

He connects love of God and love of neighbour continuously in his writings and especially in his Appeal of May in 1835.

We too are called to reach out in our own times to invite others to the love of God and neighbour for the Kingdom of God which is a Kingdom of God's Love. With Vincent Pallotti who commissioned us as the ongoing founders of the Union, we are to appeal to the people of our own times with the same conviction that he had, to "everyone who has zeal for the glory of God and has compassion for the spiritual salvation of one's neighbour."

Our reasoning for this zeal on our part is similar to that of our Founder in his own perception of the world of his own time. We could apply his words to our local, national and global condition. "Whoever considers carefully the present state of the world regarding religion comes to the conclusion that, because there is much evil in our age, we have a great need of faith" (Appeal of May 1835).

We are therefore urged by the love of Christ to come together and evangelize together with "pure hearts" that are fashioned by the Holy Spirit into the likeness of Jesus Christ and to walk together for the Reign of God.

### **Questions for personal and community reflection:**

1. How would you describe "pure of heart" to the people in our society, particularly to our young people?
2. Following the lead of St. Vincent Pallotti, how would you word an invitation to join the Union?
3. What steps would you take to help our youth to understand the Pallottine charism and to put it into action?
4. How are you as a cenacle and as a national body working together for the Reign of God?

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USA*



# *Apostles for Today*

*Prayer and Reflection - January 2019*

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## **Holiness: A Path Travelled Together**

As Founder of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, St. Vincent Pallotti received the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to invite EVERYONE "who has zeal for the glory of God and has love and compassion for the spiritual salvation of his neighbour."

It is with deep gratitude to Pope St. John XXIII that religious congregations and other institutes of consecrated life were called to return to their original charism, and therefore to the inspiration of their founders, to renew within themselves the gift of the Holy Spirit that had been given to them through their founders. For me, Vincent Pallotti became alive with a message that moved into the very heart of humanity as it restored the spirit of the first Christians, all of whom were called to make Jesus known by the very fact that they accepted him as Lord and Saviour.

This was a time when the priests, sisters and brothers worked together to delve into the original inspiration that Pallotti had received. It was a period of study and of sharing to come to a better understanding of what had been passed on to us. It was a time of renewal that we entered into with one another with a deep desire to learn more about the charism that St. Vincent had received. This was a moment in our history that fostered mutual understanding and sharing, a period that restored the place of the laity within the vision of our Founder, a time when we were called to embrace the whole Body of Christ as a part of the Union. As a result of this study and interaction with one another and with the laity, we received the grace to know and love Vincent Pallotti and to be inspired by his vision not as something of the past but as a very real personal call in the present.

In the Appeal of May 1835, St. Vincent invites EVERYONE who has zeal for the glory of God and has love and compassion for the spiritual salvation of his neighbour. Such an invitation does appeal in fact to those whose hearts have already been touched by God's grace. It invites the people of Rome to come together to respond to God's loving call. They are to do this regardless of the specific calling of their vocation.

This association proposes to unite the evangelical action, the prayers and the offerings, not only of the members but also of all those who would cooperate with it, even once, for the reawakening of faith and piety among Christians and the multiplying of the means necessary to maintain and propagate the Catholic religion.

We find that from its inception in the vision of Pallotti everyone is included. And to emphasize this inclusion of the ALL, St. Vincent clarifies what he means.

Therefore, the association is formed in such a way that all Catholics may belong to it. They can be either clerics or laypersons, men or women, learned or illiterate, wealthy or indigent, nobles or commoners and persons of whatever vocation, state or fortune. Hence, those who cannot exercise the sacred ministry personally directly can still offer their support with their personal works, trade, profession, job, voluntary offerings and by opportunely utilizing their influence. Of course, all can cooperate with the efficacious means of prayer. Through this association then no one is excluded from cooperating in the Catholic Apostolate or from participating in its undertakings, merits and rewards.

In this lengthy and detailed appeal to the people of Rome, Pallotti, in quoting Pope St. Gregory the Great, reminds them that there is no sacrifice more acceptable to almighty God than the sacrifice of a heart filled with a zeal for the salvation of one's neighbour. And so he appeals to their love for God that is present within them to be able to reach out to others for the salvation of their souls. He is aware that this love of God has been placed in the hearts

of all of God's people for a communion with God and neighbour. This inspiration brings him to perceive the call of God to the ALL.

Throughout the invitation to the people of Rome, Pallotti appeals to the heart and to the capacity of the individual to respond in love to reach out to one's neighbour. "We are rather convinced that all truly Catholic hearts, all the truly zealous persons, who have at heart the salvation of their neighbour, the glory of God and the holy name of Jesus Christ, will answer with equal generosity and readiness the appeal which we make to their religious sensitivity and charity" (Appeal of May 1835). It is an appeal to come together for the glory of God and the name of Jesus. It is Vincent's vision of the Body of Christ united in action as well as joined in prayer. It is the heart of the Union of Catholic Apostolate to travel together in holiness and in apostolic action.

Throughout the Appeal of 1835 and the writings of St. Vincent Pallotti, there is emphasis on the Christian heart and its intentions. Undoubtedly, he gathers much of that from scripture itself as he refers to "all the truly Catholic hearts, all the truly zealous persons" who will answer the call. He would be in agreement with Pope Francis in the Encyclical "Rejoice and Be Glad" and would apply that scripture to the Union members: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

For Pallotti, there is no separation between love of God and love of neighbour and in both cases that love must come from the heart. This is the foundation of the Union where the members come together through the grace of God and do God's work as a body. And he goes beyond the members themselves to include anyone who would cooperate with them even once for the reawakening of faith and piety.

For Pope Francis, the beatitude speaks of those whose hearts that are simple, pure and undefiled and for a heart capable of love that does nothing that might harm, weaken or endanger that love. He points out that the bible uses the heart to describe our real intentions, the things we truly seek and desire, apart from all appearances. Pallotti would agree for our times that a heart that loves God and neighbour genuinely is a pure heart; it can see God.