



Apostles for Today

Reflection and prayer - March 2009

“Lord Jesus ... may Your life be my life”

(OCCC X, p. 488)

St. Vincent Pallotti's invitation

We have meditated on the 33 points of the Fundamental Rule each month during the past few years, in them St. Vincent exhorted us to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ and to make of his holy life the rule for our own lives. “The fundamental Rule of our little Congregation is the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ” (*Fundamental Rule* 1, OCCC III, p. 40). He was convinced of the basic truth that “If all Christians are obliged to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ, then with how much greater perfection, diligence and fervour must we imitate him? Have we not received the gift of the very life of our Lord Jesus Christ as the fundamental rule of our little Congregation? Do we not receive daily in the congregation numerous and special graces that allow us to imitate him?”

We should keep before our eyes God made man who is our example, our model and the practical rule of both our interior and exterior life. With trust in his omnipotent grace we should do everything in the best possible way and with the utmost diligence, attention, fervour and humility, trusting in the graces that our Lord Jesus Christ with infinite love wishes to lavish on us so as to imitate him. A person who believes in Jesus Christ and who in humility and trust strives to imitate him, receives (as grace) that Jesus destroys in him/her all faults and deformities. Jesus Christ enters into that soul and operates in it and Jesus Christ continues his very life in that soul, He lives in it and communicates to it the merits of his holy works, thus the promise of Jesus Christ is verified “I tell you solemnly the one who believes in me will perform the same works I do and will perform even greater works” (Jn. 14.12), this is indeed true, because Jesus Christ does everything in us” (Daily Practical Memorandum, OCCC III, 35-37).

St. Vincent, with bold assurance, affirms that if a person seriously undertakes to imitate Jesus Christ with humility and trust, Jesus Christ himself will destroy and straighten out in that person all that is to be destroyed and straightened. When everything is clean and orderly He himself enters in and

takes possession of the person and fills his/her faculties, He lives and operates in the person, and his/her actions acquire the value and the merit of the holy actions of Jesus Christ himself.

Let us ask ourselves in silence:

What fruits we have drawn for our spiritual and apostolic lives as Pallottines from these meditations?

Do we share in our hearts the same desire that St. Vincent had: “Lord Jesus ... may Your life be my life”?

Let us pray using the invocations written by St. Vincent during a retreat he made in 1841 (OCC X, p. 656- 681)

“My Jesus (...) Your prayers will become my prayers.

My Jesus (...) may the communication of Your holy life with all Your virtues and merits be in me and in all persons now and always.

My Jesus, infinite Wisdom (...) may Your life be my life.

My Jesus (...) make Your conformity my conformity.

My Jesus, my Judge (...) give me Your life, I want to live with it, I want to die with it and with Your life to present myself before Your divine tribunal.

My Jesus (...) give me Your purity, thus Your purity will be my purity.

My Jesus (...) form in me the Eight Beatitudes through the communication of Your life, and thus I will possess them in true fullness.

My Jesus (...) grant me all Your prayers and all the infinite merit of Your sacrifice.

Jesus my Truth (...) give me all Your life which is Truth, is true and eternal light.

My Jesus (...) give me Your charity, and transform me into Your charity so that I may live it.

Jesus is the most amiable, the most loving and is little loved. My Jesus (...) grant me and all persons, now and always all of Your love.

Jesus, the proof of love that You want from me is the salvation of Souls, therefore destroy in me all that stops me from being fully occupied and effective for the well-being of souls, give me all of Your life, all of Your virtues, all of your characteristics, all of Your energy, all of Yourself so as to bring the souls of every person living and who will be born to Your heart.

My Jesus (...) give me Your life, and with Your life may I always work and exercise all the different parts and functions of the Gospel ministry.

My Jesus (...) grant that the fullness of Your life may be in me and in all persons always so as to prepare all people for heaven.

My Jesus with the holiness and perfection of Your life destroy all of my life, give me Your life and I will always live with Your life”.

“My God I firmly believe that every moment you destroy all my life in me and bring Jesus Christ to life in me so that in everything and always it be Him who thinks, speaks and works in me with all of His being, all of His virtues and all of His works” (OCCC X, p. 261).

To pray with the life of Jesus

The journey of growth and the maturity that takes place in the life of each one of us helps us to understand its deepest meaning which is the gift of the infinite love of God. This consciousness or awareness reveals a reality to us, be it the revelation of what is good or the revelation of that which come s from evil. The season of Lent is an ideal time to rethink our lives and to adapt them more to Christ.

In the writings of St. Vincent we find numerous prayers which are the fruit of profound reflection on his life and go right back to the moment of his conception. Particularly fascinating are his attitude of humility and gratitude to God, his optimism and the search for the fullness of life. In his prayers his desire to live the life of Jesus is strikingly and ardently shown. One of these prayers is the “Benedicite” composed by St. Vincent shortly before his death. It is a hymn that wells up from his heart with a singular thirst: “Lord Jesus expel me from within me and put Yourself in me. May my life and every action of mine be destroyed and may Your life be my life”. This prayer, like many others written in diverse moments of his life, show us how Pallotti prayed (with) the life of Jesus. In the light of the life of the Lord Jesus Pallotti would find the deeper meaning of the different stages and the events of his life and he allowed himself to be totally transformed in Jesus.

Suggestions for personal meditation:

The letter of St. Paul to the Philippians 3,7-12.

Sharing of experiences

We have seen from the letters that were received in the General Secretariat of the Union that many members, collaborators and friends of the Union in various parts of the world have been following this journey of the imitation of Jesus according to the teachings of St. Vincent. At the conclusion of this period spent meditating on the 33 points I feel as if I am at the start of a new stage in my life! As I reflected on the *Fundamental Rule* I used to ask myself: 'what does St. Vincent want from me in proposing that I follow his path? I looked for a response to this question in his writings, especially in volume X which is called "I Lumi" (the enlightenments). There I discovered meditations, prayers and litanies which have all helped me to know better the treasure that has been hidden from my eyes up to now: **the life of Jesus is a gift to me, but one to be shared with others!** When I read in the Gospel of St. John a passage which was frequently quoted by St. Vincent "God so loved the world that He gave His Son ..." I asked myself what these words mean to me and what God is teaching me for my life. And I borrow the words of St. Vincent and say "My God (...) with infinite love You thought to give me your beloved Son Jesus, and with Jesus You have given me everything" (OCCC X, 479).

It is true that:

"Jesus Christ, true God and true man,
in soul, body and divinity is ours and is all ours;
and all the life of Jesus Christ
and all his infinite merits and most perfect virtues are all ours!
Jesus Christ is mine, the Word became man, in soul, body and divinity is mine;
the virtues (...) of Jesus are mine,
and mine are the works that Jesus has done on this earth..."
(*God the Infinite Love* med. XXII)

As I meet with other members of the UAC what can I share of what I have experienced, felt and discovered in the itinerary of imitating Christ which we have lived in these 33 months?