

***RATIO
INSTITUTIONIS***

**OF THE
SOCIETY OF THE
CATHOLIC APOSTOLATE**

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Piazza S. Vincenzo Pallotti, 204
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Italia

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INDEX

Letter of the Rector General	7
Abbreviations	9
General Introduction	13

PART ONE - PALLOTTINE SPIRITUALITY AND IDENTITY

CHAPTER I - PALLOTTINE FORMATION IN THE FOUNDER'S THOUGHT AND PRACTICE	23
Pastoral Care of Vocations	26
Postulancy	28
The Period of Preparatory Formation	30
Preparation for the Ordained Ministry and Perpetual Consecration	33
Ongoing Formation	37
St. Vincent Pallotti the Spiritual Director	45
Some criteria to consider in Pallottine Formation	52
CHAPTER II – THE CONSTANTS OF PALLOTTINE SPIRITUALITY	63
The God in whom we believe	63
The Christ whom we follow	68
The Spirit who urges us	72
Mary who accompanies us	77
The UAC: Our Way of being Church	82
Serve the World in which we live	88
CHAPTER III - INTEGRAL VISION OF THE HUMAN PERSON	93
Theological Vision of the Human Person	93
Vision of the Human Person according to Pallotti	97
Christian Vocation: a Call and a Response	106
Psychosocial Factors Affecting the Vocational Journey	108
Human Development	111
Cultural Vision of the Human Person	114
Towards a Formative Journey	118
Conclusion	127

CHAPTER IV - PALLOTTINE CONSECRATION	129
The Theological and Juridical Content of Consecration	129
A Glance at Pallottine Consecration	130
The Development of the Thought of St. Vincent Pallotti regarding the Consecration	133
Towards a Formative Journey	139

PART TWO – THE STAGES OF PALLOTTINE FORMATION

CHAPTER V – VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT	143
VOCATION PROMOTION	
Aim and Challenges	149
The Concept, Content and Pedagogy of this Stage	151
The Person Called	153
Formators and the Educational Context	155
Methods and Means	157
THE POSTULANCY	
Goal and Challenges	158
The Concept, Content and Pedagogy of this Stage	159
The Person Called	160
Formators and the Educational Context	161
Methods and Means	162
Some Practical Applications	164
CHAPTER VI – PREPARATORY FORMATION AND THE PREPARATION FOR FIRST CONSECRATION	167
Goal and Challenges	167
Content and Pedagogy	170
The Concept of this Stage	170
The Person Called	173
Formators and the Educational Context	174
Methods and Means	178
<i>The Human Dimension</i>	179
<i>The Spiritual Dimension</i>	181
<i>The Communitarian Dimension</i>	184
<i>The Apostolic Dimension</i>	185
<i>The Charismatic Dimension</i>	187
Practical Applications	190

CHAPTER VII - PREPARATION FOR THE ORDAINED	
MINISTRY AND PERPETUAL CONSECRATION	193
Goal and Challenges	194
The Concept, Content and Pedagogy of this Stage	197
The Person Called	199
Formators and the Educational Context	203
Methods and Means	207
<i>The Human Dimension</i>	207
<i>The Spiritual Dimension</i>	208
<i>The Intellectual Dimension</i>	212
<i>The Apostolic Dimension</i>	216
<i>The Communitarian Dimension</i>	219
<i>The Charismatic Dimension</i>	220
Practical Applications	222
CHAPTER VIII - ONGOING FORMATION	223
Introduction	223
THE FIRST YEARS	
Goal and Challenges	227
The Concept, Content and Pedagogy of this Stage	228
The Person Called	229
Formators and the Educational Context	230
Methods and Means	234
MIDDLE AGE	
Goal and Challenges	241
The Concept, Content and Pedagogy of this Stage	242
The Person Called	245
Formators and the Educational Context	246
Method and Means.....	249
ADVANCED AGE	
Goal and Challenges	253
The Concept, Content and Pedagogy of this Stage	255
The Person Called	256
Formators and the Educational Context	257
Methods and Means	258
Ecclesial and Pallottine Documents on Formation	261
Analytical Index	267

Societas Apostolatus Catholici

PALLOTTINI



Rector Generalis

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF CATHOLIC APOSTOLATE

Dear Confreres,

On the 25th of March, eight years ago, the Post-Synodal document *Vita Consecrate* was published. In number 68 of that document, the Synod Fathers “asked all Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life to draw up as soon as possible a **ratio institutionis**, that is, a formation programme inspired by their particular charism”.

Six years ago, in response to a resolution of the XVIII General Assembly, the General Council instituted the General Secretariat for Formation and, at the same time, entrusted the new Secretariat with the task of preparing a *ratio institutionis*.

Four months ago the General Secretariat for Formation met here in Rome to make a final revision of the text, in accordance with the suggestions and requests offered by the General Council.

On the 25 June 2004, the General Council approved the final text in the Italian language for immediate use in all formation programmes of our Society, from initial to ongoing formation. Eventually, every member should have a copy of this *Ratio* for personal study and renewal in the essentials of our way of life. The General Council has printed the Italian and English editions. It is hoped that the translation of the text into the other official languages of the Society will begin as soon as possible.

What is the nature of the approval of the General Council?

The General Council, aware of the continual development of formation issues in today’s world, is aware of the need for regular updating of formation texts, and is therefore convinced of the need for a periodic review of the *ratio institutionis* of our Society. The present text shall be in use for a period of six years. During that time, the General Secretariat for Formation will identify the necessary changes and improvements, in order that a revised text can be published after the General Assembly of 2010.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the members of the General Secretariat for Formation for this very valuable contribution to the formation needs and challengers of our Society. The members of the Secretariat are: Fr. Jacob Nampudakam (NA) – General Secretary; Fr. Jeremiah Murphy (IR) – Secretary; Fr. Paul Rheinbay (LM); Fr. Julio Endi Akamine (SP); Fr. Stanislaw Stawicki (RW); Fr. Józef Lasak (WA). The contact person with the General Council is Fr. Kazimierz Czulak. On behalf of all our members I express a word of heartfelt thanks to these confreres.

Let us pray that the main objective of this *Ratio* may be to enable every member to discover the path towards the gift of self to God, ever more genuinely and ever more generously, and to extend this gift to others with greater serenity and wisdom, as well as with greater simplicity and richness of grace (cf. VC 70). Let us also pray that this *Ratio* may lead every member along the path towards holiness and mission in accordance with the gift of the Holy Spirit that we inherit from our Holy Founder.

May Mary, Queen of Apostles, guide us along the way of creative fidelity to all that we are called to be in this life, as Pallottine priests and brothers.

Jacob Nampudakam, SAC
Secretary General

Séamus Freeman, SAC
Rector General

Rome, 4 July 2004

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i> – Vatican Council II
ASAC	Acta Societatis Apostolatus Catholici
CG	SOCHA, H., <i>Commentario Giuridico</i> , Roma 2002
CIC	Code of Canon Law
DG	<i>General Guidelines for Formation in the Introductory Period SAC</i> , Rome 1987
DV	<i>Dei Verbum</i> – Vatican Council II
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> – Vatican Council II
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> – Vatican Council II
LSAC	Law of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, Rome 2003
NMI	<i>Novo Millennio Ineunte</i> – <i>Apostolic Letter</i> , 2001
OCL	Opere Complete Lettere – S. Vincenzo Pallotti
OOCC	Opere Complete – S. Vincenzo Pallotti
OT	<i>Optatam Totius</i> – Vatican Council II
PC	<i>Perfectae Caritatis</i> – Vatican Council II
PDV	<i>Pastores Dabo Vobis</i> – Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, 1992
PI	<i>Potissimum Institutioni</i> – Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes <i>Potissimum Institutioni</i> , 1990

RC	<i>Renovationis Causam</i> – <i>Instructions for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life</i> , 1969
RD	<i>Redemptionis donum</i> – <i>Apostolic Exhortation</i> , 1984
RdC	<i>Starting Afresh from Christ</i> – <i>Instructions for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life</i> , 2002
SAC	Society of the Catholic Apostolate
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> – Vatican Council II
UAC	Union of Catholic Apostolate
VC	<i>Vita Consecrata</i> – Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, 1996

RATIO INSTITUTIONIS

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«The Synod Fathers earnestly asked all Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life to draw up as soon as possible a *ratio institutionis*, that is, a formation programme inspired by their particular charism, presenting clearly and in **all its stages the course to be followed in order to assimilate fully the spirituality of the respective Institute**. The ratio responds to a pressing need today. On the one hand, it shows how to pass on the Institute's spirit so that it will be lived in its integrity by future generations, in different cultures and geographical regions; on the other hand, it explains to consecrated persons how to live that spirit in the different stages of life on the way to full maturity of faith in Christ».

[*Vita Consecrata*, n° 68]

Since formation tends toward the total development of the human person, natural and supernatural, so also our formation must tend toward the development of the whole religious person in his total dedication to the apostolic aims of our Society. In this formation we can distinguish three stages: the first three years of formation during postulancy and novitiate in preparation for one's first consecration; the further growth during the years of temporary profession leading to one's final commitment to God and to our Society as a priest or as a brother; and the continuing formation thereafter, which is one of the greatest needs in our present-day religious life and apostolate. Only when this entire program forms an integrated whole can we feel that it will be able to meet the demands of modern times.

[“Our Formation in General”, n° 4,
Documents of the Twelfth, Extraordinary, General Chapter]

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. **[Journey towards maturity]** The process of formation is a journey, an exodus, a progress, a growth towards unity and integration. From a philosophical point of view, a human person is a being incomplete, always perfectible, always capable of growing towards something more. As in physical life, there is progress from infancy through adolescence to mature adulthood, so also in the realm of the spirit one can and must grow. The great masters of the spirit, the Jewish prophets, the Oriental guru and roshi speak of the path, journey, itinerary, progress, stages, climb, and development. All these concepts speak of time, history, and duration. Our human maturation implies time. Every life is a constant path toward maturity, a maturity that cannot be achieved except by constant formation¹.
2. **[A permanent beginning]** The six dimensions of formation to consecrated life (human, intellectual, spiritual, apostolic, communitarian and charismatic), are not separate, but together they comprise **integral** formation. They develop together and are all indispensable for the formation of a good Pallottine². This integration is not achieved all at once, but it is a continual process. The human dimension, also called affective - relational, is the basis of all formation; Intellectual formation is the instrument; Spiritual formation is the heart; Pastoral formation is the goal³.

¹ Cfr. *VC*, n° 65.

² During one of the meetings of the Council of the Institute of St. Vincent Pallotti, the problem of the correct use of the terms “Pallottino” and “Pallottiano” was raised. After consulting the experts and a long discussion, it has been proposed to adopt the following use of the terms: “Pallottino” as adjective for everything regarding Pallotti; “Pallottiano” only for the persons, the Pallottines. It was indicated that this problem exists only with expressions in Italian language because in other languages the same expression (Pallottine) is used. Cfr. *Universal Apostolate*, half-yearly Journal of the Institute of St. Vincent Pallotti, n° 9, 2003, p. 87.

³ Cfr. *VC*, n° 65.

3. **[A gradual process]** Therefore, formation is a unified and gradual process which unfolds within the reality of the vocation to consecrated life in a dynamic-relational sense, and it becomes the principle which unifies the whole person, harmonising all dimensions of being: biological, psychological and spiritual. It is an evolutionary process which passes through every stage of personal maturation – from the psychological and spiritual to the theological and pastoral⁴. It involves the whole person and its ultimate aim is the transformation of the whole person⁵ by being configured to and growing into union with Christ⁶.
4. **[Goal of Formation]** The above mentioned aspects are to be integrated into Pallottine formation as envisaged in our Fundamental Law: “Formation in our Society aims to help each member in the development of his personality and his vocation so that he can attain full human maturity, grow in the likeness of Christ, be efficient for the tasks of the Society, and thus become an active member of the Community”⁷.
5. **[Point of integration]** It is in Christ, Apostle of the Eternal Father, that every dimension of Pallottine formation – human, intellectual, spiritual, communitarian, charismatic and apostolic – finds its point of integration. An integrated Pallottine formation thus enables a candidate to achieve a realistic, consistent and positive self-identity as a human being, Christian and Pallottine. The essential means for arriving at such a goal is the most perfect imita-

⁴ Cfr. *VC*, n° 65.

⁵ Cfr. *VC*, n° 65.

⁶ Cfr. S. Bisignano, “Formation for Religious Life” in: T. Goffi A. Palazzini (Ed), *Theological Dictionary of Consecrated Life*, Milano, Editrice Ancora, 1994, p. 767.

⁷ *LSAC*, n° 67.

tion of Jesus, the Apostle of the Eternal Father, fully Human and fully Divine, of the God-Man, the perfect exemplar of Christian perfection⁸.

6. **[History of formative efforts]** In the history of our Society, the present *ratio* is the second document that includes all the stages of Pallottine formation. The first was printed in 1963, in Latin, under the title *Ratio educandi Societatis Apostolatus Catholici*. In the years since then the following documents were published: *General Directives for Formation in the Introductory Period* (1987) *Directives for Priestly Formation of the Students in Philosophy and Theology* (1989) and *The Brothers in the Society of the Catholic Apostolate* (1995). In conformity with the resolution of the XVIII General Assembly of our Society⁹, the General Council constituted the General Secretariat for Formation on 31 March 1999, appointing the following confreres as members: Fr. Jacob Nam-pudakam (NA): General Secretary; Fr. Jeremiah Murphy (IR.AR): Secretary; Fr. Paul Rheinbay (LM), Fr. Julio Endi Akamine (SP), Fr. Stanislaw Stawicki (RW), and Fr. Jozef Lasak (WA). The Contact Person between the General Council and the General Secretariat for Formation is Fr. Kazimierz Czulak (PN), General Consultor. The XVIII General Assembly took account of the importance of renewing formation at all levels, as a response to the invitation of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*. For the same reason it was necessary to prepare the *ratio institutionis* of the Society¹⁰. The General Council assigned this specific task to the General Secretariat for Formation. The members of the Secretariat

⁸ Cfr. OOCC, III, pp. 36-37.

⁹ "The General Council should establish a Secretariat for Formation at the Generalate", *Final Document of the XVIII General Assembly*, Rome, 1999, n° 6.2.1., p. 38.

¹⁰ Cfr. *Final Document of the XVIII General Assembly*, 7.1; See also *VC*, n° 68.

immediately began that work and have developed this text, the fruit of their 5- year efforts. The VII Consultative Congress of the Major Superiors held at Konstancin in Poland from 1-10 October 2002 is the most recent event in the life of the Society to give yet another impulse to formation. The participants proposed that once again various aspects of formation become themes for the XIX General Assembly¹¹.

7. **[A Pallottine profile]** The XVIII General Assembly also insisted "Our formation must develop with mutual collaboration between the SAC and the UAC¹², searching for the greatest possible understanding and clarity regarding our identity, charism, community life and mission. Special attention must be paid to and specific steps must be taken for the formation of Formators"¹³, especially in the spirit of our Pallottine charism. Following this directive of the General Assembly, the General Secretariat for Formation applied itself intensely so that a typically Pallottine profile would become the specific characteristic of the entire *ratio institutionis*.
8. **[A unifying principle]** The three themes of great importance for the entire Pallottine foundation today are the Union of Catholic Apostolate, Pallottine identity and Formation. We are invited to work for the fullest realisa-

¹¹ Cfr. *Final Document of the Consultative Congress of the Major Superiors*, Konstancin, Poland, 1-10 October 2002, p. 14.

¹² Let us remember that St. Vincent Pallotti has given different names to his foundation: "Pious Union", "Pious Society", "Pious Association", "Pious Apostolic Institution", "Pious Secular Society of the Faithful", "Evangelical Trumpet" or still "Auxiliary Body of the Church". In 1971, the SAC General Assembly chose exclusively that of "Union of Catholic Apostolate"; Cfr. *Memory and Prophecy of the Union of Catholic Apostolate*, Rome, 1993, n° 25; Séamus Freeman, *In a Constant Search for Faithfulness*, Rome, 1996, n° 25.

¹³ Cfr. *Final Document of the XVIII General Assembly*, op.cit., n. 7.1, p. 41.

tion of the original vision of St. Vincent Pallotti and make it a reality. In fact, Pallotti strived "...to invite the greatest possible number of faithful in such a manner that the vast number of zealous Christians would be united to form a Pious Union"¹⁴ to procure "...with the secular and religious clergy and the laity of both sexes...the multiplication of spiritual and temporal means necessary and suitable to revive faith and re-ignite charity among Catholics and propagate them in the whole world"¹⁵. Pallotti wanted a general mobilisation for evangelisation; he ardently desired that, rooted in the *constitutive essence of the true spirit of the most perfect charity*, all, everywhere, with all means and for all needs, according to their vocation, would make themselves totally available for all initiatives in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus. This was not only a new working model, but also a way of being *Church as home and school of communion*, for which the theological and juridical guidelines were lacking until Vatican II. This prophetic vision of Pallotti was finally recognised and declared on 14 November 2003 when the Pontifical Council for the Laity decreed: a. the erection of the Union of Catholic Apostolate as an International Public Association of the Faithful of Pontifical Right, as a juridical person in accord with the norms of canons 298-320 and 327-329 of the Code of Canon Law; b. the approval of its General Statutes for a period of five years *ad experimentum*¹⁶.

9. **[SAC – Integral part of the Union]** The choice of the theme for the XIX General Assembly – *Society of the Catholic Apostolate*: "... *an integral part of the Union of Catholic Apostolate*"¹⁷ – is therefore done with the intention of dealing

¹⁴ OCCC IV, p. 123.

¹⁵ OCCC VII, p.3.

¹⁶ Cfr. *General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate*, Rome, 2003, p. 11.

¹⁷ LSAC, n° 1.

with these fundamental questions. While the Law of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate and the General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate clearly define Pallottine spirituality, charism and identity, it is the task of an integral formation to guarantee the interiorisation of the essential Pallottine values. Therefore, one of the fundamental challenges that we must face is an adequate formation in the various stages of life, with particular attention to the spiritual, anthropological and community nature of our charism¹⁸. Formation, as already noted, is a journey, an exodus towards unity and integration. In this never-ending process, formation remains a responsibility of both the Community and the individual member: "The formation of the members is a serious and permanent responsibility of the whole Society. But individual members also must feel a sense of personal responsibility for their own formation, and take an active interest in it"¹⁹. The present *ratio* is a response to that "serious and permanent responsibility" of the Society in forming its members. Its success will be determined by the measure to which the individual candidates and members will be motivated to respond to the call "to continually deepen a love and commitment to the spiritual and apostolic essence of our way of life"²⁰. This means "to live fully one's own vocation within the Union, to better serve the Church and all humankind"²¹. It is our hope that the present *ratio* will be a source of inspiration and will provide helpful tools for such growth.

10. **[First part]** The content of the present *ratio institutionis* is divided into two parts: the first part presents the basis for

¹⁸ Cfr. *General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate*, "Historical Premise", pp. 4-5.

¹⁹ LSAC, n° 70.

²⁰ *In a Constant Search for Faithfulness*, Rome, 1996, n° 2.

²¹ Cfr. *General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate*, Rome, 2003, n° 35.

developing pedagogy for an integral Pallottine formation; the second part deals with the Stages of Formation. Chapter 1 begins with an analysis of Pallotti as Formator. This text presents the concept of formation of members of the entire Pallottine foundation in an original manner. It is followed by a profound examination of the foundational aspects of Pallottine spirituality and charism in Chapter II, with the intention of defining our identity as clearly as possible. The effectiveness of our formation programme will be measured largely by the clarity and conviction that develop in our candidates with regard to our specific charism and identity. At the same time, it is absolutely fundamental to understand the human person who responds to the divine call to follow Christ more closely by entering into our community. In Chapter III, on the Integral vision of the Human Person, we present some of the elements of a Christian and Pallottine anthropology. It is no exhaustive study of this important theme. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that we can trace all the essential elements of a complete and adequate anthropology in the writings of our Founder. The first part of the *ratio* proceeds therefore with the examination, in Chapter IV, of Pallottine Consecration, and its meaning and implications for formation. It ends with a conclusion in which, in the light of all the previous considerations, the goal of an integral Pallottine formation is summarised.

11. **[Second Part]** The second part of the *ratio* is subdivided as follows: **a.** Objective and Challenges, which determine the goal of formation at that stage; **b.** Content and Pedagogy which describe in detail the concept, the characteristics of the person called, the formators, the environment required, and the methods and means necessary for formation; **c.** Practical tools for formation. The stages of formation considered are: vocational discernment, postu-

lancy, the period of initial formation and the preparation for consecration, the scholastic period and preparation for perpetual consecration, and ongoing formation.

12. **[A universal *ratio*]** The real challenge involved in the preparation of a *ratio institutionis* for the entire Society is that it has to be sufficiently universal and, at the same time, it must be specific and relevant enough to be of use in the diverse cultures and situations existing in the various Provinces and Regions of our Society. It is our hope that the essential contents and the pedagogical approach of this *ratio institutionis* will lead to the preparation of effective formation programmes, contextualised in our Provinces and Regions²².
13. **[Guarantor of unity]** Regarding the preparation of formation programmes in the various Provinces and Regions according to “the needs of the apostolate, the conditions of living and the culture of their respective territories,” our Law establishes that “the basic norms of formation are identical for the whole Society.” This *ratio institutionis*, approved by the General Council, certainly provides a general orientation for a Pallottine formation, and guarantees its unity in the entire Society”²³.

²² Cfr. LSAC, n° 72, 110, 303, Appendix III, numerals 7 and 52. “The Provincial and Assemblies or the Provincial Council have the duty to establish, in consultation with the experts, the programmes of formation in the Province and get it approved by the General Council. In their elaboration the Provinces should consider not only the demands of apostolate in the socio-cultural conditions of their respective region but also must follow the directives of the respective Episcopal Conference” – H. Socha SAC, Juridical Commentary to the Law of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, Rome, 2002, n° 830.

²³ Cfr. LSAC n° 71.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. **[Journey towards maturity]** The process of formation is a journey, an exodus, a progress, a growth towards unity and integration. From a philosophical point of view, a human person is a being incomplete, always perfectible, always capable of growing towards something more. As in physical life, there is progress from infancy through adolescence to mature adulthood, so also in the realm of the spirit one can and must grow. The great masters of the spirit, the Jewish prophets, the Oriental guru and roshi speak of the path, journey, itinerary, progress, stages, climb, and development. All these concepts speak of time, history, and duration. Our human maturation implies time. Every life is a constant path toward maturity, a maturity that cannot be achieved except by constant formation¹.
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⁷ *LSAC*, n° 67.

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⁸ Cfr. OCCC, III, pp. 36-37.

⁹ "The General Council should establish a Secretariat for Formation at the Generalate", *Final Document of the XVIII General Assembly*, Rome, 1999, n° 6.2.1., p. 38.

¹⁰ Cfr. *Final Document of the XVIII General Assembly*, 7.1; See also *VC*, n° 68.

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8. **[A unifying principle]** The three themes of great importance for the entire Pallottine foundation today are the Union of Catholic Apostolate, Pallottine identity and Formation. We are invited to work for the fullest realisa-

¹¹ Cfr. *Final Document of the Consultative Congress of the Major Superiors*, Konstancin, Poland, 1-10 October 2002, p. 14.

¹² Let us remember that St. Vincent Pallotti has given different names to his foundation: "Pious Union", "Pious Society", "Pious Association", "Pious Apostolic Institution", "Pious Secular Society of the Faithful", "Evangelical Trumpet" or still "Auxiliary Body of the Church". In 1971, the SAC General Assembly chose exclusively that of "Union of Catholic Apostolate"; Cfr. *Memory and Prophecy of the Union of Catholic Apostolate*, Rome, 1993, n° 25; Séamus Freeman, *In a Constant Search for Faithfulness*, Rome, 1996, n° 25.

¹³ Cfr. *Final Document of the XVIII General Assembly*, op.cit., n. 7.1, p. 41.

tion of the original vision of St. Vincent Pallotti and make it a reality. In fact, Pallotti strived "...to invite the greatest possible number of faithful in such a manner that the vast number of zealous Christians would be united to form a Pious Union"¹⁴ to procure "...with the secular and religious clergy and the laity of both sexes...the multiplication of spiritual and temporal means necessary and suitable to revive faith and re-ignite charity among Catholics and propagate them in the whole world"¹⁵. Pallotti wanted a general mobilisation for evangelisation; he ardently desired that, rooted in the *constitutive essence of the true spirit of the most perfect charity*, all, everywhere, with all means and for all needs, according to their vocation, would make themselves totally available for all initiatives in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus. This was not only a new working model, but also a way of being *Church as home and school of communion*, for which the theological and juridical guidelines were lacking until Vatican II. This prophetic vision of Pallotti was finally recognised and declared on 14 November 2003 when the Pontifical Council for the Laity decreed: a. the erection of the Union of Catholic Apostolate as an International Public Association of the Faithful of Pontifical Right, as a juridical person in accord with the norms of canons 298-320 and 327-329 of the Code of Canon Law; b. the approval of its General Statutes for a period of five years *ad experimentum*¹⁶.

9. **[SAC – Integral part of the Union]** The choice of the theme for the XIX General Assembly – *Society of the Catholic Apostolate*: "... an integral part of the Union of Catholic Apostolate"¹⁷ – is therefore done with the intention of dealing

¹⁴ OOCC IV, p. 123.

¹⁵ OOCC VII, p.3.

¹⁶ Cfr. *General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate*, Rome, 2003, p. 11.

¹⁷ LSAC, n° 1.

with these fundamental questions. While the Law of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate and the General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate clearly define Pallottine spirituality, charism and identity, it is the task of an integral formation to guarantee the interiorisation of the essential Pallottine values. Therefore, one of the fundamental challenges that we must face is an adequate formation in the various stages of life, with particular attention to the spiritual, anthropological and community nature of our charism¹⁸. Formation, as already noted, is a journey, an exodus towards unity and integration. In this never-ending process, formation remains a responsibility of both the Community and the individual member: "The formation of the members is a serious and permanent responsibility of the whole Society. But individual members also must feel a sense of personal responsibility for their own formation, and take an active interest in it"¹⁹. The present *ratio* is a response to that "serious and permanent responsibility" of the Society in forming its members. Its success will be determined by the measure to which the individual candidates and members will be motivated to respond to the call "to continually deepen a love and commitment to the spiritual and apostolic essence of our way of life"²⁰. This means "to live fully one's own vocation within the Union, to better serve the Church and all humankind"²¹. It is our hope that the present *ratio* will be a source of inspiration and will provide helpful tools for such growth.

10. **[First part]** The content of the present *ratio institutionis* is divided into two parts: the first part presents the basis for

¹⁸ Cfr. *General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate*, "Historical Premise", pp. 4-5.

¹⁹ LSAC, n° 70.

²⁰ *In a Constant Search for Faithfulness*, Rome, 1996, n° 2.

²¹ Cfr. *General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate*, Rome, 2003, n° 35.

developing pedagogy for an integral Pallottine formation; the second part deals with the Stages of Formation. Chapter 1 begins with an analysis of Pallotti as Formator. This text presents the concept of formation of members of the entire Pallottine foundation in an original manner. It is followed by a profound examination of the foundational aspects of Pallottine spirituality and charism in Chapter II, with the intention of defining our identity as clearly as possible. The effectiveness of our formation programme will be measured largely by the clarity and conviction that develop in our candidates with regard to our specific charism and identity. At the same time, it is absolutely fundamental to understand the human person who responds to the divine call to follow Christ more closely by entering into our community. In Chapter III, on the Integral vision of the Human Person, we present some of the elements of a Christian and Pallottine anthropology. It is no exhaustive study of this important theme. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that we can trace all the essential elements of a complete and adequate anthropology in the writings of our Founder. The first part of the *ratio* proceeds therefore with the examination, in Chapter IV, of Pallottine Consecration, and its meaning and implications for formation. It ends with a conclusion in which, in the light of all the previous considerations, the goal of an integral Pallottine formation is summarised.

11. **[Second Part]** The second part of the *ratio* is subdivided as follows: **a.** Objective and Challenges, which determine the goal of formation at that stage; **b.** Content and Pedagogy which describe in detail the concept, the characteristics of the person called, the formators, the environment required, and the methods and means necessary for formation; **c.** Practical tools for formation. The stages of formation considered are: vocational discernment, postu-

lancy, the period of initial formation and the preparation for consecration, the scholastic period and preparation for perpetual consecration, and ongoing formation.

12. **[A universal *ratio*]** The real challenge involved in the preparation of a *ratio institutionis* for the entire Society is that it has to be sufficiently universal and, at the same time, it must be specific and relevant enough to be of use in the diverse cultures and situations existing in the various Provinces and Regions of our Society. It is our hope that the essential contents and the pedagogical approach of this *ratio institutionis* will lead to the preparation of effective formation programmes, contextualised in our Provinces and Regions²².
13. **[Guarantor of unity]** Regarding the preparation of formation programmes in the various Provinces and Regions according to “the needs of the apostolate, the conditions of living and the culture of their respective territories,” our Law establishes that “the basic norms of formation are identical for the whole Society.” This *ratio institutionis*, approved by the General Council, certainly provides a general orientation for a Pallottine formation, and guarantees its unity in the entire Society”²³.

²² Cfr. LSAC, n° 72, 110, 303, Appendix III, numerals 7 and 52. “The Provincial and Assemblies or the Provincial Council have the duty to establish, in consultation with the experts, the programmes of formation in the Province and get it approved by the General Council. In their elaboration the Provinces should consider not only the demands of apostolate in the socio-cultural conditions of their respective region but also must follow the directives of the respective Episcopal Conference” – H. Socha SAC, Juridical Commentary to the Law of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, Rome, 2002, n° 830.

²³ Cfr. LSAC n° 71.

PART ONE

**PALOTTINE SPIRITUALITY AND
IDENTITY**

CHAPTER I

PALLOTTINE FORMATION IN THE
FOUNDER'S
THOUGHT AND PRACTICE

14. **[Pallottine identity]** All through its history the Society of Catholic Apostolate has always striven to cultivate Pallottine identity and it intends to continue to do so today¹. It preserves and develops this identity, prolonging the spirit and apostolic plan of St. Vincent Pallotti. This *ratio institutionis* falls into this line.
15. **[History of Pallottine formation]** The history² of formation in the Society of the Catholic Apostolate confirms the continuity that exists between the spiritual and pedagogical experience of the Founder and the new elements discovered along the way and assumed in view of a more conscious and effective service.
16. **[Pallotti's formative activity]** The formative activity of St Vincent Pallotti was undoubtedly the fruit of his holiness and his own personal formation³. It does bear the

¹ “[...] The identity of an institute should be preserved with such care as to avoid the danger of a situation insufficiently defined, which means that the Religious, without due consideration of the particular style of action proper to their disposition, are inserted in the life of the Church in a vague and ambiguous manner”; *Mutuae Relationes*, n° 11, *Enchiridion Vaticanum 6*, Holy See official documents 1977-1979, EDB, 1980, p. 451.

² Cfr. Society of the Catholic Apostolate, “Direttive generali della formazione nel periodo introduttorio”, *ASAC*, vol. XII, pp. 442-444.

³ One of the best Italian minds, Antonio Rosmini-Serbatì (1797-1855), writes this about the personal formation of Vincent: “A great loss for Rome was certainly that of the holy Abate Pallotti, a man who was so good for the soul, and whom I myself consulted for direction of my spirit and received excellent advice. Such men are rare, formed only by the Lord through his grace and sent by him to

mark of its historical context, but it is also qualified by a long-lasting patience derived from reflection on his personal spiritual experience, from changes made to it and from docility to the advice of ecclesiastical authorities. All of this helped to propose a significant and original Christian itinerary for the exigencies, which arise from the process of formation.

17. **[The Pallottine trinomial]** Inseparable promotion of “spiritual, scientific and ministerial culture”⁴ was a characteristic which intimately bound all the aspects of formation as proposed by Vincent Pallotti. Study was always to be preceded by a desire for holiness and guided by co-operation for the glory of God and the salvation of humanity. Through this dynamic, his first companions, lay and clerics, experienced the originality of this project and the values of their universal apostolic vocation. In fact, in his writings Vincent Pallotti continually insists on this trinomial: *spiritual growth - study - apostolic commitment*. It was to be the basis and unifying foundation of Pallottine formation. It is important from the first stage of formation to establish an intimate bond between spiritual culture, ecclesiastical sciences and apostolic experiences⁵.

earth as a gift for the benefit of many, and of whom it is written: *multitudo autem sapientium sanitas est orbis terrarum* (Sap 6, 24)”; Antonio Rosmini-Serbatì, *Epistolario completo*, volume X, p. 767.

⁴ Cfr. OOCC I, pp. 152-189.

⁵ Cfr. *ivi*, pp. 171-177. As academic teacher of the Faculty of dogmatic theology at La Sapienza University, Pallotti devoted a good part of his time to the intellectual formation of young clergy. However he never separated it from spiritual and pastoral formation. Raffaele Melia will say of him later: “What is remarkable is that Vincenzo Pallotti succeeded in giving the young clerics the milk of pure science mixed with that of authentic piety. A mixture of which he was a living example, both for his great knowledge and for his great faith”; Walter Devetter, *Saint Vincent Pallotti, apôtre aux idées larges et généreuses*, Editions Marie-Médiatrice, Genval 1963, p. 29.

18. **[Model of a formator]** The type of formation which our holy Founder handed on through his life and his writings, his praxis, and also through a sort of spiritual and apostolic irradiation throughout Rome, has become our tradition. It has remained and been developed in keeping with his desires⁶. For us Vincent Pallotti is not only a “master of spiritual life and apostolic activity”⁷, he is also a model and the first to be concerned about the task of formation⁸.
19. **[Being formed according to a plan]** Pallotti, as formator of his first companions, had his methods and his way of doing things, as they themselves testify⁹. He acted according to a very precise plan of formation, conceived at Camaldoli in 1839¹⁰, developed progressively with experience acquired with new arrivals and codified in the *Regole della Congregazione dei preti e fratelli coadiutori dell’Apostolato Cattolico* [*Rules of the Congregation of the priests and coadjutor brothers of the Catholic Apostolate*]¹¹. We refer mainly to these two writings in these historical notes on Vincent Pallotti, formator.

⁶ “[...] I pray now and always, and I intend to pray even after my death (which follows me every moment), your charity and your religious zeal my dearest Fathers and Brothers in Our Lord J. C. Crucified, to commit yourselves totally for the stable Institution and the most rapid and fruitful propagation of the Pious Society as if you were Chosen by Our Lord J. C. to be its Founders, Propagators, and Preservers on this earth [...] and do all you can to be concerned with it like all Saintly Founders and Foundresses who were concerned for the Foundation, Propagation and Preservation of their respective Institutions of all kinds” - OCCC III, pp. 28-29.

⁷ Cfr. *LSAC*, n°17.

⁸ With regard to Pallotti as a professor at La *Sapienza University* you may consult an excellent work of research by Fr. Ansgario Faller, “Il tomismo alla Sapienza illustrato dallo studio ed insegnamento di San Vincenzo Pallotti”, *Doctor Communis*, Review of the Pontifical Academy of San Tommaso, n°3, 1984, pp. 262-277.

⁹ Cfr. Bruno Bayer, *Paul de Geslin, compagnon de saint Vincent Pallotti. Écrits et lettres*, Edition du Dialogue, Paris 1972, pp.70-85.

¹⁰ Cfr. OCCC I, pp.152-189. This is the *Procura* under the protection of St. Peter, whose mission was to promote spiritual, scientific and ministerial culture of the clergy and hence Pallotti’s insistence on the priestly vocation, which will appear again in this paper.

¹¹ Cfr. OCCC VII, pp. 1-406.

PASTORAL CARE OF VOCATIONS

20. **[Vocation: gift of God]** Since every vocation is a gift of God to his Church¹², Pallotti insisted strongly on prayer for vocations. He was convinced that all human efforts for the formation of candidates to the consecrated life would be useless without God’s gift. There will never be good priests or brothers, that is holy priests and brothers, formed and totally committed to the apostolic ministry, unless God gives them to his Church. The first duty in the pastoral care of vocations is, therefore, prayer¹³. Pallotti considered prayer an infallible means for obtaining authentic vocations¹⁴.
21. **[Vocation: human commitment]** Precisely because it is a gift of God, every vocation is also a human responsibility. St. Vincent gave this duty various names. He liked to speak of “corresponding to the vocation”, asking God to forgive his “minimal correspondence to the vocation”¹⁵. He spoke also of a *spirit of sacrifice*: “And just as Our Lord Jesus Christ came into the World, lived and died in the spirit of Sacrifice, so with greater perfection than the Laity they must enter the Sanctuary and with the spirit of sacrifice they must live and die there; so that all may be resplendent with the most perfect mortification of the pas-

¹² Cfr. OCCC I, p. 157.

¹³ Cfr. *RdC*, n°16.

¹⁴ Cfr. OCCC I, p. 153. We note that with this intention, Pallotti composed beautiful prayers for vocations. See for example, the litanies «Mitte operarios in messem tuam» (OCCC XI, pp. 400-410), and «Per ottenere operai evangelici» [To obtain workers for the Gospel] (OCCC IV, pp. 39-40).

¹⁵ Cfr. OCCC X, pp. 582-585. With regard to priestly vocations Pallotti writes: “To enter the Ecclesiastical Ministry it is necessary to have a vocation from God. I will pray the Lord not to allow me or others to enter the Ecclesiastical Ministry without being called, and that he may sanctify those already in the ministry and of those who are not called, may he make them called, and sanctified and make the truly called correspond to the calling OCCC X, p. 562..

sions”¹⁶. We note that Pallotti called ecclesiastics who made no effort to correspond to their vocation “priests without spirit”, who “by a sort of cruelty, leave many without all those treasures of religion, and corporal and spiritual works of mercy, they could have promoted” and therefore they are a disgrace to the people of God¹⁷.

22. **[Signs of an authentic vocation]** Those responsible for vocations should be extremely attentive and alert with regard to the signs of an authentic vocation in those young men who come to us. Care should be taken to ensure that these young men progress in maturity both in studies and in spirit, in keeping with the circumstances of time and place. Among the signs of an authentic vocation Pallotti includes: real talent, disposition admirably prepared by grace, inclination to the sacred and all those other qualities which offer well-grounded hope of becoming excellent workers for the Gospel¹⁸.
23. **[Personal availability]** To the young men who knocked at the door of a House of Formation Pallotti proposed certain exercises to prepare them for the consecrated life¹⁹: **a.** deep awareness of one’s unworthiness to receive the gift of a vocation and the grace to respond to it and to remain faithful to it always; **b.** humbly petition God for these gifts, favours and graces; **c.** aspire to be good priests solely for the glory of God and the benefit of peoples; **d.** learn to dominate passions and to exercise the spirit of sacrifice.

¹⁶ OOCC I, pp. 157-158. This is “Rule of life to be kept by those aspiring to the priesthood”.

¹⁷ Cfr. *ivi*, p. 164.

¹⁸ Cfr. *ivi*, pp. 153-154.

¹⁹ Cfr. *ivi*, pp. 157-158.

24. **[Behaviour]** Pallotti counselled the same young men to adopt a certain style and purity of life, suited to their project. Here is a list of means to obtain this end²⁰: **a.** make sure you lead a life of personal prayer, using every day the prayers that every good Christian prays; **b.** arrange your day in order to live it as continual preparation and thanksgiving; **c.** read a chapter of Holy Scripture every day; **d.** study with diligence and commitment, always remembering that the clergy must be well-formed in order to sustain the faith of the people through example and advice; **e.** take part in the life of the local Church, participating in apostolic groups and associations, striving to grow in the spirit, knowledge and ministry of the Gospel; **f.** have recourse to personal spiritual counselling, indispensable for vocational discernment, choosing a confessor and spiritual director and meeting him at least once a month, and whenever the need arises; **g.** arrange to take part in a retreat once a month in order to grow in virtue, especially in apostolic zeal and charity; **h.** once a year for eight days follow the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, guided by an experienced retreat director; **i.** live, dress, and speak with modesty, sobriety and simplicity; **j.** avoid anything which might harm your vocation project; preferring instead all that can edify and build it up.

POSTULANCY

25. **[A decision to imitate Jesus Christ]** When a person, whatever his condition or grade, asks to enter the Congregation, the director of the Postulancy will make him understand that the important thing is not to choose between the ordained ministry and the consecrated life, but rather to

²⁰ Cfr. *ivi*, pp. 158-162; See also: OOCC XI, pp. 311-316. In twelve points Pallotti presents a «Breve Regolamento di vita per dispersi ad abbracciare lo Stato Religioso». He greatly insists on this attitude of “disposing oneself”.

choose to follow Jesus Christ. The following four points must be clearly explained to all postulants: **a.** members are obliged to imitate Jesus Christ in everything; **b.** no one can be dispensed from this; **c.** all who wish to live in the Congregation must be, as far as possible, perfect imitators of Christ; **d.** the heart must be genuinely and generously disposed to imitate Him observing the Rules and the directives of superiors and spiritual directors²¹.

- 26. [Illusions and false signs]** In vocational discernment Pallotti warned about certain false signs. He used to say that there were postulants who were truly willing to follow Jesus Christ in everything and others who had neither the true disposition nor vocation. St. Vincent urged both postulants and directors to take time for discernment. With regard to false signs, he called attention to those without a calling, especially noting impatience and lack of talents. Those with an authentic vocation, on the other hand, would be tempted to postpone their definitive reply. Pallotti tried to make people understand that, from the beginning of our life, our relationship with the Lord must always be lived as a call and response. And the response we give today prepares and conditions the one we will have to give later. Constraint would be a serious illusion²².
- 27. [Discernment and goal of the Society]** During the Postulancy, the director and the postulant should strive to see whether the character, dispositions and qualities of the latter correspond to the goal and development of the works of the Union of Catholic Apostolate²³. Therefore Pallotti advises that candidates should be *recruited* in view of the

²¹ Cfr. OCCC VII, pp. 10-12.

²² Cfr. *ivi*, p. 12.

²³ Cfr. *ivi*, p. 13.

mission proper to the Society and that from the beginning, formation and apostolate should be related.

- 28. [Quality not quantity]** “One firm precept, St. Vincent points out, is not to fret about forming a great number: better a few, but filled with spirit: because even one alone filled with the spirit of Jesus Christ will achieve much: and just one without the spirit of Jesus Christ will cause great harm even amidst many good ones”²⁴. Therefore before accepting a candidate it is necessary to verify whether he has true piety and zeal; whether he is peaceful and what his natural gifts are; that he prefers to obey rather than command, that he is able to endure hard work and to assume commitments consistently²⁵.
- 29. [Points of reference for the future]** Obstacles and illusions are not insurmountable. To recognise them and be wary of them is already a protection. Positive points of reference useful for reliable discernment can be obtained by way of negative points of reference. Therefore St. Vincent writes by way of conclusion: “Once what is necessary for the authentic good of the Postulant, the Congregation and its Works, which can concern the Postulant himself, has been ascertained, the candidate will be accepted and the day and hour of Entrance will be set”²⁶.

THE PERIOD OF PREPARATORY FORMATION

- 30. [Welcoming new members]** Every candidate is a gift of God to our Society. Welcoming him, and offering him the best possible formation, we render homage to our Creator and we honour this gift. This is why Pallotti compares the

²⁴ OCCC III, p. 327.

²⁵ Cfr. *ivi*, p. 328.

²⁶ OCCC VII, p. 14.

arrival of a candidate to the birth of Christ in Bethlehem²⁷. However, just as the birth of a child changes the life of the whole family, so too the arrival of young men puts us to the test.

