



Apostles for Today

Reflection and Prayer - September 2012

SAINT VINCENT PALLOTTI: ACT IMMEDIATELY – TODAY!

(Reflection on the Homily of Paul VI during his visit to Frascati to venerate the body of Saint Vincent Pallotti which was exposed in the Cathedral, September 1st 1963)

“[St. Vincent] made it possible for all to make a positive contribution of action and of Christian witness. Come with your understanding of the social needs which surround us, and with your genius for discovering new ways in which the Message of Christ can be made known. It is time to act, we must act today, today, because this is the law of the Christian conscience. When someone feels a duty, they don’t say: I will do it tomorrow. It is necessary to act immediately. This imperative to act today and immediately comes from the needs, which are truly great precisely for those who know how to see them. You don’t say to someone who is hungry: come tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. Christian aid must be given immediately to all these movements surrounding us which could be fatal for the life and history of our country, and which have an enormous need of people who will become apostles for them, who will free them from the errors which have brought them to this state and which still seduce them; an apostle who knows how to say to the good and generous hearted among our people: no, not this way, but the way of Christ. It is necessary to work today because tomorrow may be too late. The times are serious and, without being solemn, they may prove to be decisive. Let us take care not to become found lazy and slow, wayward children of the Gospel and of the Church. Let all seek to be faithful in bringing to the Church the effective contribution of their loyalty, of their word, of their help, and above all of their action. This is, indeed, the formula which the Church wants to adopt today and which the Lord, through his Spirit, wants to suggest for the salvation of the world: act in such a way that Christ be our Master and our Saviour now and always.” (Paul VI).

St. Vincent Pallotti calls us to work, to be apostles from the very moment of our Baptism; when we are anointed we are transformed into priests, prophets and kings and we must act as such. "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Co 9:6). But it is today that evangelisation needs men and women who are committed, sure of themselves through the power of the Spirit of God. New methods need to be employed; and we must not, through laziness on our part, leave it to others to take up positions in our place. Throughout his earthly life, Jesus did not leave anyone unattended, he went out to people, from the joy of the wedding feast of Cana to mourning and weeping for the death of his friend, from curing the paralytic to multiplying the loaves in order to feed the crowd.

May this be our attitude, now and always, as followers of Christ, of the living Christ offered to us in the Eucharist every day. "We must do the work of him who sent me while it is daytime; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world" (Jn 9: 4-5)

*(In what follows, the **bold print** highlights ideas from St. Vincent Pallotti's prayer to Mary Queen of Apostles)*

The Word of God is clear and concise, the light of day, already here and now, enabling us to attain salvation by **fulfilling the commandment of love, for ourselves and for our neighbour.** **The vocation to follow Jesus Christ** is the principal mission of the Christian - following his footprints, imitating his work - the urgency to do this revealing our witness to be authentic, a true testimony of the one who sends us **to continue his mission of salvation.**

We should place our weakness in His hands and in those of our Mother, trusting that they will safeguard our journey, which is his, through **the renewal of our personal life and our**

apostolate.

Our life of prayer which supports and guides our actions will always be filled with the Spirit of God which has hovered over the waters since the beginning of creation. How can we not feel his presence when we are certain that it is Mary herself **who obtains the Spirit for us as She did for the apostles gathered with her in the Upper Room?**

Trusting in her maternal intercession we dare to offer , every day, our lives and every gift of nature and of grace, aiding those who have fallen, bringing mercy and comfort to those most in need, based on the premise that it is we ourselves who are needy, with our **joys and sorrows, health, sickness and even our trials...**

We want to perform the works of the Catholic Apostolate to revive faith, rekindle love and lead all people to the unity of faith in Christ. This is the time to think and act, not waiting for God to work a miracle, but helping others to understand his message by becoming, ourselves, signs of the radical and definitive salvation that Jesus brings into the world, signs of his presence in the world the manifestation of the Kingdom of God. The works of mercy and of solidarity carried out by the Church through her members, like relieving the hunger of the poor or the pain of the sick, must be done precisely and quickly because there are persons who suffer from hunger and infirmity and who awaken our compassion and move us to action, like Jesus in the multiplication of the loaves. The desire to share our faith in the one Lord, but also our bread, should prevail in us.

And when we have no other means of contributing towards this goal, **we will never cease to pray that there may be one flock under one shepherd,** without treating God like a talisman who magically solves our problems and not the Word to which we must listen and who performs signs that are beyond our

possibilities, while he continues to rely on us, to ask us, to involve us in the real problems that are to be solved in order that we actively participate with our generosity and trust.

In this way our personal and communal Christian life becomes a prophetic sign that multiplies good and speaks eloquently of the presence of Christ, Apostle of the Eternal Father, among us.

FOR REFLECTION IN PERSONAL OR COMMUNITY PRAYER:

Do you feel that the Word of God, science and technology expand your knowledge, according to your talents and opportunities, making you more human, in order to put yourself at the service of others?

Does our relationship with God correspond to our need to be in solidarity with others and to work for justice and peace among the human family, leading us to being in connection with all of Creation?

Do we always remember that we are sent for the salvation of others not by our own merit but by the Lord Jesus who died for all?

Am I cooperating with God who has chosen me in order that the divine promise may be fulfilled: "There shall be one flock and one shepherd" (Jn 10:16)?