

Roma, 13 giugno 2008

**XXXVIII Incontro di Studiosi dell'Antichità Cristiana
AUGUSTINIANUM 7, 8, 9 maggio 2009**

Dear Friends,

The *Augustinianum* and the Organizing Committee (F. Cocchini, A. Di Bernardino, R. Dodaro, V. Grossi, M. Marin, A. Nazzaro, S. Pricoco, E. Prinzivalli) thank all who took part in the recent *XXXVII Incontro di Studiosi dell'Antichità Cristiana*.

The *XXXVIII Incontro* will be held **7-9 May 2009** and will address the topic:

Διακονία, diaconiae, diaconate: Semantics and History

In recent years important philological research has revealed previously unacknowledged semantic aspects of the Greek term *διακονία* and cognates. These have stimulated research on early Christian literary sources in regard to church, ministry and the diaconate. Recently, other important studies have explored obscure or disputed aspects of the origins and development of the diaconate. These have included investigations into sequential ordination – the *cursus honorum* – and early deaconesses.

Given these ongoing developments and in order to understand the functions of the diaconate in the early church, the following questions require further investigation: What was the role of the deacon inside and outside of the liturgy? In what ways were deacons the “eyes and ears” of the bishop? What were the differences in the ways diaconal ministries were exercised in different geographical regions and in the various patriarchates? What roles did deaconesses play in the life of the church? Research on these questions should include a renewed consideration of the phenomenon of *diaconiae* in Rome and elsewhere, new examination of early church orders, further exploration in patristic sources relating to *διάκονος*. These investigations should also extend to the diverse fields of inscriptions, iconography, archaeology and liturgy. Other insights might arise from a re-investigation of early relationships between synagogue and church.

Investigation of this topic requires contributions from scholars from different disciplines. Three macro-areas for contributions have been identified as relevant: **a)** Philology (including literary texts and epigraphical data along with their proper semantic and linguistic contexts for interpretation); **b)** Archeology (including monuments and their functions relative to this theme, along with iconographical and iconological data); **c)** Religion (including liturgical and non-liturgical functions of deacons and deaconesses).

Scholars wishing to offer a communication (20 minutes) should send the title of their paper together with a brief abstract (maximum 10 lines) no later than **30 November 2008** to the following address: Segreteria Incontri *Augustinianum*, Via Paolo VI, 25 – 00193 Roma / Italy - Fax +39.06.68006298; E-mail: incontri@patristicum.org

The Organizing Committee will meet early in January 2009 to evaluate proposals for papers and will inform those who submitted them of their decision immediately thereafter.

The Organizing Committee of the
XXXVIII Incontro di Studiosi dell'Antichità Cristiana 2009