


 Vatican Philatelic Society
Vatican Notes

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DANTE



THE VALERIAN MARTYRS.

The Valerian Martyr set was intended to be issued on the 1700th anniversary of their death in 258, which would have had them issued in 1958. For this purpose, five designs were prepared by the Grassellinis. Three were after frescoes found in the catacombs under the Church of St. Chrysogonus in Trastevere (Rome):- St. Agapitus, deacon; St. Felisissimus, deacon and St. Sixtus II, pope. The design for St. Lawrence, deacon, was taken from a mosaic in the Grotte Vaticane, under the Basilica of St. Peter. That for St. Cyprian was also taken from a picture in the catacombs. The set was forecast for late 1958. The illness and death of Pope Pius XII on October 9, 1958, caused a delay in issuing the set, which finally had its First Day on March 25, 1959.

This was now the 1701st Anniversary of the death of these five Valerian Martyrs, not the 1700th. St. Fructuosus, Bishop of Tarragona, had died in 259 in the Valerian Persecution in his episcopal city in Spain. His name was added to the list of Valerian Martyrs to be commemorated on the stamps, keeping the anniversary within the 1700 year span.

Having no picture of St. Fructuosus, the Grassellinis consulted records of the life of this martyred Spanish bishop, read his works, and with this as a spiritual basis, drew a portrait of the man, attempting to keep the portrait in the primitive artistic style of the other five representations.

If you will examine the cachet for the First Day Covers, which were prepared at Rome for this event, you will find that it carries the portraits of the five saints who were martyred in 258. Rather than waste the FDCs with the colorful cachet, they used it in 1959 with St. Fructuosus "included out". (See below).

The Latin quotation from the Book of Wisdom V,5 = "Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints," appears below the cachet.



DANTE.

DANTE ALIGHIERI was born at Florence, Italy, in 1265 (died at Ravenna, Sept. 14, 1321) of Alighiero de Bellencione Alighieri and his wife Bella. Politically he was a Guelph, and fought against the Ghiblins. He became a member of the Guild of Physicians and Apothecaries, since as a guild member he could participate in public life. He began writing, completing his first book (New Life) in 1294, which was poetry about "Beatrice", the name of a young girl who had died in 1290.

In 1300 he was elected as one of the six Priori who ruled Florence in two month terms, his incumbancy being from June 15 to August 15. Two factions had risen among the Guelphs, the Blacks and the Whites, Dante belonging to the Whites. Charles of Valois with his troops entered Florence in 1301 and placed the Blacks in power. Dante was falsely charged with hostility toward the Church, was convicted and assessed with a heavy fine and was perpetually excluded from public office, and in 1302 was condemned to be burned to death.

By this time Dante had fled the city of Florence and joined his wife and children in San Godenzo. Withdrawing from active politics, he started writing a group of poems, partly allegorical in nature, which actually formed a connecting link between his "New Life" and the "Divine Comedy". He was at Bologna in 1304, but was expelled in 1306 with the other "Whites", going first to Padua and then to Linigiana. During this period he wrote "The Banquet", a popularization of Scholastic Philosophy, and then disappeared from recorded history for some years. After the election of Emperor Henry VII, and in anticipation of the Visit of the Emperor to Italy, in 1309 he wrote "De Monachia", presenting the picture of the Emperor as the healer of all the ills of Italy. Dante met Henry VII in 1311, and later wrote to him, taking him to task for delaying an attack on Florence. Florence reacted with a decree of perpetual exile from that city, without amnesty.

The writings of Dante shaped Italian poetry and left his mark on modern literature. His greatest work was the "Divine Comedy", which he composed in three books:- Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, completing the last at Ravenna about 1317.

THE DIVINE COMEDY is an allegory of human life in the form of a vision of the world of Eternity, intended to convert a corrupt society from sin to grace. Dante recounts a vision granted him in the Jubilee Year of 1300, which was intended to lead him from a sinful life to the ways of God. In the vision he passes through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, speaking to individual souls in each place, describing the punishments and rewards, and learning what God has in store for him and the whole world. The journey through Hell with the Roman poet Virgil begins Holy Thursday night and ends on Easter Sunday at 5:00 A.M. At dawn on Easter Virgil leads him into Purgatory and entrusts his trip through the earthly paradise and Paradise itself to Beatrice on Easter Wednesday morning. Beatrice leads him through Paradise to the Throne of God.

