



Vatican Notes

Volume XIV.

September - October 1965

Number 2.

NOTES ON: THE PONTIFICAL STATE ISSUES OF 1867 AND 1868 AND THEIR REPRINTS.

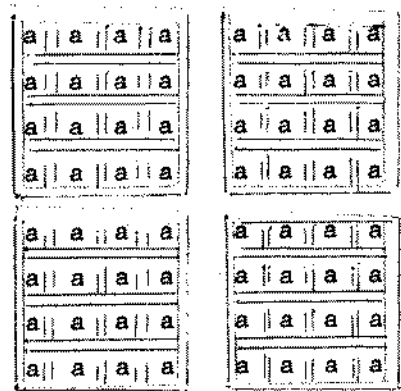
These notes do not purport to be an authoritative work, but a review of the material presented in "Reprints of the Roman States" by Alexander J. Sefi; F.W. Fulcher's "Roman States"; Bolaffi's English Catalogue; Notes on a collection of Pontifical State stamps and reprints by Dr. Donald S. Patton ("Romagna") and observations and corrections from my own collection. — Because none of this information has been easily available for some years.

THE ISSUE OF 1867: had its first day on September 21, in the following values with the colors described by Bolaffi:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2 Centesimi - dark yellowish green | 20 Centesimi - indian red |
| 3 Centesimi - rose gray and gray | 40 centesimi - lemon yellow |
| 5 Centesimi - greenish blue | 80 Centesimi - lilac rose |
| 10 Centesimi - vermillion orange | |

There is only one setting for each value. The stamps were printed in sheets of 64, - four panes of 16 stamps each; each pane having four rows of 4 stamps. The imperforate sheets of 120 are REMAINDERS of the 1868 issue.

There are double continuous lines around each pane, and double continuous horizontal lines across the panes between the rows of stamps. Vertical double lines are in sections between the continuous horizontal lines. This is emphasized because one of the tests of a genuine stamp is the continuous horizontal lines and the broken vertical lines. Almost universally the reverse is true: in the reprints, with few exceptions, the vertical lines are continuous and the horizontal lines are in sections.



We sketch the pane here. A photograph of a full sheet of the 2 Centesimi is found in Bolaffi's English Catalogue (1965) on page 21, and can be examined at leisure.

Individual Issues.

2 Centesimi.

Variety: no period after CENT: Pane I #7; Pane II #13; Pane III #1 & 6
 Pane IV #4 & 10. Dark yellowish green; yellowish green.

3 Centesimi.

No varieties. Rose gray; gray
 3 Centesimi green not issued.

5 Centesimi.

Variety: no period after 5- Pane I #9; Pane III #9
 Variety- three or more periods after 5- Pane I #3 & 9; Pane II #2; Pane III #6
 Genuine- greenish blue. 5 Centesimi REMAINDER of 1868 issue is purer blue and has no gum.

10 Centesimi.

The genuine has a highly glazed surface. The "T" of CENT is often defective or absent. There is a narrow margin between panes. Imperforate REMAINDERS of the 1868 issue are usually unglazed, or possibly semi-glazed; vermilion orange.
 Genuine: vermilion orange; orange vermilion.

20 Centesimi.

Variety: without period after CENT- Pane III #12.
 Variety: without period after 20- Pane I #2
 Variety: split period after 20- Pane I #9; Pane II #4.
 Variety: group of small dots after 20- Pane IV #1
 Variety: small dot after 2- Pane I #7 & 9; Pane IV #1, 3 & 8.
 Imperforate REMAINDERS OF 1868 issue: solferino; dark solferino; deep purple; all without gum. Stanley Gibbons once listed the 20 Cent. Solferino REMAINDER under the 20 Cent. 1867 issue.

40 Centesimi.

Two types in sheet:

Type 1:- C of Cent. is dropped. Ornament to left of 4 has 8 branches.
 (29 on sheet).

Type 2:- C of Cent. inclines up to right. Ornament has 7 branches.
 (35 on sheet)

Variety: no period after 40 in all Type 2,
 except:- Pane I #9
 Pane II #10,14,16.
 Pane III #15
 Pane IV # 10,11,13,14.

