

EDITOR'S NOTE

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in St Vincent Pallotti

The day of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, this year 24 June, is a moving date celebrated on the second Friday after the Solemnity of the Body of Christ. The purpose of this solemnity is to remember that the Incarnate Word loved us with a human heart during his life, agony and passion (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 478). St Paul in Galatians shows us this offering of the Son of God: “He loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20).

Saint Vincent Pallotti joined the Pious Union of the Heart of Mary on 22nd June 1817 and at the same time promoted devotion to the Heart of Jesus, a devotion that came through Saint Margarita Maria Alacoque, whom he mentioned twice without naming her (Letters, vol. I, 85, 105). In Rome there were two Pious Unions dedicated to the Heart of Jesus that were characterized by two aspects. The first was to seek in everything the glory of Jesus Christ, who died for us on the Cross, and of his Heart, which burns with love for us in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; the second was to make reparation for the offences done to the Sacred Heart in the Blessed Sacrament.

Fr. Francesco Todisco states that St Vincent Pallotti's acceptance of devotion to the Heart of Jesus at such a remote date should be emphasized, because the Jesuits introduced devotion to the Heart of Jesus into their Order after 1833 and the universal Church did not celebrate the feast of the Heart of Jesus until 1856 (St Vincent Pallotti prophet of the spirituality of communion, p. 155-156).

Another historical fact about St. Vincent's devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was the consecration of the second Pious House of Charity, inaugurated on December 12th 1839 in Via di Sant'Onofrio, Gianicolo, near the church of SS. Salvatore in Onda. On Friday, 18 June 1841, St. Vincent celebrated with particular solemnity the feast of the Heart of Jesus in this second Pious House of Charity, in the presence of the Cardinal Vicar of Rome and Cardinal Polidori (OCL vol. III, nos. 759, 351-352).

Devotion to the Heart of Jesus is based on the moment when “one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance. Immediately blood and water gushed out” (Jn 19:34). Regarding this biblical verse, St Vincent wrote: “Here I hope that Jesus will lead me to death and mystical perfection, to the destruction of my heart, and make me live with his most holy Heart” (OCCC vol. X, p. 779). St Vincent recommended loving with the love of the Heart of Jesus those who were suffering (OCL vol. I, no. 364).

At the end of the Litany to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, approved by Pope Leo XIII in 1899, we address the following invocation: ‘Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like yours’. The heart of Jesus is considered the main sign of the infinite love with which the Redeemer unceasingly loves the Eternal Father and all human beings. This invocation to Christ, meek and humble, is for us to love God, the first commandment of the Decalogue, as Jesus himself loved the Father and every human person.

The Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is dedicated to the sanctification of the clergy so that our pastors love the people entrusted to them as Jesus did. This is the condition for pastoral projects in our dioceses, i.e. without the charity of Christ that drives us, the Church will only be a care organisation or a service provider.

St. Vincent Pallotti worked intensively for the formation of priests and was appointed by Pope John XXIII as patron of the Missionary Union of Clergy. In fact, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is an integral part of the Pallottine charism, both because of St Vincent Pallotti’s remote devotion to Eucharistic adoration and reparation, and because of his tireless apostolate of formation and accompaniment of priests. “Sacred Heart of Jesus, make our hearts like yours!”

The journal “Apostolato Universale” No. 54/2022 opens with an article by the undersigned on the challenges for SAC members at the time of the pandemic. It was a very difficult time for all mankind with profound consequences for the Catholic Church and the formation of clerics and consecrated life. No. 54/2022 also presents four communications from Fr Jacob Nampudakam, Rector General of SAC, the letter from the students of the Urban College to St Vincent Pallotti, written

for the Solemnity of the Founder in the year 2022, and a brief history of the houses of the Indian Province of Bangalore.

Also presented is a session on the XXI General Chapter of the Pallottine Missionary Sisters celebrated in Rome.

In the part dedicated to the Union of the Catholic Apostolate one can find the texts of the VI General Assembly, the meeting of the General Coordination Council and the Formative Bulletin Apostles Today only for the month of January 2022.

It is always a joy to spread the study and research on the Pallottine charism and to note the ever growing interest in the Founder St Vincent Pallotti.

We thank all collaborators and enjoy reading!

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