31. **[Initiation into the *sequela Christi*]** Since the goal of Christian life, including Pallottine life, consists in being configured to the Lord Jesus, it is necessary to undertake a path of formation which facilitates the progressive appropriation of Christ's sentiments towards God the Father. St Vincent Pallotti was convinced of this and therefore he asked us to rejoice every time a new candidate entered the Congregation because his coming meant the arrival of another imitator of Christ²⁸. Initiation into the *sequela Christi* should be the central concern of the entire Pallottine formation itinerary and in all of life.²⁹
32. **[Initiation into co-operation]** For Pallotti, the initial imitation of Jesus Christ marks the start of co-operation in our salvation. The community which welcomes a new arrival should be a second "Bethlehem", that is *the House of bread* – symbol of our minimal Congregation – because it abounded in the means necessary to "acquire the most sublime perfection in order to *co-operate* more and more for the greater glory of God and the salvation of Souls"³⁰. Nevertheless these means would be useless without "the most lively, generous and perfect desire to *co-operate* in everything and always for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls"³¹.

²⁷ Cfr. *ivi*, pp. 19-20; OCCC II, pp. 15-16.

²⁸ Cfr. *ibidem*.

²⁹ We think particularly of «*Memoria pratica quotidiana per imitare nostro Signore Gesù Cristo*» (OCCC III, pp. 34-39).

³⁰ OCCC II, pp. 15-16.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

33. **[As the apostolate, so the formation]** In the context of his epoch, when weakening of identity characterised various components of the Church and society, Vincent Pallotti insisted on the importance of "working together". He realised that he was called to become "like a central point"³² in the heart of the Church amidst all her realities. The goal of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, which he founded in 1835, was to unite all Christians to co-operate in the growth and the spreading of the faith and the consolidation of unity among Christians³³. Because the Union saw itself as a space for co-operation in the bosom of the Church, whose main aim – according to Pallotti – was the universal apostolate³⁴, the art of co-operation with God and among people became one of the essential objectives of Pallottine formation.

34. **[Prelude to continual co-operation]** Speaking of initial formation of the male Community of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, St. Vincent Pallotti enumerated some objectives to be pursued: **a.** test the vocation of the person who wishes to join the Congregation; **b.** form him in the practice of the spirit of the Rule of our holy Institution; **c.** help him to dispose himself to acquire the most sublime Evangelical perfection; **d.** help him to strive with discernment towards the perfect imitation of Jesus Christ, mainly through a humble, poor, laborious, beneficent and hidden life; **e.** lastly, as if he wished to recall that formation continues all through life, Pallotti said "lead each person to practice the life of perfect and constant sacrifice even to Death in order to *co-operate* in the most active and

³² Cfr. OCCC III, p. 4 e p. 83.

³³ Cfr. OCCC IV, p. 130 e p. 315; OCCC VI, p. 130.

³⁴ Cfr. OCCC III, pp. 177-178.

perfect way for the greater glory of God and sanctification of self and neighbour”³⁵.

35. [Fostering the Disposition to let oneself be formed]

St. Vincent, expert and attentive pedagogue, did not say that a novice should acquire the “most sublime Evangelical perfection” during his initial formation but that he should *dispose* himself towards it. In fact initial formation succeeds well if it leads a young man to dispose himself to be formed for the rest of his life. In other words, learning how to co-operate with God, with others and with oneself is not restricted to one definite moment, but is a willingness and an interior freedom to continue to learn all through life, under every circumstance and from every person. Pallotti says unequivocally: co-operation must be “constant”³⁶, “universal”³⁷, “persevering”³⁸, “free”³⁹, and also “eternal”⁴⁰.

PREPARATION FOR THE ORDAINED MINISTRY AND PERPETUAL CONSECRATION

36. [Always more] St. Vincent held that it was not sufficient to enter the Congregation merely disposed to practice a life of perfect sacrifice, because very often, once the novitiate is finished and the first consecration has been pronounced,

³⁵ Cfr. OOCC II, pp. 286-287.

³⁶ Cfr. OOCC I, p. 2; OOCC V, pp. 307-308; OOCC VII, p. 39. See also: *RdC*, n°15: “[...] it is consecrated life itself which demands by nature *constant* willingness in those called to this life. [...] So it will be important for every consecrated person to be formed in freedom to learn all through life, at every age and season, in every human environment and context, from every person and from every culture, and allow himself to be instructed by any fragment of truth and beauty that may surround him”.

³⁷ Cfr. OOCC XI, p. 327.

³⁸ Cfr. OOCC I, p. 94.

³⁹ Cfr. OOCC V, p. 73; OOCC IX, p. 414.

⁴⁰ Cfr. OOCC V, pp. 210-211; OOCC X, p. 280.

one may turn back. Therefore “so as not to turn back but to imitate ever more perfectly the Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ in order to co-operate effectively in the works for his greater glory and the greater sanctification of Souls, it is necessary that all through life they attend seriously and with all possible fervour to the most perfect exercise of all the Virtues necessary to acquire the most sublime perfection, such that their life may have among its distinctive characteristics that of moving *ever forward* and growing constantly in holiness and in evangelical perfection according to the Rules and the spirit of the Congregation”⁴¹.

37. [Pedagogy of Nazareth]

Our Founder loved to comment on Luke’s⁴² narration of Jesus’ childhood. He was convinced that the pedagogy of Nazareth, hidden but bearing life was the only one truly able to prepare candidates for evangelical ministry⁴³. Thus he said that the house of Nazareth “must be the rule for our Houses and the holy Retreats of our minimal Congregation”⁴⁴, particularly houses of formation. Following this pedagogy, candidates are led to grow, like Jesus, in wisdom, age and grace before God and men, to “wait until they are mature to dedicate themselves and to carefully dispose themselves beforehand” for public ministry⁴⁵.

38. [Holiness, wisdom, health]

Reading the life of St. John Berchmans, Vincent Pallotti, still a seminarian, wrote that three things were dear to him: “1st. great holiness, 2nd. great learning and 3rd. great bodily strength; the first absolutely, the other two if they were for the glory of God”⁴⁶.

⁴¹ Cfr. OOCC VII, pp. 63-64.

⁴² Cfr. OOCC III, pp. 65-72; OOCC VII, pp. 18-114.

⁴³ Cfr. OOCC III, p. 71.

⁴⁴ OOCC VII, p. 111.

⁴⁵ Cfr. *ivi*, p. 112.

⁴⁶ OOCC X, p. 537.

It comes as no surprise then, that in proposing a formative itinerary for his men, St. Vincent sought to establish a close and intimate bond between spiritual culture, ecclesiastical sciences and apostolic experiences⁴⁷ at all levels of formation.

39. **[A type of novitiate]** For diocesan seminarians preparing for holy orders Pallotti proposed an original path which he called “Novitiate of the Ecclesiastical Order” or “Novitiate of the Priesthood”⁴⁸. Distinguishing it clearly from the novitiate of Religious, St. Vincent explained that his purpose was to predispose the ecclesiastical novice for holiness in the world, that is “a holiness tested in the face of temptation, mature and practised for sufficient time”⁴⁹. Whereas the religious novitiate prepared the candidate for first profession and concluded on that day, the “secular novitiate” concluded with priestly ordination and its goal was to prepare the candidate for holiness in the world⁵⁰.
40. **[Integrating suffering]** In the context of formation to holiness in the world, Vincent Pallotti urged seminarians to “take up the cross”. In fact he insisted on the importance of integrating the mystery of Christ crucified into the life of priests, teaching them to follow Him in trials and suffering. Speaking of this Pallotti quoted St. Paul: “*Those who belong to Jesus Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires*”(Gal 5,24). And he concluded that self-denial, effort and asceticism are indispensable for acquiring a tested and mature holiness in order to remain faithful to one’s vocation and to follow Jesus on the way of the Cross⁵¹.

⁴⁷ Cfr. OOCC I, pp. 152-189.

⁴⁸ Cfr. ivi, p. 167 e OOCC VII, pp. 261-262.

⁴⁹ Cfr. OOCC I, p. 167.

⁵⁰ Cfr. OOCC VII, pp. 261-262.

⁵¹ Cfr. OOCC I, p. 169.

41. **[The means]** Vincent Pallotti wanted to reach the objectives of the “novitiate for ecclesiastics” through weekly meetings. The seminarians formed small groups each under the guidance of a priest-leader for a period of *spiritual, intellectual and apostolic* formation. For the same goal St. Vincent proposed an entire method of work insisting heavily on the unity of the three areas, on active participation of each of the seminarians and cultivating in them a spirit of synthesis⁵².
42. **[The spiritual dimension]** With regard to spiritual formation, according to Pallotti the only thing that counted was that, at the end of their formation, seminarians would know and love Christ, because the choice of this type life consists in imitating Him. None of the other matters can stand alone. This is why each meeting dealt with a different aspect of the life of Christ, insisting for example on certain points: his humble, poor, laborious, hidden, charitable life, etc. In fact, St. Vincent said that to speak in general of Christ rendered the meetings “less fruitful”. In this sense he insisted that at every meeting the seminarians should reflect on one aspect of the life of Christ and he indicated the teaching and means to render the effective imitation possible⁵³ that flowed from it. Alternating with study of Christ’s life, Pallotti proposed reading the Roman catechism to help to synthesise the faith and correctly identify the role of the Magisterium of the Church⁵⁴.
43. **[The intellectual dimension]** “It is not enough for the clergy to be holy”, Pallotti wrote, “they should also be

⁵² Cfr. ivi, pp. 169-178. To develop a spirit of synthesis and facilitate interiorisation and integration of the subjects, at the beginning of a new meeting, for example, Pallotti would ask one of the seminarians to summarise the previous conference.

⁵³ Cfr. ivi, pp. 170-171.

⁵⁴ Cfr. ivi, p. 175.

learned»⁵⁵. Personally convinced of the importance of the intellectual dimension, St. Vincent encouraged seminarians, after a period of spiritual formation, to meet again in small groups according to the path taken by each, “to allow the studious youth to savour all the wealth, nobility and substance of Sacred Literature selected from the Old and New Testament and the most enlightened works of the Holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church”⁵⁶. Seeking to elicit a love of study in the young men, Father Vincent required the seminarians to write a brief fifteen-minute talk on a chosen philosophical or theological subject⁵⁷.

44. **[The apostolic dimension]** So that young priests, once ordained, would not find themselves incapable of “even exercising the sacred Functions” Pallotti suggested that practical formation should be organised and that this apostolic formation should be introduced in the first years in the seminary, but following an order and method. Theology students were “trained in evangelical preaching”: homilies, preaching and conferences. Students of philosophy and humanities learned how to “teach Doctrine” to young people, children, and also to sick people and prison inmates. On Sundays they taught doctrine in parishes⁵⁸.

ONGOING FORMATION

45. **[Continual learning]** Formation in our tradition is not the moulding of a passive subject in order to provide, on the day of perpetual consecration, “a Pallottine” lacking all originality. He should never consider himself “complete”, but as a person always in process. St. Vincent Pallotti was

⁵⁵ Ivi, p. 171.

⁵⁶ Ivi, pp.173.

⁵⁷ Cfr. ivi, pp.173-174.

⁵⁸ Cfr. ivi, pp. 175-177.

very sensitive to the personal commitment of each member and his willingness to grow throughout life. This is why, commenting on Luke 2,40.46⁵⁹, he elaborates two chapters in his Rule on the obligation to “allow oneself be instructed”⁶⁰. He reasoned as follows: just as Jesus grew and strengthened himself in wisdom by listening to and questioning his teachers, even though he was Wisdom itself, this is all the more reason for us to let ourselves be instructed and directed. Therefore, for love of our Lord “we must love receiving Instructions so much and we must seek it diligently, and long to show to others our ignorance; and by this humble path God will give us great and saving intelligence”⁶¹.

46. **[Formation for everyone]** No one receives instruction simply for his or her own advantage. The fundamental purpose of all formation is described by Pallotti in these terms: “so as not to turn back but to imitate ever more perfectly the Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ in order to cooperate effectively in the works for his greater glory and the greater sanctification of Souls”⁶². Since this is an obligation for all Christians, each according to their condition and vocation, “in the Congregation not only the priests must be fully and practically instructed but also the Coadjutor Brothers”⁶³. St. Vincent listed the fields of study in which it was necessary to apply oneself seriously and continually as follows: Sacred Scripture, Church History, Dogmatic and Fundamental Theology, Theology of the

⁵⁹ “After three days they found him in the temple sitting among the doctors listening to them and asking them questions” (Lk 2, 46).

⁶⁰ Cfr. In the *Grande Regola* 1839 (OCC II, pp. 56-61 e pp. 81-86); in the *Copia Lambruschini* 1846 (OCC VII, pp. 63-68 and pp. 88-93); In the *Piccola Regola* 1847 (OCC III, pp. 47-48).

⁶¹ OCC III, p. 48.

⁶² OCC VII, pp. 63-64.

⁶³ Ivi, pp. 90-91.

Sacraments, Liturgy and Moral Theology. He explained that it was important for teachers to be familiar with catechetical methods and practices so that “they make themselves fully understood even by the greatest of idiots and the least intelligent”⁶⁴.

47. **[The means]** To achieve the goals of ongoing formation, Pallotti proposed a series of meetings, which he called “spiritual conferences”, “conferences of study”, “spiritual exercises”, “monthly assemblies” and “college of scholars”. What are striking about the methods proposed by Pallotti at these various meetings were their dynamic, their variety and their simplicity. The subjects touched both heart and mind. Each ecclesiastic was encouraged to participate actively. Attention at these meetings focussed on: daily life, reading the signs of the times, the needs of the Church and the world, the apostolic ministry. These were both “support groups” and a means of continuing formation. Pallotti insisted that the meetings should be open to both secular and regular clergy, “because by uniting the evangelical force of one and the other clergy, the effects of the holy undertakings will be more efficacious and constant and more numerous will be the Blessings of our heavenly Father to perpetuate their fruits”⁶⁵.

48. **[Spiritual Conferences]** Once a week⁶⁶, for at least an hour and a half, on a suitable day, conferences were organised for ecclesiastics. The purpose was to help them grow in their imitation of Jesus Christ, to promote, as far as possible, the greater glory of God and evangelical per-

⁶⁴ Ivi, pp. 88-89.

⁶⁵ OOCC I, p. 186.

⁶⁶ Speaking about the conferences organised in Rome at the church of *Spirito Santo dei Napoletani*, Pallotti explained that these meetings were held “every week on Thursday”. This is why these conferences are usually called “Thursday Conferences” - cfr. OOCC V, pp. 571-585.

fection of self and others and thus to dispose oneself to fulfil the apostolic ministry⁶⁷. Pallotti explains that the method of conferences, in order to be fruitful, should be simple and touch both heart and mind⁶⁸. Each meeting would include the following: lessons in Gregorian Chant, reading and sharing on the Gospel passage of the following Sunday⁶⁹, progressive reading of the Roman Catechism with a commentary by one or more designated priests, a debate in a spirit of “peace and charity” on a moral case chosen during the previous conference, and a closing prayer to ask God to send workers into his harvest⁷⁰.

49. **[Study Conferences]** The study conferences were organised according to the local needs and possibilities, alternating with the spiritual conferences. The aim was to cultivate the theological sciences increasingly. A list of subjects planned and printed for the whole year enabled the priests to prepare themselves. Each theme was presented by a designated priest, according to a common method: the subject, its present state, the reasons, the position of the Magisterium, bibliography and research. Pallotti explained that everything should be done in the spirit of humility which seeks to edify rather than to swell with pride⁷¹.

⁶⁷ Cfr. OOCC V, pp. 572-574.

⁶⁸ Cfr. Ivi, pp. 574-575.

⁶⁹ With regard to sharing the Gospel, Pallotti insisted that after the text had been read in Latin, there should also be a reading of the «translation in the vulgate with the notes». Each participant was invited to say not only what had touched him but, having considered the passage read, what he would like to do to follow Jesus Christ. The purpose of this sharing was also to enrich Sunday preaching. At the end of the sharing each participant received a piece of paper bearing a verse of Holy Scripture. Each one read his piece out loud and then made a brief comment (OOCC I, p. 179).

⁷⁰ Cfr. OOCC I, pp. 178-180.

⁷¹ Cfr. Ivi, pp. 180-182.

50. **[Spiritual Exercises]** To increase the fervour, evangelical perfection and zeal of the clergy it was indispensable, according to Pallotti, for priests to gather once a year for a spiritual retreat of at least ten days. As a method for the spiritual exercises Pallotti suggested that of Ignatius of Loyola⁷². The daily programme included: two periods of prayer, two of spiritual reading and two conferences, and evening exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. To obtain the maximum benefit St. Vincent advised the priests to stay in a house suited to this sort of exercises and that the retreat should be “behind closed doors”⁷³. He also advised complete silence, recollection, solitude, spiritual direction, gratuitousness of time and some exterior mortification, whatever “the spiritual Father deems opportune and necessary for the spiritual benefit of each”⁷⁴.

51. **[Directorate]** “So as not to turn back but to live ever more perfectly the Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ”⁷⁵, Vin-

⁷² We repeat that St. Vincent was very familiar with the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola for two reasons: he took part in them and he preached them. We have texts which testify to this knowledge. Some examples: “Regole da osservarsi dal Direttore, parte delle quali ricavate dal Direttorio degli Esercizi Spirituali di . Ignazio compilate per ordine del R. P.dre Proposito G.le ella Compagnia di Gesù Claudio Acquaviva” (cfr. OOCC XI, pp. 826-829). These ten points of regulations are hand written by Pallotti. Vincent held them in great consideration. “Spiritual exercises made with great precision like those proposed by St. Ignatius of Loyola”, Pallotti writes, “are the most opportune and valid known means to reform a man and help him put on the New Man of O. L. J. C., therefore it is a rule not to be dispensed either totally or partly or with regard to any subject whether in the condition of layman or cleric even one of recognised luminous virtue” (OOCC II, p. 282). Therefore he wishes for the novitiate to begin with four weeks of Exercises (cfr. OOCC II, p. 282); seminarians and other members of the Congregation will make them for ten days once a year (cfr. OOCC II, pp. 183-187); missionaries will make them for a month before departing for a foreign country (cfr. OOCC II, p. 253); the election of the rector General will also be preceded by spiritual exercises lasting about ten days (cfr. OOCC III, p. 17).

⁷³ Cfr. OOCC I, p. 184.

⁷⁴ Cfr. OOCC II, pp. 184-187.

⁷⁵ OOCC VII, pp. 63-64.

cent proposed to the members of his congregation a month long Directorate every five years⁷⁶. Here is how Pallotti describes the *spirit* of this formation: “Returning to the Directorate not as a formality, but with an authentic spirit to profit from it, and since no one can presume to be perfect in God’s ways, indeed each must consider himself a child, or even less we might say, all will enter like the newest of the Postulants, and the least in the House of the Lord; and all, like children, will subject themselves to the Rules of the Directorate; and all, as if they were the most ignorant, the most inexpert, will let themselves be instructed. God, however, will reward their humility, docility and dependence with an abundance of enlightenment and divine illustrations, with increased favours, graces and greater understanding of the Most Holy Mysteries [...] in this state, and through their co-operation and fidelity they will have God all the nearer to them the less they sense his goodness and sweetness”⁷⁷.

52. **[Cultural Formation]** Those in charge of the *Procura di S. Pietro*, whose mission consisted in promoting the spiritual, scientific and pastoral culture of the clergy, were asked by Vincent Pallotti to establish connections with people who were educated and learned and to unite them in a “college of learned men”⁷⁸. In this way St. Vincent certainly aimed for what today we would call cultural formation. In this sense it is enough to recall the branches of knowledge on which St. Vincent insisted: religious literature, Sacred Scripture and the Church Fathers, oriental and western languages, philosophy

⁷⁶ Cfr. ivi, pp. 63-68. Missionaries were to make one every three years for two weeks and those who could not travel often, once they came back, would make one for three months.

⁷⁷ Ivi, pp.67-68.

⁷⁸ Cfr. OOCC I, pp.187-189.

and religious sciences⁷⁹. Pallotti wished to stimulate the charity and zeal of the learned that they would co-operate freely with the works of the universal Apostolate which he considered “most interesting” and “of the greatest utility for the Catholic Church”⁸⁰. The Society needed their learning and had to take advantage of it according to “the times and necessities”. He also called for vigilance with regard to the “religious spirit” of these learned men and their co-operation with the other SAC *procure* which had like need for their competence and assistance⁸¹.

53. **[Discerning together]** Vincent Pallotti spoke of yet another means, original and very rare in those days, to increase ongoing formation, namely, “a monthly Consultation to promote the undertakings for the greater Glory of God”⁸². Today we might call it a consultation of “communal apostolic discernment”⁸³. In fact it was a monthly

⁷⁹ Pallotti gathered around the *Union of Catholic Apostolate* numerous learned men: painters, musicians, journalists, lawyers, university professors, etc. We think only of Tommaso Alkusi (professor of oriental languages), Giovanni Allemand (Biblist), Gioacchino Ventura (philosopher and writer), Francesca de Maistre (translator), Luigi Maria Santambrogio (lawyer), Pierpaolo Azzocchi (doctor), Gaetano Morichini (architect), Serafino Cesaretti (painter), and many others.

⁸⁰ Cfr. *ivi*, p. 187 e OOCC III, p. 30.

⁸¹ Cfr. OOCC I, p. 189. We note that with the system of the thirteen *Procure*, which today we could call “Councils of Co-ordination”, Pallotti wished to move away from the classical, limited ecclesial structure, to go beyond the usual frontiers of diocese, parish etc., which did not correspond to the fundamental strategy of his Foundation, that is co-operation. Thinking then of his Union in terms of an organised entity in which the culture of co-operation occupied a central place, Pallotti needed at the same time to introduce community apostolic discernment. “We must consider above all”, Vincent wrote, “the highest importance of undertaking with all possible zeal and charity these weekly consultations, because on the vigorous execution of the same depends to a great extent that which concerns the multiplication of spiritual and temporal means opportune for reviving the Faith, rekindling and propagating Charity; which forms today the substantial object of the Society” - OOCC II, p. 178.

⁸² Cfr. OOCC I, p. 183.

⁸³ The *SAC Law* does not speak explicitly of “communal discernment”. Nevertheless it has paragraphs which refer to it indirectly. For example, «there must be

meeting of those responsible for the Procures and all their co-operators “to discuss the needs of the Church and the People”⁸⁴. St. Vincent was highly sensitive to the signs of the times and their demands. Very often he spoke of the importance of considering “attentively the present state of the World”⁸⁵, to “perceive the present time and its challenges”⁸⁶, and again “to study the needs of the Church and the world”⁸⁷. Thus Pallotti wished to form apostles able to understand the men and women of the current time, to work together to seek the will of God and to co-operate with Jesus Christ and among them for the salvation of humanity.

54. **[Formators]** Vincent Pallotti expected the formator to be, first of all, a “man of God”, who gave himself to his mission “day and night”⁸⁸. He was decisively for formation which was orderly and disciplined and this was a quality also expected of the formator⁸⁹. But at the same time St. Vincent required the formator to assume his re-

an exchange of information and ideas on everything which concerns the activities of the members and the community» (n 52). The question of community discernment was clearly mentioned in a letter from the Rector General, M. Jürtsch on “Elections in our Society” (19.03.1986), *ACTA SAC*, vol. XII, pp. 227-243. We note that the same Rector General sent all SAC Major Superiors a copy of a Letter by Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, Superior General of the Society of Jesus on “Common Apostolic Discernment”, (cfr. *Curia Praepositi Generalis Societatis Iesu*, Rome 1986/23), with a request «to study this document thoroughly because it can offer impulse and ideas to walk together guided by the Spirit along the path traced by our community in the Church and the world of today”- The Letter was dated 26.05.1987.

⁸⁴ Cfr. OOCC I, p. 183.

⁸⁵ Cfr. OOCC IV, pp. 387-388 e p. 254.

⁸⁶ Cfr. *ivi*, pp. 139-140.

⁸⁷ Cfr. OOCC VII, p. 3; OOCC X, p. 135.

⁸⁸ Cfr. OOCC I, p. 155.

⁸⁹ Pallotti encouraged those in charge of formation never to forget that “the enemy of Souls is not happy to see well trained Seminarians and so against them he uses the most malicious and dangerous warfare [...] and it can happen that on the part of Man courage and confidence may be lacking but not lacking on the part of God is the grace to overcome all difficulties”- OOCC I, p. 155.

sponsibility in a benevolent way towards all, including those who did not have a vocation⁹⁰, watching over the conduct of the candidates with charity that they might learn to live in the world without being of the world⁹¹. Therefore St. Vincent required “rectors, confessors and spiritual directors” of our Formation Houses to guide candidates according to the spirit of Jesus Christ: meek, humble, serene, benevolent, welcoming, strong and loving. He added that, since St. Francis de Sales was filled with this spirit, so formators should follow his example in the area of spiritual direction⁹². Lastly, Pallotti stressed that no one is automatically equipped with the “gift of governing and directing others”, and suggested asking God for this gift, letting oneself be governed and directed by Him⁹³.

ST. VINCENT PALLOTTI THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR⁹⁴

55. [Formator of the clergy] Vincent Pallotti realised that the formation of a clergy edifying and zealous for the glory of God and the salvation of souls was a real necessity of the times⁹⁵. He affirmed that in order to rekindle

⁹⁰ Cfr. OOCC VII, p. 13.

⁹¹ Cfr. OOCC I, p. 156.

⁹² Cfr. OOCC VII, pp. 15-16.

⁹³ Pallotti in this is very determined: “No one shall be appointed to the office of Rector, Spiritual Father or Confessor for any of the SS. Retreats of the Congregation unless he is known to exercise great perfection in the life of Sacrifice and to be gifted with the divine gift of governing and directing”- OOCC VII, p. 17.

⁹⁴ On this theme excellent articles may be consulted: Bruno Bayer SAC, “Pallotti come direttore spirituale”, *Apostolato Universale*, n°2, 1999, pp. 46-54; Bruno Bayer SAC, “Eredità degli scritti del Pallotti”, *Apostolato Universale*, n°1, 1999, pp. 36-44; Bruno Bayer SAC, “Pallotti als Erzieher”, *Apostolato Universale* n°7, 2002, pp. 51-68; Ansgario Faller SAC, “San Vincenzo Pallotti e i monasteri femminili romani”, in: *Rivista Diocesana di Roma*, n°7/8, 1963, pp. 429-433.

⁹⁵ Cfr. OOCC III, p. 31. Vincent writes in his *Spiritual Testament*: “O. L. J. C., placed in my mind [...] another goal proper [to the formation of clergy] suited to the circumstances of the times”- OOCC III, p. 27.

faith and authentic charity the clergy should be “edifying for their doctrine and for their being full of a truly evangelical and apostolic spirit”⁹⁶. At the same time it was necessary “to remove any wall of division between secular and regular clergy, to animate both with the sacred bond of emulating charity and zeal for committing themselves increasingly to the Works of the Sacred evangelical Ministry with timeliness, and a spirit of disinterest and authentic humility for the greater glory of God and the eternal salvation of souls”⁹⁷. This is why Vincent accepted the office of spiritual director in a number of Rome’s seminaries and colleges⁹⁸, through which he experienced the richness of the universal Church. He loved to counsel his seminarians in this way: “do not run too fast towards Holy Orders because you have a great need of acquiring holiness and doctrine”⁹⁹.

56. [Confessor for all] Without fear of erring we can say that St. Vincent Pallotti consecrated himself with great dedication to the ministry of reconciliation for which he was sought by persons of every condition¹⁰⁰. In his *Spiritual Diary* he expresses “a deep desire to instruct, illuminate, govern, sanctify, perfect and convert [...] souls”, and also “to live occupied with the direction of souls on the path of the highest perfection”¹⁰¹. In his confessional, therefore, Pallotti formed most of his ecclesiastical and lay collaborators¹⁰². To elicit an apostolic spirit and to create an

⁹⁶ Cfr. ibidem.

⁹⁷ Cfr. OOCC VII, p. 3.

⁹⁸ Cfr. Francesco Amoroso SAC, *San Vincenzo Pallotti. Romano*, op.cit., pp. 59-63.

⁹⁹ Cfr. OCL IV, p. 52; Bruno Bayer SAC, «Pallotti als Erzieher», art. cit., pp. 51-68.

¹⁰⁰ Cfr. Bruno Bayer, *Paul de Geslin compagnon de saint Vincent Pallotti*, op. cit., pp. 39-41.

¹⁰¹ Cfr. OOCC X, p. 23 e pp. 204-205.

¹⁰² We think above all of Giovanni Allemand, Giuseppe Valle, Domenico Santucci, Francesco Virili, Tomaso Alkusi, Luigi Nicoletti, Emilia Longhi, Francesca de

apostolate of prayer among women Religious, Vincent Pallotti established personal contact with many convents in Rome¹⁰³. He was convinced of the importance of spiritual direction in the life of consecrated persons and he knew how to direct them with love, diligence and gentleness. Francesca de Maistre would later say of Pallotti: “In him I found something which in other Servants of God I did not [...], an expression of heavenly goodness, an ability to calm and reach the soul at the right point with only a few measured and effective words”¹⁰⁴.

57. [A Guide who was himself Guided] Vincent Pallotti knew that the best way to help others on the path of spiritual growth was to accept the help of others. He indicated the way to others while striving humbly to practice what he taught. Although sought as a spiritual guide, he attributed the greatest importance to letting himself be guided. We need only think of his three confessors: Bernardino Fazzini, Salvatore Pascale and Father Serafino. The first accompanied him for thirty years¹⁰⁵. But Vincent went further. Although he directed Elisabetta Sanna for nineteen years he often asked her advice and encouraged others to do the same. In fact the poor widow gave such opportune

Maistre, Luisa Maurizi, Elisabetta Sanna, Geltrude Costantini, Cardinal Lambruschini and many others.

¹⁰³ Cfr. Ansgario Faller SAC, «San Vincenzo Pallotti e i monasteri femminili romani», art. cit. We recall that Don Vincent aggregated 39 convents of women Religious in Rome and 30 others outside Rome to the *Union of Catholic Apostolate* (cfr. ibidem., p. 429). Fabio Ciardi observes that “Pallotti had contact with practically all the female communities in Rome at the time (92 in 1873; the number in 1850 was only slightly lower)”- cfr. “Vincenzo Pallotti e i consacrati”, *Apostolato Universale*, n° 9, 2003, p. 41.

¹⁰⁴ Cfr. OCL IV, pp. 389-390.

¹⁰⁵ Cfr. Bruno Bayer, «Pallotti come direttore spirituale», art. cit., pp. 48-50. See also: Jan Kupka, “Vincenzo Pallotti e i suoi primi collaboratori: preti, fratelli, suore e laici”, *Apostolato Universale* n° 7, 2002, p. 75; Johannes Hettnerkofer, *Ven. Vincentius Pallotti in relatione cum beato Gaspare del Bufalo et parocho Bernardo Fazzini*, in *Analecta PSM* II, Romae 1938, pp. 580-595.

advice and instilled such an enthusiasm for God that the fledgling community of priests and brothers considered her their *spiritual mother*¹⁰⁶. “She was held in such high esteem by our Novice Master – Rev. Domenico Porrazzo would later say referring to Sanna – that he was in the habit of sending us to her to ask for advice”¹⁰⁷.

58. [Spiritual direction by correspondence] Following the example of spiritual masters, especially St. Francis de Sales, Vincent also practised spiritual direction by correspondence¹⁰⁸. Thanks to these letters we see Pallotti as a director filled with paternal goodness, intelligence and psychological sensitivity; a mediator who respected the mystery of each person, a demanding and determined promoter, not lacking a sense of humour¹⁰⁹. This is why he once said to Felice Randanini, who pestered him for nine years with his fears, scruples and anxieties, “You, Felice, are too happy and you make yourself unhappy. Put an end to your artificial unhappiness”¹¹⁰. Writing again to Randanini, who obstinately refused to accept his mission in Vienna, Pallotti said, “You demand to live in a land

¹⁰⁶ Cfr. Jan Korycki, “Vincenzo Pallotti e i suoi amici santi”, *Apostolato Universale* n° 8, 2002, p. 108.

¹⁰⁷ Cfr. J. Korycki SAC, „Elzbieta Sanna, pierwsza kobieta w pallotyńskim Zjednoczeniu Apostolstwa Katolickiego”, in: *W służbie prawdzie i miłości. Powołanie do świętosci i apostołstwa*, Pallottinum, Poznan 1998, pp.204-205.

¹⁰⁸ The two people to whom Pallotti wrote the most letters were Sr. Maria Geltrude Costantini (1780-1846), novice mistress and then superior of the Order of the Visitation in Rome (D. A. Faller SAC speaks of 327 letters and short notes- cfr. “Vincenzo Pallotti e i monasteri femminili”, art. cit., p. 432), and Rev. Felice Randanini (1810-1875), a young Roman priest, a friend since childhood, who lived for nine years in Vienna as secretary at the apostolic Nunciature. We have over 150 letters which Pallotti addressed to him.

¹⁰⁹ Cfr. Wladyslaw Gajur, *Pallotti e i suoi principi nella formazione spirituale attraverso il rapporto con Felice Randanini*, Gregorian University, Rome 1993.

¹¹⁰ Cfr. OCL II, p. 155. Pallotti plays on words: “You Felice, [name] are too felice [adjective], and you make yourself infelice [unhappy]”. This manner of guiding him proved effective and fruitful, because in 1848 Randanini was appointed spiritual director of the Roman Seminary - cfr. OCL II, p. 326.

where there is neither weeping nor grieving. Then it is better to go to Paradise *ubi non est neque luctus neque clamor* (cf. Rev. 21, 4). Calm yourself, stop this once and for all, and never again complain about the state that divine providence has well prepared for you”¹¹¹. And again: “It is time to think, speak and act not *ut parvulus*; but *ut vir in Domino* (1Cor 13, 11)”¹¹².

59. [From desired holiness to poverty offered up] By personal experience Pallotti knew that spiritual progress, like all human progress, happens in stages, it passes through compulsory moments of purification before opening to an ever-greater availability. If we wished to use a formula to describe the global line of spiritual growth according to Pallotti, we could say that it goes “from nothing to all”, *from desired holiness to poverty offered up*. So when Elisabetta Cozzoli complained of Pallotti’s absence from Rome and mainly from the *Pia Casa* of which she was the first superior, Vincent wrote: “to reach perfect union in God and with God we must suffer frequent separations [...]. Search for God in all things and you will always find Him”¹¹³. Elsewhere he said to Paul de Geslin one of his first companions: “In the Life of the saints one chapter is always missing. – Which one? – The longest one my dear son – he replied, the chapter on their imperfections”¹¹⁴.

60. [Formation in spiritual discernment] One of the essential roles of spiritual direction consists in helping to discern what leads to growth in the spiritual life. In other words, discernment is the heart of direction. This was how Vincent accompanied his directees: rather than acting

¹¹¹ Cfr. *ivi*, p. 153.

¹¹² Cfr. *ivi*, p. 149.

¹¹³ Cfr. OCL III, p.42.

¹¹⁴ Cfr. Bruno Bayer SAC, *Paul de Geslin, compagnon de saint Vincent Pallotti*, op.cit., p.62.

for them, he helped them discern the paths of spiritual progress for themselves. For example, when a young German priest, Agostino Wunder, asked in a letter under what circumstances it was legitimate not to say the breviary, Pallotti replied: “When can the Divine Office be omitted, every good Moralist will tell you; you have the books, so I will not go on to remind you of the teachings. In general, though, rest assured that the recitation of the Divine Office is extremely necessary for the evangelical Ministry; and that the more suited one is to promoting the glory of God and the salvation of Souls, the more correct, precise, and devout he will be in reciting it. Remember that St. Francis Xavier amidst the multitude of the works of his Apostolate never omitted it”¹¹⁵. To another of his penitents, Felice Randanini, Pallotti wrote: “Remember what the Holy Spirit says: *Familiares tibi sint mille, Consiliarius autem unus* (Eccli. 6,6). Therefore listen to all as the Holy Spirit wishes *ut familiares*, but from all you may choose one *ut consiliarius*”¹¹⁶.

61. [Prayer and co-operation] Vincent was convinced that prayer must be the soul of all co-operations. In fact spiritual co-operation had a privileged place in the Union of Catholic Apostolate since its foundation. The spiritual associates who co-operated with the apostolic works through prayer were considered by Pallotti to be the most important and most noble members of the Society¹¹⁷. Composing a beautiful apostolic prayer based on the Jesus’ words, “The harvest is great but the workers are few” (Mt 9, 38), Vincent hoped it would nourish in us day after day “the most lively commitment to co-operate in order

¹¹⁵ Cfr. OCL II, pp.78-80. Su Wunder, see also: OCL II, pp. 332-333.

¹¹⁶ OCL V, n° 1122a. See also: Giovanni Hettenkofer, *Scritti del Ven. Vincenzo Pallotti, Supplemento e indice generale*, p. 39.

¹¹⁷ Cfr. OCL IV, pp. 151-154; pp. 357-358.

to obtain with the infallible means of prayer Jesus Christ commanded us to use¹¹⁸. Convinced that the gift of co-operation for the salvation of humanity was obtained mainly through co-operation with God, Pallotti directed those in his spiritual care towards this relationship, such that the person charged with the critical publication of his letters affirms: “The pivotal point of all Pallotti’s formative activity can be summarised in a phrase found very often in his writings: *With regard to your problems, I have but one word to say to you: God. God be with you*”¹¹⁹. He also suggested that we should aspire and breath in co-operation “every time you hear the chiming of any clock or bell”¹²⁰, explaining that it is through desire and continual prayer that this gift is obtained.

- 62. [Instrument of divine Mercy]** In a letter dated 16 August 1839 addressed to Francesco Virili, one of his friends and collaborators, Pallotti begs: “Pray, pray unceasingly to obtain all enlightenment and spirit necessary to write, as an instrument of divine Mercy”¹²¹. It was during his stay at Camaldoli, when Pallotti found himself “immersed in an immense Sea of divine Mercies”, that God revealed to him “the real idea of the nature and works of the Society”¹²². In fact, Vincent considered his foundation “a gift and a wonder of infinite Mercy”¹²³. What is more he realises that Divine Mercy constitutes him in the Church as “a new Miracle of Mercy”¹²⁴. Consequently in his work of spiritual direction, Pallotti guides the people entrusted to

¹¹⁸ Cfr. OCCC XI, pp. 400-410; OCCC VII, p. 242.

¹¹⁹ Cfr. Bruno Bayer SAC, «Vinzenz Pallotti als Erzieher», art. cit., p.68.

¹²⁰ Cfr. OCCC VII, p.77.

¹²¹ Cfr. OCL III, p.118.

¹²² Cfr. OCCC III, pp.26-27.

¹²³ Cfr. OCCC X, pp.196-199.

¹²⁴ Cfr. *ivi*, p. 211.

him to live this experience of sensing and identifying themselves in the Church as channels of divine Mercy.

SOME CRITERIA TO CONSIDER IN PALLOTTINE FORMATION

- 63. [Anthropological Criterion]** Like an insightful psychologist, Vincent often discovers and reveals his own weaknesses, refusals, malice; in brief, the dark side of himself¹²⁵. Should we be led to conclude he was exaggeratedly moved by anthropological pessimism? We think not. Certainly Pallotti had no illusions about human nature: “We are all sons of Adam”, he wrote¹²⁶. Despite the appearance of anthropological pessimism, Vincent never despaired of humanity: “I do not want to despair: here is Jesus Christ, He knows me and understands me most perfectly”¹²⁷. And again in *God the Infinite Love*, Pallotti wrote: “You [my God] will grant me [...] to always appreciate and esteem my Soul and the Soul of my neighbours”¹²⁸. It follows that Pallottine formation should educate to esteem oneself and others.
- 64. [Criterion of the imitation of Christ]** With his passion for the infinite glory of God and the salvation of humankind, Vincent Pallotti conceives of the formative itinerary as an apprenticeship in the imitation of *Christ, Apostle of the Father*, which consists in co-operating as far as possible with God and with the brothers in the salvation of hu-

¹²⁵ We think for example of the pages written during the spiritual exercises in 1842 (cfr. OCCC X, pp. 682-737), or a review of his fifty- five years of life (cfr. OCCC X, pp. 276-282). It is interesting to note that in looking back on his fifty-five years of life Pallotti examines himself first as a man, then as a Christian and lastly as a priest.

¹²⁶ OCCC I, pp. 108-109.

¹²⁷ OCCC X, p. 701.

¹²⁸ OCCC XIII, p. 64.

manity¹²⁹. Therefore the ability to co-operate with God and with others following the example of *Jesus sent by the Father* should be considered one of the fundamental criteria of Pallottine discernment, “the heartbeat” of all our formation.

65. **[Marian Criterion]** Vincent Pallotti sees Mary as the model of total self-giving to God¹³⁰. But first of all in her he saw the mother capable of shaping her own Son in him and in each of us. And because Pallotti desires to be totally transformed in Jesus, he asks Mary, whom he calls “teacher of the spiritual life”¹³¹, to obtain this. In the itinerary of Pallottine formation, Mary leads us to interior knowledge of Christ and she introduces us to intimate familiarity with the Most Holy Trinity where the Holy Spirit manifests himself as the “eternal communication” of the infinite love of the Father and the Son¹³².
66. **[Criterion of Love]** There is no one way of being a Pallottine but that which unites us – allowing us great variety and flexibility – is love as it is presented by Saint Paul in the Letter to the Corinthians¹³³. Pallotti makes this love the “soul of the Congregation”¹³⁴, and the motor of all apostolic commitment. This apostolic charity impels him to win souls and to serve all men and women, from the

¹²⁹ In fact, Pallotti affirms that of all the divine perfections God communicates to his creatures the most divine is the gift of co-operating in the salvation of souls. Those who take advantage of this gift are the most perfect imitators of Jesus Christ, who came on earth to achieve the redemption of souls for the glory of the heavenly Father- cfr. OOCC XI, p. 256.

¹³⁰ Cfr. OOCC XI, pp. 96-99. Pallotti composes a sort of litany, attributing different titles to Mary; he calls her for example: “all in God and all from God”.

¹³¹ OOCC X, p. 159.

¹³² Cfr. OOCC X, pp. 195-196.

¹³³ Cfr. 1 Cor 13, 4-8.

¹³⁴ Cfr. OOCC III, pp. 109-111. Pallotti adopts the Pauline motto «*Caritas Christi urget nos*».

humblest to the greatest. Thus Pallotti comes to the aid of abandoned youth, soldiers, the sick, the excluded, prisoners, the learned, the Roman nobility and poor farmers from the countryside around Rome. His desire was to become all things in order to give himself to those who had nothing: “I would become food to satiate the hungry, clothing to cover the naked, drink to refresh the thirsty, [...] medicine and health to cure the infirmity of the sick, [...] light to illuminate the spiritually or physically blind”¹³⁵.

67. **[Criterion of Love for the Church]** Deep love for the Church and loyalty to the Pope and the Magisterium¹³⁶ are also characteristics which should distinguish the Pallottine formative itinerary. In fact Vincent loved the Church passionately. While promoting a lively and creative ecclesiology¹³⁷ at the same time he always desired to do everything in harmony with the Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Church. He always subjected his innovative intuitions to ecclesial discernment: “I subject everything to the infallible judgement of Holy Mother Church: I believe all that the Holy Church believes and teaches: and I reprove all that Holy Mother Church reproves now and always, and I

¹³⁵ OOCC X, p. 115.

¹³⁶ Pallotti wishes, for example, for the Foundation of Catholic Apostolate to be “absolutely and immediately under the orders of the Pope” (cfr. OOCC IV, p. 31; p. 161). We also note that when he was preparing for the sub-deaconate young Pallotti made a special and private vow to believe in every article of the *Christian Creed* (cfr. OOCC X, p. 521).

