



UAC NEWSLETTER

April 2012



Dear brothers and sisters in the Union,

we are very happy to present to you in this newsletter a synthesis of the life of Elisabetta Cozzoli, adapted principally from the book, *San Vincenzo Pallotti, profeta della spiritualità di comunione (Saint Vincent Pallotti, prophet of the spirituality of communion)*, edited by Fr. Franco Todisco SAC, and the biographical note in the *Lettere di San Vincenzo Pallotti (the Letters of Saint Vincent Pallotti)* edited by D. Bruno Bayer SAC, along with other news from the UAC.

1. EARLY COLLABORATORS OF SAINT VINCENT:

Elisabetta Cozzoli (1793-1873), was the first Superior of the Pia Casa di Carità and, for a brief period, was also the Superior of the "Sacred Heart" Retreat on the Salita di S. Onofrio, no. 49. Daughter of Michele Cozzoli and Raffaella Allegretta, Elisabetta was born in Molfetta (Bari) and in 1810 married Vincenzo Ribera (1768-1828) with whom she had eight children. The eldest, Emmanuele Ribera (1811-74), became a Redemptorist and is a Venerable Servant of God. Having come to Rome in 1838, Elisabetta met Fr. Vincent Pallotti. That same year the Saint opened the Pia Casa di Carità: he began to choose, among the cooperators, those who were disposed to and capable of acquiring 'the fullness of the spirit of Jesus Christ' (OCCC II, 12), so that they might become the cornerstones of the new institute. Among them Elisabetta Cozzoli stood out ... who, among her distinguishing qualities, had that of being the mature mother of a family. The Monday after Pentecost, June 4th, 1838, the Founder himself and his *daughters of charity* took possession of the Fuccioli College with great solemnity, in the style of the time. A procession of twenty seven young women left from the Salvati house, with Saint Vincent at its head carrying a large cross and with several priests of the Union of Catholic Apostolate and Giacomo Salvati and his family at the rear. They prayed the Rosary and sang litanies. At the parish church... they all received a blessing with the Blessed Sacrament and then, accompanied by the parish priest... entered via Sant'Agata, where the founder, in an impressive ceremony, formally entrusted all of the girls... to Mrs. Elisabetta Cozzoli who, already dressed in the holy habit of the Third Order of Saint Francis, welcomed them with the love and tenderness of a mother. She was appointed the first Superior of the Pia Casa. In the chapel they sang the hymn to the Holy Spirit, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, and then the *Te Deum*; Fr. Vincent preached a sermon and the house was blessed. Thus was born the *Pia Casa di Carità* or *Conservatory* of Borgo Sant'Agata, under the protection of the Queen of Apostles and Saints Francis of Assisi and Stanislas Kostka. Giacomo Salvati was appointed its procurator, forming part of the committee of five men to whom Fr. Vincent entrusted all financial aspects. The house was supported economically by a group of benefactors, at Fr. Vincent's behest, but lived in the midst of ever present financial difficulties.

After the departure of Fr. Vincent for a time of recuperation at the hermitage of Camaldoli in Frascati in the summer-autumn of 1839, the house immediately encountered difficulties. Fr. Melia recounted what happened. The superior didn't want to accept any more girls because the overcrowding would have made the already-suffocating summer heat unbearable. Seeing the misery of so many girls touched Salvati's heart and he insisted that they be welcomed; God would already have planned to move the hearts of benefactors, and that of Salvati himself to knock on their doors. The superior, however, was awaiting Fr. Vincent's response. Fr. Vincent asked Dr. Azzocchi to assess whether the sanitary conditions of the house would permit new admissions or not. Once the doctor replied affirmatively, he asked him to explain to the superior that she, with the written permission of Monsignor de Ligne, could admit or refuse other young girls. (In February 1839 Monsignor Giuseppe de Ligne began to contribute to the maintenance of the house and... was elected Representative in its Council of the women who organised the collection of funds for the house.) He wrote to her, 'How I rejoice that in the hardship of which you speak to me you afterwards turned to God! Seek God in all things and you will always find Him. I always keep you immersed in the sacred chalice, and also keep you enclosed with all your needs, and those of the Community, in the Sacred Heart of Jesus... [W]e pray, we put everything in God, and we have faith that everything will come good,

because we have always seen that by means of adversity we discover the work of God' (Camaldoli, July 12th, 1839, OCL III, letter 559a, pp. 42-43). But Pallotti was very concerned for Elisabetta and wrote to Dr. Azzocchi: "Take care, if we lose the Superior", "we will undoubtedly see that she will not be easily replaced. Here we see the great appreciation that Fr. Vincent had for Elisabetta.

