



Apostles for Today

Reflection and prayer - July 2010

St. Vincent Pallotti – “God, the Infinite Love”

Meditation X

Since we are created in the image and likeness of God we are obliged by nature and by reason of creation always to work well, without succumbing to laziness, so that we may imitate God who always works.

Introductory prayer

Psalm 24(23)

To Yahweh belong earth and all it holds,
the world and all who live in it;
he himself founded it on the ocean,
based it firmly on the nether sea.

Ecclesiasticus 17, 1-10

The Lord fashioned man from the earth,
to consign him back to it.

He gave them so many days' determined time,
he gave them authority over everything on earth.

He clothed them with strength like his own,
and made them in his own image.

He filled all living things with dread of man,
making him master over beasts and birds.

He shaped for them a mouth and tongue, eyes and ears,
and gave them a heart to think with.

He filled them with knowledge and understanding,
and revealed to them good and evil.

He put his own light in their hearts
to show them the magnificence of his works.

They will praise his holy name,
as they tell of his magnificent works.

He set knowledge before them,
he endowed them with the law of life.

He established an eternal covenant with them,
and revealed his judgements to them.

Their eyes saw his glorious majesty,
and their ears heard the glory of his voice. (Ecclesiasticus 17, 1-11)

These words from the Book of Ecclesiasticus set the scene for the beautiful meditation that St. Vincent gives us the gift of, this meditation shows us how Vincent continuously submerged himself in God's infinite and gratuitous love, a love that embraces all his creatures.

Introduction: “Yahweh God took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it” (*Gen 2,15*). To work always, to be active and to do good means that laziness does not take hold of us. Enlightened by faith I am invited to reflect on the fact that God has worked, has been productive from all eternity and he continues to work and will do so for all of eternity. God, in his infinite love and according to the designs of his infinite mercy which he graciously gives us in every moment of life in gifting us with free will, wishes to enrich us with innumerable works which merit eternal life. He has deigned to create us in his image and likeness so that, in the order of creation, there is in our souls an impulse and an instinct to always work and work well without laziness. With the help of grace we are therefore invited to embrace and profit from the sublime gift of creation in order to work and to create always and in a meritorious manner, to do otherwise would be to degrade or diminish our souls and would in fact be going against the goal of creation. This is why God as soon as he created our father Adam introduced him into an earthly paradise so that he might work even though he was innocent and his toil and effort was not the result of sin. (cf. ‘God, the Infinite Love’, meditation X).

Reflection

St. Vincent Pallotti, in contemplating creation as the infinite work of the Creator, invites us to grasp both the immensity and the extraordinary beauty of all of creation and also the great responsibility to which God calls each and

every one of us by working always and by doing good in the place in which God has planted us and which he has desired for us from all eternity.

Pallotti shows us the true place that the creature has in relation to the Creator, he shows us the attitude that we are to have towards our Creator and all of creation; he urges us to acquire a clear awareness of who we are and who we are called to be as children of a God who has always loved humankind in every age. In reading between the lines of Vincent's ecstatic contemplation as he submerges himself in God's infinite and gratuitous love, as he breathes it in until his lungs are full, we are gently led to thinking about our presence in the world, to reflecting on the significance of our lives in it.

Vincent asks us to look at our being here on this earth with new eyes; to wake up to the wonder of creation, not to take anything for granted and to come face to face with our responsibility, one which God has extended to us by entrusting to us, both personally and as a community, the world! Vincent's thinking is very explicit, he helps us to understand that because we are created in the image of such an infinite love then we cannot allow ourselves to live with attitudes that do not transmit the true significance of life, attitudes such as;

- **to laze about or wander around without a goal;**
- **to remain a simple spectator of life;**
- **to act as if one were absolute master of the gifts one has received gratuitously.**

Pallotti strongly emphasised that the human being is called to care for, cultivate and watch over the earth that God has created (Lev 25,23); to be a faithful and enthusiastic guardian of the life which pulses in all of the universe.

In the light of these reflections on being created beings who act together with the Creator we can ask ourselves:

- Am I consciously aware that God has given me everything freely?
- Have I ever reflected on the responsibility to which God calls me in asking me to care for the world?
- What can I (we) do in order to better the little piece of the world (family, group of friends etc) in which I (we) live?

We, the ordinary people of the streets

“We, the ordinary people of the streets, believe with all our strength that this street, that this world where God has placed us, is for us the place where we become holy. We believe that we lack nothing necessary here in the streets; if we did need something more, God would have already given it to us. In the street, hemmed in by the crowd, we prepare our souls to be caverns of silence where the Word of God can find rest for itself and can resonate. To us people of the street solitude does not appear to be the absence of the world but rather the presence of God. The whole world is like coming face to face with him whom we cannot evade. We cannot stand upright except to move forward, except to plunge in with the enthusiasm of charity. We must live our lives, not as if it were a game of chess where everything is calculated, nor as if it were a brain-teasing theorem, but rather live it as an unending feast in which encounters with the Lord renew us like a dance, in the arms of his grace, dancing to the universal music of love.”

(by Madeleine Delbrel)

Our solitude is the encounter with God everywhere. For us, being alone in a crowd, is participating in the solitude of God.

Let us pray with St. Vincent Pallotti

“O, my God, my Father, infinitely loving creator, infinite mercy, you have tolerated me on this earth for so many years in spite of my monstrous ingratitude..., but in your constant infinite mercy you come to my help enabling me to pray like this: my Creator, infinitely loving, infinitely merciful, you think of me constantly, you have tolerated me on this earth for so many years even though I have never profited as I should have from the infinite love and infinite mercy with which you created me, you created me like you yourself, you who are always active and productive. I firmly believe and I am certain that you will grant me perfect contrition of my sins and the grace to make amends for all the losses of the past by beginning to work well from now on up until the hour of my death; may I profit and take advantage of all the moments of life which you mercifully grant me. Amen.”

(Cf. God, the Infinite Love, med. X)