Colors: lemon yellow; yellow.

1 2 2 1	2 1 1 2
2 2 1 1	2 1 1 2
2 1 2 2	2 2 2 1
1 1 2 1	1 1 2 1

2 1 2 1	2 2 1 2
1 2 2 1	2 2 2 1
1 2 1 1	2 2 2 2
2 2 1 2	2 2 1 1

80 Centesimi.

Normal stamp has large and small period after Cent.

Variety: Small period missing after 80- Pane II #7 & 15; Pane IV #5 & 13
 Variety: Group of black dots between 80 & Cent: Pane II #2.

Variety: Oblique dash instead of small dot: Pane II # 12 & 13.

Variety: 3 dots after 80: Pane IV #16. Colors: lilac rose; bright lilac rose.

Topical Vatican



CHRIST ON VATICAN STAMPS.

(Part 2)

Christmas 1959	266-68
Christmas 1960	292-94
Christmas 1961	323-25
Christmas 1962	353-55
Christmas 1963	369-371
Christmas 1964	
Refugee Year (Flight into Egypt)	275 & 278
St. Paul's Basilica Facade Mosaic	306 & 309
Good Shepherd (Symbolic)	330/332/334
Multiplication of Loaves & Fishes	356 & 358
Miraculous Draught of Fishes	357 & 359



Period: July 1, 1964 to June 30, 1965

To: William P. Quinn, President

Balances reported on June 30, 1964:

Checking Account	\$ 813.68
Savings Account	<u>1000.00</u>
	\$1813.68

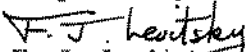
Received:

Dues:	461 Payments for 1964-65	\$922.00
	336 Payments for 1965-66	672.00
	24 Payments for 1966-67	48.00
	11 Payments for 1967-68	22.00
	8 Payments for 1968-69	16.00
	1 Payment for 1969-70	2.00
	54 New Members @ \$2.00	108.00
	22 New Members @ \$1.50	33.00
	60 New Members @ \$1.00	60.00
	41 New Members @ \$0.50	20.50
	Profit from Sales Department	40.00
	Interest on Savings Account	42.95
	Sale of back issues of NOTES	298.95
	Advertising in NOTES	8.00
	Special Contributions	6.62
		<u>\$2300.02</u>
	Subtotal =	\$4113.70

Paid:

Checking account service charges	\$ 16.81
Postage	201.37
Telephone toll charges	7.93
Membership Cards (1000)	11.80
Refund on overpayment for back issues of NOTES	1.00
Bad dues check returned by bank	24.00
Donation toward INTERPEX Lounge expense	25.00
Advertisement in Linn's Weekly Stamp News	15.75
Advertisement in McKeel's	3.24
Advertisement in COMPEX Program	15.00
Philatelic Literature Association dues	4.00
File for Secretary	2.89
Membership Roster	
Printing	175.50
Postage	23.61
Printing of letters and return envelopes	35.75
Printing of Constitution & By-Laws	24.93
Supplies	14.51
Miscellaneous	5.00
VATICAN NOTES	
Printing (6 Issues)	1036.50
Postage (6 Issues)	161.86
Photographs	25.40
Shipping charges for back issues	16.39
Mailing list changes	31.11
Annual Bulk Mailing Fee	30.00
Supplies	5.19
	<u>\$1914.54</u>

<u>Balance on Hand, June 30, 1965:</u>	\$2199.16
Worcester County National Bank	\$1156.21
Worcester Federal Savings & Loan Association	<u>1042.95</u>
	\$2199.16

Respectfully submitted,

 F. J. Levitsky, Treasurer

CHAPTER NEWS.St. Louis Chapter.

Prepared for participation in the Hobby Show at Kiel Auditorium in September are the following: Harry Banghart:- Vatican Air Mails - Christmas Issues of Vatican; Brother Gerard:- Reign of Pope John XXIII - The Pieta; Rev. Terepka:- Ornamental Corner Blocks; Robert Hutcheson:- Vatican First Flight Covers - Pope Paul's Visits - Kennedy and the Vatican;- Roman States Covers; Robert Eller:- First Stamps of Vatican.