THE STAMP DESIGNS are by Casimira Dabrowska. The Lire 10 is taken from the Disputa del Sacramento by Raphael, the fresco on Theology in the Camera della Segnatura in the Vatican Palace (Cf. Vatican Notes, Vol. XII, #4, p.10) and the other three were inspired by originals by Sandro Boticelli which he did to illustrate the Divine Comedy.

Reference for the scene on the Lire 40 stamp is Canto I of Hell, verses 32 ff., which relates that Dante wandered from the right road into the Dark Wood of Sin. He tries to escape by climbing a beautiful mountain, but is turned back succesively by a Leopard, a Lion and a Wolf, which are images of sin identified respectively with Lust, Pride and Avarice, or with the three types of sin which can damn unrepentant souls to one of the three main divisions of Hell

First rose, a Leopard, nimble and light and fleet,
Clothed in fine furred pelt all dapple-dyed,
Came gambolling out and skipped before my feet,
Hindering me so, that from the forthright line
Time and again I turned to beat retreat.....

Yet not so much that I fell to quaking
 At a fresh sigh - a Lion in the way.
 I saw him coming, swift and savage, making
 For me head high, with ravenous hunger raving
 So that for dread the very air seemed shaking.
 And next, a Wolf, gaunt with famished craving
 Lodged ever in her horrible lean flank,
 The ancient cause of men's enslaving;
 She was the worst - at that dread sight a blank
 Despair and whelming terror pinned me fast,
 Until all hope to scale the mountain sank.

(At this point Virgil appears to guide him on his way:- verses 62 ff.)

Suddenly a form was there, which dumbly crossed
 My path.....

"Canst thou be Virgil? thou fount of splendor,
 Whence poured so wide a stream of lordly speech?"

(Virgil leads Dante through the Upper Hell and the two parts of the Nether Hell, and then into Purgatory, leads him up the mountain of Purgatory as far as the Earthly Paradise).

The scene on the Lire 70 stamp is from the beginning of The Purgatory. Purgatory is pictured as a mountain on an island at the South Pole, with two lower terraces of Ante-Purgatory, followed by St. Peter's Gate which is at the entrance to the Seven Cornices of Purgatory, above which, at the top of the mountain, is the Earthly Paradise. The first three Cornices make up lower Purgatory and the fourth middle Purgatory, while the last three are upper Purgatory. At sunrise of Easter Sunday the Ship of Souls arrives at the Island of Purgatory from the mouth of the River Tiber with the newly dead, steered by an angel. On the stamp we see Dante and Virgil about to start the ascent of the mountain, and at the upper right the angel and the Ship of Souls. We quote from Purgatory, Canto II, verses 12 ff.

And lo! as sometimes at the approach of day
 Mars in the west across the ocean floor
 Glows through thick vapor with a dim, red ray,
 Even so - God send I see the sight once more! -
 I saw a light come speeding o'er the sea.
 So swift, flight knows no simile therefor.
 For a brief space I turned inquiringly
 Back to my guide; then looked again and lo!
 Bigger and brighter far it seemed to me.
 Then from each side of it, there seemed to grow
 A white I-knew- not what; and there appeared
 Another whiteness, bit by bit, below.
 Now all this time my master spoke no word,
 Till plain we saw, those first two whitenesses
 Were wings; and knowing then what helmsman steered,
 "Down, down!" he cried, "fold hands and bow thy knee,
 Behold the angel of the Lord! Henceforth
 Thou shalt see many of these great emissaries.
 See how he scorns all instruments of earth,
 Needing no oar, no sail but his own wings,
 Twixt shores that span so vast an ocean's girth.
 See how each soaring pinion heavenward springs,
 beating the air with pens imperishable
 That are not mewed like mortal coverings.".....

And hard on shore he steered his flight....
 The heavenly pilot on the poop stood tiptoe
 And with him full a hundred souls had place...
and so he brought the ship to.
 He signed them with the blessed cross and they,
 All with one motion, leapt upon the strand;
 Then swiftly as he came, he went his way.

