

PEOPLE OF GOD NEWSLETTER

LAITY, RELIGIOUS AND CLERGY LIVING THE VISION OF ST. VINCENT PALLOTTI



Society of the Catholic Apostolate
Winter 2005



The Pallottines

Poland - Here We Come!

Reflections: Pallottine International Congress of the Union of Catholic Apostolate

by Mrs. Betty Reichertz & Fr. Greg Serwa, SAC

POLAND!!! It's been a long time coming, but after a 10 hour flight from O'Hare in Chicago and a seven hour difference in time we arrived greeted by Christopher, a deacon from the seminary in Oltarzew.

Why were we in Poland from August 22-27, 2005? The first UAC General Congress since the General Statutes were approved by the Vatican was held at the Center for Mission Animation in Konstancin, (near Warsaw). The theme was "Now is the time for a new 'creativity' in charity." Prior to leaving we were asked to do a prayer-novena each month for spiritual preparation. Twenty-six countries participated and 5 major languages (English, German, Polish, Portuguese and Italian) were spoken. Ten members from the US National Conference were represented. As the laity, religious and clergy

arrived you could feel their excitement and anticipation ready to make St. Vincent Pallotti's dream come true.

At the first session Fr. Czeslaw Parzyszek welcomed everyone, followed by Fr. Seamus Freeman who opened the Congress. Fr. Derry Murphy, the Secretary General of the U.A.C., along with members of the General Secretariate moderated the Congress. It was Fr. Marek Gulbinowicz who gave us the practical information, like where to find the bathrooms, the food, etc., and could be found always with camera in hand taking pictures of everything and everyone throughout the week. We were invited by all of the speakers to discover the ideals of Vincent Pallotti, listen to others, be enriched and enter into the spirit of communion with each other. Most important was to get to know each other - to learn from each other

and in this way strengthen our Union - **TO COLLABORATE.**

We were asked to review the General Statutes, bring them to life. Many countries have not actually read the statutes and we were asked to review them with our UAC Cenacles. We need to



US National Conference Members: Fr. Greg and Betty Reichertz on far left.

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Vocation Staff Plus One

by Editorial Staff

Hi! My name is Jeffrey S. Montoya -- you can call me Jeff. I am the latest addition to the Pallottine Vocation team. My new title is Vocation Coordinator for the Pallottines - Mother of God Province. How's that for a mouthful?

I will be working part-time in the vocation office completing administrative and ministerial duties.

Originally from New Mexico, I have lived in Wisconsin for almost 10 years, coming in 1995 to Wisconsin for college. I did my undergraduate studies in Religious Studies and Philosophy at St. Norbert College from 1995 to 1999. I then worked as a youth minister for just over four years before moving into campus ministry. At present I work as a campus minister and director of diversity at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee in addition to my work with the Pallottines.

In my free time I enjoy playing volleyball and softball in the summer, and darts and bowling in the winter. I have an obsession with books and reading. I have a cat named Noah and a basset-hound named Moses.



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deepen our understanding of them. We have until 2008 to look them over to see if we need to make any revisions. There are 48 countries where Pallottines live, but so far there are only 18 NCC's.

Our meeting room had a large stained glass image of Mary Queen of Apostles as a back drop so it was easy to envision ourselves beginning each day at prayer in the Cenacle. Because the various presenters did not always speak our language, we all wore headsets that were connected to translators. After each speaker, small language groups gathered together to share thoughts and ideas on the talk given. Collaboration and formation were priorities for most groups as we came together to share what had been discussed. We were also impressed with a deep love of St. Vincent and the Union found in the group sharing. We got to know each other; we were enriched.

