



Apostles for Today

Reflections and Prayer - August 2008

Fundamental Rule 33

“He had always loved those who were his in the world, but now he showed how perfect his love was” (Jn. 13,1).

“While our Lord Jesus Christ, crucified for us, agonized on the Cross, his enemies said to him: “If you are God’s son, come down from the cross”; however, he preferred a lingering death on the cross. Therefore if our spiritual enemies should say to us: “descend from the cross of perpetual observance and of a humble, poor and work-filled life in the Congregation”; we for love of our Lord Jesus Christ, with trust in his omnipotent grace and in the powerful intercession of Mary most holy, of the angels and saints, should overcome them and persevere until death in the congregation. Our Lord Jesus Christ now sits glorified at the right hand of the Father. If we have been spiritually crucified with him, have become like him in a life that is humble, poor, work-filled and unappreciated, have been crucified on this earth, he will make us like him in glory for all eternity. Amen.” (OCCC III, p. 59-60).

Vincent Pallotti on founding the Union of Catholic Apostolate left us the life of our Lord Jesus Christ as our Fundamental Rule. The Holy Spirit inspired him and under this inspiration he composed the 33 points to recall the years that Jesus lived among us. Jesus is Emmanuel, God-is-with-us (Mt 1,23b; Is 7,14). He made his home among us (cf. Apoc 21: 3); and “He had always loved those who were his in the world, but now he showed how perfect his love was (Jn 13, 1). His presence in this world “renewed the face of the earth” and brought new life and new hope. With Jesus among us, the person, marked by sin, became aware that he/she is made in the image and likeness of God and as God’s is loved by him from all eternity. In the face of this reality revealed by Christ Pallotti became conscious of his state as ‘a man of sin’, but also one redeemed by Christ (cf.1Cor 6: 19-20).

In contemplating the face of Christ Pallotti realized just how much he was loved. This is why he says that God “is crazy with love” so much so that he

sent his only begotten Son into the world where he was condemned to death for our sins.

The Son was obedient to the will of the Father and accepted the challenge of liberating all of humanity from the humiliation which sin had produced in those who are created in the image of God. Vincent Pallotti was fascinated by this loving intervention in human history, he considered himself to be unworthy of such a great gift and wished to do all possible to correspond to this love. He wanted the entire Church to contemplate Christ and come to be obedient to the Father's project.

This is the proper measure of our dignity as human beings. It is the reality of life here on earth. We are God's partners, not his opposition, for a better future and for the salvation of the world. Therefore, in communion with Jesus Christ, let us, in all things, aspire to the infinite, eternal, immense, immortal and incomprehensible (Pallottine Community Prayers p. 131).

The mystery of salvation shaped a large number of Vincent's prayers. He lived the abundance of spiritual and corporal atonement. Not only this but he also propagated devotion to the blood of Christ in order to arouse true compassion in Christ and Mary. He wanted all to be aware of the royal priesthood (1Pt 2: 9), so that all people might consciously offer the blood of Christ.

More than anything he makes one understand that in Christ and in his blood the fight against sin is like a war in which all must enrol and for which they must train ('The Prayers', A. Faller, p. 33).

Pallotti who was convinced that it is necessary to return to Jesus' school every day and ask of him: "Lord, teach us to pray", put this principle in action (*cf. Faller, p. 39*).

From Jesus he learnt the habit of prayer and also to choose the right place and time: "In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there" (Mk. 1,35). This example was essential for Pallotti and so he established and rigorously observed fixed times for prayer and meditation.

The man become prayer

Vincent had the gift of praying a great deal and of praying continuously. Not only was he 'the man become prayer', that is the man of continuous prayer,

but he was also a master of prayer. One of his particular merits was that he discovered and spread the special prayer which the Divine teacher taught: “Pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest”, and that he revealed through his preaching the compassion of Jesus for the sheep without a shepherd (Mt 9:37-38; cf. *Faller*, p. 52).

The purpose of Pallotti’s prayer was to give glory to God and the salvation of souls, and in order to save souls grace is necessary as well as continuous prayer and frequent reception of the sacraments so as to receive this grace. (cf., Faller, p 44).

Father Vincent was convinced that the time dedicated to God in prayer would bring benefits to all. He was even more convinced of the truth expressed in the affirmation: “Ask for that which is great and you will also be given that which is little”. He was aware that the holy intention and an offering repeated various times in the course of the day are transformed into an attitude which is constantly nourished by the spirit of faith. This overcomes obstacles and causes one to grow in the spirit of prayer and thus is the creature deified. (Ibid, p. 47).

For Vincent prayer should make one like to Christ and so he says:

“May I be totally identified with you, so that I am no longer me, so that nothing of me be in me, and that only you be in me”. This means that, on the one hand, God would spiritualize all of his past, present and future life, and on the other, increase his thirst to be ever more like God (Ibid, p. 49).

Thus prayer is in harmony, not only with infinite mercy, but also with unlimited poverty and with permanent penitence. Vincent added a preference for an apostolic intention to this elevated religious concept. The priority remains the divine gift of a living, generous and perfect desire for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls (Ibid, p 53).

The Word of God

A prayer asking for true understanding of the Word

God of infinite goodness, enlighten my mind to understand your Word; open my eyes to banish the blindness which does not allow me to contemplate your infinite love; open my ears so that all of my being can relish your Word, and touch my lips so that I can proclaim your wonders to the whole world (cf. OCCC XIII, 158).

(Mt 9: 6; 20:34; Acts 10:34-42; Rom 6: 4-11; 1Cor 2:2-9; Wisdom 2:12-22).

The Word as mediation: reflect

The Word of God is a light that enlightens the road, thus Pallotti was always sure of receiving special graces (cf. OOCC X, 84-85).

God dispenses floods of graces because his love is infinite. God is crazy with love (cf. OOCC X, 235)

The mediation of the Word leads us to take an interest in our brothers and sisters to the point of being light for the blind and drink for the weak (cf. OOCC, 15-16).

Jesus, you who died for us, may your life be my life (cf. OOCC X, 618-625).

God infinite love

My God, my eternal Father and Lord of the universe, infinite love of my soul, only you can understand in your own infinite love and mercy the mystery of our souls!

Only you can know how ungrateful I have been and just how much I abused all the graces which you mercifully and with infinite love have given me.

Now, however, I have complete trust that in your infinite mercy, and through the infinite merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the merits and intercession of Mary most holy and of all the angels and saints, you will grant me to always remember the infinite love and mercy which caused you to give me innumerable graces and in particular the gift to profit from the graces until death, in accordance with your will. Amen.

Prayer to obtain mercy

My Jesus, my infinite, immense, incomprehensible mercy, you give me your very own mercy and you transform me into your mercy so that my life may be one of corporal and spiritual works of mercy for the good of all persons. Where I cannot reach with my own strength, may you, in the fullness of your mercy, reach so as to fill the entire world with your mercy for all time and eternity. Amen.