

Material for reflection – Union of Catholic Apostolate

April 2006.

The Imitation of Christ according to St Vincent Pallotti (continued).

In preparation, let us pray with St. Vincent Pallotti:

“O my Jesus, I am infinitely unworthy to be allowed participate in your humble, poor, suffering, benevolent, hard-working and scorned life. You, in your infinite mercy and through the intercession of Mary most holy and of all the Angels and Saints, grant me this grace. May the life of our Lord Jesus Christ be my life both now and forever. Amen.”

Reflection.

In the ‘Practical daily reminder to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ’ (OCC III, pages 34 – 39) St. Vincent Pallotti proposes the following:

1. Before beginning any activity in the daily routine:

- reflect first of all on what would be the thinking of the holy mind of Jesus in these concrete situations;
- consider what the feelings of his divine Heart would be;

and in situations in which one must speak:

- ask oneself what words of humility, gentleness, charity, patience and prudence would Jesus use;
- consider just how measured his words would be, he would use neither too many nor too few words;
- in the use of all material and created things that are necessary to life, consider the moderate use that Jesus Christ made of these;
- with ones imagination try to see Jesus, and using the imagination and in a spirit of reviving or intensifying ones faith, think of the God-man who became for us both an example and a model;
- it is Jesus Christ himself who is the practical rule or guide for both the interior and outward life of the Christian;
- an invitation is made to trust in the grace with which he wishes to bless us abundantly in order that we may imitate him.

Biblical texts for reflection.

Isaiah 58, 5-9;

Luke 8,13-16;

John 8, 1-12;

John 19, 25-27;

Luke 23, 33-34;

John 14, 1-11.

The challenge before us is that of imitating Jesus in both his hidden and public life.

The following reflection is one that Pallotti himself wrote, it is taken from “**The God of Infinite Love**” reflection no. 12:

“On the obligation of becoming perfect, since we are living images of the Son.

Enlightened by holy faith, I must remember that my soul, created in the image and likeness of God, is therefore a living image of the divine Son. Because this is so, and by natural obligation of creation and trusting in grace, I must avail of my free will in order to become perfect inasmuch as I am a living image of the same divine Son of the eternal divine Father. And since the divine person of the Son is infinitely similar to the Father, my soul is therefore under an obligation of its very

nature to become increasingly more perfect in its essence as an image of God and of all of God. To do otherwise would be, according to the wise designs of infinite love, to work against nature and against the needs of the nature of my soul which God wishes to be like Himself in glory. In so far as it is possible and helped by grace, I am, therefore, obliged to govern all the thoughts, words and deeds of my life in such a manner that I may imitate God in everything according to His purposes.”

In April we commemorate the birth of Saint Vincent Pallotti on April 21st 1795. He was born in Via del Pellegrino, 130, in the city of Rome. He was the third of ten children born to Pietro Paolo Pallotti and Maddalena De Rossi and he was baptised on April 22nd in the Church of Saint Lorenzo in Damaso.

The *reflection-testimony* this month is on the exemplary life of Saint Vincent:

St. Vincent Pallotti sought, throughout his life, to imitate Jesus Christ at every opportunity. As a child he learnt from his parents to listen carefully to the Gospel and to meditate on Jesus Christ; little by little his heart opened to the activity of the Holy Spirit who ensured that Pallotti’s life was filled with the love of God. This love was so strong that it often caused him to forget himself; it helped him to acknowledge his weaknesses and, at the same time it allowed him to know himself as deeply loved by God. This experience gave rise to a desire to respond to such love and to commit all of his life to awakening others to the infinite and merciful love of God.

Pallotti is a great Saint because he gave room to God’s grace, he allowed it to work in him, and when God enters a soul he does marvellous things. Examples of this in St. Vincent’s life are the amount of time that he dedicated to listening to the people who came to him for counselling, he never seemed to tire; he once gave his coat to a poor person who was shivering from cold and he continued to hear confessions despite the cold. Vincent forgot about himself, he did not worry about a possible dose of ‘flu, he considered the needs of the other to be of greater importance than his own. Like Jesus he gave his life for others. This is what it means to truly love.

We too are called to open our hearts, our minds and our hands so that the Holy Spirit, working in us and with us, can transform us and teach us to love as Jesus taught us.

From the “*Imitation of Christ*”, Book III, Chapter XVIII:

After the Example of Christ

“O Lord, because You were patient in life, especially in fulfilling the design of the Father, it is fitting that I, a most miserable sinner, should live patiently according to Your will, and, as long as You shall wish, bear the burden of this corruptible body for the welfare of my soul. For though this present life seems burdensome, yet by Your grace it becomes meritorious, and it is made brighter and more endurable for the weak by Your example and the pathways of the saints. But it has also more consolation than formerly under the old law when the gates of heaven were closed, when the way thereto seemed darker than now, and when so few cared to seek the eternal kingdom. The just, the elect, could not enter heaven before Your sufferings and sacred death had paid the debt.

Oh, what great thanks I owe You, Who have shown me and all the faithful the good and right way to Your everlasting kingdom! Your life is our way and in Your holy patience we come nearer to You Who are our crown. Had You not gone before and taught us, who would have cared to follow? Alas, how many would have remained far behind, had they not before their eyes Your holy example! Behold, even we who have heard of Your many miracles and teachings are still lukewarm; what would happen if we did not have such light by which to follow You?”

Act of Consecration to Our Lady.

O Mary, my Mother! I give myself entirely to you, and, to show my devotion to you, I consecrate to you today my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my entire self. And because I am yours o loving Mother, keep me, defend me, as your property and possession, Amen.