



# *Apostles for Today*

*Prayer and Reflection - May 2014*

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## **Mary, Star of the New Evangelization**

Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, begins with the call to share this “joy of the Gospel” and ultimately the joy of knowing Jesus Christ. He ends the exhortation with the place that Mary has as Star of the New Evangelization and as the Mother of the Church which evangelizes. Like Vincent Pallotti, the Pope sees Mary as central to the spirit and understanding of the new evangelization. As members of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, we recognize the same call given to us by God, Infinite Love, through the charism bestowed on our Founder .

At the time of St. Vincent Pallotti, the challenges in the area of faith matched our own. Although there was no talk of a global society or a technological age, the widespread lack of faith was a fact both in the internal life of the Church and in the societal attitude. It went far beyond the boundaries of the Vatican and of Rome. So like us, Pallotti had to confront what existed then and there. The inspiration that God gave him included a response to the times : real people and real situations. Similar to the period of Pallotti’s call, the concrete world around us is crying out to us for a witness to the presence of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, who not only walks among us, but who walks with us in life’s journey. The task in 2014 is not different from the one that Founder faced in the 1800’s:

- To give new life to faith
- To ignite a new spark to love

-- To launch a new thrust to unity in Christ Jesus

Vincent envisions all of this happening with the presence of Mary in the Church, the Body of Christ, and therefore, within in our hearts as members of that Body. It is the Mary who is mother to Jesus and who now “mothers us” according to the image of her Son. It is the same Mary of *Evangelii Gaudium* (no. 287) who is the woman of faith and who lives and advances in faith. She is the one who with her Son walks at our side, shares our struggles and constantly surrounds us with God’s love (cf. EG no. 286).

With the challenge before us to proclaim Jesus to the world , Mary continues to be the guiding light that points to the Holy Spirit on a journey of faith towards a destiny of service and fruitfulness (EG 287).

Vincent presents that same light to us in the Marian icon of Nazareth as the place of the preparation of Jesus for his mission where both she and Joseph help lay the solid foundation to acquire the “true value of things” [Cf. *OOCC VII*, p. 112]. We live with Jesus of Nazareth in humility and in obedience to the Heavenly Father in this experience of the Holy Family – in submission to the Virgin Mother Mary and to St. Joseph his foster father [*OOCC XIII*, p. 129]. We seek a relationship with other apostles as members of the same Pallottine family – a family on an apostolic mission.

With the reality of a global society that is has lost a sense of God, Mary, Queen of Apostles invites us once again to receive the Holy Spirit as on the day of Pentecost and Pallotti invites us to be with her and with the Spirit in the same Cenacle of Jerusalem – a place of divine power -- right where we are.

“Wherever I shall be, I intend to imagine myself to be

together with all creatures in the Cenacle in Jerusalem where the apostles received the Holy spirit. I shall remind myself to renew this desire often. As the apostles were with Mary, so will I be in spirit with my beloved Mother and Jesus. As they are my special intercessors, I am confident that they will help me and all other creatures to receive the abundance of the Holy Spirit.  
[OOCC X, p. 86]

So Mary, Star of the New Evangelization, leads us as a Pallottine family to the following:

- To say “Yes” in a Cenacle atmosphere to proclaiming Jesus to our world
- To be present in the Cenacle of today’s Jerusalem so as to receive power
- To join Mary at the Crucifixion within today’s society for the salvation of the world

Finally, in our brief reflection, we come together with both Pope Francis and our Founder to take on Pallotti’s inspiration – with the help of Mary, Queen of Apostles, -- to collaborate with every one for the greater glory of God and in every work like an evangelical trumpet calling all, inviting all, reawakening the zeal and charity of all [...], so that in proportion to the various needs of the Church of Jesus Christ in all times, present and future, all may cooperate constantly and effectively with every greater zeal [...] with all those evangelical undertakings of Catholic Apostolate [OOCC I, pp. 4-5].

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## Questions for personal and community reflection:

- What are the similarities in the above reflection between Vincent Pallotti's image of Mary as apostle and that of Pope Francis' references to Mary as star of the new evangelization?
- How do these images help us renew our own vocation to be apostles in the call of the Church to New Evangelization?
- In what ways can we join St. Vincent's view of Mary, Queen of Apostles with that of Pope Francis' view of Mary as Star of the New Evangelization? What kind of action do they call for on our part to "give new life to faith, a new spark to love and a new thrust to unity" so that Jesus Christ may be known and loved by all?

## Prayer [cf. *Evangelii Gaudium* No. 288]:

Mary, Queen of Apostles  
And Star of the New Evangelization,  
Help us to bear radiant witness to communion,  
Service, ardent and generous faith,  
Justice and love of the poor,  
that the joy of the Gospel  
may reach to the ends of the earth,  
illuminating even the fringes of our world.

Mother of the living Gospel,  
Wellspring of happiness for God's little ones,  
Pray for us. Amen. Alleluia.