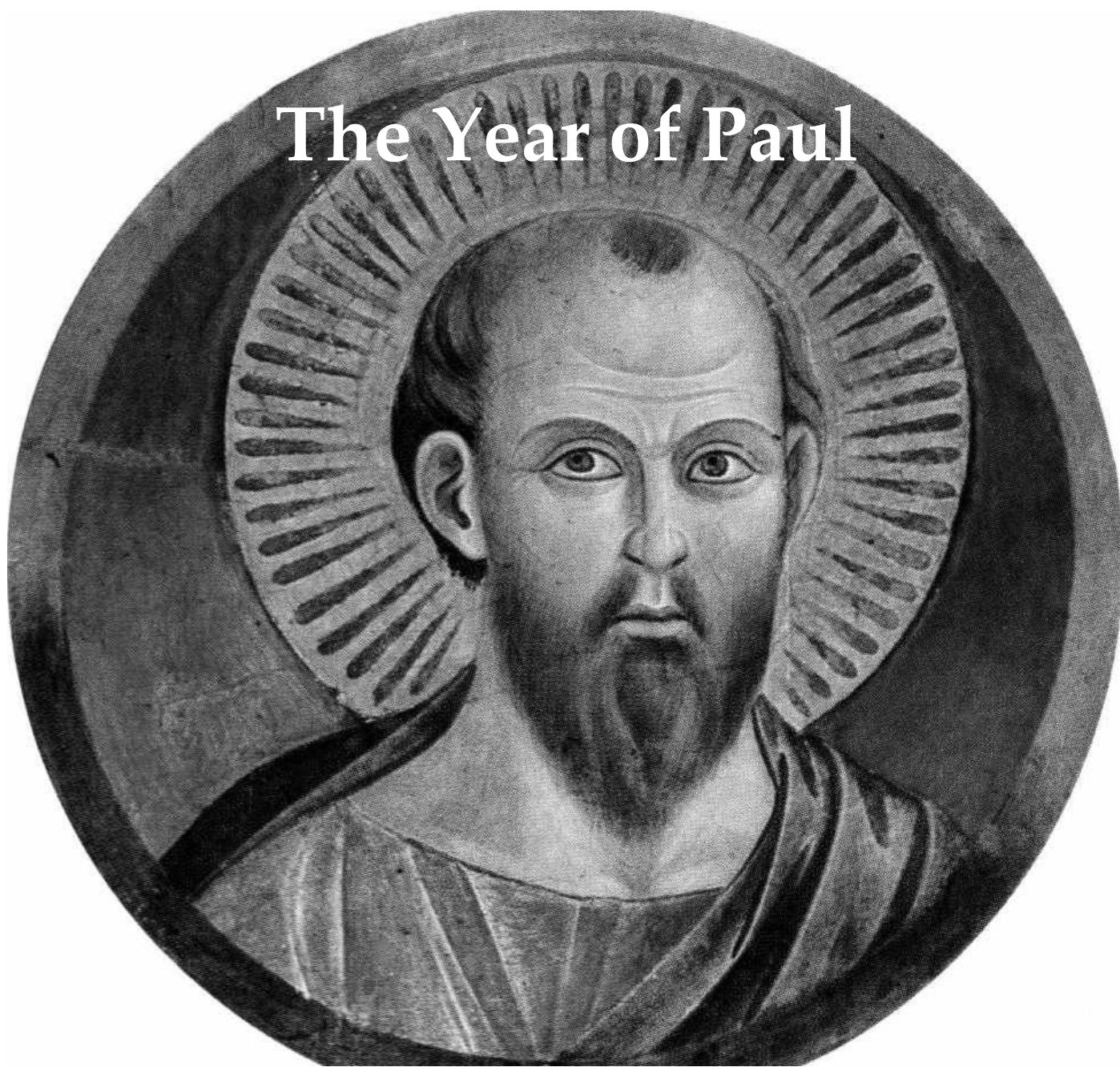
Official Newsletter of The Fraternity of St Genesius, St Mary's Presbytery, Dublin Road, Drogheda, Co. Louth, Ireland.

Volume 2

Summer/Autumn 2008

Issue 2

The Year of Paul



**Pope Benedict Formally Inaugurates the
Pauline Year**

The Fraternity of St Genesius

St Mary's Presbytery, Dublin Road, Drogheda,
Co. Louth, Ireland.

Tele: + 353 (0)86 266 2565 Fax: + 353 (0)41 98 45144
www.stgenesius.com e-mail: info@stgenesius.com

The Fraternity of St Genesius is an approved association of the Catholic Church in which its members commit themselves to supporting the men and women of the theatrical and cinematic arts through their daily prayers and sacrifices. In this way, recognizing their role within the Mystical Body of Christ, they participate in the renewal of culture as called for by the Servant of God, Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, and spiritually accompany their brothers and sisters in Christ. The Fraternity was founded in Drogheda, Ireland, on 19th January 2007 and is under the patronage of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and St Genesius, the patron of the theatrical arts.

Fraternity Council

The Fraternity is governed by a Council under the Father Director. Its current members are:

Father Director: Fr John Hogan. **Secretary:** Christopher McCamley, OCDS. **Treasurer:** John Cahill. **Membership Secretary:** Michael Barden. **Media Secretary:** Donal O'Sullivan-Latchford. **Member Relations Secretary:** Mary Cahill. **Cllr. Epilepsy Apostolate:** Sr Eucharia Kenny, RSM. **Assistant, Apostolate for Epilepsy:** Elizabeth King. **Cllr. Religious Goods:** Sr Carmel Casey, DC. **Culture Secretary:** Kevin Dolan.

Fraternitas

Fraternitas is the official Newsletter and magazine of the Fraternity. Published quarterly, it aims to keep members informed of what is happening in the association while providing articles of interest on spiritual and cultural matters. Contributions, be they articles, letters, testimonies etc., are always welcome and will be considered for publication. Contributions can be sent to: Editorial Committee, *Fraternitas*, Fraternity of St Genesius, St Mary's Presbytery, Dublin Road, Drogheda, Co. Louth, Ireland or by e-mail to info@stgenesius.com.

Donations

The Fraternity is a non-profit organization and does not charge membership fees or a subscription for the Newsletter. Since it has no source of income it depends entirely on donations to cover the printing of the Newsletter and literature and postage. We would be most grateful if you could send a donation to support us in our work. The Fraternity is a registered charity.

Thanks to all

We would like to offer a sincere thanks to all those who sent donations to the Fraternity in honour of St Genesius to assist us in our work. The Fraternity is a non-profit charity, and we depend on donations to cover our expenses which consist mainly of printing the newsletter, our prayer cards and other literature and postage. Your contributions will help us keep up the work. All our benefactors are remembered in a special Mass which is offered each month by the Father Director for their intentions and needs. May the Lord bless you for your generosity. Please continue to remember us and if you would like to help sponsor a newsletter or any of our works at some time, please let us know.

Correction

In the last issue of *Fraternitas*, the website address for Ten Ten Theatre at the end of Martin O'Brien's article was incorrectly given. Please note the correct address: www.tententheatre.co.uk. Apologies for the mistake.

CONTENTS

Fraternity News	3
From the Father Director <i>Fr John Hogan</i>	5
Pope Benedict Inaugurates Pauline Year	7
Homily of Pope Benedict at the Inauguration of the Pauline Year	8
The Life of St Paul	10
A Call to True Discipleship: The Meaning of the Pauline Year <i>Fr John McKeever</i>	11
Fleshing Out the Word <i>Kevin O'Brien</i>	13
USCBB Movie Reviews	10
Meditations on the Proto-Icon <i>Fr John Hogan</i>	15
Reviews	18
Saints of the Media: St Clare	19

Fraternity News

Protector Bishop to Accompany Fraternity Pilgrimage

Bishop Michael Smith, the Protector Bishop of the Fraternity, will accompany our first pilgrimage to Rome. Bishop Smith will be chief celebrant at the Mass in the Basilica of St Mary Major's and at the Solemn Mass at the tomb of St Genesius in the Church of Santa Susanna. The Father Director and members of the Council welcomed the Bishop's decision, and thanked him for his kindness and support for the Fraternity.

Bishop Smith spent his seminary years in the Pontifical Irish College in Rome and obtained a doctorate in Canon Law from the Lateran University. While in Rome he was present at many of the sessions of the Second Vatican Council in which he acted as a secretary. He is one of the few Irish Churchmen to have been present for the entire Council.

During his time in Rome he has also met Blessed James Alberione, the Founder of the Pauline Family and Apostle of the Media. Blessed James is one of the saints the Fraternity looks to for inspiration and guidance in our mission: a visit to Blessed James' tomb is included on the schedule of the pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage group leaves Dublin for Rome on the 24th October, and returns on the 31st. Your prayers are requested for those traveling. If you are interested in coming with us, it is still not too late: contact Angela at JWT Travel for details: (01) 241 0816.

New Prayer Approved: *The Corona of St Genesius*

A new devotion composed in honour of St Genesius has just been granted the Imprimatur by Bishop Michael Smith. The Imprimatur is the Church's official mark of approval on a prayer or text testifying that there is nothing contrary to the faith in the text. The new devotion, called the Corona of St Genesius, a chaplet composed as a means of seeking the intercession of the martyr.

