

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

item 303

Curitiba conversations

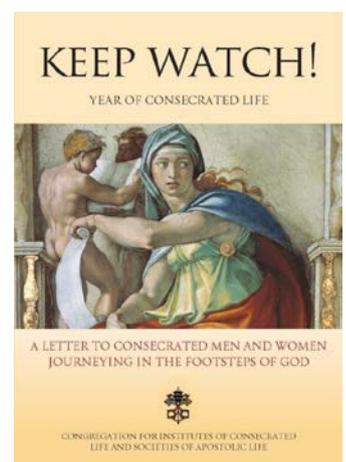
Our 'whole-of-province' SAC community had a meeting in the last week of January, at Curitiba. We came together from 26th to 29th – as is customary in this month every year – at our major seminary dedicated to the Mother of Divine Love.



These joyful days provide an opportunity to not only live together but also to share our ministry experiences and to study some pertinent theme. This time we explored the subject of the second letter from the Vatican 'to men and women journeying in the footsteps of God' – **Keep Watch!** It succeeds Pope Francis' earlier document **Rejoice!** This personal formation section of our meeting was facilitated by Fr. Denilson Giraldo, who involved all of us throughout the first morning.

We then continued to share our life experiences, discovering what has been happening across our seven SAC communities – three in the state of Paraná, two in the state of São Paulo and one in each of the states of Bahia and Maranhão.

A very significant moment was the Report introduced by Fr. Manoel Santana Vieira about our mission in the Peruvian plateau, where he is working in partnership with Fr. Edvan Vieira Serra Sena. We were also updated on the activities of our men who have responded in recent years to calls for support from other Pallottine entities – in Italy and the United States [see following].



In bringing the sharing to a close we celebrated Mass together in the parish church of **São José**, in the suburb of Vila Oficinas. The people there provided a splendid dinner for all the participants. It was a great occasion which we could share together with some ex-seminarians who live in Curitiba.



In conclusion I can happily advise you of the good news that, in the weeks prior to this event, we celebrated:

- the annual commencement of the formation courses in our seminaries in Paraná
- the opening of the Introductory Year in Cornélio Procópio
- the Renewal of Promises of those students in theology and philosophy
- the Perpetual Consecration of our two deacons, Fernando and Marcelo

At the end of the week we joined in the ceremony of First Profession of our youngest member, Mateus Prates Bastos.

In the first week of February, we will be relocating the Postulancy to Bahia [from Curitiba].

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this parish...began... in an upper room above a coffin factory

The parish of **Our Lady of Pompeii** began with an Italian immigrant community meeting in an upper room above a coffin factory in the late 1800's. On arriving in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn they did not feel at ease in the ethnically German and Irish local parishes. Though the Mass was in Latin for all, they wanted clergy who spoke their home language and a community of mutual support. Right around 1900 they were formed into a parish and in 1902 a rope factory was purchased and converted into a church, rectory and convent. Several decades later a gymnasium/parish hall was added behind the three-part main building. There has been a worshipping community on the present site for over 100 yrs now.



The Pallottines came to serve here in 1937. There was another local Pallottine community at All Saints' Church, only a few blocks away. Although Pompeii parish never had a school, the Sisters of St John the Baptist lived in the convent part of the complex and taught sacramental preparation classes, made home visits to the people, and ran a nursery school.

Through time the Italian community dispersed to other boroughs and towns. Hispanic people moved into the area, changing the face of all the local parishes. Most came from Puerto Rico, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, and Mexico. These changes bring new challenges to the parish staff, dealing with economic, social, and religious questions. Both the Diocese of Brooklyn and the Pallottines responded to this challenge, providing services in Spanish, preparing clergy and religious as needed and in as much as possible. Most recently a new "gentrification" has gotten underway as many of the old factories and warehouses are being converted into



loft apartments. Their residents are of a completely different social and economic background and in many cases the children are of un-churched parents.

Due to the many years of fewer vocations, some religious communities had to leave their apostolates in this area, including the Sisters of St John the Baptist. Our own community had to withdraw from All Saints' Parish. Other communities entered this section of Brooklyn to take up the new challenges, among them the Conventual Franciscans.

The Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens, like so many others, has embarked on a renewal and reorganization process called, "Christ Jesus Our Hope". Our Lady of Pompeii parish is collaborating with the diocesan efforts. We have formed evangelization teams that have visited most of the addresses in our area and in one year added 95 new registrations to the parish community, most of them families. This is consonant with the *Year of Faith*, and has been the constant aim and goal of the Pallottines as an expression of our charism.

The Diocese has combined many of its schools into "Catholic Academies". Pompeii parish is aligned with Queen of the Rosary Catholic Academy, which serves families often living in difficult economic situations, helping them to face the social problems in the local community.

For the faith life of the community and the building-up of the body of Christ the parish offers many diverse activities: RCIA, CCD-Sacramental Preparation, Cursillo, Charismatic Prayer Group, Sacred Hearts Society, Divine Mercy Devotion, St Jude Novena, Youth Group, Holy Hour every Friday evening, and Fatima Holy Hour every first Saturday morning. The parish celebrates each year the particular feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary typical of each national/ethnic group. The evangelization group is preparing another round of outreaches. There is an adult faith formation group that meets weekly in Spanish. A major event each year in early June is a Broadway musical performed by the "Pompeii Players" troupe of adolescents and young adults that has been active since 1978. For a full 6 months the members practice and prepare in a safe, creative



environment, during which time opportunity for personal faith development is offered.

Essential to the realization of our charism is the life of the Union of Catholic Apostolate – the full foundation of St Vincent Pallotti. Our UAC group is an essential part of the parish and the spirit of the Union pervades all the parish activities. This is also seen in our collaborative efforts in conjunction with the Diocese and the other religious communities present.

Trying to stay open to the Spirit and to the needs of the parish and local Church the staff of the parish strives together – lay faithful, religious, and clergy – to “revive faith, rekindle charity, and to spread them to others as apostles of Jesus”.

courtesy SAC São Paulo Province
BRAZIL

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