¹³⁷ “I feel O my God that you have deigned to form and create in me a miracle of new mercy and you have constituted me in your Church as a new Miracle of Mercy”- OOCC X, p. 211. It is not difficult to realise that Don Vincent was aware not only of being “a miracle of mercy” in the Church, he also saw himself as a “new miracle”. It was this awareness of something new which, among other things, nourished in Pallotti the creativity and courage to undertake ecclesial paths that were new and untrodden.

believe, think and say and mean to say everything according to the meaning of Holy Mother Church”¹³⁸.

68. [Criterion of the “evangelical trumpet”] Pallotti was an apostle with lofty and open ideas. All sectarianism, exclusion or closed mentality he considered foreign. His desire was to mobilise every person to co-operate for the glory of God and the salvation of humanity, hence his openness to diversity of languages, rites, peoples and cultures. It was precisely to this openness and to this co-operation with all, laymen and ecclesiastics, men and women, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, that Vincent formed his followers, when he announced to them “this Society calls itself a society of *Catholic Apostolate*[...] so that it may be perpetually within the Church of Jesus Christ like an *Evangelical Trumpet* calling all, inviting all, reawakening the zeal and charity of all [...], so that in proportion to the various needs of the Church of Jesus Christ in all times, present and future, all may co-operate constantly and effectively with every greater zeal [...] with all those evangelical undertakings of *Catholic Apostolate*”¹³⁹. This is why, today as yesterday, Pallottine formation is called to form in its members “the mentality of being an evangelical trumpet in the heart of the Church”.

69. [Criterion of commitment and fervour] In his writings Vincent Pallotti criticises laziness among ecclesiastics. “Laziness in an Ecclesiastic, he writes, is most pernicious for the Ecclesiastic himself, for others and for the honour of God”¹⁴⁰; “An Ecclesiastic who is lazy with regard to the Ministry of his state makes himself the worst enemy of

¹³⁸ Ivi, p. 290.

¹³⁹ OOCC I, pp. 4-5. Elsewhere Pallotti says with regard to this co-operation with all: “Through this association therefore, no one is excluded from taking part in the Catholic Apostolate”- OOCC IV, p. 124.

¹⁴⁰ OOCC X, p. 567.

God, the worst traitor to the Church and his own worst enemy”¹⁴¹. Therefore, “we are obliged to keep even the lowest degree of laziness away from the Community, from every individual and from every one of us”¹⁴². In this context Pallotti proposes an ordered study, that is one that unites ecclesiastical studies with prayer, commitment, fervour and close examination¹⁴³. In other words he wishes to do “everything possible”, because he is persuaded that “God will take care of everything when we do everything convinced that we can do nothing without God”¹⁴⁴.

70. [Criterion of universality of methods and means] All through the Pallottine formative itinerary it is absolutely necessary to consider the means which Pallotti uses and which he proposes to others to form a sort of “spiritual factory”¹⁴⁵ in a person. In fact Vincent gives great importance to the means because using them or not is our only power¹⁴⁶. Since each person must use them according to

¹⁴¹ Ivi, p. 575.

¹⁴² OOCC III, pp. 73-74.

¹⁴³ Cfr. OOCC X, p. 576 e p. 585.

¹⁴⁴ Cfr. OCL II, p. 56.

¹⁴⁵ Cfr. OOCC XII, p. 150. This is one of the Pauline terms developed by Pallotti. This “spiritual building” has faith as its foundations; hope as its walls; charity as its roof. “Necessary and opportune means” will serve as tools for building. Here are some examples: prayers of ejaculation (OOCC X, p. 354); clock of the passion (OOCC V, pp. 539-540; OOCC VII, p. 314; OOCC X, p. 12; OOCC XI, pp. 73-80); spiritual reading (OOCC X, p. 548); *lectio divina* (OOCC X, p. 552; OOCC XII, p. 454); spiritual direction (OOCC VII, pp. 82-87; OOCC XI, p. 900); confession (OOCC VII, p. 75; OOCC X, p. 755 e pp. 789-791); spiritual newspaper (OOCC XI, p. 216; OOCC XIII, p. 556); divine office (OOCC XIII, pp. 437-438); meditation (OOCC X, p. 560); examination of conscience (OOCC X, p. 548; OOCC XIII, p. 426); visits to the Blessed Sacrament (OOCC X, p. 128; OOCC XI, pp. 300-304); Eucharist (OOCC XII, p. 188; OOCC XIII, pp. 743-750); “holy pictures”, or small notes to put up or read often (OOCC IX, pp. 412-413; OOCC XI, pp. 830-831); *Stations of the Cross* (OOCC XIII, pp. 752-756); devotion to the Sacred Heart (OOCC V, p. 542; OOCC XIII, pp. 1367-1368), ecc.

¹⁴⁶ Cfr. OOCC X, p. 279. Pallotti asks forgiveness from God for not having used all the means available.

his own dynamics¹⁴⁷, Pallotti lauds the universality of methods and means. In fact his pedagogy is not linked exclusively to any school of spirituality or method or formula. It is an open pedagogy, inclusive and universal. Its specificity consists in achieving co-operation among all methods, schools and means *necessary and opportune* which help form candidates for a “universal apostolate exercised in the footsteps of Christ the Apostle”¹⁴⁸.

71. **[Criterion of a passion for harmony]** Vincent’s passion for symphony shows itself in an expression he used often in the context of formation, “neither too many, nor too few”¹⁴⁹. It is as if Pallotti intended to say that neither a situation of excessive want, nor a state of excessive satisfaction favour the development of the person. Formation is best when it is an experience of times of want and dissatisfaction as well as times of fullness and happiness. Developing the art of co-operation, Pallotti prefers variety, harmony, and moderation, in other words a constellation of charisms, methods and means, which *flow together* to produce the same result. So for example, fully part of the pious environment of his times, Pallotti encourages participation in the numerous confraternities and Third Orders, promoting mutual knowledge and *co-operation* among

¹⁴⁷ Pallotti holds in high esteem “means suggested by God” (cfr. OOCC X, p. 605). He advises Father Francesco Virili to follow Francis de Sales as a master of prayer, but he adds immediately: “As a method of mental prayer you could choose the one which the spirit finds easiest and most fruitful”- cfr. OCL III, p. 78. Elsewhere he suggests following Philip Neri and the spirit of the Oratory (cfr. OOCC V, pp. 456-457), Peter of Alcantara and Teresa of Avila (cfr. OOCC X, pp. 217-219 e pp. 237-242), or Ignatius of Loyola (cfr. OOCC II, p. 282).

¹⁴⁸ Cfr. *Memory and Prophecy*, n° 23. Formation in itself is senseless unless it is directed towards the mission to be achieved. Since the apostolate is universal so too must formation be universal. Like apostolate, like formation.

¹⁴⁹ Cfr. OOCC II, p. 159; OOCC III, p. 36; OOCC X, p. 536.

them¹⁵⁰. We can say that in the Church is his time Vincent practised and promoted what Pope John Paul II calls today “a spirituality of communion”¹⁵¹.

72. **[Criterion of the three specific promises]** There are some qualities of the Pallottine vocation, which Vincent codified in the promises from the beginning of the foundation. These include perseverance, sharing of resources, and spirit of service¹⁵². They further specify our style of apostolic commitment, our fidelity to God and to each other. This means that our common mission takes priority over our personal programme and that we are not simply isolated individuals, living one next to another, but are dependent on one another for our common life and mission¹⁵³. This is why Vincent wishes to see us “live a perfect common life”¹⁵⁴, tirelessly putting all that we are and all that we have at the service of the apostolate. Lastly we would point out that when speaking of perseverance, Pallotti strongly insists on seeing it as a gift: “My God, I am not worthy to receive the gift of holy perseverance [...], but you give it to me out of your Mercy”¹⁵⁵. And he adds: “You yourself, O my God, are my Perseverance”¹⁵⁶.

73. **[Criterion of managing tensions]** Every fruitful life grows through tensions. Vincent experienced them in his life and helped others to manage them. We deal with tensions between “holiness and apostolate”, “universal and particular”, “quantity and quality”, “necessary and oppor-

¹⁵⁰ Pallotti entered the spirituality of the 19th century joining nineteen Confraternities and five Third Orders. He made a note of all these memberships (cfr. OOCC X, pp. 497-503), inviting others to do the same.

¹⁵¹ Cfr. *VC*, nn. 46 e 50-51; *NMI*, nn. 43-45; *RdC*, nn. 28-30.

¹⁵² Cfr. OOCC VIII, pp. 13-14 e pp. 24-28.

¹⁵³ Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 240 e n° 241.

¹⁵⁴ Cfr. OOCC III, p. 41.

¹⁵⁵ OOCC X, p. 655.

¹⁵⁶ *Ivi*, p. 735.

tune”, between “too much and too little”, between “individual commitment and co-operation with everyone”. It depends on us whether these tensions are destructive or fruitful. It is on these tensions that Pallotti builds his formative itinerary, managing them all in a productive manner.

74. **[Criterion of *docibilitas*]** An expert pedagogue, Pallotti sees formation as a continual process of striving to learn throughout life. In fact Vincent does not say that during his initial formation a candidate should acquire “the most sublime evangelical perfection”, but that he should “dispose himself for it”¹⁵⁷. Formators will “work to help them [the candidates] become fond of a life which is spiritual and methodical, so that *appoco appoco* [*little by little*] they become accustomed to practising the ecclesiastic life with full maturity; to dispose them for this they will use all diligence”¹⁵⁸. Therefore initial formation is successful only if it fosters *docibilitas*¹⁵⁹ in the candidate that is the willingness to let himself be formed all through life.

¹⁵⁷ Cfr. OOCC II, pp. 286-287.

¹⁵⁸ OOCC I, pp. 156-157.

¹⁵⁹ Amedeo Cencini explains that literally the term *docibilitas* should be translated “teachability”, or availability of the subject to let himself be taught. But in the context of Pallottine pedagogy this concept has a more active and resourceful significance: “*Docibilitas*, Cencini writes, is not only *docilitas*, because it is that intelligence of spirit which amplifies certain precise factors besides “docile”, obedient and somewhat passive acceptance; and that is full *active and responsible involvement* of the person, first agent of the educational process; a fundamentally *positive* attitude towards reality, of *reconciliation and gratitude* for one’s history and of trust towards others; *interior freedom* and the intelligent desire to let oneself be instructed by any fragment of truth and beauty around oneself, enjoying all that is true and beautiful; *capacity for relations with others*, fruitful, active and passive interaction with objective reality, other and different from myself, even letting myself be formed by it”- cfr. *Il respiro della vita. La grazia della formazione permanente*, San Paolo, 2002, pp. 34-35.

75. **[Criterion of spiritual joy]** A spirit of joy and sense of humour help maintain a sense of balance in relational and community life. Without them we would become bothersome to the ones we wish to serve and to ourselves as well. Pallotti was convinced of this and wrote: “Holy cheerfulness and spiritual joy are one of the most precious fruits of the Holy Spirit and therefore one of the distinctive characteristics of authentic Servants of the Lord [...]. They should remember that if they lack this character they will bring few souls to God, because from their features few will fall in love with the following of Jesus Christ”¹⁶⁰. This is why Pallotti is anxious to see the faces of present and future members of the Society resplendent with joy and holy happiness¹⁶¹. These characteristics are the *thermometer* of a healthy evolution in the life of following Christ.

76. **[Criterion of reciprocity in the community]** Co-operation and reciprocity with clergy and laity are important marks of our personal relations in our local communities. In other words co-operation and reciprocity either begin at home or they will never begin. This is why Vincent Pallotti made sharing of resources a specific promise for his communities¹⁶². This promise concerns co-operation within our communities. In fact with this promise we promise to work together and to put all that we are

¹⁶⁰ OOCC II, pp. 162-164.

¹⁶¹ Cfr. *ivi*, p. 163. It would be very interesting in this context to read some of the letters Pallotti wrote to Randanini. The former treats the problems entrusted to him with delicacy and understanding. However his opinions and advice are not lacking in delicate nuances, joviality and humour. On this see : Bruno Bayer SAC, “Pallotti come direttore spirituale”, art. cit., p. 52; and by the same author: “Eredità degli scritti del Pallotti”, art. cit. pp. 43-44.

¹⁶² We recall that from the beginning of the foundation priests, brothers and sisters made this promise which the Founder called “perfect community life” (cfr. OOCC III, p. 64 e OOCC II, p. 558).

and have at the service of the apostolate¹⁶³. As a consequence Pallottine formation must take care to form not only expert collaborators with the outside but above all within the community because “once a congregation has become lax to re-order it would take a great miracle which is most rare”¹⁶⁴.

77. **[Criterion of holy co-operation]** From the very beginning of our foundation we have been called to co-operate with God and among ourselves: “All [persons] must be so united that one watches over the other, and continually motivates the other, so that no one loses force of will, suffers lessening of zeal, or experiences cessation of works”¹⁶⁵. In other words, we are not solitary apostles. The *lone ranger* is dangerous and foreign to Pallottine identity. Vincent desired a Union of Catholic Apostolate that is a *communion* of different gifts and diverse vocations. Consequently, our times should see us committed more than ever to making the most of and developing the fields and means which serve to make the Church and our Union *houses of communion and schools of co-operation*¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶³ Cfr. *LSAC*, nn. 37-39 e 242.

¹⁶⁴ *OOCC* II, p. 30 e *OOCC* VII, p. 38.

¹⁶⁵ *OOCC* III, pp. 156-157.

¹⁶⁶ Cfr. *NMI*, nn. 43 e 44.

CHAPTER II

THE CONSTANTS OF PALLOTTINE
SPIRITUALITY

THE GOD IN WHOM WE BELIEVE

78. **[Seeking God]** Vincent Pallotti belonged to the category of people who had great aspirations and perspectives. The measure of his thoughts, words and actions was the thirst for “the infinite”. His very being and action were immersed in the fountain of the infinite reality of God: “My God, who are You; and who am I before you? What do you wish that me to be before you?”¹. This existential question of the Founder was accompanied by yet another of his fervent desires: “Seek God and you will find Him. Seek God in everything and you will find him in everything. Seek God always and you will find him always”².
79. **[Mystical Experience of God]** “Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat”³ – so begins the spiritual Diary of our Founder. “God alone, alone, alone, alone, alone, alone, etc. & my God alone”⁴ - here is one of the expressions of his thirst. The reason for the life, personal sanctity, manner of understanding and living the Church and the fruits of the commitment of this saint were all rooted in his mystical experience of God⁵. “My God, not the intellect, but God... God always and in everything”⁶. This

¹ OCCC X, p. 462.

² OCL II, p. 382.

³ OCCC X, p. 5.

⁴ Ivi, p. 66.

⁵ Cfr. *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, n°13, Rome 1989.

⁶ OCCC X, pp. 247-248.

outlook is extended also to others: “I see you in God, deal with you in God, embrace and greet you in God, love you in God, and in God I am always with you, united in all your works, in order to reach and be all united together in God in the Kingdom of heaven, to sing for ever the divine mercies”⁷.

80. **[In the company of the Most Holy Trinity]** “*Venite omnes gentes...* come and admire, marvel, thank, bless, exalt and glorify your God and my God the Father, Son and Spirit...”⁸. This image of God finds its foundation in the Sacred Scripture. God in Pallotti is the personal reality, full of the reciprocal exchange of life – we could say – the relational reality of his nature. His infinite thirst aspires this God. “O my God, You are therefore the food of my soul! So the Father is the food of my soul, the Son is the food of my soul, the Holy Spirit is the food of my soul, and all God is the food of my soul and the whole of You my God, eternal, infinite, immense, incomprehensible, are the food of my soul, and you are so always, night and day, at every moment, and you desire that we open all the more the mouth of our soul for feeding ever more...”⁹. This experience of God is fundamental: “I live, but not I; it is the most Holy Trinity that is living in me!”¹⁰; It is amazing: “Remember that you are in the presence of God and say in faith – the Father who created me is here – the Son who redeemed me is here – the Holy Spirit who sanc-

⁷ OCL III, p. 245.

⁸ OCCC X, pp. 247-248.

⁹ OCCC XIII, p. 117.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 256. “*I live but not I, the Blessed Trinity is living in me*”. Fr. Carlo Orlandi who received from the Founder the task of improving the Rules wanted to add a seventh promise to those of the SAC: the devotion to the Most Holy Trinity. Cfr. *Theological, Spiritual Commentary to the Law of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate* (manuscript), p. 88.

tified me is here. I am in the company of the three Persons of the most Holy Trinity – Oh what a company!”¹¹.

81. **[God the Infinite and Merciful Love]** The Triune God is a God of love and mercy. “...Oh the excess of incomprehensible love! Ah my God, infinite love of my soul, ineffable mercy! Oh the divine inventions of your infinitely merciful love”¹². With genuine gratitude let us accept this message of the Founder who praised the “loving inventions of the divine mercy! ... Infinitely merciful love ...”¹³; who felt “that the same infinite Justice of God is infinitely merciful”¹⁴ and who, seeing in Mary the “marvel of ... Grace”, considered himself as the “Wonder¹⁵, Miracle, Abyss, Trophy of [...] Mercy”¹⁶. Truly, the “Justice of God is infinitely merciful”¹⁷.
82. **[... and infinitely communicable]** Vincent Pallotti shares with us another discovery: the Infinite God, the Triune God, the God of Loving Mercy is “infinitely diffusive”¹⁸. He “carries out the work of creation in order to communicate Himself to his Creatures”¹⁹. God communicates himself. The holy Founder can exclaim: “My God, my infinite Mercy, Eternal, Immense, Incomprehensible, one and only Infinite, infinitely Communicable...”²⁰. This

¹¹ OOCC XI, p. 236.

¹² OOCC XIII, p. 129.

¹³ OOCC X, p. 292.

¹⁴ Ivi, p. 322.

¹⁵ Ivi, p. 303.

¹⁶ Ivi, p. 356. On 17 July 1839 Pallotti writes: “to confirm me in the trust [...] of having been made a wonder, trophy and abyss of mercy, in contrast to Mary most holy, who is the abyss of Grace, this morning, 17 July 1839..., the same infinite mercy who became food, nourishment and nutrition of my soul, made me to feel...” – OOCC X, p. 354.

¹⁷ Ivi, p. 322.

¹⁸ OOCC XIII, p. 30.

¹⁹ Ivi, p. 29.

²⁰ OOCC X, p. 513.

divine communicability constitutes a source of tremendous force in the spirituality of the Founder.

83. **[Ad Infinitam Dei Gloriam]** “All the good, which all the creatures have done and will do and all that I have done, continue to do, and will do, for the greatest glory of our God and loving heavenly Father, I wish that it may be done with infinite perfection”²¹. Let us introduce courageously this mystical experience of God of our Founder in the context of our present -day reality where we find a great thirst for spiritual values and a longing for God²², but where, on the other hand, we meet many persons who think and behave “as though God did not exist”²³, and linger in the great clouds²⁴ of their quest. Every moment of Father Vincent’s existence and every fibre of his personality were striving for God; thus he gave infinite glory to God.
84. **[Towards the formative journey]** In the light of the “*Confessio Trinitatis*”²⁵ and the A.I.D.G. of St. Vincent Pallotti, we shall indicate a few hints for the formation of the members of the Catholic Apostolate: “The UAC, of which the SAC is the integral part²⁶, contemplates the icon of the most Holy Trinity”²⁷ and is “inserted into the dy-

²¹ Ivi, p. 57.

²² Cfr. St. Augustine: “You urge him (man) [...], because you have created us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you”, *Confessions*, n°1.

²³ This statement is present often in the discourses of John Paul II.

²⁴ Cfr. Pontifical Council for the Culture and Pontifical Council for the Interreligious Dialogue, *Jesus Christ, giver of living water. Una riflessione cristiana sul “New Age”*, Città del Vaticano, 2003.

²⁵ This is the title of the first chapter of the Apostolic exhortation, “Vita Consecrata” This document begins with the following words: “*The Consecrated Life, deeply rooted in the example and teaching of Christ the Lord, is a gift of God the Father to his Church through the Holy Spirit*”.

²⁶ Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 1.

²⁷ Cfr. *Called by Name*, Manual of Formation for the Union of Catholic Apostolate, Rome 1989, pp. 45-51. In a figurative way this rhythm is presented by the seal

namic process of the merciful love of the most Holy Trinity...”²⁸; the absolute primacy of God²⁹; the spirit of the infinite and a faith open to mysticism; a love that makes of itself a selfless gift³⁰; a spirituality of communion³¹; a creativity of mercy,³² which presents itself as the interpretative key of the present age³³. In the Pallottine contemplation of the Face of God, we can discover all these fundamental sensitivities of today, which are the signs of the times. The appeal of St. Vincent Pallotti for the “increase, defence and propagation of charity, and catholic faith”³⁴ is still valid.

of the Union of Catholic Apostolate. “In the space of the circular form the great mystery of the most sacred Trinity is represented at the top...” “The circular shape of the seal represents the three persons of the Most Holy Trinity...”.

²⁸ *General Statutes of the UAC*, n°14.

²⁹ “The demand for new forms of spirituality, now making itself felt throughout society, needs to find a response in the *acknowledgment of God’s absolute primacy* which consecrated persons experience in their total gift of self and their permanent conversion in a life offered up as true spiritual worship”, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* of John Paul II, n°38.

³⁰ Cfr. *GS*, 24.

³¹ Cfr. *NMI*, 43.

³² “God rich in mercy” (Ef 2,4) is the one Jesus Christ has revealed to us as Father: “the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known” (Gv 1,18; Eb 1,1). Thus begins the Encyclical Letter of John Paul II *Dives in misericordia*. Cfr. also John Paul II, *NMI*, n°38, 49 and 50 where we are invited to *abet on charity*”, on the “*creativity of charity*” (we find other expressions in other languages: “*called to mercy*”; to the “*imagination of mercy*”).

³³ Cfr. *NMI*, n°50. “We share also the conviction that the message of justification directs us in a special way to the centre of the testimony itself that the New Testament gives to the salvific action of God in Christ: it tells us that we, as sinners, should have our new life only in the mercy of God which forgives all things, the mercy that we can receive only as a gift of faith, and which in no way can we ever merit”, in the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by the Catholic Church and the World Lutheran Federation* on 31 October 1999, by the *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity*.

³⁴ *OCC I*, p. 5.

THE CHRIST WHOM WE FOLLOW

85. [The Apostle of the Eternal Father] “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son” (Jn 3,16). “And eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (Jn 17,3). “Therefore...turn your minds to Jesus, the apostle and high priest...” (Heb 3,1). St. Vincent Pallotti, being inspired continually by Sacred Scripture and highlighting the primacy of the grace of God, fixed his eyes on the Messenger of the Divine Father, that is, on the Apostle of the Eternal Father. “Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Apostle of the Eternal Divine Father because he is sent by Him [...]. The apostolate of Jesus Christ is his obedience to the precept of the heavenly Father...”³⁵. The charism of the Founder and his spirituality bring to light the apostolic dimension of the life and the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. “The source, origin and teacher of the whole apostolate for those who belong to the Union is Jesus Christ, Apostle of the Eternal Father” (cfr. Heb 3,1)³⁶. The members of our Society “follow Christ, Apostle of the Eternal Father..., according to the counsels of the Gospel”³⁷.

86. [“Christ lives in me”] Vincent Pallotti, who wanted to have and live “the same mind of Christ Jesus” (Phil 2,5), demonstrates himself to be His great imitator and follower³⁸. The great Mother of Mercy has made him “know her own divine Son”³⁹. Therefore the sentiments of Jesus

³⁵ *OCC III*, p. 139.

³⁶ *General Statutes of the UAC*, n° 2.

³⁷ *LSAC*, n° 5.

³⁸ “Imitate” and “imitation”, but also “follow” and “following”; we can find the use of this language in the *Opere Complete* and in the *Letters* of St. Vincent Pallotti.

³⁹ Cfr. *OCC X*, p. 195. It deals with the *Spiritual Marriage with the Most Holy Mary on 31 December 1832*.

become the rhythm of the life of the holy Founder: “The life of Jesus Christ is my life... The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is mine...The obedience of Jesus Christ is mine...the fortitude of Jesus Christ is mine⁴⁰...the works of Jesus Christ are my works...the preaching done by Jesus Christ to the poor is mine...the fullness of the power of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is mine⁴¹. Jesus Christ is mine; his virtues and infinite merits are mine and his works – and the earth is too small to contain the books required to narrate them – it is all mine!”⁴². “I live; but not I, Christ lives in me”⁴³. This was his rule. This is also the program of the members of his Foundation. “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 the possible perfection in all the Works of the hidden Life, and of the public evangelical Ministry for the greater glory of God the heavenly Father, and for the greater sanctification of our soul, and of our neighbours...”⁴⁴.

87. [**“Modellum nostrum Christus est”**] To know, to love, and to follow the Apostle of the Father: here is the dynamic of the life of St. Vincent Pallotti and the fundamental inspiration of his spirituality. In this context we understand even more the interior conviction and passion of Vincent Pallotti, expressed in the following words: “God has commanded each one to procure the eternal salvation

⁴⁰ *Ivi*, pp. 161-162.

⁴¹ *Ivi*, pp. 492-495.

⁴² OOCC XIII, p. 121.

⁴³ OOCC X, 256. “Vivo Ego jam non ego vivit vero in me Christus”.

⁴⁴ OOCC III, p. 40. It is the “Rule of 33 points”. “The members want to live this vocation fully; by their determination to follow Jesus Christ in the Society; by making his hidden and public life, even to his death on the cross, the fundamental rule of their lives, and by hoping to find final perfection in him in the resurrection”, cfr. *LSAC*, n° 12.

of his neighbour; and since in carrying out such a precept we must imitate Jesus Christ who is the Apostle of the Eternal Father, therefore the life of Jesus Christ, which is his Apostolate, should be the model of the Apostolate of everyone; and as all are called, rather obliged to imitate Jesus Christ, so all, in proportion to their condition and state are called to the Apostolate...”⁴⁵. In this perspective the Work of the Universal Apostolate, that is the Union of Catholic Apostolate, presents itself as the foundation “par excellence”. “The specific spirituality of the Union is the following of Christ, Apostle of the Eternal Father. In faith and charity, those who belong to the Union intend to remain united to Christ, Crucified and Risen, who is present in their midst (cf Mt 18, 20); they strive to imitate his love for the Father and for all, and desire to realise today in the most complete manner, His style of life and apostolate”.⁴⁶

88. [**“Caritas Christi urget nos”**] According to our Founder, the life of Jesus Christ and, above all, His death have become the supreme sign of the revelation of His thirst for souls. In this manner the divine emptying, manifested through the Apostle of the Father, becomes the revelation of that which sustains the universe: the love of God. This “fire” of love has brought the Apostle of the Father to the earth (cfr. Lk 12, 49): “All members of our Society live in a spirit which is ever renewed by the love which Jesus brought to earth”⁴⁷. “The members are guided by a spirit of generous love which desires only to serve and does not seek its own interests (cfr. 1 Cor 13). This is the source and strength of our apostolate and of our community living. It assures a basic harmony between our apostolic

⁴⁵ *Ivi*, p. 142.

⁴⁶ *Statuto Generale dell’UAC*, n°16.

⁴⁷ *LSAC*, n°10.

work and our own spiritual life, gives a lasting quality to our consecration and to our lives in the community, and helps us to be loyal”⁴⁸.

89. [Daily Practical Memorandum] “Having the Life of O.L.J.C as the fundamental Rule of our minimal Congregation, before beginning any work, we are obliged to consider during the various occasions of the day, how O.L.J.C., would have thought, or spoken, or acted, and we must strive to be the most perfect in everything, and always”⁴⁹. Therefore St. Vincent Pallotti proposes to us, above all, the *daily practical Memorandum*⁵⁰. We must remember always “the infinite mercy, and the infinite love of O.L.J.C., who in order to continue his most holy life in us, deigned to remain among us in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, and communicates himself to us as food, and nourishment for our Soul”⁵¹. We can admire the fruits of that *Memorandum* in the life of our holy Founder. We find especially the spirit of charity, humility, meekness, tranquillity, peace, sublime perfection, sweetness, compassion, patience, sacrifice and industriousness⁵², qualities that are all expressions of the zeal of the Apostle of the Father.

90. [Towards the formative journey] What do we want to highlight in the formative process? The Pallottine spiritu-

⁴⁸ Ivi, n°13.

⁴⁹ OOCC III, p. 42: “To imitate O.L.J.C., above all, we need his spirit, that is, that all the operations within our soul be similar to the same O.L.J.C., so that we might imitate him sincerely in our external actions, which should be the true expressions of the internal ones...”, *ibidem*, p. 38.

⁵⁰ “Daily practical Memorandum for imitating O.L.J.C. in the observance of the most holy Rules, and Constitutions”, OOCC III, pp. 34-39.

⁵¹ Ivi, pp. 37-38. “In fact, all the spiritual goods of the Church are contained in the most holy Eucharist”. Cfr. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, Encyclical Letter of John Paul II, for Holy Thursday of the year 2003, n° 1.

⁵² Cfr. *Ibidem*, pp. 38-39.

ality is apostolic: we shall imitate and follow the untiring zeal of the Apostle of the Father, His mysterious thirst for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. The life of O.L.J.C. is our rule; in the various circumstances, from thoughts to desires, from desires to love, from love to trust, we shall follow the contemplation and action of Jesus Christ. “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor 11,1). Imitators of St. Vincent Pallotti? Precisely in this following and imitation we shall discover the mystery of the apostolic zeal of the Founder, who deserved to be called the apostle of Rome⁵³. Charity and apostolate together give the distinctive mark to the life and activities of the members, and also to the organisation and governance of the Society⁵⁴.

THE SPIRIT WHO URGES US

91. [“Eternal communication”] There are two qualities that Vincent Pallotti attributes to his *spiritual marriage* to Mary, which he celebrated “...on the last day of the year 1832”⁵⁵. *The great Mother of Mercy* allowed him “to know her own divine Son, and She being the Bride of the Holy Spirit [is committed], so that all may be internally transformed in the Holy Spirit”⁵⁶. Respectful before the great-

⁵³ Numerous authors are amazed by the multitude of responsibilities and the enormous apostolic dynamism of Pallotti, who was at the same time pastor and teacher, rector and professor, confessor and spiritual father, orator and preacher, benefactor of soldiers, of prisoners and of the sick, friend of the poor, host of Popes and Cardinals, author of books and articles, untiring promoter of the missions, the priest who hurried to help his countrymen, organiser of night schools for the craftsmen, director of the fraternity and president of the society, initiator of a society for loans and catechist on the streets, mediator between the priests and laity, interpreter of the signs of the times and the Founder of religious communities.

⁵⁴ Cfr. *LSAC*, n°8.

⁵⁵ OOCC X, p. 195.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*.

ness of this mystical experience and this mystery, we can understand that, thanks to the gift of spiritual marriage, Pallotti could immerse himself more fully in the ocean of the Most Holy Trinity⁵⁷, into the mystery “of the two hands of God” of which St. Irenaeus speaks⁵⁸. The greatest gift of “knowing the Son” impels St. Vincent to pray: “Omnipotent, and merciful Jesus, destroy my entire life, and grant that my life be your life and [that] of the Blessed Trinity, (...) eternal contemplation, eternal delight, *eternal communication* of the Holy Spirit”⁵⁹. In fact, our Founder discovers the Holy Spirit as *bond, bridge and cooperation* in God himself; as “eternal communication” of God “infinitely communicable”⁶⁰. At the same time the Holy Spirit is for Pallotti the communication and the cooperation at the heart of humanity, among men⁶¹. This horizon sensitises us even more to the most profound conviction of our Founder that “among all the divine perfections, that God communicates to his creatures, the most divine is that of calling the creature to cooperate with God himself in the salvation of souls”⁶². Here is also the secret of his apostolic fruitfulness. We find many statements in his writings regarding the spirit that, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, must revive the Pallottine family⁶³. It has to be emphasised that it is from the Spirit that charity, sanctity, unity and holy cheerfulness “overflow”.

⁵⁷ “The Father with his infinite Power, the Son with his infinite Wisdom, and the Holy Spirit with his infinite Charity”- cfr. OCCC XIII, p. 187.

⁵⁸ According to St Irenaeus, God made himself known through his Word (the Son) and his Wisdom (the Spirit). Cfr. *Adversus haereses*, II, 30, 9, 822b.

⁵⁹ OCCC XI, p.24.

⁶⁰ Cfr. *ibidem*. The interpretations of some of the icons of the Trinity, for example, that of Rublëv, shows the Holy Spirit at the centre of the picture like the “synthesis” of the Trinity.

⁶¹ Cfr. OCCC VIII, p. 9.

⁶² OCCC III, p. 322 and p. 403; OCCC XI, p. 234.

⁶³ Pallotti reveals his secret: “The Holy Spirit who has sanctified me is mine”- OCCC XIII, p. 1553. See also: OCCC XI, pp. 288-292.

92. [The spirit of charity] In the first place we underline the spirit of charity which is the foundation of the Society. It is the Holy Spirit who pours out the charity, which “urges to the apostolate”⁶⁴. We participate in the love of the Holy Spirit⁶⁵. Given this, St. Vincent excluded vows for the members of the *Congregation of Priests and Brothers*, and this renunciation must have been the triumph of the love of God on the life of the soul and the protection of the apostolic vigour of the community⁶⁶. Our consecration is the right response to this awareness of the ineffable and infinite love of God, poured out into us by the Holy Spirit. Accepting the enrichment of the reflection of Vatican Council II⁶⁷, we highlight the ongoing reality of the motivation of Pallotti who has placed the utmost importance on the precept of love as foundation of apostolate. Created in the image of the God of Love, impelled by perfect love towards God and neighbour, we shall take as norm the “generous charity” in which we find our “activity for the salvation of men and for our spiritual life”⁶⁸. The great reality of the motivation for apostolic commitment, founded on love, is underlined by another factor. Modern man, in an epoch in which a “large sector of Christians” habitually think, decide and live “as though Christ does not exist”⁶⁹, does not easily enter into the classical places of meeting with Him (sacraments, Word of God,

⁶⁴ OCCC XI, p.7. “The Apostle of the Eternal Father invites man to give himself without reserve to God and at the service of neighbour and to cooperate in the salvation of the world” (*Ibidem*, p. 10).

⁶⁵ Cfr. OCCC IV, pp. 215-216.

⁶⁶ Cfr. OCCC IX, pp. 24-25. See also, SAC Renewal 2000” [2], *Pallottine Consecrated Life*, n°2.

⁶⁷ According to Vatican Council II, the apostolic commitment finds its *raison d’être* reason to be in the Sacrament of Baptism; cfr. *LG*, n°33 and *AA*, n°3, where it treats especially with the apostolate of the laity, so dear to the holy Founder.

⁶⁸ Cfr. *LSAC*, n°13. We assure thus “the eternal salvation of one’s own soul”; Cfr. OCCC III, p. 40.

⁶⁹ Cfr. Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Europa*, n°26.

prayer...). The presence of Jesus, promised to those who love with His love, is not destined only for those who have a great intellectual or theological preparation, but it can be made present in all environments, including those which are more secularised.

93. **[The spirit of sanctity]** The fruits of loving cooperation with the gifts of the Holy Spirit are manifested in the sanctity of Vincent Pallotti, called the “Saint of the City”. Starting from his desire, “I hope to become saintly as God wants”⁷⁰, and “I would like to have infinite wills and lives, to sacrifice them all for the Honour of the Name of God”⁷¹ that we find in the *General Protestation* and through all stages of his life until the reflection on the obligation “to perfect ourselves...in so far as we are living image of the Sanctity, and of the Perfection in essence”⁷² of which the small booklet *God the Infinite Love* speaks, we understand that these thoughts and concrete works of sanctity have marked the life of St. Vincent Pallotti⁷³. We discover the secret of his apostolic fruitfulness in his sanctity. He saw a direct and substantial relationship between sanctity and apostolate, and wanted a community of persons who would never say, “that's enough” in the journey towards perfection⁷⁴. “Now it is not enough that all who are and will be in the Congregation enter with the disposition to

⁷⁰ OOCC X, p. 84.

⁷¹ Ivi, p. 109.

⁷² OOCC XIII, p. 107. “...and God has so created me that if I do not make myself a Saint and perfect as much as I can in my whole life with the help of his grace, I am always and I work always more or less in contradiction with myself, because I am living image of Sanctity, and Perfection in essence” - ibidem, p. 108.

⁷³ It is sufficient to follow the analytical index of the *Opere Complete* of St. V. Pallotti. The word *sanctification* appears 400 times, *sanctity* 362 times and *saint* 820 times.

⁷⁴ “Since *love* never says *enough*, so I believe that nobody can call him mad who desires such a thing”, OOCC XI, p. 118.

practice the Life of perfect Sacrifice [...], it is necessary that [...] their life has, among its distinctive characteristics, the desire to go always forward, and to grow always in sanctity and evangelical perfection”⁷⁵.

94. **[The spirit of unity]** Unity should constitute the essential dimension of the Union and the Society of the Catholic Apostolate. The Union is called to the service of unity. Some priests, along with some pious secular laity “proposed to gather together in a bond of emulative Christian charity [...] desiring together to see that moment desired by all and foretold by Jesus Christ, the moment in which there will be only one flock and one Shepherd”⁷⁶. In fulfilling the desire of Jesus “That all may be one” (Jn 17, 11.21), “we undertake initiatives in the field of ecumenism and shall give our support to intense activities to obtain unity of Christians. Our work in this field must be done in a spirit of respect for the working of the Holy Spirit in the other Christian communities”⁷⁷.
95. **[The spirit of holy cheerfulness]** One of the fruits of the pedagogy of the Holy Spirit is holy cheerfulness and spiritual joy. It “is one of the precious fruits of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and therefore one of the distinctive characteristics of the true Servants of the Lord [...] Therefore all, through the perfect observance of the rules, acquiring the disposition to receive an abundance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and striving in the same way to profit by them, shall abound also in the precious fruits of such gifts. As spiritual joy is one of the fruits indicated, which produces in the true Servants of God holy cheerfulness and spiritual rejoicing, it must shine in them wholly particular

⁷⁵ OOCC VII, pp. 63-64.

⁷⁶ OOCC IV, p. 2.

⁷⁷ LSAC, n°206.

way”⁷⁸. The servants of the Lord “shall remember that if such a characteristic is lacking, they will bring very few souls to God, because from their manner of living few will fall in love with the following of Jesus Christ”⁷⁹.

96. **[Towards the formative journey]** In the spirit that revived St. Vincent Pallotti and which revives the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, we accept the revelation that the Spirit himself is the most important Agent of formation and is the formator "par excellence". May the spirit of sanctity of our Founder, called the “Saint of the City”, impel us unceasingly to a “high measure” of “ordinary Christian life”⁸⁰ and impel us to develop a “pedagogy of sanctity”⁸¹; may “the process of true maturation in humanity, in individual and communitarian life”⁸² be realised under the action of the Holy Spirit; may the way of charity open up the possibility of discovering and experiencing first-hand the living presence of God. Openness to the gifts of the Holy Spirit forms part of the treasure of the spirituality of the Founder. The formative pedagogy should underline this constant in thought and action.

MARY WHO ACCOMPANIES US

97. **[Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, Spouse of the Holy Spirit]** Mary, with her spiritual richness and beauty, is presented as an inexhaustible source of contemplation and action for Vincent Pallotti, who shares with others an abundance of his spirit through his three *Mesi di*

⁷⁸ OCCC II, pp. 162-163.

⁷⁹ Ivi, p. 164.

⁸⁰ *NMI*, n°30.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*.

⁸² Cfr. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, n°59.

Maggio for the Cloistered⁸³, Ecclesiastics⁸⁴ and Faithful⁸⁵. The holy Founder and his foundation are inspired by “Mary Most Holy, Daughter of the Eternal Father, Mother of the Eternal, Incarnate Word, and Spouse of the Holy Spirit”⁸⁶. Thus we find Marian spirituality in the Trinitarian horizon. In fact, St. Vincent puts the following words in Mary’s mouth: “Finally I tell you that with maternal affection I implore on you all, now and always, the Blessing of the Father, whose daughter I am, that you may be strengthened with his power; the Blessing of the Son, whose Mother I am, that you may be illumined with his wisdom; the Blessing of the Holy Spirit, whose Spouse I am, that you may be sanctified with his charity, so that filled with heavenly gifts, you may be more and more courageous in God and persevering in engaging yourself in every way possible”⁸⁷.

98. **[The spiritual marriage with Mary, Most Holy]** The gift of *the spiritual marriage* with Mary, Most Holy, which took place on 31 December 1832, is a “Miracle of the Mercy” of Jesus “on behalf of an ungrateful wretch” and of Mary towards “the most miserable who ever has been and who ever can be”⁸⁸. This event, which led to the knowledge of Jesus and to transformation in the Holy Spirit, constitutes the supreme example and crowning of

⁸³ Cfr. OCCC XIII, pp. 185-353: the *Queen of Saints* speaks to cloistered men and women.

⁸⁴ Cfr. Ivi, pp. 355-537: the *Queen of Apostles* speaks to the Ecclesiastics.

⁸⁵ Cfr. Ivi, pp. 539-756: the *Mother of Mercy* speaks to the Faithful.

⁸⁶ OCCC XI, p. 88 Prayer to the Most Holy Mary: We are in the faith of the Second Vatican Council which, presenting the B.V.M, Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and of the Church, sees in her “the true Mother of God and of the Redeemer... endowed with the high office and dignity of the Mother of the Son of God and therefore also the beloved daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit”, *LG* n°53.

⁸⁷ OCCC IV, pp. 215-216.

⁸⁸ Cfr. OCCC X, pp. 195-196.

the union of Pallotti with Mary Most Holy. He considered himself the bridegroom of the Immaculate. In fact, she gives the *fullness of grace* “to him in the measure she possessed”⁸⁹. Her sanctity constituted the model for that of her bridegroom Vincent. The initiative belonged to the Great Mother of Mercy. In the context of such a gift one can understand this exclamation of Pallotti: “I will sing for ever the mercy of the Lord! I will sing forever of the mercy of Mary. My God, my all”⁹⁰.

99. [Mary at Bethlehem] In the light of the Marian icon of Bethlehem, we read the surprising statement of Vincent Pallotti: “As soon as someone [...] makes a formal entry into the Congregation of the Pious Society, it could be said [...] today is born for you the one who will cooperate for your salvation, who in some way can be called your Saviour [...]. And he is born in the City of David called Bethlehem, which means *House of Bread*, symbol of our minimal *Congregation* abounding in spiritual food, and in the necessary means for the acquisition of the most sublime perfection, in order to cooperate more and more for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls”⁹¹. Mary watched and contemplated the events of *Bethlehem*, which could be said to be the cradle of our charism. Considering the cooperation of Mary in the work of salvation, we can imagine what role she plays in the birth of the Pallottine charism in the person who enters the Society.

100. [Mary at Nazareth] We can also be inspired by the Marian icon of Nazareth, considering the place of interior preparation for life in the Society. *The fundamental Rule of the Congregation* dedicates much space to the life of the

⁸⁹ Ivi, p. 195.

⁹⁰ Ivi, p. 196.

⁹¹ OCCC II, pp. 15-16.

Holy Family of Nazareth⁹², because it is considered the place where a solid foundation is laid and where one acquires the “true value of things”⁹³. At Nazareth Jesus “lived in humility, poverty and toil, practised in the most perfect manner all the virtues, all in obedience to the Heavenly Father, and in perfect submission to the Most Holy Virgin Mother, and to St. Joseph his foster Father...”⁹⁴. Mary of Nazareth, who contemplated all these things, now forms Christ in us. With her and thanks to her we open ourselves to interpersonal relationships and to the emotional dimensions of our life.

