



Apostles for Today

Reflection and Prayer - April 2012

God the Infinite Love

Meditation 31 (OCCC XIII, pp. 166-171)

“The Infinite Love and Mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist”.

Opening Prayer

Eucharistic Jesus, You deigned to stay with us forever by instituting the Holy Eucharist as a sacrament for the nourishment of our souls. Under the Eucharistic appearances of bread and wine You gave yourself wholly – Body, Soul, Divinity. Enable us to approach your throne of grace and mercy always to be enriched with your infinite treasures, to heal the wounds of our souls, to communicate your infinite merits, to be clothed in your most perfect virtues. Amen.

The last meditation of ‘God the Infinite Love’ gives us a glimpse of our Holy Founder St. Vincent Pallotti’s personal experience of Jesus’ infinite love and mercy in the Holy Eucharist.

The Christian faith is that Holy Eucharist is Jesus Himself. It is the Body of Christ – not just soul or divinity but his entire self with his real Body.

For Pallotti, the Eucharist was the Beloved, the Bridegroom of the soul who communicates himself to us –“we

should always remember the infinite mercy and the Love of Christ who in order to continue his most holy life in us, deigned to remain among us in the most Holy Eucharist, thereby communicating himself to us as food and nourishment of our souls.”

In the Eucharist Jesus gives himself entirely to us. It is not merely a communication of something partial, some graces or blessings. It is a total giving of Self – body, blood, soul and divinity, everything. It is indeed a self-gift of God – a sacrament of love – the supreme expression of love. Hence Pallotti demands that we return love for love. “Jesus makes us an infinite gift in the most Blessed Sacrament. The ways in which we can make a return of this gift are: frequent visits to him in churches, frequent reception of him in holy communion and offering him adoration and obedience.” From Pallotti’s most committed apostolic life, we also know that the overflowing love received in the Eucharist was for him the source of his untiring charity towards those in need whom he met: "The love of Christ impels us..."; "I would like to be food for the hungry..." Jesus in the Eucharist wants to open our hearts and help us to become with Him missionaries of the Love of God in word and deed.

According to Pallotti we really catch hold of Jesus in the Eucharist and take possession of him – “I wish to think with what fervour the Eucharistic Jesus, the sweetest Bridegroom, would be visited if he were to be found in only one church of the world. With what fervour we would receive him if we could receive him only once in life and that too from the hands of the supreme Pontiff after long pilgrimages and penances?”

Pallotti tells us, “There are 3 principal things in Holy Communion: the memory of the passion of Jesus Christ, an abundance of grace and the pledge of eternal life. These ideas of Pallotti are re-affirmed by the Church: Eucharist is a sacrament

of love, a sign of unity and a bond of charity, a banquet in which Christ is received, the memory of his passion is recalled, the mind is filled with grace and the pledge of future glory given to us.

Pallotti's devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was something unique – “ he passed hours in adoration both by night and day...” and during the celebration of the Mass so great was the fire of his love and fervour, as explained by his close companions – that “at the elevation he remained for a while immovable, with arms uplifted holding in his hands the celestial Bread” and also that “he was raised with his body about one foot from the ground.”

Despite all of these mystical experiences, St. Vincent makes the protestation “ I confess now... that I have not profited from the most Holy Eucharist.” He could never be satisfied with acts of homage and veneration given to the Eucharist, never content in loving Jesus, wishing to love him in a measure without measure.

Through the Eucharist Jesus gives himself entirely, his life, his strength, his divinity and everything, enabling us to live a holy life – strengthening us with his own strength; “under the Eucharistic appearances of bread and wine, he gave us himself wholly, soul, body, divinity... He has come back on our altars as priest and victim .. Jesus with such incomprehensible love and mercy not only wants to remain with us forever on the altar on a throne of grace and mercy.” There is nothing that we cannot obtain from him – ‘an incomprehensible excess of love’.

For Pallotti, Eucharist was a mystical food that created saints and mystics, that effected the celestial union between the finite human soul and the Infinite God – that effects the transformation of the soul into Christ - “ in the Eucharist he has

come to me in person to visit me and to nourish my soul, with his entire self, in order to transform me wholly into himself and to be a pledge of paradise for my soul.”

Eucharist, far from being a mere food, is God, containing in himself everything, the author of everything, the source of every grace and the goal of all beings – “the Saviour, the Priest, Victim, Food and nourishment of the soul... author and distributor of grace.” Eucharist is in fact Jesus himself, our all in all; as the Council puts it, “It is the entire wealth of the Church.”

Questions for personal reflection

1. Do I have a faith- filled understanding of the mystery of Eucharist?
2. Do I experience the total Christ when participating in Eucharist?
3. Does the Eucharistic celebration help me to recall the passion of Jesus, open me to experience the abundance of his graces?

Closing Prayer

O Love, Infinite Love, Incomprehensible Love, Unacknowledged Love, Outraged Love, O Love, convert me into love now and for all eternity. Amen