

E-BULLETIN #43

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

item 84

let me go where God calls

"When we believe in Jesus Christ and strive...to imitate him...He grants to us the grace of being destroyed of every deformity...then Jesus enters into us and continues his life within us." [OCC,III,P.37]



God's call for each of us is very special. If we think how wonderfully God works it is marvellous. Reflecting on these 6 words – 'let me go where God calls' – I realise that this is exactly what happened to me. Having been here for 14 months I want to share my growth – in joy, hope, courage and self-confidence.

Coming from another country one wonders how it will be ? New culture... tradition... people? Also mixed feelings...anxiety...new challenges? I recalled: "*Be not be afraid, I go before you always*".

It wasn't so difficult to get to know the sisters in my community, to cultivate a healthy atmosphere, and to surrender myself totally in the service of others. They accepted me as their own, an international community that was happy to have me. Their support filled me with confidence – confidence to stand up on my own, not to give up but to let go.

Becoming registered and obtaining a Nursing Certificate is a process that takes at least 2 years. Initially I was sad and wondered why so long? But God has His own purpose and I just try to keep positive. I pray for patience and tolerance and try not to let it bother me.

Its lovely to have elderly sisters here amidst the younger ones. Their simplicity, humility, hard work, generosity and selfless service to the people are marvellous. Some are aged, unable to move, but despite that they really try to give. Their small contributions to the community set us a great example, and remind us that everyone has a part in it. In fact right now I am looking after a sister who for 3 months has been dying. She is bedridden and unable to communicate. But I see it as a joy to care for her because she has done many good things during her life in Cape Town.

Some are very humorous. And their gentleness, the way they pray, the experiences they share inspire me. Spending time with them is a real blessing. And gives me a hint of how I will have to be in my old age...patient ... gentlecompassionate. That gives me a fright!

I learn each day about acceptance, openness, how to be more simple and humble...that way I will be ready in my service to others. I pray before the Lord: "*Life is a process to learn everyday until our death*". It is He who gives us strength, grace and moreover acceptance.

Many years back we sisters did have our own **Vincent Pallotti Hospital**, but gradually our numbers reduced. During apartheid there was lots of discrimination between blacks, whites, and coloureds. Although blacks were supposed to be excluded many were admitted. Most of them were not able to pay. They were poor and the hospital started to run out of money. In the end debt was very high, the sisters were not able to manage, there was no money only debt. It was not easy for the sisters to sell their own hospital but there was no other way then. Nevertheless the name remained – **Vincent Pallotti Hospital** – and even the road signs read that! Sometimes, looking at that building, I say to myself ‘the sisters did their best, to serve the poorest of the poor’.

When I commenced to visit the hospital, the rehabilitation centre and the renal unit, I realised that it made lots of difference to the people. Pallottine sisters were still appearing around the corner, making an effort to visit the sick and the suffering. I started to develop self-confidence. It became a wonderful experience, and people accepted me very lovingly. As well the relatives then waited for me. Not only



Catholics but people of other religions are admitted. Many ask me to pray with them. For the Catholics I carry every day Holy Communion, which makes them very happy. Even though many haven't been practising their religion their belief, faith, trust and confidence in the Lord makes them receive him every day in their lives.

What I find is that the people are very friendly, very open, and I in turn feel comfortable with them. The sisters presence is very much appreciated, specially in times of need. I realise that this is what I was called to do, this is my apostolate, just as it was for Vincent Pallotti. People appreciate us sharing their joy, their happiness, their loneliness, just giving them a word of HOPE, COURAGE, TRUST AND SELF CONFIDENCE. And a SMILE.

And those opportunities are truly a blessing for me too! I cherish my time here, with a heart full of gratitude. I thank my sisters for their encouragement and support, and for making me feel one of them. Let us not loose HOPE, FAITH AND TRUST IN THE LORD, SURRENDER YOURSELF TOTALLY TO HIM.

Can I conclude with the blessing which Vincent Pallotti prayed for his Society, a blessing which means so much to me every day of my life.

*“May God grant us a blessing of wisdom,
a blessing of courage and strength,
a blessing of loving kindness and of goodness!”*

And with these words, let me go where God has called me.

Prescilla Rego sac – Cape Town – SOUTH AFRICA
23.10.12
precillarego@yahoo.com

the Healing Presence of Jesus



The immense and unconditional love of God, manifested in Jesus, was the basis for all St Vincent's apostolic activities, his urge to serve the suffering Christ. "God so loved the world that He gave his only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (Jn. 3, 16). He never wearied of surrendering his life for his fellow man. He saw in everyone the holy countenance of Christ. He was a saint of the 'present'. Time was precious for him. Nothing should be left for 'tomorrow'! He invited his followers to live this spirituality, and to imitate the very life of Jesus.