Officers: Pres. Robert Eller; Vice-Pres. Robert Hutcheson; Sec. Bro. Gerard; Treas. Barbara Lawrence.

Chicagoland Chapter.

COMPEX Awards in May 1965 to the Chicagoland Chapter members include:-
 Stephen J. Sieben:- Grand Award for Pontifical State stampless covers and letters 1800-1860.
 First Place-Vatican:- Oddities and obscurities from a Vatican Collection.
 Richard N. Freiburg:- First Place-Pontifical State- Selected Covers.
 J. Ed Walz:- Second Place-Pontifical State:- A Field for Study.
 Juanita T. Burgess:- Second Place-Vatican- Vatican Stamps and Covers; Journeys of Pope Paul VI; recent issues.
 Laurence J. Brueck:- Third Place-Vatican:- Stamps and FD Covers of the Pontificate of Pope John XXIII.

Eastern Massachusetts Chapter.

The June Exhibition awards were assigned in two classes. Class 1- Previous winners; Class 2. Never won in competition.

Class 1. First Prize- Frederick J. Levitsky:- Journey of Pope Paul VI to India
 Second Prize:- William P. Quinn:- A World Trip with Vatican Stamps.
 Third Prize:- Rev. Herbert A. Phinney: Complete Stamp Designs of Corrado Mezzana on Vatican, Italy, San Marino.

Class 2: First Prize: Helen Paonessa; Second Prize: Rita Murphy; Third Prize Elizabeth Woods.

Chicagoland Chapter

Officers: Pres. James C. Schilz; Vice Pres. Laurence J. Brueck; Sec. Ruth Holys; Treas. Juanita T. Burgess.

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Rev. Richard J. Salvatore.

Word reached us too late for the last issue of Vatican Notes, that Seminarian Richard J. Salvatore was ordained to the priesthood on June 5, 1965, at the Sacred Heart Cathedral, Rochester, N.Y., by Most Rev James E. Kearney, Bishop of Rochester, and Fr. Salvatore celebrated his first Solemn Mass at St. Mary of the Lake Church, Watkins Glen, N.Y. Fr. Salvatore now resides in Watkins Glen at 800 1/2 Perry St.

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Secretaries of Chapters:

Vatican Notes must receive all information, articles or announcements at least six weeks before publication date of Vatican Notes (this issue- Sept. 1 all information must be in before July 16.) The printer takes a month to print and mail Vatican Notes. The Editor, Fr. Phinney, needs two weeks to type and assemble them. Anything arriving later than July 16 could not appear in this issue. Any news, announcements or articles will be printed when it concerns V.P.S. when space is available as soon as the next edition of Vatican Notes is made up, after receipt of news item, etc.

From: Stato Della Citta Del Vaticano TARRIFFE POSTALI E TELIGRAFICHE (Continued)

Surtax for AIR MAIL ON LETTERS, POSTCARDS (LC) AND OTHER OBJECTS (AO) (continued)

<u>Country of destination.</u>	(LC) ¹ (Every 5 grams or fraction thereof)	(AO) (Every 30 grams or fraction thereof)
<u>Countries outside Europe.</u>		
Haiti	65	70
Hawaii	60	50
Honduras	70	75
British Honduras	70	75
Hong Kong	100	80
Huon Island	150	135
Ifni	60	35
India	100	65
Portuguese India	100	65
Indonesia	115	115
Iran	45	25
Iraq	45	25
Israel	20	15
Jadu	150	135
Johore	100	75
Kedah	100	75
Keeling	140	135
Kelantan	100	75
Kenya	65	40
Kermadek	150	135
Kuwait	45	30
Labuan	115	85
Laccadive Is	100	65
Laos	100	70
Island of Lealta	150	135
Lebanon	20	15
Liberia	70	45
Libia	15	15
Lord Howe	140	135
Macau	120	80
Madagascar and Dependencies	100	60
Madera Island	20	15
Malacca	100	75
Maldive Island	100	60
Malaysia	100	75
Marquesas Archipeligo	150	135
Mariana Islands	150	135
Marocco	25	20
Marshall Islands	150	135
Martinique	90	70
Mauritania	60	35
Mauritius	100	65

