

# Vatican Notes

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## VATICAN CITY PHILATELIC NEWS

No new issues are expected immediately, since the issuance of the Refugee Year and the St. Pius X sets.

Recent reports show that the new regular set will appear sometime next fall. This set will consist of 15 stamps; three of which will bear the likeness of Pope John XXIII whereas the other 12 values will feature the Sibyls and Prophets from Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel. The date of issue is still unknown.

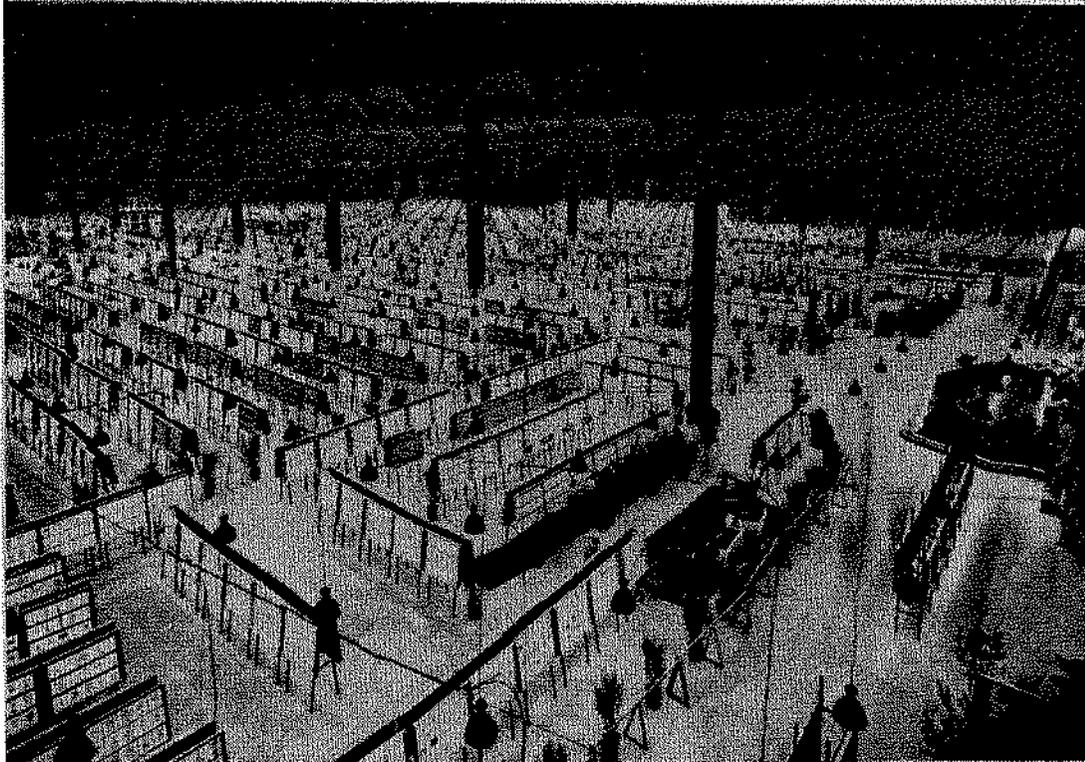
Although the total printing of the World Refugee Year set was 600,000 sets the 100 Lire value was the subject of speculation by purchasers on the first day of issuance and complete sets were sold out less than two hours after the post-office opened. What this will mean, in the long run, is not known. You can expect the same situation as when the Sede-Vacante issue was cornered: High prices at first and then a gradual leveling off. It is understood that plans are being discussed which will help put a halt to this problem but what they are, or when they will start, is not known.

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## VATICAN NOTES WINS INTERNATIONAL AWARD

In January of this year Mr. David Lidman, President of the American Philatelic Congress, suggested to all specialty groups that they submit their publications for entry in the FIRST INTERNATIONAL PHILATELIC CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION to be held at Barcelona, Spain from March 26th to April 5th. In response to this request your

Editor submitted the six issues which were issued in 1959. Up to date we have not heard any further word from the exhibition officials but we are pleased to read, in the regular philatelic press ( such as Linn's Weekly Stamp News and Western Stamp Collector ) that we have won the Silver-Plated Bronze Medal Diploma.



The above illustration of the exhibition hall will give you some idea of the vastness of the problems this exhibition was confronted with. It is no wonder that the individual winners are late in being notified but we will publish a photo of our award when it is received.