101. [Mary in the Cenacle] Most Holy Mary, first present on Calvary under the cross of Christ, receives the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, together with the Apostles. St. Vincent Pallotti attributes a role that is totally special to the Cenacle of Jerusalem. “Wherever I shall be, I intend to imagine myself to be together with all creatures in the Cenacle in Jerusalem where the Apostles received the Holy Spirit. I shall remind myself to renew this desire often. As the Apostles were with Mary, so will I be in spirit with my beloved Mother and Jesus. As they are my special intercessors, I am confident that they will help me and all other creatures to receive the abundance of the Holy Spirit”⁹⁵. Regarding the Cenacle, we can be inspired by another “classical” text of the Founder: “The Society was founded under the special protection of the Queen of Apostles. [...], although Mary was neither a Priest nor an Apostle, she applied herself with such perfection and fullness that

⁹² Cfr. OCCC III, pp. 46-51. We refer here to “The Rule of the Congregation of Priests, Brothers Coadjutors of the Catholic Apostolate under the special protection of Most Holy Mary, Queen of Apostles”. See also: OCCC VII, pp. 111-114.

⁹³ Cfr. OCCC VII, p. 112.

⁹⁴ OCCC XIII, p. 129.

⁹⁵ OCCC X, p. 86.

she merited a glory above the most holy Apostles. Therefore the Church gave her not only a simple honorary title but it is for reason of the fullness of merits that she greets her with the distinguished title of Queen of Apostles. Therefore Priests, and laity, and all of every sex, state, grade and condition will be inspired to imitate our immaculate Mother Mary, Most Holy, in all undertakings for the greater glory of God, and in all works of corporal and spiritual mercy in favour of the neighbours”⁹⁶.

102. [Royal way of Mary] Vincent Pallotti profoundly desired that all, laity, priests, religious and consecrated persons, would have in Mary, after Jesus Christ, the most perfect model of genuine apostolic zeal and of perfect charity⁹⁷. If we are dealing with the order of love, of dedication and apostolic zeal, the “Marian” ministry surpasses the “Petrine” ministry⁹⁸. The holy Founder, with great intuition, presented this *royal priesthood* of Mary, Queen of Apostles, who opens us to the proper diversity and plurality of Christian vocations. We are certain that Vincent Pallotti, living today, would have accepted with joy the conviction that Mary “sheds light on the woman just as [...], the woman, looking at Mary, finds in her the secret to live with dignity her femininity and to achieve its genuine promotion”⁹⁹. We can say that, in Mary, appears fully that *genius* of woman, whose manifestation our days await and from whom Christ awaits the fulfilment of that “royal priesthood” (1P 2,9), which is the great treasure given to all people¹⁰⁰.

⁹⁶ OCCC VII, pp. 7-8.

⁹⁷ Cfr. OCCC I, pp. 6-7.

⁹⁸ This thought is found frequently in contemporary theological reflection.

⁹⁹ Encyclical Letter of John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, n°46.

¹⁰⁰ Cfr. Apostolic Letter of John Paul II, *Mulieris dignitatem*, n°30.

103. [Towards the formative journey] Pallottine spirituality contains a rich and dynamic Marian dimension: the icon of Mary in Bethlehem – Postulancy and Preparatory Formation; the icon of Mary in Nazareth – fundamental formation; the icon of Mary in the Cenacle – “Patroness of the Society and for the entire Union, is *Mary Queen of Apostles*... , after Christ, the most perfect model of our apostolate”¹⁰¹. Mary, Queen of Apostles, opens us to the “equal dignity” of the faithful of both sexes, of all states, grade or condition, which “is based on common likeness to the Creator and on the common priesthood of the People of God”¹⁰². The Cenacle, together with Mary, Queen of Apostles, becomes therefore the “place” of universal communion for receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit, who is the motive for going and “preaching to all the nations” (Mt 28,19) and for being wherever is necessary.

THE UAC: OUR WAY OF BEING CHURCH

104. [A gift of the Mercy of God] On Friday, 9 January 1835, after the Holy Mass, “celebrated through a very particular touch of the divine Mercy”¹⁰³, Vincent Pallotti received the inspiration to found the Catholic Apostolate: “My God, my mercy, You in your infinite mercy grant me in a special way to promote, stabilise, propagate, perfect, [] perpetuate at least with a more lively desire in your most Sacred Heart **1.** A pious institution of universal Apostolate in all the Catholics to propagate the Faith and Religion of Jesus Christ among all the non-believers, and non-Catholics. **2.** Another hidden Apostolate to revive, conserve, and increase faith among Catholics. **3.** An institution of universal charity in the exercise of all the Works of

¹⁰¹ *LSAC*, n°9.

¹⁰² Cfr. *General Statutes of the UAC*, n°7.

¹⁰³ OCCC X, p. 196.

Mercy [...]. God, God, God – Mercy, Mercy, Mercy – Grace – God”¹⁰⁴.

105. [In the Church and for the Church] According to the Holy Founder, “This Pious Society [Union] is called of the *Catholic Apostolate*, not because it pretends to have in itself the *Catholic Apostolate*, but because it is to remain in the Church of Jesus Christ permanently like an Evangelical Trumpet, which calls all, invites all, awakens the zeal and charity of all the faithful of every state, grade and condition”¹⁰⁵. All Catholics were called to be part of it: “Ecclesiastics and seculars, men and women, learned and ignorant, poor and rich, noble and plebeian, whatever may be their state, profession and fortune... There cannot be anyone excluded from being part of the Catholic Apostolate and sharing in its merit, its undertakings, and its compensations”¹⁰⁶. In fact, the Union of Catholic Apostolate from the very beginning has been oriented towards the apostolate of the Church and presented itself “as a way of being Church”¹⁰⁷, as one of its “auxiliary bodies”¹⁰⁸. The activities are determined by the needs of the Church itself, to which Christ entrusted the apostolate and at whose service St. Vincent Pallotti placed his foundation from the very beginning¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁴ Ivi, pp. 198-199.

¹⁰⁵ OOCC I, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁶ OOCC IV, 124.

¹⁰⁷ Cfr. *Together We Journey, Together We Serve*, Final Document of General Assembly XVI.

¹⁰⁸ “The Pious Society [...] is instituted under the absolute dependance of the Supreme Pontiff [...] with the most ardent desire to cooperate efficiently, constantly, and gratuitously without ambition or temporal interest, all works for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, in all the ordinary and extraordinary needs of the Church, near or far, in any part of the world, ... existing as an *auxiliary body of the Church* [...]. In this manner the Pious Society [...] is certain of the blessings of God, and the fruits of the same divine blessings” - OOCC I, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰⁹ LSAC, Preamble, f.

106. [“Parable of apostolic unity”¹¹⁰] Vincent Pallotti loved the Church and in the context of this love we can better understand his desire and his will to “reform her” and, above all, his great longing for her *unity*. He experienced this need as a sign of the times and, therefore, inscribed in the heart of his Foundation a primordial responsibility and commitment towards [*comm*]union. Regardless of numerous defeats and disappointments, the world tends towards unity even today. This tendency constitutes a great opportunity for the Church, which presents itself as “a people assembled in the unity of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”¹¹¹, and it has the vocation to be “sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of unity of the whole human race”¹¹². Therefore as members of the SAC, in a spirit of genuine dialogue¹¹³, reviving faith, rekindling charity and propagating both of them throughout the world, we nourish the desire for one flock and one Shepherd (Gv 10, 16), and intend “to work with all energy for unity among Christians and strive to communicate the Good News to those who do not know it, so that the Church may be a more effective sign of unity and salvation for the whole world”¹¹⁴.

107. [The Pallottine project: an ecclesiology of cooperation] The ecclesiology of Pallotti underlines the necessity of cooperation. In fact, Don Vincent wrote: “[...] reason and experience show that ordinarily the *good* that is done alone is *insufficient, uncertain* and of *little duration*, and that the efforts of the most generous individuals cannot

¹¹⁰ Cfr. *In the Union to Evangelize*, Final Document of the XVII General Assembly, n° 13.

¹¹¹ LG, n°4, referring to a statement of St. Cyprian, *De Orat. Dom.*, 23:PL 4, 553.

¹¹² Cfr. LG, n°1.

¹¹³ It deals with the groups belonging to the Church, according to the Dogmatic Constitution LG, nn. 14-16.

¹¹⁴ LSAC, n°2.

achieve anything *great* neither in the *moral* nor *religious* spheres, if they are not united and organised towards a common goal; thus it was willed, upon approval of the necessary Ecclesiastical Authority, that this mass of zealous Christians be united in such a way as to form a pious society”¹¹⁵. The argument of the Founder is well known: “*Omnium divinarum divinissima extat perfectio cooperari Domino in salutem animarum ad suum Creatorem*”¹¹⁶. This “gift to cooperate in the salvation of souls is one of the perfections that God communicates to his creature, [...] because those who profit from such a gift [...] are the most perfect imitators of Jesus Christ, [and] because he who profits, perfects meritoriously in himself the image of the Most Holy Trinity, or rather he resembles God more”¹¹⁷. Cooperating “from the beginning”¹¹⁸, we can do more and better. Therefore it is necessary that we journey and serve together¹¹⁹, that we really are “together to evangelise”¹²⁰. Such cooperation demands respect and a form of reciprocal obedience. According to the holy Founder, “we should live with the spirit of obedience and submission towards all [...], towards persons of whatever grade, state and condition, and towards everything that is not against the Law of God and of the Church”¹²¹. Such an affirmation allows us to interpret the charism of the Founder in the contemporary context: reciprocal listening and

¹¹⁵ OOCC IV, pp. 122-123.

¹¹⁶ Cfr. ivi, p. 125. A small picture with this text of Dionysius the Aeropagite is found in the room of the Founder in Rome.

¹¹⁷ OOCC XI, pp. 256-257.

¹¹⁸ Cfr. Séamus Freeman, *In a Constant Search for Faithfulness*, op. cit., n°33.

¹¹⁹ Cfr. *Together We Journey, Together We Serve*, Final Document of the XVI General Assembly, Roma 1990; *In the Union to Evangelize*, Final Document of the XVII General Assembly, Roma 1992.

¹²⁰ The Jubilee of the Bicentenary of the birth of St. Vincent Pallotti had this motto. See also the Document of the Consultative Congress of the Major Superiors: *The Charism and the Gift of Collaboration*, Carranza 1996.

¹²¹ OOCC III, p. 50.

cooperation must be the basis of our style of apostolic life¹²².

108. [An ecclesiology of communion] We are convinced that our Founder too, had he lived among our contemporaries, would have used the expression “ecclesiology of communion”. Would he also have called his Foundation “The Comm-Union of Catholic Apostolate”? According to its General Statutes, the Union of Catholic Apostolate presents itself in the Church as a “communion [*communio*] of those faithful who, inspired by the charism of St. Vincent Pallotti, promote the co-responsibility of all the baptised to revive faith and rekindle charity in the Church and in the world bringing all to unity in Christ”¹²³. Thus the UAC, of which the SAC is an integral part¹²⁴, “seeks to live the mystery of the Church as communion which reveals the identity and fundamental dignity of all the faithful”¹²⁵. This involves a communion characterised by the vertical dimension of the “One and Triune God”, and the horizontal dimension of human beings, including their fundamental equality and diversity¹²⁶. This is the commu-

¹²² Cfr. Séamus Freeman, *In a Constant Search for Faithfulness*, op. cit., n°34. The *Preamble to the Law of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate* states “in the documents of the Second Vatican Council we find a confirmation of the convictions of St. Vincent Pallotti, namely, that the apostolic efficiency of the Church reaches its full potential only when all the faithful are brought to an awareness of their obligation to collaborate in her mission”, *Preamble* d.

¹²³ *General Statutes of the UAC*, n°1.

¹²⁴ *LSAC*, n°1 and n°4.

¹²⁵ *General Statutes of the UAC*, n°13.

¹²⁶ This spirituality “means above all the glance of the heart into the mystery of the Trinity [...], besides the capacity to listen to the brothers in faith in the profound unity of the mystical Body; therefore *as one who belongs to me*. The spirituality of communion is also the capacity to see above all that which is positive in others [...], and finally, know how “to make space” for the brother, carrying “the burdens of one another” (Gal 6,2) and rejecting the egoistic temptations. Thus we make the Church into “the house and school of communion” - *NMI*, n°43.

ion of the followers of Jesus Christ, *Apostle of the Eternal Father*. We are convinced that Vincent Pallotti, profoundly involved in the life of the Church, would have accepted with gratitude this proposal of the *spirituality of communion*¹²⁷ as the programme of his Work. The theme of “communio” nourishes more and more the reflections and projects of the Pallottine communities. By being faithful to our Founder, we will be “Faithful to the future”¹²⁸.

109. [Towards the formative journey] The fundamental aspects of the *ecclesiology* that must be emphasized in the Pallottine educative process are the following: “The Society of the Catholic Apostolate is an integral part of the Union of Catholic Apostolate. It has the same apostolic aim and spirit as the entire Foundation of St. Vincent Pallotti and, like the Union, its members serve the Church in her apostolic mission to the world”¹²⁹. “To accomplish this, our Society will use whatever means are appropriate to promote, defend, and nourish Christian life”¹³⁰. And the UAC General Statutes add: “St. Vincent Pallotti founded the Union to serve the Church which continues the mission of Christ on earth and which is the sign and instrument of the universal unity that God will bring to perfection. Therefore, the members of the Union are committed to remaining in communion with the Pope and the Bishops”¹³¹. The Pallottine ecclesiology is open to and therefore promotes the spirituality of communion, making it emerge as an educational principle everywhere. The Work of the holy Founder is in fact an eloquent expression of “*sentire cum Ecclesia*”. The Union of Catholic Apostolate is

¹²⁷ Cfr. *VC*, nn. 46-51 and *RdC*, nn. 28-29.

¹²⁸ Cfr. “SAC Renewal” [1], *Jubilee Message 2000*, n°1.

¹²⁹ *LSAC*, n°1.

¹³⁰ *Ivi*, n°3.

¹³¹ *General Statutes of the UAC*, n°18.

in the Church and for the Church and reveals the fullness of the charism of Pallotti and his Foundation. Here is the mystery of the greatness of our Founder, called the “precursor” of the future.

TO SERVE THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE

110. [A glance at the world] “For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mk 10, 45). The Son of God, to become Saviour of the world, emptied himself of his divinity (cfr. Phil 2,7). Inspired by the example that comes from above, Vincent Pallotti opened himself to the signs of the world. His writings contain expressions such as: “glance at the world”, “actual state of the world”, and “the whole world”¹³². In the insignia and in the *Medal* of the Union of Catholic Apostolate the world is also symbolically presented as a huge harvest waiting for the labourers¹³³. In fact, the Catholic Apostolate in the Church is projected towards the world: “If one *gives a glance at the world of our century* [...], one cannot but see the almost inconceivable demand for faith to be revived and charity to be rekindled [...]. At the sight of a spectacle so lamentable who will not remember the obligations of Christian charity [...] which can obtain with prayer and contribute with works to the needs of the world in matters of religion, which is to say, to make the whole world happy in the possession of peace[?]”¹³⁴.

¹³² In the OOCC we often find the expression the “world”, often written with the capital letter “M”. See for example: OOCC IV, p. 254; pp. 387-388. See also: Vincent Pallotti, *Lettere Latine*, ed. By Don Francesco Moccia, Rome 1998.

¹³³ Cfr. OOCC I, p. 7.

¹³⁴ OOCC IV, pp. 220-221.

111. [Mature openness] “You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?” (Lk 12, 56). The desires and the auspices of the holy Founder are turned to the spirit of compassion, towards the “present and future needs of the world” and the “happiness of the world”, which embraces eternal but also “earthly happiness”¹³⁵. We are impressed by the maturity of the Founder’s vision. He is aware also of the other side of the coin. He sees the dangers of the world¹³⁶, its difficulties¹³⁷, and its miseries¹³⁸ and he is convinced of the necessity of detachment from it¹³⁹, of despising this world¹⁴⁰ full of temptations¹⁴¹. This world has need of light and salt; this world has need of *sanctification*¹⁴²; in this world *faith* must be revived and *charity* rekindled. “Our imitation of Christ impels us to apostolic action. We commit ourselves to the salvation and the well-being of our neighbour with all our energy and we want to unite ourselves with the common efforts to create a more humane world for all, to consolidate peace in justice and in charity and to unite all in Christ. Thus we are open to all the concerns of the Church and are ready to serve its tasks with fidelity”¹⁴³.

112. [Universal Apostolate] In this perspective we also perceive the project of the *Procura*¹⁴⁴, which even today pre-

¹³⁵ Cfr. OOCC I, pp. 18 and 93; OOCC X, pp. 431-440; OOCC XI, p. 365.

¹³⁶ Cfr. OOCC II, p. 117 e 123.

¹³⁷ Cfr. OOCC III, p. 233.

¹³⁸ Cfr. OOCC IV, p. 153.

¹³⁹ Cfr. OOCC II, p. 54.

¹⁴⁰ Cfr. *ivi*, p. 276.

¹⁴¹ Cfr. *ivi*, p. 192.

¹⁴² Cfr. OOCC I, p. 44 e p. 266.

¹⁴³ *LSAC*, n°15.

¹⁴⁴ Thus writes Vincent Pallotti on the necessity and usefulness of the institution of the *Procura*, their progress, their stability and increase: “The Pious Society, in order to provide for the present and future needs of the World in the field of

serve the character of an apostolic challenge. These are open to the spheres and concrete needs of the people of God; to spiritual, scientific and pastoral culture of the Clergy; to the missions and to spiritual exercises for the people; to the missions *ad gentes*; to the works of mercy; to the religious, civil, and literary education of youth, in a special way of the poor, without any differences between men and women; to the education and religious culture of those who live in rural environments; to the corporal and spiritual works of mercy for detainees and those condemned to death; to the corporal and spiritual works of mercy in aid of the sick in hospitals and those left alone at home; to the religious and moral culture of soldiers; to the practice of devotions approved by the Church; to the works of mercy and aid to foreigners of every age, sex, state and condition, and in particular to orphans, to girls, and to families¹⁴⁵. Fr. Vincent in fact states: “if some people were to think such a system [...] too big, or of little use, they should reflect that the purpose of the institution of the *Procura* regards an extremely important subject, and of maximum interest for humanity, because it is for the greater glory of God, and the greater sanctification of souls and of the world, to procure for the people what temporal happiness is possible”¹⁴⁶.

Religion, and for the influence Religion has, and in the active exercise of the works of mercy to promote the temporal happiness of the Peoples, and to procure in the most effective manner the eternal salvation of all, promotes the institution of the *Procura*. In order that all who have zeal and charity be encouraged to cooperate, and in order that all those who by virtue of their office should promote the progress of the Catholic Religion and the temporal and eternal happiness of the Peoples may effectively ensure to have it instituted in all places under their jurisdiction, they need to know the necessity and usefulness of the institution of the *Procura*, not only their progress, stability and expansion, but all that can be known in no better way than by seeing them in the nature of the same institution considered attentively in all the aspects regarding them, as is now being explored here” (OOCC I, pp. 18-19).

¹⁴⁵ Cfr. OOCC I, pp. 1-397.

¹⁴⁶ Cfr. *ivi*, p. 93.

113. [Loving objectives¹⁴⁷] The example of the Apostle of the Eternal Father inspires the Union and the Society of the Catholic Apostolate in reciprocal relationships and in serving all. The Union “wants, in particular, [...] with all the people of good will [...], to commit itself to justice, solidarity, peace and the protection of creation; [...] to promote the preferential option for the poor and the excluded, fighting the causes of poverty”¹⁴⁸. And in the Law of the Society we read that “Our Society aspires to cooperate in promoting social justice according to the teaching of the Gospel. Therefore, in its apostolic works, it is open to the needs of socially neglected groups, such as the poor, the aged, the sick and all those who in any way are objects of social discrimination. Our Society seeks, at the same time, to form the laity to accept as their specific task the renewal of the social order”¹⁴⁹. We underline that such a vision unites things divine those human in a way that is relevant for all times and in every corner of the world.

114. [Towards the formative journey] The Pallottine formative process should emphasise this fundamental task, that is our service “towards the world”. The *spirit of service* belongs to the true apostle and should be the mark of Catholic Apostolate¹⁵⁰. The Society in the Union of Catholic Apostolate is open to the diverse cultures of peoples and it adapts itself to the changing circumstances of times¹⁵¹. In fact, “it is time for a new *creativity in charity*, which should uphold not so much and not only in the efficiency of the help given but in the capacity to draw close

¹⁴⁷ Cfr. OCCC XI, p. 259; See also: OCCC XIII, p. 490.

¹⁴⁸ *General Statutes of the UAC*, n°13 c.

¹⁴⁹ *LSAC*, n°209.

¹⁵⁰ Cfr. “SAC Renewal 2000” [2], *Pallottine Consecrated Life*, p. 9.

¹⁵¹ *Preamble to the LSAC*, e. f.

to and remain in solidarity with those who suffer¹⁵². Therefore, Pallottine formation will encourage the candidates to open themselves, to be capable of discerning the signs of the times, whether positive or negative, present or future, in order to respond to God before the world with the “redemptive yes”¹⁵³.

¹⁵² *NMI*, n°50. The English version of this formulation is the following: “Now is time for a *new creativity in Charity*” the French version: “C’est l’heure d’une *nouvelle imagination de la charité*”; and the Polish version: “Potrzebna jest dziś *nowa wyobraźnia miłosierdzia*”.

¹⁵³ Cfr. Society of the Catholic Apostolate, *Directive for Priestly Formation*, n°5.

CHAPTER III

INTEGRAL VISION OF THE HUMAN PERSON

115. [Need for an inter-disciplinary, Christian anthropology] The person called to consecrated life in the Society of the Catholic Apostolate is a unique individual and Christian in possession of a unique personality and living in a specific cultural milieu. His development is a mystery taking shape in relation to God, others, his own self and the environment. An integral vision of the human person is an indispensable requirement for a formation programme. In other words, an adequate and complete inter-disciplinary and Christian anthropology constitutes a fundamental basis for the *ratio institutionis*.

THEOLOGICAL VISION OF THE HUMAN PERSON

116. [From Sacred Scripture] The human person is created in the “image and likeness of God”¹, the only creature of which this is said. It does not mean that the human being is identical with God, but refers to the strong bond of relationship that exists between this creature and the Creator. His very existence itself signifies relationship with God. In his deep-rooted rational capacity he is capable of hearing God’s word and responding to it. In both accounts of the creation of human beings², humanity is presented as the crown of creation, the focal point in the project of God. Human beings are created individually as man and woman³. This separation is neither denial nor distance but shows the uniqueness, diversity and compli-

¹ Gen 1, 26.

² Cf. Gen 1,1-2,4a; 2:4b-25.

³ Cfr. Gen 1, 27.

mentary nature of persons. By his very nature, the person is social; he must seek God and live in relation to Him and to other creatures.

117. [Limits of the human person] From the very act of creation itself, the person has limits⁴; in fact, he is divided in himself and has been given prohibitions⁵. That is, he is left free in his spontaneous decisions and in the exercise of his God-given powers but divided in himself; he is driven by his desires, which make what is prohibited desirable⁶. The Sacred Scripture presents the vision of the human person thus: as a fragile earthen vessel, raised to the heights to be God’s image, called to carry forward the eternal plan of God in his flesh. Sin or limitations do not wipe away the divine image; grace elevates him to seek God and live in union with Him. For this he has to put aside the old self⁷ and put on the new self through the death of Christ⁸, the new self created in the image and likeness of God as it was in the human being originally⁹.

118. [Human person as image of God] The Second Vatican Council, in the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)* presents the human person in his relational dimension. He is created “in God’s image”¹⁰; “he has the capacity to know and love his Creator”,¹¹ and “by sharing the divine mind he is called to seek and to love what is true and good”.¹² He has a law inscribed in

⁴ Cfr. Gen 2,16-17.

⁵ Cfr. Gen 2, 16-17.

⁶ Cfr. Gen 3, 6.

⁷ Cfr. Eph 4, 22.

⁸ Cfr. Col 3, 9-10.

⁹ Cfr. Gen 1, 26; Eph 4, 24.

¹⁰ Cfr. GS, n° 12.

¹¹ Ivi, n° 12.

¹² Cfr. Ivi, n° 15.

his heart¹³, and he has the freedom to turn towards what is good or to shun it, because “true freedom...is a privileged sign of the divine image in the human person”¹⁴.

119. [The human person is called to communion with others] “For by his innermost nature man is a social being; and if he does not enter into relations with others he can neither live nor exercise his gifts”¹⁵. He realizes his dignity not in isolation, but in the total gift of self in love. There exists a certain parallel between the union between the Divine Persons and the union between the sons of God in truth and love. “It follows, then, that if man is the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake, man can fully discover his true self only in the sincere giving of himself”¹⁶. Through his dealings with others, through mutual service and fraternal dialogue both a person and the Society develop¹⁷. Thus “being in the image of God, the individual has the dignity of the *person*; he is not only *something* but *someone*. He has the capacity to know himself, to be in possession of himself, to give himself freely and to enter into communion with other persons; he is called, by grace, to an alliance with his Creator, and to give a response in faith and love that no one else can give in his place”¹⁸.

120. [Reality of sin] The reality of sin is part of human history. To understand what it is, we must above all recognise the *profound bond that exists between man and God*. Sin cannot be understood clearly without the knowledge of

¹³ Cfr. *ivi*, n° 16.

¹⁴ *Ivi*, n° 17.

¹⁵ *Ivi*, n° 12.

¹⁶ *Ivi*, n° 24.

¹⁷ Cfr. *ivi*, n° 25.

¹⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Vatican Booksellers and Publishers, Vatican City, 1992, n° 357.

God. Only by understanding the design of God for man do we realise that sin is an abuse of that freedom which God gifts to persons so that they can love Him and one other. Outside the relationship between God and man, sin is often described as a defect in growth, a psychological weakness, an error, an unavoidable consequence of an inadequate social structure etc¹⁹. But, in fact, every sin rather is a lack of trust in the Creator, a disobedience to the commandment of God. In every sin man “prefers” himself, makes a choice against God, against the demands of his own condition as a creature and consequently against what is truly good for him²⁰. The human person therefore has inherited an important vocation mixed with weakness, and he realises the meaning of his own life in relation to God and others. He has fundamental potentialities to follow and love what is good, but often tends to do the contrary. He is, at the same time, divided in himself²¹. As St. Paul says: “For though the will to do what is good is in me, the power to do it is not: the good thing I want to do, I never do; the evil thing which I do not want – that is what I do. But every time I do what I do not want to, then it is not myself acting, but the sin that lives in me...Who will rescue me...?” asks St. Paul. And he answers: “God – thanks be to him – through Jesus Christ our Lord”²².

121. [Christ, the New Man] “In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man becomes truly clear [...]. Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high

¹⁹ Cfr. *ivi*, n° 387.

²⁰ Cfr. *ivi*, nn. 397 and 398.

²¹ Cfr. *GS*, n° 13.

²² Cfr. Rom 7, 18-20; 24-25.

calling”²³. Jesus, “image of the invisible God”²⁴, is the perfect man, who has restored in the children of Adam that likeness of God, which had been disfigured ever since the first sin²⁵. Therefore in the mystery of incarnation lies the basis for an anthropology “that can go beyond its own limits and contradictions, moving towards God himself, or rather towards the target of divinisation through insertion into Christ the redeemed man, admitting him into the intimacy of the Trinitarian life [...]; only because the Son of God has truly become man, the human being can become truly son of God in him and through him”²⁶.

VISION OF THE HUMAN PERSON ACCORDING TO PALLOTTI

122. [An integral vision] The Pallottine anthropology follows the Biblical notion of the human person as the “image and likeness of God”. St. Vincent Pallotti’s understanding of the human person was ontologically, theologically and psychologically complete and integral.

123. [Existential questions]: Pallotti asked the following mystical and existential questions: *My God, who are you, and who am I? Who am I before you? What is it you want of me as I am before you?*²⁷ There are two interrelated questions in the above passage.

124. [“My God, who are you?”] It is a question about the nature of God. The profoundly theological and existential answer that Pallotti received is: *God is infinite love and mercy*²⁸.

²³ GS, n° 22.

²⁴ Col 1, 15.

²⁵ Cf. GS, n° 22.

²⁶ NMI, n° 23.

²⁷ OCCC X, pp. 462ff.

²⁸ See nn. 78-84 of this *ratio*.

125. [“Who am I?”] This question on the nature of the human person himself, for Pallotti, is incomplete without these additions: “Who am I before you?” and “What is it you want of me as I am before you?” This means that the human person can be understood and his vocation can be defined only in relation to God, his Creator. The response to the questions of Pallotti are found in these words: “O infinite, immense, incomprehensible mercy, who could have imagined that an eternal, infinite, incomprehensible God [...who], has no need of man, and who has foreseen all the ingratitude, sins and sacrileges of man from all eternity and always, and who has foreseen all my infinite indignity [...], and the continuous rebellion of my whole life [...], has willed to create our soul in his image and likeness, that is, he has willed that our soul be a living image of Himself [...], a spiritual substance which has for its distinguishing mark the true and living image of Himself [...]. O ineffable invention of the infinite Love! O Love not recognised! O Love that is not reciprocated by me! O Love infinitely offended, reviled, despised by me!”²⁹

126. [Homo viator] Pilgrimage, for the believers, is a parable of human existence and it belongs to the anthropological foundation of religions³⁰. Vincent Pallotti loved to describe the life of man in this manner. For him every man and every Christian is a wayfarer set on a journey. In fact St. Vincent writes: “My God, [...] your mercy assures me that you accept my sincere, living desire to work and suffer for You, and to love You [...] as though I were always in the state of a *traveller*”³¹. Elsewhere he writes: “[...] The life of *man the traveller* is a battle, and all must know the art

²⁹ OCCC X, pp. 482-483.

³⁰ For Gabriel Marcel, for example, “Being, signifies to be in journey”; *Homo Viator*, Presence Association of Gabriel Marcel, Paris 1998, p. 10.

³¹ OCCC X, p. 727. See also: OCCC X, pp. 365-366.

of fighting to win, yet very few know it, because they learn little or nothing of its rules.. Therefore, I want you to make it an object of your sacred studies, and do as much as you can to teach these rules to poor travellers”³².

127. [Living image of God] The first and the most significant answer that Pallotti received to his question “Who am I?” is that God created the human person in His own image – a gratuitous choice made out of love. He writes: “Therefore O my God, my infinite love, ineffable love, incomprehensible love: it is a truth of faith that my soul has been created in your image and likeness. It is not an image painted on canvas, nor made of wood, stone or metal but a living, rational and spiritual substance with its distinct nature in creation, and therefore forms its true, real essence; it is the created, existing being that represents You, my God, and all of You in Your essence. [...]. Therefore it is a truth of faith that my soul, being a living image of You, is also a living image of the eternal, infinite, immense and incomprehensible God”³³. Again he adds elsewhere: “My God, with infinite love, you deigned to create me in your image and likeness. You have also given me the gift of free will to perfect myself as a living image of you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit”³⁴. Thus, for Pallotti, the infinite love of God is first of all manifested in the creation of the world but reaches its climax in the creation of the human being in His own image and likeness. He vested him with gifts of nature and grace and enabled him to become a reflection of divine perfection.

128. [Nothingness and sin] If the first anthropological reality is that the human being is in God’s own image and like-

³² OCCC XIII p. 487.

³³ Ivi, pp. 60-61.

³⁴ OCCC X, p. 749.

ness, the second one is that the same human is also finite, limited, and sinful; he is **“nothingness and sin”**. But what is sin? Sin can be understood, according to Pallotti, only against the bright background of God’s infinite love as revealed in the work of creation, and of the human person’s destiny to partake in the life of God. Pallotti writes: “Enlightened by holy faith, I must recall that God, with infinite love and mercy, created us in His image and likeness to become like Him in glory for all eternity. As soon as He saw that Adam had sinned, and that in the sinning of the first father of all, the entire human race was utterly lost and had become children of hell, moved by the same infinite love and mercy, He calls the disobedient Adam, admonishes him compassionately, [...] and promises him the Saviour”³⁵. Thus sin appeared to him as the darkest ingratitude and the rejection of God’s love. He felt himself profoundly implicated in the sin of the world. We find in him not only the outspoken hatred of sin (*Ad destruendum peccatum*), but also his constant self-humiliations because he considered himself as “nothingness and sin” (*nihil et peccatum*).

129. [“I do not know how to love You”] Pallotti’s awareness of his sinfulness might even appear exaggerated, irrational and psychologically unhealthy. Could it be that he suffered from an extremely low self-image, neurotic guilt or scrupulosity? The truth is that, in the face of the almighty, the infinitely perfect and all-loving God, like the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah³⁶, Vincent could not hide from his own imperfections and nothingness. It was his inability to love God, as he willed and as he ought to have, that he considered as the darkest sin. “[...] I am in despair, I am

³⁵ OCCC XIII, p. 487.

³⁶ Cfr. Is. 6; Jer. 1.

not able to love You as I ought. He who fails to love you my Jesus cannot live.”³⁷

130. [Sense of sin and the desire for perfection] The surest proof of the genuineness of Pallotti’s sense of sin is that such a state of his soul did not spiritually or psychologically crush him, but increased his trust in the infinite mercy of God even more. It did not lead him to depression but increased his motivation to love God with even greater perfection. He writes: “Therefore I do not want to despair; behold Jesus Christ; He knows me and understands me perfectly as the *sinful man* I am. For me he is confused, for me he is humiliated, for me he is grieved until he perspired blood in agony in Gethsemane [...], and in him and with him I offer You my all: destroy my sinful life; may I be destroyed completely, and in turn, receive Your atonement in Jesus Christ. Then perceive not me but Jesus living in me as my sinful life is entirely destroyed”³⁸.

131. [Jesus, the miracle of infinite love and mercy] Sin tarnished the divine image in the human person but the infinite love and mercy of God showed once more its efficacy: the pernicious effects of sin were overcome by an even greater miracle of his mercy. God decided to redeem man and lead him back to his original destiny by sending his own divine Son as our Redeemer. Pallotti writes: “God, moved by His infinite Love and Mercy, became man to teach us in His sacred humanity how we should live in order to perfect our souls as living images of God”³⁹. The apostle writing to the first faithful of Rome said: “For those whom He has foreknown He has also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son” (Romans

³⁷ OOCC X, 226.

³⁸ Ivi, 701.

³⁹ OOCC XIII, p. 127.

8,29), to show that God has [...] given us his Divine Son so that we can imitate him, and as much as possible, be similar to Him”⁴⁰.

132. [Jesus, image of the invisible God] Hence it is Jesus who restores to the human person the divine image tarnished by sin. Thus Pallotti anticipates a very modern idea which is expressed in the Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*. In his humanity and by the mystery of his life the Incarnate Word “fully reveals the human person to himself and makes his supreme calling clear. Further, through his Son, the perfect “image of the invisible God” and the perfect human being, God restores to the human being that “divine likeness which had been disfigured from the first sin onwards”⁴¹.

133. [Jesus Christ, the divine model of perfection] About two months before his death, on November 25, 1849, Pallotti asked himself this question: “Vincent [...], how did you profit from God’s infinite Love with which He created you in his own image and likeness?”⁴² He wished to “be perfect as the Heavenly Father is perfect”⁴³ and for that he needed to resemble the infinite Love and infinite Mercy of the Father. Since Jesus was the most perfect incarnation of the infinite Love and Mercy of the Father, the self-expression of the Father, Pallotti realised that perfection consists in being transformed into Christ. In 1832, he wrote in the *Month of May for all the Faithful*: “Do you want a perfect example of the perfection of the heavenly Father? You have it in Jesus. He became man to teach men how to live their lives in order to become holy and perfect like the

⁴⁰ OOCC XIII, pp. 127-128.

⁴¹ Cfr. *GS*, n° 22.

⁴² OOCC X, p. 752.

⁴³ Mt 5, 48.

Heavenly Father. Look, therefore, in faith at your divine model, Jesus Christ: profit by the treasures of grace that he gained for you through his holy life, and you will become holy and perfect as your heavenly Father”⁴⁴.

134. [Jesus, the first-born among many brothers] Vincent believed that the human person is predestined to find his fulfilment by being transformed into Christ, *the first-born Brother, and the image of the Father*⁴⁵. Having realised that human destiny and salvation consist in complete transformation into the first-born Brother, Pallotti’s life was thereafter an incessant striving toward this goal. “[...] Therefore, through Your infinite mercy, through the infinite power of the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, destroy in me my inconceivable unworthiness and the infinite impediments that are in me, in order that I may receive the infinite communications of all your infinite attributes. And I believe firmly [...] that You, O my God, my infinite Mercy, [...] communicate to me all the merits, all the virtues and all the works of the entire life of Our Lord Jesus Christ in such a way that transforming me wholly into Yourself and in my first-born Brother Jesus Christ, Your infinite mercy may remain glorified”⁴⁶.

135. [Complete transformation into Christ] On 11 November 1827, Pallotti expressed his desire for complete transformation into Christ in these very intense words: “May all my life be destroyed and may the life of Jesus alone be my life [...]. May the life of our Lord Jesus Christ be the perfect criterion, the science, and the prayer [...]. May the life of Christ be in me the ornament of the Church [...]. The life of our Lord Jesus Christ is my meditation [...].

⁴⁴ OCCC XIII, 697. See also Chapter I, n° 63 of this *ratio*.

⁴⁵ Cfr. Rom. 8, 29.

⁴⁶ OCCC X, 364-366.

The charity of Christ is my charity [...]. May the love of Christ for the Blessed Mother be my love”⁴⁷.

136. [Fire of love] Identifying with Christ, the divine model, means perfection in charity because Jesus, moved by love to become our Redeemer, did everything for love of the Father and his love for humankind. His aim was to enkindle the fire of the love of God in the hearts of persons: “The Redeemer of the human race has clearly stated that he has come to spread the divine fire of love in the whole world. He wants it to be kindled everywhere; it is for this that he worked and longed so much that all hearts be enkindled with the fire of love in response to the infinite love by which he came to redeem us at the cost of becoming obedient unto death on the cross”⁴⁸.

137. [The Human person as the image and likeness of charity] The human person becomes God’s image most authentically and fully when he reflects the most supreme divine perfection, namely love. Pallotti affirms the same: “God is Charity in Essence. Man is created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore man, according to the essence of his creation, is an image and likeness of Charity in Essence”⁴⁹. He adds: “You are Charity itself in Essence, and we are therefore by the very nature of our creation is obliged to perfect ourselves, as we are living images of You, Charity in Essence”⁵⁰.

138. [Caritas Christi urget nos] The whole life and works of Pallotti were impelled by the same love of Christ, from

⁴⁷ OCCC X, pp. 618-625.

⁴⁸ OCCC III, 175.

⁴⁹ Ivi, p. 151.

⁵⁰ Ivi, p. 218.

which originates his motto *Caritas Christi urget nos*⁵¹. He wanted his whole foundation and every member to be fundamentally motivated by the spirit of the most perfect charity. “As the Pious Society is founded and established in charity, in order to promote in all the faithful of all whatever state, quality, grade, sex, and condition, the most perfect, concrete exercise of the works of charity and mercy for the greater glory of God and of his holy, Immaculate Mother, and for the greater sanctification of peoples, all must therefore be always animated by the true spirit of the most perfect charity”⁵².

139. [Called to participate in the redemptive mission] In the Pallottine anthropological model, the human being is essentially someone who is “sent”, someone who has received a mission. Transformation into Jesus necessarily leads to participation in his redemptive mission. Pallotti writes: “To everyone God has given the commandment to procure the eternal salvation of his neighbour; and in fulfilling such a precept we must imitate Jesus Christ the Apostle of the Eternal Father. Therefore the life of Jesus, which has been his apostolate, must be the model of apostolate for everyone. As all are called, or rather obliged, to imitate Jesus Christ, all, in proportion to their condition and state, are called to the apostolate”⁵³.

140. [Self-emptying (*kenosis*) as the spiritual dynamics] We can summarize the core of the spiritual dynamics of Pallotti into a process of self-emptying (*kenosis*), as expressed in these words: “May all my life be destroyed and may the life of our Lord Jesus alone be my life”⁵⁴. The

⁵¹ Cfr. 2 Cor 5, 14. OCCC III, pp. 109-110.

⁵² OCCC I, pp. 105-106.

⁵³ OCCC III, p. 142.

⁵⁴ OCCC X, p. 618.

process of self-emptying originates in love, is motivated by love, and tends towards the acquisition of love, which is considered as perfection. No doubt, Pallotti practised all traditional spiritual exercises like prayer, meditation, spiritual reading, fasting, and engaged in the most severe ascetical practices according to the spirit of the times. But all of these practices made sense only in the context of his experience of the infinite love and mercy of God. It was the inner spiritual and psychological security from the un-failing trust in the infinite love and mercy of God that enabled him to destroy, spiritually and psychologically, his *old self* in a healthy way to be fully filled with Christ and thus be transformed into him. In fact, the entire process of spiritual growth is based and modelled on the paschal mystery, in which the *old man* is crucified with Christ and the *new man* comes to light with the resurrection. The result of these redeeming experiences is transformation into Christ. The essence of this process of death and resurrection (*kenosis*) is summarised in the new commandment of love: “Love one another as I have loved you”⁵⁵. The key to Pallottine and Christian perfection is the dynamic of the new commandment, expressed and lived profoundly in the paschal mystery.

CHRISTIAN VOCATION: A CALL AND A RESPONSE

141. [Call] The search to understand a human person without a proper reflection on his divine vocation can be limited insofar as at the very origin of the Christian vocation is a call from God. Vocation, in fact, is a gratuitous gift born out of love, and is connected with one’s very origin and destiny. The call is personal and unique: “Jesus, looking upon him, loved him”⁵⁶, and said to him, “If you wish to be per-

⁵⁵ Jn 15,12.

⁵⁶ Mk 10, 21.

fect, go sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me”⁵⁷. The Christian or religious vocation is thus an appeal calling the human person in his totality, laying claim to his total existence.

- 142. [Response]** The call of Christ, which is an expression of redemptive love, demands a personal “yes” from the one who is called. Divine grace builds on and perfects human nature, and hence requires an active participation of the person. Grace respects and acts through human freedom. Indeed, human freedom is the condition of the action of grace. Thus the role played by the human person in the vocational dialogue begins with the fundamental option made, expressed in the motivation of making a total commitment to God.
- 143. [Freedom to love]** The person who makes the fundamental option for God in his vocational dialogue is basically making a total gift of himself in joy and freedom. It is love that has called him and that impels him to respond, and it is also the fundamental objective of the call. Hence it is right to say that the Christian vocation is a call to freedom for theocentric love⁵⁸, which means to love as Jesus loved⁵⁹.
- 144. [Thrust towards self-transcendence]** Just as the vocation of the Christian is the call to freedom for theocentric love, the human being in his very ontological orientation is also characterized by an active thrust to self-transcendence. This is the existential experience rightly expressed by St. Augustine when he said: “You have made

⁵⁷ Mt 19,21.

⁵⁸ Cfr. Gal 5,13-14.

⁵⁹ Cfr. Jn 15,12.

us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you”⁶⁰.

- 145. [Theocentric self-transcendence: The ultimate goal]** The ultimate goal of human self-transcendence can be neither the perfection of one’s own self nor the perfection of the human community, but only God. In the Christian life, and in particular in consecrated life, the ultimate goal of this life requires that the human motivational process leads to the living of *union with God* and the *imitation of Christ* as ultimate values, and *chastity*, *poverty* and *obedience* as instrumental values. The quest for the perfection of one’s own self or the human community must be subordinated to the ultimate goal of theocentric self-transcendence, which responds to the ultimate questions of the human person.

PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE VOCATIONAL JOURNEY

- 146. [Limitations to freedom]** Freedom is the foundation of self-transcendence through love, and limitations to freedom can limit such a process. Theocentric self-transcendence is the fruit of the internalisation of the values of Christ. Lack of interior freedom affects one’s capacity to internalise, which in turn will negatively influence one’s vocational growth and apostolic effectiveness. Freedom can be limited by a great variety of factors. Particularly significant is the influence of psychosocial factors, both conscious and unconscious, on one’s motivational system.

⁶⁰ Cfr. St. Augustine, *Confessions*, IV ch., n° 4.

147. [Negative influence of the unconscious] The conscious and the subconscious are two indispensable parts of the human person⁶¹, and therefore one needs to examine both of these realities in order to understand the human person in his totality. The unconscious exists as a psychogenetic force that is strongly active in the life of normal persons, and of each and every person, and it permeates many of their actions. Further, its influence is persistent and shows a striking resistance to change. There exists also an affective unconscious, which is characterised by its inaccessibility: it cannot be summoned to consciousness voluntarily. In the affective unconscious the person is normally aware of the feelings, but not of the processes and the origin of the emotion in relation to their past and present experience. As a matter of fact, the more unconscious the emotions are, the greater their effect in making the memory and imagination selective; this selectivity limits or preconditions our knowing, deciding, and acting with respect to the information, the values, the persons, events, etc., considered. Moreover, the living out of values affects the Christian vocation and our relationship to God. Thus subconscious forces strongly influence conscious life and the living of vocational values.

148. [Discerning the signs of a true vocation] Every person always possesses the intrinsic power, with “the help of God”⁶² to change and grow but, in fact, this power is very

⁶¹ While the conscious level refers to the awareness of the person, which is immanent in the acts of seeing, hearing, imagining and having insights, etc., the subconscious is formed of the preconscious and the unconscious. The preconscious can be called to conscious awareness through reflection, meditation or examination of conscience; the unconscious psychic content can be brought to the conscious level only with professional help.

⁶² “There is nothing I cannot do in the One who strengthens me” (Phil 4,13). This phrase is often found in the *Lumi*, see, for example: *OOCC X*, p. 5, p. 115, p. 122, p. 423, p. 657.

often ineffective. Despite the proclamation of vocational values, what often guide us are our own needs and fears. Often the values are not loved for themselves, but for what can get us or what they can help us to hide. Here we speak of vocational consistency or inconsistency. Every vocational value can be lived as a pseudo-value: obedience for fear of personal responsibility, perseverance in consecrated life for fear of facing life in the world, celibacy for fear of depending on and adapting to others etc. The unconscious and the vocationally inconsistent needs have a direct influence on one’s capacity to internalise the values of Christ. However, psychological dispositions do not touch one’s life of holiness, but certainly do affect apostolic effectiveness.

149. [Unveiling the conscious and unconscious forces] The more the unconscious conflicts are out of harmony with the values of Christ, the greater will be the difficulty in living out the total gift of self to God and neighbour. The unconscious needs and conflicts not only hinder the person’s capacity to internalise the values of Christ, but also limit the vocational commitment and apostolic effectiveness. For example, in one’s apostolic activity, a person with a strong affective need may search unconsciously for more satisfying relationships rather than self-giving in the service of God and neighbour. Or one who lacked secure relationships will live in doubt and suspicion and as such will have difficulty entering into relationships with others. Since the conscious and unconscious components co-exist from childhood as normal elements of the human person, it is necessary to continuously uncover the conscious and unconscious forces. The greater the awareness of psychic forces, the greater will be the possibility of adapting to new and mature ways of living.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

150. [Tension between polarities] Human development involving the tension associated with certain polarities – for example, between *organism* and *environment*, between *past* and *future*, between *structure* and *process* - influences the psychological level, and constitutes one of the anthropological bases of the human person. The tension results from opposing realities such as transcendence and immanence, self-fulfilment and self-denial, movement of ascent and descent, perfection and weakness, etc. Development leads to the acquisition of new structures and to change from one structure to another. Such acquisition or change is activated in response to the tension flowing from transformations, which cause continuous differentiation and integration. Human development is characterised by stability as well as change⁶³.

151. [The mystery taking shape in relationships] Human development is a journey from infancy to maturity through encounter with others in the process of education and formation in various stages. Those who reach the stage of integration are very few, in that every stage has its weaknesses, problems and paradoxes, which provide both the potential for maladjustment as well as for growth. Growth means continuing to give up self-centredness in a realistic manner. Maladjustment results when a person is fixated at a lower stage⁶⁴.

152. [Goal of human development] The goal of human development, in short, is to give up the world of narcissism and grandiosity for a realistic understanding of self and the reality of things and persons. There is renunciation in

⁶³ See also n° 73 of this *ratio*.

⁶⁴ Cfr. Ivi, n° 59 of this *ratio*.

this process- a letting go of partial and wrong perceptions of self to gain a progressively mature self-identity. The movement is from self-centredness to self-transcendence.

153. [Developmental process] A child born into a specific family matrix, culture, economic status, with a defined sexuality, etc., is formed in relating with others. The family forms a reasonably uniform social system that shields and forms the person who is not yet mature. The largely constant reciprocal interactions in the family permit the child to develop expectancies and build up more or less consistent behavioural patterns. In the process of growth, the assimilated patterns of interpersonal relationships, accepted ways of fulfilling basic needs, cultural or social attitudes, religious values, etc., form the foundations of their perceptions of significant persons and their ways of relating to them. The layers of problems or conflicts in personal and interpersonal life have their roots in or are intertwined with the human developmental process. While in mature or optimal situations the child grows towards consistent behaviour, the conflicting, confusing and disturbed environment leaves individuals with many unresolved problems.

154. [Developmental Situations and Maturity] Early childhood experiences play a vital role in the formation of the psychodynamics of an individual. Though we cannot say with mathematical certainty, it is evident that an environment with conflicts and traumas, and without affection and security, can affect the formation of the child in different ways. As social beings we become who we are through our interaction with others. The child's first encounter with others is with its parents and other members of the family, and within this shelter the personality of the child gets organised. New and important later influences

will build upon the structures already organised within the family. Therefore the ability to function in new situations and the way in which they utilise what they encounter will depend upon the emotional security and intellectual equipment, which they have gained in relation to others.

155. [Progression/Regression] Early experiences of anxiety, fear, resentment or confidence, basic trust and affection, therefore influence the orientation of the person. The individual passing through the consecutive developmental stages builds internal structures based on those which have preceded. Optimal conditions offer opportunities for development, growth, and discovery, but when they are less so, lead to fixation and immaturity. While the imbalance leads to regression and decline, optimal harmony leads to progress and redemption. The development is never tranquil, but is characterised by imbalance, instability and insecurity⁶⁵. It is to be also noted that maturity does not necessarily correlate to age or experience. It is true that certain personal aspects could be determined by one's own history and life experiences, but at the same time the person has the capacity to decide what he wants to become and in what manner he wants to do it. Along with the psychological wounds, there also exists the God-given capacity to grow and to transform these very situations of pain into responsible choices, full of meaning for life, achieved with the help of divine grace and of others. It involves abandoning our egoistical focus on the sources of comfort which sustain us, and instead ourselves becoming that source of comfort in our self-giving to others. Adapting to mature attitudes, such as the *acceptance* of the *past*, *responsibility* for the *future* and living out the *call* in the *present* requires a thorough discovery and acceptance of

⁶⁵ See also n° 71 of this *ratio*.

the personal story of the individual. At the same time, one must remember that the economy of human development involves that of redemption, in which to find oneself means to lose oneself. Thus the process of human development cannot be limited to a simple psychological process. Love which transcends itself is the way that leads the human person to the fulfilment of his most profound aspirations, even as far as the infinite Other. The Christian mystery envisages the possibility of a transformation, if the invitation of the Apostle Paul is taken up: "Have in yourselves the mind of Christ Jesus"⁶⁶.

CULTURAL VISION OF THE HUMAN PERSON

156. [Human person and his relation to culture] The human person is deeply rooted in the culture in which he lives, and hence any attempt to understand him can be effective and meaningful only when he is understood in the context of the totality of his cultural background. It is difficult to speak about a universal cultural scenario because there are so many cultures and customs in the world. For the same reason, the *ratio institutionis*, prepared at the Generalate level, must be applied in the particular cultural situation of each Province/Region. However, certain growing, universal cultural tendencies can be outlined.

157. [Need for an inculturated formation] An integrated Pallottine formation must always be inculturated, which means that the formation must be made relevant and rooted in the local cultural, social, political and economic situations. Accordingly, the formation programme should be such that it helps the candidates to respond to the challenges posed by the complex socio, economic, political

⁶⁶ Phil 2, 5.

and cultural realities of the place and time. “Particular attention must be given to a cultural formation in keeping with the times and in dialogue with research into the meaning of human life today. This calls for a greater preparation in the philosophical, theological and psychological-pedagogical fields and a more profound orientation to the spiritual life, for models better adapted to the cultures in which new vocations are being born and well-planned programs for ongoing formation. Above all it is hoped that the best resources will be devoted to formation even when this calls for great sacrifices”⁶⁷.

158. [Joys and sufferings of the present cultural context]

In the contemporary world marked by the “joys and hopes, the sadness and the agonies of the human beings”⁶⁸, we can distinguish certain positive and negative phenomena. In the globalised culture of today, John Paul II says: “Not only are technology and economy globalised, but also insecurity and fear, criminality and violence, injustices and wars”⁶⁹.

159. [Positive signs] Among the positive signs we find the growing sensitivity of people to human dignity and human rights⁷⁰; the demand for a greater personal and human maturity; the conviction of the inter-dependence of peoples and the need for solidarity and communion, and the phenomenal developments in science and technology. In the religious sphere we see also the growing thirst for God, especially among the young.

⁶⁷ *RdC*, n° 18.

⁶⁸ Cfr. *GS*, n° 1.

⁶⁹ Cfr. *RdC*, n° 1.

⁷⁰ Cfr. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n° 26.

160. [Negative signs] Among the negative signs that will have a definitive influence in the imparting of a balanced formation, we find the various violations of the dignity, freedom and rights of the human person for political and economic purposes, indifference and moral relativism, the dehumanising effects of globalisation, growing materialistic and secular attitudes, individualism and subjectivism, the breakdown of social structures such as family; with marriage leading to an increasing number of divorces, separated or single-parent families; a culture of immediate gratification; the devaluation of sexuality and different sexual deviations, and erotic tendencies in relationships. Candidates who enter religious life today come from the present culture in which impersonal sexual activity, cohabitation and easy divorce appear to be the norm. The celibate lifestyle is almost becoming a counter-cultural stance in a society where celibacy is under scrutiny and is generally discredited by people in contemporary Western culture. Revelations of paedophilia among clergy and religious point to a certain dysfunction in church ministry. This public scandal, together with the disclosure by some clergy of their homosexuality, give rise to serious questions, even doubts about the effectiveness of training for celibate living among the priests and religious of our church. This situation has made bishops and superiors of religious congregations re-evaluate priestly and religious formation⁷¹. We live in an era in which personal fulfilment is stressed, release from contract or commitments is encouraged if these are perceived as preventing one from achieving fulfilment of the self. It can rightly be termed a

⁷¹ Cfr. for example: *Third Continental Congress on Vocations to Ordained Ministry and Consecrated Life in North America*, New Series, Year XLII N° 1, January-March 2002, specially the article of Germin Grisez, “The conditions for assuming rightly the celibate commitment”, pp. 269-308. See also: Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, “Considerations on the projects of legal recognition of unions between homosexual persons”, of 3 June 2003.

“Me-Generation”, a narcissistic culture in which the person is concerned only about his own body, needs, feelings, and thoughts, and is disinterested in everything else.

161. [Weakening of religious values] In the religious sphere we see a general weakening of faith, but at the same time, in some countries we also observe its re-awakening. The decreasing religiosity among people is, to a great extent, a consequence of atheistic, secularist and materialistic tendencies. This, in turn, reduces the ethical-moral sensibility of the human person leading to consumerism, hedonism and social and economic inequalities. As John Paul II affirms: “Social inequalities to the level of misery exist in rich nations, and in less-developed countries manifestation of egoism and display of wealth to a very puzzling and scandalous degree can often be seen”⁷².

162. [SAC formation in response to the needs of the times]

It is to the realities listed above that the Church must announce the mystery of salvation, and the Society of the Catholic Apostolate offers its service in the spirit of Vincent Pallotti. Therefore, the formation should be such as to make candidates sensitive to the existing realities and should enable them to discern the signs of the times, be they present or future⁷³, positive or negative, for the growth of God’s Kingdom. Among the youth of today, signs of fragility and a certain tendency to pessimism can sometimes be perceived. The Jubilee of Young People, as John Paul II declared, has signalled on the other hand “the message that young people, whatever their possible ambiguities, have a profound longing for those authentic values which find their fullness in Christ. Is it not Christ the secret of true freedom and profound joy of heart? Is

⁷² Cfr. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei ocialis*, n° 26.

⁷³ Cfr. n° 53 of this *ratio*.

not Christ the supreme friend and the teacher of all genuine friendship? If Christ is presented to young people as he really is, they experience him as an answer that is convincing and they can accept his message, even when it is demanding and bears the mark of the Cross”⁷⁴. They must be helped to make a radical choice of faith and life.

TOWARDS A FORMATIVE JOURNEY

163. [Human formation as the foundation] The entire Pallottine formation would be deprived of its fundamental basis if the human dimension were lacking. *The human and fraternal dimensions* of consecrated life call for self-knowledge and the awareness of personal limitations, so as to offer its members the inspiration and support needed on the path towards perfect freedom. In present day circumstances, special importance must be given to the interior freedom of consecrated persons, their affective maturity, their ability to communicate with others, especially in their own community, their serenity of spirit, their compassion for those who are suffering, their love for the truth, and a correspondence between their actions and their words⁷⁵. The Synod wished to emphasise that the model of human perfection is Jesus Christ, Incarnate Word become man but without sin. Further, Jesus is the model for our life and apostolate. Therefore, a Pallottine must say and do the same things that Jesus himself taught and carried out for the good of all human beings. Jesus, fully God and fully man, remains the most perfect model for human formation, also according to Pallottine anthropology, as Pallotti reminds us: “Look, therefore, in faith at your divine model, Jesus Christ. Profit by the treasures of the grace that he gained for you through his holy life. You

⁷⁴ *NMI*, n° 9.

⁷⁵ Cfr. *VC*, n° 71.

will then become as holy and perfect as your heavenly Father”⁷⁶. In fact, the journey that consecrated life is asked to undertake at the start of the new millennium is guided “by the contemplation of Christ”⁷⁷, with the gaze “more than ever firmly set on the face of the Lord”⁷⁸.

164. [Self-realisation through self-transcendence] Human formation is a dynamic process whereby a human person is initiated into discovering his positive human qualities and developing them in order to realise himself. Generally speaking, this dynamic process, which varies from one phase to another, is intended to help a candidate to progressively develop an integrated personality from the psychological, social, cultural and religious viewpoint. An important point to remember here is that self-realisation is not a fruit of self-seeking or self-indulgence, but of self-transcendence through self-giving, in order to arrive at the state of the “perfect Man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself”⁷⁹.

165. [Human maturity] The principal objective of human formation is nothing less than the achievement of human maturity, a complex process that requires the development, in a harmonious and balanced way, of all the human faculties to their fullness. For this reason it is never fully achieved once and for all⁸⁰. Human maturity is encouraged and fostered above all by a growth in freedom, a gift which human beings alone possess and which makes them unique in being able to choose their own destiny. By nature, human beings are conscious and free, called to grow

⁷⁶ OCCC XIII, 697.

⁷⁷ Cfr. *RdC*, n° 23.

⁷⁸ Cfr. *NMI*, n° 16.

⁷⁹ Eph 4, 13.

⁸⁰ Cfr. n° 71 of this *ratio*.

in that knowledge which leads to self-mastery and to living a responsible life. Any formative process is effective to the extent that it fosters one’s internal freedom.

166. [Effects of limitations to freedom] Though freedom is a natural right of the human person, limitations to freedom can happen in so many ways. Unfavourable environments such as a maladjusted family background can hinder the growth of internal freedom to significant levels. Unconscious emotional conflicts, as seen already, can lead to the disorganisation of personality structures. Lack of freedom often leads to egoistical and narcissistic tendencies, which restrict the possibility of a person being able to engage himself with generosity in the fulfilment of his vocational responsibilities. The egoist seeks affection, security, serenity, and imaginary freedom, personal and social satisfaction, and is anxiously preoccupied in trying to dominate others. Growth occurs when a person begins to give up self-centredness in a realistic manner. Education to freedom enables a person to make a gift of self for the service of the Church⁸¹.

167. [Formation of conscience] Formation to responsible freedom necessarily involves the formation of conscience. The Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* insists that the human maturity of the priest “should include especially the formation of the conscience”⁸². This means helping a candidate to build a constant inclination towards what is true and good, because conscience is the law which has been written by God in the heart of man, who invites him to always do what is good⁸³. The training of the conscience of a priest is in accordance with his apos-

⁸¹ Cfr. *LG*, n° 24.

⁸² Cfr. *PDV*, n° 44.

⁸³ Cfr. *GS*, n° 16.

tolate. The Fathers of the Synod point out: “[...] so that he may meet his obligations with regard to God and the Church and wisely guide the consciences of the faithful, he should become accustomed to listening to the voice of God who speaks to him in his heart, and to adhering with love and constancy to his will”⁸⁴. Formation of moral conscience implies acquiring a life style of constancy, self-discipline, mortification and renunciation of the non-essentials⁸⁵, and also cultivating good thoughts, valuing study, developing the habit of reflection, contemplation and silence in presence of God. Formation is essentially a process of internalising the values of the gospel.

168. [Affective maturity] A decisive and significant factor in the formation of candidates is commitment towards affective maturity, which is a result of an education in true and responsible love⁸⁶. Talking about affective maturity implies clarifying our understanding of the concept of love. The fathers of the Synod, being aware of the problem, stated: “We are speaking of a love that involves the entire person, in all his being: physical, psychic and spiritual, in the ‘nuptial meaning’ of the human body, thanks to which a person gives oneself to another and takes the other to oneself”⁸⁷. Such a love necessarily involves self-giving, and thus also self-transcendence. Only mature and well-integrated people can achieve true self-giving.

169. [Formation for celibacy] Affective maturity is achieved through an effective formation for celibacy, it being a “virtue that develops a person’s authentic maturity”⁸⁸. The

⁸⁴ *PDV*, n° 44.

⁸⁵ Cfr. n° 40 of this *ratio*.

⁸⁶ Cfr. *PDV*, n° 43.

⁸⁷ *Ivi*, n 44.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*.

integration of sex and existence presupposes a wholesome project of life, a sound appreciation of sexuality, and a readiness to discipline sexuality in the light of the project to which one is committed. The integration of sexuality into a contented living of celibacy is one of the challenges, which faces us. It is a challenge not made any easier by some of the characteristics of our present time. The questioning of recent years has left values less clear for many, so that they are more vulnerable when dealing with their own desires. This can at times be further complicated by formation systems, which have moved from favouring repression of emotion to encouraging acceptance and expression of emotion without, always recognising the need for discernment. Not every expression of emotion is appropriate, and the failure to discern this adequately can cause obvious problems in relation to celibacy. Cultures that promote repression - *don't ask, don't tell*- or see no further than the reproductive or hedonistic goals of human sexuality, breed more immature persons and fail to promote personal growth. Some difficulties of formation consist in having to face persons entering religious communities or seminaries in their younger years before having acquired a stabilized sexual identity. Other difficulties come from a series of personal and familial dysfunctions, including confusion or pathology regarding sexual identity or behaviours, and internal conflicts leading to guilt, shame, anxieties or fixations. Sexual integration and fruitful living of consecrated celibacy, on the other hand, is a life-long process, leading to a joyful living of consecrated life through a total gift of self in love with an undivided heart⁸⁹. It is generally admitted that the psycho-sexual-affective aspect of celibacy needs more treatment than is given in most religious formation programmes. In the past

⁸⁹ Cfr. *VC*, n° 88.

and still today, the candidate's intellectual formation is well cared for, and his readiness for religious life or priesthood is ascertained, by and large, from his overall academic record and performance. However, a critical dimension in celibate formation today, in view of family breakdown and unresolved personal issues, is the affective dimension, which enables a person to gain a developing sense of his bodily sexual self in the growth toward proper self-love and the love of God and others, all essential for an authentic celibate life. Affective maturity belongs to the very core of religious formation and consecrated life because it is related to the living of the supreme commandment of love with one's full freedom: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind [...]. You must love your neighbour as yourself"⁹⁰. In fact, the new commandment of love is the fundamental law of perfection⁹¹.

170. [The completeness of the Pallottine anthropological model] Pallottine anthropology provides the essential elements for a complete and adequate vision of the human self. Every human being needs to have a positive, realistic and stable sense of self-identity. Self-knowledge, self-acceptance and self-love are important steps for arriving at such a self-identity. Self-knowledge illumined by faith leads to the acceptance of one's self as precious but limited. The Pallottine anthropology reminds us that one's self-esteem should be based ultimately on the most fundamental, ontological and theological reality, namely, that one is created in the image and likeness of God and hence is honourable, precious and lovable⁹². At the same time, this "self" is limited and finite. Such a vision is never in-

⁹⁰ Mt 22, 37-39.

⁹¹ Cfr. GS, n° 38.

⁹² Cfr. Is 43, 4. See also n° 63 of this *ratio*.

tended to create an all-positive and unrealistic sense of self or a totally negative image of self. Both of these approaches are equally partial and unhealthy. It is in Christ, fully God and fully Human, that these two anthropological opposites are reconciled and integrated. Only such a "mature self" will allow one to die to self because one can lose oneself only when one has found one's self, as the Lord Jesus says: "Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me. Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it"⁹³. And to find one's self, which is created in God's image and likeness, requires the closest collaboration between grace and nature. Discovering as well as helping to live as the image and likeness of God is an important goal of Pallottine formation.

171. [Internal transformation as the core of the formative dynamic] In Pallottine pedagogy, therefore, the emphasis is on *internal transformation* of the person into God's image and likeness, as someone free to love God, others and self. The Holy Spirit is the force behind such a transformation and the Cenacle provides the right atmosphere for transformation through unceasing prayer: "In the Cenacle the Apostles and I were filled with the Holy Spirit, but we prepared ourselves with unceasing prayer: [...] I want to see you, O son, rich, rich in the treasures of grace; I would like to see you wholly transformed into God, to make you a minister of the Gospel ever more helpful to souls and to give glory to the heavenly Father. Therefore love prayer. May it be your food, your drink, your rest"⁹⁴?

172. [Love: the measure of growth] The ultimate measure of growth in candidates in formation is the life of charity. A

⁹³ Mt 10, 38-39.

⁹⁴ OCCC XIII, pp. 40-441. See also n° 91 of this *ratio*.

true Pallottine must try to transform egocentric tendencies into the capacity to love and to give. He is to be impelled from within by love to do everything for the infinite glory of God, and for the greater sanctification of his neighbour and of himself. “Whoever comes into the Society must be moved firstly by the principle of love of God, who loves us so much that he has given us his only Son. But he must be also moved by real love of his neighbour whom he must love as much as Jesus loved us”⁹⁵.

173. [Love as the foundation of every dimension of formation] When Vincent Pallotti says that love is the “*constitutive essence* of the pious Union”⁹⁶, he announces and wishes to promote that love which is lived in divine communion, in solidarity with people and with the entire human race. The call of all Christians to the apostolate derives from such a precept of love, for love is the principle motive and aim of every apostolic activity. This love is also the essential element of ecclesial communion, “and if this is ever missing the Catholic Apostolate would no longer exist in it”⁹⁷. Therefore, love will always be the foundation of the body called the *Catholic Apostolate*. “Since the Pious Society is founded and instituted in Charity, and is to promote in all the faithful in every state, quality, rank, sex and condition the most perfect and actual exercise of the works of charity and mercy for the greater glory of God, [...], all must be always animated by the true spirit of the most perfect charity”⁹⁸. Hence the ultimate goal of Pallottine formation is to help the candidate grow in the love of Christ, which lies at the root of every dimension of formation.

⁹⁵ OOCC II, pp. 5-6.

⁹⁶ OOCC III, pp. 137-138.

⁹⁷ Ivi, p. 138.

⁹⁸ OOCC I, pp. 105-106. Cfr. *VC*, n° 75.

174. [Integrative model of formation] All these things are made possible through an integrated formation by which our members are helped to live their spiritual and human identities. The primary objective of such a formation is to prepare people for the total gift of self “by taking personal responsibility for maturing in one’s vocation”⁹⁹. Formation, therefore, has to influence the whole person not only by means of academic and doctrinal information but also through in-depth help that leads to the integration of the values of Christ with human identity. The integrative model of formation considers the action of grace in initiating and maintaining the vocation to be irreplaceable, and offers personal in-depth help in self-knowledge to the individuals in formation in such a way as to lead to structural change in the dynamics of the person. It has a complete and adequate Christian anthropology as a theoretical basis, and aims at helping the person to assimilate, internalise and integrate the values of Christ in his personality through in-depth help.

175. [Well prepared Formators] This kind of formation requires new educators who are themselves integrated and able to walk compassionately with those in formation, able to orient them towards self-discovery and move them towards the values of Christ¹⁰⁰. The formators themselves must be able to offer in-depth help to increase self-knowledge and personal integration in such a way that it brings about a genuine structural change in the interior dynamics of the persons entrusted to them. In the choice of formators we need to take into account three important elements: **a.** They are to be persons who have recognised and been helped to integrate the psychological with the spiritual and supernatural dimensions of their personali-

⁹⁹ *VC*, n° 65.

¹⁰⁰ See also n° 54 of this *ratio*.

ties, in order to avoid the transfer of their own problems to others, thereby leading to the communication of the Christian message in a partial and subjective way; **b.** They are to be persons who have extensive professional skills to identify and help the individuals in their difficulties and offer effective help in the various areas of life, or at least be able to direct them to avail of professional help in case of necessity; **c.** They must be persons who have good pastoral experience. The effective help mentioned here consists of a process of “discernment of spirits”, which involves reflection on the word of God¹⁰¹, prayer and frequent meeting with the formators. The devout and silent reflection on the word of God and the complete sharing of experiences of life with the formators can lead to the emergence of unconscious elements which are useful for psycho-spiritual integration. Such an intense interior journey can effect a lasting structural change in the person, leading to greater human and vocational maturity.

CONCLUSION

176. [Integral growth of the human person] The human person in the totality of his being is called to respond to the Christian vocation. He is a being with physical, social, psychological and spiritual components; he is simultaneously conscious and rational, having emotions and affections, and subject to unconscious influences, and each person is irreducibly unique and unrepeatable in his response to his call. As grace builds on and perfects nature, God works respecting the human nature. Consequently, the gratuitous gift of vocation is exposed to the disposition of the receiver’s will to keep it: this permanent condi-

¹⁰¹ “The word of God is alive and active: it cuts more incisively than any two-edged sword: it [...] can pass judgement on secret emotions and thoughts” (Heb 4,12).

tion of grace is always exposed to the freedom of man. Hence the integral growth of the human person is a precondition for growth in vocational life and effectiveness in apostolic life¹⁰². The examination of the developmental process of the individual and correcting the faulty mechanisms and fostering the inner energies for growth would be an important part of any formation programme. “If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow completely into Christ”¹⁰³. Pallottine formation must be a journey in pursuit of the truth about God, others and oneself, but a journey always animated by love. For such a model of formation, the Pallottine anthropology provides a suitable and complete foundation.

¹⁰² See also n° 17 of this *ratio*.

¹⁰³ Eph. 4:15.

CHAPTER 4

PALLOTTINE CONSECRATION

THE THEOLOGICAL AND JURIDICAL CONTENT OF CONSECRATION

177. [Consecrated Life: a gift of God] “The Consecrated Life, deeply rooted in the example and teaching of Christ the Lord, is a gift of God the Father to His Church through the Holy Spirit”¹. In fact, “The profession of the evangelical counsels makes the characteristic features of Jesus - chaste, poor and obedient - visible in the midst of the world. It gives them a typical and permanent stability and continually calls believers to the Kingdom of God, already present and active, but still awaiting its fullness and completion”².

178. [The call to consecrated life] Jesus invited everyone to welcome the Kingdom of God and called some “to place their lives at its service, leaving everything behind and closely imitating his own way of life”³. To the rich young man he said: “You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me”⁴. But the young man’s “face fell at these words, and he went away sorrowful”⁵. In contrast however, throughout the history of the Church, men and women, leaving everything like the Apostles for the service of God and of their brethren, have chosen this fol-

¹ VC, n° 1.

² “SAC Renewal 2000” (2), Pallottine Consecrated life, n°1; cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum*, 1984, n° 1.

³ VC, n° 14. See also: OOCCH, pp. 34-39.

⁴ Mk 10:21.

⁵ Mk 10:22.

lowing of Christ as one of the ways of living out their baptismal consecration⁶.

179. [The theological meaning of consecration] “Theologically, consecration is an act which places a person or a thing in special relationship with God. Regarding the consecration of persons, the following distinctions are usually made: *consecration of Christian initiation*, brought about by Baptism and Confirmation; *devotional consecration*, whereby a Christian privately ratifies and develops his vocation; *consecration for incorporation*, through which a Christian is raised to the membership of a private or public association of evangelical counsels; *canonical consecration*, resulting from public profession of the evangelical counsels; *consecration for an office*, such as the sacramental conferred on abbots and abbesses on the day of their installation; *sacramental consecration of ordination*, whereby some of the faithful are empowered, in the person of Christ the head, to fulfil the teaching, sanctifying and governing functions and in this way unite the people of God”⁷.

A GLANCE AT PALLOTTINE CONSECRATION

180. [The importance of consecration] Although the Society of the Catholic Apostolate does not belong to the Institutes of Consecrated Life, nevertheless, as a fundamental interior attitude of dedication to God and as a public profession, consecration occupied a central place in Pallottine spirituality right from the summer of 1839, that is, from the time of the apostolic prayer in which the Founder ex-

⁶ Cf. *Pallottine Consecrated life*, n° 2; cf. RD, nn. 3-5.

⁷ CG, n° 229. See also Hubert Socha SAC, “La natura fondamentale e le caratteristiche di una Società di Vita Apostolica con particolare riferimento ai suoi tipi,” *ASAC*, VIII, pp. 543-600

pressed the importance of the dedication of one's life to God by means of the consecration⁸.

181. [Total gift to God] “By our consecration we give ourselves entirely to God, and we resolve to follow Jesus by living in our Society according to the norms of its Legislation. So we promise to the Society: consecrated celibacy, poverty, obedience, perseverance, the sharing of resources, and the spirit of service. This is our response to God's invitation to live for him and to serve mankind and the world by living in a brotherly community”⁹.

182. [Being in the hands of God] In consecration, we recognise that we are totally in the hands of God and depend on him. This authentic self-gift to God must spring from free decision, living faith and generous love; it must be without holding anything back for the present or future, it must involve all the aspects of the person but at the same time it marks only a beginning to be deepened, ratified, and made one's own everyday¹⁰.

183. [Following of Christ] “In consecration we also decide to follow Christ. The self-gift to God and the decision to follow Christ do not form two acts which are separate or only linked externally; on the contrary, they are one unique act; the gift to God translates itself in the decision to follow Christ, the Apostle of the Eternal Father, and such a decision is inspired and interiorly full of the relationship with God, because God in Christ has come close to us once and for all in an unsurpassable manner”¹¹.

⁸ H. Socha SAC, Commentario, op. cit., nn. 224 and 225; OCCC II, pp. 303-304.

⁹ LSAC, n° 18; OCCC II, p. 290.

¹⁰ Cf. CG, no° 231; OCCC II, p. 55; pp. 290-291; pp. 303-305; OCCC VII, p. 6.

¹¹ CG, n° 232.

184. [Union with the Church] “Our consecration flows from our basic Christian vocation and has its roots in the ontological relationship established between the Trinitarian God and his people by the sacraments of Christian initiation”¹². In a new and special way, it associates us with the mission of the Church¹³. “Consecration in the Society adds nothing ontologically. Its *more perfect force of expression*, its *new and special way* refer to the vital realization of the ways and means and to the specific mode of obligation”¹⁴.

185. [The Consecration in the SAC] The consecration in the Society of the Catholic Apostolate falls into the category of consecration *for incorporation*¹⁵. According to the descriptive definition, the consecration includes: an act of self-giving to God, a decision to follow Christ in the Society; the making of the promises and the response to the apostolic vocation. In consecration, we surrender, give and offer ourselves to God the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit. We perform an act of worship of God (*religio*), for which we were empowered in baptism, and we profess the obligation arising from our condition of being creatures and from our incorporation into the Church, to “live always in God, to work always for God, to think, to speak and to use all the senses of the body and powers of the soul, and all created things for the greater glory of God, and for our greater sanctification and that of our neighbour”¹⁶.

186. [The Promises] Just as the surrender of one's own self to God is manifest in the decision to follow, so also the act of

¹² Ivi, no° 259; VC, n° 30.

¹³ Cf. LSAC, n° 19; RD, n° 14.

¹⁴ CG, n° 260.

¹⁵ Cf. Ivi, n° 229.

¹⁶ OCCC VII, pp. 283-284; cf. OCCC II, p. 290; OCCC III, pp. 217-219.

incorporation into the Society is realized by means of the promises. According to the norms of our Law, by our promises we bind ourselves, through a contract, to the community of brothers who follow Jesus, the Apostle of the Father, and assume a moral and legal responsibility in the Society, an integrating part of the Union of the Catholic Apostolate¹⁷. “The profession of the promises is motivated by the love of God and of his creatures, and is an expression of our decision to stay with Christ and to live as he did for the sake of others. The immediate recipient of the promises, however, is the Society. Therefore, vows which oblige by virtue of religion are not involved here. On the other hand, the promises do not stand outside our decision to give ourselves to God and to follow Jesus, but constitute an integral and essential part of our consecration”¹⁸.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THOUGHT OF ST. VINCENT PALLOTTI REGARDING THE CONSECRATION

187. [The apostolic prayer] “At first the formula of consecration of our Society was in the form of an apostolic prayer which Pallotti composed in the autumn of 1839 for the members of the most holy houses of the Pious Society and which, with small modifications, remained in vogue for the Congregation of Priests and Brothers until the year 1846”¹⁹. The following is the original text: “My God, Almighty, Father of Mercies, and God of all consolations, I thank you for having deigned to create us in your image and likeness, You have formed us essentially as living images of Charity and granted us the gift of free will; the very nature of creation obliges us to employ it for our perfection as we are images of You Who are essentially Love,

¹⁷ Cf. CG, n° 235.

¹⁸ Ivi, n° 236; cf. OCCC VI, p. 461.

¹⁹ Cf. CG, n° 238.

and just as You have given Yourself totally to us, so also we are obliged to give You all that we are and all that we have for Your greater glory, and for the greater sanctification of our souls and of our neighbours, since in having given all of Yourself to us You have obliged us to imitate you also in this, in order to profit from all your gifts of nature and of grace for a purpose worthy of You; but to make us more clearly aware of our obligations You have loved us and loved us to the point of dying for us on the Cross, and therefore, I NN., assisted by Your all powerful grace, which I hope to obtain by Your infinite mercy, and by Your infinite merits, and through the merits and intercession of the Immaculate Queen of Apostles, Mary Most Holy, and of all the angels and Saints, consecrate all of myself to You, and I resolve to will always to imitate Your most holy life as depicted in the holy Gospels according to the rules of the holy Institute of the most sacred Houses of the Pious Society of the Catholic Apostolate, and for this end I resolve to will every day of my life to profit from all your gifts of nature and of grace for Your greater glory and for the greater sanctification of my soul, and of my neighbour, and I am resolved to do this even if for this end I must die as You, O My Jesus, died for us on the altar of the Cross”²⁰.

188. [The dilemma of vows] In October/November 1846, when the Priests and Brothers of the Union of Catholic Apostolate became a Society of common life, Pallotti was faced with the problem of vows. Just as the Union was born under exemption from any vow or oath, so also in order to belong to the Society, Pallotti required only a contract, which regulates members’ belonging to the Soci-

²⁰ OCCC II, pp. 303-304; cf. OCCC III, pp. 217-219. It is interesting to note that the first to make the promises on October 4, 1846, were Vincent Pallotti and Francesco Vaccari.

ety, “[...] after their Novitiate, writes Fr. Vincent, the Priests, Clerics, and Coadjutor Brothers make the formal act of Solemn Consecration of themselves to God not through the bond of a vow, but by means of a solemn Contract they commit themselves to living in the Congregation until death according to the norms of its most holy rules and Constitutions”²¹. God made him understand this in the Convent of St. Francesco ai Monti in October of 1946 and he sang the *Te Deum*²². Thus, at first, Pallotti used the apostolic prayer of 1839 for the act of consecration, substituting only the expression holy *Institute of the most holy Houses*: “[...] I consecrate all of myself to You, and I resolve to will always to imitate Your most holy life as depicted in the holy Gospels according to the rules of the Congregation of Priests and Coadjutor Brothers of the pious Society of the Catholic Apostolate”²³.

189. [Evangelical Counsels] At the beginning of the year 1847 the prayer of consecration was broadened by the promise of the evangelical counsels: “[...] I consecrate all of myself to You and resolve to will always to imitate Your most holy life as depicted in the holy Gospels according to the rules of the Congregation of Priests which fosters the Institute of the Pious Society of the Catholic Apostolate, and for this end I promise to the same Congregation and its present and future superiors to persevere in the same Congregation until death living in Obedience, Poverty and Chastity”²⁴.

²¹ OOCX IX, pp. 25-26.

²² Cf. *Pallottine Consecrated Life*, n° 7.

²³ OOCX II, p. 304

²⁴ OOCX IX, pp. 21-22. Cf. CG, n° 240. A little later, in January/February 1847, the prayer form was replaced by the following declaration: “For the greater glory of God, [...] I consecrate myself wholly to God, and resolve to will always to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ according to the rules of the congregation of Priests of the Catholic Apostolate who foster the Pious society instituted for the increase, de-

190. [Perseverance] The Founder, while not wanting to impose the bond of vows, yet at the same time felt the need to add to the solemn consecration to God a specific *duty of perseverance*²⁵, so that the Society would have a suitable basis for inner cohesion and stability in its works²⁶. “From the moment [...] the Priests, Clerics and Coadjutor Brothers make the formal act of solemn Consecration of themselves to God, they bind themselves, not by virtue of any vow but by the bond of a solemn Contract, to living in the Congregation until death”²⁷. We also note that Pallotti warmly recommended constant prayer to obtain the grace of fidelity to God and to the Society²⁸.

191. [Two other promises] “And at the same time, in 1847, for greater solidarity among the members themselves and in order that they be better disposed towards the souls to be led to Christ, he asked for two more promises or commitments: perfect common life and the non-acceptance of any ecclesiastical dignity without the authorization of one’s superior; later they came to be called *life in the sharing of resources* and *in a spirit of service*. Both of these promises have a particular relevance and influence on the activity and apostolic effectiveness of the Society; they are there to guarantee that the Catholic Apostolate be truly the apostolate of Jesus Christ and that it be truly universal”²⁹.

fence and propagation of piety and of the Catholic faith, and for such an end I promise to the same Congregation, and its present and future superiors to persevere in the same until death, living in obedience, poverty and chastity; and in the observance of the most holy rules” (OOCC IX, p. 15, note 1).

²⁵ Cf. Renewal SAC 2000 [6]. *The Promise of Perseverance*, Rome 2004.

²⁶ Cf. *Pallottine Consecrated Life*, n° 9.

²⁷ OOCX IX, pp. 25-26. See also: OOCX III, pp. 41-42; OOCX VIII, pp. 24-28.

²⁸ Cf. OOCX VIII, pp. 27-28; OOCX X, p. 97; pp. 734-737.

²⁹ *Pallottine consecrated life*, n° 9.

192. [The perfect common life] The promise of *perfect common life* has the aim of binding the members of the Society into one single organism, sound, robust, compact, harmonious, devoid of any isolation or inequality, without personal privileges to be defended, but with the singular common purpose of promoting the greater glory of God and the greater sanctification of neighbour, and “of corresponding to the most sublime end of their vocation, [that is] following more closely the example of our Lord Jesus Christ”³⁰. Sharing of our resources is principally meant for the apostolate of the Society, because it is in service of our mission³¹. In fact, “*perfect common life* has immense apostolic impact, since every member of the Society speaks and acts with the authority and strength of all the confreres, who share its life and holiness; and it is obvious that the more closely knit a community, the more certain and lasting its apostolic results will be”³².

193. [The spirit of service] “From the beginning it was clear to Pallotti that all the members of his entire foundation must have the attitude of total availability for disinterested service”³³. However, the original formula limited itself only to asking the cleric “not to accept any dignity, unless obligated by legitimate authority”³⁴. The actual designation *spirit of service* has already the advantage of also including also the Brothers and requires all to nip in the bud any trace of pride or desire for pre-eminence. “The *spirit of service* is the spirit of the true apostle and should be the banner of the Catholic Apostolate. In order to become the Saviour of the world the Son of God stripped himself of

³⁰ Cf. *ibidem*; OCCC VIII, p. 284.

³¹ Cf. CG, n° 512; OCCC VIII, p. 75; pp. 85-88; Ludwig Münz, *Our Poverty*, Rome 1981, pp. 15-20.

³² *Pallottine consecrated life*, n° 9; OCCC VIII, p. 284.

³³ CG, n° 543.

³⁴ OCCC VIII, p. 254 and OCCC IX, pp. 97-98. Cf. CG, n° 543-546.

his divinity, *taking the form of a servant*³⁵. And the apostle Paul said of himself: *I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more*³⁶ and still further *We are your servants for the love of Jesus*³⁷. Moreover, the Founder expressly recalled that Jesus Christ became the model for a humble, poor, hard working and despised life and declared that he had not come to be served, but to serve³⁸.

194. [The goal of consecration] “The goal assigned to every candidate for his whole life is the greater glory of God and the greater sanctification of his soul and that of his neighbour³⁹. The *object* of Consecration is the whole person with all that he has. The *action* of the three verbs, *surrender*, *give* and *offer* indicates the value of the gift made to God, and that of the fourth verb, *I resolve to follow our Lord Jesus Christ forever*, qualifies the Society as being solemnly bound to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, freely, consciously and without exception⁴⁰. This first part of the consecration links together two desires, which are at the same time two commitments: to offer oneself totally to God and to make Jesus Christ live again in one’s own person⁴¹.

195. [A “Therefore”] The second part of the formula of Consecration, composed by the founder in 1846 for the members of his congregation⁴², “describes the concrete juridical obligations, but there is a *therefore* woven into the first part as fruit of the self-surrender to God and the imitation of Jesus Christ. This means that the juridical obligations are

³⁵ Phil 2:7.

³⁶ 1Cor 9:19.

³⁷ 2Cor 4:5.

³⁸ *Pallottine consecrated life*, n° 9. See also: OCCC VII, p. 289.

³⁹ Cf. OCCC IX, p. 14.

⁴⁰ Cf. *ivi*, p. 15.

⁴¹ *Pallottine consecrated life*, n° 10.

⁴² Cf. OCCC IX, p. 14.

rooted and grow in proportion to the depth of love and spiritual progress. The promises are, therefore, the faithful reflection of that love and closeness to Jesus Christ, while fidelity to the rule is a measure of the depth, seriousness and intensity of our self-surrender to Him. The more the fidelity of members deepens, the more the apostolic dimension of the promises grows in them. As long as the promises illumine and support that love, that self-surrender and that closeness, one remains in the Society with joy. Here lies the genuineness and originality of the great Pallottine asceticism”⁴³.

