

# Mission in St. Vincent Pallotti:

## Service to the Church

### 1. The Apostolate of Saint Vincent Pallotti

The apostolate of St. Vincent is the expression of his soul: the joy of making the Father known and loved the way he loved Him. And the success and breadth of his apostolate is proportionate to the strength of his love. Just as love shines from the eyes and glows from the face of the one who loves, so apostolic activity overflows spontaneously and unfailingly wherever the love of God is real and meaningful.



There can be no split between true love of God and genuine apostolate, since there is no separation in Jesus Christ, Apostle of the Eternal Father. Whoever loves generates love and whoever works to become holy, fosters the holiness of his neighbor.

The apostolate is an expression of human relations. It stems from creation and has received a kind of sacramental quality from the command of Jesus Christ: "Love one another as I have loved you" (in 13.34). So the apostolate, result of holiness, is first an apostolic spirit before becoming action.

### 2. The Apostolate of Jesus Christ

The apostolate of Jesus Christ is identified with his person which consists of both humanity and divinity, whereby he becomes physically the Mediator between creatures and the Creator. He says of himself: I am the light" (Jn 8: 12);

"I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn 11:25); I am the way, the truth and the life" (Jn 6:48); "I am the door" (Jn 10:7); "I am the Good Shepherd" (Jn 10:11). In itself the Incarnation is an efficacious and continuous redemption from pride, the cause of sin. This is apostolate. The very humanity of Jesus Christ is an immense apostolate, because it makes God visible and tangible. And Jesus reveals the Father, brings the Kingdom of God on earth, glorifies the Father, redeems man from eternal death, and inserts himself into humanity through faith and his divine life, making all of us children and heirs of God. Thus, the whole life of Jesus Christ is his apostolate.

All that the apostles accomplished for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, according to the command of Jesus Christ, is their apostolate (OOCC, III p. 140). The apostolate of Jesus Christ is the apostolate of the Church which continues today, God's work of redemption. It is the apostolate, therefore, which makes Jesus Christ visible and makes us resolve to live as if the eternal and universal apostolate of Jesus Christ was confided to us (OOCC, X, p.152).

### 3. Motivation of the Apostolate

To do an apostolate is not a person's choice. It is the fulfillment of a precious duty which has its source in the divine image imprinted in us at the moment of creation. God the Father created human beings to his own image and likeness, so that they would be happy in him and with him. How can we be indifferent, faced with the eternal death of souls?

The Eternal Word is God who accomplishes in himself the plan of redemption of all humankind. The Holy Spirit is sanctifying Love which renews all things. How can it make sense to resemble the Son and the Holy Spirit unless we actively cooperate in the salvation of the world (OOCC, IV pp.337-8)?

In the fullness of time the Word became flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary. He renounced the splendor of his divinity, accepted humiliation and death with love, declared that there was no greater love than to give up one's life for a friend, and ordered us to love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 13.34).

Love of neighbor then must be a commitment that involves the whole person for all his life. Christ announced love and came to attract humanity to love. That is why the real scope of the Union of the Catholic Apostolate is "to invite all... so that all are brought to cooperate in the continuance of the same mission of the Divine Redeemer" (OOCC, III,177).

#### 4. Pallotti zealous love for the Church

Pallotti, moved by the Spirit of Christ, ardently desired the eternal salvation of every person. He was motivated by a yearning to have all come to a knowledge of Christ the Savior and to become part of his flock. He understood the infinite desire of Jesus' Heart and made it his own that all might hear the voice of the Shepherd and might enter the one fold (Jn 10:16). St Vincent understood and felt that the Church was the result of the Infinite Love and Mercy of God the Father, revealed in his Son, Jesus Christ, as the universal sign of salvation and as his saving presence in the world.

Pallotti nourished a deep gratitude toward the Father who had touched him with his Love and saved him through the Church, He thanked God for being a member of the Church from the early days of his childhood. Because he experienced the merciful Love of God in the Church. St Vincent wanted everyone to have the chance to share in this communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ (I Jn 1:1 ff).

Because he loved the Church so much, he wanted it to be truly the light of the world and the salt of the earth. The flock might be little, but it was to be dynamic in the Spirit. He often contemplated the community in the Cenacle, and used to imagine himself always remaining there to receive, together with the whole Church, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thus his desire to work for the Church became stronger and stronger, so that he was filled with apostolic zeal and totally committed to the salvation of the world.

#### 5. Vincent Pallotti suffering for the Church

His great love was accompanied by great sorrow. Anyone who loves suffers because he has a special sensitivity to all that might oppose the beloved, and to the weaknesses and failings of the person and the community so loved by God. Pallotti suffered because of the Church's situation in that time: the majority of the people knew nothing of Jesus Christ and therefore lived in darkness and in danger of being condemned to eternal death. He was aware that the salvation of the world is a gift of God, but required human participation, which was lacking. Pallotti suffered because he realized the harvest was ripe but there was a great lack of workers. He suffered further at seeing the disunity in the Christian

Community and the wounds caused by separations among the followers of Jesus Christ.

All these divisions diminish the Church's witness to Jesus. The apostolic and missionary awareness of Christians was much less. Pallotti, moved by deep compassion, submitted to the Church to serve it and cure its wounds. offering his whole life for its welfare and efficacy.

#### 6. Pallotti served the Church with great generosity.

Pallotti felt himself in solidarity with the Church. He prayed untiringly for the coming of the Kingdom of God as soon as possible. He was aware that the light of the Gospel only reaches the world effectively through the testimony of good Christians. Hence he prayed and invited others to pray for a multiplication of evangelizers. He prayed also for the apostolic renewal of the Church, so that it might be filled with the Holy Spirit. Pallotti wanted to love the Church with the love Jesus has for it, and prayed to be himself transformed into Christ: "May the life of Jesus be my life".

Besides prayer, he was indefatigable in apostolic activity, always directed to the renewal and the development of the Church.

Together with his co-workers, he initiated the Union of the Catholic Apostolate, with the aim of reviving faith and charity among Christians so that virtues might be diffused throughout the whole world.

The Catholic Apostolate was the greatest contribution of Pallotti to the Church. Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, he understood that all Christians should participate in the saving mission of Jesus Christ. So he tried to reawaken in them their apostolic vocation and at the same time helped them discover the best ways to make the apostolate effective.

For St. Vincent Pallotti, the apostolate is not a work to be done alone, but rather a community work carried out in collaboration with others so that it may have more effectiveness and credibility.

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