(from page 13)

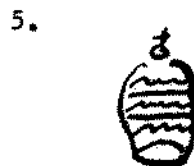
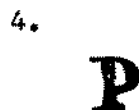
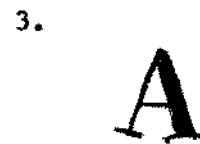
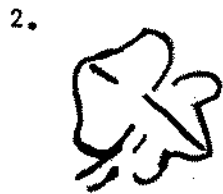
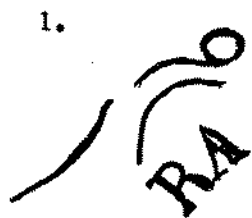
(Continued)

Rubrics of the St. Benedict Issue

Two values: L.40 & L. 300. Vertical format 24 x 40 mm. Each sheet contains 50 stamps. Printed by rotogravure on paper watermarked crossed keys. Perf. 14 x 14.

The Genuine 50 Baj.

1. At upper left, break in 2nd fram line from inside is above the R of FRANCO.
2. At lower right, there is a break to the left of the leaf.
3. A of BAJ has level cross bar; serifs on right leg are even.
4. There is a serif at left foot of P of POSTALE.
5. Tiara wide at top and has alternate straight and wavy lines.

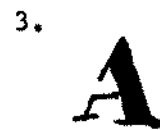
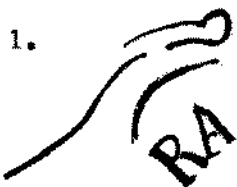
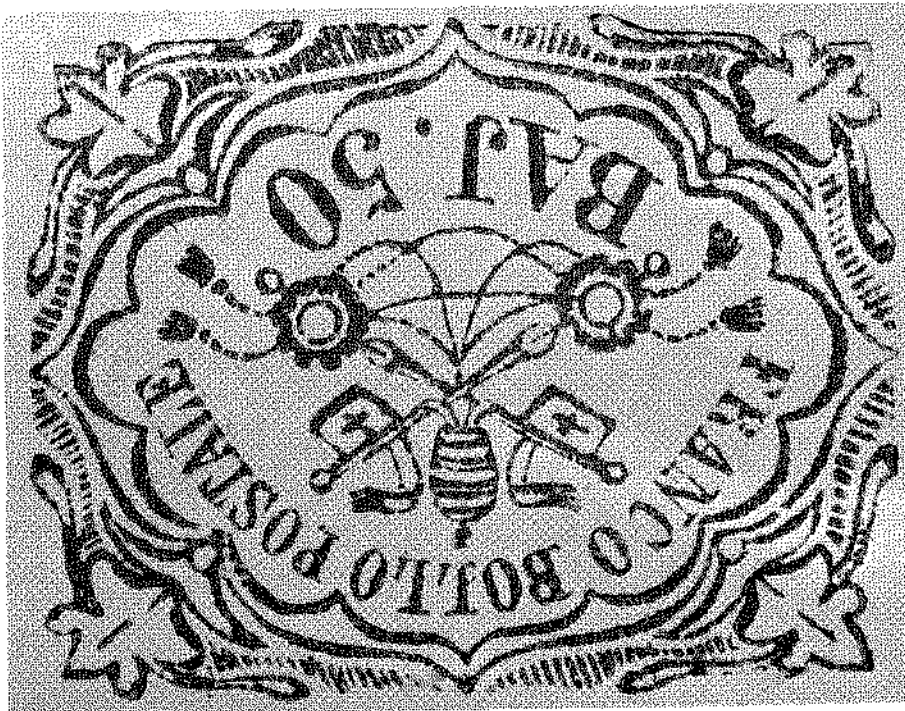


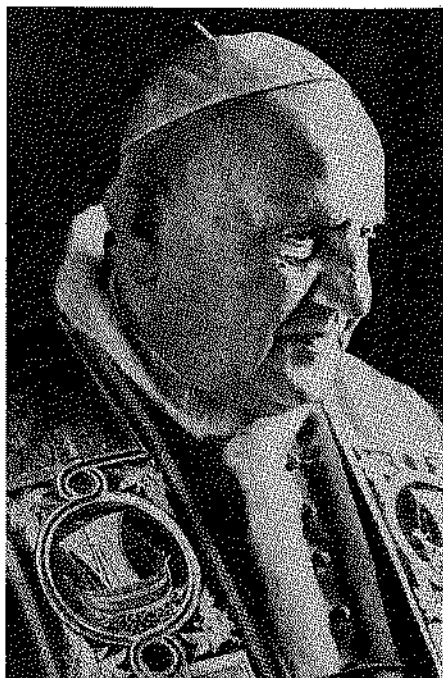
Forgery of the 50 Baj.

