



Apostles for Today

Reflection and prayer- October 2010

St. Vincent Pallotti – God the Infinite Love Meditation XIII

*“...I must recall that my soul, being a living image of God,
is also a living image of the Holy Spirit,
infinite, immense, incomprehensible love of the Father and the Son.”*

Lord, teach us to pray: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Prayer: My Lord, my Life, my Love, I adore you profoundly with all that I am and all that I have. Come to me, Father, in Infinite Love, enter into me and fill me with Your utter Fullness. Jesus my beloved breathe in me the Breath of the Holy Spirit and touch especially those areas of my life that resist you. Holy Spirit, Divine Love, let your light, the warmth of your presence, the flame of love take possession of me so that I may be all flame, the flame of Love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Scripture: John 3:5-8

In all truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born through water and the Spirit; what is born of human nature is human; what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be surprised when I say: You must be born from above. The wind blows where it pleases; you can hear its' sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

Reflection:

I am the living image of the Holy Spirit and I wonder what is the Holy Spirit like, how can I become like Him.

There are two main images of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. The first is the wind & breath. “The wind blows where it wills and you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going; so it must be with

those who are born of the Spirit.” After His resurrection Jesus breathed the breath of the Spirit on the apostles and in Acts the Spirit comes as a mighty wind that shakes the house.

Last year in Argentina we came upon a *tormenta*, a storm that uprooted trees and blew the roof off the small church. Every moveable thing inside the church was either toppled or broken. And it seemed to me to be what an authentic Pentecost might do to our attachments, the sacred icons by which we are connected to God; snatched from our grasp so that we have nothing to hold us back from surrender to that which we cannot control.

To be a living image of the Spirit means to have the quality of wind, air or breath – something that I cannot control or order. We are used to demanding of ourselves and others, an ordered way of living that is clearly defined, predictable, dependable, and safe. The Holy Spirit is never clearly defined or predictable but He is dependable and safe and does have His own order that we are called to surrender to.

This is the key – surrender. Surrendering to the movement of the Holy Spirit in my life. Surrender and trust – trust in the Spirit rather than trust in myself. The perfect example of this surrender and trust is Mary.

The Jesuit poet, Gerald Manley Hopkins wrote a poem called “The Blessed Virgin Compared To The Air We Breathe” and in it he describes her as “wild air world mothering air, nestling me everywhere.” I like this image because it connects Our Lady with the Holy Spirit – the wind that blows where it will. Mary is not simply the quiet still woman but she is also a woman of great strength. She has the strength and the power of the Holy Spirit in her and she is carried in that strength.

The second image of the Holy Spirit is fire – what John of The Cross calls “that living flame which is the Holy Spirit” whose interior action causes me to send out flames of love to God and to others. This is the flame that impelled Mary out from herself to go to the aid of Elizabeth. Our experience of the Holy Spirit is only authentic when it inflames us,

enkindles love in us and sends us out to others. This is the Caritas Christi urging us.

“The divine awakening produces in the soul of the perfect flame of love...that living flame which is the Holy Spirit Himself...this is the operation of the Holy Spirit in the soul that is transformed in love, that His interior actions cause it to send out flames...This flame wounds the soul as it is given, but the wound is tender, and, instead of causing death, it increases life...” John of the Cross

Vincent Pallotti’s meditation reminds us of the obligation that is ours as a result of our being living images of Infinite Love. “...helped by grace, I am obliged to profit by the gift of free will to become perfect inasmuch as I am a living image of the infinite love of the Father and the Son”. This awareness inspires Pallotti to an honest prayer of repentance and mercy. “Instead of living the life of love, in your Infinite Love, I have loved myself, I have loved the brutal excesses of my evil passions, I have loved material things, I have loved sin.”

Repentance:

I have loved sin. This is the truth that Pallotti recognizes in himself, it is the truth about me that I actually love the sin that I commit. Take a little time to acknowledge your sin before the Lord, without fear, because Infinite Love is infinitely patient. Give to Him that which you are unable to overcome in your life. In nothingness and helplessness abandon yourself into the hands of the only One who is able to set you free, the One who desires to set you free.

The Lord says, “I have seen the misery of my people...I have heard them crying for help...Yes I am well aware of their sufferings. And I have come down to rescue them” (Ex 3:7-8)

Prayer of trust

Through His infinite mercy God helps us to pray with St. Vincent in this way:

My God, my Father, infinite love and mercy of my soul which is a living image of Yours...I am sure that You will look upon me and be moved to compassion... I firmly believe, rather I am certain, that

immediately You will grant me perfect contrition for my sinful life...rekindle in my soul the flame of Your most pure love, grant me the efficacious grace to live always a life of such ardent love that I make amends for both my sins and the sins of all others. Deign to transform me wholly in Your holy love so I may become similar to You in glory, oh my infinite, eternal, immense and incomprehensible love.

Meditation

Vincent Pallotti encourages us to breathe God in and out:

Be still now in the presence of the Lord.

Be still and breathe.

The Holy Spirit is everywhere,

He is in the air that you breathe,

in every breath you take you are filled
with the utter fullness Spirit who is Infinite Love.

You are in the Cenacle of Love with Mary,

in the communion of praise and adoration
with all the angels, saints and the whole Church.

If you need a word to help you then you can repeat this phrase silently
– *I am a living image of the Holy Spirit*. Remain in this place, this blessed state, as long as the Holy Spirit allows.

Before concluding ask for the particular grace you need in this moment of your life and surrender everything trustfully into the hands of God.

Offering:

Eternal Father, in union with the most sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I offer you the most precious blood of the Immaculate Lamb, our divine Redeemer, in thanksgiving, as if you had already granted all the graces I have requested for me and for all, now and always.

Amen.