



PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURE

What's been going on at the Pontifical Council for Culture
Circular Letter for Members and Consultors, N. 2 (26 May 2015)

Visits *Ad limina*

Bishops from **Togo** stopped by our offices May 12 to spend time reflecting on cultural issues. They shared strategies, priorities and experiences in the encounter between the Faith and the world of sport (one bishop has a marathon for the Lord in his diocese converging on the Cathedral), in music (80% of CD sales in shops is of Gospel music, but only 1% of these feature music by Catholics), and discussed pastoral approaches to the phenomenon of the Seat of Ancestral Power.

The sad state of life in the **Central African Republic** was discussed on May 21 as bishops from that crisis-torn country visited. The lack of even primary school teachers in a country where 60% of the population is under 25 is symbolic of a society struggling to transmit values and meaning to future generations. While many Africans are rightly proud of their sense of family and solidarity, they are also aware how cheap life has become with children killing each other like animals in the street. A recovery of a proper sense of the sacred is a priority. A Church-led Observatory on the Crisis is being set up to tell the story the African way, with forgiveness and reconciliation to the fore, one of a series of projects aimed at tackling cultural rootlessness. Painful words spent on the phenomenon of stolen childhood.

Opening of the Holy See's Pavilion at Expo Milano 2015 (1 May)

These images include the striking facade of the Holy See's pavilion at #Expo2015 (where the world is focusing on Feeding the Planet – Energy for Life) and some other photos from inside telling other stories about material and spiritual hunger. #notbybreadalone



Forthcoming is the Holy See's National Day taking place on 11 June with various inputs including from the Courtyard of the Gentiles on "The Faces of the Earth"



Cardinal Ravasi received numerous visitors including the Ambassadors of Panama, Slovenia and Ireland. Special mention for a group of young women and men from **Panamá**, prize winners in a competition to engage with beauty and art for a better common good. And among his more notable talks the opening remarks at the Conference at the Antonianum, "*Women in the Church: Perspectives in Dialogue*", 28 April 2015.

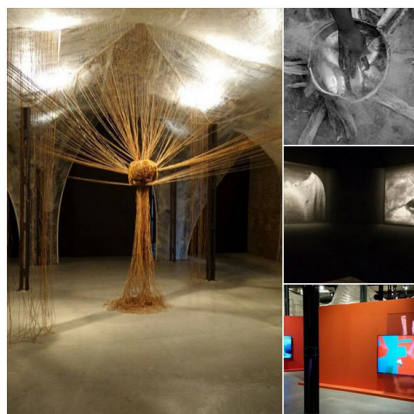
Days of celebrations for Dante



750 years ago Dante Alighieri was born and today the long shadow of his art, wisdom and insight still shapes and inspires much of Italian and European Culture. On 4 May 2015 a day of celebrations was held at the Italian Senate in the presence of Sergio Mattarella (president of the Italian Republic) and Cardinal Ravasi who is overseeing preparations for the seventh centenary of the death of the “Sommo Poeta” in 2021. Pope Francis sent a message recalling the appreciation given to Dante by Benedict XV and his famous Encyclical “In praecleara summorum” of 30 April 1921, Paul VI’s apostolic letter “Altissimi cantus” at the end of the Second Vatican Council, as well as his influence on John Paul II and Benedict XVI. On 19 February another celebration took place in Florence.

On 25 May a concert of music by the choir “Rustavi” took place in Cardinal Ravasi’s titular church marking the visit of the **Georgian Minister of Culture** with delegation who visited the Dicastery.

Opening of the Holy See’s Pavilion at the *Biennale d’Arte di Venezia 2015* (8 May)



The world of contemporary art has one of its focal points in the Venice Biennale where the Holy See has its own Pavilion opened by Cardinal Ravasi on 8 May.

Three artists were given the prologue to John’s Gospel with its key expressions “In the beginning” and “the Word became Flesh”. They were also invited to reflect on the parable of the Good Samaritan to give form to the ideas of contact, neighbourliness and nearness. The three young emerging artists were Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva (Macedonia – GB), Mário Macilau (Africa) and Monika Bravo (Colombia – New York)

Bishop Carlos Alberto Azevedo, **Delegate** spoke at the meeting for Ministers of Cultural Heritage of the European Council in Namur, 22-24 April and opened the conference “Safeguarding the Musical Traditions of Eastern Christianity,” sponsored by the Notre Dame Sacred Music Program, 25 May 2015.

The **Undersecretary** attended the 3rd Intercultural Dialogue Forum, Baku, Azerbaijan, 17-18 May.

The Courtyard of the Gentiles held an event for students at MAXXI looking at “The City: Babel or Jerusalem” on 27 April and a meeting of its scientific counsel on 22 May on the theme “**End of Life**” which is elaborating a basic text on this issue for public distribution. And the Courtyard’s **Children’s Train** is due to arrive with its usual amount of colour, charity and nonchalance into the Vatican’s Train station allowing children of prisoners to travel and meet the Holy Father on 30 May.

Our **Science** Department was busy 9 May with a Study Day on “*Robotics: A hand for humanity*”.

Cultures and Faith: The Review

Vol. XXIII 2015 N.1 of the Dicastery’s journal came out with a focus on musical cultures. Introductory articles look at the place of music in the world and in the life of the Church, painting a broad picture of some musical research and educational projects, work being done in safeguarding patrimony and developing new engagement through different cultures, and, of course, customs and developments applied in the liturgical sphere.

This circular letter bridges the gap between our Review Cultures and Faith, still coming to you three times a year, and the information on our website www.cultura.va and various social media. Richard Rouse, Communications.