(50 B. #5)

1. At upper left, break in 2nd frame line from inside is above A of FRANCO instead of R.
2. At lower right, no break to left of leaf.
3. A of BAJ has slanted center bar and long serif at lower right.
4. Serif at foot of P of POSTALE is short to left.
5. Tiara not wide enough at top; has all straight lines horizontally.

(Cf. Billig #40)





THE EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE BIRTH OF
Pope John XXIII.



L.10. The Coat of Arms of the Roncalli Family.

The Roncalli family first came to Sotto Il Monte in 1420, when the founder of the family moved from Valle Imagna. His name was Martinus Roncalli, called Maitinus. Attempts have been made to link these Roncallis with the Roncalli Family of Bergamo, which was prosperous and attained to noble rank. This Pope John XXIII discounted.

Lire 25. The Church of the Baptism of Pope John XXIII.

On the night of November 25, 1881, the first son was born to Giovanni Battista Roncalli and his wife, the former Mariana Mazzola, their third child. The Pious mother insisted that the infant be wrapped in warm clothing and be taken to church for immediate baptism. There was a wait for the priest who was rather reluctant to venture out on that cold and rainy evening. But the child's father insisted: "We have been waiting a long time for him and we want him baptised tonight." So in the Church of St. Mary in Briscio, in the Commune of Sotto Il Monte, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was baptised. As a priest, as an archbishop and as Patriarch of Venice, he often returned to Sotto Il Monte to

spend a few quiet days with his family and at these times celebrated Mass in the church of his baptism. The Church of St. Mary is shown on the stamp as well as the date of his baptism. The First Day of Issue of this set of stamps was actually the 80th birthday and 80th anniversary of the baptismal day of Pope John XXIII.



Lire 30. The Church of the Ordination to the Priesthood of Pope John XXIII.



At the age of twenty-three, having completed four years of theological study at the Collegio Ceresoli in Rome, Angelo Roncalli was ordained a priest on August 10, 1904, in the Church of Santa Maria in Monte Santo (St. Mary on the Holy Mount) in the Piazza del Popolo, Rome, by Bishop Cepperelli, Vicar of Rome. On August 11 he celebrated his first private Mass at the tomb of St. Peter, and the same day was presented to Pope Pius X, who encouraged him to be a credit to the priesthood and a consolation to the Church of God. He returned to Sotto Il Monte to celebrate his first Solemn Mass for his family and friends in the Church of St. John the Baptist.

Santa Maria in Monte Santo is one of the twin churches which stand at the head of the Corso in the Piazza del Popolo. (Cf. VATICAN NOTES, Volume XI, Number 1, Page 9- the July-August Issue of 1962). The other is dedicated to St. Mary of the Miracles. They appear on the design for the 25 and 100 Lire stamps of the Obelisk air mails, illustrated in the Notes at the given citation. Santa Maria in Monte Santo is on the left. Both churches are octagonal in shape, and were said to have been built to replace two chapels which had stood at the head of the Bridge of Sant'Angelo, and which were destroyed because the troops of Charles V had used them as outworks in their attack on Castel Sant'Angelo during the Sack of Rome in 1527.



Alexander VII had begun their construction and they were completed by Cardinal Gastaldi, the treasurer of Pope Alexander VII, after the Pope's death. A legend tells that a woman had saved for many years and willed 150 Scudi for the completion of the churches. They date from the second half of the seventeenth century, with domes and vestibules designed by Rinaldi and completed by Bernini and Fontana. In a chapel to the left of the main altar in Santa Maria in Monte Santo is a painting by Carlo Maratta (Virtuosi of the Pantheon Set of 1944) of St. James and St. Francis with the Blessed Virgin.