Each of the speakers presented us with a challenge. The first day was a prayer day – reflection on the Scripture. We were called to be apostles as in the Cenacle – the thrust of the challenge here was to bring what we learn to Cenacles at home – we are sent as apostles. Each country was asked to bring their flag, which was displayed in the courtyard, and a picture or statue of Mary, which had a special meaning for our country. A procession was held on Tuesday evening, August 23, to the chapel where these were placed in front of the altar. The image chosen by the U.S. delegates was the Immaculate Conception. Under this title she was named our Patroness, dedicated in the 1800's by the Third Plenary Council and located in the National Shrine in Washington D.C. After the closing Liturgy on Saturday, August

27, each country picked a name of a Madonna from a different country and we were asked to take the statue or picture home and pass it to everyone in our Union Group and to pray for the Union throughout world.



Some of the many priests who concelebrated the Eucharist each day.

Wednesday evening the countries did a presentation of their customs, songs, dance, etc. The evening was fun and relaxing. It was very impressive. From the United States we chose to sing two songs, America the Beautiful and Take Me Out to the Ball Game.

At the Thursday morning session Mr. Andy Thompson from the United States spoke on "Poverty, how it affects human dignity, created in the image of God, and how it touches the Church and the union." Andy's challenge for us was to understand poverty not only as a lack of goods but also to recognize what might be called an intellectual poverty, or a lack of openness to diversity in ways of thinking. In the afternoon, we took a bus to Warsaw's downtown. Seeing the sights of Warsaw together and buying souvenirs, we even

stopped for an ice cream cone. We ended the day with a Eucharistic Celebration at the Provincialate of the Pallottine Fathers and Brothers. Each day we celebrated Eucharist in a different language. It was enriching to celebrate the Mass in various languages and especially to see so many priests concelebrating.

Father Hubert Socha, SAC made some outstanding comments on the General Statutes on Friday. His challenge to us was to put life into the Union. He encouraged us to use our lived experience to enliven the skeleton of the General Statutes. Another speaker Mr. Corrado Montaldo of the “*Comunita V Dimension*” spoke of his own experience in being nervous about performing some ministry until he took the focus off himself and realized he was doing it for Christ.

Some of the proposals made on Saturday were: to look into ourselves and community, take away the prejudices in our lives, to build communion on all levels, and cooperate. Be a doer, not just a lis-

tener. Make the UAC known with a logo or some kind of symbol. Each group gave suggestions as to where they would like the 2008 or 2009 General Congress to be held. Rome and Brazil were the favorites.

Saturday, the Congress ended with a Eucharistic Celebration. During the Liturgy the members of the UAC made a renewal of their Apostolic Commitment. At the closing the Sign of Peace was extended and it was hard to say good bye and there were so many tears and hugs. No one wanted to leave. It was very touching and emotional. A lot of e-mail and addresses were exchanged to keep in touch. It was quite an experience meeting and sharing our thoughts and ideas about St. Vincent, his spirituality, charism and how we as Union members can make Pallotti’s dream come true. Being together, bonded by a deep love of St. Vincent Pallotti, helped us to strengthen our unity and keep his dream alive, real apostles.

Sunday we had an option to take a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Czestochowa (Black Madonna). It was a fun four hour bus trip there. When we arrived we began with a Mass in one of the smaller chapels. There was a long line to see the Black Madonna, but when you saw her, the emotions that flowed through you were unexplainable. After the Liturgy we had lunch at the Pallottine Shrine in honor of the Mercy of God. We later walked back to spend more time at Czestochowa. We had time to see the small village, to buy souvenirs, and of course to have an ice cream cone. Poland has yummy ice cream! Four of us were going to continue to see other sights of Poland so our farewells had to be said at the bus and once again there were hugs and tears. We wish everyone could have shared the rich experience of being at the General Congress in Konstancin.



Fr. Greg & Sr. Alicia from Belize at statue of Fr. Joseph Stanek, SAC (WWII Memorial Warsaw).

And Now You Know!

Excerpts from the book: *Like An Evangelical Trumpet: A History of the Mother of God Province of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate*, written by Steven M. Avella.

Question #16: How did the Milwaukee Pallottines gain the Status of a Province?

