



# *Apostles for Today*

*Reflections and prayers - November 2011*

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## **God the Infinite Love** **Meditation 26 (OCCC XIII, pp. 132-137)**

**God, Moved by His Infinite Love and Mercy, Did Not Stop Adam's Sin in order that Our Life Might be Ennobled, Sanctified, and Enriched by the Merits of Jesus' Life**

### ***Introduction***

*“Enlightened by faith, I recall that when God, perfection and sanctity in essence, does not prevent sin, He does so for reasons worthy of Himself and of all His infinite perfections. I am not able to understand all the most holy, loving and merciful reasons for which he did not prevent Adam's sin, though faith helps me to see God's principal reason in giving us Our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, holy mother Church sings out the reason in the Liturgy of the Easter Vigil, “O happy fault, which merited having such a Redeemer.”*

*More than ever we have reason to wonder. For, had not God given His divine Son Incarnate for us, even though neither Adam nor anyone else had sinned, and if moreover all would have performed good deeds, these good works would never have been enriched, bettered and ennobled by the infinite merits, perfections and holiness of Jesus Christ. Jesus sanctifies, improves and enriches, with His infinite merits, all the words, thoughts and deeds of our life, even those which are mediocre,*

*as long as they are done for God and as long as we are in a state of grace.*

*Without the merits of Jesus Christ, our good deeds would remain as they are intrinsically, that is, worth almost nothing in the presence of God. They are in fact, monsters of imperfection in the presence of the infinite perfection of God.*

*Oh my God, I am unworthy to contemplate the excesses of Your infinite love and mercy. You have permitted Adam to offend You in order to give us Your divine Son as our Redeemer from the slavery of sin. You not only destroyed our deformity, caused by sin, but rather You sanctified, ennobled and enriched all the thoughts of our minds, all the good affections of hearts, all the words, work, actions and feelings of our body and soul – everything. This you did with the infinite merits, holiness and perfection of all the thoughts, words, deeds, breathing, actions and everything of the most holy soul and pure body of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Through the communication and application of Jesus’ infinite merits, all the imperfection of our actions, even though they are good ones, is destroyed. In fact, the deeds which we call good are just horrible monsters without the application of the perfection, merits and holiness of Jesus Christ. It is through the application of Jesus’ merits that the imperfection of these deeds is sanctified, perfected and enriched. In this way we can say that the perfections, merits, and holiness of Jesus are mine. All Jesus’ life is mine, because of the application of His merits” (OCCC XIII, pp 132-136).*

### ***Meditation***

St. Vincent invites us to reflect on sin through the eyes of faith.

“Enlightened by faith” – these words challenge us and afford us an

opportunity to reflect on faith and discover how it helps to form us into the people we become. Faith is not stagnant, but is a living thing that leads us deeper into the realities of God and of his divine plan for us and for all creation. Pallotti assures us that Adam's sin was allowed by God in order to reveal Jesus' mission to us. Scripture tells us many things about Jesus' eventual arrival on earth to redeem us. In the Old Testament, his coming was foretold literally for centuries. Although many names were given to this promise, faith continually encouraged believers to hope in it. The New Testament opens our eyes to the revelations of Jesus' coming. Chapter 1 of John's Gospel is an amazing reflection on God's plan for his people through Jesus, "The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world ... and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ... From his fullness we have received grace upon grace." (Jn 1:9-16) Does this piece of Scripture help to further clarify what Pallotti is trying to tell us in our passage for this month? What is sin? It is any wilful thought, action, or failure-to-act that either weakens or causes a total disruption in our loving relationship with God. The effect of Adam's sin is inherited by all humans from the first moment of their existence. Jesus became the new Adam and through his passion, death and resurrection provided us with the promise both of salvation from sin and of eternal happiness, which Adam lost for us through his turning away from God. In his letter to the Romans (5: 12 – 21), St. Paul reflects on how sin came into the world through Adam but how Jesus changed that, as he goes on to explain - "Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all..." (Rm 5:18). Our hope of redemption is based on the faith that leads us to God in Baptism. Paul asks "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (Rm 6:3) Chapter 6 continues to reflect on the relationship

between sin, death and grace and the interplay between them which serves to free us from the overwhelming temptation to sin. Verse 6:14 states: “For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under the law but under grace”.

Pallotti, the mystic, has reflected in a similar manner on sin, on our unworthiness, and on our inability to act without the grace which Jesus wills to share with us. Grace is a free gift from God, one that we his children can take advantage of by being open to its action through our efforts to live the Christian life and, in a particular way, through our fruitful reception of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation. Prayer is a vital part of each of our lives, and making room in our busy schedules to share a relationship with Jesus and the Triune God through an active prayer life will help us in different ways. It will help us to recognise the draw of sin within us which leads us to make choices which damage us and also our relationship with God and with others. It will teach us that only God’s free gift of grace received through prayer can give us the strength and courage to purify our lives, that only the working of grace within us can bring about true and lasting conversion and growth. The love and example of our families and of our brothers and sisters in faith can offer inspiration and guidance when temptation threatens to separate us from our Lord who loves us and desires us to live lives that are truly blessed. If we always keep in mind our continual need to be “enlightened by faith”, we will also grow to understand and experience first-hand the complexity of the issue of sin and how it is only through the merits of Jesus Christ that we can become the image of God, no matter how imperfect we may be. God loves the sinner and never ceases to applaud our efforts to become more “Godlike”.