



Apostles for Today

Reflection and prayer - November 2010

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

MEDITATION XIV

“On our obligation to become perfect because we are living images of God, infinite power”

Prayer

O Holy Spirit, giver of the gift of wisdom, enlighten me.

O Holy Spirit, giver of the gift of intelligence, instruct me.

O Holy Spirit, giver of the gift of counsel, guide me.

O Holy Spirit, giver of the gift of fortitude, strengthen me.

O Holy Spirit, giver of the gift of knowledge, overcome my instability.

O Holy Spirit, giver of the gift of fear of God, free me from all sin.

O Holy Spirit, giver of the gift of peace, bestow peace on me.

Reflection

The power of God in the work of creation

In this short reflection our Founder explains concisely the aim and the very core of our call to a life of faith. The way of holiness which we embarked on with our baptism has its source and its ultimate goal in God, the omnipotent Lord and Creator. Sacred Scripture affirms that “*for nothing is impossible to God*” (Lk, 1, 37), and in the Book of Wisdom God’s power and goodness are compared: “*You..., disposing of such strength, are mild in judgement, you govern us with great lenience, for you have only to will, and your power is there*”(Wis. 12, 18). The act of creating us was born of God’s will, it is an expression of his infinite love. We are called into existence because HE DESIRES IT. We are an expression of the love that God wishes to share with his creatures and this is the reason why our call to holiness passes through the way of perfection and the following of Christ. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that “*Man is by nature and vocation a religious being. Coming from God, going toward God, man lives a fully human life only if*

he freely lives by his bond with God. Man is made to live in communion with God in whom he finds happiness..."(Cat. 44 & 45). St. Vincent was convinced of this and he reminds us of the need to commit ourselves to reaching this communion through the use of our free will, he also explains that the goal is to glorify God, sanctify our own souls and those of others and to overcome earthly temptations (AIDG, ASA, ADP): *"...fortified and made powerful in God, I will be able to perform all acts for the greater glory of God and for the greater sanctification of my soul and my neighbour. I will be able to live always doing, saying and thinking...according to God's law and the teachings of the Church...never will I allow anything to weaken me in such a manner as to make me give in to the temptations of the devil, the snares of the deceiving world and the allurements of evil passions..."*.

"He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly" (Lk 1,52)

The story of salvation shows us many instances in which God reveals his strength. Starting with the creation of the world from nothing, his solicitude for his chosen people, in the Patriarchs and Prophets, and finally in his own Son Jesus Christ (through his miracles, teaching and his passion, death and resurrection), in all of this God unceasingly shows the greatness of his infinite power. It is not, however, the attitude of a despot taking advantage of his subjects by oppressing them. The Lord God is good and patient and his power is revealed in his mercy which is confirmed many times in Sacred Scripture. His heart's desire in that his creatures, whom he has called to life in love, will respond to him with love. We know from our own lives that this is difficult. Every time our pride *"triumphs"* over humility we experience defeat in our fidelity and in our call to follow him. However, when we strive with humility to look at the world through pure and simple eyes, we begin to see things as they truly are and we accept our littleness before the Lord. True humility admits ones own limitations and accepts them with serene confidence while entrusting oneself to the arms of the Father. Such trust and confidence is the most eloquent expression of the power of the Lord who

works in and through us. Convinced of this truth we can exclaim with St. Paul: *“For it is when I am weak that I am strong.”* (2Cor 12,10)

“To know your power is the root of immortality” (Wis, 15,3)

Today we tend to understand ‘power’ in a sense that is very different to that of this inspired author of Sacred Scripture. In the secularized world of today the words ‘power, strength, force, energy, influence’, give rise to images in which domination of others is projected in all areas of life from the physical to the intellectual and from the military to the material. God, through the words of St. Vincent Pallotti, encourages us to seek a different type of power. Created in his image and likeness we are called to follow him in his manner of exercising power which is shown through forgiveness. Sanctifying grace leads us along this road and in cooperating with it we remain firmly on the road. And if and when we do sin, sincere repentance and the forgiveness we receive in the Sacrament of Reconciliation give us the strength to continue to be instruments of God’s mercy. We know that the desire to return to the Father is already a manifestation of the power of God at work in us, left to ourselves, without his powerful grace, we would be incapable to getting up again and resuming our journey.

Blessed Fr. Michał Sopoćko, spiritual director of St. Faustina Kowalska, wrote of this extraordinary sign of the power of God: *“The mercy of God...precedes justification and prepares the sinner for conversion. Mercy accompanies the sinner in all his actions and sustains his weakened attempts, forgives faults...and pours out grace. **Mercy arms the penitent for the battle against temptations** and guides his works of penance in order that he acquire the necessary virtues. Mercy communicates the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the penitent to lead him to a participation in the life of God. While having the power to exterminate sinners or at least to punish them severely, God sustains and supports them as if he were carrying them in his arms, he nourishes them, he fills them with delights, he permits the sun to warm them and the rain to fall on them and in order to forgive them in the right moment he pours his love into their*

souls and brings them to an equal standing with the just. This is truly the sign of his sublime power.”

We have all been sinners and experienced his infinite power on being forgiven, we have gone from being sinners to becoming saints, from wrongdoers to doers of good, from being rebellious children to being adopted children of God and heirs of his Kingdom.

Let us, therefore, be witnesses of the great works of the Lord! Let us bring to the world the true image of God infinite power, in which he has created us, loved us, forgiven us and chosen us for eternal life with him.

Texts for reflection and sharing:

Gen. 1,27; Psalm 8; Psalm 18(17),1-4,30.33-36; Psalm 7(26)
Wis. 12, 18; Lk 1,30-33,35.37; Rm 1,16; 2 Cor 6, 2b-10

Concluding prayer

My God, my mercy, I am infinitely unworthy of Paradise, but your mercy assures me of Paradise, through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, through the merits and intercession of Mary, Most Holy, of all the Angels and Saints, and now and always in union with all creatures, past, present and future, I intend to offer you the most precious Blood of Jesus Christ in thanksgiving as if you had already granted me and all persons Paradise without going to Purgatory...

My God do with me as you will. Grant me the grace to work and to do as you will. My God, my all, now and always – may this be my Paradise – to suffer infinitely, to love infinitely, to experience your grace without rejoicing in it, rejoicing only in that you are infinitely glorified and that I am infinitely disdained. Amen. (Cf. OOCC X , 188-190)