The Corona consists of the traditional prayers of the Apostles' Creed, the Our Father, a short verse intercession and Glory be (ten times), followed by the Hail Mary, an invocation to the Immaculate Heart and finishing with the Fraternity prayer to St Genesius. As the prayer calls on the intercession of the martyr, and the intercession of the blood of the

martyrs, it is hoped the Corona will prove a powerful prayer for those in need. Special Corona



beads (pictured), featuring a medal of St Genesius, have been designed, and the men of the Cenacolo community near Our Lady's Shrine in Knock have agreed to produce them. The beads can also be used as a decade rosary.

The beads with an explanatory prayer card can be obtained from the Fraternity and will also be available at Fraternity events and ceremonies. The beads

cost €2.50 each, a price which simply covers the cost of manufacture. If making a request in writing please enclose €2 extra to cover post and packaging.

Fraternity Film Club

Plans are in place to open the Fraternity's first film club in Dublin. Culture Secretary, Kevin Dolan, is hoping to have the club up and running in Dublin soon. The aim of the club is to provide interesting films with either a Christian theme, or exploring issues which the contemporary Church is facing. It is hoped that the club will meet once a month and will welcome everyone who is interested in film and the arts. The format being posed is that of an introductory speaker, and after viewing the film the audience will engage in a discussion. While the Fraternity aims to provide a forum for those involved in the Church to discuss the arts it also hopes to increase exposure to Christian art and introduce the Fraternity to the wider community.

St Genesius Drama Group Formed

A new drama group has been formed in Dublin under the patronage of St Genesius. The St Genesius Drama Group was founded by a number of young adults, Fraternity member Rachel McKeever and Culture Secretary Kevin Dolan among them, and aims to promote Christian drama in the city. The group's first production was a performance of the late Pope John Paul II's play *The Jeweler's Shop* which

took place at Aras Treasa, Clarendon Street, Dublin on the 4th and 5th July. Taking Pope John Paul's powerful play on marriage as their first production proved a wise decision as both nights were sold out completely. The Group aim to stage further performances of the Pope's play for interested groups while working on other productions. Please remember their projects in your prayers and *Fraternitas* will keep you updated.

Father Director on EWTN

Father Director, Fr John, will feature in three new series on the American based Catholic television channel, EWTN. In the first he will contribute to the annual series of reflections for Advent. In the fourth programme, to be aired on the 21st December, the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Fr John will reflect on the story of the Annunciation.

In a second series, Fr John will be interviewed by Kevin O'Brien, founder of the Theatre of the Word Incorporated (see article below). Kevin, a dedicated member of the Fraternity, is filming a 13 part series on Christian drama. In the first episode he interviews Fr John and explores the life of St Genesis and the mission of the Fraternity. The series is expected to air in September 2009.

Meanwhile Fr John will be filming a 13 part series with Fr Owen Gorman in the US in December. Entitled, *Europe and the Eucharist*, the two priests will reflect on various places and people in Europe which reveal different aspects of the Eucharistic mystery. Fr John will fly out to Birmingham Alabama to film the series in the first week of December. As yet no date has been given for airing, but *Fraternitas* will keep you informed.

New Statue of St Genesis



The Fraternity has recently commissioned a new statue of St Genesis. At the moment there are no statues to be had of the saint and to fill the gap a young French sculptor, Christine Onillion has been asked to design one. In Catholic piety statues of the saints aid prayer, and so to promote devotion to our martyr it was decided that an artistically beautiful image be produced for devotees. At the moment the sculptor

is working on two sizes – 21cm and 50 cm. Two clay models are being made and when complete they will be fired in a kiln. These then will become the prototypes from which moulds will be made and copies will be produced from the moulds.

Thanks to providence two anonymous donors have made contributions which will cover the cost of making the original statues and baking them. If you would like to make a contribution to help us with the cost of making the moulds and producing the first batch of statues, we would be very grateful. Donations can be sent to the Fraternity, please indicate that they are for the statues. It is hoped that we will have statues in the two sizes available for purchase in the near future.

Au Revoir, Annie-France!



The Fraternity of St Genesis lost one of its spiritual companions and friends with the death of Annie-France Legault on the 10th May last. Annie-France died in a tragic road accident as she was traveling with a group from the

Cenacolo community from Lourdes to Italy. Annie-France was a consecrated lay-sister of the French Community, the Fraternity of Mary Immaculate Queen, and was one of those who discerned and prayed with the Father Director in the months and years prior to the foundation of our Fraternity. Always interested in the arts, Annie-France was enthusiastic about the idea of the Fraternity and immediately committed herself to praying for those in the theatrical arts.

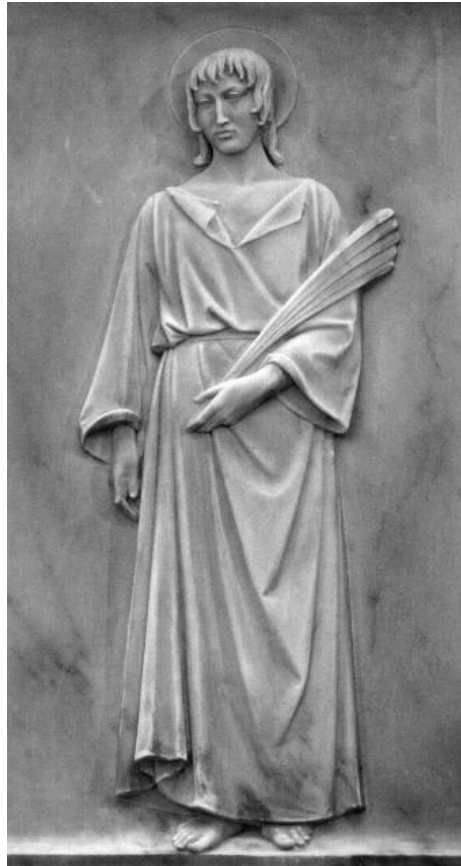
Annie-France's funeral took place on Tuesday, 13th May, feast of Our Lady of Fátima, at Maranatha, the Generalate of Fraternity of Mary Immaculate Queen in France. She was laid to rest in the community's cemetery there. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to her family, to Père Eric, the Moderator of the Fraternity of Mary Immaculate Queen, and to the members of her community. We pray that, through God's love and mercy, Annie-France will share in the joys of heaven with the Immaculate Heart of Mary and St Genesis and all the saints. Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord.

From the Father Director

St Genesius: Patron for Social Justice

In his homily for the feast day of St Genesius, Fr John reflected on St Genesius' patronage of torture victims and, by extension, that of social justice. This is an edited version.

In our devotion to St Genesius, we know of his patronage of the arts and epilepsy, but there are a number of other areas of which he is also patron and these also deserve attention. There is one in particular which I would like to reflect on this evening, and while it falls outside the mission of the Fraternity, it is not unconnected with our aims to assist in the renewal of culture. According to many of the ancient martyrologies, Genesius is also considered the patron of torture victims: this is derived from his own suffering. After Diocletian had failed to persuade Genesius to turn from his new-found Christian faith, he handed the actor over to the Plautian, the prefect of the praetorium. It was Plautian's job to extract a recantation, and he was permitted to do whatever he needed to do to get it. Roman methods of persuasion were not limited to words: they were as keen on using torture to get what wanted as much as delivering passionate orations. As the noble words of Mark Anthony at Julius Caesar's funeral impressed the Roman crowds so did the horrors of the dungeons. The ancient Acts of Genesius's martyrdom tell us that he was beaten with rods, racked, lacerated with iron hooks for a long time, burnt with torches; his agony came to an end with beheading, and this was rarely a clean cut. He suffering dreadful tortures and we know nothing of the psychological warfare which went on between persecutor and actor in those days, perhaps even weeks in the dank cellars of Rome. Genesius is rightly acknowledged as a patron and protector of men and women who suffer torture: a patron for justice.



We live in a world in which millions of men, women and children are subjected to torture of one kind or another every day. Recent conflicts have reminded us that despite claims to being civilized and respect for the human person, our age is no better than those that have gone before – indeed, in many respects it is

far worse: the dehumanization of men and women continues today even in the most grotesque ways. In many countries innocent people fall victim to the hatred and violence of other people and political régimes. The injustices and torture of these people is, at times, headline news, as in the case of the torture of prisoners following the Iraqi war, with many groups registering their protest. Other injustices go unnoticed – they are not politically correct perhaps, like the regular killing of Christians for their faith in the Islamic world.

The Gospel of Christ, as we know, can never be reduced to pious platitudes or hidden personal sensibilities. Christianity is to be a public faith, witnessed to in the world by those who call themselves disciples of Jesus Christ. Inherent in this public profession of faith in Christ are charity – the love of our neighbour, and justice. In recent years, certainly since Vatican II, many Catholics have taken the call to promoting justice very seriously, and now almost every apostolic congregation, for example, is involved in peace and justice projects in every country of the world. The Church, of course, blesses their commitment to this important work and has dedicated some of its most important theological works and manuals to

the subject of promoting justice in the world. Pope Leo XIII's encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* stands as a seminal work in the Church's magisterium, and is the blueprint for all subsequent reflections on how we as Christians should promote social justice. It is rumoured that Pope Benedict is writing a major document on social justice, perhaps even an encyclical. The figure of Genesius is one who, in the midst of his tortures, draws our attention to the need for us to take the Church's mission for justice seriously: but this mission must be centered on Christ and expressive of true fidelity to the Church and her pastors, and here we come to a problem which has emerges in the modern Church: the politicization of the Church and the Gospel.

