



UAC NEWSLETTER

September 2010

Dear brothers and sisters in the Union

This month brings biographical material on the cause for beatification of **Franciszek BRYJA SAC**, prepared by Fr. Jan Korycki, SAC, Postulator General of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, as well as other UAC news.

1. CAUSES FOR BEATIFICATION OF MEMBERS OF THE UAC AT DIOCESAN LEVEL (continued)

Franciszek BRYJA SAC, a priest and member of the Polish Province was born on May 31st 1910 at Rajcza, in the region of Krakow, he was ordained a priest on July 11th 1938 and died at the concentration camp in Dachau on May 4th 1942. The Cause of Beatification was officially opened together with that of other martyrs on September 17th 2003 in Warsaw. Fr. Henryk Kietliński, SAC is the Postulator at the Diocesan level.

After ordination Fr. Bryja lived in Warsaw and studied classical philology at the University while engaged in part-time pastoral work. It is worth remembering that during the German occupation the universities in Poland were closed, however, people courageously studied clandestinely.

Fr. Bryja was arrested by the Nazis on September 13th 1940 as a hostage in place of another priest who subsequently presented himself and was arrested, however, neither of the two was released. Initially Fr. Franciszek was placed in a very tough prison known as Pawiak in Warsaw. On an occasion when he had been interrogated one of the Nazi soldiers remarked to another "This man (Bryja) does not appear to me to be very guilty, but since he is here we must detain him". Fr. Franciszek himself heard this and he later repeated it to his confreres. He was moved from Pawiak to the concentration camp at Auschwitz on November 23rd 1940 and shortly afterwards, on December 10th to the camp at Dachau, he was assigned a number, prisoner 22196. There he formed part of the group of prisoners known as 'the invalids', who were given lighter work but within a short period of time were condemned to death in the gas chambers.

Fr. Bryja foresaw all that awaited him. The day before he died the camp authorities told 'the invalids' to prepare themselves for a journey to another, better organized, camp, where there would be a basket making factory, however he did not believe this. He took leave of his two Pallottine confreres, Fr. Stefan Treuchel and Fr. Jan Wroński, who were also prisoners in the camp and, according to Fr. Stefan, said the following "Our jailers fear a rebellion and this is why they say that they are going to take us to a better organized camp where we will be employed weaving wicker baskets, another (of the guards) assured us that we will be taken to a rest home. I do not believe what they say and therefore in these few moments which are left to me I want to tell you of my last will and testament." He spoke briefly to them regarding his material possessions which he had inherited from his parents, then after a moment of silence, he continued "When news of my death reaches you please remember what I am going to tell you now. In this moment I offer to God and to the Queen of Apostles my young life, the first years of my priesthood, my dreams and the hopes which have not yet been realized, I offer all my heart and my soul; I make this offering so that the Catholic faith may increase and develop in Poland and for the growth of the Pallottine Polish Province" (Queen of Apostles, 9 (1958), p. 16). He died in the gas chamber on May 4th 1942 just short of his 32nd birthday and four years of priesthood.

The memory of Fr. Bryja lives on in the Polish Pallottines as an example of generous service to God and neighbour and of fidelity to a vocation which was crowned with martyrdom. The General Chapter of the Pallottines in 1947 recognized his heroic life and accepted that the process for his beatification be pursued. It is noteworthy that after his death three of his nephews, all sons of his sister, discovered their vocation to the priesthood and two of them became Pallottines and the third a diocesan priest.

2. The XX General Assembly of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate is taking place at Ariccia (Rome), it started on September 20th and continues until October 15th. The theme of the Assembly is "Revive faith and re-ignite charity: Apostles of Jesus in a changing world." We pray that the Holy Spirit may guide the hearts and minds of all the participants in this important event in the life of the Society. A special website has been

set up to relay a daily bulletin from the Assembly and will include photographs, you can access this site at www.sac.info/2010

3. The National Coordination Council in India met on August 16th at Assumption House in Bangalore and in the course of the meeting the members elected a new President in place of Sr. Josephina D'Souza, SAC, who has taken up her position as General Councillor of the Missionary Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate in Rome, Ms. Regina Silvia Arokiaswamy, President of the Khristsevikas community and based in Pune, was elected President of the NCC.

The Khristsevikas celebrate 50 years this year, Ms. Joyce Almeida wrote "The decision of the Khristsevikas to celebrate God's goodness of 50 years is spread over 14 months. The theme chosen is "Thank you God for what has been, Trust You for what will be on our journey", focus of the celebration is spiritual renewal. From October 2010 the group will gather four times in Pune at their Centre, 'VARDAN' (which means Blessings). The programme includes Integration through psycho-spiritual dimension, Renewal, Session on Living the Gospel values rooted in Christ, Retreat with the theme 'Indian Society, Church and the Secular Institute', Seminar on Indian Woman - consecrated person. A General Assembly will be held and the Jubilee will conclude in December 2011.

October 13th 2010 is a the day marking the 50th year of the beginning when the first member left home. She followed the call of the Lord that came through Msgr. Jos Fernandez, Director of the Pontifical Missions in India at the request of Fr. Ansgar Faller SAC. Initially the idea of having a Secular Institute group in India with the vision of St Vincent Pallotti, came from Fr. Bryan Tiernan an Australian Pallottine working at Raipur mission of the Pallottines and Msgr John Weidner (from Germany) also working in the same mission.

In 1960 the first member was sent to 'Regina Mundi' Institute in Rome and Fr. Faller also secured for them a house 'Il Nido'. More young ladies joined later and Fr. John S. Gaynor SAC was their spiritual director.

The Hildegard sisters of the Catholic Apostolate and the Theresian sisters of the Catholic Apostolate, both in Germany formed a federation at the request of Fr. Faller in order to give life and stability to the newly formed group. Hence the care and spiritual formation was taken up by them in Rome and Germany. On returning to Raipur in 1965, the name Khristsevikas (servants of Christ) was given to them by Msgr. Weidner. Living the Secular Institute way of life in the spirit and charism of St. Vincent Pallotti, they respond to a world in crisis, in solidarity with those wounded in their human dignity, suffering injustice and those searching for God. With particular emphasis on girls and empowerment of women, they engage in various professions by presence, witness, love and service working in seven dioceses in India and animate a UAC group in Pune".

4. Santa Maria, Brazil, the VIII Latin American Congress of Pallottine Education took place on September 4th and 5th at Our Lady of Fatima College (run by the Pallottine Sisters) in Santa Maria. 193 persons participated from Argentina and Brazil representing ten Pallottine centres of education. The theme was "Spirituality in education" and the motto was "With Pallotti we are Apostles in the field of Education".

Fr. Marcos Sandrini, SDB, guided a reflection on the first day and said "we need educators who imbibe their spirituality from the well of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it is he who gives a foundation to what they are and do". The objective of these congresses is to promote education in the light of the Gospel and so for the Pallottine institutes of education they are a means to up-date and reflect on educational themes in the light of the Pallottine charism, spirituality and pedagogy. The congress was prepared and led by the Latin American Coordination Team of Pallottine Education – ECLAEP.

5. Sudan, members of the UAC from Kenya and Uganda accepted an invitation to visit Sudan and went to the diocese of Juba in July and had initial contact with the Bishop and the local church by speaking on the UAC and its charism during the celebration of mass in several parishes.

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