Lire 40. Church of the Archepiscopal Consecration of Pope John XXIII.

A special representative was needed by the Holy See for the turbulent Balkans, who could deal with catholic problems with decision and delicacy. Cardinal Tacci, Prefect of the Congregation for Oriental Affairs, placed the name of Msgr. Roncalli before Pope Pius XI, who appointed him to the position. According to customary practice, anyone assuming an important position in Vatican diplomacy was designated at least an archbishop, and so Msgr. Roncalli was named Archbishop of Aeropolis, a Titular See. The designation "Titular See" refers to an ancient bishopric or archbishopric, which now has no catholic population to require the incumbent's presence, e.g. the ancient sees of North Africa.

The consecration of Msgr. Roncalli took place on the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19, 1925, in the Lombard National Church, St. Charles Borommo on the Corso (San Carlo al Corso). The consecrator was Giovanni Cardinal Tacci, and the co-consecrators were Bishop Palica, Vice-General of Rome, and Bishop (Later Cardinal) Marchetti-Selvaggiani, Secretary of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. Present was the Bishop of Bergamo, as well as the family of Archbishop Roncalli, and a delegation of the clergy from Bergamo. His first Pontifical Mass was celebrated the following day on the tomb of Peter, to reaffirm his fidelity to the Chair of Peter.



The site of San Carlo al Corso was for a long time the location of the national church of the Lombards. At one time there had stood there a church named in honor of St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, which was razed in 1651 to make way for the new church named after an Archbishop of Milan, St. Charles Borommo. This is probably the reason that the names of St. Ambrose and St. Charles are linked on the stamp. The new church has a heavy, poorly proportioned facade and was erected either under Onorio Lunghi or Martino Lunghi, and completed by Pietro or Piero da Cortona. Over the high altar is one of the finest paintings of

Carlo Maratta (Virtuosi of the Pantheon 1944) depicting St. Charles in glory with St. Ambrose and St. Sebastian. Under the main altar rests the heart of St. Charles.

Lire 70. Election of Angelo Roncalli as Pope.

The election of Cardinal Roncalli to be Pope John XXIII is recalled by the Altar of the Chair of Peter, since as Bishop of Rome, John XXIII succeeded to the episcopal chair of Peter on October 28, 1958.



At the time that Bernini was constructing the colonnade around St. Peters Square, he was designing a monument to the Chair of St. Peter, which was to be placed in the apse of St. Peters Basilica to enshrine the episcopal chair used by the first pope. Originally this chair was of plain oak, but its front and back had been decorated with antique ivory tablets in the ninth century. Rings had been added to admit staves, so that it could be used as a sedia gestatoria. It had stood in the Baptistry of Pope Damasus in the Old St. Peters Basilica and was the object of veneration before the third century, when the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter was observed on February 22. Urban VIII

had had it decorated and placed in the new baptistry. Innocent X had placed it in a bronze reliquary.

Bernini sketched a small model from which his pupils constructed a larger one. Work on it began in 1657 and the casting was completed in 1665. It required 191,383 pounds of bronze, more than was needed for the baldacchino. Giovanni Artusi da Piscina directed its casting and Carlo Mattei its gilding. In 1666 on January 18, the present date of the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter, the venerable chair was carried into the choir apse and enclosed in Bernini's monument. The base of this huge bronze is of multicolored marbles, with the statues of St. Augustine and St. Gregory, Latin Fathers, and St. Athanasius and St. John Chrysostom, Greek Fathers, supporting it.

Lire 115. Portrait of Pope John XXIII

References here given to VATICAN NOTES give biographical information about Pope John XXIII which it is not necessary to repeat here.

- Volume VII, Number 6, Page 5.
- Volume X, Number 3, Page 1.
- Volume XII, Number 1, Pages 1 to 4.



