

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

item 408

formation – ‘an alive construction site’

The *Year of Consecrated Life* gave religious institutes and their members a push to deepen their identity and charism. It also echoed the expectations of a church anxious to give a better image of God’s love in the world.

Experts say that, of all the states of life in the church, none has been written about so much as consecrated life. An obvious reason is that consecrated life is really at the heart of the church, vitally important to its life and its mission. A second is that, as time passes, we are faced with ever new, contemporary problems to be solved and challenges to be addressed – among them individual and communal spiritual renewal, fidelity to one’s charism, maintaining apostolic zeal, formation of members, the evangelical counsels etc.

For Pallottines the greatest of our challenges is perhaps summarized by the theme of the next General Assembly, namely to live and to do everything in a manner that follows our fundamental rule of life, which is Jesus Christ. An assembly always provides a vision of the way forward, but it is up to the formators to accompany candidates and confreres to bring the vision to life – and that is a process for the whole of life!



Formation has to go beyond an ‘imitation’ or ‘following’ model, to embrace an ‘identification’ model – to actually capture in one’s being the sentiments of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This implies transformation, from being not just an assiduous disciple but to becoming an apostle, full of zeal. As Pope Francis says: ‘formation must form the heart, otherwise it will only form little monsters!’



Currently the Pallottines have around 50 houses of formation worldwide, including minor seminaries – a tradition still in use in Brazil and India – introducing and educating more than 500 candidates. Many formators give of their best to transmit our spiritual heritage. And, beyond initial formation, our Society offers many opportunities for ongoing formation courses:

- Summer meetings take place in Rome, at the Cenacle in Via Giuseppe Ferrari. Offered to members of different provinces/regions, they provide a unique opportunity for them to walk together in the footsteps of St Vincent Pallotti, as if on a pilgrimage. One can sense that the participants embrace this chance for spiritual and charismatic renewal.
- Other Pallottine formation meetings are offered at a 'continental' level. These events facilitate the coming together of a large number of formators and other confreres, who both speak the same language and are confronted with the same challenges.



I cannot but praise the fruitful work of our International College, "Queen of the Apostles." Many spend a few years there, completing university studies and sharing the experience of an international community, right where Pallotti himself lived. Major events of the Church, celebrated at the Vatican, are also formative moments for them.

Another important contribution to training comes from the so-called Annual Course on Pallottine Spirituality. The three Founding Congregations cooperate in forming together selected members with a view to them becoming suitable for the formation or animation of our spiritual centers.

If someone were to ask me to identify another important project in the field of education I would say without hesitation that, beyond what is stated above, it would be vocation promotion. How do we achieve it? I would answer in the words of the Gospel:

"Ask and you shall receive, seek and you will find ..." (Lk 11,9)

"Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest" (Lk 10,2)



Pray, but also offer one's heart and one's mouth to Jesus to call the workers!

It is also urgent to promote a culture of lifelong learning. It is said today that if formation is not permanent, it cannot even be called formation. Perhaps a suitable image would be a construction site – a site that is always 'alive' and active.

A final word on formation may be that it is not a question of length, but of depth. Understood in this way the matter studied is not seen as just enabling the passing of exams, or of an assessment before consecration or priesthood, but as becoming formative and, indeed, transformative.

The corollary of that will be that our Pallottine lifestyle will become attractive for others and our apostolate fruitful.

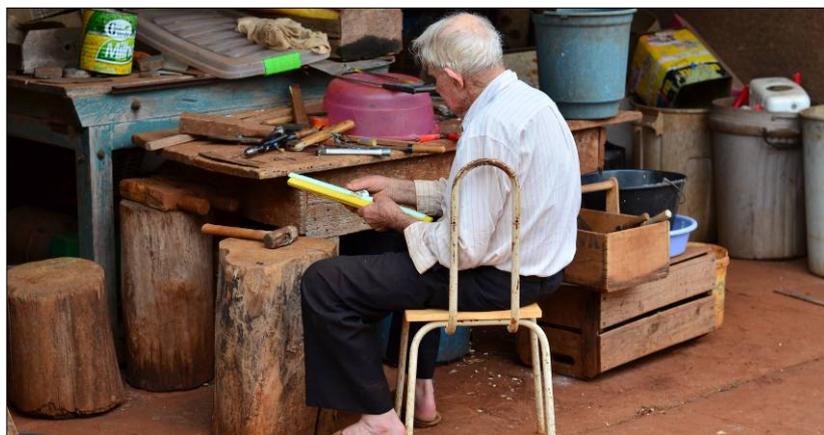
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item 409

