



# *Apostles for Today*

*Reflection and Prayer - February 2012*

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## **God the Infinite Love**

### **Meditation 29 (OCC XIII, pp. 157-160)**

*“The Infinite Love and Mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ in everything He did for us during the years of his Preaching”.*

In this 29<sup>th</sup> meditation, Vincent Pallotti describes his contemplation of the infinite Love and Mercy of Jesus, manifested in all that he did for us during the years of his preaching.

Through our Baptism, we receive the gift of faith, we commit ourselves to follow and imitate Jesus Christ in our being and in our doing. This discipleship requires a process of formation, of knowing and experiencing the Word of God in order to be living witnesses of his merciful love.

The incarnation of the Word has re-established communion with the Father, shattered by sin, revealing that God loves us with infinite love. The more this knowledge is penetrated in meditation and contemplation of the Word, the more a person succeeds in understanding their own dignity, having been made gratuitously in the image and likeness of God. This enchants the heart and inspires absolute confidence in a God who is capable of loving in such a way.

The goal of the preaching of Jesus was to reveal to the world that the Father, from eternity, desires the happiness of every human being, which is attained by believing in his only Son, recognising his infinite Love and Mercy. In Luke 4:16ff. we find the description of the

mission of Jesus: “to liberate people from chains which prevent them from realising and make concrete the Kingdom of God. Free from physical evils and enlightened by faith, human beings are able not only to understand the signs of the Kingdom of God, but also to feel themselves motivated and challenged to collaborate in order to bring it about concretely. This revelation of Jesus was a cause of discord and disagreement among the doctors of the law. The Kingdom was understood in a political and juridical manner, but Jesus understood it differently.

Considering the history of salvation, we realize that the chosen people of Israel, during the forty years of travelling in the desert, experienced great trials and suffering, but God promised to be with them at every moment and did not abandoned them.

Therefore, in various parts of the Old Testament we encounter very significant expressions which reveal God’s love, God’s favour for his chosen people. We will quote a few of them: “... *Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine... For I am the Lord your God... You are precious in my eyes, since you are honoured and I love you*” (cf. Is 43:1ff. In other passages: “*It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel; I shall make you a light to the nations, so that my salvation may reach to the very ends of the earth*” (cf. Is 49:6ff.). “*I have carved you on the palms of my hands*” (Is 49:16ff.).

The Word of God contains beautiful surprises. The name of Israel can be substituted with our own name, the word directed to Israel we can hear as directed to our hearts. This experience confirms the love that God has for us, it is He who sustains us on our spiritual path and who helps us to overcome life’s difficulties.

Certainly, every person experiences hardship in their life, situations in which everything seems to lose its meaning. There are moments in which God puts our faith to the test; however, He is always faithful to his promise: “*Do not be afraid, I am with you*”. Considering these

difficulties with the benefit of the passage of some time, from the perspective of faith, we feel the need to exclaim: Without the presence and the grace of God we would not have been able to overcome these difficulties! Through faith we realize that the history of salvation is not something from the past, but that God continues to create the history of every unique and unrepeatably person

Vincent Pallotti, man of God, had this experience, which led him to recognise, with profound joy and gratitude, the infinite love of God. Motivated by such love he felt the call to communicate the Good News of the Infinite Love of God for us to the world. Today, we are called to proclaim, in word and in deed, the Good News to all of humanity. Whoever experiences the Lord cannot simply stand still and watch.

Such was his consciousness of this reality, which drove Saint Vincent to exclaim: “What did you want me to be, O God, when you made me in your own image and likeness? Just this: that I would be like You. That my life would be: light from Your Light, justice from Your Justice, love from Your Love, holiness from Your Holiness! (cf. OCCC X, 483).

Contemplating this great, eternal and incomprehensible God, Pallotti has no words, feeling himself to be nothing and sin, infinitely in need of grace, but at the same time, he feels himself to be so loved that he can come to say with the psalmist: the abyss of nothingness attracts the abyss of everything (Ps 42:8). It is not by chance that our Founder has called us to meditate every day on 1 Co 13:1-13, where we find the essence of our love, that is, love for God and neighbour.

We can understand that he, with this meditation, wanted us also to have the experience of being able to recognise the love of God the Father towards us through the teachings of Jesus Christ, his Son. This recognition drives us to make the love of God visible in our apostolic mission among the poor and the most needy.

We beg Mary, Mother of Divine Love, to help us in the process of identifying with her Son Jesus, in order to concretely live out the words spoken to the servants at the wedding feast of Cana: “*Do whatever he tells you*” (Jn 2:5).

### **For reflection:**

1. In what situations of your life are you conscious of having experienced the merciful love of God?
2. How can you and the other members of the UAC live the teachings of Jesus in this globalized world?
3. How does your group value the Word of God in your formation process?
4. Compose your own psalm of praise to God for his infinite love and mercy and share it with your group.

### **Prayer:**

My Jesus, my most beloved brother, Master of Eternal Life, wonder worker, when I remember all that you taught, did and suffered for us during the years of your heavenly preaching. Looking at my ingratitude, I do not lose faith. Through your infinite mercy, through Your infinite merits, through the merits and intercession of Mary and all the angels and saints, I firmly believe that You will grant me perfect sorrow for all my sins and effective and lasting grace to practice all Your heavenly doctrines. In this way I will always live in the belief and trust that You will continually work new wonders of eternal life in my soul, so that I will benefit from Your suffering by loving and enduring suffering and grief as You wish me to do in order to be completely like You.