



E-BULLETIN #28

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

item 59

coordinators of youth ministry **homily - concluding Mass - Rome meeting**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This is a Eucharistic celebration in gratitude for all the blessings that we received from God during these days of the meeting of the coordinators of youth ministry in our Society. It is the first time that we have organised a meeting with the participation of so many youth coordinators and animators from the Pallottine world. All the participants have been clear about their goals and enthusiastic about their ministry. There might have been some deficiencies regarding the contents or dynamics of the meeting. These areas could be always improved but the important thing is that we have set in motion a field of apostolate that is so important for us Pallottines, for the Church and the world as a whole. It is a ministry that has to do with the right education of the youth in human and Christian values.

The Gospel passage that we heard just now can give us new inspirations in our youth ministry too. Jesus made a choice to call Mathew, the tax collector, as one of his disciples to carry on his mission. Certainly he could have selected a better candidate, if he wanted. Instead, he went for Mathew, a tax collector for the Roman empire, and someone so much hated by the local people for the same reason. Not only that. Jesus was associated with publicans and sinners of all sorts. Jesus even went to dine in the house of Mathew.

Most people failed to understand the reason for these actions of Jesus. Jesus who was supposed to be a respected Rabbi, Master and Teacher, was surrounded by publicans, prostitutes and sinners. The so called-good and just people could not accept that. In order to settle all their preoccupations, Jesus finally made this statement: "It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick". He further asked if they understood this statement: "Mercy is what pleases me, not sacrifice!". He concluded by saying: "I came not to call the upright, but sinners" (Mt 9,9-13).

Not that Jesus ever made a distinction between the good or the bad people, the just or the unjust. But Jesus always challenged those who thought that they were more righteous or just as compared to others. This was the problem with the publicans and Pharisees. Such an attitude blinded them spiritually and made them incapable of opening themselves to God's mercy and forgiveness which they needed so much. At times we can become so preoccupied in teaching and correcting others that we lose touch with our own fragilities and weaknesses. Self-righteous attitude can be terribly hampering the growth of God's grace in us.

In developing the youth ministry too we could take some of these points into consideration. First of all, it is our responsibility to reach out to those young people who are most in need. Like Mathew, the tax collector, we will come across many young persons who are problem-makers in many ways. Instead of labelling them as hopeless cases, the spirit of the Gospel demands that we are able to reach out to them in some way. So the youth ministry should not be limited only to those good students under our care in various institutions but there should be channels to reach out especially to the most needy ones. Now such a ministry can be done only if we have clarity of vision, the means and also well-prepared personnel. But our doors should be always left open for such radical forms of youth ministry.

The vast majority of the youth under our care will be good and well-educated young men and women. They too need care. But we must also ensure that they have the right spiritual attitudes of humility, openness to divine mercy, readiness to grow, the spirit of generosity and, above all, the openness to the Holy Spirit. These young people, as well as all of us will benefit greatly when we are constantly aware that we are all infinitely unworthy of the mercy of God. Such a profound sense of humility is the starting point of our conversion. It is also the first step in the process of new evangelization. To revive faith and rekindle charity in the depths of our own hearts, as St. Vincent Pallotti wanted, the change of hearts, the metanoia, is what matters in transforming the Church and the entire world. Such should be also the aim of our youth ministry.

Thank you so much for coming to Rome for this programme. Thanks also to all the members of the Youth Commission for taking this initiative. Regardless of the energy and money spent on such encounters, these efforts will enable us to grow together as Pallottines, truly filled with the spirit of St. Vincent, especially in this year of the 50th anniversary of his Canonization. Our success or failure will depend much on becoming stronger in our identity and spirit as Pallottines and in feeling and in working together as members of one big Pallottine Family in service of the one Church of Jesus Christ. Thus the Pallottiness and the spirit of universality should be the hallmarks of each member of our Society today. All these efforts will succeed, finally, when GOD alone remains the centre and the only motive for our existence and for all our apostolic activities. May all we are and all that we do contribute to the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls. Amen.

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item 60

our deepest longing for a better world



"I want to say something about charism and where it springs from, and how we allow it to guide us in a world that is unrecognizable from the one we grew up in," **Brother Philip Pinto cfc** said as he opened the first session of the 2012 CRA National Assembly in Adelaide.

Br Philip, current Congregational Leader of the Christian Brothers, went on to speak at the assembly every day, using passages from poets, writers and thinkers such as Rabindranath Tagore, David Whyte, Ian McCallum, Erich Fromm, Johannes Lindworksy and even Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings".

Br Philip's first talk, "A World Moving Beyond Boundaries," on 26 June was a fearless exploration of charisma, authenticity and leadership in religious life, of which he knows much about. His approach to religious brotherhood has been described as counter-cultural and subversive, with an emphasis on integrity, quality and authenticity of religious life.

Charism is understood in its simplest terms as a gift or grace, something received from God. In the context of religious congregations, charism pertains to the spirit or quality that gives a congregation its particular character.

Yet in fact, charism is inside all of us, said Br Philip. "It is the creative urge within us to move beyond where we are."

"It is wired in our DNA, in our genetic code and in our whole universe," said Br Philip.



"Charism is a cry for authenticity, for following one's deepest longings, even unknown to the person himself or herself until that moment."

Founders of religious congregations, said Br Philip, are those men and women who felt this longing and answered it, "not even stopping to count the cost."

"A founder's charism is built around the prophetic insight into the mind of God that allows him or her to see the poor in a whole new way: Where is human suffering? Where is the world's pain to be seen? You cannot have charism that does not address that."

"For religious gathered in this room, most of our constitutions would say to us, through our ministry of leadership, that we are called to safeguard charism. But for the charism in order to live, it must be let go. Bring it out, because the world is God's agenda."

"We risk charism. We dare with charism. It's the only way that charism can survive and thrive."

According to Br Philip, it is the extraordinary experience of God's love that allows us to dare, to open our lives and go beyond our comfort zone.

"The longing that is deep inside me, to go beyond myself, has been opened. And it's an extraordinary feeling of freedom, because you know you are loved and you are not alone."

Br Pinto referred to "a world beyond boundaries" in a spiritual and personal context. "When we think about a world moving beyond its borders, it is a cry that is deepest within us to beyond ourselves. It precedes all our religious longings and is in the heart of our religious longings," he said.

Yet he also spoke about this idea in the sociopolitical sense, exemplified by pivotal global events such as the Arab Spring, Occupy Movements, and the environmental movement. "We are living at a hinge of history. It is a time of transformation," said Br Philip.

“A world moving beyond boundaries is already happening. And it is fought by those who have the most to lose,” he said.

“Jesus comes along and he comes into a world like that, which has its own agenda, its own boundaries, its own ‘who’s in-who’s out’ that comes with empire. A world moving beyond boundaries is inspired by Jesus of Nazareth who began to erase all these lines.”

He offered a sobering challenge to the assembly, “A world moving beyond boundaries is already happening. We are now trying to play catch up.”

“We should be at the cutting edge. Unfortunately we are not. Our Church is already behind. We are already behind.”

Of these times, Br Philip reminded the assembly with a passage written by Johannes Metz about the origin of religious congregations: “These are the historical times when pain is deeper, aspirations more acute, when a settled world’s values are up-ended, in short, when an old world order is dissolving and a new world is in the making.”

“Charism is being born anew,” added Br Philip.

“It’s a whole new mindset that we have been invited into, if we believe we are in a world that is moving beyond boundaries.”

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