



MSGR. JOÃO SCOGNAMIGLIO CLÁ DIAS, EP,
FOUNDER OF THE HERALDS OF THE GOSPEL,
SURRENDERS HIS SOUL TO GOD

PRESS RELEASE

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the Faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day” (2 Tm 4:7-8).

At around 2:30 a.m. this daybreak (Brazilian time), November 1, comforted by the Sacraments of the Holy Church and surrounded by his spiritual children, Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias, EP, at the age of 85 serenely surrendered his soul to God in Franco da Rocha, Greater São Paulo, after 14 years of sufferings resulting from a cerebrovascular accident.

He was born in São Paulo, Brazil, on August 15, 1939. Disciple and faithful interpreter of the thought and work of Dr. Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, he realized long-cherished desires of his teacher and inspirer by founding the Private Association of the Faithful Heralds of the Gospel, approved in 2001 by Pope John Paul II, and the Societies of Apostolic Life *Virgo Flos Carmeli* and *Regina Virginum*, approved by Pope Benedict XVI in 2009.

Having studied Law at the Largo São Francisco Faculty in São Paulo, he obtained doctorates in Theology and Canon Law, wrote 27 works – several of them translated into seven languages and some with a publication of over 2 million copies –, promoted the construction of churches in Brazil and other countries of the Americas, Europe and Africa, personally directed the institutions he founded, which today carry out their activities in over 70 countries, with millions of members and adherents, including priests, associated brothers and sisters, cooperators or participants in solidarity.

Since 2017 the Heralds of the Gospel have been the object of false denunciations on the part of enemies of the Church and the good. Re-establishing the truth, Msgr. João traversed these waves of defamation unscathed, whether benignantly accepting judicial retractions of the accusers, or garnering innumerable legal victories, sealed by sentences and conclusions of inquiry.

Thus, certain that the biographies of providential men do not end on this earth, his spiritual children will carry on his work under the protection of Mary Most Holy, in order to fulfil the mission of being a link between the Holy Church and civil society.

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Msgr. João was born in São Paulo, Brazil, on August 15, 1939, of an Italian mother and Spanish father. Since his adolescence, he aspired to gather young people together in order to teach them and lead them to God. For this mission, he dreamed of finding a man who was entirely good and disinterested, in the midst of the pride and concupiscence of the world (cf. 1 Jn 2:16). On July 7 of 1956, he met Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, one of the most outstanding Catholic leaders of Brazil in the 20th century, of whom he became an ardent disciple and faithful interpreter. He joined Dr. Plinio as a member of the Third Order of Carmel, and some years later, as a member of the Brazilian Society for the Defence of Tradition, Family and Property.

In 1958 he served in the Brazilian Army, in which he was decorated with one of the most distinguished military honours in the ambit of training, the Marechal Hermes Medal. This period of his life was a considerable influence in the martial note which would later mark the Heralds of the Gospel.

After studying Law in the Largo São Francisco Faculty in São Paulo, he received formation from eminent Dominican professors of the Thomistic school, such as Fr. Victorino Rodríguez y Rodríguez, Fr. Antonio Royo Marín, Fr. Arturo Alonso Lobo, and Fr. Estéban Gómez, among others. He later obtained degrees in Psychology and Humanities, as well as doctorates in Canon Law from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (*Angelicum*), in Rome, and in Theology.

Msgr. João founded the Aristotelian-Thomistic Philosophical Institute and the St. Thomas Aquinas Theological Institute, as well the scientific journal *Lumen Veritatis* and the magazine of catholic culture *Heralds of the Gospel*. He wrote 27 works, several of which were translated in up to seven languages and some with over 2 million copies published. Especially noteworthy among them are: *Fatima, Dawn of the Third Millennium*; *Mary Most Holy, the Paradise of God Revealed to Men*; *St. Joseph: Who Really Knows Him?*; *New Insights on the Gospels*; *Dona Lucilia* and *The Gift of Wisdom in the Mind, Life and Work of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira*.

