

E-BULLETIN #114

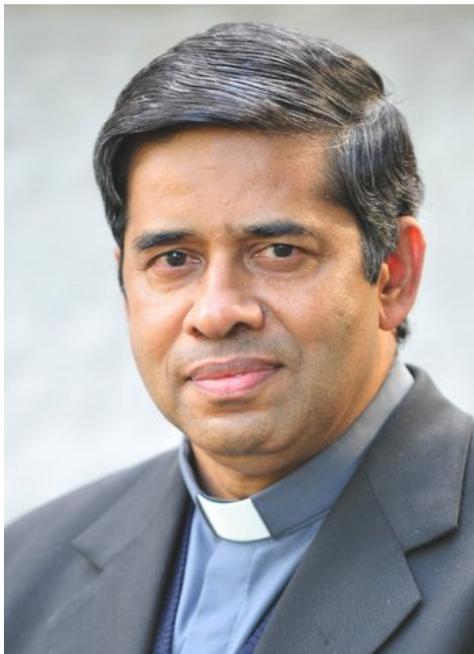
"Let the holiness of God shine forth" (cf. Mt 5, 16)

item 215

challenges to religious life

Pallottine Father Jacob Nampudakam on returning to the spirit of the Gospel

ROME, MAY 23, 2012 (Zenit.org).- As the October synod of bishops on the new evangelization draws near, ZENIT continues its series of interviews with the superiors of religious congregations. ZENIT talked with Indian **Father Jacob Nampudakam**, Rector General of the congregation founded by Saint Vincent Pallotti in 1835.



ZENIT: How have you received Pope Benedict XVI's call to the New Evangelization?

Father Nampudakam: This is a very important call for us as Pallottines. It is a topic that is related to our charism because our holy founder wished to build a Church in communion, with the participation of all the faithful, religious, priests, laity, all together as true apostles of Christ.

ZENIT: How must the faith be presented in today's environment?

Father Nampudakam: What is important is to return to the Gospel, and to live Jesus' message more authentically. The New Evangelization is not just conferences and books – which are important -- but until we return to the spirit of the Gospel, we will not be able to change anything. Hence, I believe we must present God, Jesus, exactly as he is.

ZENIT: The Pope says that God is the "Great Unknown" in present day society.

Father Nampudakam: It would seem that people are not interested in God, but from my little experience, I think that in the depths of their hearts there is always the desire for God. I have found, especially among young people -- when I hear their confessions, and who seem very disinterested and confused -- a real sincerity of heart, an honesty. Man cannot live without God, he can deny him for some time or create an illusion of greatness and immortality, but in my opinion God is an existential option.

ZENIT: What could be changed in religious life to respond to this challenge of the New Evangelization?

Father Nampudakam: For all of us, whether religious or laymen, the greatest temptation is materialism. We all have before us the beatitude: "Blessed are the poor." And this is not a problem of the East or the West, but a problem of human nature, because like original sin, we feel like God. Materialism creates the illusion of feeling omnipotent, like God; that is why, an experience of real poverty: spiritual, psychological and human is very important. I think that for those who are youngest, the experience of the mission is important, because when the missions are visited, when we see those children without anything, it touches our heart and changes our attitude to life.

ZENIT: And in religious formation, what must be taken into account in the future?

Father Nampudakam: It must be founded on essential things. Often we live in environments that are somewhat removed from reality. There is the whole of theology, philosophy, science, but in the end what matters here is our profound relationship with God, with Jesus. In other words: a simple life, a certain poverty, not many great things, and also contact with persons, with the pastoral experience of the mission and with human littleness, because these are important values.

ZENIT: You spoke of the mission. What can the West learn from the East?

Father Nampudakam: In my experience, there are strong and weak points in each culture. No culture is perfect in itself. We can learn much about Western culture and the culture of many other Eastern countries or of Africa. For example, I am from India, and in the Indian, Eastern culture there is always a great sense of God as something innate. In the Muslim world, everyone also feels like this. Hence we need more interiority, profundity, and we must not limit ourselves, for example, to the liturgy, but there must be a greater experience of God. Then, we must have more simplicity, because the world and society create so many needs, but we can live a simpler life, poorer, this is very important.

ZENIT: And can what works well in the East or in Africa as pastoral strategy be learned in the West?

Father Nampudakam: For example, in India a very effective strategy was that of Mother Teresa. As a Catholic religious she had no difficulty in professing the Catholic faith and everyone accepted that. So to profess our faith honestly is something important, and also to respect all the other religions.

ZENIT: Hence, service can be a good strategy for people to find Christ in other persons?

Father Nampudakam: In the first place, the Gospel must be preached, because our work is not just of a social character. However, we cannot forget people's needs, the works of charity, I would say especially in Africa. Because only someone who has been there can know what this means. People don't have anything, and we cannot close our eyes to the suffering of the people, who must be involved in the works of charity in the Christian sense, with great respect because if they are poor, we are not their masters. We are all the same in this world and we all have the same rights.



