

Reginaldo Santilli
and the Journal Vita Sociale

VINCENZO CAPRARA

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Fr Reginaldo (baptised Guido) Santilli was born at Segni, in the Province of Rome, on 4 November 1908. At the age of 15, having completed his secondary education, he received the Dominican habit and began his novitiate at the convent of Santa Maria della Quercia in Viterbo. He was ordained priest on 4 April 1931 and obtained the lectorate and his theology degree from the Angelicum. A few years later he obtained a philosophy degree (*laurea*) from the University of Florence.

For almost 50 years, Fr Santilli was passionately dedicated to education. He taught philosophy at the provincial studium at St Dominic's in Pistoia, sociology at the major seminary in Florence, and the history of philosophy at the Mantellate High School.

Much valued by the Archbishop of Florence, Santilli was nominated assistant to the Federation of Italian Catholic Universities (FUCI) and the Italian Catholic Association of Workers (ACLI). He was also nominated ecclesiastical overseer for the press, episcopal vicar for the lay apostolate, theologian of the Archbishop's Curia, member of the presbyteral and pastoral councils and director of the weekly diocesan newspaper, *Osservatore Toscano*. For carrying out his work with competence and dedication, during Santilli's funeral homily Cardinal Giovanni Benelli recalled him as 'a special gift for all the Florentine Church ... No other religious has served the diocese as much as he.'¹

Of particular importance are the projects that Santilli set up around the convent of Santa Maria Novella (of which he was prior from 1939 to 1942). In July 1944, with a group of friends, he founded the publication *Vita Sociale*, which he directed for more than 30 years. In 1946, with the best contributors to this journal and other expert communicators, he founded a school of journalism. In 1949, this school became known as the Catholic Centre of Social Studies. For a few years, he also organised the Social Weeks for the Catholics of Florence.