a beautiful life

On February 29 last, in the Holy House of Mercy of the city of Cornelius, Parana, our dear confrere **Br Carlos Zontini sac** died of multiple organ failure. He was 93 years old, born on 22 July 1922. He had lived 63 years of Pallottine consecration.

Carlos was born in the city of Itirapina-Rio Claro, São Paulo. In 1950, at age 28, he entered the Minor Seminary of Londrina. In 1951 he started the Novitiate there, and was finally professed in 1957.



Br Carlos was always a man of the land. His family's rural origins were brought to our community and he was seen as a bumpkin, in the best sense of its meaning, that is smart, curious, mischievous, but above all God fearing. Thus he always worked on the land, in Londrina to 1962, Curitiba until mid-1970, then back to Londrina which he never left.

So it was a history of 46 years, in which Br Carlos served the Pallottine

Novitiate of *Queen of Peace* [now the International Novitiate *William Whitmee*], working from sunrise to sunset in the garden, serving and participating in the community over the years, giving genuine witness of a life consecrated to God, being a considerate neighbour to the poorest, and faithful friend of many generations of parishioners and citizens of Villa Independence.

The last years of his life were difficult for his body, marked by growing age and the infirmities that were emerging. His physical limitations, however, never deterred him from his service in the garden! I believe that not a day passed without him going to his plantation, as he worked from Monday to Saturday. On Sundays it was common to see him strolling in the garden, as he explained himself – ‘to see how the vegetables were growing’ – or even to collect some



of them to take to the house of some family whose members were unemployed and had nothing to eat.

And it was in the garden that he seems to have suffered a fall some weeks ago. He complained of constant pain that began in the lower leg and spread to other parts. This led to hospitalization. Tests were run reaching the dramatic diagnosis that there had been an acute thrombotic process. The treatment was amputation. His right leg was amputated above the knee. However the days that followed were even more difficult because he was struck by excruciating pain, not lessened by even the strongest painkiller. Further tests were made and the doctor even entertained the possibility of further surgery, but this did not occur. The heavy sedation put him in a state of lethargy and so, a body so used to movement, refused to recover. Inactivity led to death.

In his last days our priests were always present, and the novices took turns to look after him. He was buried from the parish of Our Lady, Queen of Apostles where many came to bid him farewell – a real 'universality' of rich and poor, people of all ages and of various religions.

Thus ended so many stories, vividly recounted by a man who knew the mysteries of nature, the signals it sends, the movements of the stars and the sky, not to mention his deep practical knowledge of the Christian message and the consecration that he lived so loyally all his life. Perhaps few know but those hands, calloused by hard work, held an extraordinary surprise – he had beautiful handwriting, no doubt a reflection of his great soul.

Although the month of February felled him, and in the days that followed one leg was stolen, and surgery put him in a bed to rise no more, still on the last day of the month he was standing before God, with an imperishable body, invited to live in the eternal meadows of the Good Shepherd.



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you commented...

on #215 Thanks...it makes sobering reading, and edifying.

DM 11.04.16

Thank you for this very sombre newsletter, made more so by the handwritten account. Despite the reports of so many atrocities in our world, it's hard to read this and realise this is happening now and is not an account from long ago. You're right: the first response to this must be prayer.

MB 11.04.16

Oh my goodness. How confronting. Handwriting describing this terrible act of violence against innocent humanity. Prayers and blessings to all those affected.

JC 10.04.16