

# Vatican Notes

Volume VI

January - February 1958

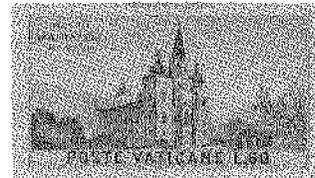
Number 4

## VATICAN CITY PHILATELIC NEWS

**MARIAZELL SHRINE** - On November 14, 1957 the Vatican released a set of four commemorative stamps (Scott 229-232) to mark the eighth centenary of the Marian Shrine at Mariazell, Austria. The issue consists of two designs both executed by the famed Vatican designer, Miss Casmira Dabrowska. The 5 and 60 Lire stamps are green and ultramarine respectively, and shows the basilica with its two Baroque and one Gothic spires. They were printed from plates engraved by V. Nicastro, Inc. The 15 and 100 Lire stamps are grey-green and dark violet respectively, and show the



Shrine itself with the famous wooden statue of the Blessed Virgin and Child. The 800-year old statue carved by a Benedictine Monk appears to be perfectly preserved. The stamps were printed from plates engraved by M. Canfarini, Inc. All stamps were printed by the State Printing Office in Rome in sheets of 50 with standard Vatican watermark and perforations. The 5 and 60 Lire values bear the



dates 1157 and 1957 and "MARIAZELL." The 15 and 60 Lire values bear the inscription "The Great Mother of Austria" - Cella Magnae Matris Austriae.

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VRS President William Wonneberger, jr. reports that during January 1958 the Vatican will release a set of two airmail stamps with face values of 500 and 1000 Lire respectively. The stamps, which will have a design common to both values, will depict St. Peter's Dome and will be similar if not identical to the airmail issue of 1953 (Scott C22-23) except for colors.

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Mr. Wonneberger also reports that the Lourdes Issue, mentioned in the last issue of VATICAN NOTES, has now been confirmed and will be issued early in 1958 - probably in February. This commemorative set will mark the first centenary of the appearance of the Blessed Virgin Mary to St. Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes, France. At least one of the designs will depict the vision while another is expected to portray the grotto at Lourdes.

For the first time in its twenty-nine year philatelic history, Vatican City will issue commemorative stamps to record a non-religious event. This Vatican "first" will be to mark the World's Fair at Brussels, Belgium, at which the Vatican will have its own three-building exhibition - "Civitas Dei", City of God. While no further details are available, it is expected that the set will appear in April to coincide with the opening of the Fair.

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#### RESULTS OF VPS VOTING

##### Present Officers Re-elected

##### Student Chapter Amendment Adopted

Ballots for the election of officers for 1958 and for constitution and by-laws amendments were included in the last issue of VATICAN NOTES. The ballots which were returned by the members have now been counted and the following results have been officially recorded by the Secretary:

For PRESIDENT:	William Wonneberger, jr.	208 votes
For VICE-PRESIDENT:	Rev. Herbert A. Phinney	206 votes
	Leo A. Stevens	1 vote
	Frederick J. Levitsky	1 vote
For SECRETARY:	Wallace R. Smith	208 votes
For TREASURER:	Frederick J. Levitsky	206 votes
	William P. Quinn	1 vote
	Rev. Herbert A. Phinney	1 vote

Accordingly, the following have been duly elected as officers of the Vatican Philatelic Society for the year 1958:

William Wonneberger, jr.	PRESIDENT	Wallace R. Smith	SECRETARY
Rev. Herbert A. Phinney	VICE-PRESIDENT	Frederick J. Levitsky	TREASURER

Each of the above elected officers, as well as the other appointed officials, have accepted re-election (or re-appointment) and greatly appreciate the confidence which the membership have placed in them. All are eager to continue their present VPS duties and will spare no effort in forwarding the aims of the Vatican Philatelic Society in the coming year.

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The Secretary has also reported and officially recorded the results of the voting on the constitution and by-laws amendments as discussed on page -3- of Volume VI, Number 3 of VATICAN NOTES and as set forth in the attachment to that issue.

Voting FOR	207 votes	Voting AGAINST	1 vote
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Accordingly, the proposed constitution and by-laws amendments are adopted and made a part of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Vatican Philatelic Society.