The design on the L.200 of Dante and Beatrice recalls the paradise. Actually, Beatrice appears to Dante in the Purgatory (Canto XXX) and leads him to the earthly paradise, because Virgil cannot enter there. Paradise starts from the Earthly Paradise on top of the Mountain of Purgatory. Beatrice turns her eyes toward heaven, and Dante fixes his gaze on her face, and they rise to the First Heaven.

Beatrice gazed on heav'n and I on her;
 ..whence she.....
 Turned to me as blithe as beautiful;
 "Lift up to God"; she said, "thy grateful sense
 Who with the first star now uniteth us".....
 Into itself the eternal union
 Received us both, as water doth receive
 A ray of light and still remains all one.

When Dante and Beatrice arrive in the First Heaven, the Heaven of the Moon, the scene depicted on the L.200 takes place. He sees a group of souls (at the left of the picture by Sandro Boticelli, but not shown on the stamp)(Paradise Canto III, vv.7 ff.)

But what I saw so carried me away
 To gaze on it, that ere I could confess,
 I had forgotten what I meant to say.
 Like as from polished and transparent glass,
 Or as from water clear and luminous,
 Whose shallows leave the bottom shadowless,
 The image of a face comes back to us
 So faint, a pearl on a white forehead stirs
 The seeing sense no slower than this does,
 Si I saw faces, many and diverse,
 Eager to speak.....
 ...so I turned instead
 Straight to my dear and guiding light; she smiled,
 Her holy eyes aflame, and then she said".....
 True substances are these thou dost perceive,
 Who broke their vows, and so are cloistered here...."

Heaven, as depicted by Dante, consists of ten successive levels, the last of which is the Empyrean. Here St. Bernard prays to the Blessed Virgin that Dante may behold God, which favor is granted. Dante looks on the Blessed Trinity and the Sacred Humanity of Christ, but his power to describe fails him, and all that he remembers is that his will is totally surrendered to the love of God.

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ST. PATRICK'S PURGATORY.

Dr. R. J. O'Reilly, M.B., B.Ch., of Armagh, Ireland, has pointed out to the Editor that there are two Lough Derg in Ireland, the one on the Shannon River, which was incorrectly indicated as the Location of St. Patrick's Purgatory. The real location is in the other Lough Derg, located in County Donegal a short distance from the City of Donegal (about 6-7 miles east), close to the boarder between Eire and Northern Ireland. Refer to the map Vol. XIV, #5, p.12. At the northwest of Ireland near the boarder of Connaught and Ulster on the west coast, it would lie about 1/8 inch inland above the river indicated at that point.

