



UAC NEWSLETTER

N° 7 – November, 2004

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Dear Friends in the Union,

We are fast approaching the beginning of Advent, a lovely time of the year, a time of hope, of love and of expectant waiting to celebrate anew the feast of Christmas. St. John the Evangelist cuts to the heart of the matter when he writes in chapter 1 verse 14: “The Word was made flesh, he pitched his tent among us and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.” This expression, ‘he pitched his tent among us’, conveys a sense of Jesus’ identification with us, with our world, our lives and our condition. He became as we are. In Advent hope is reborn in the heart of each of us, that we can become as he was, that we will progress some little way in this process of identification with Jesus as we live another Advent and Christmas time.

Let us pledge ourselves to a prayer for all our fellow members of the Union each day. We pray for eyes that are opening to the presence of the Word made flesh, to the activity of his grace and truth; we pray for the grace of hearts ready to respond.

On behalf of the members of the General Coordination Council and of the General Secretariate of the Union I wish you all a blessed and holy Christmas.

UAC General Congress 2005

The General Congress of the UAC will take place from 22nd to 27th August 2005, at the Pallottine Retreat Centre at Konstancin, Poland.

We have already sent you the texts for the first two months of spiritual preparation for the Congress. As you know this programme consists of material for a novena of monthly meetings/encounters and is intended to be used by all members and collaborators of the UAC. We have had positive feed-back from several NCCs, they have said that they appreciate the material and that it can be profitably used in a variety of ways and in different contexts. Through the novena we are all united in prayer and reflection on a common theme each month.

The programme for the Congress is being formulated as are the details of costs and the number of participants that may participate, we will be in contact with you in the near future with regard to these points.

We continue to ask your prayerful support for the organisation of and preparation for the Congress.

The autumn of the year was a busy time in Rome for the members of the SAC with the 19th General Assembly of the Society. Fr. Fritz Kretz, SAC, was elected Rector General of the Society on October 7th and the new General Administration was elected in the succeeding days. On Sunday October 17th the members of the Assembly, together with many Sisters and members of the Union and of the Pallottine Family, gathered in the Church of Santo Spirito dei Napoletani to celebrate the Eucharist in that place which is so important for the Union. Fr. Kretz blessed a commemorative plaque to St. Vincent Pallotti during the course of the Mass, recording in a very visible form St. Vincent's years spent as Rector of the Church. The following is the text of the homily Fr. Kretz preached during the mass and evokes the importance of Santo Spirito for the Union.

Homily delivered at the Church of Santo Spirito dei Napoletani, Roma, 17 October 2004.

1). The Mystery of the Cenacle.

The Cenacle is our essential Pallottine model. In recent years in Germany one hears discussions everywhere on models, whether it is in the economy, in politics, in the Church, in religious communities. Various questions determine the discussion: who are we and what is our identity? Where do we come from, what is our origin? Where do we want to go? What are our goals and our vision? How do we get to where we want to go? What are the sources that sustain us?

Today's reading of the account of Pentecost is a model. It describes a meeting of very concrete people, each with a concrete history, each individual is named by name, this indicates that the people who are gathered are unique. Everyone brings his or her very own history, his/her past. Some of this past had been spent together – and that was not always a happy past, we know that sometimes they had their conflicts.

In the Cenacle these differences were not wiped out. But they were no longer an obstacle for their life, for their community, for their mission. Rather their differences became a fruitful plurality.

And how did this happen?

They looked towards a common centre, they were focused on God. They received a common mission by the power of the Holy Spirit despite all their limitations. This mission was to spread God's kingdom. To let people experience the Kingdom of God; by baptism and proclamation; by healing and caring for others; and by a lived reconciliation, by the way they lived together despite all the differences. From Pentecost onwards they continued to wrestle with each other, we have only to think of the Council of Jerusalem, but they do it in another spirit. The issue is no longer who is the greatest among them, who has priority in the eyes of Jesus and of the people; it is about the way the Kingdom of God can become concrete, that God himself can take concrete form in them in their respective reality, this is the mystery of an everlasting incarnation. But for that to happen God had to be reborn in them. That happened in the Cenacle, by the Holy Spirit, by nothing else! That is the mystery of the Cenacle.

