

Cardinal Angelo Amato S.D.B.: a cultured theologian between the West and the East

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, SDB, had the opportunity to know the late Cardinal Angelo Amato very well. Both shared the Salesian vocation and had collaborated as teachers at the Pontifical Salesian University. Later, Fr. Angelo Amato succeeded Mons. Bertone as Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, a position he held from 2002 to 2008.

His Eminence Cardinal Bertone wishes to offer his personal testimony about Cardinal Amato, which we present below.

Cardinal Angelo Amato was one of the most intelligent Salesians, well-versed in the human and ecclesiastical sciences. His ability to grasp and connect Philosophy and Theology was especially evident during his years of study at the Salesian University, as part of a group of exceptional students who brought prestige to the same and who later distinguished themselves not only in teaching, but also in service to the Holy See at the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia.

I particularly remember his exceptional skill in the study of Christology and Mariology. His writings were highly refined, and he was sought after as a preacher of Spiritual Exercises, especially for consecrated persons, not to mention the sharpness of his opinions in promoting Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue. In fact, he was particularly appreciated by the then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (who later became Pope Benedict XVI), and by the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity. For this reason, he was sent to Greece to study the Theology of the Eastern Fathers, learned ancient Greek and modern Greek,

and even published a highly regarded study at the Greek University of Thessaloniki on the conception and practice of the Sacrament of Penance among the Eastern Fathers. During that time, he learned the art and spirituality of "writing" icons, which he continued to practice until the end of his life. In Rome, he primarily taught at the Pontifical Salesian University, becoming Dean of the Faculty of Theology, and as an expert in Christology and Mariology, he was appointed Consultor of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and later also Secretary of the same.

It is interesting to note the contribution that Fr. Angelo Amato made in collaboration with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for the drafting of the famous dogmatic declaration "*Dominus Jesus*" of September 1, 2000. It is declaration desired by Pope John Paul II and drafted by Cardinal Ratzinger with the fine and intelligent collaboration of Fr. Angelo Amato. Cardinal Ratzinger later valued him for the documents and reflections produced by that doctrinal Dicastery of the Roman Curia. Then, when Secretary, Msgr. Tarcisio Bertone was appointed Archbishop of Genoa, a successor was sought. I remember very well the consultations of Cardinal Ratzinger and the dialogues with His Holiness John Paul II. Among the candidates for succession, the name of Fr. Angelo Amato stood out, but in a conversation between Cardinal Ratzinger and myself with Pope John Paul II, I pointed out a peculiarity that seemed to create some difficulty, namely the fact that one Salesian would succeed another Salesian in this important role. Pope John Paul II asked Cardinal Ratzinger, "But does this pose a problem for Cardinal Ratzinger? Would Cardinal Ratzinger like to appoint another Salesian to the position of Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith?" Cardinal Ratzinger replied, "I would prefer Fr. Angelo Amato because I have found it very good to work with him here at the Dicastery, and we are in perfect harmony." John Paul II responded, "Then let us appoint Fr. Angelo Amato as the new

Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.” And so this happened on December 19, 2002.

He carried out many activities in drafting the documents that characterised the Magisterium of this Dicastery of the Roman Curia presided over by Cardinal Ratzinger, and subsequently, Pope John Paul II decided to create him a Cardinal and appoint him Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. In this role, he carried out intense activity promoting holiness in the Church, holiness in consecrated life, lay life, and priesthood. He also published among his volumes a series of biographies of Blessed and Saints that made known and multiplied the attraction of holiness in the variety of charisms, cultures, and people that enriched the Church, with many beneficial examples and initiatives.

He remained Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints for 10 years, until 2018, and continued his magisterial activity for the Church in service to the Popes. Pope Francis sent a beautiful telegram to the General Vicar of the Salesian Congregation, praising the “Salesianity” of Cardinal Amato and his work as Prefect of the Causes of Saints.

We include the message in full:

REVEREND DON STEFANO MARTOGLIO SDB
VICAR OF THE RECTOR MAJOR
SOCIETY OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES (SALESIANS)
ROME

Upon learning of the news of the passing of dear Cardinal Angelo Amato, I express my closeness to you and to the Brothers of this Religious Institute, as well as to the family of the late Cardinal. I thank God for the edifying testimony of this spiritual son of Saint John Bosco, who for many years dedicated himself with human finesse and generosity to the Gospel and the Church. I think of his priestly soul and the theological preparation with which he served the Holy See,

especially in the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and in that of the Causes of Saints. I assure my prayers for the soul of this good and vigilant servant who, faithful to his motto 'Sufficit gratia mea', even in the final days marked by suffering, entrusted himself to the goodness of the Heavenly Father. I trust that, accompanied by Mary Help of Christians and the Saints and Blesseds he led to the glory of the altars, he will be welcomed into the eternal banquet of Heaven, and I send my blessing to all who share in the sorrow of his passing.