## BEATIFICATION OF POPE PIUS X

Beatification is a process of the Church by which permission is granted for public veneration of a person, restricted to certain places and acts. Before such permission is given, a thorough examination is made of the life of the person to be declared Blessed. A postulator is appointed by ecclesiastical authority and he and his assistant inquire into the sanctity of the person concerned, prove that no public veneration of the person has taken place contrary to Papal decrees, and collect all the writings of the person. A commission, under a Cardinal, examines all this material. If a favorable decision is reached, the Pope is informed and he signs a decree that the person is to be called Venerable. A second commission is appointed to further the cause of beatification. If this commission finds that the person practiced Christian Virtue in a heroic degree, these findings are discussed in three meetings, at the last of which the Pope presides. All doubts as to the person's sanctity and all difficulties must be removed by this time. A decree is then issued testifying to the person's holy life. Now two miracles must be proved as happening through the intercession of the person. The opinions of physicians are necessary if the miracle is a cure. When all doubt as to the miracle having been performed only through divine intercession has been removed, a decree is issued declaring them valid. After three sessions of discussions, at the last of which the Pope again presides, a Pontifical Brief is issued declaring the person Blessed.

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 It has been reported that during his reign, Pope Pius X performed miracles when he gave his Apostolic Blessing. His great faith attributed this to his office as Head of the Church rather than to his personal sanctity. However, after his death, reports of miraculous cures due to his intercession gave rise to petitions for his canonization. The cause of his beatification (which precedes canonization) was begun on February 17, 1943. His body was taken from its tomb in the crypt in 1944 and brought to the main basilica of St. Peters. It was found to be incorrupt. Fr. Phinney, VPS Vice-President, who was in Rome, saw the body incorrupt the day after its exhumation. The limbs of Pius X were supple and his face peaceful.



After the process of beatification described above was completed, Pope Pius XII proclaimed him Blessed Pius X on June 3, 1951, the 116th anniversary of his baptism. The two miracles substantiated were the cure from bone cancer of Sister Maria Francesca Deperras, declared hopeless by the doctors, and the cure of Sister Maria Benedetta of a malignant tumor. The latter was present at the Beatification ceremony.

The ceremony began at 10:00 a.m. in St. Peters Basilica with the reading of the Apostolic Brief of the Beatification of Pius X. His body was clothed in Papal Robes and a Papal ring was on his finger. Banners depicting the two miracles for his beatification were displayed. While the hymn "Te Deum" was being chanted, drapes were drawn aside revealing his body in a glass casket. A Solemn Pontifical Mass was celebrated and the ceremony ended. That evening in St. Peters Square, Pope Pius XII, standing before an overflowing multitude, gave the eulogy of the new Blessed, in front of a temporary altar near which was the glass coffin containing the body of Pope Pius X.

The set of four commemorative stamps were issued on the day of the ceremony and show the Pope in excellent likeness in full front and side profile views against a gold background. (Scott 145-148)

## THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON

Chalcedon was a city on the coast of Bythnia in Asia Minor, opposite the city of Byzantine or Constantinople. Its name through the years has become Kadi-Keui or Kadikei. The Fourth Oecumenical Council of the Church was held in this city from October 8th to November 1, 451. It concerned the definition of the correct teaching of the Church concerning the two natures of Jesus Christ. The Church from the beginning has held that in Jesus Christ there is but one person, the Divine Person of the Son, Second Person of the Blessed Trinity; that Jesus Christ had two natures, the nature of God from all eternity, and the nature of man from the moment of His conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

The Council of Ephesus in 431 had condemned as false and heretical the teaching of Nestorianism, which claimed two persons in Christ, by defining the Apostolic teaching of the Church that there was but one person - the Divine Person. The Council of Chalcedon in its fifth and sixth sessions condemned as false and heretical the teaching of the Monophysites headed by Eutyches who claimed that the divine and human natures of Christ had fused to make but one nature, by reaffirming and defining the Apostolic teaching that in Christ there were two separate and distinct natures, the divine and the human, which were joined by their union in the Divine Person of Christ but which were not fused into one.



There were fifteen sessions of the Council in all. The main work was completed after the sixth session with subsequent sessions concerned only with secondary matters which were mostly jurisdictional. One of the resolutions of the 14th session brought rejection by the Pope, so He gave his approval to only the first six sessions which dealt with matters of faith. Only this part of the council became Oecumenical. While the council did not put an immediate end to the controversy concerning the two natures of Christ, it struck a death blow to the spread of the heresy even though it continued to exist among a few for some time.



