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

item 359

***Musings of a Mystic:
Santo Vincenzo Pallotti***

Dear saintly Padre Vincenzo,

It was per chance I came to know of you and the Society you established. Half a century ago, as a teenager I was set to join the Jesuits. All of a sudden one of my relatives, who knew about you and your Society, suggested the Pallottines to me and to my father and successfully persuaded me to change my mind. I didn't have sufficient knowledge then to make an informed choice between Jesuits and Pallottines, but I am convinced it was not by chance but by the Divine Providence I made that choice.

In hindsight, I am happy with my decision. It led me to know more of you. During the novitiate I read about you and came to know of your life, of your activities, of your charisma, of your vision for the Church and the world. Rooted in deep union with God your life of simplicity and your untiring activities continue to amaze and challenge me, inspiring me to emulate you in my own life.

Oh, saintly Padre Vincenzo, the mystic in you has always fascinated me. I keep wondering how you balanced being a mystic in the midst of your manifold apostolates. Although you neither called yourself one nor claimed to be one, your very being and your ways of behaviour betray the mystic in you. Your constant



awareness of the image and likeness of God within both yourself and your fellow humans and your continuous experience of Him in your personal life is surely the essence of being a mystic. It keeps inviting me to imbibe and embody your deep mystical spirituality blended with an active apostolate.

According to my ancient, ancestral Indian spiritual heritage every human being, especially the elderly, is strongly recommended to pursue actively, to foster avidly, and

embrace gladly the natural yearning of humans to reduce worldly activities and begin a life of closer communion with God the Creator. This would ultimately lead to a mystical relation with and an intimate experience of the Divine. I have big strides to make and a long way to trudge!

Oh, dear saintly Padre Vincenzo, permit me to peep into your musings:

"I consider myself truly blessed to have been gifted with fifty-five years life on earth, and that too right in Rome, the cradle of Catholicism. As you know, I was born and brought up just twenty minutes walk from the Vatican!My mother regularly took me to...our parish church. I loved to kneel before the statue of the Blessed Mother and pray to make me a good boy.

I was rather slow in studies. So I prayed a Novena to the Holy Spirit ...Slowly and steadily, I began to perform better.

Though the people used to call me a 'santarello', I don't think I was that holy. I used to have occasional fights with my companions and once I threw a stone at a bully whose face was bruised! I was naturally gentle, and reserved so I must have given the impression of being saintly...

From childhood I wanted to be a Capuchin priest as I was fascinated by St Francis of Assisi. But due to frail health, Don Fazzini, my spiritual mentor dissuaded me, so I joined the Roman Seminary. My seminary days were academically enriching. I loved to go the chapel and spend as much time as possible in the grace-filled presence of the Eucharistic Jesus! It is from these moments of silent adoration and encounter with the Lord that I began to savor the bliss of the deeply personal experience of the Lord and of his Blessed Mother. Slowly but steadily the Lord was guiding me to a deeper mystical awareness of the Divine Presence in me and in others. After my ordination I wanted to be all things to all....Everyday I felt my unworthiness to be an anointed one of the Lord. Besides university teaching I involved myself in various types of apostolates - hearing confessions, visiting the sick, the prisoners, and caring for the orphans.



I wished everyone be a Catholic, every Catholic a good Catholic, and every good Catholic an apostle. They used to call me the apostle of Rome. Though I feel honoured, I wondered whether I deserved it! I wanted to involve the laity in active participation and to enlist everyone's cooperation in reviving faith and rekindling charity. I always felt 'The love of Christ urges us' and wanted to dedicate all my energy to the infinite glory of God. I tried to see the image and likeness of God in everyone. I looked forward to going to the Camaldolese Monastery in the hilly outskirts of Rome. I loved the serenity and silence of the place and went as often as possible to spend time in silent reflection adoration to replenish my zeal for the Lord. The faithful in Rome used to refer to me as the second Philip Neri. Once again I felt honoured but kept asking myself whether I deserved it? I considered myself just an Instrument in the hands of Jesus.

I had my share of frustrations and humiliation too. The Society I had formed was forbidden by the Pope as he was misinformed. After knowing the true facts the suppression was revoked. The young priests with whom I had shared the rectory often locked up the sacristy and hid the keys! Well, it did humble me. I gladly took them all as little crosses.

I am convinced every human being has an innate yearning for the Creator. But sadly this constant yearning goes unnoticed by most. I am also convinced that the basic element in developing a mystical awareness of Divine Presence consists in recognizing and fostering this innate yearning. The

abundance of which the Lord envisions for us consists of this constant awareness of awesome majesty as well as utter simplicity of the Divine.

The innate yearning goes beyond any gender or any age or any educational qualifications. Children or the elderly, women or men, literate or illiterate, any and every human being is capable of fostering a mystical awareness and the presence of God. It is up to us to develop it by constant practice. All religions, especially the religions of the East, give much importance to the mystical and devotional awareness and approach to the Divine in our daily lives. I am glad many of you, my spiritual children are trying to be in touch with the presence of the Divine in your daily lives.



I shall keep holding you all in my prayers from here in heaven!

JoAchen sac [NA] – Cochin – INDIA
28.08.15
Joachenmonologues@gmail.com

item 360

forming Formators

A few years ago the *General Secretariat for Formation*, with the support of Father General, decided to create a **Centre of Pallottine Studies** in Rome to prepare formators for the entire Society. Initially just a dream, after many meetings it has now matured and become a reality.

This is thanks in no small way to the confidence of our major superiors and the collaboration of many brothers and sisters. They accepted the challenge and last year representatives from their different entities came together for the first time. Their own formation will, in turn, be of benefit for all the members of our Pallottine family across the globe, in deepening the experience of our charism.

Several Pallottine priests took part, also sisters from the congregations of the Catholic Apostolate and the Missionary Sisters, the Cenacle Sisters and some lay people. In their respective Provinces and Regions all of them are engaged in the field of formation, either in seminaries or in parishes.

The Cenacle Centre, at *via Giuseppe Ferrari*, is now looking forward to welcoming more and more of our brothers and sisters into the future. To enhance the course we have an arrangement with the Theological Faculty of **Teresianum** [Carmelite faculty] so that participants can also enrich themselves during the academic year with an option on Consecrated Life. So not only will our own formation curriculum benefit but students will also have the possibility of obtaining a university diploma.

The challenge of formation is always confronting simply because the society from which so many of the students come is itself continuously changing, many bringing their own multiple difficulties and personal and psychological hurts. Our formators have to be able to support them not only spiritually but also in their human reality.



Regrettably this year – 2015-2016 – we have only four Pallottine priests and some sisters for the annual Formation course. Therefore we appeal to all entities of our Society, who value the contribution provided by this Centre, to send men and women who are interested in deepening their knowledge of our charism and of the life of our Founder. As well this course offers a great opportunity to experience an international Pallottine community, an advantage which can also benefit future collaboration in various fields of Pallottine life.

At the beginning of 2015 Father General, Jacob Nampudakam, appointed me from the Province of St Paul the Apostle, Brazil, for a period of three years, as the Formation Guide at the Centre. So I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have gone before me and made the Centre successful.

May God bless us. We continue to seek the intercession of the Blessed Queen of Apostles and of St Vincent Pallotti, for our valiant effort for the growth of our Society and the entire Pallottine Family.

Valdeci Antonio de Almeida sac [SP] – Rome – ITALY
27.08.15
valdecisac@hotmail.com

sac asia oceania e-bulletin

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