Francis

Among the Salesian Cardinals, especially endowed with great theological charisma, Cardinal Angelo Amato stands out, leaving a great heritage of doctrine and wisdom available not only to the Pontifical Salesian University but also to various institutional centres of study and spirituality, with the hope that it continues to impact the life of the Church and the formative Communities.

□ *Tarcisio Card. Bertone*

The Jubilee of 2025 and the Jubilee Basilicas

On December 24, 2024, on Christmas Eve, the Pope opened the Bronze Door in St. Peter's Basilica, thus marking the beginning of the Jubilee of 2025. This gesture was subsequently repeated in other basilicas: on December 27, on the Feast of St. John Apostle and Evangelist, in the Lateran Basilica (of which he is co-patron); on January 1, 2025, the solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God, in the Basilica of

St. Mary Major; and finally on January 5, the Vigil of the Epiphany, in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. Below, we briefly explain what the Jubilee is and the Jubilee basilicas where it is possible to obtain plenary indulgence.

Origins

Sometimes there is confusion between the **first Jubilee** and the **first Bull** that established their frequency, however the Jubilee finds its roots in biblical legislation. It was God Himself who commanded Moses to celebrate a “Jubilee” year every fifty years (*Leviticus* 25). Over the centuries, this practice passed on to the Christian community, gradually adapting to the needs and traditions of the Church.

In 1300, in response to the great influx of pilgrims to Rome, Pope Boniface VIII published the bull *Antiquorum Habet Fida Relatio*, which did not establish the Jubilee *ex novo*, rather it recognised the already existing secular tradition. He conducted various inquiries, even questioning very elderly people, such as a 107-year-old Savoyard, who remembered being brought to Rome by his father a hundred years earlier to gain “great indulgences”. This widespread belief prompted Boniface VIII to solemnly establish what was being transmitted orally, namely the possibility of obtaining the plenary indulgence by visiting St. Peter’s Basilica during the “secular” year.

Originally, according to the bull of Boniface VIII, the Jubilee was to be celebrated every hundred years. However, the periods between Jubilees changed over time:

- Pope Clement VI reduced it to every fifty years (thus resuming the frequency of the Old Testament);
- Pope Gregory XI set it every thirty-three years, in memory of the years of Jesus’ life;
- Pope Paul II finally established the frequency of twenty-five years, so that more faithful, including young people, could enjoy this grace at least once in their lifetime (considering the low life expectancy of those times).

In addition to “ordinary” Jubilees (every 25 years), “extraordinary” Jubilees are sometimes proclaimed for particular circumstances or needs of the Church. The last three extraordinary Jubilees have been:

- 1933-1934: Extraordinary Jubilee of Redemption (1900th anniversary of the Redemption of Christ, traditionally dated to the year 33 AD);
- 1983-1984: Extraordinary Jubilee of Redemption (1950th anniversary of the Redemption of Christ);
- 2015-2016: Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (to centre upon the theme of Mercy).

Since not everyone could travel to Rome, the Popes granted the possibility of obtaining the plenary indulgence also to those who, for economic reasons or other nature, could not travel. Instead of the pilgrimage, other works of piety, penance, and charity could be performed, as is still the case today.

Meaning and spirit of the Jubilee

The Jubilee is a strong time of **penance** and **conversion**, aimed at the remission of sins and growth in God’s grace. In particular, the Church invites us to:

1. **Renew the memory of our Redemption** and evoke a lively gratitude towards the Divine Saviour.
2. **Revive** in us faith, hope, and charity.
3. **Arm ourselves**, thanks to the Lord’s particular enlightenment in this period of grace, against errors, impiety, corruption, and scandals that surround us.
4. **Awaken and increase** the spirit of prayer, a Christian’s fundamental weapon.
5. **Cultivate penance** of the heart, correct behaviours, and repair with good works those sins that draw God’s wrath.
6. **Obtain**, through the conversion of sinners and the perfection of the righteous, that God anticipates in His mercy the triumph of the truth taught by the Church.