ZENIT: Can you tell us about your Congregation and its vocations?

Father Nampudakam: We are 2,500 priests and brothers in 43 countries. In the past we have had a great presence in Germany and Poland, although present-day Poland is strong, in some other countries the number of vocations has declined. Today the greatest growth is in India. We are reaching other countries such as Taiwan, the Philippines, and we might also go to Vietnam or Cambodia. We are working in close to 12 countries in Africa. There is a great future in Africa, given that many countries have a large Catholic population where, at the same time, there are many needs. In South America we are quite strong, for

example in Brazil, and we are growing in other countries of the region. In the European world the situation is not altogether good, but it is interesting because in Ireland we have seven young men and some in Germany.

ZENIT: What do these young postulants say to you? Why have they left the world behind?

Father Nampudakam: I have spoken with the youths of Ireland to find out why they entered our Congregation. And they told me that it was because of the hospitality they found through our parish priests, our openness to the laity which is part of our charism. Saint Vincent Pallotti always wanted to create a community with the great participation of the laity. I think today's Church must be like this, and it is something logical, because 90% of the Church is the laity, who must not just be spectators.

ZENIT: How are the causes of canonization progressing among you?

Father Nampudakam: There are close to 20 cases. We have two from Poland who have been beatified, Fathers Jozef St. anek and Jozef Jankowski, martyrs killed during World War II, together with some other Germans and Poles. There are also the Irish martyrs and the Argentine ones who were killed during the period of dictatorship in Argentina.

ZENIT: Finally, what message can you give the Pallottine Family in the world?

Father Nampudakam: My message is that we must return to the Gospel, to the spirit of the Gospel. We have Jesus as the exemplary model of Christian life and perfection. A profound decision must be made: let us do different works, but let us do everything in the name of Christ and for his kingdom. The Church is ours and we are at the service of the one Church of Christ.

May 23, 2012
by Jose Antonio Varela Vidal
[translation by ZENIT]

item 216

"God always and in everything"

the South American **Preparatory Formation** program

The year of Preparatory Formation in South America was initiated on January 14, 2014 in the presence of Fr. José Elias Fadul, the Provincial Rector of St. Paul the Apostle Province, Fr. José Rodrigues Filho, the Regional Rector of Mother of Mercy Region and Fr. Sérgio Luiz, representing Mary the Conqueror Province.



After the welcome address by Fr. Elmar Neri Rubira, the director of the Preparatory Formation, the initiation rite for the admission of the **seventeen candidates** coming from different states of Brazil was conducted.

Candidates belonging to Preparatory Formation this year are only from the Brazilian entities, four belong to St. Paul the Apostle Province, six are from Mary the Conqueror Province and six belong to the Mother of Mercy Region.

The Provincial Rector of St. Paul the Apostle Province presided over the Eucharistic celebration and emphasized the joy of being together to achieve the ideal of cooperation and brotherhood among Pallottines in Brazil. He also spoke about the tireless efforts of many confreres who were responsible for bringing the formation programme in South America up to this level. He also stressed the importance of Pallottines living together as a family which strengthens the bond of unity in South America, enabling them to advance together in communion and cooperation with the firm intention of carrying forward our apostolic mission and the development of our charism.

Each candidate in Preparatory Formation was given a medal with the image of our Founder and of Mother of Divine Love, that it may be a sign of a desire to respond to God's will, of security for their faith and of perseverance in their spiritual journey. Let us pray that this symbol in the lives of the candidates of the Preparatory Formation be a sign of belonging to Christ and to the Society of Catholic Apostolate.

The very response of our candidates tells us that God continues to call labourers into his vineyard from different localities and diverse cultural backgrounds. We formators strongly believe that diversity enriches our community, gives significance to our charism, especially to the dimension of cooperation.

We constantly wish to tell our candidates that: "Our community welcomes you with joy and joins you in imploring Divine help. We wish to grow together with you in love of God and our neighbour so that everything we do may be done for the greater glory of God, for personal sanctification and the sanctification of our neighbour."

Elmar Neri Rubira sac [SP] – Cornelio Procopio – BRAZIL
20.01.14
elmarpalotino@hotmail.com

sac asia oceania e-bulletin

you commented...

on #113

It was wonderful to read of the impact of St. Vincent's bible on the group who gathered in Pune India with the Khristsevikas Community and the action of a young child who responded with such simple and pure faith. A beautiful image of the key to the door of her house protecting the family from illness. It seems to me her action showed us that we can so often complicate God's message which can be so simple if we just see God's call and love in our life and follow it.

CS 01.04.14

This issue reminds me of St. Vincent's words that we can do more than all the saints before us have done. The Lenten reflection was much like something Pallotti would have written and the Bible was a reminder that the Word of God is ours and so easily accessible today. What a gift!

CF 01.04.14