The sixth session took place on October 25th, which made the actual duration of the Oecumenical Council from October 8th to 25th, 451. At this session, the Emperor Pulcheria was present with the Imperial commissioners and senate. The Emperor made an appropriate address.

The decree of faith made at the fifth session was read again and approved by the Emperor. However, it was the approval of Pope Leo, who had called the Council and who as the successor to St. Peter possessed the infallible teaching authority, which made this reaffirmation of the Apostolic teaching a matter of faith to be believed by all the members of the Church. This is recalled in the words which appear on commemorative stamps showing the sixth session of the Council - "Peter has spoken through Leo."

The issue commemorating the 1500th anniversary of the Council appeared in October 1951. The 5, 35 and 100 Lire values show the Council in the sixth session, while the 25 and 60 Lire values portray Pope Leo the Great, who called the Council, meeting Attila the Hun. (Scott 149-153)

## POPE LEO I AND ATTILA THE HUN

When Northern Italy had been devastated by Attila and his Huns, Pope Leo I went to see him personally and prevented him from attacking Rome. It was at the wish of the Emperor that Pope Leo I, with Consul Avienus and Prefect Trigetius, met Attila at Mincie in 452, near Mantua. Attila withdrew from Italy and promised to negotiate peace with the Emperor.

Raphael depicts this scene on one of the wall panels of the Stanza of Heliodorus in the Apostolic Palace of the Vatican. Attila is portrayed in the midst of his cavalry, which had swept all before it, yet he draws back in terror at the apparition of St. Peter and St. Paul whom tradition says appeared above the head of Pope St. Leo. In the distance are seen burning villages. Pope Leo is depicted on the left, but his face is that of Pope Leo X, whose face is again shown as one of the accompanying Cardinals. In his painting, Raphael has transferred the scene from Mincie to the vicinity of Rome. The picture is supposed to be an allusion to the retreat of the French at the Battle of Ravenna in 1512 at which Leo X as a Cardinal served as Legate to the Army. Attila represents Louis XII of France. Since Leo I was reigning Pontiff during the Council of Chalcedon, this incident from his life is portrayed by the Vatican on two of the stamps commemorating that event.

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## BACKGROUND HISTORICAL SERIES ON VATICAN CITY STAMPS

This series is continued in the present issue of VATICAN NOTES with the presentation of material on the Beatification of Pope Pius X (145-148) on page - 3 -, the Council of Chalcedon (149-153) on page - 4 -, St. Maria Goretti (156-157) on page - 6 -, and the beginning of the Popes Series (158-168) on page - 7 - to - 10 - inclusive. Scott 154 is the Basilica overprint. Information on the basic stamp was included in the presentation on the Basilica Series and no further material is required in this series. It was originally planned to cover the Centenary of Postage Stamps (155) in this issue. However, in order to insure adequate space for the presentation and to make it possible to include a review of Roman States history and philately, it is now planned to cover this stamp and souvenir sheet in the next issue of VATICAN NOTES, replacing the usual two pages of Roman States material.

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## EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER ELECTIONS

In elections held on November 26, 1957, the following officers were elected:

PRESIDENT: L. Paul Marini (re-elected)  
 VICE-PRESIDENT: William P. Quinn (replacing Rev. Herbert A. Phinney)  
 SECRETARY-TREASURER: Miss Rita Murphy (re-elected)

This very active chapter has made an intensive study of the various reprintings of the Popes Series, the results of which have been embodied in a useful chart. This will be included in VATICAN NOTES in the near future.

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In response to the request on page - 2 - of the last issue of VATICAN NOTES, a number of comments have been received relating to the publication of a Vatican City catalogue. These are now being evaluated by the Board of Governors and the decision will be announced shortly.

## ST. MARIA GORETTI

Maria Goretti was born during the night of October 16, 1890 in Corinaldo, near Ancona, Italy. Her parents were Luigi Goretti and Assunta Carlini Goretti. Her home was a poor farm of small size. The name of Maria Teresa was given to the newborn girl at Baptism on October 17th. She spent the first six years of her life there on the farm with her hard-working and religious parents. She grew to be a most obedient child in this atmosphere. Late in 1896 her family moved to Colle Giaturco. Here they remained for three years attempting to draw a living from the poor soil. Finally the family moved to Ferriere di Conca in the Pontine marshlands below Rome in the Anzio-Nettuno area of the Anzio beachhead of World War II.

