

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

GIORNALE QUOTIDIANO POLITICO RELIGIOSO

*Unicuique suum Non praevalerunt*



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Udienza ai capitolari e alla famiglia carismatica degli Orionini

## Nel fuoco dei tempi nuovi

«Gettarsi nel fuoco dei tempi nuovi» per aprirsi a «nuove frontiere» e scoprire «nuove forme di missione»: riprendendo un'espressione «tipica dell'ardore apostolico» di don Luigi Orione, Papa Francesco ha rivolto questo invito ai partecipanti al capitolo generale dei Figli della Divina Provvidenza e a una delegazione

della Famiglia carismatica orionina. L'occasione è stata l'udienza svoltasi stamane, sabato 25 giugno, nella Sala Clementina, in occasione del 150° anniversario della nascita del santo fondatore.

PAGINA 8

In serata la messa presieduta dal Pontefice in piazza San Pietro

## Verso la conclusione il X Incontro mondiale delle famiglie

Con la partecipazione alla messa celebrata stasera dal Papa in piazza San Pietro e all'Angelus di domani, le famiglie giunte in questi giorni a Roma dai cinque continenti concluderanno il loro X incontro mondiale, iniziato lo scorso mercoledì 22 giugno. Da giovedì a sabato i delegati di 120 Paesi hanno partecipa-

to ai lavori del congresso teologico-pastorale, chiusosi stamane con una riflessione sul tema della santità incentrata sull'esperienza dei beati coniugi Luigi e Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi.

PAGINA 8



## Il colore del pericolo

Gli scarti della produzione tessile inquinano i fiumi del Bangladesh

La sentenza  
della Corte suprema  
Usa che annulla  
la legalizzazione  
dell'aborto

Per la vita  
sempre

di ANDREA TORNIELLI

La sentenza della Corte Suprema, che dopo mezzo secolo annulla la legalizzazione federale dell'aborto negli Usa ridando ai singoli Stati la facoltà di legiferare, può essere l'occasione per riflettere sulla vita, sulla tutela degli indifesi e degli scartati, sui diritti delle donne, sulla tutela della maternità.

È un tema sul quale, fin dall'inizio del suo pontificato, Pa-

The front page of L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican newspaper, from June 25, 2022. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano)

Cindy Wooden

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Vatican City — December 13, 2022

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Recent popes have used the concept of a "Petrine principle" and a "Marian principle" to describe the important role women and men together play in the Catholic Church, but a biblical scholar writing in the Vatican newspaper said it is time to talk about the discriminatory and stereotypical notions behind it.

The question must be asked: "Doesn't the Marian-Petrine principle express an ideology and rhetoric of sexual and gender differentiation that has now been exposed as one of the covers for patriarchal privileges?" wrote Marinella Perroni, a retired professor of biblical theology at the Pontifical Atheneum of St. Anselm in Rome.

Her article Dec. 12 in *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper, was in response to Pope Francis' most recent use of the dual principle in [an interview](#) with the Jesuit-run *America* magazine in late November.

As he has done frequently when asked about the role of women in the church and the possibility of ordaining women deacons or priests, Francis insisted that "the Marian principle, which is the principle of femininity in the church, of the woman in the church, where the church sees a mirror of herself because she is a woman and a spouse" is more important than the Petrine principle, which refers to ordained ministry in succession to St. Peter and the apostles.

"The church is more than a ministry. It is the whole people of God. The church is woman. The church is a spouse. Therefore, the dignity of women is mirrored in this way," the pope told *America* magazine. "Why can a woman not enter ordained ministry? It is because the Petrine principle has no place for that. Yes, one has to be in the Marian principle, which is more important."

Perroni said the Petrine-Marian principle was first formulated by the Swiss theologian Fr. Hans Urs von Balthasar in the 1970s to combat an "anti-Roman" sentiment

among some Catholics and to insist that the hierarchical structure of the church and its living community of believers called to holiness and to bringing Christ to the world must go together.

Sts. Paul VI and John Paul II as well as retired Pope Benedict XVI and Francis have used the principle "to talk about the life of the church and, above all, about the participation in it of women and men," Perroni wrote.

In the formula, she said, "it is immediately intuited that Mary is the prototype of the feminine and Peter is the prototype of the masculine, and it is clear that when the popes use the formula of the 'Marian-Petrine principle,' they want to affirm that everyone, women and men, should feel at home in the church because it is a place where the relationship between masculine and feminine is one of close reciprocity."

"At the beginning of the third millennium, however, a reciprocity that assigns to women the charism of love and to men the exercise of authority should at least give us pause," she wrote.

Perroni quoted Pope Paul's 1974 document on Marian devotion where he explained that with Mary, God "has placed in his family, the church, as in every home, the figure of a woman, who in a hidden manner and in a spirit of service watches over that family and carefully looks after it until the glorious day of the Lord."

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The popes, including Francis, have insisted that the Marian principle and feminine role in the church is more important than the ministerial and authoritative role of St. Peter and his successors, Perroni wrote, even if the Marian principle characterizes the role of women as "maternal" and "domestic."

Acknowledging the church needs a more profound "theology of women," she said, Francis "struggles to free himself from the patriarchal vision" that reserves authority to men and loving to women.

Using the binary Petrine principle and Marian principle is "seductive" because it is simple, Perroni said.

But it is problematic because it stereotypes the differences between men and women and gives them a hierarchical value, she said. The feminine is presented as domestic, interior, welcoming and spiritual, while the masculine is presented as ministerial, authoritative and powerful.

However, Perroni wrote, it is "quite clear that forms of the mystical exaltation of the feminine are directly proportional to the refusal of public recognition of women's authority."

"The masculine-feminine bipolarity," she said, featured "obsessively" in Catholic theology when it was "totally androcentric and patriarchal," but it has lost credibility "since women first became the 'women's issue' and then, having shaken off this offensive expression, became full protagonists in social, political and ecclesial life."

A version of this story appeared in the **Dec 23, 2022 - Jan 5, 2023** print issue under the headline: Academic urges pope to get beyond women stereotypes.