



Apostles for Today

Reflection and prayer - December 2010

St. Vincent Pallotti – “God, the Infinite Love”

MEDITATION XV

“On our obligation to become perfect because we are living images of God, Infinite Wisdom”

Introductory Prayer

God our Father, Giver of all gifts, we are not worthy of the many gifts that are ours by your goodness and love. Be merciful to us, God our Father giver of all gifts and send your Holy Spirit to overshadow us and illuminate our ignorance. Fill us with Wisdom to overflowing that we be fully capable of perceiving and interpreting the signs of the times. And when that is fully understood, Father, give us that inner strength and determination so that, like the Apostles, we go to the uttermost ends of the earth to proclaim your name. This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.

“God is eternal, infinite and merciful Wisdom...and although I am infinitely unworthy of His illumination...still He mercifully nourishes me with His eternal and infinite Wisdom. With such nourishment He completely destroys my unworthiness and the darkness of my ignorance” (OCCC X, p. 454).

Reflection

St. Vincent experienced God as Eternal and Infinite Wisdom. The wisdom of God which is beyond measure. No one can totally understand God’s wisdom nor come near comprehending the immense wisdom enveloped in the immensity of God. Yet, every person needs God’s wisdom in order to grow and understand the perplexities of this world.

All living things, plants and animals, manifest the immense wisdom of God by simply living and growing as God created them to be. Their expression in the world adds the beauty, the diversity and the infinite manifestation of their Creator. They provide us with myriad opportunities to admire, to use, to enjoy and to give God praise. How much more we, his creatures,

can and do manifest his wisdom because we are made 'in the image of God'. How generously and profusely we see God's wisdom freely given to his people and how that wisdom in people continues the work of recreation in this world. Our doctors, scientists, teachers and persons of other professions touch the humanity of this world. St. Vincent was conscious that although he was unworthy of God's illumination, God continued to mercifully nourish him with Infinite Wisdom which completely destroyed the darkness of his ignorance. Pallotti reminds us in this meditation that wisdom is not merely a gift for the elite and learned but is for all of us who are made in the image and likeness of God; that is, you and I, we are capable of acknowledging and harnessing that gift to illumine the far corners of this earth. I may not be worthy but his wisdom will completely overpower the darkness of ignorance in my human heart and fill me with true knowledge and correct my understanding so that I can perceive life and in it God's plan for me. I am capable of manifesting God's wisdom in his world by stepping out in faith to put into practice what he tells me to do. Did he not tell Jeremiah, "I will put the words into your mouth"? Do we doubt that he will place his words in our mouths today when we step out in faith to accomplish his mission? I must heed these words and emulate them in my life. I must recognize and acknowledge along with Vincent Pallotti that my human wisdom is founded on the immense wisdom of God that I can draw from that immense wisdom if I need and desire to.

Scripture passage: Wisdom 9, 1-6.

In this passage from Scripture we see that Solomon, like Vincent Pallotti, realized that Wisdom is a gift from God and he therefore longed to take Wisdom as his own. Solomon realized that it was only in asking that he could get her and therefore he asked for Wisdom so that Wisdom could be with him and work with him because Wisdom knew what God's pleasures were. Wisdom is capable of guiding Solomon quietly and discretely in all his activities.

In ministering to the indigenous people of Central America we are, in turn, ministered to by them when we walk the mountains to bring the Good

News to them in the remote corners. We recognize the Wisdom of God in these people who walk for hours to listen to the Good News and praise our God for the message. In their simplicity of heart they are ready to be nourished with the Wisdom of God who sends his messengers to impart his Word. Even though they do not have the academic knowledge and understanding of the Eucharist these indigenous people manifest the Wisdom of God because in faith they leave everything behind to follow, to listen and to bask in the Good News they receive. They have life and have it abundantly.

If Wisdom guided Solomon, and later Vincent, and now the indigenous people of Central America, why would we doubt that Wisdom would not also guide us in the ways of the Lord? By the fact that we are made in the image and likeness of God we can claim like Solomon, Vincent and the indigenous people that divine illumination which banishes our ignorance. This realization and conviction can help us to live life to the fullest.

Perhaps we could spend some time reading and reflecting on chapters 11 to 18 of the Book of Wisdom to appreciate how Wisdom guided the Israelites through the desert to freedom.

Reading these chapters we ask ourselves if we can identify areas of our lives or specific times when Wisdom guided our choices and how the outcome could have been different had we not consciously called on Wisdom to guide us.

We are called to repentance and conversion, the Lord loves all things that are made and loathes nothing that he has made: *“You are merciful to all because you can do all things and overlook men’s sins so that they can repent. Yes, you love all that exists, you hold nothing of what you have made in abhorrence, for had you hated anything, you would not have formed it. And how, had you not willed it, could a thing persist, how be conserved if not called forth by you? You spare all things because all things are yours, Lord, lover of life, you whose imperishable spirit is in all”* (Wisdom 11, 24-26). Here we see that Infinite Wisdom in his mercy nourishes us unworthy though we are, with such nourishment the darkness of our ignorance is destroyed and we can live life to the fullest.

Suggested texts for reflection and sharing:

Deuteronomy chapters 4, 6 and 29; Ecclesiasticus chapters 1, 4, 12 and 24; 1 Corinthians chapters 1, 2 and 3; Romans chapter 11 verse 33; Matthew chapter 13 verse 54; Luke chapter 2 verse 40; Psalm 104.

For study:

1. In the Book of Wisdom chapter 1, why does the author personify 'justice' as 'he' and 'wisdom' as 'she'?
2. In Matthew chapter 13, what do the parables of verses 44 – 50 teach about the value of the kingdom? With what emotion and energy should it be pursued? How does the parable of the net compare with the parable of the weeds? Who are the teachers of the Old Law who have been instructed in the new Gospel? How does the hometown crowd's response to Jesus differ from that of other Israelites? How does where I come from or my background affect my ministry? How do I deal with that?
3. In the Book of Wisdom chapter 6, what does the author promise to reveal about Wisdom in verse 22? The author states that "in the greatest number of wise men lies the world's salvation", what is the value of a number of people sharing their wisdom and prudence in leadership? Why was Solomon revered by his people, (verses 24 and 25)? How is Solomon like all other men (chapter 7, 1-6)? How is he distinctive?

How am I like other people? How am I distinctive?

Closing prayer: O God, eternal and infinite Wisdom, I am unworthy to receive all the gifts and illuminations that you so generously have in store for me. Yet, in your mercy you look upon me and lavishly nourish your eternal and infinite wisdom which completely destroys the darkness of my ignorance. Give me that inner strength to freely and generously use the gift of Wisdom in helping all people to live to the fullest in this world. We ask this through Christ our Lord and through the intercession of St. Vincent Pallotti. Amen.