



# THE ECHO

A newsletter for CATECHISTS and RE TEACHERS



Issue 3

Summer Term 2016

## THE JUBILEE DOOR



Before the current Jubilee year, the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican was last opened by Pope St John Paul II for the Great Jubilee of 2000. It was then shut and walled up until Pope Francis opened it again on 8 December last year for the Year of Mercy. Its sixteen panels, four rows of four panels each, depict the history of salvation and show God's mercy towards us and of our call to conversion.

Jesus is the 'door' (Jn.10:9) through which we access God's mercy - and this door is always open. It is us who at times decide to do without Jesus. This year is intended to be for us a journey during which we experience God's mercy in our lives and enter through the door into a new and closer relationship with him. He accepts us as we are, with our sins and our good and bad habits and offers us his help to change. This year of Mercy is a moment of grace for us all - time to walk through the door into the Father's house. As catechists we are also in a position to echo these thoughts of God's mercy to all those we come in touch with, now in this Jubilee year of Mercy and always.



### Door Panels

The very top row of St Peter's Basilica Jubilee door depicts the fall of Adam and Eve and the Archangel Gabriel asking Mary to be the Mother of Jesus. The next two rows highlight gospel stories of the mercy and forgiveness of God including the parable of the Prodigal Son and the Crucifixion. The final row proclaims the Easter mystery and the birth of the Church showing St. Thomas inspecting the wound marks of Jesus and Jesus appearing to Saul (St. Paul) on the road to Damascus.

### POPE FRANCIS on CATECHESIS

Catechesis would be *seriously compromised* if our experience of faith were to leave us *confined in and anchored* to our familiar world.

To *believe* in the Lord is always to enter anew through the door of faith that makes us *go out*, to set out on a journey, to leave our comfort zone...



# THE ECHO



The word 'CATECHIST' comes from the Greek word meaning 'to echo'. As Catechists or teachers of RE we do not proclaim our own word. We echo the message of Jesus Christ our Lord.

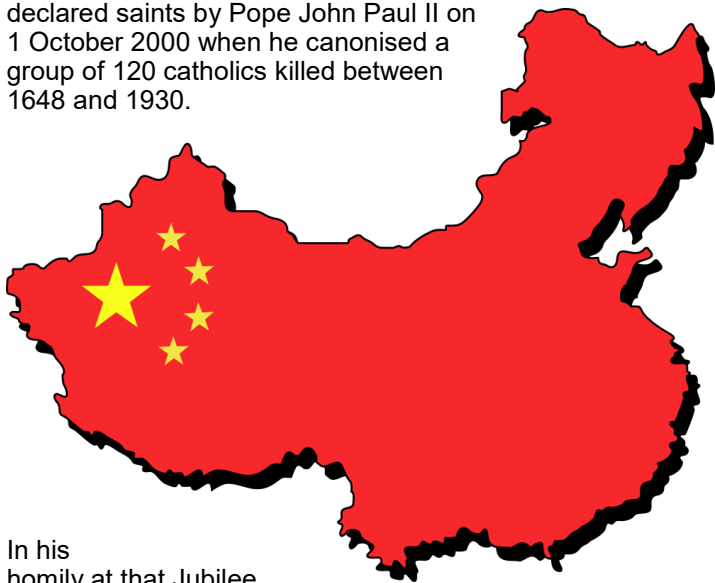
This newsletter aims at providing parish catechists and teachers of RE in schools some support in terms of reflections, ideas, useful resources they can use and so on. Feel free to make more copies for other colleagues and friends.

There is also an online version on our website [www.sdc.me.uk](http://www.sdc.me.uk)

# THE WITNESS OF MARTYRED CATECHISTS

A few months ago Pope Francis expressed the wish to visit China. Since the time of the Jesuit Saints Francis Xavier (d. 1552) and Matteo Ricci (d. 1610), China has constantly resisted the influence of Christianity. Thousands of dedicated catechists however kept the flame of faith alive, and over the centuries in time of persecutions many lay catechists were prepared to suffer martyrdom instead of giving in to demands of apostasy.

At the very beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, parts of northern China were in upheaval. A secret society, ironically named 'of the Righteous and Harmonious Fists' wanted to rid China of Western and Japanese influence. The 'Boxer Rebellion' which followed was aggressively anti-Christian. About 220 members of the Eastern Orthodox Church were martyred. Another eighty-six martyred Catholics were declared saints by Pope John Paul II on 1 October 2000 when he canonised a group of 120 Catholics killed between 1648 and 1930.



In his homily at that Jubilee canonisation, Pope John Paul II himself referred to the witness of two very young Catholics: the 14 year old Ann Wang who withstood the threats of her torturers and before her beheading declared with a radiant face: "The door of heaven is open to all", and three times murmuring the name of "Jesus"; and 18-year-old Chi Zhuzi, who cried out fearlessly before being flayed alive: "Every piece of my flesh, every drop of my blood will tell you that I am Christian".

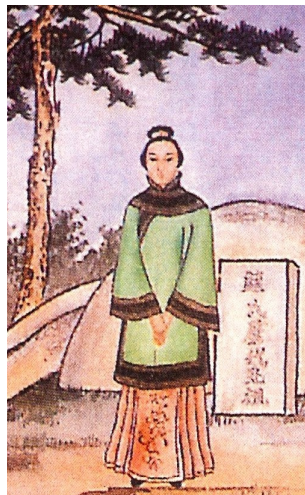


The feast of the Chinese saints is on 9 July. They are "an example of courage and consistency to us all". May their intercession hasten Pope Francis' entry into China.



**SDC** is a Catholic organization that works in the field of catechesis within Catholic Parishes. It was founded in 1907 by St George Preca. For more information or to download resources for parish or school catechetical programmes visit our website [www.sdc.me.uk](http://www.sdc.me.uk).  
SDC, 38 Ryefield Road, Upper Norwood, London SE19 3QU.

## St Rose Zhao



Rose was around 22 years when she was killed by the 'Boxers' on 28 July 1900. She met her executioners in a resolute way encouraging her mother and sister Mary who died with her. She carried out her faith lessons with joy and enthusiasm. At least one village woman witnessed that: "She was an exemplary and devoted catechist, ready for any sacrifice."

## St Peter Ou



Peter Ou was a married man and a convert to Christianity. He was an established businessman. When he became a Catholic he defended the oppressed openly. Eventually he started to go with the missionaries as a fervent catechist. He was arrested in April 1814 and imprisoned till 11 November. Refusing to step on a crucifix, he shouted that heaven was his "true home"

following which he was executed.



**The blood of martyrs is the  
seed of the Church**

**Tertullian**