For now, the acceptance of the Canadian mission brought the Milwaukee Pallottines to a critical juncture. Boenki was not only eager to gain a foothold in Canada and provide some sort of ministry to his interned confreres, he was also anxious to raise the number of priests in his region to

the requisite number of thirty in order to make it eligible for province status. The affiliation of the interned priests became a critical question. Were they still members of their German Province or did they now belong to the North American Region? Initially, Hoffmann was unwilling to "count" the internees in the American Region. Replying to Boenki, who apparently had raised the question and the possibility of a petition for Provincial statue, Hoffmann wrote in November 1944:



If you think that all conditions for the elevation of your region to the rank of a Province are fulfilled, please let the Regional Council make an official demand to the General Council; then without doubt the General Council and the Holy See will give their consent. But it would be difficult to comprise, just now, the fathers living in Canada in the number of 30 priests requested by Constitution 339, because practically by reasons not de-

pending on any Pallottine, they cannot be appointed definitively to your Region before the war will be finished. Nevertheless, if you have 30 priests, of whom the ordinary curriculum of studies is finished, then there is no canonical obstacle, and I will be very glad to elevate Milwaukee to the position of a province.

On December 29, 1944, however, the Generalate partially reversed itself and offered a Solomonic compromise resolving, "that the Fathers now residing in Canada belong definitely to the North American Region. But that they shall be entitled to ask for their return to Holy Trinity Province during the first year after the conclusion of peace." This now brought the number of priests in the community to thirty-one, one more than the number required for elevation to province status under article 339 of the Pallottine Constitutions. The way was now open for the formal canonical erection of the Mother of God Province.

However, passing through the convoluted channels of the Apostolic Delegation's mail delivery system and the fitful days at the end of the war, the letter

took several months to arrive in Milwaukee. Boenki then shared it with the Regional Consulta on April 4, 1945, which met the news with approval. On April 12, 1945, the same day the nation heard of the death of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the Regional Council, Boenki, DeMaria, and Goldschmidt, formally informed the Rector General that the provisions for Province status stipulated in Constitution 339 had been fulfilled. The region now had two parishes in Milwaukee, a Novitiate and a House of Studies as well as missions in North Dakota and Canada. With thirty-one priests and a manageable financial picture, the conditions seemed right. As preparations were laid for a Regional Chapter to be held in anticipation of a General Chapter in 1947, the American Pallottines waited for news from Rome on their application. In a letter of June 13, 1946, to the region announcing the event and preparing for elections of Capitulars, Boenki announced: "The General Council intends to erect several new regions and to raise the Swiss and North American Region to the status of a Province. If this decision is made before our regional chapter, two delegates and two substitutes will be elected for the General Chapter.

Eleven days later, the General Council formally met and on June 24, 1946, formally declared the erection of the North

American Province after having secured permission from the Sacred Congregation for Religious on June 11, 1946. The Mother of God Province, as the October chapter would so designate it, would begin a new phase of its history.

(It is interesting to note that World War II help bring about an early "Americanization" of the newly formed province.) War meant an acceleration of the seminary courses in Milwaukee, Jessup and the House of Studies. In order to avoid the draft, seminary students nationwide had to remain in school all year long. One hapless student... had not taken the proper steps to assure his draft exemption and found himself inducted into the army despite the fact that he was in vows and even had received tonsure (the formal introduction to the clerical state.) Pallottine officials attempted to extricate him from this situation, but the young man determined that his was not a Pallottine vocation while in the service of his country and was dispensed from his promises. The stepping up of the seminary education would ultimately provide a bumper crop of American priests, beginning in 1943 with the ordination of Fr. Marcel LaJoie, the first American to move through the Pallottine formation system. By the early 1950s, a growing cadre of American Pallottines would move into positions of community leadership.

Next Time: What were those first formative years like for the new province?

*If you want to learn more about the Pallottines of the Mother of God Province on your own, the book **Like an Evangelical Trumpet** is now available in a 335 page soft-cover edition, complete with 33 pages of nostalgic pictures and photographs, for the price of \$19.95 plus \$3.50 postage and handling. To receive your copy, send your name, address and payment to:*

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