



UAC NEWSLETTER

December 2013



Dear sisters and brothers in the Union,

we are very happy to present to you in this newsletter a synthesis of the life of **Giovanni Allemand**, prepared by Fr. Jan Kupka SAC, along with other news from the UAC.

1. Giovanni Allemand (1799-1835):

Giovanni Allemand, Roman priest, was one of the closest collaborators of Saint Vincent Pallotti. His name is found both on the list of those first numbered in the Catholic Apostolate and among the participants in the first meeting of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, which took place on July 14th 1835 in S. Maria in Carinis (cfr. *OOCC V*, pp. 3-7). This means that Giovanni Allemand actively participated in the beginnings of the foundation of the Union of Catholic Apostolate.

Giovanni Allemand was born on November 9th 1799 in Rome. His father Giuseppe Allemand came from Reves, diocese of Toulon (France). In 1795 he married Maria Cavallini. The third born from their marriage was baptised in the parish church of S. Maria sopra Minerva with the names Pietro, Giovanni, Gaspare.

During his youth, Giovanni Allemand attended the oratory at S. Maria del Pianto, where he met Vincent Pallotti and began to collaborate with him in the formation of young people. Pallotti became his spiritual director. After priestly ordination in 1823 he was appointed professor of Sacred Scripture in the Roman Seminary. The Popes Leo XII and Pius VIII very much esteemed his great learning in theology and in the biblical sciences. In the context of the Church of Rome he received important duties as censor of the theological academy and consultor of the Congregation of the Index.

Giovanni Allemand died in Rome on August 29 1835 at 36 years of age, in the year of the foundation of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, and was buried in the church of S. Maria sopra Minerva. Precisely on August 29th 1835, in a letter addressed to Augustine Wunder, Vincent wrote: "The priest Giovanni Allemand, professor of Sacred Scripture in the Seminary and consultor of the Index, has passed into eternity. O enviable death! Oh truly holy death and of a great saint! I do not think that he will need suffrages, but charity in such circumstances clearly obliges us to multiply them" (*OCL II*, l. n. 348, p. 80).

This testimony regarding the death of 'a great saint' This testimony regarding the death of a "great saint" shows that Vincent Pallotti knew the priest Giovanni Allemand well and experienced a deep understanding with him both on the spiritual path and in the field of apostolic commitment. This emerges from the letters which Pallotti addressed to his spiritual son. On July 22nd 1834 he wrote: "holiness consists in doing the will of God. Therefore, one will become holy (...) in literary discourses, in scientific academies, in professorships, in scholarly circles, no less than in the crowd of tax collectors and sinners: in a word one will become holy by becoming all things to all people (cf. 1 Cor 9:22) in order to win all to Jesus Christ" (*OCL II*, l. n. 308, p. 24). And Giovanni Allemand lived his path of holiness not only in scientific research and teaching, but also by exercising charity towards his neighbour. In "Remembrance of Don Giovanni Allemand", Pallotti wrote of him: "he regarded himself as least of all and helped to relieve all who were miserable with advice, with alms, and by tirelessly comforting, supporting and hearing the confessions of poor sick people in the hospitals of Rome" (*OOCC XIII*, p. 985).

The memory of Giovanni Allemand is also preserved in general literature. The "Annals of the religious sciences", in the part dedicated to the death of important figures, published biographical details on Giovanni Allemand (Rome 1835, vol. I, pp. 457-459), which read: "Neither honours nor his

beloved studies could cool in the slightest the ardent love which he exercised in his priestly ministry and a similar zeal in obtaining the salvation of souls. The prayers with which he strengthened his spirit were continuous and he severely mortified his body with penances" (ibidem, p. 458).

The spiritual bond of Vincent Pallotti with Giovanni Allemand and their engagement in apostolic works show that people of excellent spiritual quality were to be found in the group of collaborators of our Saint. At this point we would like to recall that Vincent Pallotti also cultivated relationships of friendship and collaboration with Giovanni's sister, Marianna (1797-1862), and brother, Filippo (1804-1864).

2. The 7th Annual Walter Silvester Memorial Lecture 2013 was given by Fr. Frank Donio SAC, Director of the Catholic Apostolate Centre, Washington DC, USA, and member of the GCC, to about 160 participants on Tuesday October 29th at the Catholic University of Australia, Melbourne, on the topic "New Pope, New Evangelisation - new way of being Church". The presentation was 'an engaging and fascinating blend of history, spirituality and current Church thinking, with a description of Pope Francis' style of service used as the connecting thread' (Pat Heywood).

3. Poland - New members of the Union:

During a Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr. Stanisław Rudzinski SAC in Ołtarzew on December 14th, as part of the Union retreat from 13-15 December 2013, two long-standing members of the Warsaw Queen of Apostles community made their Act of Apostolic Commitment in the presence of an animator of the community, of Sr. Barbara Rohde SAC who represented the NCC President and of all the retreat participants. The retreat was also attended by long-time collaborators of the Seminary who are not formal members of the Union.

4. Christmas Novena, Manaus, Amazonia, Brazil:

The main theme of the Christmas novena this year was "Christ, our Hope" - hope for humanity, hope for the world. Here the novena is celebrated very much as an event of evangelisation. All who are in any way involved in pastoral or community work are divided into small teams to go throughout the parish for eight consecutive days to visit as many families as possible, particularly Catholics with little or no involvement in parish life. The structure of the novena for each visit is very simple: listening to and reflecting and sharing on the Word of God in Scripture together followed by prayer for all of the family. During the visits, information is gathered on the spiritual and material needs of the families, who are informed of parish activities and invited to come to the church. The teams speak to the children about catechesis and find out about the sacramental situation of family members. If needed, a family may also receive financial assistance. On the evening of December 23, all of the teams and those visited who accept the invitation gather in the church for a prayer celebration, followed by a modest agape and much enjoyment. While fewer than desired, some people always return to church through this novena. It is not easy to get to many families: some are afraid to open the door; other times, a mother invites the team in, and the father and children, who had simply been watching television, suddenly find that they must leave immediately on urgent business! Many other people must also work late, especially in the pre-Christmas time. However, undaunted by such setbacks and seemingly limited fruit, the teams set out bravely each year from house to house to visit as many families as possible with the good news of God's love. Midnight Mass, known as the Mass of the Cockerel, is celebrated on the night of the 24th, followed by the Ceia do Natal, the Christmas Dinner.

5. 'Bethlehem' Community of Families, Bielsko-Biała Pallottine parish, Poland:

On the Feast of the Holy Family in 2003, 21 members of the 'Bethlehem' Community of Families joined the Union of Catholic Apostolate. On the same feast this year, December 29th, 10 years later, the community, which now has 53 UAC members, had Mass in the Pallottine parish church, followed by refreshments in the Cenacle room.