2. The Mystery of the Cenacle at the Church of Santo Spirito dei Napoletani.

What is the mystery of this concrete place here? Here today different people are gathered, different groups and communities of the union: here in the cradle of the union. We have come back to the place of our origin; to the place

- where Pallotti lived with his community;
- where this community took on concrete shape;
- where Pallotti wrestled with his vision for the Union, he wrestled with God, with his brothers, with lay-people, the first collaborators and members of the union, with the ecclesiastical authorities;
- where the union had its meeting-place;

- where initiatives were started for the Apostolate, by the brothers and priests, by the sisters, by the laypersons.

Sometimes it is necessary to go back at the place of birth, to remind ourselves of our origin, of where we come from.

Santo Spirito dei Napoletani is, for the Union of Catholic Apostolate, the Original Cenacle:

- a place of prayer,
- a place of gathering together,
- a place of apostolic effectiveness,
- a first place of identification,
- a place where they felt at home,
- a place for the common consciousness of mission, they wanted to renew the Church by renewing the faith of all and enkindling their love, and to do so with the help of all and by all possible means.

Many very different people belonged to this community at that time. Here in this place, they found unity despite differences. Here in this place their differences became fertile because of their common mission. The first 'school of formation' for the union and the society was here: it was not an academic institution imparting theories, but rather, a school of life.

3. The Mystery of the "Pallottine" Cenacle.

What does this mean for us? We are also very different people. We also have our history and past. What we bring is not only a history filled with light. There are shadows also. Occasionally we have suffered, we have hurt each other, and we may continue to do so even today. This is so human. We are brought together by the person of St. Vincent Pallotti and his vision of the church, we are fascinated by this and this leads us forwards.

However, ideas and visions need icons, symbols, places, people, in order to become fertile. For Pallotti a concrete home or place for his vision was essential, and this first home was here.

We are human beings, we too need such places. Places where the spirit takes concrete form, becomes incarnated, becomes life. We need places of inspiration, animation, memory, identification.

In today's Gospel we heard Jesus say that the role of the Spirit is to remind us in places such as this of everything that he said. The Spirit gets a place, becomes concrete, can be experienced.

Theory is important, it is essential to have a vision. However, we often discuss the vision too much, sometimes we indulge in hair-splitting, where one dresses up one's own ideas with the clothes of the founder in order to have one's way.

Places of memory, and of reflection are necessary. We need places like Santo Spirito dei Napoletani, or our home, San Salvatore in Onda, where we come back to the cradle, to the roots of our mission, in order to grasp the spirit of the Founder again. We need these places not only as schools of reflection but as places of experience, where the foundational charism is lived and can be experienced. Places where people live and work together filled by this spirit.

Places are only means, because the Spirit lives in people. The Englishman says: "The person is the message". However, places can help to give this spirit space again, through the power of the Holy Spirit who reminds us of everything.

So it was in the Cenacle.

So it was here in Santo Spirito dei Napoletani in former times.

So it should be in San Salvatore in Onda today.

So it should be in our Local Communities and in the Local, National and International Councils of the UAC.

However, the union does not live because of the buildings, of the Churches of Santo Spirito dei Napoletani or San Salvatore in Onda, but the Union lives because from these places enthusiastic people went into the world.

From this fire of the initial vision of Pallotti, the foundational charism of the Union is passed on to us, through our participation in this celebration, a spark is carried out into our world. My prayer and wish as we celebrate the Eucharist in this historical place is that the vision and fire of Pallotti be transmitted.

A final thought: a burning match suffices to set fire to whole forests, let's be flames – in the spirit and mystery of the Cenacle!

News from the Union.

India

Fr. Matthew Panakal, SAC, has written: UAC Meeting

In the evening of 29th June, 2004, the members of the UAC National Coordination Council had a meeting at Prabhodana, Mysore. Some of the important decisions made during the meeting are the following:

1. A decision was made to publish a UAC Journal. It will be owned by all the major superiors of the Pallottine Family. It will be coordinated and published by PAC. Initially it will be just one issue per year. Ms. Joyce Almeida, Khristsevika, has consented to be the chief editor.
2. It is time to begin more detailed and in-depth study of UAC and its application in the Indian context. Therefore it was decided to have a symposium on 28th to 30th November, 2004 at Pallottine Animation Centre, Nagpur. Other than the Major superiors, representatives from all the Pallottine entities of fathers and sisters will take part in the same.

