



UAC NEWSLETTER

September-October 2014

Dear sisters and brothers in the Union,

we are happy to present to you in this newsletter a sharing on the experience of an Indian Pallottine of the Prabhu Prakash (Nagpur) Province, **Fr. Emmanuel Joshi SAC, working with Union groups**, along with other news from the Union.

1. AN EXPERIENCE OF ESTABLISHING AND ACCOMPANYING UNION GROUPS IN INDIA - FR. EMMANUEL JOSHI SAC

I have been actively involved with Union of Catholic Apostolate (UAC) groups for almost four years. The many meetings and symposiums in my Province to create awareness of our charism sparked a deeper interest within me, and I felt an urge to do something practical as a Pallottine to bring our Founder's vision for the Church to life. So I contacted a few active parishioners of the parishes in which I was working, expressing my wish to begin formation of lay people in the spirit and charism of St. Vincent, which led to a first meeting in Trivandrum on January 24, 2010, attended by nine lay people. During the meeting an introduction was given to the spirituality of Pallotti, the structure of the UAC and its unique position in the life of the Church. We decided to meet on the 2nd Saturday of every month for prayer, study and discussion, the number of participants gradually growing to 24.

After two years of formation, 14 lay faithful made their commitment in the UAC on the feast of St. Vincent. In his address to the gathering, Msgr. Eugene Pereira, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Trivandrum, said, "The new members of the UAC have made the Church proud, and it is a sign of laity emerging in the Church as an effective missionary force". One of the new UAC members expressed his feelings as follows: "I am extremely happy to be a Pallottine, with the vision that gives space for everyone in the Church to be an apostle according to the state and condition of one's life. I love Pallotti and his charism, because he makes me really feel that I am a missionary despite living with family and running my business".

Eight of the 14 new members were from the neighbouring diocese of Neyyattinkara, so that they had to travel a long distance in heavy traffic to attend the Trivandrum UAC meeting. It was therefore decided to start a UAC group at Neyyattinkara, also to facilitate the enrolment of others from their locality for formation in the Union. Together we visited St. Elizabeth's Pallottine Parish in this diocese, conducting a seminar on the life and charism of St. Vincent. Through the efforts of the parish priest, about 250 lay people attended, many of whom openly expressed their willingness to join the UAC. Consequently a new UAC group was formed there.

Presently, I am formator and spiritual adviser to these two UAC groups, which comprise 44 committed members. All are actively involved in their parishes as catechism teachers, Small Christian Community leaders, members of parish pastoral councils, of religious associations, participants in education, social and other ministries. Monthly meetings and study sessions are organized for each group on a regular basis.

The following are the principal activities undertaken by the lay UAC members during this year:

- UAC members twice gathered the inmates of the Rehabilitation Centre for Woman Prisoners for prayer and a shared meal with them
- A 700 sq. feet house was built for a poor family in the parish by collecting contributions from parishioners, the Vincent DePaul Society, the social service wing of the diocese and the Prabhu Prakash Pallottine Province of the Society, and blessed on January 17th 2014 by the Archbishop of Trivandrum.
- Every first Sunday of the month a woman suffering from cancer is given Rs. 1,000 as a small support.

- The UAC members collected Rs. 130, 000 from generous local people and met the expense a poor girl's marriage which was solemnized on September 2nd 2014

The members also come together for a Christmas celebration, the cultural festival of Onam, and two recollections each year. Events like birthdays and wedding anniversaries of lay UAC members are celebrated during the monthly UAC meetings. The children of UAC members are also specially honoured for their achievements in any field such as study, arts, sports or religion. Since family bonds are very strong here we try to ensure that the whole family and not just the individual alone journeys with the UAC.

The selfless and generous involvement of the lay members in various UAC activities is a source of great pastoral satisfaction and spiritual enrichment. Their walls at home are decorated with pictures, among others, of St. Vincent and of Mary, Queen of the Apostles. The UAC groups are self-reliant and collect monthly subscriptions from the members to meet various expenses. One thing that has struck me after working with UAC groups is the lack of a fixed model of how they should be organised. Groups differ from each other depending on their contexts. Every group is in the process of learning and growth, and so, every group has something to tell and inspire, making it quite enriching for a UAC group to know what is happening in other groups.

My earnest desire is that more of our confreres be empowered, encouraged and exposed to the 'UAC-in-practice'. I am optimistic about the UAC because I trust in the words of our dear dying Founder, "The Society will live and be blessed by God"; I believe that this includes the entire Union, comprising laity, religious and clergy, as co-responsible in the mission of the Church.

2. Celebration of the Feast of the Union in Spirito Santo dei Napoletani:

The 11th Anniversary of the erection of the Union as a public international association of the faithful of pontifical right was celebrated in the church of Spirito Santo dei Napoletani on October 25th 2014, the Saturday closest to the date of the actual anniversary, October 28th. The response for the Mass of the day was taken as the overall theme of the celebration: **"Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord"**. The celebration began at 3.30 pm with a time of Eucharistic Adoration in the spirit of the Cenacle, which consisted mostly of silent prayer periodically interspersed with prayers or short hymns, led by Fr. Gilberto Orsolin SAC with the collaboration of Sr. Bożena Olszewska SAC. This was followed by a concelebrated Eucharist, led by the General Secretary, Fr. Rory Hanly SAC, which was attended by many members of the Pallottine family from the Rome area and enriched greatly by the UAC choir. Fr. Nicola Gallucci SAC, Provincial of the Italian Regina Apostolorum Province, preached the homily during which, among many other things, he said: "[Jesus] himself calls his disciples to put out into the deep, "Duc in altum" (Lk 5: 4). This is the call of Jesus to the whole Union of Catholic Apostolate, that it may take up with courage, with a new dynamism, its responsibility to the Gospel and to humanity. We are asked to be prepared to evangelise, not to stand idly by locked up in the protective shell of an association which is turned in on itself, but to lift our gaze out to the deep, to the vast sea of the world, to cast our nets so that all may encounter the person of Jesus who makes all things new". The Rector General and Ecclesiastical Assistant, Fr. Jacob Nampudakam SAC, introduced the renewal of the Act of Apostolic Commitment by all present, during which he emphasised "passion" as a key element mentioned in Fr. Nicola's homily which should characterise our lives as members of the Union - we are called to be people of "passion" - passion for Christ, passion for the Gospel, passion for prayer, passion for the Church, passion for St. Vincent Pallotti, passion for service, passion for those who are poor and broken. After the communal renewal of the Act of Apostolic Commitment, Fr. Rebwar Audish Basa, an Iraqi priest of the Antonian Order of St. Ormizda of the Chaldeans, gave a moving testimony about the suffering of our Iraqi Chaldean Christian brothers and sisters and others, particularly with the spread of IS, and spoke particularly about the history and the current needs of St. Joseph's Orphanage, Alqosh, Nineveh, Iraq for which a collection was subsequently taken up during the offertory. As a postscript to the celebration, by an extraordinary twist of Divine Providence, the orphanage turns out to be situated in the very town of birth of Thomas Alkusi, one of St. Vincent's earliest collaborators and among those whose names featured on the first list of members of the Union; he was official representative of the Chaldean Church to the Holy See, professor of Oriental Languages in the College of Propaganda Fide and had Vincent Pallotti as his spiritual director (cf. UAC Newsletter - August-September 2012 for a synthesis of his life).