

# The Legacy of Pope Francis

Amid the flood of articles and comments that have accompanied these days, we simply want to express our **thanks** to Pope Francis for the human and spiritual heritage he leaves us:

- 1. For Divine Mercy.** Thank you for tirelessly reminding us that “God never tires of forgiving” and for the extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy.
- 2. For the joy of faith.** Thank you for teaching us that faith in Jesus Christ allows us to live “on the wings of hope”: truly *Spes non confundit*.
- 3. For devotion to Mary.** Thank you for the testimony of filial devotion to the Mother of God, the Most Holy Mary.
- 4. For disarming simplicity.** Thank you for a sober lifestyle that has marked every gesture of his pontificate.
- 5. For prioritizing the least.** Thank you for placing the poor, the homeless, refugees, migrants, and prisoners at the center.
- 6. For denouncing the “throwaway culture”.** Thank you for condemning the exploitation and instrumentalization of people, unscrupulous profit, and rampant consumerism.
- 7. For the value of the family.** Thank you for warning us that pets cannot replace children.
- 8. For attention to the elderly.** Thank you for reminding us that fragile life is not to be discarded: the elderly are not to be euthanized for being useless or unproductive, but are witnesses of peace, love, and blessing.
- 9. For synodality.** Thank you for showing that Christianity is not a “do-it-yourself” project, but communion with God and with brothers and sisters.

**10. For ecumenical openness.** Thank you for seeking unity among Christians with concrete and courageous gestures.

**11. For the fight for peace.** Thank you for raising your voice in a world torn apart by a “third world war in pieces.”

**12. For the prophetic vision of the present time.** Thank you for helping us understand that we are not simply living through an era of change, but the change of an era.

**Thank you. May God reward all the good sown on earth.**

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## **A Blessed Easter of the Resurrection 2025!**

*“But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.” (Luke 24:12)*

**To behold the Risen Lord, our human eyes do not suffice; we need the light of faith. May this faith, enlightened and strengthened by the joy of the Resurrection we celebrate this Holy Easter 2025, always guide your earthly journey towards our heavenly home.**

**Christ is risen!**

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# donbosco.info: a Salesian search engine

*We present the new donbosco.info platform, which is a Salesian search engine designed to make it easier to consult documents related to the charism of Don Bosco. Created to support the Salesian Bulletin Online, it overcomes the limitations of traditional archiving systems, which are often unable to intercept all occurrences of words. This solution integrates dedicated hardware and specially developed software, also offering a reading function. The deliberately simple web interface allows you to navigate through thousands of documents in different languages, with the ability to filter results by folder, title, author, or year. Thanks to the OCR scanning of PDF documents, the system identifies the text even when it is not perfect, and adopts strategies to ignore punctuation and special characters. The contents, rich in historical and educational material, aim to spread the Salesian message in a widespread manner. With free uploading for documents, continuous enrichment of the platform is encouraged, improving the search.*

As part of the work for the drafting of the Salesian Bulletin Online, it was necessary to create various support tools, including a dedicated search engine.

This search engine was conceived taking into account the limitations currently present in the various Salesian resources available online. Many sites offer archiving systems with search functionality, but often fail to locate all occurrences of words, due to technical limitations or restrictions introduced to avoid overloading the servers.

To overcome these difficulties, instead of building a simple archive of documents with a search function, we have created a real search engine, also equipped with a reading function.

This is a complete solution, based on dedicated hardware and specially developed software.

During the design phase, we evaluated two options: software to be installed locally or a server-side application accessible via the web. Since the mission of the Salesian Bulletin Online is to spread the Salesian charism to the greatest number of people, it was decided to opt for the web solution, so as to allow anyone to search for and consult Salesian documents.

The search engine is available at [www.donbosco.info](http://www.donbosco.info). The web interface is deliberately essential and “spartan” to ensure faster loading speeds. The “home page” lists the files and folders present, in order to facilitate consultation. The documents are not only in Italian, but also available in other languages, selectable via the icon at the top left.

Most of the uploaded files are in PDF format derived from scans with OCR (optical character recognition). Since OCR is not always perfect, sometimes not all the words searched for are detected. To overcome this, several strategies have been implemented: ignoring punctuation and accented or special characters, and allowing searches even in the presence of missing or incorrect characters. Further details can be found in the FAQ section, accessible from the footer.

Given the presence of thousands of documents, the search can return a very high number of results. For this reason, it is possible to narrow the scope of the search by folder, title, author, or year: the criteria are cumulative and help to find what you need more quickly. The results are listed based on a relevance score, which currently mainly takes into account the density of keywords within the text and their proximity.

Ideally, it would be preferable to have the documents in vector format instead of scanned, as the search would always be accurate and the files would be lighter, with consequent advantages in terms of speed.

If you have documents in vector format or of better quality than those already present in the search engine, you can upload them via the upload service available on [www.donbosco.space](http://www.donbosco.space). You can also add other documents not present in the search engine. To obtain access credentials (username and password), send a request via e-mail to [bsol@sdb.org](mailto:bsol@sdb.org).

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## Election of the first Rector Major

*During the eleventh General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation, the first Rector Major, Fr. Paolo Albera, was elected. Although he formally represents the second successor of Don Bosco, he was actually the first to be elected, as Don Rua had already been personally appointed by Don Bosco, through divine inspiration and at the request of Pope Pius IX (Don Rua's appointment was officially confirmed on November 27, 1884, and subsequently ratified by the Holy See on February 11, 1888). Let us now be guided by the narrative of Fr. Eugenio Ceria, who narrates the election of Don Bosco's first successor and the works of the General Chapter.*

It hardly seems possible to speak of ancient Salesians without starting from Don Bosco. This time it is to admire divine Providence, which led Don Bosco to meet the indispensable men along the arduous path in various roles and offices of his newly established Congregation. Men, I say, not made, but to be made. It was up to the founder to seek out young boys, to raise them, educate them, instruct them, inform them of his spirit, so that wherever he sent them, they would represent him worthily among the members and before outsiders.

This is also the case with his second successor. The small and slender Paolino Albera, when he came to the Oratory from his native village, did not stand out among the crowd of companions for any of those characteristics that draw attention to a newcomer. Yet Don Bosco soon noticed in him the innocence of his character, intellectual ability veiled by natural shyness, and a childlike disposition, which gave him good reason to hope. He accompanied him up to the priesthood, sent him as Director to Sampierdarena, then Director to Marseille and Inspector for France, where they called him *petit Don Bosco*, until 1886 when the trust of his brothers elected him General Catechist or Spiritual Director of the Society. But his progress did not stop there.

