



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE GENERAL CHAPTER
OF THE SOCIETY OF THE CATHOLIC APOSTOLATE (PALLOTTINES)**

*Clementine Hall
Monday, 10 October 2016*

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Welcome!

I am pleased to receive you on the occasion of your 21st General Assembly. I cordially greet you and thank your Superior General for his words. I extend my greetings to all the members of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate and to all who share the charism of Saint Vincent Pallotti. He has become an enlightening and inspiring beacon in the Church. His charism is a precious gift of the Holy Spirit, because it has given rise to and continues to call forth various forms of apostolic life and urges the faithful to engage actively in Gospel witness.

Your Founder realized that in order to live in communion with God, Jesus Christ, “the divine model of the entire human race” (*Complete Works* II, p. 541), must be placed at the centre. In this Holy Year of Mercy, I like to remember that Vincent Pallotti was blessed with recognizing that Jesus is the Apostle of the Father, full of love and rich in mercy, the One who fulfills his mission by revealing to everyone the tender love and infinite mercy of the Father. This mystery of God’s fatherhood, which opens to every man, through the work of the Son, his heart full of love and compassion, acquires special significance in our time. Every day, we see scenes of violence, merciless faces, hardened and desolate hearts. We need so much to remind ourselves of that Father, whose heart thinks of everyone and desires the salvation of each person. “Mercy is presented as a force that overcomes everything, filling the heart with love and bringing consolation through pardon” (Bull *Misericordiae Vultus*, n. 9).

The reflections of your General Assembly focus on the following words of your holy Founder: “The fundamental rule of our minimal Congregation is the life of our Lord Jesus Christ in order to imitate him with humility and trust with all possible perfection in all Works of the hidden Life and of the

public evangelical Ministry” (*Complete Works* III, p. 40). In light of this precious advice, each member of the Pallottine Family is called to base his or her life on the person of Christ as the example to follow faithfully.

Contemplating the life of Jesus and looking at ourselves as pilgrims in this world with so many challenges, we feel the need of a profound conversion and the urgency to rekindle faith in him. Only then can we serve our neighbour in charity! Every day we are called to renew our trust in Christ and to draw inspiration from his life in order to fulfil our mission, because “Jesus is ‘the first and greatest evangelizer’. In every activity of evangelization, the primacy always belongs to God, who has called us to cooperate with him and who leads us on by the power of his Spirit” (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 12).

Dear Brothers, I encourage you to proceed along your path with joy and hope, committing yourselves with all your heart and with all your strength, so that the charism of your Founder may bear abundant fruit in our time too. He loved to repeat that the call to the apostolate is not reserved to some, but is addressed to everyone, “regardless of their status, their condition, their profession, their fortune, everyone can take part” (*Complete Works* IV, p. 346). The Union of the Catholic Apostolate, the bearer of the charism of Saint Vincent Pallotti, offers so many opportunities and opens new horizons for participation in the mission of the Church. For this reason it is called to operate with renewed vigour to reawaken faith and rekindle charity, especially among the most vulnerable segments of the population, that are spiritually and materially poor. In this, you are sustained by the example of so many of your confreres, authentic witnesses of the Gospel, who have dedicated their lives to serving others. I too got to know them during my pastoral service in Argentina and have fond memories of them.

You can help those you meet in your ministry to rediscover God’s immense love in our lives, in the footsteps of Saint Vincent Pallotti, who considered himself a prodigy of God’s mercy. He wrote: “O my Jesus, in you shines the incomprehensible excess of your infinite love and your infinite mercy” (*Complete Works* XIII, p. 169).

I entrust all of you to the protection of Mary Most Holy, whom Saint Vincent Pallotti venerated in a special way as Queen of the Apostles. She, an effective example of apostolic zeal and perfect charity, invites us to unceasing prayer in order to invoke the gifts of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of today, so that the Gospel of her Son may be proclaimed in every part of the world. I also entrust myself to your prayers, and, in expectation of the best of results of the work of your Assembly, I wholeheartedly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you.