



UAC NEWSLETTER

August 2013



Dear sisters and brothers in the Union,

we are very happy to present to you in this newsletter **a note on Saint Vincent and the apostolate of evening schools**, along with other news from the Union.

1. SAINT VINCENT AND THE APOSTOLATE OF EVENING SCHOOLS

As part of the general historical context, it is worth noting that at the time of Saint Vincent, in contrast to many countries, school in the Papal States was not obligatory, with the result that most of the population did not know how to read or write.

In 1819, one year after priestly ordination, Saint Vincent began to preach in public squares in the evening, in order to bring the Gospel to those who did not go to church so easily, after which he would lead all who were willing, including children, to the church of S. Nicola degli Incoronati (demolished in 1938, it was located behind the Carceri Nuove, via Giulia), for a night prayer gathering (oratory). However, it became necessary to organise a separate gathering for the children in order to meet their particular needs. Thus, Vincent came to an arrangement with a layman named Giacomo Casoglio, a carver with a shop on via Larga, a side street of via del Pellegrino, who, while Vincent gathered the adults in the church, taught the children to read and write and explained the catechism to them in his small workshop, also getting them to sing. Thus began the evening schools, which the rector of S. Nicola degli Incoronati, Mons. Giannoli, supported with economic assistance.

In 1823, Casoglio died and was succeeded by the lawyer Michele Gigli. In 1835, Pallotti formed a group of cooperators who gave a monthly contribution to the maintenance of the schools. In 1837, there were two such schools: one in Borgo, between the Tiber and the Vatican, and the other in via della Maschera d'Oro, near Piazza Navona. When cholera spread through the city, Vincent put the school premises at the disposal of the sick, and Gigli, having given himself generously to help the cholera victims, was himself infected and died on September 2nd 1837. Saint Vincent used this painful occasion to reorganise the two schools, himself taking over their direction and distributing offices and work among members of the Union. Among the laity, the lawyer Giuseppe Venuti distinguished himself in this apostolate, but Canon Luigi Ricci, a simple, trustworthy and loyal collaborator of Saint Vincent and a specialist in Gregorian chant, dedicated himself in the evening schools more than anyone else (his name is in eighth place in the list of April 1835 of the first people enrolled in the Catholic Apostolate - cf. OOC V, pp. 3-5). There are numerous letters from Pallotti to Ricci; as an example, we quote that of September 23rd 1837: "God will bless all of your hard work for the Schools, and all of the other holy works of the Pious Society (ie. Union) (...). I like the print of the award certificate (...). You know me in everything; you read the feelings of my heart" (OCL II, p. 210). Saint Vincent obtained the help necessary to sustain this work through different donations from supporters among the nobility (among the principal ones were Duke Lorenzo Sforza Cesarini, Prince Baldassare Boncompagni and Princess Borghese) and from parish priests who contributed some scudi each month, and he increased the income of the schools to 500 scudi, allowing him to open a new one in Vicolo dell'Arancio near the Quirinale. The number of students reached 500; their general communion of 1838 was celebrated by Cardinal Ugo Pietro Spinola on Sunday April 29th in the church of Sant'Ivo della Sapienza (where St. Vincent also opened a prayer gathering for children on holy days), with the participation of the aforementioned principal benefactors (cf. OCL II, p. 263).

Before leaving Rome for Camaldoli in Frascati in 1839 because of a grave illness, Pallotti himself suggested Mons. Carlo Luigi Morichini, his student at the tutorials in the Sapienza University and future cardinal, as director and promoter of the evening schools. Morichini's leadership was much appreciated by the Vicariate of Rome and great concern was expressed to Pallotti that the monsignor would continue to direct the two schools: "Therefore I don't believe it necessary for anything to be added", wrote Pallotti to him (OCL III, p. 129). Saint Vincent, however, sensed that some problems were approaching also regarding the evening schools and, for this reason, wrote as follows to Melia on July 30th: "Reflect whether you think it may be opportune to have the Night Schools under the protection of Cardinal Frasoni. Think about it and let me know. Because I fear something against this work too" (OCL III, pp. 85-87).