TOWARDS A FORMATIVE JOURNEY

196. [The specificity of the three promises] The three promises specify the style of our apostolic endeavour, our fidelity to God and that to one another⁴⁴. In fact, what is involved here is a strong fraternal bond to which perseverance obliges us⁴⁵. A spirit of disinterested service after the example of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve⁴⁶, and a profound oneness in the community realized through the sharing with other members of all one has received from God or acquired with His help⁴⁷, leads to more effective apostolic action. However, these promises, although “typically constitutive of the SAC community, are not free from crises. *Perseverance* is at times considered a commitment that is redundant [...]; *the sharing of resources* [...] is considered either an obstacle to the apostolate or a mere functional tool [...]; against *the spirit of service*, the secularised society sees work or the holding of an of-

⁴³ *Pallottine consecrated life*, n° 9.

⁴⁴ Cf. n° 72 of this *ratio*.

⁴⁵ Cf. *LSAC*, n° 35.

⁴⁶ Cf. *ivi*, n° 40.

⁴⁷ Cf. *ivi*, n° 37, See also: Society of the Catholic Apostolate, *Directive for priestly formation*, Rome 1989, pp. 28-29.

fice as the mere practice of a trade or a profession, to be carried out with the exclusive goals of career, power, comforts or honours and not with those of an evangelical mission”⁴⁸.

197. [Setting forth from Christ] The Society of the Catholic Apostolate, like the entire Church, must *start from Christ* with eyes fixed on Him and, being immersed in his mystery, strive to be for all “a home and a school of communion”⁴⁹ and of active charity. Pallotti saw in the life of Jesus, and above all in his work of love and mercy, the fundamental rule of his foundation⁵⁰. In fact, “the greater the love is, the more profound are the union of the Society and the efficacy of its apostolic endeavour”⁵¹. This fact, when seen in the light of the Pallottine charism, binds us to direct our formation to the apostolic end. As the apostolate, so the formation.

⁴⁸ *Pallottine consecrated life*, n° 16.

⁴⁹ *NMI*, n° 43.

⁵⁰ Cf. Memory and Prophecy of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, n° 14.

⁵¹ *CG*, n° 513.

PART TWO

**THE STAGES
OF PALLOTTINE FORMATION**

CHAPTER V

VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

198. [The Christian vocation: a call and a response] Because the Christian vocation is a call and a response, it is necessary that there be a period of discernment in the life of the one who is seeking his own vocation as a person and as a Christian. First of all there is a vocation common to every baptized person, the vocation to holiness, as expressed by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council in the Pastoral Constitution “*Gaudium et Spes*”. In paragraph 11 of the document we read, “The people of God believes that it is led by the Spirit of the Lord who fills the whole world. Moved by that faith it tries to discern in the events, the needs, and the longings which it shares with other men of our time, what may be genuine signs of the presence or of the purpose of God.” In fact, “the verb *dokimazein*, used in the New Testament, expresses the fundamental meaning of discernment, that is, the activity of putting to the test, sifting and examining”¹.

199. [“Come, follow me”] The Christian understands the meaning of the human person in the context of his vocation. Its origins lie in a call from God, a free gift born of love and closely linked to his origin and his destiny. The call is personal and unique: “Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him, and he said, “There is one thing you lack.

¹ “The discernment of *spirits* or of *inspirations* is found throughout the entire NT, especially in St. Paul. As well as the explicit mention of the *diakrisis pneumaton*, of the “discernment of spirits” (1Cor, 12,10), the verb *dokimazein* and related terms, *krino/krisis* are also used – cfr. *Nuovo Dizionario di Spiritualità*, Stefano De Fiore e Tullio Goffi, Edizione Paoline, Roma, 1982. p. 421. In order to indicate the action of “discernment” the biblical texts also have recourse to the verbs *diakriein* and *dokimazein*. The first means: to separate, to sift, to evaluate, to select; the second: to investigate, to examine, to approve–. cfr. *Dizionario di Pastorale Vocazionale*, Centro Internazionale Vocazionale Rogate, Roma, 2002, p. 420.

Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” (Mk 10,21). Therefore the Christian vocation or the religious vocation is an appeal that calls the whole human person, it is something that lays claim to his whole existence, it is the discovery of the unique God-given meaning of life which, if it is accepted, becomes the principle of unity and integration at the heart of the life of the child of God².

200. [A call to freedom] The call is an expression of the redemptive love of God and requires a personal *yes*. Divine grace builds on human nature and perfects it; therefore it needs the active participation of the person. Grace both respects and operates through human freedom. This in fact is a condition for the activity of grace and for the growth of the person in freedom. Therefore the role exercised by the person in the vocational dialogue begins with the fundamental option that he makes. This is his response to the intimations of grace that are working in his nature, and this response is an expression of his motivation to give himself totally to God. The person who makes a fundamental option for God in his vocational dialogue sets out on a road towards the total giving of himself in freedom and joy. It is love that has called him and urges him to respond, and love is the ultimate end of this call. Therefore it is true to say that the Christian vocation is a call to freedom through theocentric love, as St. Paul the apostle writes: “My brothers, you were called, as you know, to liberty; but be careful, or this liberty will provide an opening for self-indulgence. Serve one another, rather, in works of love.” (Gal 5, 13-14). This me-

² Cfr. Pontificia Opera per le Vocazioni Ecclesiastiche, *Nuove vocazioni per una nuova Europa*, Roma, 1997, no 13a.

ans to love as Jesus has loved. “This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you.” (Jn 15, 12).

201. [Who is the one calling?] Because there are many voices competing to capture the attention of the person in today’s world, it is necessary to develop sensitivity to the voice of God in order to enable oneself to discover one’s true vocation. Discernment is a very important means to achieve this: “The quest for spiritual discernment is born of the experience that the Christian has of his faith in Christ both in the Church and in the world. The complexity of the situations in which he is called to live and to act in accordance with the plan of God for him and for others obliges him to engage in a careful and attentive reflection on the impulses and motivations that lead him to make particular choices. God calls every individual and every group of people who are united in his name, to a particular vocation which forms part of the mission that he entrusts to the people whom he has chosen”³.

202. [The origin of the practice of discernment] The practice of discernment was begun in the Old Testament and is recommended in the New Testament especially by St. Paul and St. John. The Apostle John in his first letter warns the Christians to acquire a critical attitude with regard to inspirations: “It is not every spirit, my dear people, that you can trust; test them, to see if they come from God;” (1 Jn. 4,1). In the Letters of St. Paul there is a process in the discernment of a divine call or vocation: **a.** It is God Himself who confirms or gives the certainty of a divine vocation: “Then God, who had specially chosen me while I was still in my mother’s womb, called me through his grace and chose to reveal his Son in me” (Gal 1,15); **b.** Such a call must be verified by the church community and its leaders: “When

³ NDS, p. 419.

after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him for fifteen days” (Gal 1,18). Therefore, among the criteria which assures that a determined inspiration does in fact come from God is “the immediacy of God in a spirit of ecclesial docility”⁴, and “listening to God in one’s personal life necessarily passes through the mediation of the Church, in the reading of the signs of the times of the society in which one lives”⁵. As St. Paul encourages the Ephesians: “Do not be thoughtless but recognize what is the will of the Lord.” (Eph 5,17). Among the signs which confirm the will of God is also the experience of what is called *consolation* in prayer, a *taste* for or an *inclination* towards the things of God, and a *desire* to serve Him in the Church of Jesus Christ.

203. [The meaning of the word *discernment*] If the word *discernment* means “to put to the test”, “to sift”, “to examine”, then this introduces us to the nature of this period of Pallottine formation. It is a time for putting to the test, sifting and examining the candidate to the Society in order to: **a.** see if the signs of a vocation to the consecrated life in the Society of the Catholic Apostolate are combined in him; **b.** see if the fundamental conditions of good health, and the intellectual, spiritual and moral capacity which are necessary to follow the consecrated life are present; **c.** identify conditions which are present in him and which may make the process difficult; **d.** see if he is called to follow Jesus, the Apostle of the Eternal Father, in the Society and in the Union; **e.** see if the Society can offer help to the young man to understand the meaning of his life and to discover his vocation as a son of God.

⁴ Ibidem p. 423.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 424, cfr. also *Nuove vocazioni per una nuova Europa*, no 25b.

204. [A true vocation according to Pallotti] A vocation is a gift of God but it is also an undertaking of the person. Pallotti liked to speak of a *correspondence, or reciprocity, to the vocation*⁶; he asked pardon of God for his “scant correspondence to vocation”⁷; and he maintained that in order to be a priest it would be necessary to have a vocation⁸. He also spoke of a “spirit of sacrifice” which is part of the vocation⁹, listing the genuine signs of a vocation as: “true aptitude, a nature or disposition admirably prepared by grace, a positive inclination towards the Sanctuary, and ... all the other virtuous and favourable qualities of with which they are adorned [which] give well-founded hope that they will succeed as excellent labourers of the Gospel”¹⁰.

205. [Predisposition to formation] Those who are responsible for the care of vocations must exercise great attention and have a clear vision in order to discern the signs of a true vocation in the people who come to us. They must also ensure that the candidates make progress both in study and in the spirit, according to the circumstances of time and place. To the young people who knock at the door of our Society, be they seminarians or college students, Pallotti proposed some attitudes in order to prepare themselves for the priesthood¹¹: **a.** “[...] have a deep-seated conviction of ones own unworthiness to have the gift of a Vocation to the Sanctuary, the grace to respond

⁶ “To correspond with humility and gratitude to the divine call” - OCCC X, p.584.

⁷ “I beg pardon for my scant correspondence to my vocation”- OCCC X, p.582.

⁸ “I will pray the Lord that he will not permit that I, or others enter into the Ecclesiastical Ministry if not called, and that those who are already there be sanctified, and if they are not called that he call them, and that he Sanctify and enable those who are truly called to correspond to the vocation” - OCCC X, p.562.

⁹ Cfr. OCCC I, pp.157-158. “And as Our Lord Jesus Christ entered into the world, lived and died with a spirit of Sacrifice, so with greater perfection the Laity must enter into the Sanctuary with a spirit of sacrifice”.

¹⁰ OCCC I, pp. 153-154. See also Chapter I of this ratio, n°20-22.

¹¹ Cfr. OCCC I, pp.157-158.

to the Vocation and remain always faithful to God”¹²; **b.** “[...] with great confidence and profound humility [...] ask of God such gifts, favours and graces”¹³; **c.** “They must not aspire to anything other than to be Priests solely for the glory of God and the benefit of Peoples and of all Souls, (they must be) without a spirit of self-interest and ambition”¹⁴; **d.** “If the life of all people is to be an imitation of the life of OLJC, how often must they meditate and with what greater perfection must they imitate him, those who on becoming Priests must take the place of Jesus Christ?”¹⁵; **e.** “[...] they must enter into the Sanctuary with a spirit of sacrifice [...]; the most perfect mortification of the passions must shine in all”¹⁶.

206. [The importance of discernment in a religious vocation] The document *Fraternal Life in Community* insists that: “During the time of formation, all good will not withstanding, it may prove impossible to integrate the personal

¹² This requires a true and profound knowledge of oneself which can be gained in prayer and in reflection on the word of God.

¹³ This entails guiding the candidate in methods of prayer to ensure the development of an attitude of creaturely dependence on divine grace, “...since every other human effort would be completely useless if the gift of God is lacking...” - OCCC I, p.153.

¹⁴ One of the objectives of the period of discernment is the purification of the motivations of the candidate. Another objective of a vocation in the Society is to be open oneself to a true spiritual disposition and to apostolic commitment.

¹⁵ Prayerful reflection on the life of Jesus is a means for testing the authenticity of a vocation with the aim of entering into the dynamic of the Christian life, which according to the Apostle Paul, is: “I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2,19-20), and “In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2,5)

¹⁶ Accepting the discipline implicitly required in the Christian living of the process of discernment as expressed in the document *Fraternal Life in Community*, n° 24: “A fraternal and shared common life has a natural attraction for young people but, later, perseverance in the real conditions of life can become a heavy burden. Initial formation needs, then, to bring one to an awareness of the sacrifices required for living in community, to accepting them in view of a joyful and truly fraternal relationship and of all the other attitudes characteristic of one who is interiorly free. When we lose ourselves for our brothers and sisters, then we find ourselves.”

gifts of a consecrated individual within fraternity and a common mission. It may be necessary in such cases to ask, ‘Do God’s gifts in this person [...] make for unity and deepen communion? If they do, they can be welcomed. If they do not, then no matter how good the gifts may seem to be in themselves, or how desirable they may appear to some members, they are not for this particular institute. It is not wise to tolerate widely divergent lines of development which do not have a strong foundation of unity in the institute itself’¹⁷. Experience teaches that the candidates are attracted to explore a religious vocation; while at the same time the motivations operating in them are neither transparent nor completely coherent. An integral part of the process of discernment is a “reading of the signs” with the candidate, accepting that God draws people to Himself along indirect paths and also through human and earthly mediations. In the process of discernment, what is sought is clarification and a reasonable judgement on the person’s capacity¹⁸. Here we note that the *Period of Discernment* is divided in our *ratio* into two stages: discernment in the stage of vocation promotion and discernment in the postulancy.

VOCATION PROMOTION

AIM AND CHALLENGES

207. [The mandate is Christ’s] All pastoral activity is a response to the mandate of Christ to build his Church as an instrument of salvation here on earth: “You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to

¹⁷ *Fraternal Life in Community*, n°40.

¹⁸ “[...] the meaning of the expression *vocational discernment*: to seek and to identify the plan that the Father has for each of his children and which He, therefore, fosters completely and fulfils integrally”. *Dizionario di Pastorale Vocazionale*, p.421.

go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last;” (Jn 15, 16)¹⁹. The apostolate of vocation promotion is a participation in the plan of God for the salvation of humanity. “[...] and good, holy, learned, expert and energetic Clergy to exercise the Holy Ministry will never be had, if God does not give them to his Church”- writes St. Vincent Pallotti²⁰. God makes himself present to the person and invites him or her to follow Christ. The aim of this period is to accompany them in the discovery of how God manifests himself in their lives and to discern with them the specific vocation to which they are called. The apostolate of vocation promotion is a way of accompanying the person in this process until he/she finds his/her path, his/her vocation in the Union of the Catholic Apostolate: as a priest, as a consecrated person, as a lay Christian²¹.

208. [The challenges] The challenges of this stage are many, varied and very different according to the context and circumstances, the principal ones being: a.1) The challenge of awakening consciousness to the reality that God is a personal God, active in His communication with human beings: “It pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself in person and to make known the mystery of his will”²²; a.2) There is an element of revelation in the communication of God: “God makes himself known as the God-who-saves”²³; the challenge here is: to lead the person to recognition of the revelatory activity of God. a.3) “God acts in ordering salvation according to his saving plan”²⁴: the challenge is to examine together with the

¹⁹ “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations” (Mt 28, 18-9); “Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation” (Mk 16, 15).

²⁰ OCCC I, p. 153.

²¹ Cfr. *General Statutes of the UAC*, n°22-33.

²² *DV*, n° 2.

²³ Cfr. Charles André Bernard, *Teologia Spirituale*, Paoline 2001, p.32.

²⁴ Cfr. *Ibidem*, p.321; See also: *DV* n°3: “God, who creates and conserves all things by his Word, (cfr. Jn 1, 3), provides men with constant evidence of himself in

candidate which signs of divine activity would lead him to find his vocation and to make progress in the order of salvation. b.1) Today's world is characterised by a high level of noise and clamour; it is a challenge to create the conditions in which to listen to God. It is not necessary to reject the world or to leave it, but it is essential to make the person aware of the presence of God in the world. b.2) In today's world there is a culture of the instant, of immediate activity, of instantaneous responses and immediate results; therefore it may be difficult to develop the capacity to listen to God, to "wait on the Lord". The challenge is to foster both patience and the discipline of an ordered spiritual life and to regulate it following spiritual exercises. c) We live in what is called a "post-modern" world and the Church is not immune from the consequences of this. The candidates who present themselves to us come from a culture that is constantly changing; they come from different family environments, and they have had diverse religious formation as well as diverse cultural, educational and catechetical life. In some areas of the Society the candidates are no longer *young* but are persons of mature age who have had the experience of work or the practice of a profession²⁵. The challenge is to accompany each candidate in the reality in which he finds himself, to seek the signs of a vocation when the *classical* signs are not immediately visible.

THE CONCEPT, CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY OF THIS STAGE

209. [A Vocation is a gift of God] In our Society, the Apostolate of Vocation Promotion comprises every activity

created realities (cfr. Rm 1,19-20); and furthermore, wishing to open up the way to heavenly salvation, he manifested himself to our first parents from the very beginning" – *DV no 3*.

²⁵ Cfr. Nuove vocazioni per una nuova Europa, no 13b-c.

done with the aim of awakening vocations. However, the first activity to promote vocations is prayer²⁶. Pallotti considered prayer to be an infallible means for obtaining true vocations²⁷. Therefore, the first activity of the Society in the area of vocation promotion is personal and community prayer for vocations. The responsibility for organizing this activity falls to rectors, together with the members of their communities.

210. [“There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven” (Qo 3, 1)] It is clear from reading the Gospels that from the very first contact with Jesus and from the experience of being in his presence, the desire for a new vision is awakened which changes the way in which people see themselves, see others and see God. In the Gospel of John we read: “The two disciples followed Jesus. Jesus turned round, saw them following and said, ‘*What do you want?*’ They answered, ‘*Rabbi,*’ – which means Teacher – ‘*where do you live?*’ ‘*Come and see*’ he replied; so they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him the rest of that day.” (Jn 1, 37-39). It is clear that the disciples, following an initial curiosity, were willing to go with Jesus and to remain in his presence, and this led to their being transformed. The use of the verbs “come, see, (they) went, (they) saw, (they) stayed” indicates that the response to Jesus must be both active and participative. In this text the apostle John develops a “school” for vocations. The Apostolate of Vocation Promotion includes a concrete plan of action to present Jesus Christ to others like John the Baptist did, leading to a personal experience of the living Christ.

²⁶ “The first task of any vocational pastoral programme is always prayer”. Cfr. *RdC n°16*. See also the first chapter of this ratio, n°20.

²⁷ It is to be noted that Pallotti composed beautiful prayers for vocations with this intention. See for example the litanies “Send labourers into your vineyard” (OCCC XI, pp.400-410), or the prayer “To obtain labourers” (OCCC IV, pp.39-42).

211. [The Holy Spirit who moves us] The challenge in this stage is to awaken the person to the activity of the Spirit of God: to help him to listen to the God who communicates and to become aware of His active grace²⁸. A further challenge is to present the vocations to ordained ministry and to the consecrated life in the Society as a relevant and valid response to God.

212. [Every vocation is important and distinct] Life in the Society is presented as a unique way of living the Christian vocation. Pallotti has given to its members the example of his apostolic commitment to the youth apostolate²⁹. Guided by this attitude and activity of Pallotti, the members of the Society place great importance on the task of forming young people, because they consider it a necessary means for their sanctification but at the same an accompaniment in order to help them open up to the vocation in their life³⁰.

THE PERSON CALLED

213. [“The Society will live and will be blessed by God”³¹] Every baptised Christian is called to enter into the mystery of salvation through the many vocations in the Church, be it to ordained ministry or to consecrated life. But each one is called to discover the personal vocation that God has

²⁸ Cfr. *Nuove vocazioni per una nuova Europa*, no 16.

²⁹ Cfr. John Santos Gaynor, *The Life of Saint Vincent Pallotti*, Cork, 1962, pp.46-49. Pallotti had a great love for the night schools and attended the confraternities and sodalities. His commitment to the work of Ponterotto was noteworthy: “His work here embraced the teaching of the catechism, the delivery of lectures and the periodical preaching of retreats in preparation for Communion...” and he also worked with the night schools, which were instituted to attend to the intellectual formation of young people. In this way Pallotti made the spiritual well-being of young people a priority.

³⁰ Cfr. Mario Polo, “Youth pastoral activity: a challenge for the followers of Pallotti”, e Giulio Verzaglia, “Vincent Pallotti and the night schools of Rome”, *Apostolato Universale* n°2, 1999, pp.41-45.

³¹ Cfr. John Santos Gaynor, *The Life of Saint Vincent Pallotti*, op.cit., p.157.

for him in His heart³². It is God who has called people to the Society from its beginnings, men fired with zeal for the gospel and eager to follow the apostolic vision and example of Pallotti. And God continues to call young men to the Society. However at the same time it is necessary to recognize that those called today encounter various difficulties³³. First of all they appear to be “fragile” in their identity and in their contact with the world. Some find it difficult to make a decision that commits them for the rest of their lives; moreover it is said that the age of adulthood is reached ever later and therefore definitive decisions are deferred. At the same time there are many who seek an experience of God, who seek him in various experiences

³² See for example: Jer 3, 14; 29, 11-14; 32, 36-44 or Ezek 3, 4.

³³ So-called modern civilisation is certainly set on a self-destructive course as far as the spiritual and psychological well-being of the human person is concerned. The breakdown of the family structure, which is so indispensable for the normal and healthy growth of a human being, is the result of the modern cultural context as well as being at the root of numerous problems. The strong psychological and social insecurities and stresses created in children as a result of divorce, parental negligence, physical and sexual abuse, violence, alienation, alcoholism, etc., have a totally de-humanising and traumatic effect on them. The net-result of such experiences will be the creation of a society of human beings who are intrinsically fragile, wounded and less human. This is already evident in a series of symptoms and of anti-social and pathological behaviours, such as violence, murders, thefts, the tendency to be easily depressed, the lack of stress tolerance and hence the excessive need for immediate physical and emotional gratification, the inability to make life-commitments (in relationships, marriage, priestly or consecrated life), the onset of sexual perversions such as homosexuality, promiscuity, and paedophilia, along with increasing addiction to drugs, alcohol, sex, etc. These are just some of the negative effects of contemporary culture. Other parts of the world, not yet so influenced by contemporary cultural trends, such as certain regions of Africa, Asia, South America, and Eastern Europe, certainly have their own share of problems and challenges. Poverty, racial and caste prejudices and wars, under-development, injustice, violence, etc., also leave their mark on the human person in the form of repressed aggression, the craving for wealth, prestige and power, the lack of faith formation, the lack of personality development and education, etc.

All the above-mentioned negative factors leave an individual fragile and vulnerable as far as his human growth and religious commitment, perseverance and apostolic effectiveness are concerned. It is also true that the human person, created in God’s “*image and likeness*” possesses every gift of nature and grace. The goal of formation is to release the potentialities inherent in the “*image and likeness*” of God, which is the true human being.

termed ‘mystical’, and many others form part of diverse groups of the Church or are committed to the community and apostolic life of modern ecclesial movements.

FORMATORS AND THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

214. [The persons responsible for formation] All the members of the Society are formators and are responsible for this apostolic activity of formation in its various stages. Our Law affirms: “All the members will have a special interest in fostering vocations and must try to enlist the co-operation of Christian families in this work”³⁴. All the members give witness to Christ and all are instruments of his grace. They all “will recall, moreover, that the most successful means to this end is the witness of their own lives and their happiness in their own vocation”³⁵. Nevertheless, it is necessary to appoint specific members as directors of Vocation Promotion in every jurisdiction with particular responsibility for this activity, taking into account their personal charism and gifts. They will work with the other members of the formation *team* under the direction of the Provincial or Regional Rector.

215. [The atmosphere which promotes vocational growth] It is necessary to create an atmosphere or setting in which to carry out vocational discernment. This requires: **a.** personal contact with a spiritual director. This must be regular, programmed and conducted in a climate of frankness and trust, in which the candidate can discover and listen to the voice of God; **b.** on-going dialogue with designated members of the SAC, but also with other members of the Society, in order to help the candidate grow in knowledge of the Society and its charism; **c.** participation in spiritual

³⁴ LSAC, n°281.

³⁵ Ibidem.

exercises. In fact, experience confirms that special times of prayer and reflection such as guided retreats for an afternoon, a day or a weekend, are of great benefit to the candidates. On such occasions members share with the candidates the spiritual riches of the Church and of the Society; **d.** meetings with other young people. Our Society is founded on the apostolate and on the community: “In the Holy Family of Nazareth and in the first community at Jerusalem, we find the models for our communal way of living the life of love and for our common apostolate”³⁶. Therefore, from the very beginning, discernment is best conducted in a context where other candidates are encountered and where it is possible to exchange experiences; **e.** prayer sessions and group reflection on the Word of God, in order to foster the vocation of every person. It is good to offer the candidates opportunity to reflect on the Word of God in the context of their personal experience of life and of work³⁷.

216. [The setting which promotes vocational growth] The member designated to care for vocations will have contact with the family of the candidate in order to better know his environment. The candidate will go to other creative expressions of Pallottine activity and spirituality and where possible, it is essential that he have experience of the UAC. It is strongly recommended that this process include at the very least a brief period spent in a Pallottine community. The advantage is that the members and the candidate would get to know each other, and the candidate would have a lived experience of a community of the Society right from the beginning. Among the candidates who come to us are some who have participated in diverse movements of the church or have been strongly engaged

³⁶ Ibidem, n°13.

³⁷ Cfr. *Nuovi vocazioni per una nuova Europa*, no 27b.

in, or committed to, the life and apostolate of the Church. This is good and may be a positive sign of the presence of an authentic vocation to our Society, which is an apostolic community, based on life in community.

METHODS AND MEANS

217. [The most effective methods] The most important method is the personal conviction of the members lived out in their apostolic and community work. Conviction together with enthusiasm and love for the consecrated life will help others to discern their vocation. Furthermore Pallotti was very insistent on prayer for vocations. Therefore the first activities of the Society in the area of vocation promotion are the personal conviction and the example of the members, together with both personal and community prayer for vocations³⁸. The responsibility for organizing prayer for vocations with the members of the community is the duty of the rectors.

218. [Other means] Other means in the vocation promotion apostolate are: the experience of life lived in accordance with the charism of Pallotti, above all in the environment of the Union of Catholic Apostolate; apostolic work in schools, parishes, communities, ecclesial movements and with catholic families to promote religious vocations; activities such as spiritual exercises, retreats, discernment in prayer, the use of the media, visits to schools, vocation discernment seminars and the distribution of suitable vocation literature. Where it is possible, the members of the Society should collaborate in the vocation promotion apostolate of the Church and of the Conferences of Religious of the country, in order to implement the objective of St. Vincent that the members of the Society actively

³⁸ Cfr. *RdC*, n° 16. See also num. 209 of this chapter.

promote the Christian vocation of each person³⁹. In the areas where the Congregations of Sisters who share our Pallottine charism are present, the apostolate of vocation promotion must be carried out in collaboration with them. Finally, we recommend that before a candidate is admitted to the second stage of the period of discernment, namely the Postulancy, it is necessary to have the favourable opinion of the parish priest, of the spiritual director, of the member of the Society who has accompanied him and of the formation *team*.

THE POSTULANCY

GOAL AND CHALLENGES

219. [Time to collaborate with the vocation] The stage of Postulancy serves to further test the vocation of the candidate and his capacity to live in community, a capacity already being verified in his ability to live in a group and under authority so as to dedicate himself to the studies and to the consecrated life. In this period, the maturity of the candidate will be examined and proven at every level; his gifts, his ability, his aptitudes and his virtues will be explored and confirmed. His conflicts, his weaknesses and the areas in which he lacks maturity will be identified and a suitable “strategy” to combat and resolve them will be programmed⁴⁰. It is not required that the candidate be in a position to immediately assume all the obligations of the consecrated life, but he must be considered capable of progressively reaching them: in order to be able to assess this capacity of candidates, it may need to be rifted over time and using other means⁴¹. These therefore are the goal

³⁹ Cfr. *General Statute of the UAC*, num. 12-13.

⁴⁰ See for example numbers 26-27 of this *ratio*.

⁴¹ Cfr. *PI*, n° 42.

and the challenges of our Postulancy: **a.** to form an opinion on the aptitudes and on the vocation of the candidate; **b.** to verify and complete his religious and intellectual education to the level necessary for the Introductory Period⁴².

THE CONCEPT, CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY OF THIS STAGE

220. [A time of preparation] In our Society, there exist different practices for implementing the Postulancy. In some regions the time for Postulancy is longer and it takes place together with the philosophical studies. With regard to this our Law states: “It is left to the Provincial Statutes to decide on the obligation, the nature and the duration of Postulancy”⁴³.

221. [Preparation for the Introductory Period and for Consecrated Life] On entry into the Postulancy the candidate begins his formal preparation for the consecrated life and therefore both the human and affective dimensions become central. The Postulancy is a period in which to develop and to grow in personal, affective, spiritual and intellectual maturity: “The gradual personal orientation of the young men to a conscious acceptance of the obligations inherent in our consecration and in finding their own identity as members of the Society, in the Church and in the world, must be realised in the community and through their own active cooperation in its life and apostolate”⁴⁴. The Postulancy begins when the candidate is officially accepted into the formation programme of a Pallottine jurisdiction and continues up to admission into the canonical year of the Introductory Period. A study pro-

⁴² Cfr. *ivi*, n° 42. See also: *CG*, n° 849.

⁴³ *LSAC*, n° 288.

⁴⁴ *Ivi*, n° 283.

gramme is to be followed which will give a gradual introduction to the spiritual life, a knowledge of and acquaintance with the person of St. Vincent Pallotti and his life, and an introduction to the charism and to life in the Society, an integral part of the Union of the Catholic Apostolate. It is recommended that this period be of at least three months duration. In jurisdictions where the spiritual year precedes the philosophical studies, it is recommended that the Postulancy be from six to twelve months duration in order to prepare the candidate for entry into the spiritual year⁴⁵. In all the other communities the entire period before the spiritual year forms part of the Postulancy.

THE PERSON CALLED

222. [“Better a few but full of spirit”⁴⁶] The candidate admitted to the Postulancy will have to manifest positive signs of a vocation to the consecrated life in the Society; he will receive direction and accompaniment from members of the Society; he will demonstrate his suitability, he will grow in prayer, he will learn to live with others, he will purify his motivations and will seek greater clarity on the grace of God, present in him, which invites him to the consecrated life. The central core of this entire process of discernment in this period is the analysis of the candidate’s motivations. This involves above all else the identification and strengthening of the motivations, a process which is finalized not only with the verification of vocational suitability, but rather with the growth of the person. The postulant, through a journey of progressive knowledge of self and of his own motivations, can achieve a process of purification of these motivations which in turn would lead him to the integration of self and of his very existence

⁴⁵ Cfr. *CG*, nn. 859,861. See also num 240 of this *ratio*.

⁴⁶ *OCC* III, p. 327. See also num 28 of this *ratio*.

around a single central motive, the predominant motive of his behaviour, that which gives a sense of fullness to his life. During this period, the postulant, with the help of the formators, will strive to establish if his character, his natural gifts and his personal qualities correspond with the aim and the development of the works of the SAC. Each jurisdiction will decide on the age restrictions for the acceptance of candidates.

FORMATORS AND THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

223. [Those responsible for the Postulancy] Every jurisdiction will nominate a member who has responsibility for this stage of formation, who will work with the other members who make up the formation team. The formators must be well prepared: “They will be well prepared in pedagogy”⁴⁷, having knowledge of the theories of human development, but will also have some pastoral experience especially in the field of pastoral care of the youth. “Moreover, before or after their specialised formation they will spend some time in pastoral work”⁴⁸.

224. [Models for the formation communities] The educational setting for this stage of formation will be a Pallottine community or a place of apostolic life where one breathes the Pallottine charism and spirit. Of special importance in this period is the introduction of the candidate to the dynamics of life according to the Gospel models so dear to the Founder. He actually compares the community of formation to “the house of Bethlehem”⁴⁹ and “the house of Nazareth”⁵⁰. Since our Society is “a brotherly

⁴⁷ LSAC n° 285.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹ Cfr. OCCC II, pp. 15-16. See also nos. 30, 37 & 99 of this *ratio*.

⁵⁰ “The Home of Nazareth is to be held as the norm of the Houses or of the Holy Retreats of our minimal Congregation” - OCCC VII, p. 111. See also nos. 37 & 100 of this *ratio*.

community in which God, through our Founder, has given a special apostolic mission, we fulfil this by living and working together in the spirit of the first community at Jerusalem”⁵¹.

225. [Formation for the Union of Catholic Apostolate]⁵² “Our society is a core community of the Union of Catholic Apostolate. As such, it has a special responsibility for the spirituality and the apostolic effectiveness of the whole Union”⁵³. It is, therefore, essential that the candidates admitted to the Postulancy be introduced from the very beginning to collaboration in the heart of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, and that all the “necessary and appropriate spiritual and temporal means”⁵⁴ be used to prepare them for such a life.

METHODS AND MEANS

226. [Activity during the postulancy] The director of the Postulancy period will prepare a programme in order to facilitate community life. It is necessary to build a community with the postulants from the very beginning because “The Society of the Catholic Apostolate is a community of priests and brothers”⁵⁵. Life in community is the foundation of our life and our apostolate. In the Postu-

⁵¹ LSAC, n° 48. See also no. 101 of this *ratio*.

⁵² “The charism of St. Vincent Pallotti is the heritage of the Union of Catholic Apostolate” – *Preamble c*; “To the Union belong, by virtue of their foundation: the community of priests and brothers, known as the Society of the Catholic Apostolate: the Congregation of the Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate and the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate. Associated with these, with the necessary approval, are other communities of various types that profess to be equally inspired by the ideals of St. Vincent Pallotti. These Institutes, founded by St. Vincent Pallotti himself or established later, dedicate themselves wholly to the accomplishment of the tasks of the Union” - *Preamble g*; *General Statutes of the UAC*, n° 77. See also nos. 104-109 of this *ratio*.

⁵³ LSAC, n° 4.

⁵⁴ Cfr. OCCC XI, pp. 19, 23 & 234.

⁵⁵ LSAC n° 1.

lancy community the candidate will have time and space to: study, read, be instructed in the spiritual life, life and spirit of the Society. They should have personal accompaniment, encounters among the postulants themselves, meetings with postulants from other religious families, supervised and guided pastoral and apostolic activity, personal and community prayer, manual work and common recreation.

227. [Cooperation] St. Vincent Pallotti writes: “However, no one is ready to use the means, if he is lacking the sharpest, keenest, most generous and perfect desire to cooperate in everything, and always for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls”⁵⁶. Actually, *cooperation* or *collaboration* is a *key word* in the writings of our Founder and is the *pulsating heart* of his proposal for formation⁵⁷. Consequently it is necessary to form in the postulants a spirit of collaboration with God and with others. Today more than ever the urgent need for an appropriate formation for collaboration is perceived⁵⁸. Therefore in those geographical areas where there are other expressions of the Pallottine family also present, a formation programme in the spirit of collaboration will be drawn up. With this aim in mind the introduction of the candidate into the coordinated work of a local Coordination Council of the Union may be useful⁵⁹. If the candidate is not yet a “member” and therefore cannot form part of a Local Coordination Council, he may

⁵⁶ OCCC II, p. 16.

⁵⁷ Cfr. OCCC XI, pp.234-260; OCCC VII, p.259; OCCC III, p.83; OCCC IX, p.26; OCCC VI, p.281; OCCC II, pp.286-287.

⁵⁸ Cfr. Séamus Freeman, «The culture of collaboration from the time of St. Vincent Pallotti», *Apostolato Universale*, n° 8, 2002, p.77. According to the author, such collaboration: **1.** is founded principally on dialogue. The dialogue must have a triple dimension, because without God there is no true, authentic collaboration; **2.** collaboration is reciprocal encouragement; **3.** collaboration requires perseverance; **4.** collaboration requires models which both promote and guarantee a spiritual and apostolic culture; **5.** collaboration finds its authentic expression in the Eucharistic celebration.

⁵⁹ Cfr. *General Statutes of the UAC*, nn. 41-45.

still, however, participate in the works that the Council coordinates.

228 [Some practical applications]

1. The candidate for Postulancy will present the following necessary documents: a letter requesting admission to the Postulancy; certificates of baptism and confirmation; a letter of recommendation from his parish priest or from another priest; a letter of recommendation from the director of Vocation Promotion; the results of a general medical examination.
2. A psychological assessment is also recommended which includes tests of intelligence and of the personality of the candidate, to be carried out by a well-chosen professional in this field.
3. The formal initiation of the Postulancy will take place with a liturgical celebration.
4. If necessary the candidate will also receive instruction in Catholic and sacramental doctrine.
5. It is strongly recommended that the candidate be prepared for the demands of the academic studies to be undertaken, according to the requirements of each country.
6. It is necessary to exercise caution and prudence with candidates who have already been in another Institute of Consecrated Life, or in another Society of Apostolic Life, or in a diocesan seminary⁶⁰.

⁶⁰ This is also recommended by the *Code of Canon Law*, can. 241, § 3, which speaks of the admission of candidates to the seminary who come from another seminary or religious institute. Canon 645 speaks of the “Documentation and other information” and establishes in § 2 that the person responsible, before accepting a candidate, must request “the testimony of the local ordinary or major superior of the institute or society or of the rector of the seminary respectively.” Section § 4 reads: “If it appears necessary superiors can ask for other information, even with

7. It is necessary to implement what our Law specifies: “Before admission, to testify to their physical and moral fitness, candidates must present documents requested by Provincial Statutes, or in particular cases, by the Provincial Council. The candidates, moreover, shall declare in writing: that they seek admission of their own free will; whether there are any hereditary ailments in their families, and that they, as far as they know, are free from them; that they are aware that any wilful concealment of such ailments can result in their dismissal even after the perpetual consecration”⁶¹. Here the Law deals with the conditions for entry into the Period of Preparatory Formation, but where such entrance occurs later, for example after the Postulancy period or after Philosophical studies, these documents are requested when the candidate officially enters the formation programme of a jurisdiction of the Society.
8. Generally, to be accepted into the Postulancy period, the candidates must be at least 18 years of age and not more than 35. The formation process aims to “form and educate the person” and therefore includes a capacity to transform oneself. However, it is clear, and psychology bears this out, how difficult it is for a person to change at an older age.

the obligation of secrecy.” The commentaries on the Code consider that this is a necessary practice and would be a security regulation.

⁶¹ *LSAC* n° 290.

CHAPTER VI

PREPARATORY FORMATION AND THE PREPARATION FOR FIRST CONSECRATION

GOAL AND CHALLENGES

229. [Commitment of initial formation] The period of Preparatory formation is a fundamental and sensitive stage. It demands in each institute an accompaniment which is personalised and attentive to the growth of each candidate, and a formative climate which is evangelical, peaceful, rich in values, sustained by the joyful witness of the formators and the community, nourished by an authentic and profound experience of the founding charism¹. In fact “the novitiate, with which life in the institute begins, is ordered so that the novices better recognise their divine vocation, which is precisely that of the institute; that they experience its style; that they be formed in mind and heart by its spirit; and that their intention and suitability be tested”². In other words, the period of Preparatory Formation could be defined as a time of integral initiation into the form of life, which the Son of God embraced and proposed to us in the Gospel. In fact, “Since the very purpose of consecrated life is conformity to the Lord Jesus [...] this must also be the principal objective of formation. Formation is a path of gradual identification with the attitude of Christ towards the Father”³.

¹ Cfr. RC, n° 4; PI, n° 45.

² Cfr. PI, n° 45.

³ Cfr. VC, n° 65.

230. [Objective of SAC Preparatory Formation] Preparatory formation should prepare candidates for entry into the Society and provide them with fundamental spiritual formation. The Preparatory Formation programme should foster interest in the ideals of our Society, so that when the candidates make their first consecration they will be convinced of their vocation, aware that they are members of the Society and the Union and ready to become involved in its apostolic activities⁴. Moreover it is necessary to ascertain whether the candidates have the aptitude necessary to undertake the work of the Society⁵.

231. [The fundamental challenge] “A candidate who is accepted in the Pallottine community must be accompanied as a human person, a Christian and a future Pallottine”⁶. The fundamental challenge of this preparatory formation is therefore part of a dynamic process, which touches every aspect of life, a movement which develops not only in a horizontal sense but which is also vertical and profound. This means that followers of Pallotti must have a keen awareness that they were created in the image of God and are called to restore this likeness to Him through their decisions in everyday life⁷. In other words, this involves openness to integral formation as a path of growth, giving priority to typically Pallottine aspects. In fact, it is to be hoped that candidates will develop a desire to continue their formation throughout life⁸.

232. [From initial formation to ongoing formation] The willingness and desire to live in a continuous state of for-

⁴ Cfr. LSAC, n. 75; See also: *Direttive Generali della Formazione nel Periodo Introdotto-rio (DG)*, numbers. 7-9, *ACTA SAC*, vol. XII, pp. 437-469.

⁵ Cfr. CG, nn. 857-873. See also nn. 205 and 206 of this *ratio*.

⁶ DG, n° 7.

⁷ See nn. 3 and 127 of this *ratio*.

⁸ Cfr. n° 35 of this *ratio*.

mation throughout life is not only the challenge and the objective of initial formation, it is above all a condition for access to ongoing formation. This constant inner state of freedom to learn in life and from life is precisely the goal of initial formation⁹. In fact initial formation should “open” out into continual formation and be fused with it; it should reawaken, direct correctly and also courageously “provoke” a certain interior disposition “to let oneself be formed” all through life. In any case, experience shows that only an authentic initial formation opens to permanent formation for the rest of life. Moreover, in some way it generates it, demands it and renders it indispensable. Initial formation that is vague and insecure in the definition of its form, or that is not in conformity with the norm, will create insecure and unstable people who constantly seek a lost identity or look for an impossible freedom. If during the preparatory formation this freedom to “let oneself be educated-formed-accompanied” in life and by life is not achieved, then it will be very difficult for the subject to be willing to learn or to receive in the successive periods of his life; in other words, there will be no permanent formation, or this formation will be lived as a burden and an imposition. To have “learned to learn”, which renders Pallottine consecrated life a pilgrimage¹⁰, is the challenge of initial formation and the condition for access to permanent formation.

⁹ Cfr. *RdC*, n° 15.

¹⁰ Cfr. numbers. 74 and 126 of this *ratio*. Here we should underline that Vincent Pallotti was fond of describing his life as a pilgrimage. Here is part of the last prayer in his spiritual testament: “My God I can say no more but if you wish for more you do it out of your infinite love, do it also on the condition that I may never lose your holy love although I am so infinitely unworthy of it, and on the condition that I remain always in the state of a *Viatore* [...] without ever reaching the intuitive vision of you in the manifestation of your glory” (*OCCC* III, p. 33).

CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY

233. [General indications] To achieve the purpose and meet the challenges of Preparatory Formation it is necessary to:

- a.** have a clear understanding of this stage;
- b.** prepare a programme which respects the conditions of the candidates, of the times and of the place;
- c.** prepare with care both formators and the formative setting
- d.** employ correct pedagogy which makes use of the human sciences of psychology and pedagogy, while not forgetting that “psycho-pedagogic means alone can never be a substitute for authentic spiritual direction”¹¹.

234. [The Pallottine style] Since “A candidate who is accepted in the Pallottine community must be *accompanied* as a human person, a Christian and a future Pallottine”¹², and because “Preparatory Formation should *help* the candidate develop his personality and consolidate his Pallottine vocation”¹³, the suitable style for completing this itinerary, suited also for that of an ecclesiology of communion and co-operation, is accompaniment, that is, walking all of us together, apostles of the Father, towards Him, following Jesus. In fact this manner of understanding and proposing the itinerary of formation transforms the community in which we live into a *Societas*, that is, into a place where each person gives and receives all he is and all he has¹⁴.

THE CONCEPT OF THIS STAGE

235. [Admission] For admission to the period of Preparatory Formation the canonical rules of validity and lawfulness

¹¹ *PI*, n° 52.

¹² *DG*, n° 7.

¹³ *Ivi*, n° 8.

