



# UAC NEWSLETTER

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UAC SECRETARIATE  
Piazza S.V. Pallotti, 204 – 00186 Roma  
Tel./Fax: (39) 06 68194623  
E-mail: [uac@uniopal.org](mailto:uac@uniopal.org)

Dear Friends in the Union,

Greetings to you from the General Secretariate of the Union in Rome. Here in Rome we have really entered into autumn, the days are short, it is dark and the cold season is approaching. In contrast with this winter climate it is a Springtime for the Union; this has been a year of celebrations, the General Congress, which took place in August, was a true celebration, and now we are looking forward to the General Assembly which will take place in December.

The feature “Under the Spotlight” which has become a regular part of the newsletter, will not form part of this number, there are many important themes to share with you in this issue and so the feature will be held over for the next number.

During this month of November we remember our dear departed ones. It offers us the opportunity to think of them and to participate in the thanksgiving of the entire Church for them, for their lives and for all that they have been to us. In his First Letter St. John exhorts us to “Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God’s children; and that is what we are! Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us. We are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.” (1John 3, 1-2). Saint John speaks to us of our nature, we are children of God, and he affirms that we really are children of God by adding an exclamation mark! Then he tells us of our destiny, to be in the presence of God, to see him as he is and to be totally transformed. This vision of St. John inspires us and invites us to make it our own and to trust that our dear departed ones are participating in this reality in the presence of God.

## **The General Congress of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, August 22 – 27, 2005.**

The General Congress afforded us the opportunity to meet and to reflect together. We had prepared for it by participating in the novena of prayer and reflection which had involved members from various countries in the preparation and translation of the texts. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who took part in it in some way.

Originally it had been considered that the Congress would take place in Italy, but for different reasons it was decided to hold it in a country of the Union and the Pallottines of Poland very graciously placed the Retreat Centre at Konstancin at our disposal. The Local Community there welcomed us with great openness and Fr. Marek Gulbinowicz, who has special responsibility for the Centre, did all in his power to be at the service of the Congress. Fr. Marek was ably seconded by a very capable and efficient Organising Committee under the presidency of Sr. Monika Szupryt. The choice of the Centre at Konstancin was providential, it is situated in a very peaceful area and the structure of the house itself contributed to the creation of unity and of a family spirit among the participants.

One hundred and fifty (150) persons from twenty four (24) countries of the Union participated, they came from: the Argentine, Australia, Austria, Belize, Belarus, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada,

Colombia, England, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Poland, Portugal, Rwanda, Spain, Switzerland, Tanzania, Uruguay and the USA. The participants were members of the various communities and of the different vocations in the UAC; there were also seven (7) translators and seven (7) Pallottine deacons/students from Poland. It would have been wonderful if more people could have been accommodated but with this number of persons the house was full to capacity. This leads us to think that the next Congress will have to be held in a place where a greater number of persons can participate.

The programme of the Congress was a combination of several daily events beginning with the liturgical celebrations which were prepared with great attention and love by the various national and language groups and which were celebrated in a spirit of prayer and devotion. The Congress conferences were prepared with dedication and seriousness and dealt with diverse themes, however, they always addressed some aspect of the principle theme "Now is the time for a new 'creativity' in charity". After the conferences were delivered there was always time for group work which was oriented by a series of questions and guidelines. The groups were mixed, made up of persons from different countries and also of different languages. This was a challenge for everyone, to strive to understand the other and to make oneself understood; in this the enormous diversity which is the lived life of the Union was evident. The translators played a very important role, they provided simultaneous translation during the conferences and plenary sessions, and also translated for some of the groups.

On Tuesday afternoon and evening the theme was 'With Mary in the Cenacle'. The continuous presence of Mary with the Union was thus celebrated. That evening a group of Polish Pallottine Sisters, together with young people from the parishes, animated an open cenacle in which the national groups carried an image of Our Lady, which is of special significance for that country, in procession through the house to the chapel where the Cenacle was lived with music, song, Scripture readings and reflections.

Wednesday August 24th was the feast of Saint Bartholomew the Apostle and with great joy we participated in a cultural evening in which each national group present shared something of their culture and tradition in music, song, dance or poetry. Everyone took part with enthusiasm and spirit, it was both an enjoyable and enriching evening.