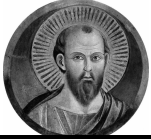
It can be said that where two or three are gathered together, there is politics: human beings are by nature political animals as much as social animals. The Church also has a role to play in politics: she cannot be excluded from it. While the Church and State must remain separate, the Church has the right and the duty to promote the Gospel and its values in the political sphere, for the sake of humanity in general, and the rights of Christians and the Church in particular. She reserves the right to guide the faithful in making morally correct choices for the sake of the common good and has often favoured movements within politics which promote the teachings of the Church and which assist the proper understanding of the human person and the right ordering of society, particularly the protection of the poor and weak. She has also opposed oppressive systems, and this has often brought suffering to the Church as we have seen, for example in the struggle with atheistic communism and Nazism.

By and large, however, the Church must remain aloof from political partisanship, hence the ban on priests and bishops becoming members of political parties, unions and becoming political public representatives. However, since the 1960's we have seen members of the Church attempting to make Church teaching and organization conform to various political ideologies in the name of social justice. Liberation Theology is one such example. As one Catholic writer wrote recently, many religious congregations have signed up to a new trinity of peace, justice and ecology, replacing these values for the Gospel, and reinventing Christianity according to particular political agendas, notably that of Marxism in one or other of its various forms. This politicization of the Church's mission leads to a selective approach to issues, and so we have the modern phenomenon of socially-aware Catholics who fight racism, war, torture, oppression of women, but also promote abortion rights, the radical use of contraception, euthanasia and those technologies which manipulate and destroy human life.

The person of St Genesius in his patronage of those who are victims of torture, of injustice towards the integrity of their being, provides us with a proper reordering of our approach to social justice. As we see in the midst of his sufferings he turned to Christ: it was Christ and Christ's way of life which was his hope. Work for social justice must have Christ and the Gospel at the center of their thinking, their work, their mission and their prayer. Many Christians have embraced secularist ideals in their struggle for

justice, and in doing so distort their mission as disciples of Christ: some reinvent Christ in their own image to justify their efforts. There are a number of problems with this, many them theological, many pastoral, and some of them basically human. When Christ is reinvented in his humanity, it leads us to reinvent humanity itself and that is dangerous since it is men and women who now define what it means to be human, and often this new definition emerges from and is subject to a limited understanding or a political ideology. Christ the rebel, as portrayed by extreme forms of Liberation Theology, for example, allows for the legitimization of the concept of bloody revolution: that which is a mechanism to effect social change, according to Marxism. Revolution and the killing of men and women becomes not only acceptable then, but necessary and then the dignity of the human person and the right to life is made subject to the cause, to the struggle for what the rebels regard as freedom.

We need not go as far as the theological debates of the 1970's and 1980's: we live in an age in which the dominant philosophy is that of unlimited human freedom, individualism and relativism. In the spirit of this age, the quality of a human life is judged by the individual who uses their own freedom as the determinant. Will the pregnancy continue to full term? Only if the mother chooses. Will scientists create babies in test tubes? If the couple want it. Will scientists make embryos for research? If you can do it and there is a need. Ethics are based on pure utilitarianism, and the weak and vulnerable fall prey to it. Sad to say many involved in social justice in the Church today base their thinking on such principles, reinventing Christ and the Gospel to justify their position and rejecting Church teaching in the name of justice, freedom and even pastoral care. Only when the whole person, in the fullness of the dignity God has conferred on them, respected and protected from the moment of natural conception to the moment of natural death. The martyr Genesius, tortured for Christ's sake, living in an age as utilitarian as our own in many respects, speaks eloquently of the dignity of the person, of the centrality of Christ and of the need of his disciples to listen to him. The Beatitude come to mind: *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*: righteousness is fidelity to God, uprightness in faith, being holy, conformed to Christ in the New Covenant, restoration as a true son or daughter of God and brought into being through love and obedience. That is the light in which we begin to see the true dignity of the person, the light by which all our actions for peace and justice are to be guided.



The Pauline Year

28th June 2008 – 29th June 2009

Pope Benedict XVI Inaugurates the Pauline Year

Pope Benedict formally opened the Church's official celebrations for the Holy Year of St Paul with a magnificent ceremony at the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls on the evening of the 28th June last. Joined by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His Beatitude, Bartholomew I and the leaders of various other Christian communities, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, the Holy Father led the congregation in solemn First Vespers for the Solemnity of SS Peter and Paul.

The ceremonies began with a procession to the portico of the Basilica, Pope Benedict leading the various Christian leaders and the abbot and Benedictine monks who serve



the Basilica. The Pope then lit the Pauline Fire – this will remain burning throughout the year. Processing into the Basilica through the 'Pauline Door', the Holy Father led the assembled crowds in Vespers.

In his homily the Holy Father pointed out that St Paul was not a figure of the past whom we recall with veneration: he is also our master, the Apostle, the announcer of Jesus Christ to us. Paul wishes to speak to us today, and so the Pauline Year allows us once again "listen to him and to learn from him, as from a master, the faith and the truth in which the reasons for the unity of Christ's disciples are rooted. From the outset, the Pope sees this year as one in which to promote authentic ecumenism. Afterwards the

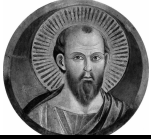
Holy Father venerated the tomb of St Paul, which has recently been rediscovered.

Various events, liturgical, ecumenical, artistic and cultural have been organized at the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls to celebrate the year. Pilgrims are coming from all over the world to pray at the tomb. The Baptistry has been designated an ecumenical chapel for the year to enable other Christians organize their own ceremonies. An official website has also been set up to keep the faithful informed of events during the year: www.annopaolino.org. The Holy Father is also devoting the catecheses of his weekly General Audiences to the life, writings and teachings of St Paul; these can be accessed through the Vatican website: www.vatican.va.

Plenary Indulgence

Pope Benedict has granted a plenary indulgence for the Pauline Year and can be obtained by the faithful for themselves and for the dead under the following conditions:

1. Having fulfilled the required conditions (sacramental confession, Holy Communion, prayers for the Pope's intentions) and free from any inclination to sin, one makes a pilgrimage to the Basilica of St Paul-Outside-the-Walls and prays before the altar of the *Confessio* at the tomb of St Paul the *Our Father* and the *Creed*, adding pious invocations in honour of Our Lady and St Paul.
2. Or, having fulfilled the required conditions and free from any inclination to sin, one takes part devoutly in a sacred function or in a pious public exercise in honour of St Paul; or on the days of the Opening and Closing of the Pauline Year in all the sacred places; or on other days specified by the local Ordinary, in holy places dedicated to St Paul, or, for the convenience of the faithful, in other places designated by the local Ordinary.
3. Or for those prevented by illness or other legitimate and important cause, always in a spirit of detachment and free from any inclination to sin and with the intention of fulfilling the required conditions as soon as possible, the plenary indulgence may be obtained if they spiritually join in a Jubilee celebration in honour of St Paul, offering their prayers and sufferings to God for Christian unity.



The Pauline Year

28th June 2008 – 29th June 2009

Homily of Pope Benedict XVI at the Opening of the Pauline Year

Delivered at Solemn Vespers at the Basilica of St Paul-Outside-the-Walls, Rome, on 28th June 2008

*Your Holiness and Fraternal Delegates,
Your Eminences,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

We have gathered near the tomb of St Paul, who was born 2,000 years ago at Tarsus in Cilicia, in present-day Turkey. Who was St Paul? In the temple of Jerusalem, faced with the frenzied crowd that wanted to kill him, he presented himself with these words: "I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city [Jerusalem] at the feet of Gamaliel, educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God..." (Acts 22: 3). At the end of his journey he was to say of himself: "For this I was appointed a



preacher and apostle... a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth" (1 Tm 2: 7; cf. 2 Tm 1: 11). A teacher of the Gentiles, an apostle and a herald of Jesus Christ, this is how he described himself, looking back over the path of his life. But this glance does not look only to the past. "A teacher of the Gentiles" - these words open to the future, to all peoples and all generations. For us Paul is not a figure of the past whom we remember with veneration. He is also our teacher, an Apostle and herald of Jesus Christ for us too.

Thus we are not gathered to reflect on past history, irrevocably behind us. Paul wants to speak to us - today. That is why I chose to establish this special "Pauline Year": in order to listen to him and learn today from him, as our teacher, "the faith and the truth" in which the reasons for unity among Christ's disciples are

rooted. In this perspective, for this 2000th anniversary of the Apostle's birth I wished to light a special "Pauline Flame" that will remain lit throughout the year in a special brazier placed in the Basilica's four-sided portico. To solemnize this event I have also inaugurated the so-called "Pauline Door", through which I entered the Basilica, accompanied by the Patriarch of Constantinople, by the Cardinal Archbishop and by other religious Authorities. It is a cause of deep joy to me that the opening of the Pauline Year has acquired a special ecumenical character through the presence of numerous delegates and representatives of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities, whom I welcome with an open heart. I greet first of all His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew I and the members of the Delegation that accompany him, as well as the large group of lay people who have come to Rome from various parts of the world to experience with him and with all of us these moments of prayer and reflection. I greet the Fraternal Delegates of the Churches which have special ties with the Apostle Paul - Jerusalem, Antioch, Cyprus, Greece - and which form the geographical environment of the Apostle's life before his arrival in Rome. I cordially greet the Brethren of the various Churches and Ecclesial Communities of the East and the West, together with all of you who have desired to take part in this solemn initiation of the "Year" dedicated to the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Thus, we are gathered here to question ourselves on the great Apostle to the Gentiles. Let us not ask ourselves only: who was Paul? Let us ask ourselves above all: who is Paul? What does he say to me? At this moment, at the beginning of the "Pauline Year" that we are inaugurating, I would like to choose from the rich testimony of the New Testament, three texts in which his inner features, his specific character appear. In the Letter to the Galatians, St Paul gives a very personal profession of faith in which he opens his heart to readers of all times and reveals what was the most intimate drive of his life. "I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2: 20). All Paul's actions begin from this centre. His faith is the experience of

being loved by Jesus Christ in a very personal way. It is awareness of the fact that Christ did not face death for something anonymous but rather for love of him - of Paul - and that, as the Risen One, he still loves him; in other words, Christ gave himself for him. Paul's faith is being struck by the love of Jesus Christ, a love that overwhelms him to his depths and transforms him. His faith is not a theory, an opinion about God and the world. His faith is the impact of God's love in his heart. Thus, this same faith was love for Jesus Christ.