Khristsevikas – New steering body members

Khristsevikas, after their General Assembly, are glad to announce the new steering body. The members of the new steering body are; Ms. A. Regina Silvia (President), Ms. Crispina D' Costa (Vice-President and Treasurer) and Ms. Joyce Almeida (Councillor).

Fr. Vensus George, SAC, has published a book of daily reflections for the year with quotations from St. Vincent Pallotti and practical applications for daily life, the book is entitled "**Find the God who seeks you: Journeying with St. Vincent Pallotti, the Prophet of Communion.**" The cost of the book is \$5 per copy plus postage, it may be ordered from the Pallottine Provincialate, Kalyan Nagar P.O. Chelikere, Bangalore – 560 043, Karnataka, India; e-mail: province@vsnl.net

Canada

Maria Domke sent the following: The Union of Catholic Apostolate in Canada met in its first National Congress in June of 2003, at which time its membership accepted the 24 articles presented to them. These articles reflect the areas of growth our members felt the NCC needed to address over the next seven years.

Formation of all our members has always been a major focus for the UAC in Canada. In the past, our members have joined together as groups of interested persons to take advantage of the formation gatherings and instruction. In recent years, we have felt the need to develop 10 sessions of Preparatory Formation. Persons interested in becoming members of the UAC, are invited to attend these evening sessions in which they are introduced to the person of St. Vincent Pallotti, his charism and the life of the UAC in the world and in Canada, before they make a firm commitment to the life of the Union.

These sessions have been a very good experience for those members who have taken part. It has been a time of building true community, and they feel better equipped to make an informed decision

to become a UAC member or not. Both aspects are a benefit to the members joining and to the UAC as a whole.

Rwanda-Congo

Sr. Marta Litawa, SAC, wrote: The bulletin “Ephiphany” which serves as a means of communication and formation for all the members of the UAC in Rwanda and the Congo has been well received by its readers, ten issues have been circulated so far.

A formation session for members of the UAC in Rwanda and the Congo took place from April 19th to 24th at the “Geseseareth” formation centre, Keshero –Goma with 22 participants from the various communities. Fr. Stanislaw Stawicki, SAC, was one of the organizers and he spoke on the theme of the “Art of cooperation for creativity fidelity”, Fr. Stanislaw has recently defended his doctoral thesis “Cooperation, the passion of a life. Historical and theological research on the life of St. Vincent Pallotti.” and made his knowledge and experience freely available to all participants. The evaluation of the Encounter was very positive, the participants valued the opportunity to deepen knowledge and understanding of aspects of Pallotti’s life and vision as a response to the Christ who calls us to cooperate with him. A felt need to spend time reflecting and meditating on the setting up of local and regional coordination councils with a special emphasis on specific works such as formation, works of charity, parish activities and formulation of statutes to guide such initiatives was expressed.

Poland

Michal Byrwa sent the following: During the course of the summer retreats for members of the UAC took place led by Fr. Stanisław Rudziński, SAC, on the topic of “Following Christ”. About 450 people participated and they were guided to reflect on why we follow Christ. In a reflection on the words of Jesus in Luke 9. 57-62, the obstacles on the road were identified and ways of overcoming them were sought.

From May 31st to June 6th a retreat took place at Ochotnica for 21 members of the UAC, matters related to the UAC were dealt with and the letter of Fr. Seamus Freeman of March 2004 was analysed. A highlight of the retreat was A Way of the Cross to Bukowina, Michal describes it “We walked through the hills with the crosses prepared by our brother in the Union Zbigniew who died last year. We planted the crosses every hundred meters, local people noticed them and decorated the places where the crosses were. Union communities have been coming to Bukowina for retreats for 26 years. We also visited the Sanctuary of Blessed Józef Stanek, SAC, in Łapsze Niżne, where he grew up.”