How could one be in country and not get to know something of its life and culture? In a spirit of wishing to see and know just a little of Poland, we went on a guided visit of the city of Warsaw on Thursday afternoon. We visited some of the important places in the city like the Cathedral and the monuments to the victims of the war. At the end of the evening we went to the parish church adjoining the Provincial House of the Pallottines in Warsaw for our Eucharistic celebration.

The Congress ended on Saturday August 27th with a concelebrated mass during which the images of Our Lady, which had been brought from the different countries, were exchanged and received by the various national groups. The members of the Union from each country which received a statue or image will ensure that Our Lady go on pilgrimage to the homes of all the members of the Union in that country between this Congress and the next General Congress. While this Congress 2005 was just ending the next Congress was already being spoken of. It would seem logical that National Congresses be organized in each country as celebrations of the life of the Union and as opportunities for the formation of the members. There were various suggestions made as to the location of the next General Congress, however, there was a marked preference for Rome given its close association with Saint Vincent and the origins of the Union.

Some of the participants with family and work commitments returned home immediately after the Congress, however a group of sixty persons stayed on to participate in a pilgrimage to the National Shrine to Our Lady in Czestochowa. The feast of Our Lady of Czestochowa is celebrated on August 26<sup>th</sup>, so going there on the 28<sup>th</sup> proved an opportunity to experience the Marian devotion of the Polish people and to see expressed the strong faith of the Poles, the Shrine was thronged with the faithful who had come to pray, to give thanks and to ask the Mother of Poland for special graces. We were able to celebrate Mass as a group in one of the Chapels at the Shrine and then visited the Chapel with the image of Our Lady of Czestochowa.

The members of the Congress identified and stressed as priorities for the Union in the coming years various themes and challenges: the Union and young people; the Union and the family; the development of Local Coordination Councils; the formation of the members of the Union; means to facilitate communication between members of the Union; a regular prayer/reflection/formation pamphlet.

Much has been said about the Congress, I believe it was a time of grace for all the participants, it was an opportunity to get a feel for the reality of the Union in its diverse expressions and realities; it was a time to celebrate the official erection of the Union and a time to think together about the development of the Union at the service of the Church.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who in one way or another contributed to the Congress or participated in it.

**The General Coordination Council of the UAC** met on Saturday September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2005.

The meeting took place at the Generalate of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate.

There were many issues to be discussed at the meeting, a sure sign of the vitality of the Union.

The most significant points were:

- communications received from the National Coordination Councils;
- the approval of the formation of a mixed commission to study and reformulate the General Statutes; the commission will gather the observations and suggestions presented by the NCCs, and with the guidance of the GCC, will formulate the General Statutes which will be presented to the Pontifical Council for the Laity for definitive approval in 2008;
- the approval of criteria for the admission of groups and communities to the Union;
- the organization of the celebrations which will take place every Wednesday at the Church of San Salvatore in Onda, Spiritual Centre of the UAC, beginning with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at 17.00, followed by the Rosary and ending with a celebration of the Eucharist with vespers;
- reports on meetings with Mons. Delgado, Office Coordinator at the PCL;
- the approval of the Regulations of the South African NCC and the approval of a proposed amendment to the Regulations of the German NCC;
- documents on “Procedural Norms for leaving the Union” and “Collaborators in the Union” were presented to the members for further study;
- the General Assembly of the UAC which will take place from December 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> 2005 and the approval of the Methodus.

The next meeting of the GCC will be held on Saturday December 17<sup>th</sup> at the Generalate of the Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate at Grottaferrata.

**The Feast of the Union, 22nd October 2005.**

On Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> of October at 16.30, to mark the second anniversary of the canonical erection of the Union of Catholic Apostolate as a Public Association of the Faithful, a concelebrated Mass was held at the Church of Santo Spirito dei Napoletani in which a large group of priests, sisters and laity, all members of the Union in Rome and the surrounding district, participated. The General Coordination Council of the UAC decided to celebrate this feast annually on the Saturday previous to October 28th with a Mass in which the members will renew their Act of Apostolic Commitment in a devotional manner and give thanks to the Lord for the gift of, and the life of the Union. The principal celebrant was Fr. Franco Todisco, Rector of the Generalate of the Society, he was accompanied by Fr. Séamus Freeman, President of the GCC and by Fr. Jeremiah Murphy, General Secretary, and by a large number of the community of the Generalate.