After Don Rua's death, according to the Rule, the governance of the Society passed into the hands of the General Prefect, Fr. Filippo Rinaldi, who therefore presided over the Superior Chapter and directed the preparations for the General Chapter to be held within the year 1910. The great meeting was set to open on August 15, preceded by a course of spiritual exercises, conducted by the Chapter members and preached by Fr. Albera.

An intimate diary of Fr. Albera, in English, allows us to know what his feelings were during the waiting period. Under April 21, we find: "I spoke at length with Fr. Rinaldi and with great pleasure. I wholeheartedly desire that he be elected to the position of Rector Major of our Congregation. I will pray to the Holy Spirit to obtain this grace." And under the 26th: "Rarely is there talk of Fr. Rua's successor. I hope that the Prefect is elected. He has the necessary virtues for the position. Every day I pray for this grace." Again, on May 11: "I accept to go to Milan for Fr. Rua's funeral. I am very happy to obey Fr. Rinaldi, in whom I recognise as my true Superior. I pray every day asking that a Rector Major be elected." Under June 6, he reveals the reason for his strong inclination towards Fr. Rinaldi, writing about him: "I have a high opinion of his virtue, his ability, and initiative." Shortly after going to Rome in his company, he

wrote on the 8th in Florence: "I see that Fr. Rinaldi is well-received everywhere and regarded as Fr. Rua's successor. He leaves a good impression on those with whom he speaks."

If it had been permissible to campaign, he would have been a great elector. Numerous Salesians thought the same way, not to mention the Spaniards, among whom he had left a great legacy of affection. Inspectors and delegates, when they arrived from Spain for the General Chapter, did not make many mysteries even when speaking with him. However, he showed all the indifference of a deaf person who does not understand a word of what is said to him. In this, his attitude was such that it impressed his cheerful interlocutors. There was a true sense of mystery.

On the evening of the Assumption, the opening meeting was held, in which Fr. Rinaldi "spoke very well," as noted by Fr. Albera in his diary. The election of the Rector Major took place in the session the following morning. From the beginning of the voting, the names of Fr. Albera and Fr. Rinaldi alternated at short intervals. The former appeared increasingly troubled and astonished. The latter, on the other hand, showed no sign of emotion. This was noted, not without a hint of curiosity. A great applause greeted the vote, which reached the absolute majority required by the Rule. Fr. Rinaldi, having completed the last act in his capacity as President of the Assembly with the proclamation of the elected, asked to read a memorandum. Upon receiving consent, he had a sealed envelope returned to him by Fr. Lemoyne, Secretary of the Superior Chapter, which had been given to him on February 27 and bore the inscription: "To be opened after the elections to take place upon the death of dear Fr. Rua." Having received it in his hands, he unsealed it and read: "Fr. Rua is seriously ill, and I feel it is my duty to put in writing what I keep in my heart for his successor. On November 22, 1877, the usual feast of St. Charles was celebrated in Borgo San Martino. At the table presided over by the Venerable John Bosco and Msgr. Ferrò, I too was seated next to Fr. Belmonte. At a certain point, the conversation turned upon Fr.

Albera, with Don Bosco recounting the difficulties posed by the clergy of his country. It was then that Msgr. Ferrò wanted to know if Fr. Albera had overcome those difficulties: – Of course, replied Don Bosco. He is my second... – And running his hand over his forehead, he stopped the phrase. But I immediately calculated that he did not mean the second who entered nor the second-ranked, since he was not from the Superior Chapter, nor the second Director, and I concluded that he was the second successor. However, I kept these things in my heart, waiting for events. Turin, February 27, 1910.” The electors then understood the reason for his demeanour and felt their hearts expand. They had therefore elected the one preconised by Don Bosco thirty-three years earlier.

Fr. Bertello was immediately entrusted with formulating two telegrams to inform the Holy Father and Cardinal Rampolla, Protector of the Society. The message to the Pope was: “Fr. Paolo Albera, new Rector Major of the Salesian Society and General Chapter, who with the utmost concord of spirits today, the ninety-fifth anniversary of the birth of the Venerable Don Bosco, who elected him and celebrates him with the greatest joy, and thank Your Holiness for the precious advice and prayers and declare profound respect and unlimited obedience.” His Holiness promptly replied by sending his Apostolic Blessing. The telegram alluded to a pontifical autograph of August 9. It read as follows: “To the beloved sons of the Salesian Congregation of the Venerable Don Bosco gathered for the election of the General Rector, in the certainty that all, setting aside any human affection, will cast their vote for that Brother, whom they judge in the Lord to be the most suitable to maintain the true spirit of the Rule, to encourage and guide all the Members of the religious Institute towards perfection, and to make the many works of charity and religion to which they have dedicated themselves prosper, we impart with paternal affection the Apostolic Blessing. From the Vatican, August 9, 1910. Pius PP. X.”

The Cardinal Protector also addressed a “fatherly



word of encouragement and blessing" to the Moderator and Electors of the Chapter on August 12, saying among other things: "Your beloved Don Bosco, with the most intense affection of a father, undoubtedly turns his gaze from Heaven towards you and fervently implores the Divine Paraclete to pour upon you the heavenly light, inspiring you with wise counsel. The holy Church awaits from your votes a worthy successor to Don Bosco and Fr. Rua, who knows how to wisely preserve their work, and indeed to increase it with new growth. And I too, with the most vivid interest, united with you in prayer, transmit warm wishes that, with divine favour, your choice may be content in every respect and bring me the sweet consolation of seeing the Salesian Congregation ever more flourishing for the benefit of souls and in honour of the Catholic Apostolate. Therefore, let your hearts be far from human concerns and personal feelings in such a sacred and solemn act, so that, guided solely by right intentions and a burning desire for the glory of God and the greater good of the Institute, united in the name of the Lord in the most perfect concord and charity, you may choose as your leader the one who, by the sanctity of life, is an example to you, by the goodness of heart a loving father, by prudence and wisdom a sure guide, by zeal and firmness a vigilant guardian of discipline, religious observance, and the spirit of the Venerable Founder." His Eminence, receiving Fr. Albera not long after, gave him unmistakable signs of believing that the choice had been made in accordance with the wishes he had expressed.

