



E-BULLETIN #42

"Let the holiness of God shine forth" (cf. Mt 5,16)

item 82

here is a Pallottine... please take your hats off!!

an "interview" with Fr Weiss Wolfgang sac – celebrating his Golden Jubilee of ordination



My confrere, Fr Rajesh, asked me for an interview and put a lot of questions to me. I thought it would be better to answer them not in the form of an interview, but by talking about my life and my experiences as a Pallottine.

Usually people laugh when I tell them that I was born in Frankenstein. Only a few know that this was the name of a little town in Silesia. The first Pallottines arrived in this town in 1919, from Limburg. They built a house, a church, a school.

A good number of young people became interested in the Pallottine way of life, and joined our Society. The first was Fr Karl Krautwurst, who later taught philosophy in the Novitiate and became the Assistant-Secretary at many General Assemblies, starting with the Extraordinary General Chapter of 1968/69. Then he became Secretary to the Technical-Judicial Commission which, after the General Assembly, prepared our Law. The second was Fr Bernhard Puschmann, for many years professor of Canon Law at our Seminary in Germany. And as well Fr Klaus Dehe, Fr Gerhard Christoph, Fr Hans Huppa who were missionaries in Australia and South Africa. And from the neighbouring villages too many young people found their way to us, or to the Pallottine Sisters. I'm thinking of Fr Alphonse Bleischwitz and his sister, Sr Caecilia. During WW II my grandparents celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary and, since they were benefactors of the "Pallottiner-Kloster", the Mass of thanksgiving was celebrated in the Pallottine church – and the grandparents wanted their grandchildren to be altar boys at this Mass. I was one of them.

After the war the German-speaking population had to leave Silesia. In northern Germany, where our family found a new home, I discovered that in Limburg the Pallottines had a school for late vocations. I wrote, applied, and was accepted. Then the "usual way": after High School graduation Novitiate in Olpe, Seminary in Vallendar-Schoenstatt.

In 1963, together with Fr Heinz-Heribert Rosenbaum, I went to Canada, studying History and Geography at the Universities of Alberta, in Edmonton and in Calgary. For one year I assisted at our Mission Station in Swan River, north of Manitoba. Then the preparation of the Extraordinary Chapter needed some “extraordinary” help. So I was called in 1967 to Rome, appointed as personal secretary to Fr Wilhelm Möhler. After five years I left my office in the hand of a young Irish priest and returned to Canada (by the way, the name of the young Irish priest was Séamus Freeman!). The big German-speaking parish in Kitchener, Ontario, kept me busy for the next six years.

Before Vatican Council II the language at our General Chapters was always Latin, but the change to the vernacular made it necessary to have translators. So I was called to the 1977 General Assembly as translator and got (not myself!) elected General Secretary, an office I held for twelve years. Then I was asked to go to England, parish priest at St Boniface’s, the German Mission in London. Since many of my predecessors were in London for many, many years (Fr Simmler 50 years, Fr Leushacke 38 years) I was convinced that I, too, would stay there for a long time. And I liked parish life very much.

But in 1992 there was again a General Assembly, and again I was asked to come and to translate, and again I had to stay in Rome for another twelve years as General Councillor to an Irish Rector General, now not so young anymore. And I am still here. Doing all kind of odd jobs, and I like doing them.

But I am also grateful for some pastoral work and experience. Since 1977 I have been involved with the Comunità di Sant’Egidio, a movement in the Church founded and directed by laypeople. Every Sunday I celebrate Mass for groups of the community – Mass for old people, for people with and without a handicap. And in the evening I quite often join them in evening prayer at Santa Maria in Trastevere, one of the oldest and most beautiful basilicas here in Rome.

Living under the same roof with our Founder is quite challenging. I am glad that across these years I have really got to know him. What strikes me very much is Pallotti’s capacity to listen, his availability, ever ready to take into consideration what others were saying, suggesting. And then his firm conviction: God, the infinite love and mercy; everyone is created in God’s image and likeness; all are called to belong to the people of God, called to accept, to live and to share God’s love, while respecting at the same time the variety of callings.

Looking back at all the years of belonging to the Pallottine Family – from my time as a student in the Minor Seminary to now already fifty years as a priest – I have to say that it was the small incidents, encounters, letters, conversations which helped me on my way. To decipher what some of the messages and messengers of God wanted to tell me was not always easy, but I trust that the Good Lord will continue to guide me.

Summa summarum, I am grateful and glad to be a Pallottine.

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Who do you say that I am?

You are Alpha and Omega, O Jesus
Eternal God, no Beginning or End,
Lord of all Seasons and of all Ages
On You, we and all, forever depend.

With the Father and the Holy Spirit
Co-equal, Triune God, Three in One,
Exist in Splendour, Majesty n Merit
Word Eternal, Father's Begotten.

Incarnate by the Spirit, Son of God
Born of the Virgin; the Son of Man,
God with us, by Prophets foretold
Emmanuel, fully Divine, fully Human.

Son of Mary n Carpenter, Nazarene
Our Pride n Fortress, Anointed One,
Son of David, Mediator n Sovereign
The Messiah n Father's Beloved Son.

Jesus, the name, the Highest Name
At Your Name bends every knee,
All people n tongues sing your fame
In Heaven n on earth hallowed be.

Author of Life, reason for all that is
Sustain all beings, live in our midst,
Maker of the Sky, Land n the Seas
By Your holy life our lives be blest.

Lord of the Universe, the Almighty
Earth and all it holds, night n day,
Nature and the spirits and all deity
And the Sun, the Moon n Stars obey.

Truly King of kings, n Lord of lords
Glory of Heaven and Joy of Angels,
Prince of Peace and God of gods
And Your reign above all far excels.

You, the Source of Life-giving Water
The Way, the Truth n the Real Light,
Our Resurrection and Life no other
The Morning Star, shining ever bright.

We are the Clay, You are the Potter
Our Creator, Maker and our Mender,
Leader, guide us, may we not falter
O Redeemer, Thy strong arms render.

You the True Vine, branches we are
We Thy sheep, You Good Shepherd,
God of Love, Our Master n Saviour
O keep us secure in Your Sheepfold.

Lamb of God, the Lamb of Sacrifice
Great High Priest, for us Crucified,
By Death on the Cross paid the price
In Thy Redeeming Blood we purified.

Pierced for us, Most Sacred Heart
Burning with love, Gentle n Fairest,
Forgive us the failings on our part
O Hidden Treasure, Pearl so Rarest.

The Holy Sacrament, the Living Bread
In this Eucharist we see Your Face,
Adoration to this Host, Most Sacred
God Himself, Worthy of all our praise.

You O Jesus, Hope of the hopeless
Unfailing Help, You are for sure,
Forgiver of sinners, You the Sinless
And Shelter to the homeless poor.

Wonder worker, Quenching drink
Dearest to the Friendless n Lonely,
Gladly feeding the hungry n weak
Healer of the sick, You one n only.

O Greatest Physician, our Health
Loving Brother, our Nearest Refuge,
Consoling the sad, raising the dead
In our need, Your Grace, not refuse.

O Divine Mercy, our One and All
We trust in You, do hear our prayer,
And by Your merits save every soul
As we plead Thy tender loving care.

Seated at the right hand of God
In power n authority Supreme Judge,
Our Advocate and our Stronghold
Stand by us O Lord, Merciful n Just.

O Conqueror of death n sin n satan
Jesus, You on Calvary Paradise won
Suffering Servant, O Good Samaritan
Keep us with You as eternal ages run.