



UAC NEWSLETTER

February 2013



Dear sisters and brothers in the Union,

we are very happy to present to you in this newsletter a reflection on the Pia Casa di Carità in Rome, prepared by Sr. Lilia Capretti CSAC, along with other news from the UAC.

1. THE PIA CASA DI CARITA' IN ROME

The root source of every action and work of St. Vincent Pallotti was always the Love of Christ, in whose light are perceived the goodness of God and human needs.

Vincent lived in Rome of the 1800s; he knew its needs and its strengths and, as a priest apostle, addressed its problems, challenges and stresses, seeking to give possible responses. As early as 1835, together with his collaborators, he had given temporary accommodation with reliable families to lone girls; but as the numbers grew, he sought a suitable house at S. Maria Maggiore. With the cholera of 1837, the number of young girls who were without parents and in need grew and, in 1838, Vincent obtained part of the building of Mons. Antonio Fuccioli, in Rione Monti, having requested it from Pope Gregory XVI. The upgrading having been completed, Vincent took possession of it on June 5th, accompanying 37 girls in procession, and with an impressive ceremony introduced the girls whom he entrusted to the mistress Elisabetta Cozzoli and, after having blessed house, placed under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Stanislas Kostka. Vincent was appointed Rector of the work. Giacomo Salvati was the Procurator and the soul of the Pia Casa. A Deputation of 5 people, appointed for life, each with their own responsibilities, was established for the administration. The Pia Casa was also the cradle in which the Congregation of the Pallottine Sisters was born, which, with ups and downs, some of them painful, was confirmed and extended in various Italian and foreign communities. From the very beginning Vincent entrusted to the Sisters, then called 'mistresses', the task of providing for the girls and for their growth and instruction, but above all for their education, since Vincent saw in this foster care the future of that generation, of the Church and of society. And he wanted them to be good Christians and faithful citizens.

Vincent wanted the place where the children were accommodated to be called the "Pia Casa di Carità" and not Conservatory or Refuge, as had been the custom at the time. And it is clear that the new title must have been loaded with significance. In 1839, for health reasons, Vincent had to go to Camaldoli, above Frascati, and remain there about four months. Meanwhile, he wrote "The Rules for the Pia Casa. His absence was strongly felt especially by the Sisters and the girls. It was not always easy to be understood by the administrators who sometimes even disagreed with St. Vincent himself: But he saw everything in the light of the Paschal Mystery, and believed that the works of God had to bear "the sign of the cross". Vincent also had a school opened which had to receive pupils who lived outside the house and which was completely free. Unfortunately, St. Vincent died early and, notwithstanding the goodwill of everyone, problems and sufferings, but also graces, were not lacking.

In 1862 the administrative structure was modified with the passing of the jurisdiction from the Pallottine Priests and Brothers to the Cardinal Vicar (Vicariate of Rome). From this came many changes: Gioachino Carmignani, who can well be called the Cofounder of the Pia Casa, got recognition for the Pia Casa as a "Moral entity" with the Royal Decree of July 19th 1874. The Interior Ministry constituted the Pia Casa di Carità as an Entity of assistance and charity (IPAB). Among the various Monsignors of the Vicariate who alternated the Presidency of the Pia Casa, great merit is owed to Monsignor Valeriano Sebastiani who, for about twenty years, was a real man of Providence, especially in supporting the young Congregation of Sisters. After a number of years, Cardinal Luigi Traglia thought it good to pass the Presidency back to the Pallottine Priests and Brothers: the first to have the task of President was Fr. William Moehler, ex Superior General of the Society, who carried out this task until 1977. After him, Cardinal Ugo Poletti appointed Fr. Domenico Pistella, Provincial Superior of the Italian Province of the Pallottine Priests and Brothers, to succeed him.

Meanwhile, the law was changing in Italy and among the many novelties there was also the change of structure for children and young people accommodated in Homes. Instead of Colleges, new structures of

assistance were envisaged and then realised: family houses, group apartments, Community accommodation. We will not dwell on an explanation, but it is necessary to say that with the approval on the part of Lazio Regional Council, the Pia Casa was registered as a juridical person of the court of Rome, with new Statutes and a new Council. The first president of the new structure was Fr. Mario Proietti with the collaboration of five other councillors.