Cardinal Spellman Named 'Petitioner' for Cause Of Late Pope Pius XII



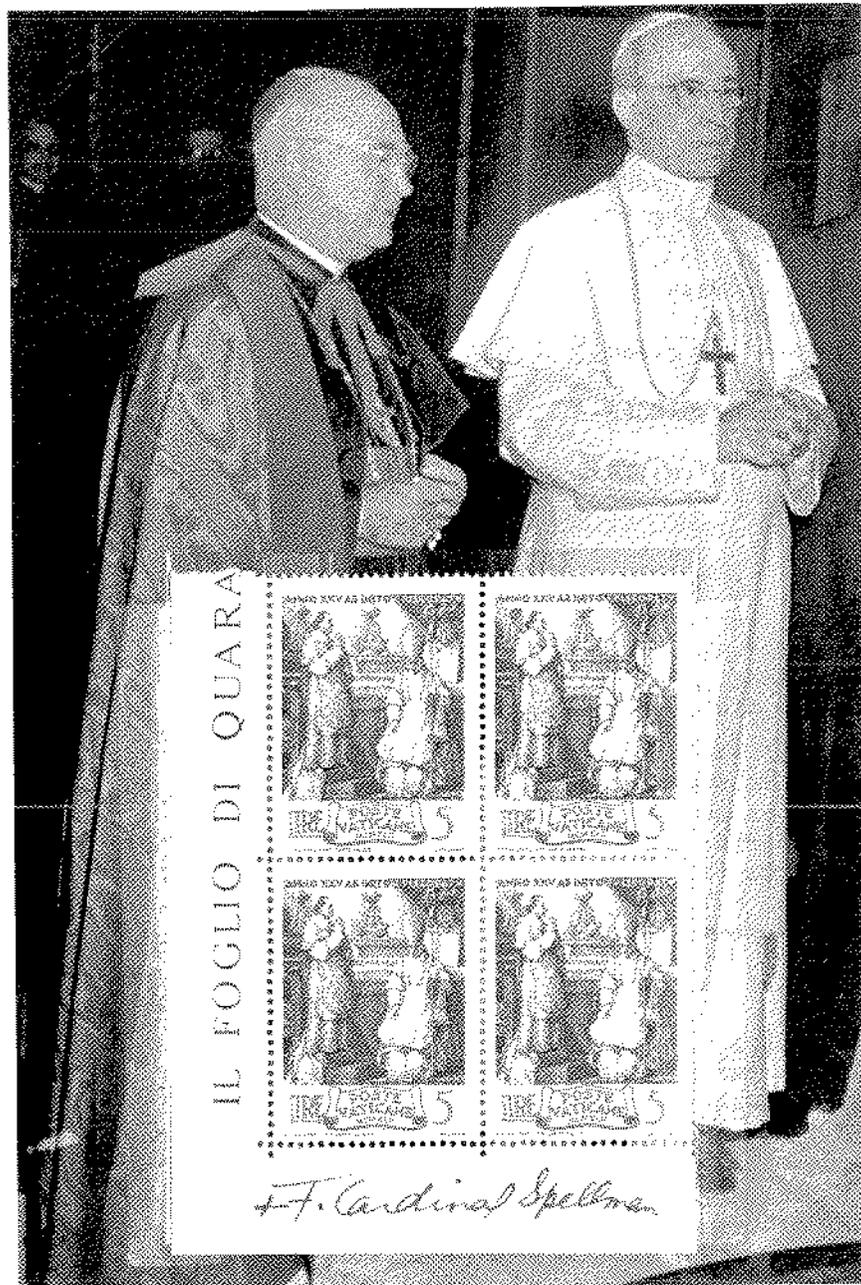
The headline at the left appeared in one of the leading U.S. Catholic weekly papers on April 2, 1966. Msgr Silverio Mattei, an official of the section of the Congregation of Rites which deals with "Causes" for beatification and canonization, announced in mid-March that Francis Cardinal Spellman, the archbishop of New York, will be the PETITIONER for the beatification of Pope Pius XII; and Bishop Clemente Gaddi of Bergamo, the diocese in which Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was born, will be the PETITIONER for the beatification of Pope John XXIII.

The PETITIONERS will be responsible for beginning the process leading to the possible beatification of the two popes, and for the nominating of the POSTULATORS, usually officials living in Rome, who prepare the documents and who present the "Causes" to the Congregation of Rites.

When the "Causes" are prepared, they usually originate in the Chancery office of the diocese in which the person up for beatification lived. Thus the prepared "Causes" will be sent to Bishop Peter van Lierde, the present vicar of Pope Paul for Vatican City. Bishop Lierde is the "chancery office" for the two deceased popes. Preparation of the "Causes" is expected to take at least several months.

(Illus.) Cardinal Spellman with Pope Pius XII. Card. Spellman worked in the Secretariat of State with the former Card. Pacelli.

Superimposed on the photo is an autographed (By Card. Spellman) block of four of the 5 Lire from the set commemorating the Silver or 25th Jubilee of the consecration of Eugenio Pacelli as bishop by Pope Benedict XV



FORGERY OF THE 8 BAJ.

(8 Baj. #4)

1. 2nd L of BOLLO joined to O at bottom.
2. B of BAJ. open at bottom and right; dot above bottom serif.
3. A of BAJ. open top left; cross bar incomplete at left.
4. Figure 8 open at top, center and right.



1.

2.

3.

4.

LO

B

A

8

THE GENUINE 8 BAJ.

1. 2nd L of BOLLO does not touch O.
2. B of BAJ. has complete lines.
3. A of BAJ. has complete lines.
4. Figure 8 has complete lines.



1.

LO

2.

B

3.

A

4.

