



Apostles for Today

Reflection and prayer - September 2008

Fundamental Rule no. 1

Together with St. Paul we exclaim: “Yet I am alive; yet it is no longer I, but Christ living in me.” (Gal 2,20a)

The Fundamental Rule of our little Congregation is the hidden and public life of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We must imitate Him as perfectly as possible in humility and confidence. Our aim in doing so is the greatest glory of God, our heavenly Father, as well as the greater sanctification of our own soul and those of our neighbours. Whoever, therefore, joins this Congregation, must be moved only by perfect love of God and neighbour, in order to assure the eternal salvation of their own soul. (OCC III, p. 40)

Reflection

The journey of Christian formation is essentially a journey according to the Spirit and consequently, is meant to be open to a continuing renewal of the commitment to spiritual formation. Since Christ, sent by the Father, is the source and the origin of the entire apostolate of the Church, it is evident that fruitfulness of the apostolate depends on our vital union with Christ; He himself assured us in his Word: “Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing” (Jn. 15: 4-5).

This does not mean that one should change one's own spirituality and adopt one which is essentially of others in the Church, but, it does mean that one should seek a spirituality which, in the concrete circumstances of one's life, would allow one to “remain in Christ in order to bear fruit” and to “walk according to the

Spirit” in the situations which are particular to each baptized person. This spirituality is lived in ones own family (religious or natural), in ones work and professional environment; in the complex social, political or cultural reality of today.

The characteristic elements of Christian spirituality, which would seem to be ones that we are to be aware of, reflect on and develop are:

- The call to incarnate in the ‘ordinariness of the mundane’ a way of life inspired by the Gospel;
- To introduce in different social institutions a spirit of service and to give witness to charity;
- To be bearers of hope for others, a hope which is active and committed;
- To be persons who work for reconciliation and peace at all levels of life;
- To continue to develop the Baptismal - Eucharistic roots of ones own mission;
- To have a profoundly Christian and ecclesial identity, one which is inseparably united with the capacity to live in universal openness;
- To have a capacity for prayer and contemplation within the concrete situations of daily living and of world history.

Together, let us reflect on how much we adhere to these realities. How much do we desire to fulfil this mission in all its dimensions, do we try to live it profoundly every day? The apostolate of St. Vincent Pallotti expresses his soul: his joy in helping others to know and love the God whom he loved.

The greatness and the immensity of the apostolate are in proportion to the intensity of ones love. Love bursts out from the eyes and, indeed, from the very pores of the person who loves. In the same way apostolic activity blooms spontaneously and inevitably overflows from a heart in which the love of God has a true home and plays a significant role.

There is not and there can not be a separation between true love of God and true apostolate. There was no such separation in Jesus Christ, the Apostle of the Eternal Father.

For our Founder, *to love and to help others to love God* as much as He merits to be loved; *to sanctify oneself and to promote the most perfect sanctification* of all creatures, are two activities of the Spirit and they are not four, as some may think. *To help others to love* is not different from loving, it is simply an expression of it; to promote sanctification or holiness is but an overflow of the authenticity of ones own holiness.

How much more did Pallotti want to tell us, when he wrote: “*My Jesus, the proof of the love which you want from me, is the salvation of souls*” (OCCC X, p. 676). This is a dominant characteristic of Pallottine life and holiness.

According to St. Vincent, holiness must serve the apostolate and the apostolate is not authentic without spirituality. The person who loves God cannot but desire that others love Him too, he or she can not stand passively under the cross of Jesus Christ. The person who knows what the soul is, knows its value and what Jesus has done to redeem it, cannot but work for the salvation of others.

The apostolate constitutes the expression of all human relations; the call to the apostolate comes from creation itself and receives a certain sacramental character from Jesus’ commandment: “*You must love one another just as I have loved you*” (Jn. 13, 34). Therefore, the apostolate, before it is activity, is an apostolic

soul. (from the book *Una santità per l'apostolato – Holiness for the Apostolate*, edited by Fr. Francesco Amoroso).

Let us pray with St. Vincent

“Eternal Father you sent your divine Son, Jesus Christ for the salvation of the human race.

In Your infinite mercy and through the merits of Jesus Christ, deign to hear us as we comply with what he asked of us, we pray that You will send evangelical workers who are filled with Your Spirit, in order to convert all souls to You.

With the precept of charity you commanded all peoples of every state, degree and condition, to seek the salvation of their neighbours soul as eagerly as they would their own. We ask you now and always to infuse the fullness of your charity in all those who live and who will live on this earth, so that all may work together in every possible way, to effectively gain the multiplication of the spiritual and temporal means necessary and opportune for the propagation of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in all the world, so that there may be one flock and one shepherd.

In union with all the angels and saints, with the souls of all the just until the end of the world, we offer you the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, His infinite merits and the merits of His Church, in thanksgiving, as if You had already heard us, and there where You are we will all come to sing for all eternity your infinite mercies”.