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

item 404

"on my death..."

Easter meditation with St Vincent Pallotti

On my death... to the most beloved confreres of the pious Society of the Catholic Apostolate so that they may strive to promote it with all their hearts, minds, souls and strength.

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ, through His infinite mercy and the infinite merits of His most holy life and through the merits and intercession of His most Holy Mother, Mary Immaculate, and of all the angels and saints, notwithstanding my unworthiness measured only by His infinite perfection, graciously allowed me to belong from the beginning to the pious Society of the Catholic Apostolate founded in Rome by the supreme authority of the pope under the special protection of the most Holy Mary, Queen of the Apostles, for the increase, defense and propagation of piety and Catholic faith.



2. The Society began privately among a few people in 1834. In 1835 it was approved first by His Eminence the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, later by His Vice-gerent and finally by the Holy Father, with a rescript made by the same Cardinal Vicar of Rome, a representative of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

3. In order that the Society be purified in the crucible of tribulations, our Lord Jesus Christ permitted that, in the beginning, the purpose of the Society be manifested in a few words. Because of this the Society was fought grievously by those who, not knowing clearly its nature, works and purpose, were beguiled by the devil, always ready to impede God's work. The Society reached the point of death, but its continued existence was proven necessary so that this work of God would carry the image of our Lord Jesus Crucified. But when some did think that the pious Society would cease to exist, the same had to realize that the Society gave new signs of life, as always happens with the works of God.

4. Still, up to the year 1839, the nature, the works and the purpose of the pious Society were not truly stated in writing. I have to admit that I failed to do so because of my disordered way of life. But our Lord Jesus Christ graciously willed to grant me mercy and so disposed circumstances that on the feast of the Princes of the Apostles, June 29, after hearing confessions all morning and while leaving the house for some charitable work, I expectorated blood many times. The same happened to me the day after, sacred to the memory of St Paul, and it was Sunday. Although I hid what happened the previous day, I could not hide this on Sunday, so I was obliged to stay in for a few days to take care of it. On July 10, 1839 I left Rome and went to the sacred hermitage of the Camaldolese Monks, near Frascati, hoping that God would grant me there the necessary light to write everything concerning the pious Society. Such a trust was strengthened by the sentiment and merit of obedience to my confessor, whom, through the mercy of God, I always trust and listen to as one who speaks in God's place.

5. After arriving at the hermitage, this was July 10, God through his mercy, inspired me to attend seriously for a few days to the reordering of my spiritual life. Since I found myself in the wide sea of divine mercies (now and forever I beg all to pray that I may profit from it as God wishes), I wrote a few pages for the benefit of my soul. Afterwards, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and through the merits and intercession of the most Holy Mary, the angels and saints, I began to write the Rules of the pious *House of Charity*, instituted in Rome by the pious Society of the Catholic Apostolate.

6. After a few days of writing the Rules of the *House of Charity*, God, through His infinite mercy, began to visit me with painful tribulations. I felt the burden of them so deeply that I thought them the greatest of all tribulations suffered in my life. But at the same time it was the will of our Lord Jesus Christ to instill in my poor and ungrateful heart a lively sentiment of trust that the time of tribulations was the most appropriate time for receiving God's light.

7. After writing the Rules of the pious *House of Charity* and reading in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mother that the apostles, after receiving the Holy Spirit, went to preach the Gospel in various regions of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ fixed in my mind the true nature and the works of the pious Society under the general purpose of the increase, defense and propagation of piety and Catholic faith. The Lord also made known to me the other aim, appropriate and particular to the circumstances of the time namely, the formation of holy and zealous diocesan and religious priests. After finishing the writings and after subjecting all of it to the wise and ministerial insight of my confessor, whom I regard in the stead of God, both of us were enlightened about the appropriateness of such aims. Other servants of our Lord Jesus Christ had the same feeling about them, even though they knew very little about the nature of the work of the pious Society, as it was declared in the writings.

8. Now Fathers and beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified, before you and all the creatures, now and forever, I must confess that, although through the approval of my confessor I must be and remain deeply convinced that the institution and propagation of the pious Society is in conformity to the Divine Will, I, on account of my unworthiness, measured only by the infinite perfection of God, never deserve from our Lord Jesus Christ the grace to promote the same Society, although from His infinite Mercy I expect to receive other graces, favors and mercies.



9. Furthermore, although our Lord Jesus Christ willed to reveal to a soul very dear to Him that He Himself inspired everything written on the pious Society and that I would see it sufficiently instituted and propagated and that the institution is for His greatest glory, still I declare that I shall always have a reasonable fear that I, on account of my sins and the innumerable and abominable self-centered and contradictory moments of my life, may be a continuous obstacle to the Society. Thus, I could deserve, as truly I do, that God would shorten my life.