8

*Lines are payable now.
Please use attached envelope
and remit immediately.*

Notes on: THE PONTIFICAL STATE ISSUES OF 1867 & 1868 AND THEIR REPRINTS. (Cont.)

THE REPRINTS OF J.B. MOENS.

Moens is reported to have commenced the production of his reprints in 1889, making reprints of all values, both perforated and imperforate. Fulcher and Patton state that the Moens settings for his reprints was in sheets of 120 in two panes of 60. Illustrated here is one of three sheets of four panes of Moen's imperforate 5 Cent. which I have in my collection. In years gone by I received offers, for exorbitant prices of similar sheets, but I cannot recall whether they were all for the 5 Cent. or whether other values were offered. It is reasonable to speculate that Moens set all his reprints in this way and that the sheets of 120 are only the top or bottom half of a sheet of 240 in four panes of 60. The sheets of 120 are more readily found, since I have three complete sets of the imperforate and one set of the perforated in my possession, plus various single panes.

The sheet of 240 measures 20 inches by 12 7/8 inches. The gutter between the top and bottom halves is 1 3/16 inches wide, and the gutter between the sheets lying side by side measured 5/16 inches. The two sheets lying side by side are made up of different cliches, and have been named MOEN'S LEFT PANE and MOEN'S RIGHT PANE. The same two panes are repeated at the other end of the sheet, inverted: L R

R I

All vertical double lines are continuous and all horizontal lines between the stamps are in segments. Both Gelli & Tani and Cohn use the setting of MOEN'S LEFT PANE. In Gelli & Tani's second reprint some of the defective cliches have been replaced by better ones.

Paper= thinner than Usigli's, but the printing does not show through.

Gum= Imperforate reprints mostly ungummed; perforated reprints either have a dull uniform thin gum or a thick glossy uniform gum which has often turned yellowish or brown through age.

Printing* good; does not show through back.

Separation= either imperforate or perf 11 1/2.

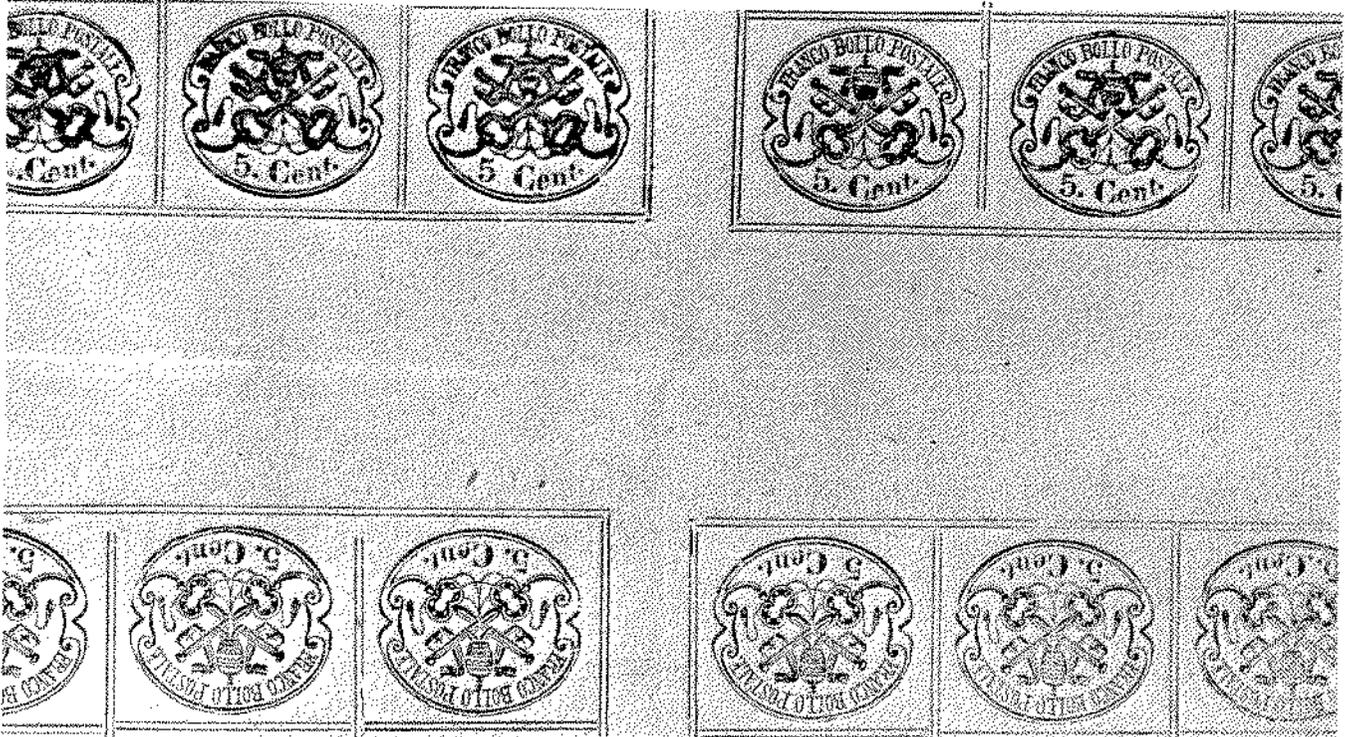
Frame lines= vertical lines continuous; horizontal lines interrupted.