Paul is presented by many as a pugnacious man who was well able to wield the sword of his words. Indeed, there was no lack of disputes on his journey as an Apostle. He did not seek a superficial harmony. In the First of his Letters, addressed to the Thessalonians, he himself says: "We had courage... to proclaim to you the Gospel of God in the face of great opposition... In fact, we never spoke words of adulation, as you know" (1 Thes 2: 2, 5). The truth was too great for him to be willing to sacrifice it with a view to external success. For him, the truth that he experienced in his encounter with the Risen One was well worth the fight, persecution and suffering. But what most deeply motivated him was being loved by Jesus Christ and the desire to communicate this love to others. Paul was a man capable of loving and all of his actions and suffering can only be explained on the basis of this core sentiment. It is only on this basis that we can understand the concepts on which his proclamation was founded. Let us take another key word of his: freedom. The experience of being loved to the very end by Christ had opened his eyes to the truth and to the way of human existence. It was an experience that embraced everything. Paul was free as a man loved by God, who, by virtue of God, was able to love together with him. This love then became the "law" of his life and in this very way, the freedom of his life. He speaks and acts motivated by the responsibility of love. Here freedom and responsibility are indivisibly united. Since Paul lives in the responsibility of love, he is free; since he is one who loves, he lives his life totally in the responsibility of this love and does not take freedom as a pretext to act arbitrarily and egoistically. In the same spirit Augustine formulated the phrase that later became famous: *Dilige et quod vis fac* (Tract. in 1 Jo 7, 7-8) - love and do what you please. The one who loves Christ as Paul loved him can truly do as he pleases because his love is united to Christ's will and thus with



God's will; because his will is anchored to the truth and because his will is no longer merely his own, arbitrary to the autonomous self, but is integrated into God's freedom from which he receives the path to take.

In the search for the inner features of St Paul I would like, secondly, to recall the words that the Risen Christ addressed to him on the road to Damascus. First the Lord asked him: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" To the question: "Who are you, Lord?" Saul is given the answer: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9: 4f.). In persecuting the Church, Paul was persecuting Jesus himself. "You persecute me". Jesus identifies with the Church in a single subject. This exclamation of the Risen One, which transformed Saul's life, in summary already

contains the entire doctrine on the Church as the Body of Christ. Christ did not withdraw himself into Heaven, leaving ranks of followers to carry out "his cause" on earth. The Church is not an association that desires to promote a specific cause. In her there is no question of a

cause. In her it is a matter of the person of Jesus Christ, who, also as the Risen One, remained "flesh". He has "flesh and bones" (Lk 24: 39), the Risen One says, in Luke's Gospel, to the disciples who thought he was a ghost. He has a Body. He is personally present in his Church, "Head and Body" form one being, Augustine would come to say. "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?" Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor 6: 15). And he added: just as, according to the book of Genesis, man and woman become one flesh, thus Christ and his followers become one spirit, that is, one in the new world of the Resurrection (cf. 1 Cor 6: 16ff.). In all of this the Eucharistic mystery appears, in which Christ continually gives his Body and makes of us his Body: "The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor 10: 16f). With these words, at this moment, not only Paul addresses us but also the Lord himself: how could you pierce my body? Before the Face of Christ, these words become at the same time an urgent plea: Bring us together from all our divisions. Grant that this may once again become reality today: there is

one bread, therefore we, although we are many, are one body. For Paul, the words about the Church as the body of Christ are not just any comparison. They go far beyond a comparison. "Why do you persecute me?" Christ ceaselessly draws us into his body, building his Body from the Eucharistic centre that for Paul is the centre of Christian existence by virtue of which everyone, as also every individual, can experience in a totally personal way: he has loved me and given himself for me.

I would like to conclude with words St Paul spoke near the end of his life. It is an exhortation to Timothy from prison while he was facing death, "with the strength that comes from God bear your share of hardship which the Gospel entails", the Apostle said to his disciple (2 Tm 1: 8). These words, which mark the end of the Apostle's life as a testament, refer back to the beginning of his mission. When, after his encounter with the Risen One, while Paul lay blind in his dwelling at Damascus, Ananias was charged to visit the feared persecutor and to lay his hands upon him so that he might regain his sight. Ananias' objection that this Saul was a dangerous persecutor of Christians, was met with the response: this man must carry my name before the Gentiles and kings: "I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name" (Acts 9: 15f.). The task of proclamation and the call to suffer for Christ's sake are inseparable. The call to become the teacher of the Gentiles is, at the same time and intrinsically, a call to suffering in communion with Christ who redeemed us through his Passion. In a world in which falsehood is powerful, the truth is paid for with suffering. The one who desires to avoid suffering, to keep it at bay, keeps life itself and its greatness at bay; he cannot be a servant of truth and thus a servant of faith. There is no love without suffering - without the suffering of renouncing oneself, of the transformation and purification of self for true freedom. Where there is nothing worth suffering for, even life loses its value. The Eucharist - the centre of our Christian being - is founded on Jesus' sacrifice for us; it is born from the suffering of love which culminated in the Cross. We live by this love that gives itself. It gives us the courage and strength to suffer with Christ and for him in this world, knowing that in this very way our life becomes great and mature and true. In the light of all St Paul's Letters, we see how the prophecy made to Ananias at the time of Paul's call came true in the process of teaching the Gentiles: "I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name". His suffering made him credible as a teacher of truth who did not seek his own advantage, his own glory or his personal satisfaction but applied himself for the sake of the One who loved us and has given himself for us all.

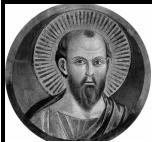
Let us now thank the Lord for having called Paul, making him the light to the Gentiles and the teacher of us all, and let us pray to him: "Give us even today witnesses of the Resurrection, struck by the impact of your love and able to bring the light of the Gospel in our time. St Paul, pray for us! Amen.

The Life of St Paul

St Paul was born in Tarsus, in what is now Cilicia in modern Turkey, around the year 8AD. His parents were Jews, from the tribe of Benjamin, and Saul, as he was then known, was brought up a devout Jew proud of his lineage, because he was born in Tarsus, he was also a Roman citizen. At a young age he came to Jerusalem where he studied under the great Jewish teacher, Gamaliel. While there he joined the Pharisees. During his time in Jerusalem, Saul did not meet nor see Jesus. As he gave himself to the Pharisaical observance of the Law, he became a fanatic, and when the first Christians began preaching the Gospel, he became a rabid persecutor: he was present at and approved of St Stephen's execution in 33/34AD. Shortly afterwards on the way to Damascus to promote a persecution there, he experienced his vision of the Lord and was converted.

He was baptized in Damascus, and then took some time to familiarize himself with the teachings of Christ spending about two years in Arabia. Preaching the Gospel in Damascus, he encountered fierce opposition and had to flee. He came to Jerusalem to meet with the Apostles and was accepted as an Apostle. Working with Barnabas he preached in Antioch, and then after a visit to Jerusalem, embarked on his first missionary journey (from 45-49 AD) as the Apostle to the Gentiles. He would make three missionary journeys traveling all over Asia Minor, into Greece - even to Athens. He established a number of churches and wrote various letters to them in response to various questions which arise and to quell disagreements. For most of his ministry he was forced to defend his reputation as an Apostle of the Lord.

Returning to Jerusalem in 58 AD he was attacked by a mob of Jews and arrested. He was put on trial. Appealing to the emperor, as was his right as a Roman citizen, he was brought to Rome, having been shipwrecked on Malta 60/61 AD, where he converted many and is the national apostle of that island. Under house arrest in Rome for two years while awaiting trial he continued to preach the Gospel. Acquitted by the emperor in 62, he set off to Spain, and then returned to visit a number of churches in Asia Minor, eventually returning to Rome, perhaps already as a prisoner again, during the persecution of Nero. Imprisoned with St Peter in the Mamertine in Rome, they converted their guards. Both condemned to death, St Peter was crucified on Vatican hill - beside Nero's Circus; and Paul was taken outside the city to what is now Tre Fontane and beheaded by the sword around the year 67. His body was buried not far from the site of his martyrdom, and today the great Papal Basilica of St Paul's Outside-the-Walls stands over his tomb which has been rediscovered in recent years. St Luke, who accompanied on many of his journeys records many events of his life in the *Acts of the Apostles*, further biographical material can be discerned from his letters.



The Pauline Year

28th June 2008 – 29th June 2009

A Call to True Discipleship: The Meaning of the Pauline Year

On the 28th June the Pauline Year began, a year which not only commemorates the two thousandth anniversary of the Apostle's birth, but also provides an opportunity for the Church and her members to reflect more deeply on the man, the Christian and the Saint. In this article Fraternity member, Fr John McKeever provides us with some reflections on the purpose of the year..