These schools were directed particularly towards young trades people who, despite their young age, had to work during the day in order to earn a living and support their families. Apart from elementary education, the schools aimed to provide religious education. The teaching of the catechism and spiritual exercises were

occasions for deepening the Christian spirituality which these young workers experienced, for example, during religious feasts. Beyond educating the students, the schools also provided a true charitable service for young people of poor economic means. The Union provided the premises, teachers and teaching materials, all free of charge but, despite this, family and work problems sometimes caused the young people to abandon their schooling. During each lesson some time was devoted to religion. Feast day vigils were reserved for prayer. Lessons began an hour and a half after sunset and lasted an hour and a quarter. The students were accompanied afterwards to their homes in groups.

2. THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF THE CATHOLIC APOSTOLATE (CSAC)

The XXV General Chapter of the Congregation took place at the Provincial house of the Italian Province of the Sisters, via Porta Maggiore (Roma), from July 21st to August 10th, with the general theme *"Let us respond to the call of New Evangelisation in full communion with all, like Mary in the Cenacle, in the symphony of the Spirit"*. Both the opening and closing Masses were celebrated in the church of SS. Salvatore in Onda, presided over by Fr. Jacob Nampudakam SAC, Rector General of the Society, joined by other members of the Generalate community. On August 6th, the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, the Sisters elected Sr. Ivete Garlet CSAC (Brazil) as the new Superior General; Sr. Ivete already served as General Superior from 1995 to 2007 and worked in Mozambique for the last few years. On August 7th, Sr. Carmel Therese Favazzo (USA) was elected Vicar General, and Srs. Stella Maria Marotta, Venicia Meurer (Brazil) and Lilly Nanat (India) were elected General Councillors.

Sunday July 28th was dedicated to reflecting, as Union of Catholic Apostolate, on the Pallottine charism in the light of the New Evangelisation, with the presence of many members of the Union, particularly from various LCCs in Italy. Fr. Jacob gave a reflection rich in content, asking many questions around "how" the Union can become an effective instrument for evangelising the different cultures and peoples, through the strength and relevance of our charism. These questions were further discussed in small groups, and among key elements held to be indispensable for the realisation of the Pallottine charism in the evangelisation of various cultures were the following: the need to develop the contemplative dimension of the charism; the need to give strong concrete witness in our lived relationships within and beyond the Union for the realisation of the ecclesial model of communion which Pallotti desired; the need for missionary dynamism, gift of the Spirit of Jesus which is born of and grows in the Cenacle, through which members can become truly effective apostles in the Church and the world.

We thank the Lord for Sr. Serena and for the members of the outgoing Council and ask his blessing on them. We ask the Lord to bless Sr. Ivete and the members of the new Council with wisdom and goodness and strength so that they may guide the Congregation in the pathways of the Spirit according to the charism of St. Vincent in order to live ever more fully its service as an integral part of the Union for the good of the Church and the world.

3. SOUTH AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF PALLOTTINE STUDIES (ISEP) IN SANTA MARIA, BRAZIL

The second stage of the VIIth gathering of ISEP, a live-in course of Pallottine studies and shared reflection, took place at the Colegio Maximo Palotino from July 5th-17th. These gatherings have taken place each year in July since 1992 and are considered to be an integral part of Pallottine formation for the Union. This year, 22 people from various parts of Brazil and 1 from Colombia took part, guided and animated by a team of members coordinated by Fr. Angelo Londero.

4. PALLOTTINE MISSIONARY WEEK AND WORLD YOUTH DAY, BRAZIL

Pallottine Missionary Week, organised by the Commission for Pallottine Youth and members of the Pallottine family in Brazil, took place in Curitiba from July 15th-21st, with about 70 young people from Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Mozambique and Portugal being hosted by families in the Pallottine parish of St. Joseph. The programme included times of prayer, reflection and catechesis, along with various missionary and cultural activities, including visiting the elderly, and helped the participants to deepen their knowledge of the Pallottine charism and the spirit of the Union (For photographs and video, see www.pallottineyouth.net). The young people then travelled to Rio de Janeiro for World Youth Day, which one young Pallottine participant described as 'a true Cenacle, as desired by St. Vincent, [in which] there were different languages, gifts, charisms, united under one Light and one Cross, where everyone understood each other and grew together. A true time of grace in which we experienced the reviving of faith and the rekindling of charity. The mission which flows from this prodigious encounter with Christ and with his Vicar, and with our brothers and sisters, is the motto of WYD: "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28, 19)" (Edvaldo Betioli Filho, Brazil).