Vincent's life enlightened my mind to understand the love of God in Jesus, who stepped into the world of poor and suffering humanity, who sought the company of men and women to accomplish his salvific plan, and eventually made his way towards

Calvary 'completing eternally the meaning of Incarnation'. In every act of Christ one can see a heart melting at the suffering of humanity, and a will endlessly submitting itself to the will of the Father.

Vincent, totally absorbed by his love of Christ, desired to be transformed in Christ. That desire opened his eyes to a suffering world. Like his master he set himself to reach out to the needy. Young and old, rich and poor, sought his help for he never made any distinction. He realised, as Fr Amoroso wrote, that it is not possible for anyone to take care of the soul of the person unless and until his basic physical needs are met. So he provided them all with temporal as well as spiritual goods. He was a saint of great contemplation yet he also acknowledged earthly necessities. His approach to the wounded soldiers, and to the sick and the suffering in the hospital of Santo Spirito in Sassia and the surrounding areas, was remarkable. He assisted them and fed them and, by taking care of their wounds and weaknesses, tried to reflect God's love for them. He administered the sacraments with a fervent desire that no soul may be lost. His love for God and firm faith made him a great apostle. His personal thirst to love God infinitely awoke in him a thirst to make known to the whole universe the love of God, and Jesus the manifestation of this great love. And he taught us that the sick are not only those who suffer physically... but everyone who is deprived of the knowledge of the love of God. And he had the company of so many good friends, priests and the laity, in his apostolate of charity.

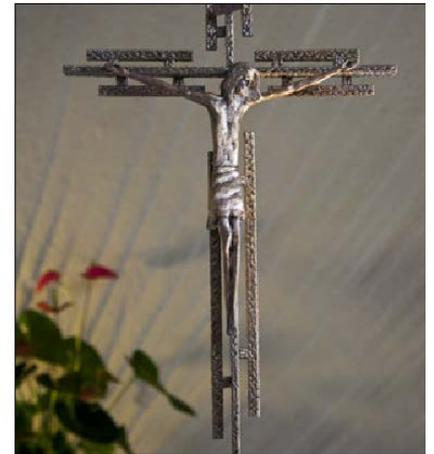
Our response should begin with an openness that starts from within, 'to live the reality and not to be indifferent'. An openness that makes us realize the needs of those around us. Our call to be a missionary, a servant, begins in the communities in which we live, our immediate surroundings. Like Pallotti we have to cultivate the desire to serve, to make the world better and happier, and to tell everyone that God in Jesus has transformed everything for good. We must become sensitive to hear, see and feel anew right where we live – hear the cry that we missed, see the wounds that we never noticed and feel the hunger we never recognized.

Secularism, the legitimate child of modernity, has born its illegitimate children. Today's self centeredness has taken away the value of family life, personal life and community life. Religion and God have no place, they are a hindrance to 'personal freedom'. Even personal interaction is becoming rare as technology moves to replace it. We fear being rejected and criticized, and so refrain from doing what we know we should do.

The life of Jesus provides the answer to our fear of being rejected. Though he was God's Son he was not accepted and recognized, and what awaited him was the crucifixion. He felt that even God, whom he dearly called Father, had abandoned him.

Like St Vincent the saints understood well what it meant to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. His suffering and death gave them courage to imitate him, they became men and women of God. They came to understand that the meaning of their existence was to take care of their less fortunate fellow beings, and thus to save their souls for God and His Kingdom. The life of Mother Theresa of Calcutta stands as a great example of so many good things that we can all do today for the poor and sick. Being a foreigner in Calcutta, and taking care of the rejected, was never a 'pleasant' task for her, for she had to endure insults and hardships for their sake. But she persevered, and gradually the world recognised the love of God that she was witnessing. The same lips that cursed her earlier then blessed her, support came from all quarters. As consecrated persons we have to make ourselves worthy of our call. To be faithful to our vocation is to be faithful to the one who called us. He is our supreme model and value. It is indispensable that Christ must enter in all of us.

St Vincent teaches us to be a healing and saving presence of Jesus and to set aside our own problems and worries. He is my inspiration in my ministry of caring for the sick, and in my community. And this healing ministry is the mission of every consecrated person – clerics, brothers and sisters, and lay people alike. In our parishes we encounter diverse situations, broken families, individuals who suffer from the loss of their dear ones, persons who find themselves in difficult and unjust situations etc. To reach them we need to carry along the loving presence of Jesus, a presence which does not condemn but heals and cares. And for this we need courage, faith and confidence in God and others. We are not called to be isolated but to be in community. Then together we can reach out to the needy. Jesus sought the company of men and women. And so did the saints in announcing the Good News to suffering and vulnerable humanity. We Pallottines, working in so many nations, and in all kinds of activities, are called to minister together in making known the love of Christ.



We ask the intercession of our father founder that all our endeavors may be 'for the glory of God and salvation of souls', a continuous healing presence of Christ.

Seetha Chakkalackal csac – Rome – ITALY
11.10.12
seethasebastian@gmail.com
