



# UAC NEWSLETTER

September/October 2013



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

we are happy to present to you in this newsletter **a summary of the process that led to ecclesiastical approval of the Union**, adapted from the text “The Charism of St. Vincent Pallotti. Origin, Development, Identity” which was published by the Union in 2004, along with other news from the Union.

## **1. The process leading to ecclesiastical approval for the Union**

Ten years ago, on October 28, 2003, the Union of Catholic Apostolate was approved by the Pontifical Council for the Laity (PCL) as an International Public Association of the Faithful of Pontifical Right. It was a long process to arrive at this. At this time of the anniversary we remember the most important steps.

Immediately after the UAC came into being in 1835, Vincent Pallotti requested episcopal blessing from the then Cardinal Vicar of Rome, Carlo Odescalchi, which was granted on April 4, 1835. Thereby, a first ecclesiastical approval was given. Then on July 11, 1835, Pope Gregory XVI granted his blessing to the work.

On March 25, 1838, with a contract, the Pontifical Support Commission transferred the Fuccioli College to the Union, whereby the latter was recognised implicitly by the Church as a public legally-entitled Union for the diocese of Rome. Yet, although the Church approved the Union, its program was soon perceived as presumptuous. In July 1838, it was even decreed that the Union be dissolved, but the Decree of Dissolution was not issued because Pallotti succeeded in convincing Pope Gregory otherwise.

Pallotti’s total foundation could not develop more fully within his lifetime, also because of the ecclesiastical and canonical prerequisites of his time. Thus, he first sought to achieve ecclesiastical approval for the congregation of priests and brothers, when it, along with the congregation of sisters, developed within the Union during the succeeding years. It was Pallotti’s firm conviction that these congregations were required in order to secure the spread of the Union.

This situation remained essentially unchanged until Vatican II. In April 1854, Pope Pius IX ordered the title to be changed to “of the missions”. After this, the communities were concerned with striving to achieve ecclesiastically recognised constitutions. The Pallottine Sisters attained a first approbation in 1886, the Pallottine Fathers and Brothers in 1894, and the Pallottine Missionary Sisters in 1901. Only in June 1947 did it become possible to use the original title “Catholic Apostolate” once again.

After the Second Vatican Council an opportunity arose to realise the Union in all its fullness, which had never been the case before. The Preamble to the Law of the Society of Catholic Apostolate, drafted by a commission mandated by the XII Extraordinary General Chapter of the Pallottine Fathers and Brothers, and adopted by most of the member communities was and remains a dynamic stimulus in striving for a contemporary realisation. After the jubilee year of 1985 – celebrating 150 years of the Union’s existence – the conviction grew that ecclesiastical approval should now be sought.

A first working paper was published in February 1995. Finally, after a long dialogue within the Pallottine family leading to three revisions of this paper, the General Coordination Council (GCC) asked the PCL for recognition of the Union of Catholic Apostolate and approval of its General Statutes in a letter delivered on March 8th 1999. In his reply, Archbishop Stanisław Ryłko, Secretary of the PCL, raised a question regarding whether the PCL was the competent Dicastery of the Holy See to give eventual recognition to the Union of Catholic Apostolate and approve its Statutes. The GCC studied the letter and decided that the best response would be to seek a meeting with Archbishop Ryłko. In the subsequent dialogue, Archbishop Ryłko suggested that the Union prepare a Historical-Juridical Motivation in order to give a justification for the GCC’s decision to direct its request to the PCL.

Father Hubert Socha SAC, Professor of Canon Law at the Pallottine Pontifical Faculty of Theology at Vallendar, Germany, agreed to elaborate a draft document, which was subsequently presented to experts in Canon Law, both within the UAC and outside, in order to gather valuable suggestions. The GCC then

examined these comments and suggestions. After two years, the GCC finally decided to present the "motivation" to the Holy See. With a letter dated 25 February 2002, the Historical/Juridical Motivation was presented to the PCL. Basically the document is a carefully researched paper that describes the beginnings and the historical development of the charism of St. Vincent Pallotti.