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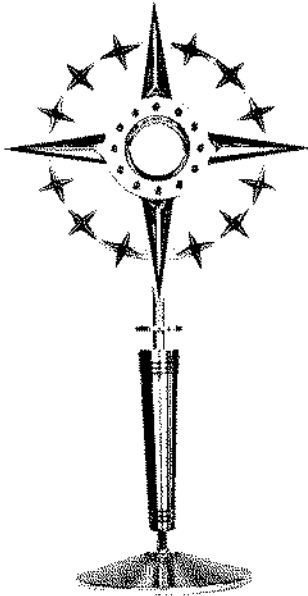
NUMBERING THE PONTIFICAL STATE FORGERIES.

Several suggestions have been received that the Pontifical State forgeries appearing in Vatican Notes be numbered for identification. The simplest method appears to number them in order of appearance in Vatican Notes with a prefix of the value, as follows:-

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Sc #1 = Vol XI - 2 DeSperati | 50 B #1 = Vol. XI - 3 De Sperati |
| 1 Sc #2 = Vol XI - 4 Fournier | 50 B #2 = Vol XII - 2 Fournier |
| 1 Sc #3 = Vol XII - 1 Fournier | 50 B #3 = Vol XII - 3 Fournier |
| 1 Sc #4 = Vol XII - 4 Spiro | 50 B #4 = Vol XII - 5 Spiro |
| 1 Sc #5 = Vol XII - 6 | 50 B #5 = Vol XIV - 1 |
| 1 Sc #6 = Vol XIII - 1 | 50 B #6 = Vol XIV - 2 |
| 1 Sc #7 = Vol XIII - 2 | |
| 1 Sc #8 = Vol XIII - 3 | |
| 1 Sc #9 = Vol XIII - 4 | |
| 1 Sc #10 = Vol XIII - 5 | |
| 1 Sc #11 = Vol XIII - 6 | |

With this issue we have begun the numbering above the forgery.

HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESSES.



International Eucharistic Congresses had their beginning through the initiative and perseverance of Mlle. Tamisier, with the encouragement of Msgr. Gaston de Segur, as a reaction against the severity of Jansenism and the attacks of atheism against the Holy Eucharist. Several attempts were made between 1874 and 1877 to bring about a large scale demonstration honoring the Holy Eucharist, and study sessions connected with it, which would make it a real congress.

Pope Leo XIII blessed the vague plans in April, 1879, but the bishops of France thought it imprudent to stage such demonstrations at the time because of the intense anti-clericalism then prevalent throughout the French Government. Belgium refused to conduct a congress because of a school controversy then going on. Cardinal Deschamps again contacted Pope Leo XIII, who again approved the plan, but who himself would not take the initiative.

In 1881 Philibert Vrau, an industrialist of Lille in northern France, agreed to undertake the project for Lille, where there had been several regional Catholic Congresses.

M. Vrau went to Rome and obtained approbation from Pope Leo XIII, and in June, 1881, the First International Eucharistic Congress was held at Lille, France, for three days. A permanent committee was set up with Bishop de la Bouillierie as chairman.

The Second International Eucharistic Congress was held in 1882 at Avignon, followed by the Third in 1883 at Liege, Belgium, while the Fourth was at Fribourg, Switzerland in 1885. Of the first fifteen International Eucharistic Congresses between 1881 and 1903, nine were held in France, four in Belgium, one in Switzerland and one in Jerusalem.

Toulouse held the Fifth in 1886, Paris the Sixth in 1888, Antwerp the Seventh in 1890, while the Eighth was held in Jerusalem in 1893 at the instigation of Pope Leo XIII. To this Eighth International Eucharistic Congress, Cardinal Langenieux was sent as Papal Legate. Papal Legates were again appointed in 1898 and 1902. Under Pope St. Pius X this custom of sending a Papal Legate was permanently established.

Belgium saw the Fourteenth Congress in 1902, Rome the Sixteenth in 1905, Tournai, Belgium the Seventeenth in 1906. Three countries predominantly protestant were chosen next: Metz, Germany in 1907; London, England, in 1908; Cologne Germany, in 1909. The Twenty First was held at Montreal in 1910; the Twenty Second at Madrid in 1911 and the Twenty Third at Vienna in 1912. Lourdes had the Twenty Fifth in 1914, followed by a hiatus for World War I. The Twenty Sixth resumed at Rome in 1922. Amsterdam had the Twenty Seventh in 1924, while the Twenty Eighth came to the United States at Chicago in 1926; the Twenty Ninth was at Sydney, Australia. Carthage in North Africa had the Thirtieth in 1930; Dublin the Thirty First in 1932; Buenos Aires had the Thirty Second in 1934; Manille the Thirty Third in 1936; and Budapest had the Thirty Fourth in 1938.

