



UAC NEWSLETTER

August 2014

Dear sisters and brothers in the Union,

we are happy to present to you in this newsletter a sharing regarding the pastoral initiative called "**A Light in the Night**" in Ostia, Rome, prepared by Sr. Sheena Madathiparambil CSAC, along with other news from the Union.

1. "A LIGHT IN THE NIGHT" - EVANGELISATION IN OSTIA, ROME

When I arrived in Ostia in 2002, the Vicariate of Rome organised a week of mission for young people. I was able to participate, and it was a very important and enriching experience. In fact, a decision was taken, along with those leading it, to continue "**a light in the night**" every month. It was a way of meeting many young people and families and of inviting them into our church of St. Thérèse to remain before Jesus. This initiative was welcomed by my community as a call of the Lord and a blessing, and so we opened the doors of our hearts and of the church to Christ in order to allow our brothers and sisters to enter. Pope Francis is strongly urging us to become more and more aware of the new evangelisation, and this invitation is an opportunity for all to meet Christ, to bring to light the thirst which everyone has to encounter Truth within ourselves, to place our desires, our sufferings and our hopes into the heart of Christ. The encounter with Christ generally does not leave people indifferent; there is always a spark kindled, opening up a new path.

Everything begins with the leaders' meeting: we meet in our Community of St. Therese, eating a pizza together, to share and tell each other about our lived experiences, dividing the tasks and, before beginning the vigil, we go into the church to share a moment of prayer.

Afterwards, the priest gives a mandate to the four groups: one for evangelisation, one for the music, one for welcoming and one for prayer. The group for evangelisation goes out to where young people gather to give the invitation, and those who accept it are accompanied to the church. Here the young people are welcomed by members of the other group who give each of them a piece of paper on which to write whatever their hearts suggest. Each person is accompanied before Jesus in the Eucharist with a nightlight in hand for a moment of prayer. They leave the piece of paper before the Lord and take another one containing a phrase from the Word of God. There are always priests available in the church to hear confessions.

In this experience we have found that there are young people and families who have not been in church for some time and have not confessed for years. In quest'esperienza abbiamo constatato che ci sono ragazzi o famiglie che da qualche tempo non entravano in chiesa e da anni non si confessavano. Here we see that the grace of God is ready to act when given the opportunity.

Whoever wishes may also leave their email address in order to receive news of the next meeting. All means are good for communicating and spreading the love of Christ, and we as Pallottines must interpret the signs of the times, collaborating with all who intend to work to make Christ and the Kingdom of God known.

In my experience I realised that for young people to fulfil themselves, they need to develop and mature in rationality and in freedom in order to be able to live in love. Sometimes a young person has a kind of crisis because of a friend being missing, or a small failure, or a lack of decision or the effort of trying to accept themselves as they are. Young people have difficulty accepting sacrifice and renunciation. Above all, they have a lot of fear of making definitive choices regarding their future. Listening to and understanding them better requires much patience, but above all, much love. Young people love being understood and loved, and feel the need for this. Contact with their families is necessary in order to understand them more fully. Great courage is needed in order to do everything with love as did our beloved Father Vincent Pallotti, and to always do everything for the glory of God.

The Annual Course in Pallottine Spirituality in which I had the grace to participate confirmed me more fully in my choice of life and in love for the Founder and for the spirituality which he left us as a gift.

My community and our fellow Pallottines found ourselves in this mission without having planned it and with little information, but love for our charism made us open and convinced us to take it on and make it our own.

2. UAC NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA

The Australian NCC President, Cheryl Sullivan, writes: There are two happenings which I would like to share; the first, the death of two long-time members of the UAC, so a somewhat sad occasion, and the second a beginning, an evening where twenty one people enrolled to undertake formation in the UAC with the view of commitment. So, as so often in life, we have endings and new beginnings combining together.

Pat Heywood died on 16 July 2014. Many of you may remember her from the two UAC General Congresses, in Poland and Rome. Pat had spent more than fifty years of her life following the vision of Saint Vincent - as teacher/educator, contributor to her parish, friend to many. When the UAC was formally established with the promulgation of the General Statutes, Pat took the role as the Executive Officer of the UAC and established the annual Walter Silvester Lecture and developed the Saint Vincent Pallotti Scholarship Trust, which offers scholarships to lay people, enabling them to complete education, attend conferences, undertake a specific piece of work, all with the aim of enhancing the apostolic outcomes of those with whom they work. Pat worked in each of these roles with skill and diligence, always seeking new ways of bringing the life and charism of Saint Vincent alive within the diocese.