In order, then, that through another abominable negligence of mine the work of God may not suffer the least harm, I pray now and forever and I intend to pray even after my death which is nearing every moment, that all of you, fathers and beloved brothers in our Lord Jesus Crucified, in your charity and religious fervor become so much engrossed in the permanent institution and in the rapid and most efficient propagation of the pious Society as, you were chosen by our Lord Jesus Christ to be its founders, propagators, stewards on this earth, and its valiant intercessors some day when, through the Divine Mercy, you will reach the eternal kingdom of God's glory.

Be greatly interested in the foundation, propagation and conservation of the Society as the holy founders and foundresses were interested in the foundation, propagation and conservation of their respective institutes. Furthermore, strive to be interested in it as our Lord Jesus Christ, His most holy Mother Mary, St Joseph, the most chaste spouse of Mary and all the apostles and the disciples were, in the foundation and propagation of the Roman Catholic Church.

I also beg your charity that if, on account of my sins, for many years the sufficient institution and propagation of the same Society be delayed, while some of you will die in the Lord, those left should meet in the Lord's name and elect another to replace the deceased. Before the election and in order to reach a unanimous consensus you should for ten days say fervent prayers and, if possible, say them together before the most Blessed Sacrament or in a solitary oratory. See to it that you elect a true servant of God, filled with the evangelical spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. The same you should do every time one of you dies or for any other reason one becomes too incapacitated to contribute to the purpose of the pious Society. In order that no one who is a wolf dressed as a lamb be admitted to any office make sure that you admit only the one who has given sure proof of deepest humility, perfect contempt of the world, most perfect love of evangelical poverty and perfect and discreet religious zeal.

10. You, fathers and brothers, beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified, be well convinced that the activities which should be promoted by the pious Society of the Catholic Apostolate are necessary or at least greatly useful to the Catholic Church. This is sufficient reason why all should cooperate in them as much as they can.

11. I beg you, though, to consider in the love of Jesus Christ Crucified that since few have considered the activities of the pious Society as the purpose of the same and have esteemed it of doubtful success, the activities to be done, even though useful and necessary to promote the glory of God and the sanctification of men and the help of our needy brothers and sisters, are as far as the Society is concerned, but as a means to an end.

12. The principal, distinct and characteristic purpose of the Society in the present circumstances is to form diocesan and religious clergy edified and zealous for the glory of God and the salvation of men. No one can deny that this is truly the need of the times because it is well known that in the Catholic regions there is a need for the re-flourishing of the spirit of faith, true charity, moral Christian practices, true social order of

brotherly love and due subjection to authority. In order to meet such needs it is very imperative to have diocesan and religious clergy filled with that edifying doctrine and spirit which is truly evangelical and apostolic. Also, it is necessary that the Roman Church send to mission territories, where there are people well disposed toward the Catholic religion, a sufficient number of diocesan and religious priests filled with apostolic spirit. And even though God, through His infinite mercy, could convert all the non-Christian people to the true Church, still it would be needed to have real shepherds of souls who would further their faith through their evangelical ministry.

A general council, convoked and presided over either by the pope himself or by his representative, certainly could be very useful to the Catholic Church. But, how difficult to implement it and realize it! I think that the aim of the council could be helped by the development, propagation and realization of the works of the clergy and the people toward the observance of the decrees of the Council of Trent and any other directive of the Roman Catholic Church.



Finally, I beg the Heavenly Court and, most of all, the most Immaculate Mother Mary, Queen of the Apostles, through the infinite attributes of God, all infinitely Merciful, through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, though the merits of the triumphant, suffering and Militant Church of time and eternity, that they may perpetually and

efficaciously pray the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that the pious Society may rapidly and quickly be propagated and established all over the world and may continue till the end of the world for the greater glory of God and for the greater sanctification and salvation of men. If this is not possible, I beg them at least to pray that God may be glorified and the souls of all men be sanctified and saved as much as God can be glorified and the souls sanctified through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Also, I pray that devotion to the most Holy Mary, the angels and the saints be propagated as much as God deserves to be glorified in His Mother, Daughter and Spouse, in the angels and saints and in infinite creatures since eternity and for infinite eternities.

My God I cannot say anymore, but please do this by yourself, out of your infinite love. Do this even though I have to remain in the pilgrim state of pure suffering and in the state of the most ardent thirst for pure suffering without reaching the vision of your glory. But grant this to me, infinitely unworthy, with the condition of never losing your holy love although I have deserved and deserve infinite hells.

Glorify yourself, Lord, with infinite glory! Fill me with ignominy, sufferings, torments, dishonor and this is enough for me. Glorify Your Mother, the angels, the saints and all the human race. Fill me with ignominy, sufferings and torments and this is enough for me. Amen.

P Vincenzo Pallotti – 1840

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