



UAC NEWSLETTER

N° 8 - April, 2005

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Dear Friends in the Union,

We are all living this lovely Easter season, a time of celebration, of a renewal of hope. On the first Easter morning, the apostles and the holy women were surprised by the presence of the Risen Lord Jesus. They met him, they did not see a ghost of Jesus. They saw him in the flesh, but in a different flesh, as the oak tree is different from the acorn that was its origin. In Holy Week and during the Easter season we touch on the mystery of a body, not just Jesus' body but our own. Our body expresses us, who and what we are, it will express us at our best, it will also express our worry, our uncertainty and our pain and suffering. The Risen Jesus was proclaimed by the apostles and the holy women, this is a mystery beyond our imagination, but it is the centre of our faith. The apostles and holy women were witnesses to his risen state, they were there, they experienced him. They were not so different from us, really, they were women and men, struggling with their own humanity and their understanding of it, but they were transformed by an encounter that give a new direction to their lives. As we grow older, nothing in our faith makes more sense than the Passion and the Resurrection, the certainty that our body, like Jesus', must suffer and die, and the certainty that we, in our bodies, have a life beyond death. We, like the holy women and the apostles, are invited to witness to this truth.

Pope John Paul II.

The death of our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, has touched us all deeply. Who could not but be moved by his courageous efforts to express his presence with the Church during Holy Week. The Lord of all life has called him to himself, we have seen the heart-felt farewell that the whole world has given him. His legacy lives on in our time. There have been many things said about him and written about him since his death. The comment that struck me was one made by the Card. Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Mons. Jorge Mario Bergoglio, S.J. he said, on April 5th, that the Holy Father "was simple coherent with his faith, he obeyed the Lord, he gave himself until death. He never deceived, never lied, never took advantage, and he always communicated with his people with the coherence of a man of God". Perhaps this is one of the greatest challenges he leaves to us, members of the Union, to be coherent with our faith and with our apostolic commitment in the Church of Christ. May his good soul rest in the peace of the Lord.

General Congress of the UAC, Konstancin, Poland, August 22nd to 27th.

Preparations are going on apace both here in Rome and in Poland as we move nearer to the Congress. The Organisation Committee in Poland has seen some changes in its membership and is now under the leadership of Sr. Monika Szyuprt, MSAC. We estimate that participants in the Congress are going to come from twenty countries truly making it an international congress of the UAC. We continue to ask you to join us in prayer so that the Congress may be a celebration of the life of the Union in the Church and a launching pad for a new expression of 'a new creativity in charity' that is after the heart of St. Vincent himself.

We have received some very positive responses to the monthly Novena in preparation for the Congress that has been sent to the entire UAC since November 2004. As you already know the idea of preparing for the Congress with a Novena came from a suggestion made some time ago by a woman from the UAC in Poland. The Novena has been following the liturgical themes of the Church's calendar. The monthly text of the Novena has been prepared by various members of the UAC; the texts for November and December 2004 were put together by members of the General Secretariate, as was the text for January 2005; Australia took on the challenge of presenting the text for February, Germany did likewise for March and we went to Brazil for the April text, the baton was then passed to Rwanda-Congo for the May text, on to India for June and we will finish with a text formulated by Poland in July. The Novena text has been translated into all seven languages of the UAC each month, and so between the preparation of the text and the subsequent translations it has proved a genuine experience of collaboration and cooperation at the heart of the UAC. Somebody commented that it was good to know and to feel that other members of the UAC all over the world were praying and meditating with the same text each month. Another comment was that the Novena offered us a common formation session. Heartfelt thanks to all those who have participated in this initiative of the Union.

The General Secretariate of the UAC.

Cardinal Newman observed that to live is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to have changed a lot. The General Secretariate has seen some changes in recent months. There were General Assemblies of the Missionary Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate and of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate during 2004 with a renewal of membership in the General Councils, this resulted in some changes in the General Secretariate of the UAC. We welcomed Fr. Franco Todisco and Sr. Bernadetta Turecka as members of the Gen. Secretariate. Donatella Acerbi of the Quinta Dimensione Community has been a member of the Secretariate for quite some years now, she too is moving on, has just taken up the position of Reader in Italian at the University of Nanking, China. We wish her every blessing from the Lord in this service. The Quinta Dimensione Community retains its strong commitment to the General Secretariate and Sig. Rosa Colucci has become a member of the Secretariate. We also extend a warm welcome to Rosa. Sr. Grace Gabrielle O'Brien has been through a difficult and trying period due to health problems, she has had knee surgery and a long-drawn out period of recuperation, thankfully she is now improving and should be back at the Secretariate in the coming weeks.

News from the UAC.

The **Apis community** in Switzerland are getting ready to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the community, the celebration will take place on May 17th 2005.