There was a further difficulty with accepting a girl when a benefactor couldn't be found to pay for her maintenance. Fr. Vincent sought to facilitate her acceptance from Camaldoli.

On December 9th, 1839, a second house, located on the Salita di S. Onofrio, n. 49, was acquired. Three days later, the superior Elisabetta Cozzoli set up house there with 23 girls and two teachers, Maria Ronca and Maria Bonatti. There Fr. Vincent was waiting for them and he consecrated this second Casa di Carità to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the young saint Stanislas Kostka.

Elisabetta remained only a short time at Sant'Onofrio, since towards the end of 1841 she resigned her office, citing reasons of health, and returned to Molfetta with her son Emanuele, the Redemptorist. There she died on September 3rd, 1873.

2. New Members of the Union in Brazil:

Santa Terezinha Parish, Codó, Maranhão: 12 people made their Act of Apostolic Commitment to become members of the Union here in 2011, one on February 4th, two each on June 21st and 23rd respectively, and seven on June 22nd.

Sao Martinho parish, Campo Grande: On November 13th, 2011, two people made their Act of Apostolic Commitment to become members of the Union here.

Guapimirim, Rio de Janeiro: On April 21st, 2012, the Birthday of Saint Vincent, at the Annual Gathering of the UAC in Brazil, the President of the Brazilian NCC, Dario Ivatiuk Junior, received the Act of Apostolic Commitment made by 5 people, during a Eucharist celebrated by Fr. Jacob Nampudakam SAC, Rector General of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate and Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Union.

3. Mato Grosso do Sul: From 19 to January 29 EVIPAL I (the first Pallottine Shared Experience) took place at the St. Vincent Pallotti House of Formation. The meeting, in addition to formation, aimed to help the participants to better know and love the Pallottine charism through a lived experience of it. EVIPAL I was attended by 40 youth and adult participants from all of the Pallottine parishes of Mato Grosso do Sul as well as from Sao Luiz Gonzaga Parish of Porto Velho, Rondonia. The meeting was very helpful in every way, from the perspectives of formation, spirituality, shared living and the exchange of experiences.

4. Saint Vincent Pallotti district, City of Codó, State of Maranhão, Brazil: A large district in the city of Codó, Maranhão, Brazil, was given the name 'St. Vincent Pallotti' after Fr. Jak Wasensteiner SAC organised a lorry-load of people to go to the city council meeting for the vote. The decree was published on December 22, 2011.

5. Upcoming 'Pallottine Family Celebrates' Jubilee Year Events in Rome:

Retreat: A Jubilee Year retreat, common to the various components of the Union and led by a diocesan priest, Fr. Sergio Simonetti, is taking place in the St. Vincent Pallotti Spirituality Centre, Grottaferrata from April 28th – May 1st with the theme "Saints, Saints soon, great Saints" (Saint Vincent Pallotti).

Congress on 'Holiness': The International Study Congress organised for the Jubilee under the auspices of the Pallotti Institute, Rome, will take place from May 15th – 19th with the expected participation of around 75 people from the different components of the Pallottine family from various parts of the world.

6. Annual Meeting of the General Coordination Council of the Union: The first meeting of the newly-elected General Coordination Council of the Union will take place in Rome from May 24th-28th. The members of the Council will elect from among their number the President and Vice-President of the Union, as well as discussing and making decisions on important matters pertaining to the life and apostolate of the Union as a whole, including the ongoing implementation of decisions taken and proposals adopted at the General Assembly of the Union in January. We ask you to keep this meeting very specially in your prayers, that it may be conducted wholly under the inspiration of the Spirit of God and bear fruit by helping to inspire new life and dynamism in the entire Pallottine family in this Jubilee year during which all are called to a renewed holiness and a more dynamic, courageous, faith-filled commitment to working together to build up Christ's Kingdom in the Church and the world.