"Dear brothers and sisters, as in early times, today too Christ needs apostles ready to sacrifice themselves. He needs witnesses and martyrs like St Paul. Paul, a former violent persecutor of Christians, when he fell to the ground dazzled by the divine light on the road to Damascus, did not hesitate to change sides to the Crucified One and followed him without second thoughts. He lived and worked for Christ, for him he suffered and died. How timely his example is today!"

When Pope Benedict XVI officially announced that a special Jubilee Year to mark the birth of St Paul would run from 28 June 2008 to 29 June 2009, these words were the explanation he offered for his decision. The Holy Father is well aware that the greatest need in the Church today is the need for everyone to respond to the call to holiness by coming to know and love Jesus Christ ever more profoundly. He even writes in the foreword to his book *Jesus of Nazareth* that his most urgent priority is to present the figure and message of Jesus so as to help foster the growth of a living relationship with him.

St Paul was passionately devoted to Christ. Nothing else mattered to him. So central was Jesus to his life that he wrote: *"There is only Christ. He is everything and he is in everything"* (Col 3: 11). So deep was his love for the Lord that he made his whole life a living sacrifice to him. Paul's love for Christ was so great that it could never remain a private relationship but rather had to be shared with all humanity. Paul's generous heart was determined that his faith in Christ had to be shared so that all people could

experience the great joy and fulfilment that he had gained from Christ. This is evident from his prayer for the Ephesians:

"Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted on love and built on love, you will with all the saints have the strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; until knowing the love of Christ which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God." (Eph 3: 16-19)



Pope Benedict has offered us this special Pauline Year as an opportunity for all of us to follow Paul's example and seek his intercession so that we too may grow in our knowledge and love of God. We can do this by prayer to the saint, by pilgrimage to his tomb in Rome, and by studying the letters of Paul either

alone or in groups so that we can be enlightened and refreshed by his spiritual wisdom.

The Holy Father has described the writings of St Paul as *"a true patrimony of humanity redeemed by Christ"* and has called the Apostle himself *"a star of first grandeur in the history of the Church."* After Our Lord himself, no one's words have had such an influence on the Christian faith as Paul's. Yet how many people could even list the names of his epistles never mind explain the rich teachings they contain? If we are called to be able to give an account of our faith and share the joy it brings with others, just as Paul did, how can we fulfil our common vocation to

be 'ambassadors for Christ' if we remain ignorant of the truths contained in the Apostle's letters? St Jerome said: *"Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ"*. This year is our God-given opportunity to remedy that ignorance.

The Pauline Year also presents us with other challenges, most especially to share St Paul's concern for the unity of the Church, the Body of Christ. Paul teaches us that if we truly love Christ then we must also love all those who are, with us, members of Christ's Body. Paul's love is attested by his words to the Corinthians: *"There is my daily preoccupation: my anxiety for all the churches. When any man has had scruples, I have had scruples with him; when any man is made to fall, I am tortured"* (2 Cor 11: 28-29). In his homily announcing the Pauline Year, Pope Benedict said that ecumenism is one particular area to which attention must be paid in our celebrations of this Jubilee. So let us take to heart St Paul's words: *"I appeal to you, brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, to make up the differences between you, and instead of disagreeing among yourselves, to be united again in your belief and practice"* (1 Cor 1: 10). Our ecumenical activities this year should follow St Paul's example and be fired with his zeal. They should not be mere polite social occasions (unfortunately, that is all they sometimes amount to), but occasions for genuine dialogue; not shirking our difficulties and disagreements, but seeking to overcome them through our common search for truth. Studying the letters of St Paul with other Christians, in a true spirit of love and honesty, would be a worthwhile effort in the cause of ecumenism.

Our work for Church unity cannot be limited to ecumenism. We are also called to work for unity within our own Church. In St Paul's time, the cause of disunity which caused him great dismay was the abuse of the Eucharist. When the church at Corinth gathered to celebrate the Eucharist the people divided into factions. We need to honestly ask whether our communities are divided and by what? St Paul reminds us that we need to examine our conscience before receiving the Eucharist, forgive others, and ask forgiveness for our own grave sins in the sacrament of penance. Otherwise, Paul's warning holds good for us: anyone who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily eats and drinks their own condemnation (cf. 1 Cor 11: 27-29).

One reason why the Eucharist was a source of division rather than unity in Corinth was that one group, rich and powerful, took over the celebration as their own private feast, while the poor were left to

go hungry. We cannot neglect the poor either. We also have to ask whether our parishes are truly open to the modern 'poor': immigrants, people with disabilities, those who have strayed from the Church and may be tentatively seeking a way back. What would St Paul have us do for them? We must also ensure that no cliques in our Church can hijack the liturgy and treat it as their personal possession. A silent scream in the Church for many years has been the unheard sorrow of those ordinary, faithful laity and religious who simply want the liturgy to be celebrated according to the rites of the Church, as is their right under canon law. Too often have they had to "put up and shut up", while pastors and leaders of religious communities have turned the liturgy into their vehicle for self-expression; in effect, a plaything, 'meaningful' only to themselves. Pope Benedict has frequently condemned this form of spiritual abuse. St Paul would be outraged by it. If we're serious about celebrating the Jubilee of St Paul, it's time this sort of behaviour stopped!

There are many other topics that a renewed study of St Paul could help us to engage during this year of grace. As one of the greatest missionaries in Church history, Paul's example calls us to improve our efforts at evangelisation. His defence of Christian virginity and dedicating one's life wholly to the Lord's service, as he did, lead us to ask what efforts we can make to promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life. His moral teachings on areas such as sexual morality, the importance of family life founded on marriage, and the importance of work (to name but a few) are of timely relevance to our society. St Paul is truly a man for all seasons. Yet this is a special season of grace. My prayer is that the Holy Father's call to rediscover the treasures of Paul will yield much fruit for us all.

On Prayer....

"God in his providence has ordained not to cure our ills or grant us grace without the intervention of prayer. He wishes us to help in saving each other by means of our prayer.....The Redeemer came, and by constant prayer he reconciled the world to the Father. If Christ's prayer and the fruits of his redemptive work are to be applied to any nation or people, or if the Gospel message is to enlighten them and they have someone to administer the Sacraments, it is indispensable that someone or even many persons should have previously won them over and reconciled them to God by earnest entreaties and supplications, by prayers and sacrifices."

Blessed Francis Palau y Quer
Discalced Carmelite Priest

Fleshing Out the Word

Kevin O'Brien, dedicated member and founder of the Theatre of the Word, shares with us the story of the foundation of their Christian theatre company and the important mission drama as having in the world today.

"There is in all good things a perpetual desire for expression and concrete embodiment; and though the attempt to embody it is always inadequate, the attempt is always made." – GK Chesterton

If you think about how Christians try to get through life, you realize that every day is an unending struggle to bring about an ongoing incarnation. We try to flesh out our love for God in what we do – in our acts. And though we may be poor actors, we still struggle to accomplish this.

Speaking of poor actors, I know a lot about them. I may very well be one myself. I've spent my entire adulthood doing what actors do – scraping out a living in any possible manner while answering my calling. I've appeared in shows by Shakespeare, Arthur Miller, Molière, performed singing telegrams in a gorilla costume, toured in USO style shows to troops around the world, played both Gilligan and Ginger in *Gilligan's Island of Death*, performed at the Missouri Governor's Mansion and for HBO in New York, and even supported myself for four weeks as a stand-up comedian, until the owner got drunk one night and threw all of his patrons out of the bar, leaving no one around to see my second show. It's been quite a ride. But through it all I knew there was something more to the dramatic arts than simply showbiz.

For one thing, every actor I knew, including me, had a strong devotional streak – except we were rarely religious. In fact, actors are among the most secular, quirky, perverse and promiscuous lot you'll ever meet. But these same sad souls live lives of sacrifice. They will spend years and years in utter squalor moving from gig to gig and devoting themselves to their craft. True, each of us secretly cherishes fantasies of fame, of becoming a super-celebrity, and in that sense our motives are often not only selfish but also rather narcissistic; and yet at the same time you will find side by side with such vanity a profound love for producing good art, for giving everything one has in rehearsal and performance, for making one's fellow actors look good on stage.

Not only that, but think of the nature of what we do. As the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, so the words of the script are "fleshed out" in performance. And if everything goes well, then the cast comes together, the audience comes together, and a kind of communion happens – the playwright, the players, and the playgoers all become one in



their understanding of and appreciation for what is suddenly living among them. In other words, you've got a hit.

But it is every actor's ongoing humiliation that he can not make something like this happen. A hit, even a good performance, is beyond our control. We can rehearse and prepare and get everything perfect from a technical point of view, and yet it will all be mechanical and dead without spontaneity, chemistry – without inspiration.

So here we have an art form in which the devout practitioners sacrifice and live like mendicants, which consists of attempts to incarnate words into life, which brings people together in a kind of communion, and which is useless without inspiration. Something's going on here – something a lot bigger than "showbiz".

For a long time I had been mulling this over – certainly since my conversion eleven years ago. I had made a few attempts to put together shows that adopted this incarnational attitude, that made use of the devotional character of actors, and even that frankly evangelized. I had put together some scenes for EWTN's series *The Apostle of Common Sense*, for example, and appeared on stage as the Poet in

Chesterton's masterpiece *The Surprise*. But most of my time was spent running my business Upstage Productions, which produces mystery dinner theater shows across the country and puts on about 200 performances a year in nine states. There never seemed to be a good time to start a new theater company, especially a Christian one.