Having come there through necessity, the Goretti's entered into a working contract with Giovanni Serenelli and his son, Allesandro, living under the same roof with them and sharing the work and profits. The father was a dishonest man and a heavy drinker, and Allesandro was no better. Luigi Goretti fell sick, and as death approached, begged his wife to return to Corinaldo as a more fitting atmosphere in which to bring up the Goretti which now numbered six. At her husband's death, Assunta Goretti found it hard to return to Corinaldo and decided to stay where she was, taking on the farm work of her husband. Maria, at the age of nine, assumed the household duties to relieve her overworked mother.

In January of 1902, Allesandro Serenelli began to form a collection of obscene pictures and to try to induce Maria to satisfy his desires. He admitted later that his suggestions were not understood by the child in most instances. But when direct advances were made to her she would repel him with her refusal - "It is a sin." For some months she bore with his attentions secretly so as not to disturb her mother. On June 5th, Allesandro left the fields and returned to the house. Here he tried to force himself on the child and with almost superhuman effort she resisted him. Drawing a knife he threatened her, only to meet with the same answer - "It is a sin!!"



The enraged Allesandro plunged the knife into her a number of times. The closed door of the house muffled her cries. As Maria fell to the floor, Allesandro started for his room. Maria summoned all her strength, opened the door and cried for help. Allesandro whirled and struck her repeatedly with the knife. The Goretti baby, Teresa, was awakened and her cries brought the elder Serenelli, who shouted for the other workers from the

fields to come running. Maria was placed in bed and the Doctor from Nettuno summoned. When he arrived he called the horse-drawn ambulance to take the child to the hospital in Nettuno. Here they performed two hours of surgery with no anesthesia because of her condition. Fourteen wounds, most of which pierced the intestines, slowly drained life from the child. While still conscious, she forgave Allesandro and the following day she died.

Allesandro was given a long prison term, after which he joined a monastic group as a lay brother. Both he and Maria Goretti's mother were able to testify at the canonization proceedings of the child. Recognition of her martyrdom for the virtue of purity was decreed on May 21, 1945. She was beatified on April 27, 1947 and canonized on June 25, 1950. Because of the great number of requests for tickets to the canonization, Pope Pius XII set the proclamation for June 24th and the Mass for June 25th. Maria Goretti's mother was present to witness the proclamation of her daughter as a saint. The Vatican issued a two-stamp commemorative set (Scott 156-157) in 1953, showing the Saint, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of her martyrdom.

## THE POPES SERIES

Editor's Note - The background historical series on Vatican City stamps which has been appearing regularly in VATICAN NOTES has now reached the Popes Series (Scott 158-168). A wealth of interesting material both on the Popes themselves (except where such information has been previously carried) as well as on St. Peter's Basilica some portion of which appears on most of the stamps, has been prepared. The first portion of this material appears on pages -7- to -10- incl. of this issue. This series will be continued in subsequent issues until the entire set has been covered.

3 Lire - ST. PETER

Simon Bar Jona (Simon, Son of John or Jona) was a native of Bethsaida, Galilee, a town on Lake Genesareth. Andrew the Apostle was his brother, and Philip the Apostle came from the same town. With Andrew and the brothers James (the Greater) and John, he was attracted to John the Baptist. John the Baptist pointed out Christ to Andrew and John (the Evangelist) as the Lamb of God. They followed and met Christ, later bringing to him their respective brothers, Peter and James.



At Christ's first meeting with Simon, he changed his name to Peter (the Rock) and later promised Peter: "Upon this rock I will build my Church." Peter resumed his work as a fisherman for a short time, and then upon receiving a call from Christ to follow Him, he became one of His permanent disciples through the three years of Christ's public life. Peter was the first named when Christ later chose his twelve Apostles, and Peter was their Head and Spokesman. At Caesarea Philippi when Christ asked the Apostles: "Whom do men say that I am?", he listened to their various replies as recorded in the Gospels. Then he put the question "But whom do you say that I am?" Peter answered "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." To him Christ said in response: "Blesséd art thou, Simon Bar Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but My Father who is in Heaven. And I say to thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound also in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in Heaven."

