JUBILEE MESSAGE

At the conclusion of the celebrations (of the aforesaid Religious Community) marking the 50th anniversary of the canonization of St. Vincent Pallotti, the Supreme Pontiff, Benedict XVI, happily joins (you) in thanking and praising God for the numerous spiritual benefits granted in this jubilee year and all through the nearly two centuries of faithful service by the Pallottines. During the past year every spiritual child of Pallotti has been able to draw invaluable lessons from the person and the work of the Founder and from the richness of his Charism inspired in him by the Holy Spirit and the precious teachings still relevant in the Church. St. Vincent recognized that the faith of his time was lukewarm; he committed himself to reviving it so that every believer might witness to the living God. His foundation – the *Union of Catholic Apostolate* – aimed at enlivening the faith and leading all to Jesus Christ. To that end the Saint also promoted several other concrete initiatives in order to enhance reverence for the ancient institution of the Church, and to animate and propagate sound doctrine. He also sought to multiply spiritual and corporal works of mercy urged on by the precept of charity, because God being love itself there is nothing more effective than works of charity to give a new impetus to the faith. Pallotti also strove to safe-guard the dignity of sacred buildings, propagate a simple explanation of the Gospel and proposed spiritual exercises for people of all walks of life. In short, he encouraged any work which, according to the time and circumstances, would prove opportune for the revival of faith.

Our own times too manifests signs of a profound crisis as is evident in the words of Pope Benedict XVI: “the true problem of our moment of history is that God continues to disappear from the life of man, and shutting out the light of God man is increasingly struck by a lack of orientation; its destructive effects are becoming increasingly evident. (*Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church, 10 March 2010).*

The Jubilee of the Pallottine family coincides with the *Year of Faith* declared by the Holy Father “*to arouse in every believer the aspiration to profess the faith in fullness and with renewed conviction, with confidence and hope. It will also be a good opportunity to intensify the celebration of the faith in the liturgy, especially in the Eucharist, which is “the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; ... and also the source from which all its power flows.” At the same time, we make it our prayer that believers’ witness of life may grow in credibility”* (Porta Fidei, 9). This is the true danger to the faith, that modern and post modern idols could assume the place of God. They enslave us with the yoke of new and subtle idolatry visible to all. In such a context the Holy Father invites every member of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate to a generous commitment to working towards rediscovering the way of the Gospel for the man of today, inspired by the message left by St. Vincent Pallotti: “*to revive faith and rekindle charity, and lead all men to Christ”.* The spiritual and apostolic journey of every component of the Pallottine Family springs from the contemplation of the life and sanctity of the Founder during this jubilee year. It, thus, becomes a confirmation of the words of the Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est: “Faith tells us that God has given his Son for our sake and gives us the victorious certainty that it is really true: God is love! It thus transforms our impatience and our doubts into the sure hope that God holds the world in his hands and that, as the dramatic imagery of the end of the Book of Revelation points out, in spite of all darkness he ultimately triumphs in glory. Faith, which sees the love of God revealed in the pierced heart of Jesus on the Cross, gives rise to love. Love is the light—and in the end, the only light—that can always illuminate a world grown dim and give us the courage needed to keep living and working”.*

Living faith and active charity are the two pillars on which Vincent Pallotti built up his luminous life and his generous works. They are the two interior forces that have stirred and sustained the manifold apostolic initiatives of Pallotti. “*Charity of Christ urges us”* (2 Cor. 5:14) was his motto with which he also motivated his followers. The fruit of his labor matured into the foundation of the *Union of Catholic Apostolate*. Right from its very beginning it greatly valued the collaboration of all of the faithful in the Church – laity, priests and consecrated – enlivening the faith of each that he/she could become an authentic apostle, a bearer of the fire of God’s love.

Sharing with the Pallottine family these reflections on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the canonization of the Holy Founder, the Successor of Peter entrusts the entire Union of Catholic Apostolate to the heavenly protection of Mary most Holy, Queen of Apostles and model of charity, and to St. Vincent Pallotti, invoking a fresh outpouring of the Divine Spirit for a fruitful ministry at the service of the New Evangelization and cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing.

With great esteem, I remain

Most devoted in the Lord

+Tarcisio Card. Bertone