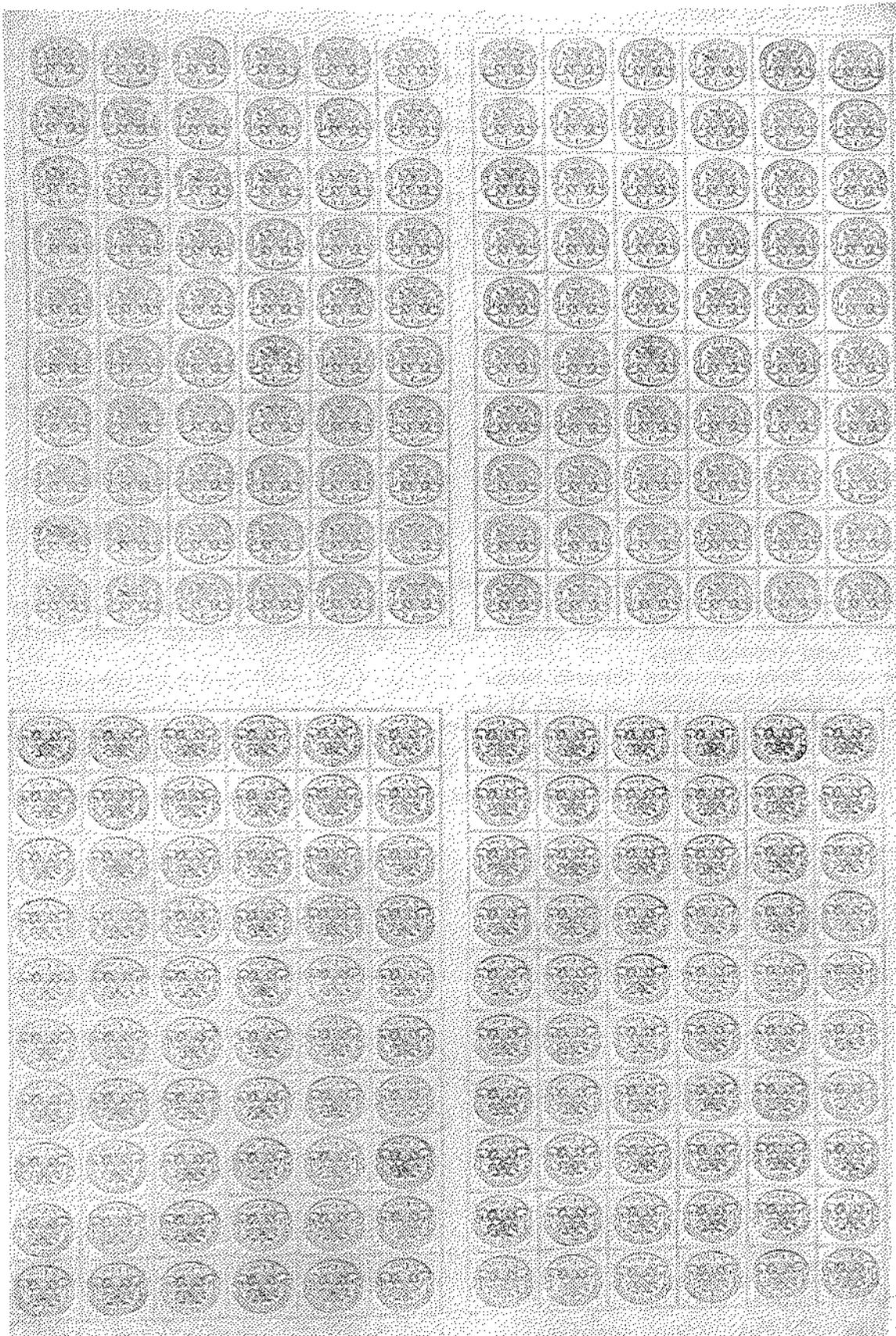
Glaze= the 10 and 40 are almost matt (dull) and the others are somewhat shiny, but not glazed as are the genuine.