Peter witnessed the miracles of Christ and heard His preaching. He was with Him at the Last Supper. Afterwards in the Garden of Gethsemane, after sleeping while Christ prayed, he drew his sword to defend Christ when the soldiers came with Judas to sieze Him, but then fled into the darkness. Later that night in the courtyard of the High Priest, Peter three times denied he knew Christ, and when Christ looked at Peter as He passed him, Peter again fled and wept bitterly over his denial. Peter is not recorded as being present at the Crucifixion of Christ, but on Easter morning, after the women had discovered the empty tomb, Peter was the first to enter the Holy Sepulchre from which Christ had risen. During the forty days that Christ remained on earth after His Resurrection, He appointed Peter to feed His lambs, to feed His sheep. Peter's appointment as the Head of the Church of Christ.

On Pentecost Sunday, after the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, Peter went out into the streets of Jerusalem with the other Apostles and

preached that Christ was the Son of God, risen from the dead. On this day he made three thousand converts from among his fellow Jews. He was the first of the Apostles to work a recorded public miracle, curing the lame man at the Temple at the Beautiful Gate. The Acts of the Apostles recounts his appearance before the Jewish High Council, and his defense of his teaching, as well as the fact that the shadow of Peter falling on the sick cured them. In Caesarea, Peter received into the Church for the first time Gentiles or non-Jews. In Jerusalem, he was cast into prison and freed by the Angel, went on extensive missionary tours, staying for a while at Antioch. He returned to Jerusalem for the Council of Jerusalem which was called to decide whether Gentile converts should keep the Mosaic Law or not. It was Peter's decision that they were not bound to keep the Mosaic Law. Antioch became the center of his activity, and he was the first Bishop of that city.

The exact time that Peter came to Rome is not certain, but it is thought to be somewhere between 42 and 47 A.D. The fact that he died there as a martyr is attested to by the writings of the first and second centuries, e.g. Papias and Clement of Alexandria; add to this the fact that the Gospel of Mark was written at the request of the Romans who desired a memorial in writing of the teachings of Peter. Mark was the Disciple of Peter. Irenaeus, Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Dionysius of Corinth, and many other early Christian writers confirm the fact of Peter's death at Rome. The year 67 A.D. seems the most probable date of Peter's death. Tradition tells according to St. Jerome, that Peter was in Rome in 42 A.D., ruling as Bishop of Rome for twenty-five years, bringing the date of his crucifixion to 67 A.D. St. Paul was executed at the same time, but Paul being a Roman citizen could not be crucified and was beheaded on the Ostian Way. Peter was crucified in the Circus of Nero, and tradition again tells that he deemed himself unworthy to die in the same manner as Christ and so requested to be crucified upside down. His body was taken by Christians and interred in a pagan cemetery on the other side of the Cornelian Way from the Circus of Nero.

#### Inscription from the Excavations Under St. Peter's Basilica

Before his death in 1939, Pope Pius XI had requested that he be buried in the crypt of St. Peter's. In excavating for his tomb, an ancient Roman cemetery was discovered. This had been unearthed when the present Basilica was being constructed, but no record of the tombs exposed had been kept. When the Baldacchino was being constructed and excavations were made for its foundations, the cemetery was again exposed, again without accurate record of the findings. After excavating from 1939 on with great care, much of this cemetery has been exposed around the tomb of St. Peter. Near St. Peter's tomb was found a picture scratched in a wall, presumably of St. Peter, under which the archeologist Muzioli found an inscription with the key word "Petrus" or Peter followed by other faint lettering. The inscription was photographed with slanting light to pick up the slightest markings and a careful study of the photographs began. In 1953, Margherita Guarducci, Professor of Greek epigraphy at the University of Rome gave the reconstructed inscription as it appears on the lower part of the 3 Lire stamp of this series: "Peter, pray to Christ Jesus for the holy Christian men buried near your grave." (Shrine of St. Peter, by Toynebee and Perkins, Pantheon Press.)

The tomb of St. Peter outside the Circus of Nero was the object of veneration of Christians. By law, the Romans protected the graves and burial places from

violation. In the year 258 this protection was withdrawn, and some think that the bodies of Sts. Peter and Paul were removed from their original graves and reinterred in the Catacombs of St. Sebastian, later being returned to their respective tombs on the Vatican Hill and the Ostian Way. This, however, is not certain.

