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

item 357

III UAC General Congress - São Paolo, Brazil

From 14 - 19 July last, **UAC General Congress III** took place at the Mariápolis Ginetta Centre of the Focolare Movement, São Paolo where we were made feel very much at home.

The first evening was limited to an informal session, to introduce the different participants – 156 in all. As well as Brazil they represented countries from across the globe – Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Venezuela, Uruguay, USA, Canada, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, the Ivory Coast, India and Australia. They included married and single people, lay, consecrated and consecrated lay people, young and old, seminarians and sister candidates, a newly-ordained married permanent deacon, sisters, brothers, priests and a bishop - a truly wonderful variety which mirrored the richness of the Church in general and of the Union.



The following morning's inaugural Mass was presided over by Cardinal Odilo Scherer, Archbishop of São Paolo, and concelebrated by Mons Julio Akamine (the Pallottine auxiliary Bishop in the same city), Fr Jacob Nampudakam and the other participating priests. That day was taken up by introductions:

- welcome address from Dario Ivatiuk Junior, the Brazilian NCC President
- greetings from two core community, Sr Ivete Garlet csac and Sr Izabela Świerad sac
- a presentation from the ecclesiastical assistant Fr Jacob Nampudakam
- a talk from the President of the Union, Donatella Acerbi

- PowerPoint presentations from 7 countries (Brazil, Poland, India, Italy, the Ivory Coast, Canada and Australia - representing 6 continents) on the life and experience of the Union in each
- an introduction from a fourth General Superior of a community of the Union, Sr Carmen Barrón Cáceres, of the Instituto Mariano del Apostolado Católico, Sucre, Bolivia, (founded in 1962).



That evening, there was a wonderful time of eucharistic adoration accompanied by an excellent music group from Arapongas, who provided inspiring music for the entire Congress.

Day two began with morning prayer [led each day by a different language group], followed by a talk on the theme of mission in, of and for the family, given by Hermelinda and Arturo Zamperlini, a married couple responsible for the Teams of Our Lady in Brazil, who attended the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family in October last year. The morning continued with a series of testimonies on the experience of families in the Union, given by married members and also by consecrated members working with families. In the afternoon, Maria Domke from Canada gave a talk on commitment in the Union, which was then discussed in small groups and reported back. Dinner was followed by a cultural evening in which different regions in Brazil and each national or language group presented something of their culture through songs, videos and other creative means.



The third morning focussed on consecrated life, beginning with a talk from Sr Teresa da Rocha csac on this theme in the context of the Union, followed by a series of testimonies from consecrated members themselves and also from lay members on their experience of encountering consecrated people. In the afternoon, Msg Julio spoke about the Union as a Family of different types of families, and later there was a series of testimonies on the experience of young people in the Union and of those working with them, with a view to providing participants with some ideas for working in this important pastoral field. In the evening, because of the next day's long journey to the National Shrine of Aparecida, the closing liturgy was incorporated an exchange of Madonnas and the imparting of the missionary mandate to participants. Each of 30 countries was matched, by means of a draw, with a Madonna from another country, as was done at the



two previous General Congresses, the idea being that members and collaborators of the Union in the country receiving a Madonna commit themselves to interceding for the Madonna’s country of origin in these years until the following General Congress.

The final day consisted in a pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida, over 3 hours by bus, where Mons Julio Akamine led the eucharistic celebration and preached, in the fairly full 45,000 capacity Basilica. He was joined by many priest concelebrants and lay and consecrated people, including the Congress participants. Subsequently participants were free for a few hours to take more time to visit the Shrine and the Old Basilica, and to eat lunch before returning to the Centre. That evening there was a sharing of impressions and experiences of the Congress and hopes for the future of the Union. Satisfaction was expressed with the overall experience and organisation of the Congress, especially in the interaction with Union members and collaborators from different parts of Brazil and South and North America.



