

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH*Unicuique suum Non praevalent*

Forty-fourth year, number 26 (2201)

Vatican City

Wednesday, 29 June 2011

Benedict XVI to the Editor-in-Chief of 'L'Osservatore Romano'

## Celebrating 150 years of 'the Pope's newspaper'

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Italian daily, "L'Osservatore Romano", the Holy Father addressed a letter to Prof. Giovanni Maria Vian, Editor-in-Chief, expressing his appreciation of the paper which staunchly maintained "its line of impartiality and courage... in the face of the tragedy and horror that have scarred the first half of the 20th century". The following is a translation of the Holy Father's letter, which was written in Italian and dated 24 June 2011.



To the Most Distinguished  
Prof. GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN  
Editor-in-Chief of  
*L'Osservatore Romano*

One hundred and fifty years are truly a considerable length of time for a daily newspaper, a long and important journey rich in joys, difficulties, hard work, satisfaction and grace. This important anniversary of *L'Osservatore Romano* – whose first issue came out on 1 July 1861 – is therefore first and foremost a cause of thanksgiving to God *pro universis beneficiis suis*: in other words for all that his Providence has disposed in this past century and a half, during which the world has changed profoundly, and for what it disposes today, with the ever more rapid transformations, especially in the communications and information sector.

At the same time, this happy event also affords an opportunity to reflect on the history and on the role of this daily, commonly known as "the Pope's newspaper". As Pius XI, of venerable memory, said in 1936, exactly 75 years ago – we are therefore invited to "take a look at the ground we have covered and another at the ground that has yet to be covered", stressing above all the uniqueness and responsibility of a daily which has made known the magisterium of the popes for a century and a half and is one of the privileged instruments at the service of the Holy See and of the Church.



*L'Osservatore Romano* came into being in a context both challenging and decisive for the papacy, with the awareness and determination to defend and sustain the principles of the Apostolic See, which seemed to be threatened by hostile forces.

Founded as a private initiative with the support of the Papal Government, this evening paper claimed to be "religious and political", setting itself the goal of upholding the principle of justice in the conviction, based on the word of Christ, that evil will not have the last word.

This objective and conviction were expressed by two famous Latin mottos – the first taken from Roman law and the second from the Gospel text – which have featured in the masthead since 1862: *Unicuique suum* [to each his own] and, especially, *Non praevalent* [they (the gates of hell) shall not prevail] (cf. Mt 16:18).

In 1870, the end of the temporal power – perceived as a providential measure despite the abuse and unjust acts to which the papacy was subjected – neither upset *L'Osservatore Romano* nor depreciated its presence and role. On the contrary, about 15 years later the Holy See decided to acquire ownership of it. With time, the direct control of the newspaper by the papal authority increased its prestige and authority. They were subsequently to develop

further, because of its line of impartiality and courage in particular, staunchly maintained in the face of the tragedies and horrors that scarred the first half of the 20th century, "faithful as an international and supernational institution", Cardinal Gasparri wrote in 1922.

Tragic events ensued: the First World War, which devastated and changed the face of Europe; the affirmation of forms of totalitarianism with harmful ideologies that denied the truth and oppressed human be-

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### 'Corpus Christi'



The Holy Father led the Eucharistic procession and celebrated Mass on 23 June for the Solemnity of *Corpus Christi*.

*The Pope's General Audience catechesis*

#### The language of the encounter with God

At the General Audience on Wednesday, 22 June, the Holy Father introduced the reading of the Book of Psalms as part of the series of catechesis on prayer.

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*Interview with the director of Pontifical Villas*

#### Prayer and work at 'second Vatican'

Bl. John Paul II, Saverio Petrillo said, used to read and write in the gardens. This year the Pope will go there 5 July to work on his book.

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