¹⁴ Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 37-39.

must be observed. This will help avoid difficulties later¹⁵. Moreover, attention must always be paid to the social-ecclesial and moral context of the candidate's family, and to his aptitude for community and apostolic life and for service to the Society in the Union of Catholic Apostolate and in the universal Church.

236. [Duration] “This period is of two years’ duration. For serious reasons, the Rector General, with the consent of his Consultors, can dispense from one year of Preparatory Formation. The Provincial Rector, with the consent of his Consultors, can dispense from six months.”¹⁶. This period “begins with a liturgical celebration preceded by a few days of retreat”¹⁷. Its general order “includes two parts: one called the Spiritual Year, dedicated to preparation for the consecrated life in the Society; the other dedicated to spiritual formation as well as study or professional formation”¹⁸.

237. [The Spiritual Year] The period reserved for the introduction of candidates to consecrated life in our Society, to be valid, should be held in a house duly designated for this purpose and should last for twelve months, although not necessarily consecutive. It may take place at any time during the period of Preparatory Formation¹⁹, but it is strictly compulsory and cannot be dispensed from, apart from the faculty of the Provincial Rector who may allow first consecration to be brought forward although by not more than two weeks²⁰. “Moreover the Provincial Rector may

¹⁵ Cfr. *PI*, n° 49; *CIC*, can. 597, § 1-2 and can. 641-645; *CG*, n° 874-893; *DG*, n° 10-15.

¹⁶ *LSAC*, n° 76.

¹⁷ *Ivi*, n° 77.

¹⁸ *DG*, n° 66.

¹⁹ Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 289, and *DG*, n° 67; *CG*, n° 890.

²⁰ Cfr. *LSAC*, nn. 76, 295 and 298; *DG*, n° 68.

allow the group of candidates, for set periods of time, to live in another house of the Society, which he himself designates”²¹.

238. [The other year of Preparatory Formation] The practical arrangement of this part of Preparatory Formation depends on whether it precedes or follows the Spiritual Year. If it comes before, it has a character of initiation; if it follows, it is a deepening and completing. This part of the Preparatory Formation may take place in a house different to that used for the Spiritual Year. In this case the Provincial Rector will designate a formator to accompany the candidates and propose to them a suitable programme for this stage of formation. For serious reasons the Rector General, with the consent of the Consultors, may dispense a candidate from the whole year and the Provincial Rector, also with the consensus of the Consultors, from a period of six months²².

239. [An integral vision] The period of Preparatory Formation should help the candidate develop his personality and consolidate his Pallottine vocation, so that, when he makes his consecration, he will be in a position, with the commitment demanded by the Founder²³, to share in and take responsibility for the charism, spirituality and duties of the Society, which is “an integral part of the Union of Catholic Apostolate”²⁴.

240. [Principle tasks] With this in mind the Fundamental Law of the Society divides the formation of candidates into three principle tasks: **a.** formation to human maturity;

²¹ *DG*, n° 68.

²² Cfr. *Ivi*, nn. 71-74. See also: *Documents of 12th Extraordinary General Chapter*, «No-viziato», n° 2.

²³ Cfr. *LSAC*, nn. 67, 69 and 75; *DG*, n° 8.

²⁴ *LSAC*, n° 1.

b. development of the spiritual life; c. preparation for the life and activities of the Society and of the Union of Catholic Apostolate. These tasks are accomplished by the candidate through the consolidation of his vocation, introduction to the charism of the Founder and to community life, and gradual preparation to undertake apostolic work²⁵.

THE PERSON CALLED

241. [Free and active co-operation] The first person responsible for formation is the candidate himself who, prepared, guided and accompanied on the path towards human maturity, the path of the development of the spiritual life and the path of the consecrated, communal and apostolic life proper to the Society, faces day by day the journey of the gift of his vocation in free and active co-operation with his formators. To do this he must respond with docility to Jesus Christ, the primary formator. “This co-operation means that the candidate should make his own the aims and programme of Preparatory Formation and be committed to their realisation [...], he should be well-integrated into the community of Preparatory Formation and strive to form with the others an authentic community based on fraternity and trust²⁶. This will come about in a climate of faith, a setting of prayer, in a spirit and an effective situation of serene, open, honest, confident and generous dialogue. In other words, the candidate and those who guide him must acquire the art of yielding to grace and accompanying him, rather than going before him or following him²⁷.

²⁵ Cfr. *ivi*, n° 67, 69 and 75; *DG*, n° 9.

²⁶ *DG*, n° 57.

²⁷ Cfr. *ivi*, n° 57; *PI*, n. 29. See also nn° 55-62 of this *ratio*.

242. [Difference in Candidates] Candidates do not begin the period of Preparatory Formation at the same age or level of human and Christian culture. Some have already spent several years in the Society and completed their philosophical studies. Therefore, each person must be given careful attention in order to walk at his own pace and to adapt to his particular needs the contents and pedagogy of the formation offered²⁸. In this regard we must admit that there are no rigid norms of formation since it must be highly personalised, with times and ways to suit each candidate. This fact underlines for the candidate, the formators and the whole of the Society the importance of responsible freedom, of honest respect for the vocation received and of not giving into the temptation of passivity and sterile repetitiveness.

FORMATORS AND THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

243. [General norms for direction] The direction of candidates is entrusted to the Director of Preparatory Formation who must report directly to the Provincial Rector. He should be free of other engagements, which would prevent him from fulfilling his charge as educator. If the number of candidates or any other just cause so require, the Provincial Rector may designate a priest or a brother of perpetual consecration to collaborate with the Director as his associate. In any case, all collaborators will depend on him with regard to the programme and the direction of this stage of formation. With him they play an important part in discernment and decision-making²⁹. In fact, the educational apostolate by a *team* of formators who understand each other well proves to be more successful and fruitful.

²⁸ Cfr. *PI*, n° 51.

²⁹ Cfr. *PI*, n° 52; *CIC*, can. nn. 650-652, § 1; *DG*, n° 63.

244. [The Director of Preparatory Formation] The Director of Preparatory Formation is “appointed for a three-year term of office by the Provincial Council after consultation with the Rector General”³⁰. Since he is the person who accompanies the candidates individually and together, it is his duty: **a.** to lead candidates towards a life of intense union with God, to a knowledge of Pallottine activity and spirituality and the practice of community life; **b.** to maintain therefore a relation of trust and dialogue with the candidates and examine with them the process of their formation, meeting each one periodically to discuss progress along the path of the vocation. This is why formation must not be considered and lived as *indoctrination*, but as *accompaniment*, which is fraternal but demanding³¹. At the same time, the Director should urge the candidates to participate actively and responsibly and to strive to build an authentic community of brotherhood, and he should encourage them to make use of individual spiritual direction. He must periodically discuss questions concerning formation with his collaborators, while remaining open to availing of the help of experts in different fields, and takes part, without a right to vote, in meetings of the Provincial Council when they deal with candidates in the period of Preparatory Formation³².

245. [The qualities of the Director] The Director of Preparatory Formation, besides having a good knowledge of the human person and a capacity for empathy, must have other qualities suited to assuming formative responsibilities: a human capacity for intuition and acceptance; a developed experience of God and of prayer; wisdom deriving from a careful and prolonged listening to the word of

³⁰ *LSAC*, n° 77.

³¹ See n° 54 of this *ratio*.

³² Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 292; *DG*, n° 62.

God; a love for the liturgy and an understanding of its role in spiritual and ecclesial education; the necessary cultural competence; a knowledge of the Work of the Founder, of Pallottine spirituality and of the history of the whole foundation; experience of life at the service of the Province, the Society and the Union; the time and good will to devote himself “day and night” to personal care of the individual candidates and not only of the group³³; interior serenity, amiability, availability, patience, understanding and sincere affection for those entrusted to his responsibility³⁴.

246. [The Provincial Rector] The Provincial Rector and his Consultors have a very special responsibility for the formation of candidates during Preparatory Formation. It is their duty to ensure that the Introductory Period is lived in accordance with the Law of the Society. The principal duties of the Provincial Rector are: **a.** to prepare the educators to be entrusted with the various tasks; **b.** to select as Director of Preparatory Formation an experienced priest who has deeply assimilated the Pallottine spirit, who knows and willingly accepts the instructions of the Church and of the Society; **c.** to assign suitable members to the community of Preparatory Formation, keeping in mind its special objectives; **d.** to keep regular contact with formators and candidates³⁵.

247. [The Spiritual Director] The Spiritual Director of the Introductory Period must be at the disposal of the candidates to advise and guide them in the spiritual life and to hear their sacramental confessions. At the same time,

³³ See n° 54 of this *ratio*.

³⁴ Cfr. *ibidem*; see also: Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CIVCSVA), Rome 1981, *Contemplative Dimension of Religious Life*, n° 20; *PI*, n° 31; *DG*, n° 61.

³⁵ Cfr. *LSAC*, nn. 77 and 291; *DG*, nn. 59-60.

through personal contact and appropriate instruction, he must “enlighten, regulate, sanctify, perfect”³⁶, that is, he must help candidates to discern the paths of spiritual progress and help them to grow in knowledge and love of the Founder and his Work³⁷.

248. [The Local Community] An important presence, although not a substitute, is the Local Community (each and every member), which offers itself as a natural setting so that all of the different elements relative to the vocation of the Society may be concretely accepted with faith and lived out. All members of the Local Community have a great impact on the formation of the candidates, not only in thought and word but also in the concrete reality of day-to-day life. It is especially seen in how members live the ideal of the Founder with an attitude of total, lively and joyful fidelity³⁸, without indoctrination, but with an awareness of being involved, along with the Director’s teaching and the commitment of the candidate, in the credibility of the vocation. Of particular importance are: **a.** the community witness of faith and prayer; **b.** an orientation towards effective and harmonious co-operation in the context of community life and the apostolate; **c.** reciprocal goodness and respect in conversation and is the various different expressions of daily life; **d.** a willingness to help the candidates acquire a deeper understanding of the Society’s life and apostolate; **e.** a love for and the practice of poverty in a simple style of life³⁹.

249. [The place] Preparatory Formation must be held in a suitable place, in a house duly designated⁴⁰, in order to

³⁶ Cfr. nn. 55-56 of this *ratio*.

³⁷ Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 286; *DG*, n° 64.

³⁸ See n° 75 of this *ratio*.

³⁹ Cfr. *DG*, n° 65.

⁴⁰ Cfr. *DG*, n° 67.

create the conditions necessary for the development of vocations. Therefore the time and place of Preparatory Formation will be organised to ensure that the novices find an atmosphere favourable to becoming deeply rooted in a life with Christ⁴¹. In fact, “It is not advisable that the novitiate be conducted within a milieu foreign to the culture and native language of the novices. Small novitiates are preferable, provided that they are rooted in this culture. The essential reason for this is to avoid a multiplication of problems during a period of formation in which the fundamental equilibrium of a person should be established and when the relationship between the novices and the director of novices should be comfortable, enabling them to speak to each other with all the nuances required at the outset of an intensive spiritual journey. Further, a transfer into another culture at this particular moment involves the risk of accepting false vocations and of not perceiving what may be false motivations.”⁴² It is therefore advisable to hold the period of Preparatory Formation in the country, culture and language of the candidate.

METHODS AND MEANS

250. [The programme] Our formation has its foundations in principles common to all Christian formation, but from the outset it assumes a specific character in keeping with the aim, nature, tradition and law of our Society and of the Union of Catholic Apostolate. Therefore, the programme of formation must help each candidate to develop his gifts, to acquire a sense of personal responsibility and of belonging to the Society so that he is able to identify himself with its interests and work to promote them. Formation must give attention to every dimension,

⁴¹ Cfr. *PI*, n° 50.

⁴² Cfr. *PI*, n° 47.

the human, spiritual, community, intellectual, apostolic and Pallottine and help our candidates to integrate these different aspects in the service of the apostolic goal⁴³. So the growth of a fully Christian personality requires progress towards unity. Formation is a unitary process, which unfolds within the reality of a vocation to the consecrated life in a dynamic-relational sense, becoming the principle, which unifies the whole person and harmonises the different dimensions of his being⁴⁴.

The human dimension

251. [Means of fostering human maturation] Formation to human maturity aims at the development of the candidate's personality, enabling him to assume the tasks resulting from the vocation received in a completely free and responsible way. This aim is achieved through a gradual and ongoing process. In fact, various aspects of the human dimension contribute to the formation of a mature and integrated personality. During the period of Preparatory Formation attention must be given to the following crucial elements: affective maturity, social formation, formation of the will and intellectual development⁴⁵.

252. [Affective maturity] To achieve affective maturity it is important to harmonise and integrate affective life, developing especially sentiments of kindness, justice and sensitivity to beauty. The candidate, with the help of his formators, should strive to integrate his sexuality with the demands of his vocation and acquire the ability to maintain his celibacy as a gift of God and a freely chosen posi-

⁴³ Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 68 and n° 69.

⁴⁴ Cfr. nn. 2-3 of this *ratio*.

⁴⁵ Cfr. *DG*, nn. 17-18; See also n° 163 of this *ratio*.

tive value⁴⁶. It should be underlined that the psycho-sexual-affective aspect of celibacy necessitates more attention than is given to it in programmes of religious formation at present⁴⁷. Difficulties encountered in formation in this field occur on the one hand when we are dealing with people who enter the community while they are young, before having acquired a consolidated sexual identity; on the other are difficulties deriving from a series of family and personal disorders, including confusion and pathologies regarding sexual identity. Candidates in the process of integrating their affective life will be greatly helped by formative sessions organised by the Director of Preparatory Formation in collaboration with an expert.

253. [The presence of social virtues] Community life in the Society requires members to develop social values, above all reciprocal respect, understanding, loyalty, gratitude, humility, justice, altruism, friendship and interest in the common good. Therefore candidates must **a.** develop attitudes of openness to problems of the community, the Church and the world; **b.** be tolerant, ready to enter into dialogue with others, strive to solve conflicts in a positive manner; **c.** learn to co-operate with others, be willing to change their attitudes when necessary; **d.** show trust in and respect for the laity and enjoy working with them⁴⁸.

254. [Daily life] The candidate must make an effort to form his character and acquire, among other things, the following capacities: self-restraint, constancy in behaviour, respect for the will of others and for the established order, a willingness to serve God and neighbour freely and readily,

⁴⁶ Cfr. *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*, n. 48. See also nn. 53-54 of this *ratio*.

⁴⁷ Cfr. nn. 168-169 of this *ratio*.

⁴⁸ Cfr. *DG*, nn. 25-26.

diligence, conscientiousness, magnanimity, prudence, courage and perseverance⁴⁹. Here the crucial point is and always will be *daily life* or day to day living. Daily life implies making little things great, not exaggerating the trifling things of “secluded” life - characteristic of this stage of formation – but rather looking at them with the intelligence and wisdom of one who lives daily life with responsibility.

255. [Intellectual development] This is a question of understanding how much importance should be given during this period of formation to study in its various aspects and the time it should occupy. Above all, it is important to reflect on the manner in which candidates should turn to study and the attitude with which they do so; we study not for self-realisation, but in order to serve others. In this way, study will truly be a means of knowing and loving, of learning to create a relationship between study and life. This is achieved through personal research on the part of the candidates, conferences, courses, reading groups, debates, discussion, use of the means of social communications and personal *hobbies*⁵⁰.

The spiritual dimension

256. [Initiation to a profound and living knowledge of Christ] This is the fundamental and characteristic dimension of Preparatory Formation. The candidate is accompanied on the path of configuration to Christ, *Apostle of the Eternal Father*, whom he discovers in Vincent Pallotti who devoted his life to the apostolate. The candidate enters a *process of following the life of Jesus*, a life which is humble, obedient, industrious, poor, chaste and faithful, which grows

⁴⁹ Cfr. *ivi*, n° 23.

⁵⁰ Cfr. *ivi*, nn. 19-20.

in him in harmony with the Pallottine charism⁵¹. With the grace of the spirit, every candidate must strive to identify himself with Christ. “Do not forget that you, in a very special way, can and must say not only that you belong to Christ but that “*you have become Christ!*”⁵². This means that the person of the candidate is totally assumed in a process of conversion and evangelical transformation⁵³.

257. [Interior life] The path of initial formation should give special attention to the interior life. “In order to imitate O.L.J.C, Pallotti writes, above all we need to have his spirit, that is, all the inner movements of our soul should be similar to those of O.L.J.C., so that we may imitate him sincerely also in external acts, which must be authentic expressions of our inner acts”⁵⁴. Therefore, it will be necessary to make and maintain space for silence and solitude with God, for reflection and personal prayer; candidates must be taught to live with *attention* that is, with an attitude of *tending towards holiness*, so that nothing of that which accompanies their path is lost⁵⁵.

258. [Means which foster spiritual life] The spiritual life develops through the different ways of being in relation with God. During Preparatory Formation candidates are educated: **a.** to love and meditate daily on the *Word of God*, to listen to it and learn to practise sharing of the Word⁵⁶; **b.** to understand and love the *Liturgy of the Hours* as the prayer of Christ and of the Church and a path of spiritual growth⁵⁷; **c.** to live the *Eucharist* as the daily and central act

⁵¹ Cfr. *ivi*, nn. 30-31; *PI*, n° 47; See also nn. 31 and 87-89 of this *ratio*.

⁵² *VC*, n° 109.

⁵³ Cfr. *RdC*, n° 18; *PI*, n° 47.

⁵⁴ *OCCC III*, p. 38.

⁵⁵ Cfr. *ivi*, p. 44.

⁵⁶ Cfr. *RdC*, n° 24.

⁵⁷ Cfr. *DG*, n° 37; *SC*, n° 99.

of Pallottine life and community⁵⁸; **d.** celebrate regularly and sincerely *the Sacrament of Reconciliation*. Church practice shows that the spiritual and apostolic level of life depends on frequent reception of this sacrament⁵⁹; **e.** to practice *personal prayer* in keeping with the apostolic spirit and character of our foundation and to feel a need for prayer as the authentic breathing of the soul; **f.** not to neglect traditional forms of prayer recommended by the Church, such as adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, etc. When forming people in the spirit of prayer, it is necessary to follow “the teaching and example of our Founder, who achieved a harmony between his union with God in prayer and his apostolic zeal”⁶⁰; it is necessary to grow in a relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary because she is Mary Queen of Apostles and also “a teacher of the spiritual life”⁶¹ and a model of perfect union with Jesus Christ⁶². Vincent Pallotti, with his example and teaching, leads us to appreciate *spiritual direction*, a most important means of discernment in this period: “frequent contact with the spiritual Director offers a better guarantee of being on the right road and hearing God’s call”⁶³. Learning to walk personally in the spiritual life demands *daily revision of life*, examining oneself in the light of the Word of God and the practice of fraternal love; and also an initiation “and a relish for the great authors of the Church’s spiritual tradition, without being limited to spiritual reading of a modern cast”⁶⁴, in other words directed *spiritual reading*, suited to apostolic objectives and the personal growth of each candidate.

⁵⁸ Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 45; *RdC*, n° 26.

⁵⁹ Cfr. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 1984, n° 31.

⁶⁰ *LSAC*, n° 42.

⁶¹ Cfr. n° 65 of this *ratio*.

⁶² Cfr. *DG*, n° 32 and i nn. 97-103 di questa *ratio*.

⁶³ Cfr. *DG*, n.°38; see also: *OCC III*, p. 47 and n° 60 of this *ratio*.

⁶⁴ *PI*, n° 47.

The communitarian dimension

259. [Fraternity as life] Our Society has *Bethlehem*, *Nazareth* and the *Cenacle* as models for the community way of living. Pallotti urges us to remain in these places continuously and inseparably⁶⁵. At the same time, Preparatory Formation should help candidates prepare to acquire and develop evangelical fraternal life, that is, brotherhood and friendship. In fact, “within a community faith is deepened and becomes communion, and charity finds its numerous manifestations in the concrete routine of daily life”⁶⁶. In reality, it is a question of initiation into the fatigue and joy of living, walking, serving and being formed together, that is, of making the change from being a *protagonist to being a brother* by means of the humbler virtues: listening, readiness and effective effort for dialogue, self awareness, willingness to accept the originality of others, an attitude of kindness, selflessness, openness to each other and to common tasks to be undertaken together in different areas⁶⁷. In fact, it is important to help candidates to understand that the community does not exist for itself, but that it is instituted for a purpose, a common responsibility for the entire Work of St Vincent Pallotti, requiring a readiness to offer one’s energies and abilities for its development. This fosters responsible behaviour with regard to the temporal goods of the Society, and effective and creative commitment in the local community⁶⁸.

260. [Participation in community living] Experience shows that a person who limits himself to being an observer does not participate in the formation of community life.

⁶⁵ Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 13; see also nn. 99-101 of this *ratio*.

⁶⁶ *PI*, n° 47.

⁶⁷ Cfr. *Fraternal Life in Community*, nn. 35-43.

⁶⁸ Cfr. *DG*, nn. 47-48.

Therefore, during Preparatory Formation, great importance must be given to different expressions of communal living such as the shared elaboration of programmes and the overall plan of the different tasks of the community, focusing on the use of simple means⁶⁹; participation in common prayers and festivities, celebrations of birthdays, saint's days and anniversaries; participation in shared times of rest, sport and recreation; dialogue on themes of apostolate and community living; work in small groups in different areas such as study, apostolic service, preparation of the liturgy, community discernment and domestic work⁷⁰.

261. [Attitudes for community living] Formation for a spirit of community, demands the practical exercise of the following attitudes: **a.** listening to others and dialoguing with them; **b.** loving the community with its successes, difficulties, limits, and not dreaming of an ideal and unreal community; **c.** accepting people of different culture and mentality; **d.** learning always to forgive and to ask for forgiveness; **e.** be kind towards all the confreres; **f.** appreciate their efforts and be happy for their successes; **g.** be open and obedient to the instructions of superiors; **h.** show continual interest in the apostolic activity and major events of the Province, in the Society and Union; **i.** be open to cultural pluralism⁷¹.

The apostolic dimension

262. [Apostolic aptitude] "...right from the moment of initial formation, community life must demonstrate the essential

⁶⁹ Cfr. Ludwig Münz, *Our Poverty*, Roma, 1980, nn. 10-12; *LSAC* nn. 28 and 227-228.

⁷⁰ Cfr. *LSAC*, nn. 52-53, 69 and 258; *DG*, n° 50.

⁷¹ Cfr. *DG*, n° 51; *LSAC*, n° 213.

missionary dimension of consecration. Thus, during the period of initial formation, Institutes of Consecrated Life do well to provide practical experiences which are prudently accompanied by the formator, enabling candidates to test, in the context of the local culture, their *apostolic aptitude*, their ability to adapt and their spirit of initiative⁷². On the other hand, SAC Law teaches that the members of the Society, because of their decision to follow Jesus Christ, *Apostle of the Eternal Father*, "must realise that their life, despite the diversity of tasks entrusted to each and the different conditions of health and age, must be an authentic apostolate and contribute to the achievement of the Society's aims"⁷³. To promote this awareness it is necessary to emphasise the apostolic dimension of Pallottine life during Preparatory Formation⁷⁴. In effect, if on the one hand it is important for the Pallottine to progressively acquire a critical evangelical attitude towards the values and counter values of his culture and of the culture which he will encounter in the area of his apostolic work in the future, on the other, he must learn the difficult art of unity of life, of the mutual interpenetration of love of God and neighbour, experiencing that prayer is the soul of the apostolate but also that the apostolate enlivens and stimulates prayer⁷⁵.

263. [Means for apostolic formation] With regard to the apostolic dimension, during Preparatory Formation candidates must be formed in apostolic openness towards all people and in a culture of co-operation with all members

⁷² *VC*, n° 67.

⁷³ *LSAC*, n° 215.

⁷⁴ Cfr. *Documents of the Twelfth, Extraordinary, General Chapter*, «*Noviziato*», n° 6.

⁷⁵ Cfr. *VC*, n° 67; 215.

⁷⁵ Cfr. *Documents of the Twelfth, Extraordinary, General Chapter*, "Esercizi di pietà", numbers 3-4; The Society of the Catholic Apostolate, *The Apostolate of the Society Today. Development and Challenge*, nn. 7-11.

of the UAC⁷⁶. The following means, among others, may be useful in this formation: **a.** giving due importance to the explanation of the apostolic aims of the Founder and their realization in the history of the Union and Society of the Catholic Apostolate, as well as their lasting validity in the light of the needs of the Church in our day; **b.** presenting the life of Jesus Christ, Apostle of the Father, of the Virgin Mary, Queen of the Apostles and of St. Vincent Pallotti from the perspective of the fulfilment of the mission received from God; **c.** introducing some apostolic activities to be undertaken outside of the community, although ensuring that they are prepared, accompanied and evaluated well⁷⁷; **d.** demonstrating to the candidates the importance of a proper use of the *media*⁷⁸. In everything it will be necessary to find a balance and a sense of gradual progression, to ensure that maturation proceeds in the awareness of being «sent», of being *God's collaborators*⁷⁹. Above all, there must be a journey of interiorisation, which consists in passing from being involved in the apostolate to being an apostle.

The charismatic dimension

264. [The charismatic dimension] The charismatic dimension aims above all to help people mature as beings created in the image of God and help them grow in imitation of Christ, Apostle of the Eternal Father. It aims at fostering a *Pallottine spirit* in every candidate, that is, an apostolic spirit open to all and animated by concrete charity lived in daily life⁸⁰. Gradual assimilation of these values and obli-

⁷⁶ Cfr. *UAC General Statutes*, nn. 12-13; *DG*, n° 52-53.

⁷⁷ Cfr. *DG*, n° 54; *PI*, n° 47.

⁷⁸ Cfr. *DG*, n° 54.

⁷⁹ Cfr. 1Cor 3, 9 and 2Cor 6, 1; See also: St Vincent Pallotti, *Lettere Latine*, p. 126 and p. 196.

⁸⁰ Cfr. *LSAC*, nn. 10-17; *UAC General Statutes*, nn. 14-21.

gations, inherent in the Pallottine vocation and consecration, should take place in the community of Preparatory Formation in co-operation with the whole Foundation of Pallotti, and with the active collaboration from the candidates themselves in the life and mission of this stage of formation. Only in this way will candidates acquire their true identity as members of the Society at the service of the UAC⁸¹.

265. [Means which foster the charismatic dimension]

Through lessons, dialogue and personal study of the charism, candidates will come to know: the person and life of Vincent Pallotti, his ideals and his apostolic work, the history and development of his foundation, his spirituality, the character and fundamental points of his rule; the Law of the Society and the Provincial Statutes; the General Statutes of the UAC; the significance of consecration as a bond with God and with the Society, in the context of the theology of consecrated life; the history of the SAC and UAC and the present situation of the Work of Vincent Pallotti⁸². It is important during this stage of formation, for the candidates to undertake personal research on “Pallottine subjects”⁸³, for example: *The Life and Work of the Founder; Fundamental aspects of Pallottine Spirituality; The Development of the UAC; The Pallottine Apostolate today*. Moreover, emphasis must be laid on certain important dates in our history: 9 January and 4 April, and the feast-days proper to the Society and the UAC, namely the *Epiphany of the Lord*, the feast of *Our Lady Queen of Apostles* and the feast-day of *St. Vincent Pallotti*⁸⁴.

⁸¹ Cfr. *ivi*, n° 283.

⁸² Cfr. *DG*, nn. 44-45.

⁸³ This research can be, for example, in the form of a letter addressed to a person with whom the candidate shares his discovery of the Founder and of Pallottine spirituality.

⁸⁴ Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 254.

266. [Novinpal] Keeping in mind that the *Society of the Catholic Apostolate* is an integral part of the *Union of Catholic Apostolate* and that it shares the spirituality and apostolic aim of the whole Foundation⁸⁵, it is necessary during initial formation to promote different forms of co-operation among its various entities. For this we propose: keeping contact by letter between different novitiates of the Pallottine reality in the world and, where circumstances allow, developing a *Novinpal* programme among the novitiates of Provinces of the SAC and of Pallottine Sisters resident in the same country⁸⁶. In fact, such co-operation can contribute towards the sound formation of those who are beginning the Pallottine journey, it can help them to realise that they are members of the *Church, mystery of communion and mission*, and to act as such, developing, through comparing and sharing, attitudes of co-responsibility for the apostolic effectiveness and the spirituality of the entire Union⁸⁷.

267. [Inter-institute collaboration] Initiatives of collaboration in the field of religious formation also involve the stage of initial formation. During this stage it is good to foster, for example, knowledge of the respective religious institutes, the Founders or Foundresses, and the different spiritualities. However it must be stressed that “Inter-institute collaboration in the novitiate phase remains at

⁸⁵ Cfr. *ivi*, n° 1.

⁸⁶ The programme could offer common courses on different Pallottine themes: Pallottine spirituality and identity, the Founder, his Work, etc. It would be good to organise common monthly retreats, spiritual exercises, and to celebrate solemnities proper to UAC together. It should be underlined that this programme involves not only men or women candidates but also their formators. The participation of all members – priests, brothers, sisters, and laity – in the process of formation, in a responsible *team* where all feel the need to “be formed together” is, in fact, most important.

⁸⁷ Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 4; *UAC* General Statutes, nn. 31-33.

the level of “complementary services”⁸⁸. In fact, Church documents teach us that “one can speak of ‘inter-congregational courses for novices, men or women, distinct from one another, but it is impossible to speak of an ‘inter-congregational novitiate’⁸⁹. When organising these “complementary services”, it is necessary to offer a well-structured, harmonious programme which should include fundamental elements of Sacred Scripture, spiritual theology, theology of liturgy and of the consecrated life, of the individual evangelical counsels in particular, “and also fundamental concepts of anthropology and psychology which should give to the novice, at the beginning of the formative journey, the possibility of better self-knowledge”⁹⁰. In any case, all of these themes must be studied more deeply in the service of formation. Given the nature of this initial stage, characterised by a process of psychological maturation and charismatic identification for the candidates, programmes of collaboration must also include, as far as possible, meetings of formation staff to discuss specific pedagogical themes which will then be given attention in the respective novitiates; matters such as, psycho-physiological development, affective-sexual maturity and other aspects of human maturation⁹¹.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

268. [Conditions for admission] Admission to Preparatory Formation depends on conditions established by the general Law of the Church and the Law of our Society⁹². The main points are as follows: **a.** the *degree of human and Christian maturity* necessary for initiating the period of Prepara-

⁸⁸ *Inter-Institute collaboration for formation*, n. 15.

⁸⁹ *Ivi*, n° 14.

⁹⁰ *Ivi*, n° 16.

⁹¹ Cfr. *PI*, n° 13 and nn. 39-41; *Inter-Institute collaboration for formation*, n° 16.

⁹² Cfr. *CIC*, can. 641-645; *LSAC*, n° 65; *DG*, nn. 10-15.

tory Formation without having to reduce a course of formation to a course of basic general formation or a simple catechumenate⁹³; **b.** a *basic general level culture*, which should correspond to what is generally expected of young people who have completed regular schooling in their country. In particular, the candidates should be familiar with the language used during Preparatory Formation. With respect to basic culture, it will be necessary nevertheless to take into consideration situations in certain countries or social environments where the percentage of children in school is relatively low and where, nevertheless, the Lord calls candidates to the consecrated life⁹⁴; **c.** *affective equilibrium*, especially sexual, which presupposes the acceptance of others, men or women, while respecting the difference. Recourse to a psychological examination can be useful, taking into account the right of each individual to preserve his or her own privacy⁹⁵; **d.** *the ability to live in an apostolic community under the authority of superiors*. This ability will certainly be verified well during the period of Preparatory Formation, but the question should be addressed beforehand. Candidates should realise that there other ways of offering one's life to the Lord besides entering an institute of the consecrated life⁹⁶.

269. [Admission to consecration] “Having completed the Preparatory Formation, the candidates are admitted to First Consecration, if they request it and are judged suitable”⁹⁷. For admission to consecration the candidate must:

⁹³ Cfr. *PI*, n° 42-43. With regard to this problem the document says: “It can actually happen that some present themselves as candidates who have not completed their Christian initiation (sacramental, doctrinal, and moral), and lack some of the elements of an ordinary Christian life” (n. 43).

⁹⁴ Cfr. *PI*, n° 43.

⁹⁵ Cfr. *ivi*; see also nn. 168-169 of this *ratio*.

⁹⁶ *PI*, n° 43.

⁹⁷ *LSAC*, n° 78.

present a written request to the Major Superior; be considered suitable with moral certainty, considering age and level of formation, to belong to the Society⁹⁸. When assessing the suitability of the candidate, attention must be given to the following aspects: level of human integration (affective and social); ability to live and co-operate in a community; knowledge of Pallottine spirituality and activity. The admission to first consecration, in the interests of both the candidate and the community, caution and prudence are again required, even more so than for admission to the period of Preparatory Formation⁹⁹.

⁹⁸ Cfr. *CG*, n° 911; *LSAC* n° 297.

⁹⁹ Cfr. *CG*, nn. 913 and 877; *LSAC*, n° 297.

CHAPTER VII

PREPARATION FOR THE ORDAINED
MINISTRY AND PERPETUAL
CONSECRATION

270. [Preamble] St. Vincent Pallotti held that people have often turned back after the first consecration. Hence he insisted that “in order to live in the most perfect imitation of the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ [...] it is necessary [...] to *move always forward* and grow in holiness and evangelical perfection”¹. He sought to promote simultaneously a spiritual, scientific and ministerial culture as inseparable aspects of this growth². In fact, speaking of the formation of the temporarily professed, the Church teaches, “the elements of the education should be so harmoniously fused that it will help to integrate the lives of the religious”³. She also insists that “in individual institutes, after first profession, the formation of all members is to be continued, so that they may lead the life proper to the institute in a fuller way and make themselves more capable fulfilling its mission”⁴.

271. [The earlier Documents] This chapter of the *ratio* intends to replace neither the *Directives for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*⁵, nor the document on *The Brothers of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate*⁶. It seeks

¹ OCCC VII, pp. 63-64. See also n° 36 of this *ratio*.

² OCCC I, pp. 171-177. See also n° 17 of this *ratio*.

³ PC, n° 18.

⁴ PI, n° 58.

⁵ Society of the Catholic Apostolate, *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, Roma, 1989.

⁶ Society of the Catholic Apostolate, *The Brothers of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate*, Rome 1995. We also drawn attention to the letter of the Rector General,

rather to summarise their content and update them with new aspects in order to constitute a *harmonious and integral whole*. Hence, it is not proposed to have two different chapters for the formation of the Priests and Brothers of our Society, but within each paragraph the differing structures and content can be distinguished.

GOAL AND CHALLENGES

272. [Harmony] Our law foresees that “the Provinces, in applying the principles and norms of the Fundamental law to their own situations, will ensure that the components of our formation – human, intellectual spiritual and apostolic – attain their integration through a continually developing process which involves the whole person and every aspect of his life”⁷. Therefore the goal and challenges of this stage of Pallottine formation consist in assisting growth in scientific knowledge, in pastoral and professional abilities, in personal maturity and in the spiritual life in such a way that all of these aspects converge as harmoniously as possible. It means, above all, living responsibly in the community and participating fully in the realization of its apostolic tasks⁸. In fact, the Church affirms that all the different dimensions of formation should be directed towards the pastoral goal with the utmost harmony⁹.

Ludwig Muenz, addressed to all the members of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate on *The Brothers in our Society*, Rome 15 October 1982.

⁷ LSAC, n° 282.

⁸ CG n° 954. See also: “Our Formation in general, *Documents of the Twelfth Extraordinary, General Chapter of the SAC*, n° 4. Let us recall that Pallotti, right from the beginning, sought to establish at all the levels of formation a close and intimate link between spiritual culture, the ecclesiastical sciences and apostolic experience. See also n° 38 of this *ratio* on this point.

⁹ Cfr. OT, n°4; PD, n° 57.

273. [The new challenges] Often during this period, problems and challenges hitherto unknown, or else known but unresolved, become manifest. “Thus, for example, if in western society where individualism is rampant, the religious community is called to be a prophetic sign of the possibility of achieving fraternity and solidarity in Christ, in cultures where authoritarianism or communitarianism is rampant it is instead called to be a sign of respect for and of the promotion of the human person”¹⁰. In each different environment it is imperative to continue this process of integral formation, harmonizing the diverse aspects of the human, spiritual, intellectual and apostolic preparation.

274. [The difference in age and level] Even though all wish to become members of the Society, not every one enters in it with the same level of human and Christian culture or at the same age. Therefore, it is imperative to pay particular attention to every individual, especially those who find it hard to study due to their age, trying to progress at their own pace.

275. [The challenges of a Perpetual Commitment] The period in question leads to the perpetual consecration. Thus the confreres must walk in a state of life that is always *ad experimentum* towards a decision *for life*. The context in which we live today does not favor such a decision. It is a context in continuous evolution, putting everyone to the test – young and old, engaged couples, those who have opted for married or consecrated life. In some cultural contexts marked by family-break up and dwindling numbers in religious communities, commitment for life is not an easy option and requires deep trust. In fact, the modern society prefers mobility and fast-track human relations

¹⁰ *Fraternal Life in Community*, n° 52.

to stability, patient waiting and commitment for life, giving rise to a sense of superficiality and of continuous acceleration, thus creating a sense of *provisionality*¹¹. It is indispensable that one attains a sufficient level of maturity in order to make the right decision responsibly and “for the whole life”.

276. [Duration of the Period] The second stage of formation, beginning with the first consecration, ends for the candidate to priesthood, with priestly ordination. For the candidate to Brotherhood it ends with perpetual consecration. “The basic norms of formation are identical for the whole Society”¹². However, some Provinces provide for a period of intense preparation, away from the normal occupation, prior to the perpetual consecration. This custom deserves to be encouraged and extended¹³. A sufficiently long period of time needs to be provided to make formation an evolving process, permeating every stage of personal maturation from human and spiritual to theological and pastoral, but always according to the Statutes of the individual Provinces, which have developed the theological, intellectual, pastoral and professional formation of their students to suit their differing cultural contexts¹⁴. According to the *Directives for the Priestly Formation of the Students of Philosophy and Theology*, the philosophical studies last at least two years and theological studies at least four years¹⁵.

¹¹ VII Consultative Congress of Major Superiors of the SAC, Konstancin, 1-10 October 2002, p.17.

¹² Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 68,71, and 80. There are different structures for the postulancy, novitiate, philosophical and theological studies and other materials in India, in Africa, in Europe and in the Americas.

¹³ Cfr. *PI*, n° 64.

¹⁴ Cfr. *VC*, n° 65.

¹⁵ Cfr. nn. 57 and 61.

THE CONCEPT, CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY OF THIS STAGE

277. [The houses and schools of communion] After the introductory period and first consecration, our confreres have already been introduced into community life, into its rules and into experiences of the spiritual life. Albeit in a different atmosphere, it is necessary, all the same, to continue the process of *harmonious integration* of the different aspects of the human, apostolic, spiritual, and intellectual preparation. Since our formation unfolds against the background of an ecclesiology and a spirituality of communion¹⁶, we must consider them a gift both of our Founder and of Vatican Council II to our times; it is the spirit in which our candidates need to be formed. For this reason, it is important to form our members in the spirit of the Union of Catholic apostolate, making our communities of formation into houses and schools of communion¹⁷.

278. [In the Union, with the Union, for the Union] An essential element of our formation at this stage is, through community experience, insertion into and involvement in the Union of Catholic Apostolate. The formation programme must make provision for this experience and facilitate the opening up of members in formation to all the faithful of the Church. As far as possible, the formation programme of the UAC should be adapted to the formation of our members. Consequently, through their daily life, their life in the community, their pastoral and professional experiences, their relationship with God and with

¹⁶ Cfr. *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, op. cit. n° 7; *VC*, nn. 46-54; *RdC*, nn° 28-31; *NMI*, n° 43. See also nn. 107-108 of this *ratio*.

¹⁷ Cfr. *NMI*, n° 43 and *RdC*, n° 28.

others, our members will be formed in a culture and an attitude of collaboration and sharing in the heart of the Church. Thus they will be helped to understand and live deeply the charism of our Society to serve better the Church and all of humanity.

279. [The demands of studies] This period of formation is to reap the benefits of the preceding stage and to follow up one's spiritual and human growth, while courageously pursuing whatever one is engaged in. The maintaining of the spiritual impulse imported during Preparatory Formation is all the more important as one's passage to academic studies or to professional training demands a close collaboration between all the dimensions of formation. It means, for example, conforming one's academic pursuits to the demands of the institute in which one studies. "Such studies should not be planned with a view to achieving personal goals, as if they were a means of wrongly-understood self-fulfillment, but rather with a view to responding to the requirements of the apostolic commitments of the religious family itself, in harmony with the needs of the Church"¹⁸. Where our students pursue their studies in institutes not belonging to the Society, it falls on the local Pallottine community to organize their formation that will continue their introduction to Pallottine identity and spirituality.

280. [Unity of life] Every member of the SAC must take to heart the great challenges facing the Church and the world of today. This assimilation gives rise to an inevitable tension and a cross to bear: to reconcile one's personal charism with that of the community. Every vocation is simultaneously personal and communitarian. While the

¹⁸ *PI*, n° 65.

community must assist in realizing the charism of each member, availability for one's duties is demanded of every member. To prepare themselves for this, members should develop in themselves a balanced attitude between action and contemplation, between holiness and apostolate, between the universal and the particular, between quantity and quality, between¹⁹ individual commitment and cooperation with all etc. In this way, one tends towards unity of life: in fidelity to Christ and to the Gospel, to the Church and to its mission in the world, to religious life and to our charism, to human beings and to our times²⁰.

281. [The universal pedagogy] Throughout the entire Pallottine formative itinerary, it is important and necessary to practice a universal pedagogy. Pallotti, in fact, praises a universality of methods and means. His pedagogy is not inextricably bound to any particular spirituality, method or formula. It is open, inclusive and universal, at the service of the unity of charisms in the heart of the Church. Consequently, Pallottine pedagogy must facilitate the cooperation of all the necessary and opportune methods, schools and means useful in formation for a universal apostolate carried out in the footsteps of Christ the Apostle²¹.

THE PERSON CALLED

282. [The One Called] After Preparatory Formation, confreres in temporary consecration must realize that it is they who are primarily responsible for their own formation. “The one called [...] is ceaselessly invited to give a response that is ever diligent, responsible and new”²². In

¹⁹ See, for example, n° 73 of this *ratio*.

²⁰ Cfr. *PI*, n°18.

²¹ Cfr. nn. 70-71 of this *ratio*.

²² Cfr. *PI*, n° 29.

other words, “responsibility for the growth of the vocation rests above all with the candidate himself. [...]. His response must always be a new and continual “yes”, even when the situation changes or various difficulties arise”²³. Thus, during the years of studies and of professional training, the person called should form himself continuously in the human, spiritual and apostolic dimensions, developing, together with his formators, a program of personalized formation. This is especially important in resolving problems arising out of one's family background and difficulties in integrating oneself into the community.

283. [Candidates to the ordained Ministry] In laying down the dispositions required for the second period of formation for those aspiring to Sacred Orders, the Provinces must take into account the norms of the universal Church²⁴. “The formation of members who are aspiring to receive holy orders is regulated by universal law and by the programme of studies proper to the institute”²⁵. The norms based on the universal laws of the Church find their concrete expression in the ordinances of the Episcopal Conferences, which are binding also for members of the Society²⁶. The formulation of every programme should respect “the internal unity of teaching and the harmoniza-

²³ *Guidelines for the Priestly formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, op. cit. n° 86.

²⁴ Here is meant, above all, the texts of the Second Vatican Council: *Perfectae Caritatis ad Optateam totius*; of two Apostolic Exhortations of Pope John Paul II: *Pastores dabo Vobis* (1992) and *Vita Consecrata* (1994); of the two documents of the Congregation for Catholic Education: *Ratio Fundamental Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (1985) and *Directives for the Preparation of the Educators in the Seminaries* (1993); of three texts of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life: *Potissimum institutioni* (1990), the *Inter-Institute Collaboration in Formation* (1999), *Starting Afresh from Christ, A Renewed Commitment to Consecrated Life in the Third Millennium* (2002).