The very early moments of the feelings of the elected one were expressed in the diary, in which under August 16 we read: "This is a day of great misfortune for me. I have been elected Rector Major of the Pious Society of St. Francis de Sales. What a responsibility on my shoulders! Now more than ever I must cry out: *Deus, in adiutorium meum intende*. I have prayed a lot, especially in front of Don Bosco's tomb." In his wallet, a yellowed sheet was found, on which this programme was outlined and signed: "I will always have God in view,

Jesus Christ as a model, the Helper in aid, myself in sacrifice."

At the same time, all the members of the Superior Chapter had expired, and it was necessary to hold the election, which took place in the third session. The General Prefect was elected first. The votes on the name of Fr. Rinaldi were overwhelmingly in favour. Of the 73 voters, 71 voted for him. Thus, there was only one vote missing, which went to Fr. Paolo Virion, the French Inspector. The other, most likely his, was for Fr. Pietro Ricaldone, Inspector in Spain, whom he greatly esteemed. He therefore resumed his daily toil, which was to last another twelve years, until he himself became Rector Major.

Having done this, the Chapter moved on to electing the remaining members, who were: Fr. Giulio Barberis, General Catechist; Fr. Giuseppe Bertello, Economist; Fr. Luigi Piscetta, Fr. Francesco Cerruti, Fr. Giuseppe Vespignani, Councillors. The latter, Inspector in Argentina, thanked the assembly for the act of trust, stating that he was obliged for particular reasons and also for health to decline the nomination, asking to proceed to another election. But the Superior did not believe he should accept the resignation so readily and asked him to suspend any decision until the next day. The next day, invited by the Rector Major to notify the resolution taken, he replied that, following the Superior's advice, he fully submitted to obedience with the intention of taking on the role.

The first act of the re-elected General Prefect was to officially inform the members of the election of the new Rector Major. In a short letter, briefly mentioning the various phases of his life, he appropriately recalled the so-called "Dream of the Wheel," in which Don Bosco saw Fr. Albera with a lantern in his hand illuminating and guiding others (BM VI, 910). He then concluded very appropriately: "My dear brothers, let the loving words of Don Bosco in the testamentary letter resonate once again in your ears: 'Your Rector is dead, but another will be elected for you, who will

take care of you and your eternal salvation. Listen to him, love him, obey him, pray for him, as you have done for me.'"

To the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Fr. Albera deemed it appropriate to issue a communication without too much delay, especially since he was receiving a good number of letters from them. He therefore thanked them for their congratulations, but above all for their prayers. "I hope," he wrote, "that God will grant your wishes and that He will not allow my ineptitude to be detrimental to those works to which the Venerable Don Bosco and the unforgettable Fr. Rua dedicated their whole lives." He finally hoped that among the two branches of Don Bosco's family there would always be a holy competition in preserving the spirit of charity and zeal left as a legacy by the founder.

Now let us take a brief look at the works of the General Chapter. It can be said that there was only one fundamental theme. The previous Chapter, having completed a rather summarised revision of the Regulations, had decided that, as they were, they would be practiced for six years *ad experimentum* and that Chapter XI would resume their examination, establishing the definitive text. There were six Regulations: for the Inspectors, for all Salesian houses, for the novitiate houses, for the parishes, for the festive oratories, and for the Pious Union of Cooperators. The same Chapter X, with a petition signed by 36 members, had requested that the administrative issue be addressed during the XI<sup>th</sup>, and especially on how to make the income sources granted by Providence to each Salesian house increasingly fruitful. To facilitate the arduous work, a Commission, so to speak, of technicians was appointed for each Regulation, with the task of conducting the relevant studies and presenting the conclusions to the Chapter itself.

The discussions, which began during the fifth session, went on for another 21. In order to close the matter, it would have been necessary to prolong the works much longer. Still, the General Chapter unanimously deferred the task of

completing the review to the Superior Chapter, which promised to carry it out by appointing a special Commission. Nevertheless, in order to show that it was not disinterested and to assist the work, the General Chapter expressed the desire to create a Commission with the task of formulating the main criteria that should guide the new Commission of Regulations in its long and delicate task. So, this was done. Therefore, ten directive norms, elaborated by its delegates under the presidency of Fr. Ricaldone, were brought to the assembly's attention and approved. Their context was to maintain the spirit of Don Bosco intact, preserving those articles that were recognised as his, and to eliminate anything that was purely exhortative from the Regulations.

I will remember nothing more than two episodes from the XI<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, which seem to have particular importance. The first refers to the Regulations of the festive oratories. The extra-chapter Commission had deemed it appropriate to simplify it, especially for the part concerning the various roles. Fr. Rinaldi felt that the concept of Don Bosco regarding the festive oratories was thus abolished, hence he rose up saying: "The Regulations printed in 1877 were truly compiled by Don Bosco, and Fr. Rua assured me of this four months before his death. I therefore wish that it be preserved intact, for if it is practiced, it will be seen that it is still good even today."

At this point an animated discussion arose, of which I will highlight the most notable points. The speaker declared that the Commission was completely unaware of this particularity, but he also noted that this Regulation had never been fully practiced in any festive oratory, not even in Turin. The Commission opined that the Regulations had been commissioned by Don Bosco based on the Regulations of the Lombard festive oratories. In any case, the intention was only to simplify it and to introduce what was practical as found in the best Salesian oratories. Yet Fr. Rinaldi did not calm down, and he insisted upon Fr. Rua's desire that these

Regulations be respected, as a work of Don Bosco, even with the introduction of what was deemed useful for young adults.

Fr. Vespignani reinforced this thesis. Having come to the Oratory already a priest in 1876, he had received from Fr. Rua the task of transcribing the Regulations from Don Bosco's original writings, and he still retained the early drafts. Fr. Barberis also assured that he had seen the autograph. The opponents had objections regarding the roles, but Fr. Rinaldi did not disarm. On the contrary, he uttered these forceful words: "Nothing of Don Bosco's Regulations should be altered, otherwise they would lose their authority." Fr. Vespignani confirmed his thoughts once again with examples from America and especially Uruguay, where, when at the time of Msgr. Lasagna there was an attempt to try differently, nothing was achieved. Finally, the controversy was closed by voting the following order of the day: "The XI General Chapter decides that the 'Regulations of the festive oratories' of Don Bosco, as printed in 1877, be preserved intact, making only in the appendix those additions deemed appropriate, especially for the sections of older youth." The sensitivity of the assembly in the face of an attempt at reform in matters sanctioned by Don Bosco is commendable.