Those who contributed significantly to a wonderful shared experience, of faith and communion, need to be acknowledged – Ms Donatella Acerbi [President], Fr Rory Hanly sac and the members of the General Secretariat of the Union from Rome, Mr Dario Ivatiuk Junior, the local NCC President and the whole organising committee in Brazil. We hope and pray their efforts will bear lasting fruit.

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my devotion to Divine Mercy...

I have just completed the annual feast day celebrations of Divine Mercy at Mustabada, India in the month of May. It was wonderful experience to be part of such celebrations.

Recently, I had the privilege of establishing a new centre in honour of our founder St Vincent Pallotti. This new community comprises about 10 families in all and, for the inauguration, about 20 people attended. It reminded me of the humble beginnings of Jesus’ mission with his twelve disciples and the model of the first community in Acts. Very Rev Fr Jacob’s friendly visit to the upcoming Divine Mercy shrine and his keen

interest and encouraging words really infused new life. He counselled: 'be Pallottine and look at Jesus full of love and compassion.'



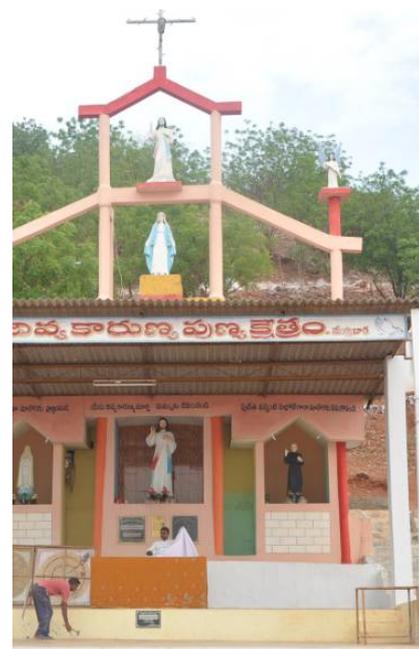
This recent experience of God's guiding hand led me to think of my own call to the priesthood and especially to the Pallottines. The words of prophet Jeremiah resound in my heart as I think of that call:

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, 'Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.'"

Indeed God is great to mould and shape me for His mission. May all my experiences along the priestly journey, the struggles and successes, enhance me to become clay in the hands of the potter.

The *Year of Consecrated Life* reminds me that priesthood is all about **call, gift and service**. This threefold gift of consecrated life helps me to witness to the Divine Mercy of God. God is full of love and compassion – 'when He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.' This mercy of Christ somehow challenges me to become as if His hands, His feet and His heart, full of mercy and compassion. The mission of Christ consists of both external works [building houses, distributing books, visiting the sick, taking care of the poor], spiritual works [adoration, eucharistic celebrations, charismatic conventions] and personal witness. By this we present Christ as Divine Mercy to the world.

Pope Francis declared 2015 as the *Year of Consecrated Life* with the motto: 'Wake up the world'. Indeed our founder St Vincent Pallotti, through his commitment to Christ, awakened the world in the extreme situation of the French revolution. Like Christ he became a 'light for the world and salt for the earth.' As this *Year* ends and we enter the *Year of Mercy* let us become like our founder – lights of the world and salt of the earth. As for me and for my parish in India, I would like to continue to spread devotion to Divine Mercy and reach out to many more people.



May the remainder of the *Year of Consecrated Life* help us to commit ourselves for Christ. It is by growing, in the sense of being consecrated and being more and more open to the work of the Holy Spirit, that consecrated persons fulfil their mission in the Church. My prayer for each member of the Pallottine family is that we be blessed to continue the mission of Christ for ever.

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you commented...

- on #187** Thank you so much. Indeed the Saints are among us! May he repose in peace and pray for us, for the Society of the Catholic Apostolate. **JN 28.09.15**
- It's sobering to read what so many Pallottines of Fr Bayer's generation went through and heartening to read of his contribution to our knowledge of St Vincent. May he rest in peace! **MB 27.09.15**
- [The] Bulletin is a weekly nice reading habit of mine. Many thanks to...all those who contribute to its publication. **DA 29.09.15**