Varieties= some of the perforated sheets exist with rows imperforate either horizontally or vertically.

Panes= 6 x 10.

(Cont.)





CONSTITUTION
OF THE
VATICAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY.

Article 1 - NAME.

Section 1 - The name of the organization shall be "The Vatican Philatelic Society".

Article 2 - OBJECT.

Section 1 - The object of the Society shall be to promote the collecting of stamps of the Pontifical State and Vatican City State, and to provide the opportunity for the exchange of knowledge concerning them.

Article 3 - MEMBERSHIP.

Section 1 - Any person interested in the stamps of the Pontifical State and the Vatican City State may become a member.

Section 2 - All members shall pay dues as hereinafter provided and shall be entitled to all privileges of the Society and shall receive the official organ of the Society, "VATICAN NOTES", and other publications which are distributed free of charge.

Article 4 - OFFICERS.

Section 1 - The officers of the Society shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary and a Treasurer.

Section 2 - The President shall appoint committees as required; shall have general direction of the affairs of the Society; and shall perform such other duties as are generally associated with this office.

Section 3 - The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President when the President is unable to do them himself.

Section 4 - The Secretary shall keep a record of all the decisions of the Board of Governors; collect membership fees, and handle all correspondence of the Society and perform other such duties as are generally associated with his office. He shall render an annual report for publication in the July-August issue of the Official Organ.

Section 5 - The Treasurer shall have custody of the funds of the Society; shall receive from the Secretary such monies as he may collect; shall pay all the bills of the Society on approval as provided in the By-Laws; shall perform other such duties as are generally associated with his office. He shall render an annual report for publication in the official organ.

Article 5 - BOARD OF GOVERNORS.

Section 1 - The Board of Governors shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 2 - The business affairs of the Society shall be managed and controlled by the Board of Governors, acting through the President.

Section 3 - The Board of Governors shall have power to fill vacancies that may occur among the elected officers until the following election.

Section 4 - The Board of Governors shall have power to expell any member for cause.

Article 6 - AMENDMENTS.

Section 1 - The Constitution may be amended at any time by a two thirds vote of those members who vote on the amandment, provided that such proposed amendment shall have been presented in writing to the Secretary and have been published in an issue of the Official Organ at least thirty days prior to the day on which the votes are counted.

Interested in SWAP ? Send your name to Mr. William P. Quinn, 435 Adams St., Milton, Mass., 02187. Latest names: Stephen J. Walker, 28 Hale St., Newton, Mass, 02164. VPS1909. Anthony A. Cibulski, 85-17 - 214th St., Queens Village, N.Y. 11427. VPS 1819. Julius M. Lipp, 130-43 - 220th St., Springfield Gardens, N.Y., 11413. VPS 894. Cf. Vatican Notes, Vol. XV, #5, p.2.

BY - LAWS
OF THE
VATICAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY.

Article 1 - DUES.

- Section 1 - All members shall pay annual dues of two dollars (\$2.00).
Section 2 - Dues are payable on or before July 1st each year. All members who fail to remit their dues for the current year shall be notified that they are in arrears. Members so notified who have not paid their dues by September 30th shall be dropped from the membership list.

Article 2 - ADMISSION.