This was the first time, to your Editor's knowledge, that our publication was entered in such an exhibition and to say that we are pleased is putting it mildly. The greatest share of the honor, which of course goes with this award, must go to the few individuals who have submitted the research articles which really make ' VATICAN NOTES ' the fine journal that it is.

## VPS LOCAL CHAPTER NEWS

LOS ANGELES CHAPTER - According to the ' NUNCIO ', the monthly bulletin of this Chapter, the April meeting was one of the best attended they have had. It is sometimes hard to get local members to form or join a local chapter but it is even harder to get them to attend regularly if an interesting schedule of meeting programs does not sustain their interest. This chapter continues to go all-out in providing the incentive for large attendance.

CHICAGOLAND CHAPTER - This outstanding Chapter of the V.P.S. will have its Vice-President Anthony Rizzo as speaker at its June 25th meeting. He will show and discuss color slides of his ' Queen of Heaven ' collection, a philatelic profile of the Madonna as portrayed on postage stamps.

Visitors are welcome at all times. Meetings are held at 1:30 P.M. the last Saturday of the month ( except July, August and December ) at the John Crerar Library Building, 86 E. Randolph St. Room 404, Chicago, Ill.

NORTHERN OHIO CHAPTER - On May 26th, twenty-six members and guests were present at the N. O. V. P. S., which was also the Chapter's Second Anniversary. It was a very pleasant and enjoyable evening as there was much celebration. Besides our Chapter's Anniversary it was also Father Winca's 15th Anniversary in the Priesthood, the 25th Anniversary of the Women's Federal Bank ( where the Chapter meetings are held ), and the son of our member, Mrs. J. E. O'Brien, was being ordained.

Among these joyous occasions Vatican Stamps were not neglected as Mr. Zeller brought his prize collection of Vatican Stamps, which were admired by all present, and Dr. Griffin gave an interesting report on the Medical Care in Vatican City.

Before the evening was over a guest became a member, so, as of the close of the meeting, there is now a total of Two Honorary Members and 26 Active Members.

The Officers of this Chapter are: Leonard Zeller, President; Leo Jodus, Vice-President; Miss Mary Stepien, Secretary-Treasurer; and Donald J. Weber, Program Chairman.

From all reports, and from the News Bulletin of this Chapter, they are going all-out in keeping Vatican Philately in the forefront.

EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER - Once again the Eastern Massachusetts Chapter will handle dues payments for those V.P.S. members of the religious who, due to their vow of poverty, are unable to pay the annual dues.

This Chapter will pay the V.P.S. dues if the following two conditions are followed; First: Such religious must inform the Chapter ( even though dues were paid by the Chapter a year ago ) that they wish to take advantage of this offer; Second: The applicant must be bound by a vow of poverty and not have any means at his disposal, which leaves out all secular clergy.

Those wishing to use this service should contact either Frederick J. Levitsky, Chapter President, 13 Lesley Avenue, Auburn, Massachusetts or Rev. Herbert A. Phinney, 377 Walnut Avenue, Roxbury 19, Mass.

The Chapter will accept any donations from individuals or other Chapters who may also be interested in this project. In this way the privilege of extending membership to those religious without financial means may be shared by other V.P.S. members. Such contributions should be sent to Frederick J. Levitsky at the above address.

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Due to three fine articles on Pontifical State Cancellations, in this and subsequent issues, the article on Pontifical State Military Covers and Cancellations will be postponed until a future issue.

*Cancellations of the Pontifical State: Disinfection or Cholera*

In the consideration of the cancellations of the Pontifical State, it is well to group such postal markings according to categories. In this issue of the NOTES we will consider the first group: The Disinfection or Cholera Cancellations. The second installment will concern the Saint Andrew Cross Cancellations.

The disinfection or fumigation of mail or postal packets, in the areas within the confines of the Pontifical State, was a practice early adopted by authorities. In the author's collection six bulletins, in printed form, exist as public proclamations concerning the subject of disinfection: being dated 1656, 1680, 1682, 1706, 1736 and 1739. All of these bear on the subject and method of fumigating articles that were to pass from one district to another and these directives were issued by either the Commissioner of Public Health or the Chancellor of the district.