When the Basilica of St. Peters was being erected under Constantine, the Memorial Chapel raised above the tomb of Peter was left intact. The Liber Pontificalis relates that this was built by Pope Anacletus about the year 90 A.D. Recent examination of this Memorial leads some experts to believe that this was constructed in 160-170 A.D. under Pope Anicetus. In order to preserve this Memorial the floor of the apse of the Constantinian Basilica was raised above the level of the floor of the nave, leaving the grave of Peter undisturbed. The same reverence was shown in the building of the new St. Peters. The vault in which St. Peter was buried was no longer accessible because of supporting walls and filling in until recent years. The great weight of the Basilica above the tomb of St. Peter deterred the start of the work which was contemplated many years before it was begun, because collapse of the building was feared. Only with extreme care and the most modern techniques and equipment was the project successful without disturbing the safety of the Basilica.

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#### 5 Lire and 85 Lire (Special Delivery) - POPE PIUS XII

Biographical information on Pope Pius XII was given in Volume V, Number II of VATICAN NOTES, August-September, 1956.

#### The Roman Cemetery

Beneath the likeness of Pope Pius XII on these two stamps appears a portrayal of the Roman cemetery referred to above, which was re-discovered when excavating for the tomb of Pope Pius XI in the crypt of St. Peters. A breakthrough of a wall revealed an extensive Roman cemetery in 1939. Pope Pius XII resolved to follow up this discovery by thoroughgoing excavations if the safety of the Basilica could be preserved. He moreover sanctioned a complete, scientific examination of the whole region of the Papal altar and the confessio down to virgin earth to test the truth of the tradition of the Apostle Peter's burial place. Preliminary reports began to appear in Italian periodicals in 1941, followed by short accounts of the Roman cemetery during the next ten years, with a full report coming in December of 1951. (Esplorazioni Sotto La Confessione Di San Pietro in Vaticano Eseguite Negli Anni, 1940-1949 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana.)



Archeological experts and the Sanpietrini uncovered a series of Roman tombs and graves which extend under the whole south side of the Basilica (left side as one faces St. Peters) which had been carefully filled in at the time of building of the Constantinian Basilica. Their line follows the axis of the Via Cornelia and their age runs from individual graves that ante-date that of St. Peter's to mausolea which apparently date from 125 to 200 A.D. The ones

furthest from the Via Cornelia are the oldest, and those near it more recent. Some contain cremation burials, and others inhumations. The filling in of these tombs was apparently so carefully and so reverently done in the time of Constantine that most are in a state of exceptional preservation. Diagrams which are available show 24 mausolea, some with more than one room. These can not be opened to the general public because of their position and confined quarters, but small groups may be allowed to visit them.

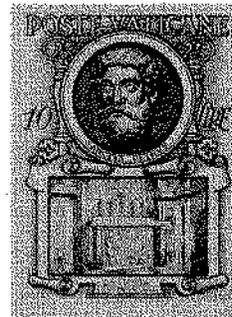
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10 Lire and 50 Lire (Special Delivery) - ST. PETER

Biographical information on St. Peter is given above for the 3 Lire value.

The Tomb of the Apostle

Beneath the likeness of St. Peter on these two stamps is shown the altar in the Clementine Chapel which is below the present High Altar of the Peters. The wall in back of this altar is the wall of the Constantine Shrine. If the Shrine of Constantine over the grave of Peter existed today, then these two would be on opposite sides of the same wall.



The description of the grave of St. Peter and its surroundings as given in English publications describing the recent findings is complicated even with accompanying diagrams. The grave of St. Peter was crossed by a retaining wall built for a section of the Roman Cemetery, called the Red Wall. When it passed over the grave of Peter its foundation was arched so as not to disturb his grave. It was into this Red Wall that the Memorial of Anicetus (90 A.D.) or Anicetus (160 A.D.) was built. Two niches were made into the wall itself and a third niche gave access to the grave below the Red Wall where its foundation arched over the resting place of St. Peter. The top niche was decorated with marble with a pitched roof effect on top. In front of this top niche a marble platform extended outward supported by two columns standing on a marble floor. This is the second niche. In this marble floor was the access to the lower niche and to the grave of St. Peter.