- Section 1 - Any person desiring to become a member shall make application on an approved form, answering such questions as may properly be asked, and being recommended by a member. This application, when completed, shall be delivered to the Membership Chairman accompanied by the current dues. The Membership Chairman shall process all applications as hereinafter described and accept as members all applicants who meet the stated requirements.
Section 2 - Any person who has been dropped from membership in the Society because of non-payment of dues, may be readmitted upon application and payment of current dues.

Article 3 - FISCAL YEAR.

- Section 1 - The Fiscal Year shall extend from July 1st of each year to June 30th of the following year.

Article 4 - VOTING.

- Section 1 - All voting shall be done by mail.
Section 2 - All voting shall be done by the majority vote of the members voting except as provided elsewhere.

Article 5 - TERM OF OFFICE.

- Section 1 - All elected Officers shall serve for a period of two years ending on August 1 in each even numbered year, or until their successors have been elected. If appointed to fill a vacancy, their term of office shall be until the next biennial election, at which time the duly elected Officers shall be elected.

Article 6 - OFFICIAL ORGAN.

- Section 1 - The Official Organ of the Society shall be "Vatican Notes".
Section 2 - The Official Organ shall be published bi-monthly and distributed free to all Society members.

Article 7 - MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN.

- Section 1 - The President shall appoint a Membership Chairman at the beginning of each Fiscal Year, said chairman not being an elected officer.
Section 2 - It shall be the duty of the Membership Chairman to handle all applications and correspondence relating thereto. He shall review all applications, make such investigations as he may deem necessary, invite comments from members concerning applicants and report bi-weekly to the Board of Governors, listing all new applicants. If no objections are received from the Board of Governors or members during the two week period between reports to the Board of Governors, the applicants shall be declared members and the Secretary shall be so notified.

BY - LAWS
OF THE
VATICAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY. (Cont.)

Article 8 - NOMINATIONS AND BALLOTING.

- Section 1 - Nominations for all elective offices shall be prepared in duplicate and must be signed by a minimum of four (4) members in good standing who are not nominees. One copy of such nominations shall be submitted to the Secretary and a second to the Editor of the Official Organ. In addition, each copy of nominations must be accompanied by a signed letter from all nominees, excepting incumbent officers, stating that if elected they will accept the office for which they are being nominated.
- Section 2 - All nominations must be submitted by April 1st each even numbered year.
- Section 3 - A ballot shall be prepared by the Editor of the Official Organ listing the names of the nominees which were received in the prescribed manner, without provision for write-in votes. Said ballot shall be mailed with the May-June issue of the Official Organ in each even numbered year and shall be returnable to the Secretary.
- Section 4 - All ballots must be in the hands of the Secretary by June 1st of each even numbered year to be valid.

Article 9 - OTHER COMMITTEES.

- Section 1 - The President shall appoint other committees as shall be required at any time, shall designate their duties and term of office.

Article 10 - AMENDMENT.

- Section 1 - These By-Laws may be amended at any time by a two thirds vote of those members who vote on the amendment, provided that such proposed amendment shall have been presented in writing to the Secretary and have been published in an issue of the Official Organ, mailed at least thirty days prior to the day on which the votes are counted.

Finis

VATICAN PHILATELIC NEWS.

On March 7, 1967, Vatican issued 6 air mail stamps (L.20,40,90,100,200,500) involving three designs. A View of the attic, balustrade and dome of St. Peters Basilica with a 4 engine jet plane in vertican flight above it appears on the design of the L.20 (purple on white) and the L.100 (brown on salmon pink). Reuse of the design of the 2nd Anniversary of the Radio Complex at Santa Maria in Galeria (Oct. 27, 1959, Scott #262-3) is made on the L.40 (black on salmon pink) and the L.200 (blackish violet on gray). An aerial view of the Square and Basilica of St. Peter is the design used on the L.90 (slate) and the L.500 (brown). Peppino Piccoli is given as the author of the design of the L.20 and L.100. The original design of the L.40 and the L.200 was Andreina Grassellini, even though the stamp gives no credit, and the other two stamps author is not given. Perf. of these stamps shows is 14 x 14; wmk. #2 crossed keys.

