



# UAC NEWSLETTER

June 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 **Antonia Bronzini**, adapted by Fr. Jan Kupka SAC principally from the books *San Vincenzo Pallotti, profeta della spiritualità di comunione*, edited by Fr. Franco Todisco SAC and *La Congregazione delle Suore dell'Apostolato Cattolico* by Sr. Maria Battistina Nori CSAC, along with other news from the UAC.

## **1. EARLY COLLABORATORS OF SAINT VINCENT:**

Antonia Bronzini was a lay woman who collaborated with Saint Vincent Pallotti in the apostolic and charitable activities promoted by the Union of Catholic Apostolate. Her name is inserted into Pallottine history thanks to Pallotti himself who mentions Antonia in his text on the origin and history of the Pia Casa di Carità instituted in Rome in 1838 (cf. OCCC VI, pp. 246-431: Regulations of the Pia Casa di Carità of Rome, I). Pallotti's spelling is not entirely clear in the original text. It could be read as either Antonia Branzini or Brandini (cf. OCCC VI, p. 249). However, it involves, as Ansgar Faller SAC explains, one of the not infrequent Pallottine oversights. Pallotti, in a familiar manner, called her Signora Antonia.

Antonia Geltrude Barbara Bronzini was born in Rome on October 22nd 1764. She was baptised on October 24<sup>th</sup> in the church of san Luigi dei Francesi. Her father, Giovanni Bronzini, was a descendent of a family which immigrated to Rome from the diocese of Novara. From 1764-1768 he managed a shop which sold barley products near san Luigi dei Francesi. When his first wife died, he married Domenica Laurenti. They had three children: Giuseppe who died aged six years, M. Teresa who died aged four months, and Antonia.

On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1782, Antonia married the surgeon Filippo Demma. At his side, she had a better life. The death of her husband however changed her living conditions. By 1790 she had already moved to her sister Maria's house (daughter of Giovanni Bronzini's first marriage). Antonia tried to make a living as a maid and housekeeper in various Roman households. Often moving house because of work, she was mentioned as resident in 31 Vicolo dei Cartari and 48 Vicolo del Governo Vecchio on the border of the parish of St. Stefano in Piscinula, near 130 via del Pellegrino where Vincent Pallotti lived. The widow Bronzini lived therefore, for about 15 years, very close to Pallotti's house. The young Vincent Pallotti knew her as Signora Antonia (cf. biographical information on Antonia Bronzini, archive of the Pallotti Institute: M/0776-4 e M/0776-5)

Antonia Bronzini is mentioned in 1805 as a collaborator in a work for the protection of young females in 7 Piazza di St. Egidio in Trastevere. In 1815, Bronzini was registered as a "teacher" and in subsequent years housed several girls in her home. The historical documentation of the Vicariate of Rome confirms that Signora Antonia Bronzini was the director of a new house of education at 159 via Quattro Fontane. In his report, the visitor of the Vicariate wrote that the place was cramped, composed of four rooms for the orphans, a bigger one for the school and, on the ground floor, two rooms used as the dining room and kitchen. This home of education was promoted and maintained by wealthy and devout people with the goal of receiving and educating orphans under 7 years of age for free (cf. archive of the Pallotti Institute - M/0776-7). In this context we can understand what Pallotti says in his text on the origin of the Pia Casa di Carità. He wrote that the devout woman Signora Antonia Bronzini dedicated herself with great passion to the poor girls who were exposed to many dangers, "for many years first in one place, then in the Home indicated (of the Greek Melchites) she had also set up a house of education" (OCCC VI, p. 250). From this it is clear that Pallotti knew the apostolate carried out by Signora Antonia and, perhaps, helped her in maintaining the house of education.

We shouldn't be too surprised then that, when difficulties emerged with the home for girls which the pious Society of the Catholic Apostolate had rented at the church of S. Maria Maggiore (the house of refuge of the Holy Family in 9 via dell'Alberata), Pallotti turned to Signora Antonia. Pallotti wrote: "After this, the Pious Society not only did not abandon this holy enterprise, but gathered other poor girls who,

also in need of asylum (...), were temporarily placed in the locale of the home of the Greek Melchites in the Stradone di S. Giovanni (...). Meanwhile, the pious Society gave Signora Antonia thirty *paoli* (silver coins) monthly per student for their expenses" (OCC VI, pp. 249-250).