After World War II, the Thirty Fifth resumed at Barcelona in 1952; Rio de Janeiro held the Thirty Sixth in 1956; the Thirty Seventh was at Munich in 1960. This brings us to the THIRTY EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS which was held at Bombay, India in 1964, for which Vatican issued the stamps commemorating both the Congress and the visit of Pope Paul the VI to the Congress.

ST. BENEDICT OF NURSIA, PATRON OF EUROPE.

On July 2, 1965, Vatican issued two stamps commemorating St. Benedict, founder of the Benedictines. Both stamps bear the inscription "In the restored Cassino monastery, Paul VI declared St. Benedict the patron of Europe in the year 1964." The FD special cancel reads: "He, who was the teacher of the peoples of Europe of peace, unity and civil culture by the cross, book and plow, was made patron to the same peoples by Pope Paul VI". St. Benedict appears on the 40 Lire and the Abbey of Monte Cassino on the 300 Lire.



St. Benedict was born at Nursia (near Spoleto) c.480 and died 543 at Monte Cassino. He was the son of a well to do family, and had a sister, St. Scholastica, probably his twin. Schooled at Nursia and Rome, he fled from the evils of the world to Enfide (modern Affile), staying for a while with his houskeeper, Cyrilla, at the hospice of the church of St. Peter there. Performing his first miracle there, the publicity cause him to flee to a cave near Subiaco. The monk Romanus gave him the monk's clothing, and Benedict dwelt in the cave for three years, visited only by Romanus. Reluctantly he became the head of a local monastery, but again withdrew to his cave, to continue his meditations on God and to discipline himself further. His holiness attracted followers, and in the valley below his cave he established 12 monasteries, each with 12 monks and a superior, with himself as father abbot.

Florentius, a priest, cause him to move to Monte Cassino c.529 or earlier where he built the first monastery on the site of a pagan temple and developed the Benedictine rule of prayer and work; goods held in common; each monastery independent with an elected abbot; the abbot elected to carry out the Rule. His authority which was monarchical was held in check by religion, debate with the community on important matters, and with representative elders on small matters. Members were to dwell in one monastery for life. Thus were the Benedictines established, not the first community of monks, but the one that has lasted the longest, proven by time and the model for all monasticism.

The Abbey of Monte Cassino was built on the site of a temple to Apollo when he came from Subiaco in 529. It was sacked by the Lombards 589-90 and rebuilt in 720. It was destroyed again by the Saracens in 884 and was rebuilt by 954.

It is the original home of the Benedictines who spread throughout Europe, and in the 11th and 12th centuries was the seat of science, particularly of medicine. The School of Medicine at Salerno was established from Monte Cassino. The first of the modern buildings was erected 1637-1727 (cf. Italy, Scott #232-38). During the second world war bombers from the Allied Air Force destroyed it on Feb. 15, 1944, as a supposed German observation post, the key to the defense of the mountains behind it, which held up the allied advance.

Its library of 50,000 books and 30,000 early works had long been removed with other portable art treasures, to avoid the pilaging hands of the Germans. It has been the place of refuge for kings and popes. The Italian Government siezed it together with other church property in 1866, when it dissolved the monasteries. Because of its fame it was made a national monument.

After the close of World War II it was restored again, an event philatelically commemorated by Italy in the stamps of 1951 (Scott Italy # 579-580; overprinted for the Free Territory of Trieste, Scott # 120-21). The stamps mentioned above showing the first modern monastery were issued in 1929, commemorating the 1400 anniversary of the founding of the abbey.

Cf. Catholic Encyclopedia:- BENEDICT OF NURSIA; BENEDICTINE ORDER; BENEDICT, RULE OF ST.; MONTE CASSINO. Cf. St. Benedict an his monks, Theodore Maynard (Kennedy, 1954)