



Apostles for Today

Reflection and Prayer - August, 2006

The Union of Catholic Apostolate

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Fundamental Rule 9 - Jesus' Life of Prayer

Introduction

In some countries where members of the UAC live, this is a time for vacation. Many of us go to the places that permit us to rest, to reflect, and to strengthen ourselves interiorly. For the month of August, all those who follow the monthly text for the prayer and reflection meetings are invited to imitate Jesus Christ in his life of prayer, putting into practice the suggestions of St. Vincent Pallotti according to the *Fundamental Rule 9*.

“Jesus Christ was born a Baby. ... Even though he is at the same time infinite Wisdom he subjected himself to the condition of babies who do not speak, and **he was always occupied in praying for us to his Eternal Father**; therefore, **for love of our Lord Jesus Christ, we must force ourselves to imitate him in the love for retreat, for prayer and for silence** ...*Silence disposes us to prayer, and silence leads us to intimate union with God: the one who does not love silence and prayer does not wish intimate union with God*” (OCCC III, p. 66).

These words of our Founder impel us to turn toward Jesus with the same petition of his disciples: “*Now it happened that he was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said, ‘Lord, teach us to pray’ ...*” (Lk 11,1)

Let us pray with the Word of God:

Psalm 63 (62): *The desire for God*

Psalm 25 (24): *Prayer in difficulty*

Exodus 33: 12-23: *The prayer of Moses*

John 17: 1-26: *The high-priestly prayer of Jesus*

A proposal and an invitation to know *God, the Infinite Love*

St. Vincent Pallotti proposed to all Christians some meditations and prayers as a way to know and recall the infinite love and the infinite mercy of God, entitling the book which contains them *God, the Infinite Love*. The God of St. Vincent is a God who incessantly wishes to communicate himself and his divine gifts to each one of us. And, as Pallotti intuitively felt, prayer constitutes a privileged moment for God to communicate himself to a person, of vesting him with his innumerable gifts. It is in faithful and humble prayer that the human heart is capable of opening itself to his/her God, of receiving with gratitude his gifts, and of experiencing the joy of feeling oneself the object of the infinite love of God, and the sadness of not having corresponded with such a great love and to the grace with which God wishes to perfect our soul.

A brief history of the booklet on *God, the Infinite Love*

In 1847, Pallotti was searching for someone to whom he could give the task of assembling a book of meditations on the infinite love of God. He asked Vincent Marie Michettoni, a priest of the Oratorian Fathers, whom he knew well. But he did not have the time at his disposal to accept the request. This happy difficulty permitted Pallotti to give all that he had in his heart and all that he understood of the works of the infinite love of God. In 1849 he was constrained to take refuge in the Irish College and there he wrote the meditations based on the Creed.

The original text of *God, the Infinite Love*, is preserved in the Archives of the Society of Catholic Apostolate, and it is a little booklet of 149 pages written in the Italian language. The text contains many modifications and additions made by Pallotti himself. It is an incomplete work because St. Vincent wished to write the meditations, basing them on the twelve articles of the Creed; instead, the present booklet contains 31 meditations which treat in depth only 3 articles of the Creed.

The method of the meditations:

- *Pallotti himself:*
 - **recalls and reflects** on one of the truths of faith proposed for the day,
 - **contemplates** the infinite love and mercy of God towards human beings and marvels at the works of God in his own life
 - **formulates the prayer** in which he commits himself to dispose his heart in order to profit from the gift of faith as pleasing to God, and with a contrite heart makes an act of faith that God will perfect his own soul.
 - **renders thanks to God** – and makes an **offering of himself**
- *Pallotti proposes as a way to do the meditations:*
 - to read the **reflection** on one of the truths of faith
 - to recite with love the prayer that follows
 - to conclude with the offering-prayer

Pallotti believes that the faithful who meditate in this way on the truths of faith would be able to profit from the incomprehensible gift of the faith, according to the designs of the infinite love and infinite mercy of God.

Let us pray with St. Vincent Pallotti:

*“My God, permit me to call the light that daily shines upon me, **the light of Your infinite mercy**; let me call the night that is given to me for rest, **the night of Your infinite mercy**; the food and drink which is never lacking, **the food and drink of Your infinite mercy**; everything created and preserved by You, and given to me to use for my temporal needs, **the gift of Your infinite mercy**; even the air I breathe, the earth I walk upon, shall be called, **the air and earth of Your infinite mercy**”* (meditation VII).

“My Omnipotent God, my Father, infinite love of my soul, infinite mercy, ... through the merits of Jesus Christ, through the merits and intercession of Mary, and of all the Angels and Saints I firmly believe, rather I am certain, that immediately You will grant me perfect contrition for my sins and the grace to use all spiritual means, especially mental and vocal prayer, and the reception of the sacraments for the sanctification of my soul, image of Your infinite power. In this way I will dispose myself to be, after the present life, like You in glory” (meditation XIV).

“O my Jesus, my Saviour, my first-born brother, my infinite love, incomprehensible, infinite, eternal and immense Mercy. ... You who are holiness in essence, have no problem in showing Yourself a sinner in Your holy humanity in order that I do penance for my sins and return to You, so that I may be enriched by all the infinite merits of Your most holy life because You are my all, my treasure, my wealth, my life, rather my eternal life” (meditation XXVII).

In the introduction to the book *God, the Infinite Love*, St. Vincent Pallotti wrote: *“No one is capable of profiting from a precious object if he does not know the value and worth he can draw from it for himself and for others.”* We can apply the same words to the meditations proposed by Pallotti. They can be a precious gift for us, members of the Union, in order to benefit ourselves and all the persons with whom we will share the infinite and merciful love of God.

Conclusion

Sacred Scripture reveals for us the predilection of God for the little ones, the humble, for all those who desire to know God through knowing Jesus who is the greatest manifestation of the love of God for human beings. To each of us God wishes to give his very self and to reveal in prayer the mysteries of his divine life: of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

“At that time Jesus exclaimed, ‘I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, because you have hid these things from the learned and the clever and have revealed them to the little children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Son but those to whom the Father wishes to reveal him” (Mt 11, 25-27)

Texts quoted from: Vincenzo Pallotti, Iddio l'Amore Infinito, Roma, San Salvatore in Onda, 1936.