Parenthetically, I should add that this is the problem of contraception. With the pill, parents are put in the position of deciding: "When would be a good time to have a child?" Of course, there is never a good time to have a child. We're always too busy, too much in debt, too distracted. And there is never a good time to start a theater company. But that never-a-good-time finally arrived.

With the help of Ignatius Press and Fr. Joseph Fessio, I formed The Theater of the Word Incorporated on the Feast of St. Genesius – Aug. 25, 2007. Now, a year later, the Theater of the Word (www.thewordinc.org) is producing touring shows that travel across the U.S. Our shows include "The Journey of St. Paul", which tells the life of the Apostle in one act with four actors and with dialogue taken almost entirely from the New Testament; and also "Socrates Meets Jesus", "The Quest for Shakespeare" and "Father Brown – Detective". Next fall, I will be seen on EWTN hosting my own series, also titled The Theater of the Word Incorporated, a 13-part anthology of Catholic drama. Each episode will also feature interviews with actors on the rigors of the craft and on the relation of acting to the Faith. And our premiere episode will feature a revealing interview with Father John Hogan – founder of the Fraternity of St. Genesius.

So, as you can see, what was once a half-idea (or half-baked idea) has become incorporated in a very ambitious way. As G. K. Chesterton says above, this attempt to embody it is bound to be inadequate, but at least the attempt is being made.

And we are not alone. People throughout the United States, like Leonardo Defilippis of St. Luke Productions have been doing this for years, as have folks like Jeremy Stanbary of Epiphany Studio Productions, Denny Hartford of Vital Signs Ministries, and more.

So I encourage all of our readers in the theatrical and cinematic arts to do similar things – evangelize through drama. If we can do it with the Theater of the Word Incorporated, so can you in your own communities, with your own companies and with your fellow writers, producers, and actors. The Holy Spirit is working for a Catholic Literary and Artistic Revival – especially in the dramatic arts, and who are we to stand in His way?

The play's the thing wherein we'll catch sight of the Kingdom.

(A version of this article was originally published in the St. Austin Review, our thanks to the editor, Joseph Pearce, for his permission to reprint it. The St Austin Review is a fine, informative periodical on Christianity and the arts, for more information visit their website: www.staustinreview.com. For more information on the Theater of the Word Incorporated visit www.thewordinc.org)

USCCB Movie Reviews

For your information, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Conference offers Catholic movie goers a valuable service on their website. The Conference's Office for Film and Broadcasting was established to review and rate movies and television programmes as well as providing Catholics with information on entertainment issues and the news media. Given the influence of the media, this service is welcome. On regularly updated pages on the main Bishops' Conference website the Office reviews over 8,000 movies including the latest releases, from a Catholic viewpoint, recommending some and warning of others which may offend Christian sensibilities. The reviews are short, comprehensive and fair, and also offer film classification so parents

can decide if a particular movie is appropriate for their children. These classifications reflect the moral suitability of the movies reviewed, but also taking aesthetical qualities into consideration, keeping the filmmaker's intentions in mind. The reviews also examine the depiction of the Church and clergy. In all their reviews and classification, the Office offers explanations for its decisions. The website also recommends its "Ten best movies of the Year" for each year since 1967, while listing and reviewing the Vatican's top 45 movies in the century of cinema. Another interesting service is its pages on current theatre productions, reviewing both the plays themselves and the quality of recent performances. The website can be accessed at www.usccb.org/movies.

Meditations on the Proto-Icon of St Genesisius:

1. The Face (*Part Two*)

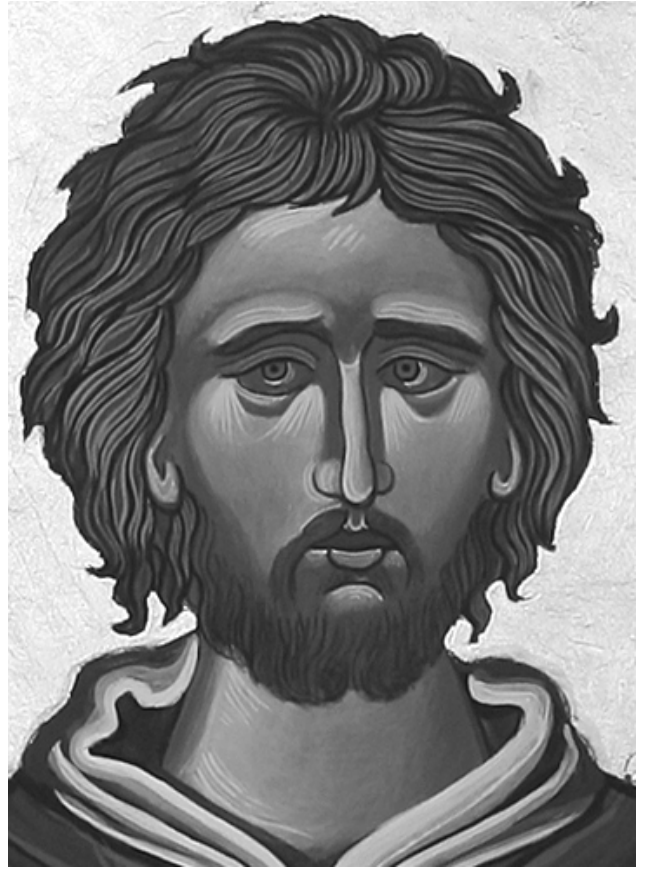
Fr John Hogan

Fr John continues the series of meditations on the Proto-Icon of St Genesisius with the second part of his reflection on the face of the saint. Here, he tells us, we see man made in the image and likeness of God, called to be a living icon of the true God.

When we reflect on the face of a man or woman our reflections must inevitably bring us to reflect on the place of man in creation: our minds may turn to that moment in the past when God created man and woman. Though there is much controversy over the origins of man, Scripture is emphatic in its teaching that man is created in the image and likeness of God: he is a living icon of the living God. As heated as the debates may get, Michelangelo's fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican still touches the hearts of modern men and women and, when all the arguments are put to one side, the traditional understanding of the creation of man as seen in this fresco – of the image of God reaching out to give life to Adam, is still accepted as pointing, in some way, of the truth of our origins. Even if only the aesthetics of the composition is all that appeals, the universal appreciation may point to the desire in the human heart to see our beginning as part of a greater mystery.

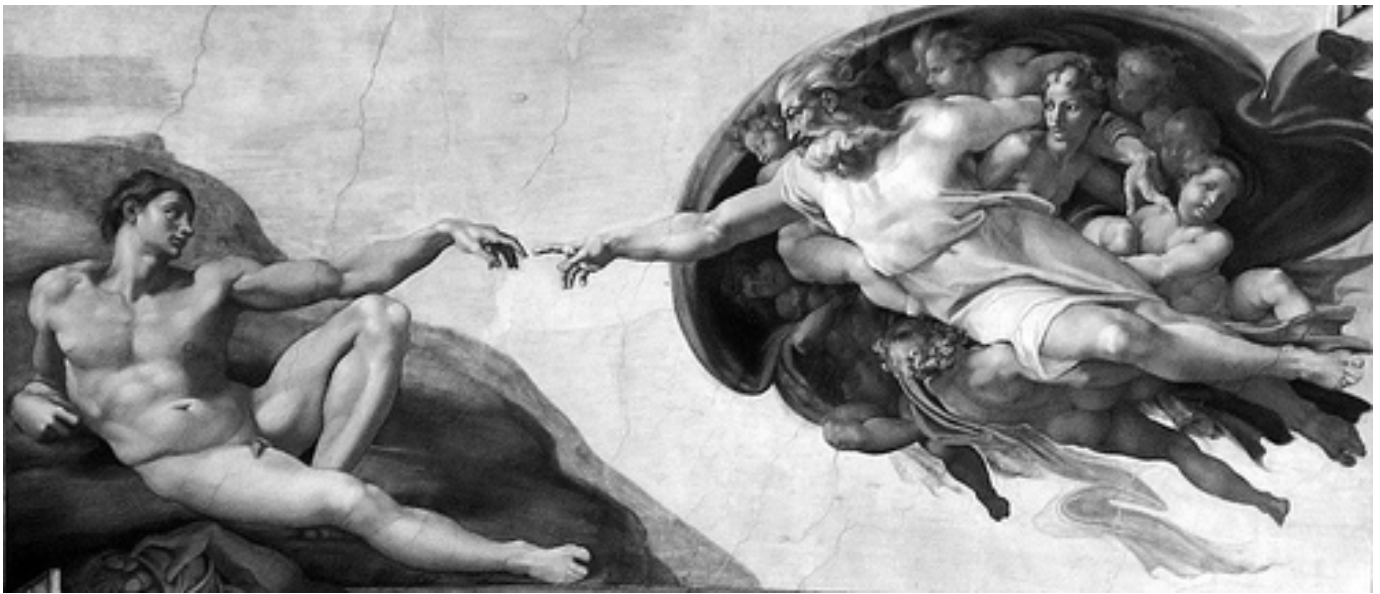
The *Creation of Adam* is in fact an 'icon' for the beauty of the human person, and of his dignity; in faith it also stands as a symbol of the great truth of man's creation, and of his election as the pinnacle of creation: as the one creature brought into being to reflect and reveal in a unique way the wonder and glory of God, and called to enter into true union with Him. This fresco is a '*memento vitae*', if I can say that – a memento of life, to modern men and women. The majesty of Michelangelo's Adam comes from his Creator – vulnerable and reaching out to God for the breath of life, the first man is indeed a reflection of the Lord who reaches down to him. Even in the symmetry of the fresco (if you imagine it for a moment) we see two beings open to each other, orientated towards each other: man towards to his Creator as he seeks him, God towards the creature he has brought into being through his love.

