



# UAC NEWSLETTER

June 2013



**Dear sisters and brothers in the Union,**

we are very happy to present to you in this newsletter **a note on the room, chapel and museum of Saint Vincent Pallotti**, along with other news from the Union.

## **1. ROOMS OF THE HISTORICAL MEMORY OF SAINT VINCENT PALLOTTI IN THE SOCIETY GENERALATE**

The three rooms mentioned above, which were renewed and reorganised in 2007, can be found on the second floor of the General House of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate in Rome. When Saint Vincent came to live in the house in 1846, he received only two rooms, which he used respectively as a private chapel and a meeting room. What we know today as his room was in fact a corridor at the time. The rooms contain many different things linked to Pallotti, but we will speak only about those which seem more personal and interesting. Beginning with the museum (already the Council room in Pallotti's time), to the right of the entrance is a display case containing the Capuchin habit worn by Saint Vincent for many years as he slept at night, a white chasuble, a chalice and missal, and his black wool habit with waistband. At the centre of the right-hand wall is the plaster bust of Saint Vincent from the room of Leo XIII which was given to the Society after the Pontiff's death. Nearby is the Mount of perfection, designed and prepared by Pallotti, inspired by that of St. John of the Cross, in which Saint Vincent highlighted even more the central place of charity in the spiritual path. A display case contains various objects belonging to Pallotti, including his breviary, his Bible, the cross with chain which he used when preaching missions, his rosary beads, various instruments of penance, and the original violet chasuble and crucifix which he had when buried and which were preserved after the first exhumation for the canonical recognition of 1906. A further display case contains the Complete Works (13 volumes) and the Letters (8 volumes) of Saint Vincent, along with several biographies. On a press against the wall between the two windows is a statuette of Saint Joseph which Vincent received as a gift from Cardinal Luigi Lambruschini. A display case to the right contains the original plaster mask of his face made immediately after his death, the plaster cast of his hands and the candle which was lighting when he died, and another one to the left holds a handwritten mathematics copybook and a small case with the image of the Mother of Divine Love which he wore on his wrist so that it could be kissed in place of his hand. There are other display cases against the left-hand wall containing his hat, gloves, umbrella, razor, and also his cup, bowl, cutlery, shoes and the long-handled fork and spoon of Ven. Elisabetta Sanna.

Entering the chapel, above the original altar where Saint Vincent often celebrated daily Mass, there is a large *papier maché* crucifix. Above this, leaning out at an angle to the wall, is a large painting of the Trinity in oil on wood (estimated to date to the mid 19th century) which represents God the Father with his arms open and the triangle symbolising the Blessed Trinity behind his head, the Holy Spirit portrayed as a dove and, below, the Son in the form of a host and chalice resting on the hemisphere of the earth, all three divine persons radiant with light. The shape of the painting suggests that the wood was originally the head of a bed. Also of particular interest are the images of the Stations of the Cross which Pallotti himself placed up high around the other three walls. On the right-hand wall is a painting of the Mother of Divine Love whom Saint Vincent held in great veneration, which was commissioned by him and in all probability painted by the artist Serafino Cesaretti. On the same wall and on that opposite the altar are two very striking paintings of the crucifixion: the first connects the cross with the image of a winepress, and the other depicts two contrasting worlds: the world which is open to Christ and the one which is hardened against him; it is towards the latter that Christ directs his loving gaze from the Cross.

On the small door at the entrance of his room is a small notice stating that Saint Vincent spent the last years of his life here, that is, from Lent 1846 to the day of his death on January 22nd 1850. Beneath this is also a small sign with a list of different places to which a pin is attached with a small chain: when Pallotti went out he would put the pin in a hole next to the place on the list where he was to be found. In this small room he heard the confessions of priests and other male penitents of every social background and