One of the culminating moments for the faithful during the Jubilee is the passage through the Holy Door, a gesture that

must be preceded by a remote preparation path (prayer, penance, and charity) and by a proximate preparation (fulfilling the conditions to receive the plenary indulgence). It is important to remember that one cannot receive the plenary indulgence if one is in a state of grave sin.

The conditions for receiving plenary indulgence are:

1. Sacramental confession.
2. Eucharistic communion.
3. Prayer according to the intentions of the Holy Father (an *Our Father* and a *Hail Mary*).
4. Inner disposition of total detachment from sin, even venial (that is, the strong will to no longer want to offend God).

If full disposition is lacking or if all conditions are not met, the indulgence is only partial.

Information on the Jubilee of 2025

As usual, this Jubilee was proclaimed by a **Bull of Indiction**, entitled *Spes Non Confundit*, which can be consulted [HERE](#). Additionally, the **Norms on the Granting of the Indulgence During the Ordinary Jubilee of 2025** are available, and can be read [HERE](#). The **official website** of the Jubilee of 2025, with information on the organization, events, calendar, and more, can be found [HERE](#).

In the jubilee tradition of the Catholic Church, pilgrims arriving in Rome make a “devout pilgrimage” to the churches enriched with indulgence. This custom dates back to the time of the first Christians, who loved to pray at the tombs of the apostles and martyrs, certain of receiving particular graces through the intercession of St. Peter, St. Paul, and the many martyrs who soaked the land of Rome with their blood.

In 2025, several **pilgrimage routes** have been proposed, and in each of the indicated churches, it is possible to obtain the plenary indulgence. All the basilicas and churches mentioned below have been enriched with this jubilee gift.

1. *Itinerary of the four Papal Basilicas*

The four Papal Basilicas of Rome are:

- 1.1 St. Peter in Vatican City
- 1.2 St. John Lateran
- 1.3 St. Mary Major
- 1.4 St. Paul Outside the Walls

2. *Pilgrimage of the 7 churches*

The pilgrimage of the **Seven Churches**, initiated by St. Philip Neri in the 16th century, is one of the oldest Roman traditions. The itinerary, about 25 km long, winds through the entire city, also touching the Roman countryside and the catacombs.

In addition to the four Papal Basilicas, it includes:

- 2.5 Basilica of St. Lawrence Outside the Walls
- 2.6 Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem
- 2.7 Basilica of St. Sebastian Outside the Walls

3. *"Iter Europaeum"*

The ***Iter Europaeum*** is a pilgrimage through 28 churches and basilicas in Rome, each associated with one of the member states of the European Union for its artistic, cultural value, or for the tradition of hosting pilgrims from that specific country.

4. *Female Patrons of Europe and Doctors of the Church*

This route offers the opportunity to get to know European saints more closely, particularly those recognised as **Female Patrons of Europe** or **Doctors of the Church**. The itinerary leads pilgrims through the alleys of the Monti district, Piazza della Minerva, and other iconic places in Rome, to discover female figures of great importance in the history of Catholicism.

5. *Christian Catacombs*

Places that are both historical and sacred, where the mortal remains of numerous saints and martyrs are preserved.

6. Other Jubilee Churches

In these churches, catechesis will be held in various languages to rediscover the meaning of the Holy Year. It will also be possible to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation and enrich one's experience of faith through prayer.

Basilicas or churches enriched with plenary indulgence

To facilitate visits and devotion, here we are presenting the list of all the basilicas and churches enriched with plenary indulgence for the Jubilee of 2025, accompanied by links to the Jubilee sites, Google Maps, the official web pages of the individual places of worship, and other useful information. Three of them have been repeated because they are included in a double category (Basilica of St. Mary of Minerva, St. Paul at the Rule, and St. Bridget at Campo de' Fiori).

	<u>Papal Basilicas (4)</u>	Gmaps	Web	Wiki
1	<u>Basilica of Saint Peter in the Vatican</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
2	<u>Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>		<u>Wiki</u>
3	<u>Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
4	<u>Basilica of Saint Mary Major</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>