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12 Lire - POPE SYLVESTER I

The date of the birth of Pope St. Sylvester I is not known but his death occurred on December 31, 335. He was elected Pope in 314 and reigned for twenty-one years, the era of Constantine the Great. According to legend he was very friendly with Constantine. He did take part in the Council of Nicea concerning Arianism. During his reign the foundation of the great churches of Rome took place at the order of Constantine: St. Peters in the Vatican, the Basilica and Baptistery of St. John Lateran, and in addition the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, and several churches over the tombs of martyrs.

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(This series will be continued in the next issue of VATICAN NOTES.)

DISINFECTION (CHOLERA) COVERS OF THE ROMAN STATES

by William A. Johnson

For a complete study of this subject the reader is referred to a monologue by Dr. Donal S. Patton of Great Britain, which appeared in the AFS Bulletin during the two-year period, 1951-1952. The treatment in this present article emphasizes the subject as it relates to Papal History.

While Dr. Patton mentioned in his article that the earliest date for Cholera Covers was 1750, the writer has in his collection a cover showing disinfection in 1740. He further states that, with the exception of Semilin and a few isolated districts, cachets of disinfection occurred about 1830. Again, the writer wishes to correct this since he has a cachet of Bologna dated 1823.

Methods of Disinfection

The earliest method consisted of sprinkling the letter with vinegar (acetic acid) or immersing in water. The letter was attached to a pair of tongs, tied to a long stick and dipped into the solution. As a result, the original white paper showed a brownish tinge, with the areas where the tongs were applied remaining as strips of white.

At first there was no attempt to fumigate the interior of the document or letter. Hence, one will find cachets stating fumigation of exterior only. However, this was followed, first, by cutting razor slits in the envelope (letter) or document and later by actually opening the letters and resealing them in cases where the regulations permitted. There are also covers showing two fumigation cancels - one each at the origin and destination - when the plague existed at both points.

The majority of the above cachets appear during the period 1854 - 1855. However, razor slits appear as late as 1867 made during local epidemics.

Epidemics of the Roman States

The earliest severe epidemic affecting the Roman States appears to have struck in the late 1700's and again from about 1823 to 1855. The world-wide epidemic of 1894 affected the entire Italian peninsula and the Roman States. The last known severe case appeared in 1911.

The various types of cancels related to disinfection (cholera) covers of the Roman States is given in the hand-drawn chart on the following page.

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Members of VPS who are collectors of Roman States stamps and covers are urged to contact the Roman States Chairman - William A. Johnson, 104 East Marshall Road, Lansdowne, Pennsylvania, indicating what subjects they would like to see covered in the future. The degree of interest shown by RS collectors will directly determine the space which can be devoted to the subject in VATICAN NOTES.

CHOLERA (DISINFECTION) CANCELS KNOWN TO EXIST

FOR THE ROMAN STATES

FAENZA  
DISINFETTATA

(FAENZA)

Forli  
Disinfettata

(FORLI)

IMOLA  
DISINFETTATA

(IMOLA)

DISINFETTO  
PER CONTATTO

(BOLOGNA)  
1854

Ferrara  
Netta Fuori  
e dentro

(FERRARA)

PESARO  
NETTA DENTRO E FUORI

(PESARO)

DISINFETTATA

(UNKNOWN)

Ancona Santa  
Netta fuori e dentro

(ANCONA) (1830)

NETTA  
DENTRO E FUORI  
(ROMA)

PROVINCIALE DI ANCONA  
Netta  
dentro e fuori

(ANCONA)

CIVITA CASTELLANA  
NETTA  
DENTRO E FUORI

(CIVITA CASTELLANA)

NETTA FUORI  
E SPORGA DENTRO  
(ROMA)

PROVINCIA DI  
Disinfettata  
BOLOGNA  
(BOLOGNA)

COMMISSIONE  
DI SANITA  
DELLA PROVINCIA  
DI BOLOGNA

(BOLOGNA)  
(1823)

PROVINCIA DI RAVENNA  
Disinfettata  
(RIMINI)

RIMINI (1854)

Disinfettata  
per contatto

BOLOGNA (1849)

PONTELAGOSCURO &  
CIVITAVECCHIE  
CANCELS ARE ALSO  
KNOWN TO EXIST