The second episode belongs to the penultimate session for a matter not unrelated to the Regulations, as it might seem at first glance. Once again, it was proposed by Fr. Rinaldi, who became the interpreter of the desire of many, that the position of the Directors in the houses be defined after the decree on confessions. Until 1901, being ordinary confessors of the members and students meant that in directing, they acted habitually with a paternal spirit (this topic is extensively covered in Annals III,170-194). After that, however, it began to be observed that the paternal character desired by Don Bosco in his Directors and insinuated in the Regulations of the houses and elsewhere was being abandoned. The Directors indeed began to attend to material, disciplinary, and school affairs, thus becoming Rectors and no longer Directors. "We must return," said Fr. Rinaldi, "to the

spirit and concept of Don Bosco, especially manifested to us in the 'Confidential Memories' (Annals III,49-53) and in the Regulations. The Director should always be a Salesian Director. Except for the ministry of confession, nothing has changed."

Fr. Bertello lamented that the Directors had believed that with confession they had to leave the spiritual care of the house as well, dedicating themselves to material offices. "Let us hope," he said, "that it was just a momentary thing. We must return to the ideal of Don Bosco, as described in the Regulations. Let those articles be read, meditated upon, and practiced" (He cited them according to the edition of the time; in the present they would be 156, 157, 158, 159, 57, 160, 91, 195). Fr. Albera concluded by saying: "It is an essential issue for the life of our Society that the spirit of the Director be preserved according to the ideal of Don Bosco; otherwise, we change the way of educating and will no longer be Salesians. We must do everything to preserve the spirit of fatherhood, practicing the memories that Don Bosco left us: they will tell us how to do it. Especially in the reports, we will be able to know our subjects and direct them. As for the young, fatherhood does not mean caresses or unlimited concessions, but caring for them, allowing them the opportunity to come and see us. Let us not forget the importance of the evening talk. Let the sermons be done well and with heart. Let us show that we care about the salvation of souls and leave the unpleasant parts to others. Thus, the Director will retain the halo that Don Bosco wanted him surrounded with."

This time as well the Capitulars found a General Exhibition of the Salesian Professional and Agricultural Schools open in the Oratory, the third, which lasted from July 3 to October 16. Having already described the two previous ones, there was no need to stop and repeat more or less the same things (Annals III, 452-472). Naturally, the past experience served for a better organisation of the exhibition. The criterion already stated twice by the organiser Fr.

Bertello prevailed, namely, according to an arrangement desired by Don Bosco, that every Exhibition of this kind is an event intended to be repeated periodically for the teaching and encouragement of the schools. The opening and closing were graced by the presence of city authorities and representatives of the Government. Visitors were never lacking, including high-ranking personalities and even true experts. On the last day, Professor Piero Gribaudo made the first presentation of about 300 former Turin students to the new Rector Major. Deputy Cornaggia, in his final speech, pronounced this judgment worthy of being remembered (Salesian Bulletin, Nov. 1910, p. 332): "Whoever has had the opportunity to delve into the study of the organisation of these schools and the concepts that inspire them cannot help but admire the wisdom of that Great One, who understood the workers' needs in the conditions of new times, anticipating philanthropists and legislators."

Fifty-five houses participated in the exhibition with a total of 203 schools. The examination of the exhibited works was entrusted to nine distinct juries, which included 50 of the most distinguished professors, artists, and industrialists from Turin. Since it was necessary that the Exhibition have an exclusively educational character, the works were judged according to this criterion, and the prizes were awarded. These were substantial, offered by the Pope (a gold medal), by the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce (five silver medals), by the Municipality of Turin (one gold medal and two silver medals), by the Agricultural Consortium of Turin (two silver medals), by "Pro Torino" (one *vermeil* medal, one silver, and two bronze), by the former students of the "Don Bosco" Circle (one gold medal), by the "Augusta" Company of Turin (500 Lire in typographic material to be divided into three prizes), and by the Salesian Superior Chapter (a golden laurel crown as the *grand prize*) (Those awarded are listed in the cited issue of the Salesian Bulletin).

It is worth reporting the last periods of the report that Fr. Bertello read before the winners were

announced. He said: "About three months ago, at the inauguration of our small Exhibition, we lamented that due to the death of the Rev. Fr. Rua, we had lost he to whom we intended to pay tribute with our studies and our works on his priestly jubilee. Divine Providence has given us a new Superior and Father in the person of the Rev. Fr. Albera. Therefore, in closing the Exhibition, we place our intentions and hopes in his hands, confident that the artisan, who was first cared for by the Venerable Don Bosco and then the joy of Fr. Rua, will always have a fitting place in the affection and concerns of their Successor."

That was Fr. Bertello's last achievement. A little more than a month later, on November 20, an unexpected illness suddenly extinguished such an industrious existence. His robust intellect, solid culture, firmness of character, and goodness of spirit made him first a wise Director of the college, then a diligent Inspector, and finally for twelve years an expert General Director of the Salesian professional and agricultural schools. He owed everything, after God, to Don Bosco, who had raised him in the Oratory since he was little and had formed him in his image and likeness.

Fr. Albera did not delay in fulfilling the great duty of paying homage to the Vicar of Jesus Christ, to the One whom the Rule calls "the arbiter and supreme Superior" of the Society. Immediately on September 1, he left for Rome, where, upon arrival on the 2nd, he already found the audience ticket for the morning of the 3rd. It almost seemed that Pius X was eager to see him. From the Pope's lips, he gathered some kind expressions, which he kept in his heart. In response to the thanks for the autograph and the blessing, the Pope said he believed he acted this way to make known how much he appreciated the worldwide activity of the Salesians and added: "You were born recently, it is true, but you are spread all over the world and everywhere you work a lot." Being informed of the victories already obtained in the courts against the slanderers of Varazze (Annals III, 729-749), he warned: "Be vigilant, for your enemies are preparing other blows against



you." Finally, when humbly asked for some practical guidelines for the governance of the Society, he replied: "Do not stray from the customs and traditions introduced by Don Bosco and Fr. Rua."