Today the Pia Casa still welcomes children in need, mostly coming from immigrant peoples; the number has decreased precisely because of the new structure. The assistance of children and their education is taken care of by the Sisters, who are completely at the disposition of the work, and it must be said that they do form the girls very well and help their families greatly.

2. CELEBRATIONS FOR THE CLOSING OF THE JUBILEE YEAR

Poland: On January 20, in communion with the whole UAC, the Pallottine family in Poland met in Gniezno to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the canonisation of our Founder. About 500 people from different communities gathered in the cathedral to start this great day by attending the Mass celebrated by the Primate, Archbishop Józef Kowalczyk, and other bishops connected with the Pallottine world, as well as numerous priests. After the Mass there was time for an agape at the Pallottine Missionary Sisters' house, where 350 people met to share joy and a meal. The celebration ended the Jubilee Year, during which the local Pallottine families had gathered each month at one of the thirteen "stations" around the country. Each celebration was accompanied by the Cross-Relic of St Vincent Pallotti and had a different motto, the last one being *Holiness for Apostolate*.

You can see the photos at <http://www.pallotyni.pl/galeria/2013-01/2013-01-20-GNIEZNO-MSZA-ZAKONCZENIE-OBCHODOW-50-LECIA-KANONIZACJI/index.html>

Brazil: The General Secretary of the Union, Fr. Rory Hanly SAC, was invited to Brazil by the NCC for the celebrations to mark the closing of the Jubilee Year there. There were a number of significant events. From January 18-21, there were celebrations in the Santa Maria area, with a Triduum of Masses in Pallottine parishes in Faxinal do Sotorno, Santa Maria and Vale Veneto. Saturday 19th was a day of reflection at the Schönstatt Marian Centre, Santa Maria, including an eye-witness account of the Canonisation of St. Vincent from Fr. Aguiuelo Burin SAC, a talk by Fr. Angelo Londero SAC on 'The lay faithful in the vision of St. Vincent Pallotti', a sharing by various members of the Pallottine family representing different vocations on the theme 'What does St. Vincent suggest to me?' and a message from Fr. Rory. The celebrations concluded with a final Mass in the Shrine of Nossa Senhora Medianeira de Todas as Graças in Santa Maria on the 21st which was televised live nationwide. The Jubilee Year officially closed at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida on Saturday January 26th. The concelebrated Eucharist, again televised live nationwide, was led by Bishop Julio Akamine, SAC, and attended by members of the Pallottine family who, along with other pilgrims, had travelled from far and wide to fill the very large basilica. This was followed by a Pallottine gathering in an auditorium of the Shrine, with an audiovisual presentation on the Canonisation of St. Vincent, a play on the life of St. Vincent by Pallottine youth from Rio de Janeiro, a message from Fr. Rory and a final blessing from Bishop Julio. During his time in Brazil, Fr. Rory also had the opportunity to visit various Pallottine groups, houses, seminaries, parishes and schools in Porto Alegre, Santa Maria, Londrina, Arapongas, Cambé, São Paulo, Niterói and Rio de Janeiro, attending a variety of celebrations, including the Silver Jubilee of Priestly Ordination of Bishop Julio. Many thanks to everyone for their unfailing kindness, generosity and welcome – it was a great privilege to experience firsthand the joy, hospitality, faith, enthusiasm and commitment of the Pallottine family in Brazil and the obvious love of so many people both young and old for St. Vincent and his charism. The visit was also tinged with deep sadness following the terrible news of the nightclub fire in Santa Maria on Sunday January 27th that killed at least 239 people. Let us continue to pray for all of those who lost their lives or who were seriously injured and for their families and friends.

3. We pray very specially:

- for Pope Benedict and for the upcoming conclave to elect a new Pope to guide the Church wisely and faithfully in these challenging times
- for the people of Santa Maria, Brazil, and all who have suffered tragedies in recent times
- for the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Syria and all who continue to experience the effects of warfare, violence, injustice and persecution