The process of fumigation, as far as a letter or mail packet was concerned, began with the dipping of the packet in an acid-vinegar solution. However, this method proved unsatisfactory because the packet, even before delivery, invariably changed color - a dark brown or redish black - the acid being so detrimental to the paper. Other means were sought and the use of sulphuric smoke began. A rastel was used to make slits, or long cuts, in the packet, a means whereby the smoke could penetrate the contents. Little care, or attention, was used in making these slits, contrary to certain authorities, as is evidenced in the cuts existing in all directions and lengths, ranging from 15 to 41½ millimetres. It has been argued that these slits were made in parallels but no two covers exist in the same pattern of cutting. Regardless of the various theories offered to explain the rastel markings, this method of fumigation seems to be the one that lasted the longest.

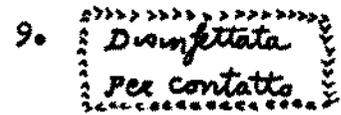
During the Cholera outbreaks of the Nineteenth Century, in addition to the slits or rastel markings, the actual use of postal cancellations began; first as pen cancels and then as block or manufactured strikes. Most authorities claim that this system of cancellations, to designate cholera mail, started during the 1830's but this author's collection, covers much earlier: from Ancona dated 3 August 1813, from Ancona dated 25 September 1806, from Ferrara dated 2 April 1816, from Bologna dated 16 May 1824. These cancellations originated from the many quarantine stations established at major Italian seaports or border towns, and these centers of disinfection were known as Lazarettos, named for the famed Saint Lazarus Station in Venice. It has also been previously stated that the block cancellations began in Rome. Perhaps this may be true, but from the known covers existing Ancona would appear to be the first district to use such a cancellation. The earliest Roman cancellation, of the disinfection type, is dated 1832. If previously dated covers exist, such information would prove interesting and helpful.

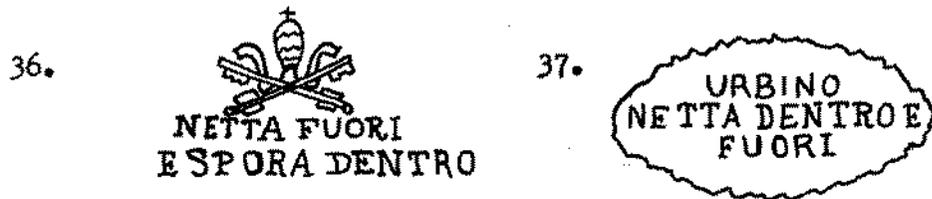
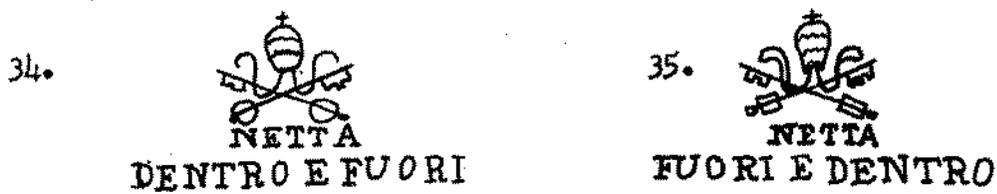
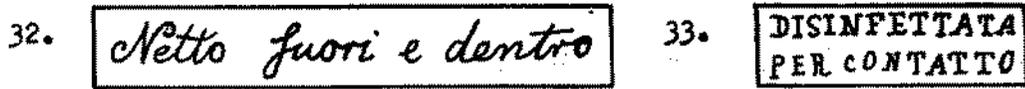
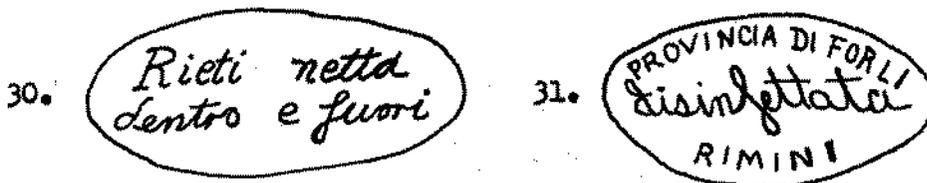
The following thirty-seven examples, of the disinfection or cholera cancellations, are from the author's collection. No doubt others exist, either completely different or a variant of some of these illustrated. A key to these illustrations is as follows:

1. Ancona - pen variety dated 3 August 1813
2. Ancona - pen variety dated 22 August 1813 - Health, clean outside and in
3. Ancona - dated 2 September 1836 - Fumigated, Health, clean outside, unclean inside.
4. Ancona - dated 6 October 1854 - Province of Ancona, Health, clean inside and out.
5. Ancona - dated 2 February 1836 - Fumigated, Health, clean inside and out.
6. Ancona - dated 25 September 1806 - Health
7. Ancona - dated 3 March 1855 - Clean inside and out
8. Bologna - dated 18 July 1854 - Disinfected
9. Bologna - dated 6 March 1855 - Disinfected through contact
10. Bologna - dated 31 December 1854 - Disinfected through contact
11. Bologna - dated 4 December 1849 - Disinfected through contact
12. Bologna - dated 18 January 1855 - Disinfected
13. Bologna - dated 2 January 1855 - Disinfected through contact
14. Bologna - dated 10 April 1855 - Disinfected
15. Civitavecchia - dated 17 April 1855 - clean inside and out
16. Bologna - dated 16 May 1824 - Commission of Health of the Province of Bologna.
17. Conselice - dated 3 June 1855 - clean
18. Bologna - dated 31 March 1835 - Province of Bologna, disinfected
19. Faenza - dated 22 February 1855 - Disinfected
20. Ferrara - dated 3 March 1856 - Disinfected through contact
21. Ferrara - dated 2 April 1816 - Clean outside and in
22. Forli - dated 7 May 1855 - Disinfected
23. Ferrara - dated 18 February 1855 - Disinfected through contact
24. Forli - dated 17 June 1855 - Disinfected
25. Imola - dated 6 June 1855 - Disinfected
26. Massa Lombarda - dated 7 April 1855 - Disinfected
27. Pasaro - dated 3 March 1856 - clean inside and out
28. Pontelagooscuro - dated 11 January 1855 - clean outside and in
29. Ravenna - dated 17 June 1855 - Province of Ravenna, Health, clean inside and out.
30. Rieti - dated 8 April 1855 - clean inside and out
31. Rimini - dated 29 October 1854 - Province of Forli, Rimini, disinfected
32. Rome - dated 2 February 1856 - clean outside and in
33. Rome - dated 6 October 1839 - Disinfected through contact
34. Rome - dated 14 March 1832 - clean inside and out
35. Rome - dated 6 March 1839 - clean outside and in
36. Rome - dated 3 November 1855 - clean outside and unclean inside
37. Urbino - dated 2 August 1855 - clean inside and out

1. *Il 3 agosto 1873  
 È stata spurgata a diligenza della  
 azione di Santa Margherita di Ancona  
 Zinagly*

2. *Ancona Sanita  
 Netta fuori e dentro*





*St. Rita of Cascia*

St. Rita was born in 1381 at Roccaporena in the Central Appenines, Italy of peasant parents in their old age. From her earliest years she desired to enter the Augustinian convent at Cascia, there to live her life as a virgin consecrated to God. Her parents demanded that she marry the man of their choice, and, although reluctant, Rita acceded to their command as an expression of the will of God for her.

The husband, chosen by her parents, turned out to be brutal, violent and dissolute, the terror of the neighborhood. Rita bore him two sons, and endured his infidelity and brutality with patience and gentleness. As her sons grew they began to follow their father's example rather than their mother's. After eighteen years of marriage her husband was brought home dead, slain by an unknown assailant. Her two sons swore to discover the killer and to avenge their father by killing his murderer. Rita prayed that they would die before being guilty of the sin of murder. They were siezed with a fatal illness, during which they renounced their oath

of vengeance and were reconciled to God.

Alone in the world, Rita applied for entrance to the Augustinian Convent at Cascia. She was refused admittance to the community since the constitution of the congregation allowed virgins only to be accepted. She applied again and again, and on the fourth attempt the rules were relaxed and she was admitted into the convent and received the habit of an Augustinian Nun in 1413.

Rita showed the same submission to authority in the convent that had guided her whole life. She was perfect in the observation of the rule of life, and where the rule allowed any latitude, as in extra austerities, she was merciless to herself. To others she was the soul of kindness, as in her care of sick nuns, and in her concern for negligent catholics, many of whom she converted to repentance by her prayers and entreaties. All of her actions were motivated by a fervent love of God.