1910 had already come to an end, and Fr. Albera had not yet made a communication to the entire Society. New and incessant occupations, especially the many conferences with the 32 Inspectors, always prevented him from sitting down at the table. Only in the first half of January, as noted in the diary, did he write the first pages of a circular, which he intended to be somewhat lengthy. He sent it with the date of the 25th. Apologising for the delay in making himself known, commemorating Fr. Rua and praising Fr. Rinaldi for his good interim governance of the Society, he elaborated on particular news about the General Chapter, his own election, the visit to the Pope, and the death of Fr. Bertello. In all, he had the air of a father who converses familiarly with his children. He also shared with them his worries about the events in Portugal. After the monarchy was overthrown in Lisbon in October 1910, the revolutionaries had fiercely targeted the religious, attacking them with wild fury. The Salesians did not have any victims to mourn, however, the brothers at Pinheiro near Lisbon had a bad day. A gang of thugs invaded and looted that house, not only mocking the priests and clerics but also sacrilegiously profaning the chapel and even more sacrilegiously scattering and trampling the consecrated hosts. Almost all the Salesians had to leave Portugal, seeking refuge in Spain or Italy. The revolutionaries occupied their schools and laboratories, from which the students were expelled. The persecution also extended to the colonies, so that it was necessary to abandon Macao and Mozambique, where much good was being done (Annals III, 606 and 622-4). But even then, Fr. Albera could write: "Those who have scattered us recognise that they have deprived their country of the only professional schools it possessed."

He, who in the early days of the Society had often heard Don Bosco predict the multiplication of his children in

every even remote nation, and then saw those predictions marvellously fulfilled, certainly felt the weight of the immense legacy received and believed that for some time it was not appropriate to embark on new works, but it was necessary to focus on consolidating the existing ones. He therefore deemed it necessary to instil the same thing in all the Salesians. To achieve this, it was not enough for the Superiors alone. He strongly recommended common cooperation. Since in those years modernism was also posing threats to religious families, he warned the Salesians, urging them to flee every novelty that Don Bosco and Fr. Rua could not have approved.

Together with the circular, he also sent each house a copy of the circulars of Fr. Rua, who from his deathbed had entrusted him to collect in a volume. The typographic work had already been completed about two months earlier. In fact, the publication included a letter from Fr. Albera dated December 8, 1910.

For the upcoming anniversary of Don Bosco's death, he therefore sent the houses a double gift, the circular and the book. He held this second one in special regard because he knew he was offering a great treasure of asceticism and Salesian pedagogy in it. He had proposed to follow the traces of Fr. Rua, especially aiming to imitate his charity and zeal in procuring the spiritual good of all the Salesians.

*Annals of the Salesian Society, Vol. IV (1910-1921), pp. 1-13*

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**“The Roman Stations”. A**

# millenary tradition

*The “Roman Stations” are an ancient liturgical tradition that, during Lent and the first week of Easter, associates each day with a specific church in Rome, within a pilgrimage journey. The term “statio” (from the Latin stare, to stop) refers to the idea of a communal pause for prayer and celebration. In past centuries, the Pope and the faithful would move in procession from the church called “collecta” to the station of the day, where the Eucharist was celebrated. This rite, while having roots in the early centuries of Christianity, retains its vitality even today, when the indication of the station church still appears in liturgical books. It is a true pilgrimage among the basilicas and shrines of the Eternal City that can be undertaken in this jubilee year not only as a path of conversion but also as a testimony of faith.*

## **Origin and diffusion**

The origins of the Roman Stations date back at least to the 3rd Century, when the Christian community was still undergoing persecutions. The earliest testimonies refer to Pope Fabian (236-250) who would visit places of worship established near the catacombs or the burial sites of martyrs, distributing to the needy what the faithful offered as alms and celebrating the Eucharist. This custom strengthened in the 4th Century, with the freedom of worship granted by Constantine: large basilicas were built, and the faithful began to gather on specific days to celebrate Mass at sites linked to the memory of the saints. Over time, the itinerary took on a more organic character, creating a true calendar of stations that touched on the various districts of Rome. The communal dimension – with the presence of the bishop, clergy, and people – thus became a visible sign of communion and testimony of faith.

It was Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) who gave structure and regularity to the use of the Stations, especially during Lent. He established a calendar that, day by day, assigned a

specific church for the main celebration. His reform did not stem from nothing, rather organized an already existing practice. Gregory wanted the procession to start from a minor church (*collecta*) and conclude in a more solemn place (*statio*), where the people, united with the Pope, celebrated the penitential rites and the Eucharist. It was a way to prepare for Easter. The very journey indicated the earthly pilgrimage towards eternity, the churches with their sacred architecture and works of art served a pedagogical function in an era when not everyone could read or access books. The relics of the martyrs preserved in those churches testified to the faith lived to the point of giving life, and their intercession brought graces to those who requested them. The celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass sanctified the participating faithful.

During the Middle Ages, the practice of the Roman Stations spread more and more, becoming not only an ecclesial event but also a significant social phenomenon. The faithful, in fact, who came from different regions of Italy and Europe, joined the Romans to take part in these liturgical gatherings.

### **Structure of the station celebration**

The characteristic element of these celebrations was the procession. In the morning, the faithful gathered in the church of the *collecta*, where, after a brief moment of prayer, they would set off in procession towards the station church, singing litanies and penitential hymns. Upon arrival, the Pope or the appointed prelate would preside over the Mass, with readings and prayers specific to the day. The use of litanies had a strong spiritual and pedagogical sense: while physically walking through the streets, prayers were offered for the needs of the Church and the world, invoking the saints of Rome and all of Christianity. The celebration culminated in the Eucharist, giving this “pause” a sacramental value and ecclesial communion.

Lent became the privileged time for the Stations, starting

from Ash Wednesday until Holy Saturday or, according to some customs, until the second Sunday after Easter. Each day was marked by a designated church, often chosen for the presence of important relics or for its particular history. Notable examples include *Santa Sabina on the Aventine*, where the Ash Wednesday rite usually begins, and *Santa Croce in Gerusalemme*, linked to the veneration of the relics of the Cross of Christ, a traditional destination for Good Friday. Participating in the Lenten Stations means entering a daily pilgrimage that unites the faithful in a path of penance and conversion, supported by devotion to the martyrs and saints. Each church tells a page of history, offering images, mosaics, and architectures that communicate the evangelical message in a visual form.

One of the most significant features of this tradition is the connection with the martyrs of the Church of Rome. During the period of persecutions, many Christians died for their faith. In the Constantinian and subsequent eras, basilicas or chapels were erected over their tombs. Celebrating a *statio* in these places meant recalling the testimony of those who had given their lives for Christ, reinforcing the belief that the Church is built also on the blood of the martyrs. Each liturgical visit thus became an act of communion between the faithful of yesterday and those of today, united by the Sacrament of the Eucharist. This “pilgrimage to the memory” connected the Lenten journey to a history of faith passed down from generation to generation.