profession from 1846. Entering the room, immediately on the wall to the left are the Meditations (31 points) of Saint Vincent on the Eucharist for every day of the month along with a Passion Clock (24 points). In the right-hand section of the room is an inlaid writing desk from his family home, above which is a painting representing the Madonna Co-Redemptrix. Above this is a large painting representing Our Lady of Sorrows, called "the Pietà". On the walls hang various other pictures that belonged to Vincent Pallotti, including those of Saint Vincent de Paul, Saint Francis Xavier, the meeting between Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Dominic, and of Saint Benedict Joseph Labre (called the beggar of God) to whom Saint Vincent had great devotion. In the left-hand part of the room is a wardrobe divided in two to accommodate a kneeler and a representation of Calvary which, according to tradition, was prepared personally by Pallotti: it is comprised of a wooden cross bearing the figure of a bloodied Christ, flanked by two empty wooden crosses, with a painting of the hill of Calvary as a background. Attached to the central cross is Pallotti's handwritten inscription in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, 'Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews' (cf. Jn 19:19-20), below which he wrote some resolutions regarding his spiritual life which date to 1816. The base on which the knees rest is inclined at an angle in order to discourage sleep. Pallotti spent much time in prayer before this realistic Calvary which helped him to meditate on the sufferings of Christ. Beside it is a bookcase containing some books used by Pallotti, including a Bible in Latin in 6 volumes. Hanging on the walls are various pictures representing saints venerated by him, such as Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Stanislaw Kostka etc. Two paintings of particular importance are the Mother and Child, called 'Our Lady of the Precious Blood', and the pencil sketch, drawn by Pallotti himself, of the portrait of Pietro Paolo Pallotti, his father, with the handwritten note of the Saint. Pallotti's small bed is also here, on which he lay at the moment of his death, with sheets and covers of the time. The bed is made from a large stuffed chair over which is stretched a coarse straw mattress which was imposed by the doctors during his final illness; it is covered by a sheet and a rough, ordinary quilt of the time. On this bed he spent his final moments and from it gave his final blessing to his spiritual children: 'The Congregation will be blessed by God and will prosper; and I say this to you not because I believe it, but I am certain of it!' For about a month after his death, several people experienced a scent of balsam in the room, attested to also by Mons. Angelini, civil lieutenant of the Vicariate of Rome at the time.

## **2. LETTER OF CONGRATULATIONS TO POPE FRANCIS AND THE REPLY FROM THE VATICAN**

**On March 18th, the following letter of congratulation was sent to the newly-elected Pope Francis in the name of the entire Union of Catholic Apostolate:** Dear Pope Francis, the Union of Catholic Apostolate, founded by the Roman priest Saint Vincent Pallotti, in its religious and lay components, is very happy to greet you on the occasion of your election as Bishop of Rome and Pastor of the entire Church, and to express our profound joy for this event of the Spirit. In the name of the entire Union we extend our best wishes for a holy and fruitful pontificate, to which we unite ourselves from this time on with the love and the passion already shown by you. We implore the constant and continuous guidance of the Holy Spirit in every moment of your life and assure you of our fervent prayers and of our communion. Our holy Founder, whom you know well through his sons and daughters in the archdiocese of Buenos Aires, has left us a great spiritual inheritance/patrimony and an 'audacious' charism: "To revive faith and rekindle charity"; and with the grace of God we will continue to be faithful to it in communion with the Church and under your guidance. Please accept our embrace as your children. In communion, Fr. Jeremiah Murphy, SAC, President; Fr. Rory Hanly, SAC, General Secretary.

**On May 29th 2013 the following response was sent from the Vatican:** The Holy Father Francis appreciated the warm good wishes which you, along with Fr. Rory and also in the name of the Pallottine Family, sent to him on the occasion of his election to the Chair of Peter. His Holiness, in expressing deep gratitude for this gesture of devoted homage, urges you to continue to pray for him in person and for his universal ministry and, invoking on each of you the abundance of the gifts of the Lord and the special protection of the Virgin Mary, is pleased to grant the Apostolic Blessing, willingly extending it to all of those who are dear to you. I take this opportunity to confirm my feelings of distinct esteem, most devoted in the Lord, Bishop Peter B. Wells, Mons. Peter B. Wells, *Assessor*.

## **3. ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COORDINATION COUNCIL OF THE UNION IN GERMANY**

The German NCC gathered for its annual meeting from June 14th to 16th 2013 at the instituted of the Society in Friedberg.