



CulturaCattolica.it

Shahbaz Batthi

Man Of The Year 2011

24th December 2011



The tradition of selecting a Man of the Year began in 1927, when editors of the American news magazine Time, contemplating newsworthy stories, decided to nominate the aviator Charles Lindbergh as the most representative person of the year for his historical trans-Atlantic flight.

So, if this year Time has decided to select as “man of the Year” the anonymous face of a protester, and the Catholic Magazine “Famiglia Cristiana” has chosen the face of the Italian President Giorgio Napolitano, CulturaCattolica.it has decided to settle upon the face of a saint: the Christian martyr Clement Shahbaz Bhatti.

At school we read and studied the poem by Ugo Foscolo “Dei Sepolcri”, where the poet exalts the importance of the gestures of past heroes to inspire the modern world, and we became certain that human greatness is the most powerful means to educate mankind. And the Church, with its everyday memory of the Saints, does not cease to use this pedagogy towards all the human beings.

After all, in this time, when we risk the return to barbarism, we need, for this true and real “educational emergency” (as Pope Benedict XVI called it), to look at those who, with their lives, can recall what is “in man’s heart”.

One cannot forget, besides the extraordinary message of His Holiness Benedict XVI for the celebration of the Day of Peace 2011, what had already been said by the Blessed Pope John Paul II in his first message of 1979: “Education for peace can then benefit also from a renewed interest in the everyday examples of simple builders of peace at all levels: the individuals and families who, by controlling their passions and by accepting and respecting each other, gain their own inner peace and radiate it; the peoples, often poor and sorely tried, whose age-old wisdom has been forged on the anvil of the supreme good of peace and who have succeeded in repeatedly resisting the deceptive seductions of rapid progress obtained by violence, convinced that such gains would bring with them the poisonous seeds of fresh conflicts”.

Hence CulturaCattolica.it, in respect of the several models of humanity which the year 2011 has showed, wishes to point out to everybody the figure and the example of Shahbaz Bhatti, the martyred Pakistani Minorities Minister assassinated on the 2nd of March 2011, owing to his staunch defence of religious freedom (reminding us of what he did to support Asia Bibi) in the face of extreme intimidation

The Jewish Rabbis said: “whoever saves one life saves the world entire”. Shahbaz Batthi with his sacrifice shows us the truth of this saying.

CulturaCattolica.it has therefore decided to elect as Man of the Year 2011 this splendid figure of a martyr, so that the precious gift of his life may enrich the whole humankind, which appears nowadays desperately in need of it.

CulturaCattolica.it, in particular, asks everyone to preserve, as a very precious treasure, the words he left us in his spiritual testament: “Many times the extremists have tried to kill me and imprison me, they have threatened, harassed and terrorized my family. The extremists, a few years ago, even asked my parents, my mother and my father, to dissuade me from continuing my mission to help the Christians and people in need, under the threat to arrest me. But my father always encouraged me. I say that, as long as I live, until my last breath, I will continue to serve Jesus and this poor, suffering humanity, the Christians, and the poor.’

It is with this spirit in mind that CulturaCattolica.it invites everyone to freely adhere to the nomination of Shahbaz Batthi as “Man of the Year 2011”, hoping that this choice will change “the threshing-floor that makes us so ferocious” (Dante Alighieri – Paradise XXII 151) into the beginning of novelty, freshness and beautiful life for everyone, particularly the young.

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