### **From decline to rediscovery**

In the Middle Ages and the following centuries, the practice of the Stations experienced alternating fortunes. Sometimes, due to epidemics, invasions, or unstable political situations, it was moderated or suspended. However, liturgical books continued to indicate the Station Churches for each day, a sign that the Church at least preserved the symbolic memory of them. With the Tridentine liturgical reform (16th century),

the centrality of the Pope in such celebrations became less frequent, but the practice of citing the Station Church remained in official texts. With the renewed interest in Christian history and archaeology, the station tradition was rediscovered and proposed as a path of spiritual formation. In modern times, especially starting from Leo XIII (1878-1903) and subsequently with the popes of the 20th Century, there has been a growing interest in recovering this tradition. Various religious orders and lay associations have begun to promote the rediscovery of the “pilgrimage of the stations,” organising communal moments of prayer and catechesis in the designated churches.

Today, in an era characterised by frenzy and speed, the *statio* proposes rediscovering the dimension of “pausing”: stopping to pray, contemplate, listen, be silent, and meet the Lord. Lent is by definition a time of conversion, of more intense prayer, and of charity towards others. Undertaking a journey among the churches of Rome, even just on some significant days, can help the faithful rediscover the meaning of a penance lived not as a renunciation in itself but as an opening to the mystery of Christ.

Even today, in the Roman Calendar, the Station Church is indicated for each day. This recalls the unity of the people of God, gathered around the successor of Peter, and the memory of the saints who have spent their lives for the Gospel. Anyone who participates in these liturgies – even occasionally – discovers a city that is not just an open-air museum but a place where faith has been expressed in an original and lasting way.

Those who wish to rediscover the profound meaning of Lent and Easter can thus allow themselves to be guided by the station itinerary, joining their voice to that of the Christians of yesterday and of today in the great chorus that leads to the Easter light.

We present below the itinerary of the Roman Stations,

accompanied by the list of churches and their geographical location. It is important to note that the order of the list remains unchanged each year. Only the start date of Lent varies, and consequently, the subsequent dates. We wish a fruitful pilgrimage to those who wish to undertake, even if only in part, this journey in the Jubilee year.

			<b>Roman Station</b>	<b>Saints and Martyrs with Relics or Preserved Remains</b>
1	<a href="#">03.05</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Sabina on the Aventine Hill</a>	Saint <a href="#">Sabina</a> and Saint Serapia, martyr (d. circa 126 AD); Saints Alexander, Evens and Theodulus, martyrs
2	<a href="#">03.06</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">St. George at the Velabrum</a>	Saint <a href="#">George</a> , martyr (d. 303)
3	<a href="#">03.07</a>	Fri	<a href="#">Sts. John and Paul on the Caelian Hill</a>	Saints <a href="#">John and Paul</a> , martyrs (d. 362); Saint <a href="#">Paul of the Cross</a> (d. 1775), Founder of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ (the Passionists)
4	<a href="#">03.08</a>	Sat	<a href="#">St. Augustine in Camp Martius</a>	Saint <a href="#">Monica</a> (d. 387), mother of Saint <a href="#">Augustine</a> ; relics of Saint Augustine
5	<a href="#">03.09</a>	Sun	<a href="#">St. John Lateran</a>	The heads of Saint <a href="#">Peter</a> and Saint <a href="#">Paul</a> : these relics are preserved in silver busts placed above the papal altar, visible through a gilded grille; the <a href="#">Holy Stairs</a> (in the nearby Chapel of the Sancta Sanctorum); the Last Supper Table – the table on which the Last Supper was celebrated, according to tradition (a significant relic located on the altar of the Blessed Sacrament)
6	<a href="#">03.10</a>	Mon	<a href="#">St. Peter in Chains on the Oppian Hill</a>	The chains of Saint Peter; relics attributed to the Seven Maccabean Brothers, figures from the Old Testament venerated as martyrs

7	<a href="#">03.11</a>	Tue	<a href="#">St. Anastasia on the Palatine Hill</a>	Saint <a href="#">Anastasia of Sirmium</a> (d. 304); relics of the Holy Mantle of Saint Joseph; part of the Veil of the Virgin Mary
8	<a href="#">03.12</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Mary Major</a>	The Sacred Wood of the Cradle (the manger of the Christ Child); Panniculum (a small piece of cloth, part of the swaddling clothes with which the newborn Jesus was wrapped); Saint <a href="#">Matthew</a> , Apostle (d. 70 or 74); Saint <a href="#">Jerome</a> (d. 420); Saint <a href="#">Pius V</a> , Pope (d. 1572)
9	<a href="#">03.13</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">St. Lawrence in Panisperna</a>	Site of the martyrdom of Saint <a href="#">Lawrence</a> (d. 258); Saint Lawrence, martyr; Saint <a href="#">Crispina</a> , martyr (d. 304); Saint <a href="#">Bridget of Sweden</a> (d. 1373)
10	<a href="#">03.14</a>	Fri	<a href="#">Twelve Holy Apostles at the Trajan Forum</a>	Saint <a href="#">Philip the Apostle</a> (d. 80); Saint <a href="#">James the Less</a> , the Apostle (d. 62); Saints <a href="#">Chrysanthus and Daria</a> , martyrs (d. c. 283)



