



# UAC NEWSLETTER

January 2013



**Dear sisters and brothers in the Union,**

we are very happy to present to you in this newsletter a reflection on the Octave of the Epiphany, prepared by Fr. Jan Kupka SAC, along with a description of the closing celebrations of the Jubilee Year in Rome.

## **1. FAITH, LITURGY AND CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE OCTAVE OF THE EPIPHANY**

The 50th anniversary of the canonisation of Saint Vincent Pallotti is a very fitting time to remember the solemn Octave of the Epiphany instituted by him. Through this celebration he wanted to draw the attention of the people of Rome towards this profound mystery of the Christian faith and show forth the universality of the Catholic Church.

The solemn Octave of the Epiphany was a synthesis of Pallotti's thought, the soul of his apostolate, the living expression of the whole Union of Catholic Apostolate which was founded in 1835 with the specific apostolic goal of preserving and defending faith and spreading charity among Catholics, and propagating them both throughout the world, so that all might soon become one flock under one Shepherd. The Epiphany, in fact, is the manifestation of Jesus to the Gentiles, is the feast of the peoples who have entered the flock, the luminous attraction of the star which invites all people to prostrate themselves before Jesus to adore him.

The celebration of this Octave was for Saint Vincent a powerful and effective means to preserve faith, to develop the missionary consciousness of the Christian people and to call peoples who were disunited back to the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ. He also wished to demonstrate how necessary union between clergy and collaboration between clergy, religious and laity were, in order that the work of the apostolate in the Church bear more abundant fruit among the faithful.

The Roman people participated for nearly 135 years in the solemn Octave of the Epiphany in the form instituted by Saint Vincent Pallotti. Pallotti celebrated it for the first time in the church of Spirito Santo dei Napoletani. The attendance was so great that he had to look for another church in Rome. Therefore, in the succeeding years he organised the celebrations in the churches of S. Carlo al Corso and S. Silvestro in Capite. From 1841 to 1969 the Octave was always celebrated in the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle. It was precisely in this church, on January 13th 1903, that blessed John XXIII, then a student in Rome, participated in the closing of the Octave. In his diary he wrote: "Jesus shone in the Host at the feet of the artistic crib. How many thoughts crowded my mind (...). I thought about the vocation of the Gentiles, of the Christian missions spread throughout the world, of the truly catholic, that is, universal, Church (*The Journal of a Soul*, Italian edition, Cinisello Balsamo 2000, p. 196).

At times it is said that we need to break with the past and begin something new. History however is a mirror and a true treasure; it is the teacher of human life. In the mirror of the historical notices about the Octave instituted by Saint Vincent we find testimonies about the inestimable meaning and value of this Roman celebration.

In 1850, in a biographical outline of Vincent Pallotti, Salvatore Proja wrote that the dominant idea in his thought was that of promoting the reuniting of peoples. Pallotti wanted to achieve this goal through the institution of the solemn Octave of the Epiphany. The preaching in different languages, the celebrations in the various rites and the participation of the faithful from all walks of life expressed the unity and universality of the Church (cf. *Album*, n. 13 of Many 25<sup>th</sup> 1850, pp. 97-101). 75 years later, in its chronicle of Rome, the newspaper "Corriere Italia" wrote: "Yesterday, in the church of S. Andrea della Valle, began the Octave of the Epiphany, that solemn manifestation of the unity of faith. (...) During the eight days, solemn Masses are celebrated in the various Oriental rites, such as the Armenian, Chaldean, Syro-Antiochene, Greek-Slavic, Syro-Maronite, Greek-Ruthenian, Ethiopian, and Greek rites, as well as in the Latin rite. The solemn Masses in the Latin rite are celebrated by various religious orders. The homilies, as well as the usual two daily ones in Latin, are given in French, English, Polish, Irish, Spanish, Dutch and German. The colleges of various nationalities take turns in serving at the altar (...). In the solemn Octave of the Epiphany the memory of Ven. Vincent Pallotti is perpetuated. The Epiphany, which commemorates the call of the Gentiles to faith, responded greatly to the idea which Pallotti had in instituting the Society of the Catholic Apostolate. Pallotti was the first to give a completely new form to this solemnity, which goes right back to ancient times, expressing the concept of the unity and the universality of the Church" (*Corriere d'Italia*, January 8<sup>th</sup> 1924, p. 4).

The spirit of the Sacred Octave as instituted by Vincent Pallotti encourages us to live our faith in communion with the Church. The inclusion of celebrations in Oriental rites in the programme of the Epiphany made visible not only the beauty and richness of the Oriental liturgy, but was also a visible sign of the unity of the Church of the East and of the West, notwithstanding the differences in rites, languages and nationalities. With this bold proposal, Pallotti wanted to express appreciation for the traditions and the diversity of forms of life in the common profession

of the same faith, and create at the centre of Christianity the climate needed to experience and live out the unity of the Church. The Octave of the Epiphany in the form instituted by Saint Vincent was, therefore, and remains a goal of the universal Church of which the entire Pallottine Family is bearer.