From childhood she had a special devotion to the sufferings of Christ. In 1441 she heard a sermon on the crown of thorns by St. James Della Marca, after which she felt a pain in her forehead, as though a thorn from the crown of thorns were imbedded in her forehead. It developed into an open wound which became so offensive that she was secluded from the other nuns. With the exception of a period in 1450, the Holy Year of Jubilee, when the wound healed so that she could make the pilgrimage to Rome with her fellow nuns ( for which she had prayed ), the sore remained with her until her death. It has been considered as a partial stigmata by many.

During her reclining years she suffered from a wasting disease which she bore with resignation, and never relaxed her penances. The roses which are connected with St. Rita, and are blessed as her emblem in Augustinian churches on her feast day, come from an old tradition that as she was nearing death she asked a visitor from Roccaporena to bring her a rose from the garden. It was early in the season, but the visitor found a rose bush in full bloom in the garden, and brought a blossom to St. Rita. She was asked to bring the saint two figs, and in the garden found two figs on a leafless tree. St. Rita died on May 22, 1457 and her body remained incorrupt until modern times. Her feast day is also May 22nd.



*Madonna of Ostra Brama*

To mark the termination of the Marian Year, the Vatican Postal Administration, at the suggestion of Polish Archbishop Joseph Gawlina, released a set of three stamps depicting the Madonna of Ostra Brama. This set not only paid tribute to the Mother of God, but to the Church in Silence behind the Iron Curtain where this famed painting is found.

The design of the stamps was executed by the eminent miniature artist, Casimira Dabrowska, who painted her beautiful miniature while residing in the land of her birth. When you realize how many beautiful paintings of the Blessed Virgin Mary are found in the Vatican Museums alone, you can readily understand why Miss Dabrowska stated, "...You can then realize how happy and proud I am of the great honour done to me and to my unfortunate country. "

The Madonna of Ostra Brama is located in the most eastern sanctuary in Europe, Vilno. In the early years of the 16th century, this town was protected by high walls pierced only by

five heavily fortified gates. Above each of these gates the townspeople placed a picture of their protectors. The southeast gate, the most exposed gate of all, was entrusted to the protection of Mary, the Mother of God. The painting placed over this gate is a little over nine feet high and 7½ feet wide. Though the artist who painted the picture is unknown it is usually attributed to Fra Luca. It is claimed that he executed this masterpiece in Cracow at the end of the 15th century. The title of Madonna of Ostra Brama has its origin in the fact that it was erected over a spiked gate ( Ostra Brama ) studded with razor sharp swords. Another story claims the translation of Ostra Brama to be sharp gate and claims this to be due to the fact that the street narrows to a point here.

The fame and miraculous powers of this painting soon spread throughout the area. The first documents of miracles obtained through the intercession of this image go back to the 17th century when Pope Clement XIV granted numerous indulgences to the pilgrims who gathered there to pray.

For protection, the painting was later moved to the inner side of the wall where a small chapel, approximately forty feet square, was erected

by the Carmelites after they had assumed direction of the Church of St. Theresa nearby. They soon spread devotion to the Madonna of Ostra Brama throughout Poland and Lithuania where it was known as " Gate of the Dawn ". So renowned did this shrine become that many generous donations were received for its embellishment. A gold woven veil and a jewel bedecked gown were placed on the image. Over the head was placed two ornate gem covered crowns to which was added a halo of rays and enshrined in the Church of St. Theresa. The following year the Apostolic Nuncio to Poland crowned the miraculous image amid a gathering of ranking Polish authorities.

The painting survived many battles of World War II. In 1942 a Communist soldier came to the shrine to place two large candles as votive lights to the memory of his departed parents. Later, it was discovered that the candles served as a disguise for two sticks of high explosives which were to be set off by the lighting of the candles. As Communist domination continued, they realized that the devotion to Our Lady was a threat to their hold on the people. In November of 1954 they ordered the famous Madonna moved to another church. The Shrine of the Madonna of Ostra Brama was then closed and the surrounding streets heavily patrolled to prevent any form of devotion.

Over the niche in the gate where this painting was enshrined, and at the bottom of the stamps is the inscription, " Mater Misericordiae " ( Mother of Mercy ). This beginning of a short prayer must have the ending, " et pro nobis ", ( pray for us ) added many times by the oppressed people of Poland that they may again pray before the Shrine of the Madonna of Ostra Brama.