11	03.15	Sat	<p><a href="#">St. Peter in the Vatican</a></p>	<p>Saint <a href="#">Peter</a> (d. 67); Saint <a href="#">Linus</a> (d. 76); Saint <a href="#">Cletus</a> (d. 92); Saint <a href="#">Evaristus</a> (d. 105); Saint <a href="#">Alexander I</a> (d. 115); Saint <a href="#">Sixtus I</a> (d. 126–128); Saint <a href="#">Telesphorus</a> (d. 136); Saint <a href="#">Hyginus</a> (d. 140); Saint <a href="#">Pius I</a> (d. 155); Saint <a href="#">Anicetus</a> (d. 166); Saint <a href="#">Eleutherius</a> (d. 189); Saint <a href="#">Victor I</a> (d. 199); Saint <a href="#">John Chrysostom</a> (d. 407, relics in the Choir Chapel); Saint <a href="#">Leo I, the Great</a> (d. 461); Saint <a href="#">Simplicius</a> (d. 483); Saint <a href="#">Gelasius I</a> (d. 496); Saint <a href="#">Symmachus</a> (d. 514); Saint <a href="#">Hormisdas</a> (d. 523); Saint <a href="#">John I</a> (d. 526); Saint <a href="#">Felix IV</a> (d. 530); Saint <a href="#">Agapetus I</a> (d. 536); Saint <a href="#">Gregory I, the Great</a> (d. 604); Saint <a href="#">Boniface IV</a> (d. 615); Saint <a href="#">Eugene I</a> (d. 657); Saint <a href="#">Vitalian</a> (d. 672); Saint <a href="#">Agatho</a> (d. 681); Saint <a href="#">Leo II</a> (d. 683); Saint <a href="#">Benedict II</a> (d. 685); Saint <a href="#">Sergius I</a> (d. 701); Saint <a href="#">Gregory II</a> (d. 731); Saint <a href="#">Gregory III</a> (d. 741); Saint <a href="#">Zachary</a> (d. 752); Saint <a href="#">Paul I</a> (d. 767); Saint <a href="#">Leo III</a> (d. 816); Saint <a href="#">Paschal I</a> (d. 824); Saint <a href="#">Leo IV</a> (d. 855); Saint <a href="#">Nicholas I</a> (d. 867); Saint <a href="#">Leo IX</a> (d. 1054); Blessed <a href="#">Urban II</a> (d. 1099); Blessed <a href="#">Innocent XI</a> (d. 1689); Saint <a href="#">Pius X</a> (d. 1914); Saint <a href="#">John XXIII</a> (d. 1963); Saint <a href="#">Paul VI</a> (d. 1978); Blessed <a href="#">John Paul I</a> (d. 1978); Saint <a href="#">John Paul II</a> (d. 2005); a fragment of Saint Andrew's Cross; the lance of Saint Longinus; a fragment of the Cross of Christ</p>
12	03.16	Sun	<p><a href="#">St. Mary in Domnica at Navicella</a></p>	<p>Saint <a href="#">Lawrence</a>, martyr (d. 258); Saint Ciriaca, martyr</p>

13	<a href="#">03.17</a>	Mon	<a href="#">St. Clement in Lateran</a>	Saint <a href="#">Clement I</a> , Pope and martyr (d. 101); Saint <a href="#">Ignatius of Antioch</a> , Bishop and martyr (d. c. 110); Saint <a href="#">Cyril</a> (d. 869), Apostle of the Slavs
14	<a href="#">03.18</a>	Tue	<a href="#">St. Balbina on the Aventine</a>	Saint <a href="#">Balbina</a> , Virgin and Roman martyr (d. 130) already venerated in early Christian times Saints Felicissimus and Quirinus (her father) associated with the martyrdom of St. Balbina
15	<a href="#">03.19</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Cecilia in Trastevere</a>	Saint <a href="#">Cecilia</a> (d. 230); Saint Valerian, Cecilia's husband, converted to Christianity and martyred (d. 229); Saint Tiburtius, brother of Valerian and companion in martyrdom; Saint Maximus, the soldier or official in charge of the execution of Valerian and Tiburtius, who later converted and was in turn martyred; Pope <a href="#">Urban I</a> (c. d. 230), who is said to have baptised Cecilia and her husband Valerian
16	<a href="#">03.20</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">St. Mary in Trastevere</a>	Saint <a href="#">Julius I</a> , Pope (d. 352); Saint <a href="#">Callixtus I</a> , Pope and martyr (c. d. 222); Saints Florentinus, Corona, Sabinus and Alexander, martyrs
17	<a href="#">03.21</a>	Fri	St. Vitalis in Fovea	Saints <a href="#">Vitalis</a> (d. 304), <a href="#">Valeria</a> (2nd century), <a href="#">Gervasius and Protasius</a> (2nd century)
18	<a href="#">03.22</a>	Sat	<a href="#">Sts. Peter and Marcellinus in Lateran</a>	Saints <a href="#">Marcellinus and Peter</a> , martyrs (d. 304); Saint Marcia, martyr associated with Saints Marcellinus and Peter

19	<a href="#">03.23</a>	Sun	<a href="#">St. Lawrence Outside the Walls</a>	Saint <a href="#">Lawrence</a> (d. 258); Saint <a href="#">Stephen</a> , Protomartyr (1st century); Saint <a href="#">Hippolytus</a> (3rd century); Saint <a href="#">Justus</a> , martyr (d. 167); Pope Saint <a href="#">Sixtus III</a> (d. 440); Pope Saint <a href="#">Zosimus</a> (d. 418); Blessed <a href="#">Pius IX</a> , Pope (d. 1878)
20	<a href="#">03.24</a>	Mon	<a href="#">St. Mark on the Capitoline</a>	Saint <a href="#">Mark, Evangelist</a> and martyr (1st century); Pope Saint <a href="#">Mark</a> (d. 336); Saints <a href="#">Abdon and Sennen</a> , Persian martyrs (3rd century)
21	<a href="#">03.25</a>	Tue	<a href="#">St. Pudenziana at the Viminal</a>	Saint <a href="#">Pudenziana</a> , martyr (2nd century); Saint <a href="#">Praxedes</a> , his sister (2nd century)
22	<a href="#">03.26</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Sixtus (Sts. Nereus and Achilleus)</a>	Saint <a href="#">Sixtus I</a> , Pope (d. 125); Saints <a href="#">Nereus and Achilleus</a> (d. 300); Saint <a href="#">Flavia Domitilla</a> , martyr (1st century)
23	<a href="#">03.27</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">Sts. Cosmas and Damian on the Via Sacra</a>	Saints <a href="#">Cosmas and Damian</a> , physicians and martyrs (d. 303); Saints Antimo and Leonzio, brothers and martyrs
24	<a href="#">03.28</a>	Fri	<a href="#">St. Lawrence in Lucina</a>	The gridiron of Saint Lawrence on which the Saint is said to have been burned alive; a vase containing St. Lawrence's burnt flesh
25	<a href="#">03.29</a>	Sat	<a href="#">St. Susanna at the Baths of Diocletian</a>	Saint <a href="#">Susanna</a> , virgin and martyr (d. 294)
26	<a href="#">03.30</a>	Sun	<a href="#">Holy Cross in Jerusalem</a>	Fragments of the True Cross, part of the Titulus Crucis (the inscription "I.N.R.I."); nails from the Crucifixion and some thorns from the Crown; a fragment of the cross of the Good Thief, Saint <a href="#">Dismas</a> ; the phalanx of Saint <a href="#">Thomas the Apostle</a> (1st century)