On a personal level, this fresco can also serve as a reminder of the divine work which brought each one of us into being, and of our unique destiny. As the *Book of Genesis* tells us that God breathed life into Adam and he became a living soul; the psalmist praises God for this work: "*I thank you, Lord, for the wonder of my being*". As we gaze on the Icon of St Genesisius: an image of a man created by God and now in glory, we see another '*memento vitae*'. We see the



dignity and magnificence of man – a dignity and magnificence gifted to man by God and, although lost at first, now restored. Man comes to life in God at the moment of his creation and at the moment of his recreation when, in baptism, he comes to life in Christ. In the symbolism of the Icon we understand the gold background to represent heaven – the figure is now in glory. In the Orthodox Church, for example, the ceremony of canonization includes the solemn enthroning of an icon of the new Saint on the altar – the image of the person now living among the blessed in the glory of God. In comparing our two images we see, in Michelangelo's fresco the great origins of man as God's creation, and in the Icon of St Genesisius, man's great destiny: the beginning and the end, or more correctly, the beginning and the new beginning, the creation and the new creation.

The Iconographer tells me that in every Icon the face of the Saint must reflect the face of Christ, and indeed we come to a profound truth of the Christian faith. The lovely hymn, '*When God Made Man*', which we sing in the Evening Office of Friday Week 1 of the Psalter, reminds tells us of the creation of Adam and as God



fashioned Adam's face, the face of his Beloved Son was revealed: *"In his own image, God created man, / And when from dust he fashioned Adam's face, / The likeness of his only Son was formed, / His Word incarnate, filled with truth and grace."* When we come to the Saints we come not only to encounter the life and person of a servant of God, but also to see the Gospel lived in the flesh and, even more wonderfully, to encounter the mystery of Christ's life lived and revealed in the mystery of the life of one of his faithful disciples. *"It is your Face, O Lord that I seek: hide not your Face"* the psalmist prays, and in that search for the Face of God we look to his servants, to those who know and love him: in them the face of Jesus Christ is also to be revealed. In the call of the Christian we see God entrusting this mission of revelation. *"To have seen me is to see to have seen the Father"*, Jesus tells Philip, and then by extension he may also say: *In seeing you, let the world see me:* Jesus' own words in the Gospel of St John may provide us with the impetus for this as he urges his disciples to remain in him as he remains in them. In this Icon, then, we are also called to see the Image of Christ: not just in the drawing and the painting, but also in the life of the one who looks back at us.

This request is made more urgent as we remember the history of the iconographical image. The face of Genesius is modelled on the Face of Jesus as represented in Icons – of the Pantocrator. This image of Jesus is ancient, written by the first iconographers from the image of the Lord said to be a True Image, the mandylion: *not made with human hands* – what many historians and theologians believe to be the actual Shroud of Turin as it was preserved and exposed at various times when in the East. In the icons of Christ, then, we are confronted with an image said to be the Face of Jesus himself: the Face preserved through suffering, in the blood on the linen of his burial cloth. In contemplating this image of the Lord

imposed on the martyr of Rome, we must understand that this True Image of Christ is to be revealed, not imprinted on a shroud, nor on a Sudarion nor a Veronica's Veil, not even on polished wood and precision of a tableau, and not so much on flesh, but in the hearts and souls of his disciples.

Tradition tells us that St Veronica may have been called Seraphina, yet we do not know her under that name: only as 'Veronica' – the true image. This is no mere commentary on the miraculous image on her veil, but a revelation about her: in her act of charity in face of danger we see a true disciple of Christ – a true image of the Lord, a true image of the Gospel. As Christ is written into the face of Genesius in the Icon, as he is present and revealed in the heart, life and actions of St Veronica, here also are God's hopes for each one of us. *"Go and do the same"* he tells the Scribe as he relates the story of the Good Samaritan: this is his command. This is one of the lessons we draw from our meditation on the Icon, a lesson we see revealed in the lives of the Saints of the poor, for example.

The Saints of the poor also teach us another lesson. St John of God, St Elizabeth of Hungary, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, among many others, teach us the way of the Good Samaritan in their humble service of the sick and indigent, but in their service they also teach us to see the Face of Christ in the poor and diseased. St Francis of Assisi remains the most famous example of this in his kissing of the leper, as do Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus as they come to see the glorious Messiah in the deposition. And perhaps in this we are led to understand the 'sadness' which some perceive on St Genesius's face – to see in him the Face of the suffering Christ and in this come to a fruitful engagement with the Lord of the Poor as he is manifested in our world today. Or, perhaps, to identify with the Crucified Lord in our own lives, and in this recognition see a path which leads us to the

healing of Christ, or to reconciliation, or to faith, or indeed to unite our suffering with his as did Genesius and all the holy martyrs.

In this context, then, we might come to understand why Genesius' eyes look beyond us: there is another vision than that of this world. The ancient acts of St Genesius' martyrdom tell us that he experienced a vision of angels at the moment of his conversion: he caught a glimpse of heaven. Now he is in heaven and he wants to give us a glimpse of what he sees. In the Icon heaven is represented by the gold – of many layers of rich, pure gold: the precious metal is refined down to surround the Saint in an image of glory. His gaze directs us that in direction, as he intercedes for us to accept from God the grace offered to help get us there. We must put our lives in context and that context is not one of power, or fame or riches or even of acceptance and respectability, but of the Gospel which is the way of weakness, of being hidden; the way of poverty, rejection and, yes, even being taken for an

outcast. Genesius understood this: one moment a renowned actor of Rome who performed for the emperor, but now, having declared for Christ, regarded as a traitor, a blasphemer, a cannibal, fodder for the executioner: the most despised, like Jesus.



The most ardent desire of the human heart is to see the Face of God – even those who deny his existence do so partly because they desire to see it, but cannot – they require proof. The Face of God is revealed in Jesus Christ, and as ones who “do not see, but yet believe”, it is the way of the disciple which will ultimately bring us to the beatific vision. The disciple reveals Christ through their faith, their virtuous lives and their works. The Face of God is revealed to others in symbolic form through the holiness of his disciples; and those disciples, as they walk the pilgrim path to God, also become ladders for others, new Cyrenians, new Veronicas for the weak and able alike. In the face of Genesius we see the face of

a disciple, and also the Face of the Lord: this icon, then, is an image of the Gospel for us insofar as we are reminded to live as Christ lived and to reflect his life and love in the midst of the world: to be other Christs.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to members who celebrated joyful events recently.....

To member Mary Jo Wynne who married Brendan Murray on the 18th June, in St Kevin's Church, Glendalough, Wicklow (*pictured*). Every blessing and grace to the newly married couple for many happy years together.

To Dedicated Members Louise and Erich Clara who recently welcomed their first child, Marie-Thérèse. Marie-Thérèse was baptized in the Oratory in St Teresa's Church, Clarendon Street, Dublin, by the Father Director, Fr John, on the 23rd August last. Louise, Eric and Marie-Thérèse have since moved to Austria to participate in a course on Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body, and will be living there for the next few years, we will keep them in our prayers.

If there are any special events in your life which you would like to share with the Fraternity, please let us know. Details and photographs can be sent to the Editorial Committee for consideration.



Touching Evil

Film Review: *The Dark Knight*

Peter Saunders

Everyone loves a villain. Whether we like to admit it or not when it comes to the movies, we tend to prefer the rogue to the virtuous most of the time. The history of cinema has provided us with plenty of villains to satisfy our interest, and it seems the most recent offering from the Batman series has given us one of the best villains of all. *The Dark Knight* was always guaranteed to draw big audiences. The tragic death of its star, Heath Ledger, was, unfortunately, the best publicity event the movie could have had. With his last movie *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* unfinished and other actors sharing his role, *The Dark Knight* stands as Ledger's final complete offering, and given the nature of his death and the suggestions that his traumatic role may have contributed to the condition which led to his demise, fans and critics alike were keen to witness his performance and see what sort of legacy this young Australian actor would leave us.

In the movie Batman (Christian Bale) teams up with Lieutenant Jim Gordan (Gary Oldman) and District Attorney Harvey Dent (Aaron Eckhart) to deal with the chaos unleashed by a criminal mastermind known only as the Joker (Heath Ledger). The Joker pushes each of the men to their limits, and devises various anarchist schemes to force people to make immoral decisions in order to save their lives. Batman's struggle with the Joker becomes personal as his nemesis attempts to criminalize the superhero and reveal his identity. There is also the usual love interest as a love triangle develops between Batman, Rachel Dawes (Maggie Gyllenhaal), his old flame, and District Attorney Dent. When the Joker discovers this he uses it to create even more problems for Batman and Gotham City. The movie is more violent and darker than previous Batman movies

Most of the performances are mediocre. Christian Bale is totally anaemic in his role as Batman. Bale is a difficult actor to relate to. He is a method actor,

and at times he seems to be so caught up in who he is supposed to be, he closes himself off from the viewer. The end result of this is that he appears to be very wooden on screen. Oldman, Eckhart and Gyllenhaal produce passable performances and Michael Caine, who plays Batman's manservant, is stereotypical in his portrayal. It is Ledger who shines and it seems as if the rest of the cast merely serves as a support to his performance.

