



Apostles for Today

Prayer and Reflection - October 2013

NEW EVANGELISATION IN THE FAMILY

I think that the best way to understand our theme for reflection is by immersing ourselves in the Holy Family of Nazareth, the Family of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the eyes of Mary.

This is precisely what St. Vincent Pallotti did in daily life, not separating himself even for an instant from the image of the Mother of Divine Love and leaving us the icon of the Queen of Apostles as a privileged 'place' of encounter for the whole Union, for our entire Family.

The month of October is connected directly with October 7th 1571, when Pope Pius V instituted the commemoration of Our Lady of the Rosary in thanksgiving after the victory of the Christian army against the Turkish one in the battle of Lepanto. In fact, from that event, October became the month of the Rosary.

It is a month in which thousands of families throughout the world unite every day in order to reflect on the life of Jesus, in communion with Mary. The return to the past, to the prayer of our parents and grandparents, to the Church of our origins, the renewing of what by now seems archaic and useless: this is "New Evangelisation", in which what is "old" becomes "new".

Lk 1:26-38:

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, most highly favoured one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."

And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her".

Let us ask ourselves, therefore, in a **“new”** way, with Mary, what this greeting might mean.

In the prayer of the Rosary all become participants.

With Saint Vincent, it could be said: *“The Father who created me is here – the Son who redeemed me is here – the Holy Spirit who sanctified me is here. I am in the company of the three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity – Oh what company!”* (OCCC XI p. 236).

Oh what company... and more again, with Mary, St. Joseph and the Angels... at least Archangel Gabriele.

To meditate on the mysteries of the Rosary is to enter with Mary into the life of Jesus. It could be said that the Rosary is the Gospel of Mary; it is the life of Jesus through the eyes of Mary.

“The Rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at heart a Christocentric prayer.”
(*Rosarium Virginis Mariae n. 1, Blessed John Paul II*)

We begin our reflection on the Joyful Mysteries with that of the Annunciation. We find this first mystery again in all of the other mysteries of the Rosary. In every mystery, in fact, we repeat the words of the Angel Gabriel “Hail Mary...” The feast of the Annunciation (on March 25th according to the tradition) is the day in which Christ, the “New Adam”, was conceived in the most holy womb of Mary, who thereby became the “New Eve”.

“God moves however in the dimension of time as we move in the dimension of space” – says a philosopher – and all of this is already accomplished... or better: is continuously being accomplished. The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a mystery on which in a marvellous way we meditate in every part of the Rosary in reciting the Hail Mary... it is a constant whisper of the Angel Gabriel which makes itself heard throughout the prayer.

Mary has experienced so many difficult moments: from the Annunciation itself, through the scourging and death of her Son to his crowning in heaven. And this would not have been possible without the constant presence of the voice of the Angel Gabriel who whispered to her in every moment: “Hail Mary... full of grace... the Lord is with you... blessed is the fruit of your womb... JESUS”. It was a continuous voice which Mary heard within herself, the voice which helped her to live her life.

Does not this angel whisper it to us too in every moment... so that we have the necessary strength in life like Mary?

In every "Hail Mary" in the life of my family, I hear this voice confirmed by the victory of Mary.

In our parish community, in the "Caritas" Centre of Divine Mercy, we meet with the sick every Wednesday at 18.30 to pray the four parts of the Rosary before the Blessed Sacrament. The prayer concludes with the common thanksgiving of the Eucharistic Celebration.

St. Vincent also dedicated Wednesdays and Saturdays to particular devotion to the Madonna through various forms of penitence.

Our communal Wednesday Rosary allows each one of us to be embraced in each mystery. It is a time dedicated to Jesus and to Mary in a special way, a time in which I find that I learn many things from her. Even the place of prayer is sanctified in a particular way, in that being among many suffering people who are praying I feel as if I am hidden in the wounds of Jesus.

In the mysteries on which we meditate in the Rosary, we encounter Mary who fixes her gaze on Jesus attentively and tenderly, we see St. Joseph whose task will be to help the Saviour of the world to grow.

As a father, in my daily life I learn from St. Joseph how to educate my children so that they may become heirs of God despite not myself being their God.

In the words "Hail Mary, full of grace" which we speak 200 times during the Rosary a continuous consolation of God for Mary and for each one of us is heard.

Through his angel, God whispers unceasingly to Mary during her life and to each one of us through all of the mysteries of our lives (beginning with the joyful mysteries, through the luminous, sorrowful in order to arrive at the glorious ones), that "**you are full of grace**", that He "**is with you**", that you are "**blessed**" according to the promise and finally, that Jesus is blessed and that we are called to give birth to him every day. This is our call from the beginning.

Aniol Ślązak, a poet and mystic, wrote beautiful and profound words: *"It is necessary that I become Mary and that God be born in me"*.

It is a task for life for each one of us. Then He will glorify himself in us.
"Not touch but God!"

Not the heart, but God!” (OOCC X 131)

St. Vincent Pallotti had a particular bond and intimacy with Mary. Every day he recited the Rosary, he always recited the prayer of the Angelus kneeling (wherever he found himself). When speaking the name of Mary he used to remove his hat as a sign of respect and great love, and every morning he asked her blessing.

Looking today at the life of St. Vincent, I am certain that the “fruit of his womb” is Jesus, God the Infinite Love.

The Rosary is a continuous repetition, many times, of the same prayer, just as St. Vincent walked via Giulia countless times in his life (from the hospital to the prison and vice versa), and also like the repetition of many tasks in our lives.

For me the Rosary is also daily breakfast with my family, sending my children to school, going to work and returning home, the Eucharistic celebration and everything, like for St. Vincent, multiplied.

“Each of us has our own Rosary of life” – says my friend Darek. At the moment, I find myself around the middle of the mysteries of **Light**. Still before me are the **Sorrowful** and **Glorious** mysteries.

Each of us has our own Rosary in life and it would be good to know how to find ourselves in it.

I have peace in my heart because every day the angel whispers to each one of us, to my wife, to our children, the words once given to Mary:

“Hail, full of grace; the Lord is with you...” (Lk 1:28)

Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you...

*Marek Kalka
Poland*