The Rector of the Church, Mons. Natalino Zagotto, welcomed all present and recalled that despite all the transformations in the building, the Church of Santo Spirito dei Napoletani remains the birthplace of many on the initiatives of St. Vincent Pallotti and retains the memory of his presence and of his apostolic works.

Fr. Todisco emphasised in his homily two aspects of the celebration: that of thanksgiving for what has taken place, and that of prayer for the future: “Ever since the Union has been officially recognized a new understanding of the charism has taken place, it is opening to the future without however neglecting the more important elements of the past. The recognition on the part of the Church is also a new official mandate, a new mission, that the Church has entrusted to us, to collaborate publicly in evangelization with the spiritual and apostolic experience of St. Vincent Pallotti. We sought this and the Church has now sent us to the world of today to bear witness to the power, the validity and the beauty of the vision of Pallotti”. Fr. Franco identified the main challenges and priorities of the Union for the immediate future and exhorted all present to pray earnestly for the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Fritz Kretz, SAC, Ecclesiastical Assistant of the UAC, was unable to be present as he was in Germany participating in the Assembly of the two German provinces and the Austrian region of the Society, however he sent a message for the participants which was read after Communion. He urged all to be aware of the importance of the renewal of the Act of Apostolic Commitment, to recall “the love that you used to have” (cf. Rev. 2,4, to the Angel of the Church of Ephesus), so that membership of the Union not become ‘routine’.

After the mass Fr. Franco invited all the participants to partake of an ‘agape’ at the Generalate of the Society; the invitation was gladly accepted and so the fraternal spirit continued on into the evening.

### **The General Assembly of the Union of Catholic Apostolate.**

2005 is indeed a year of important events for the Union, we are now preparing for the first General Assembly which will take place from December 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

The General Statutes stipulate in article 63, that:

“The General Assembly is convened every three years. Its task is to elect ten members to the General Coordination Council (cf. Art 56b) and address those matters which pertain to the internal life and apostolate of the Union, including revisions of the General Statutes. It is composed of the members of the General Coordination Council (cf, Art 56), the Presidents of the National Coordination Councils (cf. Art 46), and three members appointed by the General Coordination Council itself (cf. Art 54g).”

The General Coordination Council, in the person of its President, Fr. Séamus Freeman, has convened the Assembly and established that it will take place from December 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>. The members of the Assembly are the present members of the GCC;

the three ‘*ex-ufficio*’ members, Fr. Fritz Kretz, Rector General of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, Sr. Ivete Garlet, Superior General of the Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate and Sr. Stella Holisz, Superior General of the Missionary Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate;

and the ten elected members:

Fr. Séamus Freeman, President of the GCC, Frs. Zenon Hanas, Francesco Todisco and Hubert Socha, Sisters Ighes Burin, Armida Sacco, Rita-Lore Wicklein and Patrice Wales, Mrs. Claudia Donnini and Miss. Donatella Acerbi. Article 46 of the General Statutes establishes that the Presidents of the National Coordination Councils participate; at present eighteen (18) NCCs have been established and recognized. The GCC asked authorization from the Pontifical Council for the Laity to nominate six (6) lay members for the Assembly so that the Assembly be more representative, this request was favourably received. Therefore the members of the Assembly will be thirty seven (37) in all. The Moderators, Secretaries and some invited guests will also participate, however they are not members of the Assembly.

The Assembly will begin on the evening of December 27<sup>th</sup>. The solemn opening Eucharist will take place on the 28<sup>th</sup> at 8.00 in the Church of San Salvatore in Onda, Spiritual Centre of the Union, and Fr. Fritz Kretz, Rector General of the SAC and Ecclesiastical Assistant will be the main celebrant.

The GCC invited the President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, his Excellency Archbishop Stanisław Ryłko, to visit the Assembly on December 29<sup>th</sup> and address the Assembly on the topic of “The place of the UAC in the Church”. Unfortunately Mons. Ryłko, was unable to accept the invitation but has delegated Mons. Miguel Angel Delgado Gallindo, Office Coordinator of the PCL to be present and to address the Assembly on the topic.

