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## The Pope to the Union of the Catholic Apostolate: the call of the apostolate is addressed to all

The Pallottine Fathers, the congregation founded by St. Vincent Pallotti (1795-18050), also founder of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, are holding their 21st General Assembly in these days, on the theme “The fundamental rule of our minim Congregation is the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, to imitate Him with humility and trust, with all the possible perfection on all the works of private life and evangelical public ministry”, a phrase from the Complete Works of St. Vincent.

The Pope received them in audience this morning, and emphasised that the charism of their founder is a “precious gift of the Holy Spirit, as it has inspired various forms of apostolic life and encourages the faithful to engage actively in evangelical witness”. He continued, “Your founder understood that to be able to live communion with God, it is necessary to put Jesus Christ at the centre, as ‘the divine model of all the human being’. In this Holy Year of Mercy, I like to recall that Vincent Pallotti had the gift of recognising that Jesus is the Apostle of the Father, great in love and rich in mercy, and it is He Who fulfils His mission by revealing to all the tender love and infinite mercy of the Father. This mystery of God’s paternity, that opens up to every man through the work of the Son, His heart full of love and compassion, acquires particular meaning in our times. Every day, before our scenes of violence pass before our eyes, faces without pity, hearts hardened and desolate. We have a great need to remind ourselves of that Father, Whose heart remembers all of us and wants the salvation of every man”.

“Contemplating the life of Jesus and looking at our life as pilgrims in this world, with so many challenges, we are aware of the need for a profound conversion and the urgency to revive our faith in Him. Only in this way will we be able to serve our neighbour in charity”, Francis affirmed, exhorting the Pallottines to continue on their journey “with joy and hope”. “Your founder liked to repeat that the call to the apostolate is not reserved to some, but instead addressed to all, regardless of their state, their condition, their profession, their fortune; everyone can participate. The Union of the Catholic Apostolate, which carries on the charism of St. Vincent Pallotti, offers many spaces and new horizons for participating in the mission of the Church. For this, it is called to work with renewed zeal to reawaken faith and to rekindle charity, especially among the weakest groups in the population, spiritually and materially poor. In this, you are sustained by the example of many of your brethren, genuine witnesses to the Gospel, who have dedicated their lives to the service of others. I met many of them in the course of my pastoral ministry in Argentina, and I conserve a grateful memory of them”.

The Pope concluded his brief address by commending all those present to the protection of Mary Most Holy, whom St. Vincent venerated especially as Queen of the Apostles. “She, the example of apostolic zeal and perfect charity, invites us to tireless prayer to invoke the gifts of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of today, so that the Gospel of her Son be proclaimed in all places of the world”.

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