

# The Blue Pencil

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## Veritas award nominees

Another volume of *Vatican Notes* is finished and it is time for the Rita F. Murphy *Veritas* award, presented annually to the best feature article as judged by a vote of the members. (The award's history, criteria, and past winners can be viewed on our website at <http://notes.vaticanphilately.org/veritas.htm>.) It is my privilege to nominate the following eligible articles from Volume 57. Vote using your dues envelope.

*July-August 2008 (Vol. 57, No. 1, Whole No. 339)*

“High Value Vatican Airmails: A Postal History Journey” (Greg Pirozzi)

“Vatican Mail on the *Graf Zeppelin's* Return from Rome” (Daniel A. Piazza and Fr. Edward J. Muldowney)

“Essays, Proofs, and Specimens of Vatican City Airmail Stamps” (Daniel A. Piazza)

*Fourth Quarter 2008 (Vol. 57, No. 2, Whole No. 340)*

“Grotto of Lourdes Sesquicentennial” (Thomas Lera)

“Gardens and Medallions Anniversary Retrospective—Part II” (Greg Pirozzi)

“Vatican Philatelic Ephemera—Part III” (Michael G. Krejci)

*First Quarter 2009 (Vol. 57, No. 3, Whole No. 341)*

“Pope John Paul II's African Journeys” (Matthew V. Cassetta)

*Second Quarter 2009 (Vol. 57, No. 4, Whole No. 342)*

“Gardens and Medallions Anniversary Retrospective—Part III” (Greg Pirozzi)

## Vaccari catalogues good for another year

Paolo Vaccari, editor of the biennial Vaccari catalogue of Italian states, provisional governments, and the Kingdom of Italy postal history to 1900, has informed philatelists via E-mail that the 14th edition of the catalogue will not be released this October as scheduled. According to Vaccari,

*Quotations and trends listed in the catalogue have always been based on...realized prices at auctions, direct private sales and commercial retail lists. We have not seen great [enough] change...to justify [a] new edition.*

The current catalogue (13th edition, 2007-2009) will remain valid until at least October 2010. Fr. Edward J. Muldowney reviewed the Vaccari catalogue on page 21 of the Fourth Quarter 2008 *Vatican Notes*.

## Letters Received

The improvements in the *Notes* are fantastic! Keep up the good work!!

*Rev. Fr. George L. O'Brien #2367  
South Yarmouth, Massachusetts*

*Editor's note: Fr. O'Brien edited Vatican Notes from 1974 until 1977.*



## Plate number singles of Scott 35-40 on cover

Admiring the splendid current issue of *Vatican Notes* triggered reminiscences of over fifty years' membership in VPS and the pleasure and solid information provided by its excellent journal. How it has grown over the years!

I've included a photo [above] of my favorite Vatican cover. It was mailed on 21 June 1934 with a set of #Scott 5-40, the 1934 provisionals. It missed being a first day cover by a few days, but all six of the stamps are plate number singles.

*John A. Diehl #163  
Terrace Park, Ohio*

## Covers and stamps marked as 'rare' aren't always

I have questions about Vatican first day covers and stamps that are marked as rare. Some of the covers say things like “only 25 exist.” They are mostly from 1955-1965. I can't seem to find anyone who has a clue to them being rare and I haven't been able to find a book that lists them. I am attaching scans of some of these items.

*Steven Moore (nonmember)  
steve\_107ei@hotmail.com*

Editor's reply: I have seen numerous examples of the covers you describe. They are usually either first day or event covers with small typewritten slips of paper—often blue or yellow—that claim the covers are rare because a only small quantity exist. I often see them at shows in the New York City area, and they frequently bear cachets by Clyde J. Sarzin (1915-1985) of Long Island.



only 10 such positions exist. pr of the already obsolete vat. dity botton guide line positions Each council only \$2.95 issue sold out in 3 hrs. should get valuable.

Let's examine one of the examples you forwarded [above]. This is a Sarzin FDC bearing the three high values of the 1966 issue for the closing of the Second Vatican Council (Scott 442-444). The typewritten slip proclaims that the cover "should get valuable" because only 10 exist; the stamps have "guide line positions" at bottom; and the stamps were sold out in three hours.

All of this is nonsense. Firstly, supply is only one-half of the equation. Demand is the other half. It may be true that Sarzin created only 10 covers exactly like this one, but so what? The market for them is limited. Secondly, the wavy lines at the bottom of the stamps are not guide lines. They were printed in the selvage of all sheets of this issue, and are not rare. Lastly, that the stamps "sold out in three hours" is possibly true, but totally irrelevant. The majority of the stamps from this series were sold directly to dealers, and were probably already spoken for even before they were issued. This was fairly common with 1960s Vatican commemoratives; it was this tendency toward speculation that led to a collapse of the Vatican stamp market in the '70s.

Whoever created that typewritten slip in the 1960s valued the cover at \$2.95, and it is probably not worth more than that today. Readers with knowledge about the origins of these covers are asked to help educate fellow collectors about them by contacting the editor with information.

The stamps that are being offered to you as "rare" are even more disturbing than the covers, because the descriptions accompanying some of them are outright fabrications [below].

If you are seriously considering taking up Vatican stamps as a hobby, membership in the Vatican Philatelic Society is a must. Reading Vatican Notes will make you an informed buyer of stamps and covers.



This copy of Scott 146 was offered to a non-member as the "exceedingly rare, very pronounced heavy golden halo rarity of Pius X." This is an out-and-out lie. The stamp is exactly as it was meant to be. 125,000 copies were issued and it has the minimum Scott catalogue value of 20¢.

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**WANTED:** Vatican stamp, air letter and postcard varieties. I am seeking second printings; different perf spacings; changes in paper weight and grade; joined paper; major errors (i.e., Scott #100a "missing Redeemer"); Scott #110-121 & E9-E10 errors & misprints on cover. Any quantity from 1 to 10,000. If you have questions, contact me for a partial list of wanted varieties (the list is constantly growing). **Dennis R. O'Meara (VPS #2710)**, PO Box 178, Littlerock WA 98556; primarycolors1@gmail.com; 360-273-3219.

**WANTED:** 1959 'Obelisks' airmail series—printing, paper, and watermark varieties; "annullato" perfins; first day covers; and good postal uses on cover. Anything unusual regarding this issue! **Dan Piazza (VPS #3892)**, PO Box 76846-6846, Washington DC 20013; dpiazza3@verizon.net.

**FOR SALE:** Grandfather's collection of 30 beautiful Vatican covers, some with religious drawings, \$115 postpaid and guaranteed. Also a very nice Vatican stamp collection in book, inquire for price by sending SASE. **Victor Schwez (VPS #3904)**, 19519 Casanes Ave., Downey CA 90241-2912.

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