This Octave promoted by Pallotti maintains its profound Christian meaning right up to today, because in it are interwoven faith, liturgy and the Christian life. The path of the Universal Church is in fact echoed in the Octave of the Epiphany. This celebration moves us to live our faith apostolically in union with our brothers and sisters throughout the world as a work of the immense love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

## 2. CELEBRATIONS FOR THE CLOSING OF THE JUBILEE YEAR IN ROME

The closing of the Jubilee Year for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Vincent Pallotti's canonization was celebrated in Rome with great gratitude and joy by the Pallottine family. The theme of the Jubilee year, "*Let the Holiness of God shine forth*", permeated all of the celebrations. Gabriella Acerbi (Quinta Dimensione Community), President of the Jubilee Year Organising Committee, welcomed the participants each day. On Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, the Triduum began in the crowded church of *Spirito Santo dei Napoletani*. Fr. Jacob Nampudakam SAC, Rector General and Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Union, expressed his gratitude to Fr. Francesco Bartoloni, Moderator General of the *Missionaries of the Precious Blood*, who presided at the Mass. In his homily, Fr. Francesco spoke about the affinity of the holy founders Gaspar del Bufalo and Vincent Pallotti in their missionary spirit and collaboration and about the fraternal bonds that exist between the members of the two foundations even today. At the end of the Mass, which was animated by the Pallottine Sisters, Don Natalino Zagotto, Rector of the church, honoured St. Vincent by recalling his *life and his suffering* in this very place, which he called the "*homeland*" of the worldwide Pallottine family.

On Sunday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, the day of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a huge crowd identified by white scarves bearing the image of St. Vincent, gathered under the colonnades at St. Peter's, seeking shelter from the rain. A Pallottine sister joyfully welcomed members of the Pallotti family and others who had travelled from the Umbrian village of San Giorgio di Cascia, from which St. Vincent's family originated. Subsequently, all of the members and friends of the Pallottine family who were present gathered in the Basilica to celebrate the Anniversary Mass. Card. Angelo Amato, *Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints*, presided, and was joyfully welcomed by Fr. Jacob. In his homily the Cardinal described Pallotti as a gift to the Church, quoting homilies of various Popes and the words of some contemporaries of St. Vincent in the process of canonization. *Today*, he concluded, *the founder calls the numerous Pallottine Family members to **revive faith and rekindle love** as joyful and enthusiastic disciples of Jesus in the world, following the Gospel message in a more radical way.* The UAC choir, through singing hymns in various languages, expressed something of the universal Union inspired by Pallotti.

That afternoon was dedicated to a "family meeting" in San Salvatore in Onda, consisting of a slide show, interviews with witnesses from the 1963 celebrations and a sharing of historical reminiscences, emotions, and spiritual experiences. The Pallotti family from San Giorgio and their parish priest were very much touched by this display. They donated a painting and performed a song about St. Vincent. In a concluding address to the packed church, the three General Superiors encouraged all to start anew with Christ, the Apostle of the Father, as Pallotti had done. Closing the celebration of the Jubilee Year in Rome, Fr. Jacob spoke about the many graces received during this year and in particular the seed sown in the new mission project in Peru, sponsored by the Immaculate Conception Province of the United States. He also announced that Tarcisio Card. Bertone had sent a Jubilee Message to the Pallottine Family on behalf of the Holy Father.

On Monday morning, January 21<sup>st</sup>, Fr. Gilberto Orsolin, Rector of the community at the Generalate house, celebrated Mass with the students, staff and Sisters of Mater Divini Amoris in SS. Salvatore in Onda. The Church was crowded once again in the evening for the Vigil Mass for the Feast. Students from the Pontifical Urbaniana University animated the Mass, while Fr. Taddeo Wojda, SAC, recently nominated Undersecretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, was the main celebrant. His homily spoke of how our world is giving God the cold shoulder while God is searching for us from the depths of his heart. He added that just as Pallotti succeeded in making people aware of God's loving presence, so can we, if we strive to become saints today. As is traditional, a seminarian (of Chinese origin this year) from the University responded to Pallotti's letter of encouragement to the students of the Urbaniana which had remained unanswered when originally written.

On Tuesday January 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Pallottine family gathered once again, this time in *Sant'Andrea della Valle*, where the Octave of the Epiphany initiated by St. Vincent was celebrated for 128 years. In this place, where Pallotti made the *Appeal of May* to the entire people of God, Fr. Jacob invited the Pallottine Family to begin a journey of spiritual and apostolic renewal in the light of the spirituality and charism of St. Vincent. The choir - of children from the Pallottine Parish in Naples, the UAC choir and girls from the Pia Casa di Carità - contributed greatly to this closing Eucharistic celebration. Everyone present received a Pallotti candle, lit by the three General Superiors from the flame of the large Jubilee Candle, as a sign of the call to be light in the world. Together, lay, consecrated and ordained members of the UAC renewed their Apostolic Commitment. May St. Vincent Pallotti help his sons and daughters to be authentic apostles, giving faithful witness to God's holiness in the Church and world of today.