The second life I would like to reflect on is that of Betty Spence. Betty died on 26 May 2014, again a woman who had followed the charism of Saint Vincent for most of her more than ninety years of life. She was a wife and a mother, and a friend to many. Betty and her husband Jim (who predeceased her) worked for many years at Pallotti College Millgrove and continued to live in the area, assisting and participating in the life and works of the college. Her apostolic life was lived in her own neighbourhood, constantly reaching out to all who came in contact with her; indeed it was rare to visit Betty's home without finding others there and she had an amazing listening ear. One of Betty's sayings quoted in her Mass booklet stated: "My house is small – No mansion for a millionaire – But there is room for love – And there is room for friends – That's all I care". Not seeing Betty at the Sunday Eucharist at Pallotti College is a poignant reminder of her faithful and love-filled life. So, two women, living their lives so differently and fully, each were following their specific vocation in the spirit of Saint Vincent. When Saint Vincent wrote "Never relent in your apostolic work. If you do that you work out of obligation rather than out of love", I think it was people like Pat and Betty that he had in mind. Both women certainly lived their lives in the apostolate, working out of love.

On a different note, on Sunday 17 August, a group of over thirty people gathered at St. Christopher's parish Syndal, a Pallottine Parish for many years with parishioners well imbued with the spirit of Saint Vincent, for an event titled "Come and See the UAC". Lorraine, the UAC formation worker, encouraged us to hold such an evening to invite people who already had this knowledge of Vincent to hear more, and to offer them an opportunity to undertake formation with the intention of considering making a commitment to become a formal member of the Union. The invitations were sent broadly to people in other SAC-ministered parishes and on the night over thirty people gathered. The evening events outlined the charism of Saint Vincent and the UAC's integral role in his vision, an overview of the formation process and a shared meal. Over twenty people indicated their wish to participate in the formation process – so an exciting new time for us in Australia, as we pray that with this formation many more will recognise their specific vocation and in turn continue to being the love of God to all they meet. Let us continue to pray for and with each other.

3. ANNUAL UAC MEETING IN THE IVORY COAST

The annual meeting of the Union was held from June 6th to 9th, during the weekend of Pentecost, at the Bethany Retreat Centre, near the Pallottine Merciful Saviour Parish in Yopougon, Abidjan. It was attended by about 25 members of the Union, members of local councils from Yamoussoukro, Grand Bereby and Yopougon, who gathered to pray and reflect on the life of the Union in days marked by prayer and training sessions.

There were three presentations during this session. The first, given by Fr. Franck Allatin SAC, outlined the foundations of a fruitful apostolate: union and configuration to Christ, a strong conviction and vision, knowledge of the cultural environment where the apostolate is exercised and the research and development of skills. Further reflection and discussion regarding this topic was undertaken in workshops. The second was given by Fr. Gerard Kamegeri SAC, who presented the different aspects of Pallottine spirituality with an emphasis on the theme of the sequela Christi (the following of Christ). The third was animated by Fr. Zenon Bazan SAC, who spoke about the crises in the various stages of human maturity.

After the sessions, participants spoke of the life of the Union in general. Each local community presented a report on their challenges, projects and activities. Some of the local councils are developing well through the enrolment of new members, whereas that of Yamoussoukro is losing motivation. After these reports, the office of the NCC presented its annual and financial report, which was approved by the Assembly. The report noted the difficulty for all the NCC members to meet given the remoteness of their places of residence and the resulting cost entailed in such encounters.

One of the main benefits of this annual session is the choice of a common theme for all of the Union in the Ivory Coast. Following exchanges, the theme chosen for this year is: "Family, place of evangelization and sanctification". It is up to each LCC to organise activities and training sessions that focus on the family. Thus, at the next annual meeting, we will take stock of what was achieved in each entity.

The three new members of the UAC who made their act of apostolic commitment last January, Mr. Alexis Kolga, Mr. Maurice Kentega and Mr. Elie Zongo, all from Grand Bereby, were presented during this annual meeting. Grand Bereby LCC therefore received encouragement from the whole assembly, since they remain faithful to their commitment despite exercising their apostolate in extremely difficult conditions.

At the end of three days of prayer and reflection, participants were encouraged by the NCC President Mrs. Christine Boussou, to keep alive the Pallottine charism while taking into account the realities of our country. Next year's annual session will be held in Yamoussoukro at the same time of the year.