On March 7<sup>th</sup> 2003, a letter was received from the Holy See stating that the "motivation" was accepted, and that the PCL would be the Dicastery to officially approve the General Statutes of the UAC. Six months later, the PCL communicated the news that it was erecting the Union of Catholic Apostolate as a public international association of the faithful, of pontifical right, at the same time approving the Statutes for a period of five years *ad experimentum*. This decree was signed on October 28, 2003.

While we remember gratefully that this process came to a happy conclusion, much still needs to be done. Ten years later, Pallotti continues to challenge us: "Dedicate yourselves ...to the spreading of the Union, as if all of you were chosen by our Lord Jesus Christ to be its founder..." (OCC III 29).

**2. The 10th Anniversary of the Erection of the Union** has been celebrated throughout the Pallottine world. On October 26<sup>th</sup> in Rome, the First General Consultor, Fr. Adam Golec SAC, presided and preached at the Anniversary Mass of Thanksgiving in the church of Spirito Santo dei Napoletani, the theme of the Mass being "We seek your face, O Lord". At the beginning of the Liturgy of the Word, the Scriptures were carried in dance in procession to the altar, where Fr. Adam then received them held them up for the congregation. After the stimulating homily, there was great joy that 9 people made their Act of Apostolic Commitment, received by Corrado Montaldo, President of the Italian NCC. After this, all present renewed their Act of Apostolic Commitment together and after the Prayers of the Faithful, all prayed the special prayer for the 10th Anniversary in 2 choirs. At the end of the Eucharist, Fr. Gilberto Orsolin asked each person present to commit themselves to befriending someone in need and visiting them for at least an hour each week as a concrete gesture of solidarity, a going out with Christ to those on the peripheries of existence as Pope Francis has called us to.

After the Mass, those who were able went directly to St. Peter's Square to be a Pallottine presence at a meeting of Pope Francis with families, part of an international pilgrimage for families in Rome that weekend which was organised by the Pontifical Council for the Family.

**3. "Night of Nicodemus:** On 4<sup>th</sup> October 2013, this new initiative began in the church of SS. Salvatore in Onda, the spiritual centre of the Union. Every Friday evening from 20.00 to 22.00 there will be Eucharistic Adoration with the Sacrament of Reconciliation available, and members of the Union inviting people passing the church to come and spend a little time with the Lord and light a candle for their intentions. The idea was adapted from a similar initiative by Pallottines in the Czech Republic and there has been a good response so far from members and friends of the Union, from neighbours and from a good number of the general public.

**4. Change in personnel in the General Secretariat:** With the election of the new General Council of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate in August, Sr. Salete Maristella Cargnin CSAC has completed her time in Rome and returned to Brazil. Sr. Carmel Therese Favazzo CSAC is now representing their General Council on the General Secretariat. We wish Sr. Salete every blessing and happiness in her new mission and give thanks to God for her witness of Gospel life in the Pallottine family and her dedication, generosity and service particularly in the General Secretariat. A heartfelt welcome to Sr. Carmel Therese and we wish every blessing and fulfilment to her in her new mission.

**5. The First National Assembly of the Union in India:** was held at the Pallottine Animation Centre, Nagpur from October 1-4 2013. There were 58 delegates (priests and sisters representing each of the three Core Communities and 18 lay people, including 2 consecrated lay women) and 4 observers (2 Cenacle Sisters and 2 lay men) from various parts of the country. Talks were given on the main theme, "Together we journey together we serve" (Fr. Vijay Thomas), "Pallotti's Vision and Relevance of UAC in the Indian Context" (Fr. John Peter Lazar), "Revival of Faith and Rekindling Charity" (Fr. Henry Angel) and "Collaboration and challenges in collaboration" (Fr. Joshi Emmanuel). Elections of the 7 NCC members (5 lay members, one sister and one priest) were held on October 3<sup>rd</sup> with the first meeting of the new NCC held after the conclusion of the Assembly on October 4<sup>th</sup>. The new NCC President and Vice President will be elected at the next NCC meeting, February 28<sup>th</sup> to March 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 (NCC meetings will take place twice yearly).