	<u>The</u> <u>Seven Churches Pilgrimage (4 papal + 3)</u>			
5	<u>Basilica</u> <u>of Saint Lawrence Outside the Walls</u>	Gmaps	Web	Wiki
6	<u>Basilica</u> <u>of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem</u>	Gmaps	Web	Wiki
7	<u>Basilica</u> <u>of Saint Sebastian Outside the Walls</u>	Gmaps	Web	Wiki
	<u>Visitable</u> <u>Christian catacombs (7)</u>		Web	Wiki
8	Catacomb of San Pancrazio (Via Vitellia)	Gmaps	Web	Wiki
9	Catacombs of Domitilla (Via Ardeatina)	Gmaps	Web	Wiki
10	Catacomb of Callixtus (Via Appia)	Gmaps	Web	Wiki
11	Catacombs of San Sebastiano (Via Appia)	Gmaps	Web	Wiki
12	Catacombs of Marcellinus and Peter (Via Labicana)	Gmaps	Web	Wiki
13	Catacombs of Saint Agnes (Via Nomentana)	Gmaps	Web	Wiki
14	Catacomb of Priscilla (Via Salaria nova)	Gmaps	Web	Wiki

	<u>Iter</u> <u>Europaeum (28)</u>			
15	<u>Basilica</u> <u>of Saint Mary of the Altar in Heaven</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>		<u>Wiki</u>
16	Church of the Most Holy Name of Mary at the Trajan Forum	<u>Gmaps</u>		<u>Wiki</u>
17	<u>St.</u> <u>Julian of the Flemings</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
18	<u>St.</u> <u>Paul at the Rule</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
19	<u>Basilica</u> <u>of Saint Mary on via Lata</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
20	<u>Saint</u> <u>Jerome of the Croats</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
21	<u>Saint</u> <u>Mary of Carmel in Traspontina</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
22	<u>Basilica</u> <u>of Saint Sabina on the Aventine Hill</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
23	<u>Basilica</u> <u>of Saint Mary of Minerva</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
24	<u>St.</u> <u>Louis of the French</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
25	<u>Holy</u> <u>Mary of the Soul (Pontifical Teutonic</u> <u>Institute)</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>

26	<u>Saint Theodore at the Palatine</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
27	<u>Saint Isidore at Capo le Case</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
28	<u>Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels and of the Martyrs</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
29	<u>Basilica Santi Quattro Coronati</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
30	<u>The Most Holy Name of Jesus (Church of the Gesù)</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
31	<u>Basilica Sacred Heart of Jesus at Castro Pretorio</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
32	<u>Saint Paul at the Three Fountains</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
33	<u>Saints Michael and Magnus</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
34	<u>Saint Stanislaus</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
35	<u>Saint Anthony in Campo Marzio</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
36	<u>Basilica of Saint Clement</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
37	<u>San Salvatore alle Coppelle</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>

38	<u>Basilica of Saint Praxedes</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
39	<u>Basilica of Saint Mary Major</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
40	<u>San Pietro in Montorio</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
41	<u>Saint Bridget at Campo de Fiori</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
42	<u>Basilica of St. Stephen in the Round on the Caelian Hill</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
	<u>Patronesses of Europe and Doctors of the Church (7)</u>			
43	<u>Basilica Saint Mary of Minerva (St. Catherine of Siena)</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
44	<u>Saint Bridget at Campo de Fiori (Saint Bridget of Sweden)</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
45	<u>Saint Mary of Victory (St Teresa of Jesus of Avila)</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>		<u>Wiki</u>
46	<u>Trinità dei Monti (St. Therese of the Child Jesus)</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>

47	<u>Basilica of Saint Cecilia in Trastevere (St Hildegard of Bingen)</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
48	<u>Basilica of Saint Augustine in Camp Martius</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
49	Saint Ivo at the Sapienza (St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Edith Stein)	<u>Gmaps</u>		
	<u>The Jubilee Churches (12)</u>			
50	<u>St. Paul at the Rule</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
51	<u>San Salvatore in Lauro</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
52	<u>Santa Maria in Vallicella</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>		<u>Wiki</u>
53	<u>St Catherine of Siena</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
54	<u>Church of the Holy Spirit of the Neapolitans</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>		<u>Wiki</u>
55	<u>Santa Maria del Suffragio</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>		<u>Wiki</u>
56	<u>Basilica Saint John of the Florentines</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>

57	<u>Basilica of Holy Mary in Monserrat of the Spaniards</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
58	<u>Basilica of Saints Sylvester and Martin in the Mountains</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
59	<u>Saint Prisca</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
60	<u>Basilica Saint Andrew of the Thickets</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
61	<u>Shrine of Our Lady of Divine Love</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>
	Other churches that grant indulgence (1)			
62	<u>Holy Spirit in Saxony</u>	<u>Gmaps</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>Wiki</u>