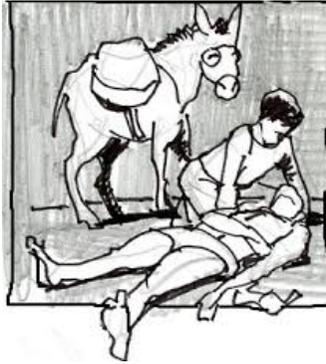




Apostles for Today

Prayer and Reflection - September 2016

Prayer and Mercy.



Misericordiae Vultus begins with a powerful connection between Jesus Christ as the face of the Father's mercy and our need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. We have, therefore, the link between mercy and prayer at the very beginning. When we study the writings of St. Vincent Pallotti, we are encouraged and challenged by the same combination: prayer and mercy.

For those who have studied the writings of Vincent Pallotti, his emphasis on the place of prayer in our lives and on the Infinite Mercy of God is well known: *The practice of holy prayer is most necessary ... A Christian without prayer is a person without reason.... A missionary without prayer is a soldier without a sword.*

The model of a life of prayer and of mercy is Jesus Christ the Lord who is the true image of the Father's mercy. Jesus reflects the mercy of God in his very person. And so Pallotti stands before God in prayer, asking for that grace to "be Jesus" on this earth. "*In all my works may it always be Jesus Christ who lives and acts in me. United with him, I offer you the correspondence of his most holy humanity.*"

This "living in Jesus" in the twofold presence of contemplative prayer and merciful works gives direction and shape to specific aspects of our Christian Life as stated in *Misericordiae Vultus*:

- ~ Relationship with God and with one another
- ~ A source of joy, serenity and peace
- ~ A meeting place and a bridge between the person and God, between me and the other
- ~ A more effective sign of God's action in our lives
- ~ A sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit, guiding the steps of believers to cooperate in the work of Christ

All of these elements are familiar to those involved in the Union of Catholic Apostolate. The life of Jesus – the very image of mercy – constitutes the "Rule" of the members of the Pallottine Family. The place of prayer is fundamental to our deepening relationship with God and each other, a relationship that, in fact, promotes peace and joy not only within ourselves but throughout the world.

Vincent Pallotti stressed the importance of confidence in our prayer, expecting God to respond generously to

our requests: *When I ask for some spiritual grace, I shall imagine with solicitude, confidence, humility and gratitude that I have immediately obtained it. I will perform internal acts as if I had really obtained such a grace. And I do not doubt I will obtain it.* (OOCC, X, pp. 112-113). How much more can we apply this to ourselves in the UAC when it comes to praying for God's grace to be a people of mercy and apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Vincent often refers to our being “a trophy of God’s mercy,” *through the institution of that holy Society which respects, venerates, favors and assists the Catholic Apostolate.* By virtue of our very foundation, we are called to be apostles of mercy and imitators of God, alert to the needs of God’s children.

We are further reminded by Pallotti that by the grace of God *our lives, words and deeds will be works of God’s mercy* and we can safely add that they will be the witness of Divine Love acting in and through us through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. In addition, we are challenged by our Founder to move forward with utter confidence during this Year of Mercy:

Let us make every effort to do great things for the glory of our Creator, and let us remember that it is divine grace that makes us holy, and that the same God can give us so great a grace that can make us become greater Saints than any other Saint that has already lived in the Church of Jesus Christ. And let us believe most firmly that God will give us such a grace.

Points for Reflection:

1. How can we as Union – as individuals, families, cenacles -- further develop our life of prayer that will lead us more deeply into the spiritual and corporal works of mercy?
2. In living out the charism given to us by God through St. Vincent Pallotti, what must we do to better *listen and respond to* the Word of God – our Rule of Life – to be genuine witnesses of mercy as imitators of our Merciful God?
3. What are the needs in our area that we can respond to as a group within the UAC – taking into account the importance of effective prayer and planning as a part of the entire process?
4. What can I do personally in my own prayer life and in my actions to embrace the challenge in this Year of Mercy to be merciful like the Father?

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**Matthew 6:7 “Blessed are
the merciful for they
shall receive mercy.”**