As the villain, Ledger is remarkable. Hollywood has tried in many and varied forms to depict true evil – from *The Omen* and *The Exorcist*, to the *Halloween* movies and the recent *Saw* series (best avoided!), but in all of these attempts we are left feeling that the



evil always seems contrived. It is true that it is easier to play an evil character than a good one – the good tend to fall into dreadful stereotypes or angelic misfits. While it has often veered in the direction of melodrama in

its depiction of evil characters, Hollywood has had some success in capturing the spirit of evil. Hannibal Lector, for example, was quite good, although in the later movies he has become a caricature of himself. It is, however, the late, young Ledger who may have surpassed them all.

Ledger described his character as a “*psychopathic, mass murdering, schizophrenic clown with zero empathy*”. To prepare for his performance he locked himself away in a hotel room for a month creating and perfecting his character's posture, voice and personality. While some critics see Ledger's portrayal of the Joker as one dimensional nature, watching him on screen there is an uncanny authenticity and one would have to wonder if the actor got in touch with something which brought him to an intimate and dangerous encounter with evil: an encounter which may have haunted him afterwards. We will never know. In the role he reveals the nature of evil

as a force which preys on humanity pushing it to decisions and actions ultimately designed to destroy it. Evil is cold – there is no passion; it is calculated: the actions and decisions of a malign will which seeks only to destroy and wants to use the innocent in its plans for destruction, destroying that innocence.

As chaos reigns in the streets and criminal gangs rake in the financial gains, the Joker reveals his true plans as he burns a mountain of money, the spoils of his criminal activity: he makes it very clear to his partners in crime that he has no interest in material gain. The love of money may have motivated his allies, but he is motivated by a deeper concern: the desire to destroy – it is this which gives him most pleasure. He is convinced that men and women are ultimately savages who merely have a thin veneer of civilization and morality: scratch the surface and the raging, immoral beast will emerge: society is a mere subterfuge. In some of his schemes he is successful as he brings some noble individuals down to his level, forcing them to engage with evil in the attempt to stop him; he manages to corrupt Harvey Dent the one who seemed most incorruptible.

He is, however, not successful in all his endeavours: he fails in another scheme to corrupt: placing explosives on two ferries, one with civilians another with convicts, he tells passengers on both boats that the only way to save themselves is to destroy the other boat: his plan fails as the passengers on both boats, ready to sacrifice themselves rather than degrade their basic humanity, decide not to destroy each other. He is also unable to corrupt Batman who sacrifices himself to save the city. The message is clear and simple: selflessness, the willingness to forget about self and be prepared to sacrifice oneself is the most powerful way of defeating evil: this is Christological in nature. But Ledger's Joker is unmoved: he is nihilistic and he provides modern audiences with food for thought about many issues, most prominent among them the existence and nature of the demonic. As one critic puts it: this movie has deep thematic veins: faith versus nihilism, hope versus despair, order versus chaos, could we also say, man versus the diabolical.

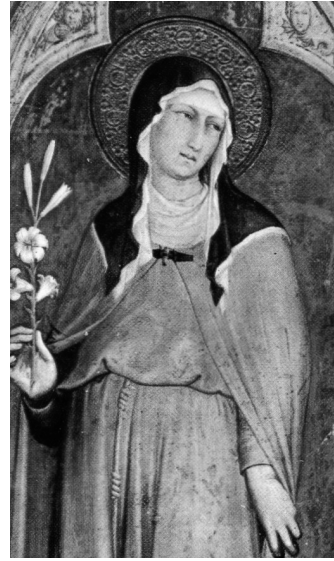
"Humanity's future depends on people who rely on the truth and whose lives are enlightened by lofty moral principles that enable their hearts to love to the point of sacrifice."

The Servant of God, **Pope John Paul II**

SAINTS OF THE ARTS AND MEDIA

Saint Clare of Assisi

PATRON OF TELEVISION



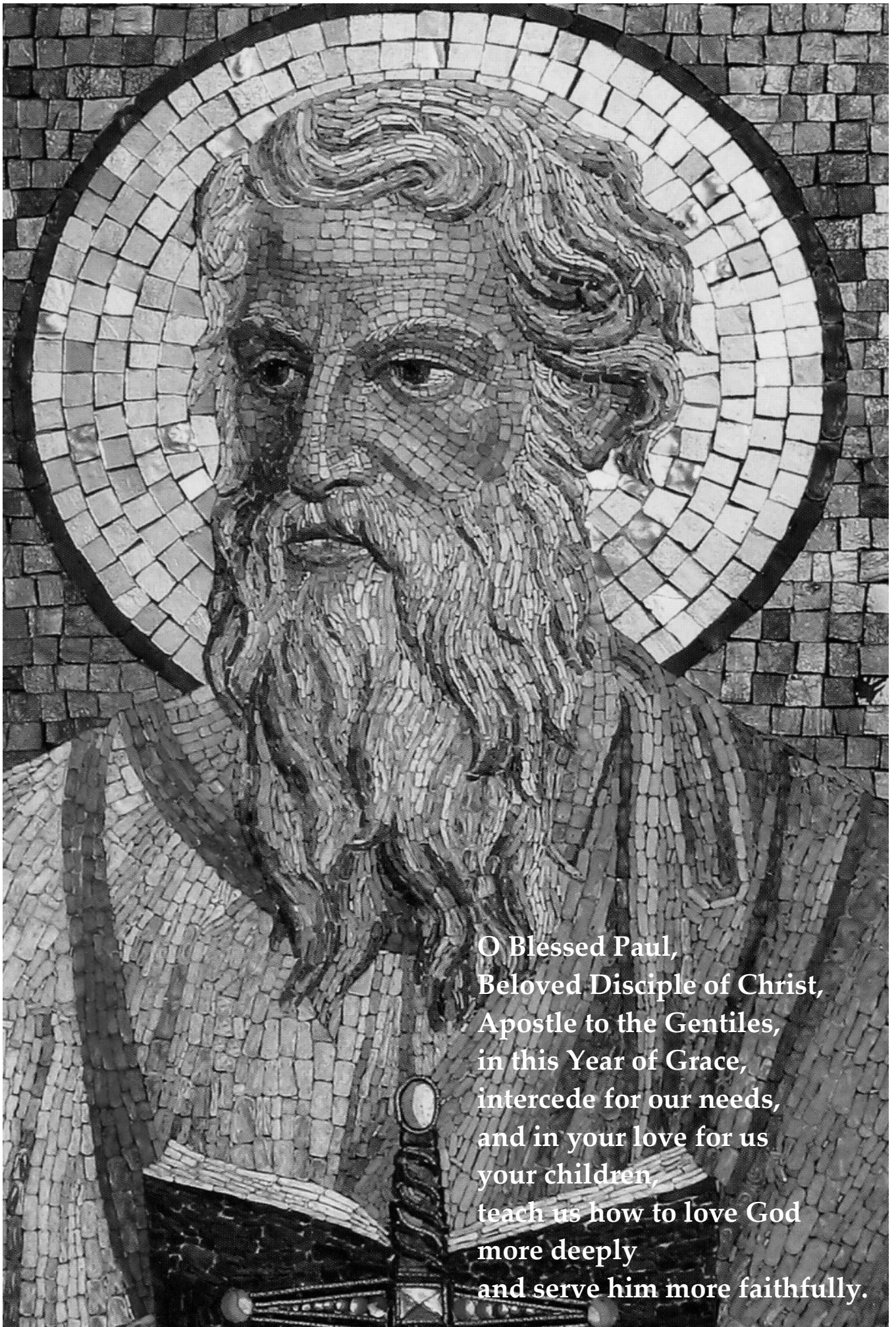
Clare Offreduccio was born in Assisi on the 11th July 1194 the daughter of a nobleman. Living in an age when the daughters of the aristocracy were seen as little more than pawns to be used to cement political alliances through arranged marriages, Clare was determined not to fall into the plans her parents had made for her and at the age of twelve she refused to marry. In Lent 1212 she heard St Francis

preach and realized that she was called to offer her life to God. On Palm Sunday she ran away from home and, in the middle of the night at the Portiuncula chapel she received the Franciscan habit and veil from Francis himself.

Living with a community of Benedictine nuns until Francis could establish a convent, she resisted all attempts by her family to return to them. Francis removed her to another convent where her sister Agnes joined her and soon after, in 1215, the first convent of Franciscan sisters, San Damiano, was founded. Appointed Abbess, Clare ruled the community and Poor Clare Order which emerged for forty years. Numerous women joined her including her mother and another sister. Living the rigid Franciscan rule, the sister took vows of absolute poverty: Pope Innocent III granted them a privilege guaranteeing this way of life, although various challenges would emerge in the following years.

Renowned for her wisdom and holiness, she was credited with many miracles during her lifetime. She remained close to St Francis and supported him in his trials and difficulties: they were true soul friends. She was a true servant of those in her care, while living an incredibly austere life. At the heart of her spiritual life was her profound devotion to the Holy Eucharist. Her faith in its power was so strong that she insisted that it be brought to the gates of Assisi to save the city from an impending attack by Saracen armies: her faith was well-founded as the city was spared when the armies fled at the sight of the Blessed Sacrament. It is this incident which gives her her symbol in art: the monstrance.

Her love of Eucharist led to another miracle: frequently ill, she was once confined to bed in her cell and unable to attend Mass, she received a vision in which she saw the Mass being celebrated in the chapel below. Clare died on 11th August 1253 and was canonized two years later. Inspired by the story of her vision of the Mass, Pope Pius XII declared her patron saint of television in 1958.



O Blessed Paul,
Beloved Disciple of Christ,
Apostle to the Gentiles,
in this Year of Grace,
intercede for our needs,
and in your love for us
your children,
teach us how to love God
more deeply
and serve him more faithfully.