One of the specific tasks of the Assembly will be the election of the ten members of the GCC who, together with the three ‘*ex-officio*’ members, will form the GCC for the coming three years. The NCCs have already been invited to nominate suitable persons in order to compose a list of candidates for election. A series of criteria have been drawn up for the selection of the candidates and for the procedure to be followed in the election in order to ensure a wide representation of the members on the new GCC.

We would ask you to pray for the members of the Assembly in this time of preparation, and during the Assembly itself, that they be open to the living tradition of the UAC and to the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

### **News from the Union.**

**France:** news has come from France of the election of Mr. Jan Suski as President of the NCC and of Miss. Jacqueline Masiak as Secretary.

**Ireland:** Fr. Liam McClarey has been elected President of the NCC and Miss. Elaine Hogan has been elected Secretary.

The NCCs of **Tanzania-Kenya** and of **Belize** have formulated drafts of their Regulations.

**Germany:** as part of World Youth Day celebrations the Pallottines in Germany organized an encounter called “*Alles Pallotti*” at Rheinbach on August 17<sup>th</sup>, for all the Pallottine participants, a large number of people from various countries of the UAC took part in it.

The group Junge-Unio in Germany has opened its own web site, the address is: [www.junio.org](http://www.junio.org)

**Brazil:** the President of the NCC, Fr. Angelo Londero, has sent a report of the activities which took place during this year. A total of 47 persons have been admitted to the UAC in four celebrations. The VI Latin-American Congress of Pallottine Teachers took place from October 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> in Vale Veneto, SM, Brazil, in which teachers from nine schools in Brazil, eight in Argentina and one in Uruguay, participated. The final message from this Congress is attached to this newsletter in Portuguese. Twelve courses of formation have taken place in Rio de Janeiro, Curitiba, Campo Grande, Santa Maria, Fatima do Sul, Londrina, Marañao e Manaus.

**Australia:** Pat Heywood, Executive Secretary of the UAC in Australia, has written to say that the blessing and opening ceremony of the new Resource Centre and Secretariate took place at Kew on November 12<sup>th</sup>.

**India:** the Secretary of the Indian NCC, Fr. Thomas Vijay wrote to say that Fr. Matthew Panakal, was elected President of the NCC on October 23<sup>rd</sup> during the course of the meeting of the NCC at Nagpur.

**Rome.** A decision was taken to invite the members of the Union in Rome and surrounding district to participate in the celebrations of the Union on Wednesdays at the Church of San Salvatore in Onda, Spiritual Centre of the UAC. The celebrations begin at 17.00 with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by the Rosary and the Litany of Our Lady, and ending with Mass and vespers. The various communities of the Union will take it in turn to organize and animate the celebrations.

### **A reflection from St. Vincent Pallotti.**

Fr. Jan Kupka, SAC, director of the Istituto Pallotti, explores the concept of “Reviving faith” in the General Statutes and the writings of St. Vincent Pallotti, in number 14 of the periodical “Apostolato Cattolico”.

Fr. Kupka stresses that “The importance of faith for the Christian life and its decrease in the world at the beginning of the nineteenth century spurred Pallotti to dedicate all his energy to the revival and growth of faith in his time ... the formulation “to revive faith” is used 87 times by Pallotti in diverse contexts. The use of the words ‘to revive faith’ is accompanied by complementary clarifications, for example: ‘to revive faith in the presence of the One and Triune God’, ‘to revive in people faith in Jesus Christ’, ‘to revive faith among Catholics’, ‘to revive faith in catholic regions’, ‘to revive in people intense feelings of faith’. To belong to the Union entails a commitment – according to Pallotti – to do one’s best to revive faith ... and that all the works done for the multiplication of the spiritual and temporal means directed to reviving faith, form the “essential aim of the pious Society (of the Union)”. This means that the aim of reviving faith is fundamental for the Union.”

This conviction of St. Vincent is as relevant for us and for our world as it was for him. We see everywhere a multiplicity of proposals that purport to help people find happiness, but we know that despite the ‘offers’ a great emptiness exists in the lives of many people. We, members of the Union, can ask ourselves at this time about the value and importance of the faith for us, and of the ways with which we could contribute to the ‘revival of faith’ in others.

There is a saying that says “Instead of giving the poor person a fish, it is better to teach him how to fish”, we could adapt this to ‘instead of saying a word on faith to another person, it would be better to teach him how to plumb the depths of himself and there, in the mystery at the heart of life, to find God and faith’.