Discerning Dr. Plinio's desires in the direction of establishing an association of a religious nature, approved by the Church and at her service, in the 1970s, he started a trial of community life in an old Benedictine building in São Paulo, like the mustard seed of the parable (cf. Mt 13:31). After the death of Dr. Plinio in 1995, the Holy Spirit watered this initiative with new graces, causing the germination of three entities of pontifical right founded by Msgr. João: The Private Association of the Faithful Heralds of the Gospel, approved in 2001 by Pope John Paul II, the Clerical Society of Apostolic Life *Virgo Flos Carmeli* and the Feminine Society of Apostolic Life *Regina Virginum*, both approved by Pope Benedict XVI in 2009.



In his solicitude for the entire Church (cf. 2 Cor 11:28), his apostolic labours extended to the whole world, particularly after the pontifical approval of the Heralds of the Gospel. He founded over 50 choirs and orchestras and promoted the building of close to thirty churches – two of which have been given the title of basilica – in Brazil and in other countries in the Americas, Europe and Africa.

The millions of members and adherents of the Heralds – priests,

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associated brothers and sisters, cooperator members or participants in solidarity – are active in over 70 countries, undertaking manifold social and evangelizing labours, following the trail blazed by their founder.

On the spiritual plane, Msgr. João spread devotion to Our Lady by means of ceremonies of consecration as slaves of love, according to the method of St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, remotely reaching close to three million members of the faithful in 178 countries. He also instituted and encouraged Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the main houses of the institutions he founded.

In 2008, three years after his priestly ordination, he was named Protonotary Apostolic and Honorary Canon of the Papal Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome by Benedict XVI. He received various decorations and honours in Brazil and internationally, including the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* Medal, for his zeal towards the Church and the Supreme Pontiff. In his commitment to the service of the Church, in 2009 he published the work *On the Occasion of the Year of the Priest, suggestions of the Heralds of the Gospel to the Congregation for the Clergy*, written at the request of the then Prefect of this Congregation, and in 2010 the essay *The Church Is Immaculate and Indefectible*, which pointed out the underlying causes of the abuses committed against minors and the vulnerable.

Another pillar of his apostolate was *sentire cum Ecclesia* – to feel with the Church –, even when unjustly maligned. In fact, with the growth of the institutions he had erected, it was not long before the enemies of the Mystical Spouse of Christ and of the good were seething with calumnies against them and against the founder himself, especially since 2017. As a son of the Church, Msgr. João always strove to re-establish the truth about her, about his works and about himself. In this way, he passed unscathed through the waves of falsification and defamation that assailed him, whether benignantly accepting the retractions – judicially ratified – of accusers, or garnering innumerable legal victories, sealed with sentences and conclusions of inquiry, in both the civil and ecclesiastical sphere. On this count, it seems to be no coincidence that he has always cherished a special devotion to St. Ferdinand of Castile: it is said that this Spanish king was never defeated on

the battlefield.

Those who know Church history do not see these setbacks as a failure on the part of the Church or the works that participate in her immortality, but only a confirmation of the words of Jesus: “If they persecuted Me they will persecute you” (Jn 15:20). There is nothing new under the sun: such was the path trod by so many paladins of the Faith, such as, for example, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Luigi Orione or St. Pio of Pietrelcina. In this perspective the words that Cardinal Franc Rodé – then Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life – addressed to Msgr. João on August 15 of 2009 are well explained: “You are of the stock of the heroes and saints!”.

The biographies of providential men do not end on this earth. Rather their sojourn in this vale of tears is but a preamble to many subsequent chapters yet to be written. Rightly did St. Therese of the Child Jesus declare: “I am not dying, I am entering life” and “I will spend my Heaven doing good on earth”.

Inspired by so many conquests of Msgr. João, under the guidance of the Paraclete and the infallible aid of Mary Most Holy, his spiritual children will, with serenity, enthusiasm and concord, but also vigilant and undaunted, carry on his mission at the service of the Holy Church and of civil society.

