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1

EDITORIAL

- 1 Stimulus for renewal | *N. da Silva Gonçalves, SJ*

2



ACADEMIC LIFE

- 2 Patristic Theology at the Gregoriana | *Interview with Fr. P.G. Renczes, SJ*
 6 Jerusalem and Rome, walking a common path | *Interview with Fr. E.E.Vető*
 10 A "little school of Lonergan" at the Gregoriana | *G. Whelan, SJ*
 12 Joint Diploma in Integral Ecology: an Alliance to Care for Our Common Home | *P. Xalxo, SJ*
 15 Child Dignity in the Digital world | *H. Zollner, SJ, K.A. Fuchs*
 19 Saint Bonaventure's theological modernity | *A. Begasse de Dhaem, SJ*
 22 Christianity in the Chinese society: impact, interaction and inculturation | *M. Romano*

25



FROM PAST TO FUTURE

- 25 The Pontifical Gregorian University of the Roman College (1873-1922) | *M. Coll, SJ*

28



GREG COMMUNITY

- 28 The appointment to Prefect of Cardinal Luis Ladaria | *Editorial Staff*
 30 Recovery and conservation of Special Library Collections | *M. Viglione*
 33 Philosophy and Interculturality: a concrete commitment | *D. Ceccato, SDS*
 35 The Pontifical Mexican College | *A.F. Navarro*
 38 The Choral Workshop of the Gregoriana | *Editorial Staff*

39 SOCIAL MEDIA

40 BOOKS

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Recovery and conservation of Special Library Collections

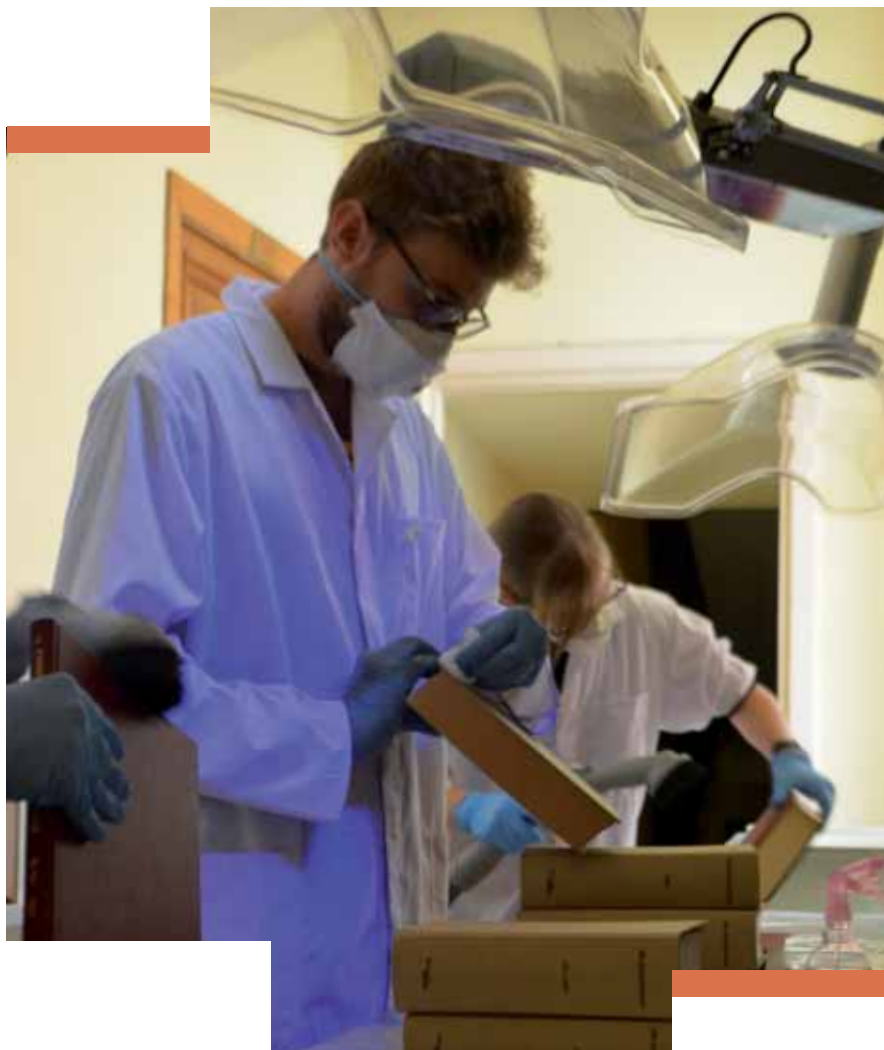
by MIRIAM VIGLIONE
Prefect of the Library

The Library of the Pontifical Gregorian University preserves its Special Collections in a depository located in the Traspontina building. There are about 100,000 volumes, 70,000 of which belong to

seven Modern Collections that are the result of donations and legacies or thematic collections, while 30,000 are from the Ancient and Rare Collection.

The airtight closure of the depository for security reasons, together with its location next to the archaeological site of the Temple of Serapis with its particularly humid wall ruins, make for non-optimal long term conservational conditions. This situation has led to the bio deterioration of some volumes and has generated concern about the conservation status of the collections, in particular the ancient, rare and valuable editions that are without doubt of exceptional historical value.

Following the inspection by the Central Institute for the Restoration and Conservation of the Archival and Book Heritage (ICRCPAL), a conservational project was presented to the Academic Authorities, to guarantee the recovery and conservation of the ancient and modern book heritage through the implementation of a medium and long-term prevention and protection policy. The generous donation received from the Marchisano Foundation allowed a prompt intervention in the management of the environmental parameters of temperature, relative humidity and air recirculation through the setting of thermostats, the integration of a humidity control system and



the improvement of the air recirculation inside the compact shelving by drilling their side panels. In January, after the adaptation of the infrastructure, the restoration of the deposit and the dusting and disinfection of the volumes and shelves began; the activity was entrusted to a team of highly qualified operators, all conservators / restorers coming from Institutes of excellence in the sector. The recovery work has continued in the last few months and will end before the summer, when all the Special Collections will be available again for consultation. Finally, the installation of environmental detectors and the periodic movement of the volumes, monitoring their state of conservation, will allow us to implement and consolidate a constant and lasting safeguarding policy for the book collections. ▶



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Dei
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