The **Italian National Coordination Council** has published in book form the formation programme of the UAC. It is called "Proposta di un itinerario spirituale sui passi di San Vincenzo Pallotti", or "The proposal of a spiritual journey in the footsteps of St. Vincent Pallotti." It is a very complete programme and is attributed to the late Fr. Vittorio Vinci, SAC, RIP. It is envisaged that the formation proposal be followed over a two year period.

The **NCC of the United States** sent to the Secretariate material informing of the National Service Day of the UAC in the United States. The NCC has established a National (Pallottine) Day of Service that is to coincide with the birthday of St. Vincent Pallotti on April 21st each year. The aim of the Day is to share Christ with others, to "...organize and perform both spiritual and corporal works on an individual and group basis ... the National Day of Service unites every member of the UAC in the mission of the Founder ... all the members of the Union should strive to select one apostolic service to participate in during the week of April 21st." The choice of the service rendered is left to each group of the UAC, or to individuals, however, members are encouraged to begin the day with a Pallottine Prayer Service, keep a record of the activity engaged in, evaluate the activity and send a report to the Communication Committee of the NCC.

The **Australian NCC** held a UAC Convention at Pallotti College, Millgrove, Victoria, from January 23rd to 26th 2005. The theme of the Convention was “Together – Bringing the Dream into Reality.” 66 members of the UAC from all parts of Australia participated in the convention. More information about this Open Space Convention can be had from the Executive Officer of the UAC in Australia at patron2@dodo.com.au or by visiting www.pallottine.org.au

News arrived from Sr. Elsa Oliva, SAC, **Belize**, informing the General Secretariate of the formation of the National Coordination Council of Belize. The members of the NCC have been nominated and the regulation of the NCC is being formulated. We wish them every blessing in this special time of giving expression to the structures of the UAC in Belize.

Questionnaire on the Life of the UAC.

The response to the questionnaire on the Life of the UAC has been varied, some of the NCCs had the questionnaire back immediately after receiving it, others are still completing it and sending it on to the Secretariate. The questionnaire is giving us a good ‘sense’ of the life of the UAC in the different countries and is producing some interesting points for reflection and pointers for areas of further growth. The Pontifical Council for the Laity has asked us to prepare and present an annual report on the ‘State of the Union’, this report will form part of our on-going communication with the PCL.

Fr. Derry Murphy, SAC, Secretary General of the UAC, visited groups of the UAC in the United States in December. He met with UAC groups in Milwaukee, New York, New Jersey and Maryland. The exchange was very positive and productive. The NCC of Rwanda-Congo has invited him to participate in a formation session for the UAC which will take place in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, from April 18th to 23rd.

Ecclesiastical Assistant of the UAC.

The General Statutes of the UAC approved *ad experimentum* on October 28th 2003, envisage that the service of central government in the Union of Catholic Apostolate be entrusted to the General Coordination Council under the leadership of its President and that the UAC have an Ecclesiastical Assistant different from the Presidency, whose task is to ensure the spiritual formation of the members of the UAC and their on-going spiritual direction and assistance. The Rector General of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate is, *ipso iure*, the Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Union (cf. Gen. Stat. art. 11). Fr. Fritz Kretz, SAC, Rector General of the Society, is therefore the Ecclesiastical Assistant of the UAC; Fr. Seamus Freeman, SAC, continues to serve the UAC as President of the General Coordination Council. This is a new departure for the UAC and is an expression of the provisions of the General Statutes, the benefits of having an Ecclesiastical Assistant will become apparent in the life of the UAC.

Fr. Kretz, together with Fr. Derry Murphy, the General Secretary of the UAC, met with Mons. Miguel Angel Delgado of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, on March 11th in order to discuss with him issues related to the life of the Union. The four main themes discussed were: the role of the Ecclesiastical Assistant in the life of the UAC; the General Statutes of the UAC; the annual report to the PCL; the members of the UAC. The theme of the XXI Assembly of the PCL held in 2004 was “Re-discover the true face of the parish” this theme is considered to be such an important one for the life of the Church that the PCL has retained it as the theme for this year’s Assembly also. It points to an area for thought and reflection for us members of the UAC.

A final reflection taken from ‘St. Vincent Pallotti, the prophet of the spirituality of communion’. Edited by Fr. Francesco Todisco, SAC. “He (Vincent) consolidated and deepened the Christocentric orientation of his piety which was already present in the writings of his youth. With the passing of the years the humanity of Christ went from being an object of devotion and of imitation to being a dynamic transformation. Fr. Vincent aspired to transform himself in Christ. “May the life of Christ be my life, the life of Christ be my prayer, the preaching of Christ be my preaching, the ministry of Christ be my ministry”, he repeated insistently.”