27	<a href="#">04.31</a>	Mon	<a href="#">Sts. Four Crowned on the Caelian Hill</a>	Saints <a href="#">Castor</a> , <a href="#">Sinfroniano</a> , <a href="#">Claudius</a> and <a href="#">Nicostratus</a> , martyrs (4th century)
28	<a href="#">04.01</a>	Tue	<a href="#">St. Lawrence in Damaso</a>	Saint <a href="#">Lawrence</a> , martyr (d. 258); Saint <a href="#">Damasus</a> , Pope and martyr (d. 384); Saints Jovinus and Faustinus, martyrs
29	<a href="#">04.02</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Paul Outside the Walls</a>	Saint <a href="#">Paul the Apostle</a> (d. 67); the chain of Saint Paul; the staff of Saint Paul
30	<a href="#">04.03</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">Sts. Sylvester and Martin on the Mountains</a>	Saints Artemius, Paulina and Sisinnius, martyrs; Blessed <a href="#">Angelus Paoli</a> (d. 1720)
31	<a href="#">04.04</a>	Fri	<a href="#">St. Eusebius on the Esquiline Hill</a>	Saint <a href="#">Eusebius</a> , presbyter and martyr (d. 353); Saints Orosius and Paulinus, priests and martyrs
32	<a href="#">04.05</a>	Sat	<a href="#">St. Nicholas in Prison</a>	Saint <a href="#">Nicholas of Bari</a> (d. 270); Saints Marcellinus and Faustinus, martyrs (d. 250)
33	<a href="#">04.06</a>	Sun	<a href="#">St. Peter in the Vatican</a>	
34	<a href="#">04.07</a>	Mon	<a href="#">St. Chrysogonus in Trastevere</a>	Saint <a href="#">Chrysogonus</a> , martyr (d. 303); Saint <a href="#">Anastasia</a> , martyr (d. 250); Saint Rufus, martyr (1st century); Blessed <a href="#">Anna Maria Taigi</a> (d. 1837)
35	<a href="#">04.08</a>	Tue	<a href="#">St. Mary on Via Lata</a>	Saint <a href="#">Agapitus</a> , martyr (d. 273); Saints Hippolytus and <a href="#">Darius</a> , martyrs (4th century); a fragment of the True Cross
36	<a href="#">04.09</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Marcellus on the Corso</a>	Saint <a href="#">Marcellus I</a> , Pope (d. 309); Saint Digna and Saint Emerita, martyrs
37	<a href="#">04.10</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">St. Apollinaris in Campo Marzio</a>	Saint <a href="#">Apollinaris</a> (2nd century); Saints Eustratius, Bardarius, Eugenius, Orestes and Eusenio, martyrs

38	<a href="#">04.11</a>	Fri	<a href="#">St. Stephen on the Caelian Hill</a>	Saint <a href="#">Stephen</a> , Protomartyr (d. 36); Saints <a href="#">Primus and Felician</a> , martyrs (d. 303); fragments of the True Cross
39	<a href="#">04.12</a>	Sat	<a href="#">St. John at the Latin Gate</a>	Bone fragments or small reliquaries containing parts of the body or personal objects attributed to Saint <a href="#">John the Evangelist</a> (d. 98); Saints <a href="#">Gordianus and Epimachus</a> , martyrs (4th century)
40	<a href="#">04.13</a>	Sun	<a href="#">St. John Lateran</a>	
41	<a href="#">04.14</a>	Mon	<a href="#">St. Praxedes on the Esquiline</a>	Saint <a href="#">Praxedes</a> , martyr (2nd century); Saint Pudens, martyr (2nd century); Saint Victoria, martyr (d. 253); the Column of the Flagellation
42	<a href="#">04.15</a>	Tue	<a href="#">St. Prisca on the Aventine</a>	Saint <a href="#">Prisca</a> , one of the first Christian martyrs (1st century); Saints <a href="#">Aquila and Priscilla</a> , Christian spouses; fragments of the True Cross
43	<a href="#">04.16</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Mary Major</a>	
44	<a href="#">04.17</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">St. John Lateran</a>	
45	<a href="#">04.18</a>	Fri	<a href="#">Holy Cross in Jerusalem</a>	
46	<a href="#">04.19</a>	Sat	<a href="#">St. John Lateran</a>	
47	<a href="#">04.20</a>	Sun	<a href="#">St. Mary Major</a>	
48	<a href="#">04.21</a>	Mon	<a href="#">St. Peter in the Vatican</a>	
49	<a href="#">04.22</a>	Tue	<a href="#">St. Paul Outside the Walls</a>	

50	<a href="#">04.23</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Lawrence Outside the Walls</a>	Saint <a href="#">Lawrence</a> , martyr (d. 258); Saint <a href="#">Stephen</a> , Protomartyr (d. 36); Saint <a href="#">Sebastian</a> , martyr (d. 288); Saint <a href="#">Francis of Assisi</a> (d. 1226); Pope Saint <a href="#">Zosimus</a> (d. 418), Pope Saint <a href="#">Sixtus III</a> (d. 440), Pope Saint <a href="#">Hilary</a> (d. 468), Pope Saint <a href="#">Damasus II</a> (d. 1048); Blessed <a href="#">Pius IX</a> , Pope (d. 1878); fragments of the True Cross
51	<a href="#">04.24</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">Church of the Twelve Apostles</a>	Saint <a href="#">Philip the Apostle</a> (d. 80); Saint <a href="#">James the Less</a> (d. 62)
52	<a href="#">04.25</a>	Fri	<a href="#">St. Mary ad Martyres (Pantheon)</a>	Saint <a href="#">Longinus</a> , the Roman soldier who pierced the side of Jesus Christ during the Crucifixion (1st century); Saint <a href="#">Bibiana</a> , martyr (d. 362–363); Saint <a href="#">Lucia</a> , martyr (d. 304); Saints Rasus and Anastasius, martyrs; during the consecration of the church in 609 A.D. by Pope Boniface IV, the bones of at least 28 groups of martyrs were transferred here from the Roman cemeteries
53	<a href="#">04.26</a>	Sat	<a href="#">St. John Lateran</a>	
54	<a href="#">04.27</a>	Sun	<a href="#">St. Pancras</a>	Saint <a href="#">Pancras</a> , martyr (d. 304); fragments of the True Cross