

says, blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.

So, this humility, this meekness, is not for nothing. There is a reward for such an attitude and actions. Pope Francis says, “...our deepest desires will be fulfilled ... for [we] will see God’s promises accomplished in [our] lives” (cf. GE, 74). Pallotti goes even further. He says that this Beatitude “means that the meek are blessed, because meekness of heart leads securely to the possession of Paradise” (Month of May for Laity, OOCC XIII, p. 563). Christ’s humiliations also led him to the resurrection and to Paradise. Thus, when we celebrate Christ’s resurrection this Easter, let us remember that he goes before us to show us both how to live and what reward awaits us.

St. Vincent’s Prayer for Humility

Lord, you resist the proud but are merciful to the humble. Give us true humility, after the example of your only Son. Deliver us from pride so that we may never know your silence; give us the gift of true humility, the virtue which obtains for us your grace. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Reflection

Pallotti encourages us: In all things, but especially when you feel bad temper rising up intensely, contemplate in faith your divine exemplar Jesus Christ, meek to the point of death on the Cross.

When we feel superior to others, pray Pallotti’s prayer for humility.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI explained that “the purpose of the promise of land (the Promised Land) in the Old Testament was that given as space for worship, for obedience, a realm of openness to God, freed from idolatry.” Set aside some time to contemplate this.

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Apostles for Today

Prayer and Reflection - April 2019

Holiness: A Path Travelled Together

Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. (Mt. 5:4)

My first real encounter with Pallotti took place after much soul searching about what I wanted to do with my life. From childhood, I have always gone to church and taken part in the various activities and liturgical celebrations and devotions in a parish served by Pallottine priests from its very beginning. The large image of Pallotti hangs in the balcony still. But for some reason I don’t remember hearing about this wonderful saint. Maybe I just wasn’t attentive enough. After university, my involvement in the parish deepened and many opportunities were presented to me, helping me to grow in my faith life.

In my late thirties I was approached to take the formation course for the UAC. I wasn’t sure if this was the right thing to do, but I felt it couldn’t hurt to find out more. This was where I finally met the person of St. Vincent Pallotti, his charism and what his vision of the Church was. It felt good and this was where I felt I belonged; where everyone can belong. After all, Pallotti tells us that “Yes, in my opinion, all, [...] important people and simple people, whether rich or poor, priests and lay people, alone or in community, old and young, men and women, the sick and the healthy, in any position of life assigned to them by God in his mercy, will be able to find some way of participating in the apostolic mission of Jesus Christ – with the merit due to them” (OOCC IV 182, cf. 326f).

Today, many years later, to belong to the UAC means to be part

of a large family which is striving to bring Christ's vision of a unified people to all, to make all aware of God's infinite and 'wasteful' love for us. We do this not in an attitude of superiority towards others, but in all humility. For, ***"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"***. Pope Francis tells us: *"These are strong words in a world that from the beginning has been a place of conflict, disputes and enmity on all sides... Ultimately, it is the reign of pride and vanity, where each person thinks he or she has the right to dominate others.... Jesus proposes a different way of doing things: the way of meekness"* (Gaudete et Exsultate, 71). We are not better than our brothers and sisters. Our actions must convey the message of God's love towards all we meet. God uses those who are humble or meek, who trust in God to lead them, no matter what the situation.

To be meek (humble) is not the same as being weak. *"Meekness is yet another expression of the interior poverty of those who put their trust in God alone"* (GE, 74). It takes great strength to be humble, especially when we are being ridiculed, made fun of because of our beliefs, attacked for saying or doing what is right when everyone else seems to be saying or doing the opposite. It is not easy to stand up for something when the world teaches or portrays something different.

But how do we come to be meek? St. Vincent tells us that *"To be humble, it is necessary to live distrusting oneself, but trusting in God"* (OCCC, X, p.543). To be distrusting of oneself, one must know oneself, our abilities and our weaknesses. For our abilities, we give thanks to God and trust he will help us use them for the benefit of others. When we know our weaknesses, and that they can lead us astray or to failure, we must put our trust in God that he will use even these to accomplish what he wants to happen in our lives. In his Month of May for Religious, Pallotti writes, *"It is very useful to know one's weakness. For this reason, you are in need of nothing so much as of God and his help."* Pallotti saw himself as

"nothing" before God. Yet it was this nothingness that God used to do great things – reconciling the dying with God; caring for orphans; setting up schools for poor youth; organizing prayer services and retreats for soldiers, youth and religious; teaching catechism; hearing thousands of confessions.

"We should remember that holiness consists in a habitual openness to the transcendent, expressed in prayer and adoration" (GE, 147). *"In that silence, we can discern, in the light of the Spirit, the path of holiness to which the Lord is calling us"* (GE, 150). *"Prayer of supplication is an expression of a heart that trusts in God and realizes that of itself it can do nothing"* (GE, 154).

Pallotti was such a man; with an intense, persistent and constant prayer life. He felt the need to be close to God so as to know the will of God for his life, to feel the peace of God through all situations, to have the ability to say 'yes' to whatever God asked of him, to put into action the love that was bestowed on him so that others too may experience the unfathomable love of God. With Jesus as his model, as the model Pallotti sets before us as the perfect one to follow, he seeks to imitate the life of Christ, in all his humility. *"Jesus, my beloved, you have deigned out of love for us to endure endless insult and incomprehensible humiliation. Impress deeply in our hearts, esteem and love for humility and a burning desire to imitate you"* (OCCC VII, pp. 333-334).

Jesus became human to journey with us, even though the situations he was in were often humiliating to him – his ability to respond to the Pharisees who objected to his eating with sinners; allowing Mary Magdalene to wash his feet in front of the elite who were appalled that he would accept her gift; bidding those he healed not to say anything to anyone; healing the sick and sinners without asking for anything in return; entering Jerusalem riding on a donkey, not in a fancy chariot with an armoured guard; suffering the most humiliating death on a cross for us. But as the beatitude