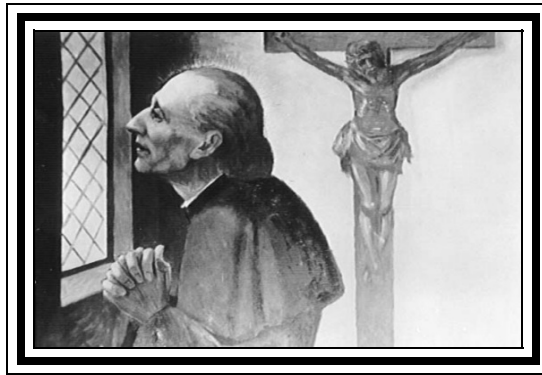


# *Vincent's Relationship with God*

A treatise on St. Vincent's words by Father Francis Amoroso, SAC

St. Vincent Pallotti was not only a great apostle, he was also a great mystic. We have evidence of this in his notes and reflections written during his times of prayer and oeft to us as a rich patrimony,



Here Fr. Amoroso explores three important questions which St. Vincent had posed for himself::

1. Who are you my God, and who am i?
2. Who am I, my God, who stand before you?
3. What did you want me to do when you made me in Your image and likeness?

These are three questions that nail the soul to your divine origin and reality. Three questions that tend to uncover the powerful energy that is enclosed in this truth: God made me in His image; I am an image of God. Three questions that bring you to an act of insatiable love for God.

## WHO ARE YOU MY GOD, AND WHO AM I?

Who are you? But how can I know who you are? How can I embrace you with my poor glance, my Infinite, My Immense One. How can I fix the pupil of my eye on you, o living sun of my life? How could I ever understand you, O my Lord, if I do not love you? Only the one who loves you, understands you. Only one who loves you immensely, possesses you. Love alone gives us true knowledge of you. Only the love of God enables us to understand fully who God is. God gives all to the one who loves him. Therefore, how can I understand you, my God, if I do not love you?

“If I really knew you, I would really love you as much as you deserve to be loved.”

But, who are you my God, and who am I? Your origin has no beginning and your mercy has no end. I am of yesterday and I do not know if I will be here tomorrow. My affections work hard to overcome the shallowness of my body; or the distance covered by my gaze.

“If I were to recognize you as you are, I would love you, I would be detached from the world, I would be all yours, I would really repent of all my sins and I would love Jesus and always imitate Him. If I really knew you well, my God, I would live all for you, totally occupied in the interest of your glory and in the salvation of souls.”

### WHO AM I, MY GOD, BEFORE YOU?

I am a poor harp with broken chords, salt without taste, a burnt out candle. And yet you have made me a harp for the universe to sing your eternal love; you have made me salt to give divine taste to all things; you made me the light for the world to illuminate your marvels.

And now, who am I before you, my God? To answer, I must be able to recognize and understand all of your beauty and goodness, and be able to recognize and understand the absurdities and malice of my sins which offend you, my God, who are deserving of infinite Love. How many sins, my God, have stained the entire course of my life! I must be able to say that the most grievous of these is more absurd: how great and numerous are the gifts and graces which you have showered upon me like a flood, even when I did not think of you, even when despising you, I offended you.

Who am I before you, my God, I who am so stubborn and so deaf to the voice of your mercy? My God, if you look more deeply into me, to see who I really am before you, perhaps it would humble me a little, make me repent of my conceited and ungrateful life, instead I am so proud.

Who am I before you, my God, that you, during the day and the night, whether I am awake or sleeping, whether I think of you or do not think of you, notwithstanding my ingratitude and sins, with infinite Love, are always thinking of me to destroy my unworthiness and to transform me totally into you.

Who am I before you, my Mercy? All my life is a constellation of obstinate resistance to your incomprehensible mercies, and yet you have never abandoned me. On the contrary, your same Mercy inspires me with trust and certainty that, the more you see me poor, the more you hasten to cover me with gifts and mercies. O unspeakable prodigy of Love! Come, all of you, admire, bless, praise, love, give thanks, magnify the Lord for all eternity, and even more, so that His mercy is multiplied a thousand times upon me a great sinner and, more than all others, unworthy.

Who am I before you, my God? You made me in your image and likeness; am I therefore I like you. Me, like you? My God, this likeness, wanted by you, reveals a Love that only a God could have conceived. My Lord, you knew very well how many and which foul attempts would be made

upon your image, and how many and which torments and agonies would be inflicted upon you, how you would be despised and cursed, but nothing was able to hold back your infinite love. You made me in your image, you made us all in your image; my ancestors, those close to me and those at a distance, the underdeveloped, the minorities, the marginalized, my enemies, everyone in your image.

WHO AM I, THEREFORE, BEFORE YOU, MY GOD?  
OR BETTER STILL,  
WHO OR WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO BE BEFORE YOU,  
WHEN YOU MADE ME TO YOUR IMAGE AND LIKENESS?

You wanted exactly this: That I would be exactly like you. That in my life I would be the light of your Light, the justice of your Justice, love of your Love and holiness of your Holiness. You knew what I would be and you wrote it on my forehead that which you wanted me to be. You wrote it in my being. Therefore, in a sense Christ, I am your image; although sinful, I am your image. There is nothing in this world that can strip me of this privilege and tremendous responsibility. I bring and always will bring this image of God with me, no matter how much I soiled it, no matter how deeply I buried it or was tempted to bury it. This is what you wanted: that I would be similar to you. This is what you still want.

O ineffable invention of infinite Love! O Love which I never understood. O Love to which I never responded, by me outraged or abused, despised and offended! Oh Love which I infinitely neglected and sacrilegiously despised!  
Oh Infinite Love, make me love you infinitely!