On Saturday June 26th eleven members of the UAC from the community in Zielonka made their Act of Commitment to the UAC after several years of formation, the Act was preceded by a two day retreat. This community celebrates its twentieth birthday this year. The community was entrusted with a relic of St. Vincent Pallotti, this relic will be received in each member’s house for one week. This will strengthen the relationship with St. Vincent and provide an opportunity for people in the neighbourhood to know of him.

Finally the UAC was present at the Third Congress of Catholic Movements, Societies and Brotherhoods, which was organized by the Częstochowa Archdiocese from May 21st to 29th, the theme of the Congress was “The Flame of the Holy Spirit.” This was an opportunity to share the riches of the Spirit and to strengthen bonds with other groups and societies.

Brazil

Brazil is centre-stage with the presentation ‘In the Spotlight’, in this newsletter, however there have been very significant events in the life of the UAC in Brazil this year.

Fr. Ângelo Lôndero, SAC, wrote from Codó, Maranhão, informing us of the admission into the UAC of 34 lay people on September 11th. He gave us a ‘potted history’ of this mission: “The Pallottine Missionary Sisters came to Codó, Maranhão in 1980, it is a city of approximately 70.000

people, they now work in three parishes. The Pallottines from the St. Paul the Apostle Province came to settle there in 1991, up until then pastoral attention was provided by the Pallottines but not on a permanent basis.” During the first week of September Fr. Ângelo guided courses of formation for Pallottines and for the postulants and then for a group of 65 lay people. From the group of lay people 34 of them made the Act of Commitment to the UAC on Sept. 11th, following on several years of formation. They belong to the communities of Our Lady of Good Counsel and St. Teresa of the Child Jesus. Fr. Ângelo observed that they had made many sacrifices in the process of formation, they met on Sunday mornings at 6 am for formation and then once the meeting finished went to fulfil their pastoral commitments in the parishes. This was a historic moment for the UAC in Brazil as this was the first formal admission of lay members to the UAC following on the erection of the UAC by the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

Fr. Edgar Ertl, SAC, wrote an appreciation of the XVII South-American Pallottine Encounter, which took place in Santa Maria, from July 22nd to 25th, with 260 participants from Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Bolivia. The theme of the Encounter was “Hope – the UAC Germinating so as to Give Life”. It was truly an international encounter, the presentations were delivered by speakers from Brazil, Uruguay and the Argentine. In the development of the theme the participants looked at the history of the UAC from 1835 onwards; the foundation of all UAC activity which is “finding in the Love of God the source of our hope”; “unity and hope in St. Vincent” and the “challenges and hopes of the UAC today” this presentation looked at the UAC in the life of the Church. The daily activities included group work, plenary sessions, intense times of prayer and celebrations of the Eucharist prepared by the different national groups, cultural evenings of song and celebration, these all contributed to a strong sense of belonging to the UAC and of its growing identity in South America. The Encounter was sustained by twelve service teams, each one representing one of the 12 Apostles.

Previous to the Encounter the ISEP had conducted the 2nd stage of the IV Course of Pallottine Formation from July 8th to 25th, with a participation of 34 people. During the Course the fruits of previous encounters were seen, an example of this was the celebration of the Octave of the Epiphany for the first time in Manaus in 2004.

Italy

On Sunday 14th of November 2004, a year after the formal decree of Canonical erection of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, 24 members of the Pallottine family made their Act of Commitment to the UAC and were formally admitted to the Union. The ceremony took place at the Spirituality Centre of St. Vincent Pallotti at Grottaferrata. The twenty four lay members of the UAC had journeyed on a lengthy programme of spiritual formation at the Centre and were guided and led by the late Fr. Vittorio Vinci, SAC. The formation programme was intensified during the last two years with special emphasis on the Spirituality of St. Vincent Pallotti.

The ceremony of admission took place during a concelebrated mass in which the Provincial, Fr. Gaetano Ianni, SAC, was the principal celebrant, the Mass was simple but intense and many Sisters, Priests, and lay people participated representing all the Local Coordination Councils.

Fr. Seamus Freeman, SAC, President of the General Coordination Council, underlined the great historical significance of the event, he wished the new members well and prayed that their dedication to the Apostolate be fruitful. He thanked God for his grace and all those who had collaborated and made it possible to celebrate the occasion.