Signora Antonia Bronzini died on May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1838. Pallotti speaks of the "truly edifying death" of the devout woman who passed from this life to the other one to receive the reward of her works of charity. Antonia died poor, with many debts. She devoted all of her belongings to the poor abandoned girls. Her active charity towards poor and abandoned girls was preserved in the foundation of the Pia Casa di Carità of Rome, in 8 via Sant'Agata dei Goti. The thought of Pallotti in this regard is very precise. He wrote: "that small community having been dissolved, the pupils of the pious Society along with some others who belonged to the House of Education of the deceased Signora Antonia Bronzini were temporarily moved into a House in the Monti district, in the Vicolo (lane) called il Boschetto (the Grove) under the auspices of a charitable association of the pious Society (OCC VI, p. 250) and subsequently, as we know from Pallottine history, were transferred to the Pia Casa di Carità on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1838.

## **2. New Members of the Union:**

**Germany:** the following UAC communities have received new members up to now this year - **Unio-Kreis Hochaltingen:** five people (January 21<sup>st</sup>); **Apstolatskreis Hofstetten:** 2 people (January 22<sup>nd</sup>); **Movimento Pallotti Berlin:** 2 people (February 19<sup>th</sup> and May 26<sup>th</sup> respectively).

**Goa, India:** Four people made their Act of Apostolic Commitment on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

**3. Germany:** The German UAC National Assembly took place in Hofstetten from June 15-17, during which time Alois Wittmann was elected President, Sr. Gertrud Meiser SAC Bursar and Ursula Knoch as fourth member of the NCC presidency, and Fr. Christoph Hammer SAC re-elected Vice President, respectively. Sr. Adelheid Scheloske SAC, the outgoing NCC President, was appointed Secretary.

**4. Catholic Charismatic Youth Rally and Evangelisation, Belize:** As one effort to reach out to spread faith and love to those not involved in the Church, UAC members formed the Praise Team for a Catholic Charismatic Youth Rally on Saturday April 28<sup>th</sup>. About six hundred young people from all over the country gathered to praise and worship, to listen to talks, to attend some of the eight different workshops, finishing with a Healing Mass led by guest speaker, Fr. Niby Itteera, a Carmelite from the United States. From April 30<sup>th</sup> to May 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Praise Team and Fr. Niby engaged in a period of extended evangelisation with Healing Masses each day respectively on the island of San Pedro, in a town in western Belize on the Guatemalan border and in Ladyville, near Belize City. There was a great sense of the presence and action of the God's Spirit in all the ministry which took place.

**5. Jubilee Year Opening, relics of St. Vincent Pallotti, Brazil:** On May 25, the Opening Mass of the Jubilee Year was celebrated at Rainha dos Apóstolos Parish, São Paulo, during which a group from Santa Maria received the reliquary containing a stole belonging to St. Vincent and a relic of his body which will be on pilgrimage to different UAC communities in Brazil throughout this year of celebration.

**6. An update from Fr. Joji Babu Tuneti SAC:** 'I would sincerely like to say a Big Thanks to all the members of the Union of Catholic Apostolate. Thank you! My bone marrow transplant has been postponed until June 28th. I will be admitted to hospital on the 21<sup>st</sup>, have chemo once more from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup>, radiation therapy from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> and the transplant on the 28<sup>th</sup>. As you know this is very risky process. I request you all to pray for me for courage to accept it and to obey the will of God'.

**The International Eucharistic Congress, Dublin:** held in Dublin for the first time in 80 years, took place from June the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> and was a wonderful event for all who attended. The UAC had an information stand for the duration of the Congress and made every effort to have a lay person, a seminarian and a priest present at all times, as a concrete living witness to our charism. The stand was visited by several hundred people each day from all over the world. A striking feature was the large number of people who came over to say thanks or to offer their best wishes to the Pallottines due to some past connection with a Pallottine priest in some part of the world. This showed the importance of simply sowing seeds of Pallottine life wherever we are, as we never know when and where they will bear fruit in the future. There was also huge interest both in St. Vincent Pallotti and in the Union from the Irish people who stopped and engaged. It was a most uplifting experience for all who worked on the stand and we go forth with renewed vigour for the mission of the Union in the coming months and for the year of faith in particular.