²⁵ *PI*, n° 103; With respect to ourselves, this refers to the *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of the SAC*.

²⁶ Cfr. *CG*, n° 959.

tion of different disciplines. Religious must be aware that there are not many different sciences, but one alone which they must learn: the science of faith and of the Gospel. In this regard, it is necessary to avoid conducting too many courses and disciplines together”²⁷.

284. [The reciprocal enrichment] Especially for the candidates to the priesthood, the role of priesthood for the person himself and for the UAC should be clarified. The mission proper to the priesthood, the apostolic aim of the UAC and the individual charism of the Pallottine priest should grow as a single personal project. The member will learn to nourish himself on the spirituality of the Pallottine community and at the same time on that of the priesthood: to announce the Gospel, to accompany the Christian community and to administer the sacraments. As a priest, he must acquire in community a special availability for service to the UAC and to the universal Church. At the same time, the community demands his availability for the internal spiritual and administrative duties: Rector, Bursar, Secretary etc. The ideal would be not to juxtapose religious life and the exercise of sacred orders, but to fuse the two elements into one original whole. In fact, the priestly consecration is assumed, qualified and enlivened by the very spirit and mission of the Pallottine consecration while conversely, itself assuring, enriching and making fertile the pastoral identity of the Pallottine vocation²⁸.

²⁷ *PI*, n° 61.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, nn 102-109; “The formation of the religious priest must take into account his future insertion into the presbyterate of a particular church, above all if he has to exercise a ministry there, keeping in mind, however, the characteristics of each institute” (n° 109).

285. [The Brothers] The principles of a common formation for all the members of the Society are well established²⁹. However, while the pastoral task of the priest seems to be well defined, the role and mission of the brothers demand an in-depth study on the part of the formators, the members and the candidates themselves. “The law of the society, n.304, gives a great impulse to the spiritual, professional, cultural and theological formation of the brothers”³⁰. According to the document on brothers, “all the brothers must receive training in Philosophy and Theology, without necessarily being bound to the system of preparation for candidates to the priesthood. This is necessary in our time for all people committed to God and humanity”³¹. In other words, the brothers should be offered the same right of formation, and also of specialization, as all other members of the Society. This holds true also for the pastoral formation. To realize this, the superiors must provide the necessary space and the time to brothers after their first consecration, without immediately assigning them tasks that would exclude further formation³².

286. [Common and proper elements] It appears to be of the utmost importance to underline in formation elements that are common for all the members of the Society: the consecration to God, the universal apostolic spirit, the spirit of service and openness, the love, the communion and ecclesial collaboration etc. On the other hand, it is

²⁹ *Cfr. LSAC*, nn. 67-71. Before speaking of the different dimensions of our formation, the special challenge facing our communities in providing for an adequate formation for the Brothers should be underlined. The role of the Brothers have changed much in recent times, depending on the different national and cultural environments. Consideration must be given to their descending numbers, and consequently to their situation of being a minority.

³⁰ *The Brothers of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate*, nn. 22-36.

³¹ *Ibidem*

³² *Cfr. Ivi*, nn. 22-36.

necessary to offer the brothers special elements in their formation, so that their choice of vocation in our community is not based on an incapacity to fulfill the academic requirements of priesthood, but on their personal vocation and charism of desiring to contribute to the works of the apostolate. This involves, besides their professional training, their theological and pastoral formation, so that they are capable of serving in the various fields of the apostolate and are kept up to date with current problems of life and faith³³. Especially in our institutes of theology, it is proposed to have a common formation for the seminarians and brothers. This would favour a mutual enrichment, especially since we are a community of brothers and priests. Depending on the circumstances, both groups could spend a certain period of time together, without overlooking the formation proper to the brothers, demonstrating clearly its role and the importance of the lay dimension in our community.

FORMATORS AND THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

287. [The Protagonists of formation] The entire Society has the privilege and responsibility of accompanying those called by the Lord to become priests and brothers in our community³⁴. However, a special responsibility falls on the General Council, assisted by the General Secretariat for Formation, and on the Provincial Councils³⁵. In fact, every Province must take care to train a sufficient number of members for formation and teaching; to decide upon content, organization and duration; to ensure that the norms of common laws are observed, that the charism of the So-

³³ Cfr. *The Brothers of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate*, nn. 29-32.

³⁴ Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 70.

³⁵ Cfr. *ivi*, nn. 71-73. *Guidelines for the work and collaboration of the Secretariat for Formation with the General Council*, n° 1.

ciety is given prominence, that the socio-cultural environment is taken into account and that a fundamental unity is maintained in formation in the whole Society³⁶.

288. [The formators] Primarily responsible for the formation in a seminary or in a house of formation is the teaching community to which is entrusted the human, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral, communitarian and Pallottine formation of the candidates. This community is made up of different formators: the Rector, the Spiritual director, the Prefect of the students and the professors. In accordance with the long experience of the universal Church, a distinction is made in formation between the internal and the external forum, in order to facilitate a profound opening up of candidates³⁷. According to various authorities in pedagogy, psychology, culture and other human sciences, it seems important also to involve other people in the work of forming the future priests and brothers of our Society: members of the UAC, including sisters, of other religious institutes, and other lay faithful, men and women, as well as diocesan and religious priests³⁸.

289. [Formation of the Formators] The future of the preparation of our candidates depends, to a great extent, on the selection and formation of the formators. Already the Second Vatican Council had spoken of the importance of formators and their preparation³⁹. It is the joint responsi-

³⁶ Cfr. *CG*, n° 955. See also *Directives for the Priestly Formation of the Students of Philosophy and Theology*, nn. 87-88; *The Brothers of the SAC*, n° 28.

³⁷ Cfr. *PDV*, nn. 61 and 66; *CG*, n° 840; *Directives for the Preparation of Educators in the Seminaries*, nn. 44 and 61; In the Church, the different areas of her operation and power of governance are distinguished. i.e. the *external forum* (forum externum), and the *internal forum* (forum internum) which in turn is divided into the *internal sacramental forum* and *internal non-sacramental forum*. For this distinction between *external forum* and *internal forum*, see *CG*, nn. 176-180.

³⁸ Cfr. *PDV*, n° 66.

³⁹ Cfr. *OT*, n° 5.

bility of the Provincial and his Consultors to select suitable confreres for educational work⁴⁰. For this ministry it is necessary to select priests and brothers of exemplary life, capable of making themselves *ever more* suitable for the task entrusted to them and possessing numerous qualities: pastoral experience, professional competence, a living love for our Founder, a lived experience of the Pallottine identity, a spirit of communion and collaboration, a knowledge of the ways of building up the community, a readiness to listen, human maturity, openness to the culture, experience in seeking God in prayer and in human beings, the art of the discernment of spirits, a profound spirit of faith and of love for the Church⁴¹. In fact, Pallotti expected that a formator be, above all, a *man of God*, and offer himself, *day and night*, to his mission⁴².

290. [The Community as the place of formation] Confreres in formation are called to build a community in which every single member can feel at home. In it, “each one learns to live with those whom God has placed with him, accepting their positive characteristics as well as their differences and limitations”⁴³. This would meet the expectations of many young people today who are looking for a life in community. Our task is to help them to build an ecclesial space through community celebrations and prayers, dialogue, mutual openness, reconciliation and hospitality, without masking the problems that exist. To fulfill this task it is necessary that, for the entire duration of this stage, the formators teach to realize this process of the

⁴⁰ Cfr. *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, n° 88; See also the *Final Document of the XVIII General Assembly*, n° 7.1.

⁴¹ Cfr. *PDV*, nn. 66-67; *VC*, n° 66; *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, nn. 89-90.

⁴² Cfr. n° 54 of this *ratio*.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

building up of the community⁴⁴. During the period of formation it is also necessary to pursue a proper balance, not always easy to achieve, between respect for the person and the common good, between the demands and necessities of every single member and those of the formative community, between personal charisms and the apostolic aim of the community, a balance “as far from a fragmenting individualism as it is from a levelling communitarianism”⁴⁵. The formators need to help our candidates to recognize that the religious community is the place where the daily tedious passage from the “I” to the “we”, from “my commitment” to “that of the community”, from the search for “my things” to the search for the “things of Christ”⁴⁶, occurs.

291. [The need to be “formed together”] Another privileged place for Pallottine formation is a community made up of priests, brothers, sisters and lay people as the visible expression of a particular experience of ecclesial life founded on communion. Because of this, the participation and collaboration of all the members of the UAC in the process of the formation of our candidates is very important⁴⁷. Hence it is recommended that ample space be provided for experiences of Pallottine formation with the reciprocal collaboration of the SAC and the other entities of the UAC, thus seeking the greatest possible understanding and clarity of our identity and of our charism⁴⁸. This collaboration for formation in the context of the UAC must be effected in the various areas, from the promotion of

⁴⁴ Cfr. *Fraternal Life in Community*, nn. 11-43.

⁴⁵ *Fraternal Life in Community*, n° 39.

⁴⁶ Cfr. *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ Cfr. *Memory and Prophecy of the Union of Catholic Apostolate*, n° 36.

⁴⁸ *Final Document of the XVIII General Assembly*, n° 7.1.

vocations to ongoing formation, through the formation of the young professed and that of the formators⁴⁹.

METHODS AND MEANS

The Human Dimension

292. [Towards Human Maturity]⁵⁰ Human development is one of the most important matters in any life lived in the continuous search for God. During this stage of formation, the main concern is to discover and develop one's talents and potentialities, to be conscious of one's weaknesses and limits, to develop the ability to work with others, to learn to use one's free time well, to adapt oneself to new conditions of life and to different mentalities, and to persevere in prayer in spite of one's work commitments. In the course of this growing self-awareness, wrong and dangerous dependencies must be identified - persons, habits and also television, mass media, alcohol etc. - and fought against. As even religious life in communities knows periods of 'desert', it is important not to separate oneself from it in such difficult moments. It is also necessary to appreciate the help of psychology as a formative tool which promotes the self-awareness of the person with respect to questions to be answered and problems to be solved. While making use of the instruments of psychology, one needs to remain attentive to the precedent concept of man and of religious life⁵¹.

293. [Affective Maturity] The capacity to relate to the other, a truly existential element for someone called to be a man of

⁴⁹ Ivi, n° 7.3.

⁵⁰ Cfr. OT, n° 11; *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, nn. 22-29; See also chapter III of this *ratio*, nn. 163-167.

⁵¹ See nn. 118-121 of this *ratio*.

cooperation and communion, is of particular importance⁵². It is in this context that the importance of formation in affective maturity is considered, i.e. an education to responsible love, involving the whole person in his physical, spiritual and psychological dimensions; an education in sexuality which makes room for an esteem for celibacy and chastity lived in joy and fidelity; an education of the moral conscience for a mature and responsible freedom which takes the form of a convinced and cheerful obedience to the sincere gift of oneself⁵³. The entire Pallottine formation to the ordained ministry and to consecrated life would be devoid of foundation if attention were not given to this human dimension.

The Spiritual Dimension

294. [The maintaining of the spiritual momentum] The spiritual dimension constitutes an element of utmost importance in Pallottine education and, without it, the apostolic dimension would go on without a foundation. "Retaining the spiritual enthusiasm given in Preparatory Formation is all the more necessary since, in a Society such as ones dedicated to the universal apostolate, the change to a more open lifestyle and to very demanding activities often runs the risk of disorientation and aridity"⁵⁴. This dimension must constitute the *heart* that unifies and vivifies the *being* and *doing* of the Pallottine priest and brother. Beyond the specifically Pallottine elements, it is also necessary to indicate the rules which apply to all who dedicate themselves seriously to the spiritual and religious life. These include, among others, growing in the choice

⁵² Cfr. PDV, n° 43 and n° 107 of this *ratio*.

⁵³ Cfr. *ibidem*, n° 44 and 50. See also: *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology* nn. 26-29.

⁵⁴ PI, n° 59.

of God as everything in one's life, the constant rhythm of participation in the liturgy and in community prayer, the discovery of the value of external and internal silence, giving oneself ample time and space to be alone with God, to imitate Mary, Queen of the Apostles, model of faith and apostolic zeal, and know and love the Church⁵⁵. Since every person needs help to arrive at a more profound self-awareness, it is indispensable to find a spiritual director and remain faithful to him⁵⁶.

295. [Conformation to Christ] The chief preoccupation of Pallottine formation must be the initiation into the *following of Christ*, since “the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ is the fundamental rule of our little Society”⁵⁷. In fact, St. Vincent Pallotti understands the formative itinerary as a learning to imitate Christ, *sent by the Father*. It consists in cooperating with God and with our brothers and sisters for the salvation of humanity. According to our founder, those who cooperate in the salvation of souls are the most perfect imitators of Jesus Christ, who came upon this earth to accomplish the work of the salvation of souls for the glory of the heavenly Father⁵⁸. It means, above all, helping the attitudes laid out by Pallotti in the “Daily Practical Memorandum” to grow: trust in God, not seeking one's own glory but an infinite love for the glory of the Father and the salvation of souls, the docility of His Heart, joy, the spirit of sacrifice, of service, of humility, of simplicity, of sobriety, of apostolic zeal and of mercy⁵⁹. Only in the context of conformity to Christ can one live the evangelical counsels with joy and as a comprehensible sign. The

⁵⁵ Cfr. Chapter II of this *ratio*.

⁵⁶ Cfr. *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, nn. 45-51.

⁵⁷ OOCC III, p.42; see also nn. 31 and 85-90 of this *ratio*

⁵⁸ Cfr. OOCC XI, p. 256; See also nn. 42 and 64 of this *ratio*.

⁵⁹ Cfr. OOCC III, pp. 34-39; See also n° 89 of this *ratio*.

foundation of this conformity to Christ is faithful meditation on the Word of God, which must be an essential element of the spiritual dimension during the entire formative itinerary⁶⁰. One needs to know and deepen ways of reading and praying with the Bible, individually and in the community, participate in the liturgy and especially in the daily Eucharist, practice the examination of life, *lectio divina*, the liturgy of the hours etc⁶¹.

296. [The life of prayer and the value of silence] “The first and fundamental form of response to the Word of God is prayer which constitutes, without doubt, a primary value and requirement for spiritual formation”⁶². Cultivating the spirit of personal and community prayer “we follow the teaching and example of our Founder, who achieved a harmony between his union with God in prayer and his apostolic zeal, knowing how to give an apostolic character to prayer itself”⁶³. In fact, “prayer and apostolate are essentially inseparable. Our apostolic work will remain fruitless if we do not remain united with God through prayer. Therefore, our apostolate must begin with prayer, return to it and become prayer itself”⁶⁴. In an atmosphere of agitation and disturbance such as in our present day society, an education in the religious value of silence and solitude is necessary. “Holy silence disposes us to holy prayer – writes St. Vincent Pallotti –; and holy prayer and holy silence lead us to intimate union with God. Whoever does

⁶⁰ Cfr. PDV, n° 47; *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, No. 48; *The Brothers of the SAC*, n° 47.

⁶¹ Cfr. PI, nn. 61 and 76. *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of the Students of Philosophy and Theology*, nn. 46-51; *Encyclical on the Eucharist* (2003). Congregation for Catholic Education, *Instruction on the Liturgical Formation in Seminaries*, Roma 1979.

⁶² PDA, n° 47.

⁶³ LSAC, n° 42.

⁶⁴ *Documents of the Twelfth, Extraordinary, General Chapter*. “Our Spiritual Exercises”, n° 4.

not love silence and prayer, by that very fact, does not desire intimate union with God”⁶⁵.

297. [Spiritual Direction] Following the tradition of the first desert Fathers, the founders of religious families and our holy Founder in matters concerning spiritual direction⁶⁶, every house of formation, especially those with a large number of the temporarily professed, must designate at least one person as spiritual director for the young people in this stage of formation. This spiritual direction “which cannot be replaced by the psycho-pedagogical sciences”⁶⁷, must be promoted by the availability of competent and qualified people. Their principal responsibilities are: discernment of the action of God, accompanying the candidate in the ways of God, nourishing their lives with sound doctrine and the practice of prayer, helping them to evaluate the past, helping them to know and appreciate the Pallottine charism and to discover the joy and the beauty of the sacrament of penance⁶⁸.

298. [The Life of Consecration] Formation to the consecrated life consists in deepening one’s awareness of the gift of consecration and in adopting a life-style, which is an expression of a complete dedication to God and to one’s neighbour⁶⁹. Whether it be candidates for the ordained ministry or for brotherhood, all should be motivated by the profound knowledge that consecrating oneself to God means service to people and service to people

⁶⁵ OCCC III, p. 44.

⁶⁶ See nn. 55-60 of this *ratio*.

⁶⁷ *PI*, n° 63.

⁶⁸ Cfr. *PI*, n° 63; *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, n° 50; *The Brothers of the Society of the Catholic apostolate*, No. 53.

⁶⁹ Cfr. *LSAC*, nn. 18-19; See also Chapter IV of this *ratio*.

means consecrating oneself to God⁷⁰. Education to chastity, poverty, obedience, sharing of resources, spirit of service and perseverance finds its place in the spiritual formation of the future Pallottine priest or brother within the perspective of the love of Christ⁷¹, which “is the motivating force behind our consecration for life and which infuses in us fresh strength every day”⁷².

The Intellectual Dimension

299. [Intellectual Growth] The present phenomenon of pluralism, not only in the ambit of human society but also in the ecclesial community, demands a particular attitude to critical discernment and makes the need for a serious intellectual formation obvious⁷³. According to Pallotti, “it is not enough that the priest is holy, he must be also learned”⁷⁴. In fact, studies should not be relegated to the level of an exterior or secondary component of human, Christian, spiritual, and vocational growth of the future Pallottine priest or brother. Through the study of philosophy and the modern sciences which have as their object of study the world, human beings and culture, and above all through the study of theology, he grows in his human and spiritual life and prepare himself for his apostolic mission.

300. [Philosophical Formation] Care must be taken to provide a suitable and basic philosophical formation which al-

⁷⁰ Cfr. *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, n° 37; *The Brothers of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate*, n° 25.

⁷¹ Cfr. *LSAC*, nn. 18-41 and nn. 218-247; *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, nn. 39-44; *The Brothers of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate*, nn. 33-35.

⁷² *Documents of the 12th Extraordinary, General Assembly*, “Our Consecration”, n° 6.

⁷³ Cfr. *PDV*, n° 51.

⁷⁴ *OCC I*, p.171; See also n° 43 of this *ratio*.

lows the acquisition of knowledge of God and a Christian vision of the world, of human beings and of culture, in close connection with the questions discussed in our times and especially those having a bearing on the Pallottine charism⁷⁵. In practical terms it would mean emphasizing a “suitable and complete interdisciplinary Christian anthropology”⁷⁶, which underscores the beauty of the world, the infinite value of human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, our ability to communicate, to dialogue and to cooperate, and sensitivity towards the marginalized and those deprived of the basic necessities. The study of philosophy also awakens in the students the desire to search for truth, to safeguard and affirm it, always taking into account the limits of human understanding; it must equip them with the capacity to confront current ideologies, to have own convictions and to trust in their reasoning power, while not denying the importance of faith.

301. [Theological Studies] In the program of studies, the first place should be accorded to Biblical, dogmatic, moral, pastoral and spiritual theology, with an in-depth study of the doctrinal aspect of consecrated life in harmony with the charism of the Society. For this reason, particular emphasis will be given to an ecclesiology and spirituality of communion, to ecumenical theology and inter-religious dialogue, to a theology of the apostolate and missiology⁷⁷. Following the understanding of the Founder and the teaching of the Church, it must be kept in mind that the “intellectual theological formation and the spiritual life, particularly the life of prayer, encounter and rein-

⁷⁵ Cfr. *PI*, n° 61; *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, nn. 55-57.

⁷⁶ See no. 115 of this *ratio*.

⁷⁷ Cfr. *OT* 16; *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Theology and Philosophy*, n° 61.

force one another, without taking anything away from either the seriousness of research or the spiritual flavour of prayer”⁷⁸. Besides this, a living dialogue between teachers and students should be encouraged in order to achieve in daily life a living incarnation of what is learned, to reflect on the current questions and thus to develop a contextualized theology.

302. [The Institutes of Theology and Philosophy] In the present situation, while there are many Pallottine Provinces and Regions, which have their own institutes of Philosophy and Theology, there are also instances where our students attend faculties run by the state or inter-institute centres of formation. In the former case, it is our task to pay attention to the completeness of the philosophical and theological materials, in order to put forward their content in a didactically adequate manner. In fact, every institute of ours should make the effort to add emphases corresponding to our charism to the basic program of studies⁷⁹. If this is not provided in the courses offered by the other institutes, then these should be complemented with additional courses corresponding to our program of studies and formation. In any case, the intellectual formation in the inter-institute centres must take advantage of the aspects common to all and respect and appreciate the diversity. Otherwise, these centres would only contribute to a leveling, with the risk of spiritual and pastoral uniformity, thus also harmful to the specific Pallottine identity⁸⁰.

⁷⁸ *PDV*, n° 53; cfr. *OCC* I, pp. 173-174.

⁷⁹ Cfr. *OT*, nn. 13-17; *The Inter-institute Collaboration in Formation*, n° 22; *Directives for the Priestly Formation of the Students of Philosophy and Theology*, nn. 54-64.

⁸⁰ Cfr. *The inter-institute Collaboration in Formation*, n° 9.

303. [Collaboration among the different entities of the SAC and UAC] Extreme care needs to be taken in the proper preparation of educators and professors, in order to ensure that a level corresponding to the needs of the times and of our charism is maintained in the studies. Such an aim could be achieved by designating priests and brothers for specialized studies, by giving attention to the preparation of professors for teaching, and above all, by creating centres of Pallottine formation and studies in collaboration with different entities of the UAC⁸¹. In fact, “there are, in our Pallottine communities, problems that could be resolved only with a common effort”⁸². Consequently, collaboration among the Pallottine entities should be developed during this phase of formation. Themes and topics of common interest to all members of the Union should be dealt with in common weeks of study and congresses, or in small groups composed of different communities.

304. [Inter-institute collaboration at the level of formation.] Inter-institute collaboration in formation is born of the necessity to give a response to the challenges posed by concrete situations and specific pedagogical needs. In fact, in all the continents, different circumstances have forced the numerous institutions to pool together their formational resources, be it personnel or institutions, and collaborate in this so very important task, which has become impossible for them to fulfill alone⁸³. There are many reasons for this collaboration: the desire for a greater ecclesial unity and communion, the development of a valid

⁸¹ Cfr. *Final Document of the XVIII General Assembly*, nn. 7.2 and 7.3; *Directives for the Priestly Formation of the Students of Philosophy and Theology*, n° 63.

⁸² The Consultative Congress of the Major Superiors, *The Charism and Gift of Collaboration*, p.17.

⁸³ Cfr. *Inter-institute Collaboration in Formation*, n° 3; *PI*, n° 98.

style of formation, the appreciation of specific charisms and sharing of them, the development of communion and of an awareness of complementarity in brotherhood, openness to the horizons of charity in the local and universal Church⁸⁴. All of these reasons so coincide with the thinking of our Founder and the dynamism of our charism that the fostering of inter-institute collaboration in formation must become our passion in the heart of the local and universal Church⁸⁵.

305. [The Forming Community and Inter-institute Centres] In every form of inter-institute collaboration it is necessary to make the proper distinction between the inter-institute centre and the community of Pallottine formators. The forming community, which no centre can substitute, is the primary point of reference, and forms the immediate environment in which the personal identity of each one and his response to the vocation received grow and mature in the Pallottine spirit and in the tradition of the Society. This community, therefore, always remains the vital synthesis of the whole formative experience⁸⁶.

The Apostolic dimension

306. [An Apostolic Commitment] True maturation of a Pallottine requires an apostolic commitment and a progressive participation in social and ecclesial experiences along the lines of our charism, taking into account the personal attitudes and aspirations⁸⁷. Because this dimension of formation is not an addition but an integral part of the

⁸⁴ Cfr. *Inter-institute Collaboration in Formation*, nn. 3-7; *RdC*, n°30.

⁸⁵ Cfr. nn. 107-108 of this *ratio*.

⁸⁶ Cfr. *Inter-institute Collaboration in Formation*, n° 10; *PI*, n° 99.

⁸⁷ Cfr. *PI*, n° 62.

studies and of the life of community and of prayer⁸⁸, courses in pastoral and practical theology, catechetics, liturgy, pedagogy, sociology, the social teachings of the Church and the sciences of social communication will be very useful⁸⁹. However, the apostolic dimension is realized, above all, through pastoral practice, be it during the course of studies, during holidays, or during a special time set apart for it according to the needs and possibilities of each Province or Region⁹⁰.

307. [The need for Coordination] During this second phase of formation, it is important to harmonize what is learned with practical experience. In fact, the documents of the Church insist on the need for proper coordination between the different aspects of human, spiritual and intellectual formation and, at the same time, on their specific apostolic aim. In that sense, the apostolic aim assures a specific content and precise characteristics to the human, spiritual, communitarian, intellectual and Pallottine dimension. The commitment to various fields of work – social, in hospitals, with the marginalized, with the youth, in pastoral care – must be selected so as to offer members in formation the possibility of familiarizing themselves with the particular problems of their future ministry and be in touch with the reality yet not known. The apostolic experiences should be prepared and subsequently evaluated through discussion and study⁹¹. Finally, students must be

⁸⁸ Cfr. n° 17 and 44 of this *ratio*.

⁸⁹ Cfr. *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, n° 73.

⁹⁰ What is meant here is pastoral experience which could converge into a true and proper 'pastoral training' and which could be of different duration either before or after priestly ordination. For example, the *Period of Deepening* introduced in Rwanda, Cameroon and Tanzania, or the Pallottine Pastoral Institute in Germany for German Culture (Pastoral Theologisches Institut der Pallottiner – Friedberg).

⁹¹ Cfr. *OT*, nn. 19-21; *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, nn. 68-77.

given the opportunity to share their experiences among themselves and with their guide⁹². Only in this manner can apostolic aptitudes and habits be formed: the spirit of initiative, the art of cooperation, the capacity to unify one's prayer life and apostolate, love of God and neighbour⁹³.

308. [Formation and the apostolic goal] Formation, in itself, makes no sense if not oriented towards the apostolic aims of our Society. As the formation, so the apostolate⁹⁴. The Union of Catholic apostolate, of which the Society of the Catholic Apostolate is a central community and an integral part, understands itself as "a way of being the church"⁹⁵, and rediscovers communion and cooperation as its constitutional principle. Therefore, the Pallottine must be formed to live with the awareness of having received a mandate to cooperate in the salvation of humanity, deepening his sensitivity and availability for the universal and communitarian apostolate in friendly cooperation with other Church personnel: diocesan priests, men and women religious, lay men and women. The apostolic commitment of the SAC requires a deeper knowledge of some topics such as ecumenical initiatives, the mission *ad gentes*, inter-religious dialogue, the social apostolate and the apostolate of social communications⁹⁶. A profound knowledge of the living conditions of the people also belongs to any preparation for the apostolate. In other words, it involves being able to say with St. Paul: "I have

⁹² *Guidelines for the Priestly Formation of Students of Philosophy and Theology*, n° 74.

⁹³ Cfr. *PL*, n°17; *VC*, n° 67.

⁹⁴ Cfr. n° 33 of this *ratio*.

⁹⁵ Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 4; Final Document of the XVI General Assembly, *Journeying and Serving Together*, n°16.

⁹⁶ Cfr. Congregation for Catholic Education, *Orientations for the Formation of the Future Priests concerning the Instruments of Social Communication*, nn. 205-210; Society of the Catholic Apostolate, *The Apostolate of the Society today*, Development and Challenge, n° 49.

become all things to all people” (1Cor. 9, 22b). This requires a growing sensitivity to material and spiritual poverty, to suffering, violence, sickness and the basic human needs⁹⁷.

The Communitarian Dimension

309. [To walk and serve together] “Since formation must also be communitarian, its privileged place for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, is the community”⁹⁸. In fact, the preparation for a total consecration of oneself to God in our Society is understood and realized in community life according to the evangelical counsels⁹⁹. This involves an initiation into the joys and pains of living together, of praying and working together, of entering together into a process of apostolic communitarian discernment, and putting all that we are and all that we have at the service of the apostolate¹⁰⁰. In such a context, the three Pallottine promises of *perseverance*, *sharing of resources* and the *spirit of service* express our way of “walking and serving together”. Consequently, the Pallottine formation at this stage should take care to form not just external expert collaborators but, above all, those within the community where reciprocity, the culture of cooperation and one’s own identity is built up in creative fidelity towards the community. All of these aspects should be understood as paths to be embarked upon¹⁰¹.

⁹⁷ Cfr. Ludwig Münz, *Our Poverty: The Rector General to all Members of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate*, Rome 1981, nn. 3-5.

⁹⁸ *VC*, n° 67.

⁹⁹ See Chapter IV of this *ratio*.

¹⁰⁰ Cfr. nn. 53 and 76 of this *ratio*.

¹⁰¹ Cfr. Documents of the Twelfth, Extraordinary, General Chapter, “Community Life”, nn. 1-6; See also nn. 72 and 76 of this *ratio*.

310. [A formation house that is open and missionary] During this phase, as during Preparatory Formation, formation to community life is realized by means of participation in the common life and through the practice of attitudes which favour such development, among which we underline: participation in prayer, feasts, in the recreation and other community gatherings, common planning of different programs, interest in the well-being of all the confreres, especially the sick and old, and continued interest in the principal events of the SAC and the UAC. But the true community is formed not only when a group of people are comfortable being together, but rather when they are bound together by a common charism given by the Lord for the common mission of the Church. Therefore, the community should not seek primarily its own sense of well-being but rather must show forth the apostolic and missionary dimension of our consecration. The virtue of hospitality serves this end. Especially in the West, a religious community with young members is a strong sign that would attract other young people, which allows room for reflection and prayer; it is a place for discovering one’s own vocation. To avoid formation becoming closed in on itself, apostolic works and the subsequent exchange of experiences gained in different human realities are of the utmost importance.

The Charismatic dimension

311. [Discovering the richness of the Charism] The Pallottine themes of Preparatory Formation are deepened and extended during this phase. With progress in studies, an understanding of the richness of our charism also grows. Without claiming completeness, it is useful to lay out the main topics to be dealt with during formation. Because ours is an apostolic community, active in various pastoral

fields, we are constantly and more easily tempted to forget the interior disposition required for the apostolate. Fidelity to one's charism must be deepened more and more each day through an increasing knowledge of the history of the Society and of the Union, its specific mission and the spirit of the Founder, in the contemporary effort to incarnate it in personal and communitarian life¹⁰².

312. [Formation for the Union] “If every member of the Union must already behave as if he or she were its founder, this is eminently true for the community of priests and brothers, which goes back to Pallotti himself”¹⁰³. The special co-responsibility of the Society for the apostolic efficacy and the spirituality of the whole work includes, therefore, concern for the sustenance of the Union by means of the spiritual and apostolic formation of its members. For this reason, in the first place, the directives contained in this *ratio* are decisive; in addition, the Manual of the Union *Called by Name* (Roma 1989), *the Guidelines for Formation for the UAC* (Roma 2001), and *the General Statutes of the UAC* (Rome 2003) also have a complementary and subsidiary function. Formation during this phase should, therefore, make the future Pallottine priests and brothers capable of entering into the spirit and dynamic of the Un-

¹⁰² Themes that require deepening, for example, are: the significance of 1835 in the Pallottine foundation; the tension between the global vision of the Work of the Universal Apostolate and its realization in the Founder; the UAC as the original foundation and not in conformity with the traditional understanding; the primacy of charity over structure; the missionary emphasis; the loss and the regaining of the original name of the foundation; the houses of London and the abazia di Masio as fertile grounds of vocations; commitment to the emigrant apostolate and to the *mission ad gentes*; the inspiration for the Schoenstatt movement and its problems; the expansion of the community and the development of the Provinces; the history of the other communities of the UAC; the Second Vatican Council and our charism; the extraordinary chapter of 1968/69; the jubilees of 1985 and 1995; the elaboration and approval of the General Statutes of the UAC.

¹⁰³ CG, n° 105; see also OCCC III, pp. 28-29.

ion, in order to fully live the Pallottine vocation. Pride of place should be given to the writings of St. Vincent Pallotti, to studies on the Founder and to Pallottine spirituality. The reading of Pallottine texts in small groups, study through discussion and debate, and scientific research under the guidance of a professor, all deserve to be encouraged.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

313. [Areas of Collaboration] Collaboration in the following areas would be opportune, in order to carry out studies and achieve a “Pallottineness” during this phase of formation: a. the foundation of inter-linked Continental Centres for Pallottine studies and for the formation of formators; b. collaboration among the different Pallottine entities and other institutes in the field of formation; c. the exchange of students and professors between the major seminaries of the SAC; d. doing part of the studies in another Pallottine community abroad in order to widen Pallottine horizons and learn other languages, in view of the international character of our community and of the UAC.

CHAPTER VIII

ONGOING FORMATION

INTRODUCTION

314. [A restrictive vision] Life is nourished continually and the years of initial formation are not to be interpreted as the time in which what is necessary for living is acquired once and for all, leaving nothing else to do but apply this. In fact, according to a restrictive vision, formation would be above all the ordinary formation that prepares the person to make their definitive choice and acquire maturity, as requirements and means to face the situations of life. Ordinary formation, while belonging to the time of growth and enthusiasm, would not however form part of successive periods. This kind of interpretation is probably responsible for phenomena of self-sufficiency in consecrated people who, after perpetual profession, have practically decided that they have no further need of any formation.

315. [The causal principle] It is worth the effort, also here, to remember the causal principle which links initial and ongoing formation¹: only an authentic initial formation opens one to successive formation for the rest of life, it also generates, requires and makes it indispensable. Therefore, ongoing formation is not that which comes after initial formation but – paradoxical as it may seem – is that which precedes it and makes it possible; it is the very source or the generating womb, which preserves it and gives it identity. Thus, if initial formation prepares one for Pallottine consecration, ongoing formation forms the con-

¹ Cfr. n° 231 of this *ratio*.

secrated Pallottine,² since it is ministry, the common life, the apostolate, everyday life, co-operation with God and with people etc. which are the primary and relevant place of formation.

316. [Natural links] Care of vocations is a crucial task for the future of our society. But since the Society is “an integral part of the Union of the Catholic Apostolate”³, the promotion of vocations cannot be delegated in an exclusive manner to a few “isolated specialists” from the entire Pallottine Family or from a true and proper ongoing formation. Every community whose members belong *a iure* to the Union⁴, is therefore called to awaken and liberate the profound questions of young people, while also rediscovering for themselves the fullness of Pallottine identity as they accompany them on their vocational journey. In other words, every Pallottine who is creatively faithful to his vocation and identity is, by nature, also a vocational animator for the whole union. In fact, whoever is “called” cannot fail to become “caller”, and whoever is a Pallottine of the SAC, cannot but be a Pallottine of the UAC. There is, therefore, a natural link between belonging to the Society and to the Union, as also there is between ongoing formation and vocational animation⁵.

317. [Formation is ongoing *per se*] According to Pallotti, consecrated life consists in “going *always forward* and growing *always* in sanctity and in evangelical perfection”⁶. In other words, formation is ongoing *per se*. Only by accepting this it is possible to subdivide time into periods, each

² Please note that in this chapter “Pallottines” always refers to brothers and priests. With regard to this, see: *CG*, nn. 716-721.

³ *LSAC*, n° 1.

⁴ Cfr. *General Statutes of the UAC*, n° 77.

⁵ *RdC*, n° 16. See also n° 17 of the same Instruction.

⁶ *OCC VII*, p. 64; See also nn. 36 and 45 of this *ratio*.

one with its own characteristics. In fact, “consecrated life itself, of its nature, calls for the constant openness of those who are called to it. If, in fact, consecrated life is in itself a *progressive taking on of the attitude of Christ*, it seems evident that such a path must endure for a lifetime and involve the *whole* person, heart, mind and strength (cfr. Mt 22, 37), reshaping the person in the likeness of the Son who gives himself to the Father for the good of humanity. Thus understood, formation is no longer only a teaching period in preparation for vows, but also represents a *theological* way of thinking of consecrated life which is in itself a never ending formation sharing in the work of the Father who, through the Spirit, fashions in the heart the inner attitudes of the Son”⁷.

318. [Creative fidelity] Our life of consecration in the SAC, like human life itself, is by its nature continuous and changeable⁸. For that reason, human maturation and development depend on the harmonization of these two elements and involve constant adhesion to the enduring aspects and values⁹, as well as the effort to incarnate them in the diverse circumstances and stages of Pallottine life. Understood in this dynamic, ongoing formation helps to integrate creativity into fidelity, to live through changes with continuity and through continuity with changes. Thus, ongoing formation is a demand of our creative fidelity to the Pallottine charism and identity¹⁰.

⁷ *RdC*, n° 15; *VC*, nn. 65-66.

⁸ Cfr. *VC*, n° 37.

⁹ See Chapter II of this *ratio*.

¹⁰ Cfr. *VC*, nn. 37 and 70. The same demand is underlined in the Instruction *RdC*, n° 18: “In a period of of profound changes, formation must be attentive to the need to plant in the hearts of young consecrated persons those human, spiritual and charismatic values necessary to make them suitable to carry out a *creative fidelity*, in the paths of the spiritual and apostolic tradition of the Institute”. See also: Séamus Freeman, *In a dynamism of fidelity*, Rome 1996, n° 2; Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, *Ongoing formation as creative fidelity*, Rome 2002, n° 2.

319. [Formation according to the LSAC] The Law of our Society envisages three periods of formation, tending to flow into each other for the whole span of life¹¹. In this way, in the truest sense of the word, “ongoing” does not simply refer to the third period of the formation programme, because the Society never intended to reserve formation to certain times of the life of its members, but rather has proposed it as a constant dimension and expression of their life of faith¹².

320. [A plan of ongoing formation] The document *Vita consecrata* offers a general indication regarding the salient phases of life worthy of particular attention in a programme of ongoing formation¹³. On the basis of these generic indications, every institute is invited to propose a kind of instrument that does not content itself with repeating the spiritual dimension or theology of the religious charism, but also indicates the way, the concrete and specific paths which lead to it throughout the phases of life. It thus becomes essential, for our Society too, to accurately define a plan of ongoing formation, whose primary aim will be to “establish a method characterized by spiritual and pedagogical wisdom”¹⁴, in order to lead progressively to the living out of the charism of our consecration.

321. [The pedagogical lines] If the fundamental characteristic of ongoing formation is “totality”¹⁵, the path of continuous maturation must also be understood in a “total” sense, that is according to the classical, but not to be discounted, triple pedagogical articulation, of educating-

¹¹ Cfr. *LSAC*, nn. 74-81.

¹² Cfr. *Guidelines for ongoing formation in the Society of the Catholic Apostolate*, n° 12, *ASAC*, XIX, p. 72. See also: *CG*, nn. 805-806, 809 and 822-823.

¹³ Cfr. *VC*, nn. 69-71.

¹⁴ *VC*, n° 68.

¹⁵ Cfr. *RdC*, n° 15.

forming-accompanying. In other words, the pedagogical lines of ongoing formation are, in essence, the same as those of initial formation, that is, those of the human, intellectual, spiritual, community, apostolic, and charismatic dimensions. It involves, therefore, making the fundamental processes of maturation ongoing according to the phases of growth, so that they are not interrupted in any phase of life, especially when the initial phase of the formative itinerary ends¹⁶.

THE FIRST YEARS

GOAL AND CHALLENGES

322. [Ongoing formation and young Pallottines] Ongoing formation is a term that has already entered into common contemporary language. For young Pallottines, ongoing formation does not constitute a novelty at the theoretical level. For this reason, the challenge of this stage consists not so much in convincing them of the necessity and importance of ongoing formation, but above all, of involving them in its realization, that is, in the elaboration of an engaging plan, organized at the theoretical and practical levels in a unifying and unified way.

323. [The aim and the prerequisite] The aim of this stage of the first years derives from that of formation as such, that is, configuration to the Lord Jesus and the integral development of the Pallottine personality. “Members must be in a position to exercise, for their whole lives and in changeable conditions, the task taken on with consecra-

¹⁶ Cfr. n° 36 of this *ratio*.

tion in the Society on behalf of the people of their time”¹⁷. Evidently such an itinerary presupposes that ordinary formation will have created in the young Pallottine the willingness to let themselves be formed every day of their lives¹⁸. Taking this presupposition into account, the aims of this stage can be summarized as follows: **a.** to rediscover a new fidelity to the Pallottine charism which replaces the egocentric initial enthusiasm and which leads to perseverance in the self-gift of consecration¹⁹; **b.** to reinterpret life in the light of Christ, *Apostle of the Father*, as the integrating pattern of the desire, sometimes unconscious, for esteem and for social recognition, with a sincere dedication to the greater glory of God; **c.** to find the proper balance between the relevant aspects of life; between work and rest, between activity and interiority, between people to be followed and the Master to be listened to, between the everyday and the festive, between the apostolate and the spiritual life, between personal study and activities to be organized, between individual effort and co-operation with all, between quantity and quality, between enthusiasm and aridity²⁰.

THE CONCEPT, CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY OF THIS STAGE

324. [The characteristic] The distinctive characteristic of this period is the passage of the consecrated person from ordinary to ongoing formation, from a formation house to the Local Community, becoming part of it, usually taking on a ministerial or educative responsibility or one of ser-

¹⁷ CG, n° 980. This stage continues the task of initial formation, which consists in “a path of gradual identification with the attitude of Christ towards the Father” - VC, n° 65.

¹⁸ Cfr. VC, n° 69.

¹⁹ Cfr. SAC Renewal 2000 [6]. *The Promise of Perseverance*, Rome 2004.

²⁰ Cfr. n° 73 of this *ratio*.

vice to the community. This *passage* constitutes a significant moment since, if it is done well, it creates and deepens in the Pallottine the “a readiness on everyone's part to let themselves be formed every day of their lives”²¹, “in every age and season, in every human ambient and context, from every person and from every culture, [...] by any fragment of truth and beauty found around him”²².

325. [A total process] Continuous formation is a total process of renewal which encompasses every aspect of the person of the Pallottine, whether priest or brother, along with our Society and the Union. It must unfold recognizing that its different aspects are inseparable and that they mutually influence each other in the life of every Pallottine and every community. The following aspects must be noted: the deepening of faith and of the meaning of Pallottine consecration; participation in the life of the Church according to the Pallottine charism and in cooperation with other agents of local pastoral activity; doctrinal and professional renewal; a better knowledge of the cultures of the places in which we live and work and professional and technical retraining if it is justified; fidelity to our own charism, with an ever better knowledge of the founder, of his spirit, of the history of the Society and of the Union of the Catholic Apostolate, of its development and its mission²³.

THE PERSON CALLED

326. [The first steps] The passage from “ordinary formation”²⁴ to the first experience of a more autonomous life, in which the Pallottine, whether priest or brother, must

²¹ *VC*, n° 69.

²² *RdC*, n° 15.

²³ Cfr. *PI*, n° 68.

²⁴ Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 81.

discover a new way of being faithful to God, is decisive. In fact, “the first years of full involvement in the apostolate are a critical stage, marked by the passage from a supervised life to a situation of *full responsibility for one's work*”²⁵. The formation of the Introductory and post-introductory Periods must therefore enable the young Pallottine to enter into the living out of a responsibility and a path of *discipleship*, making him capable of growing where the plan of God has put him and continues to transmit to him his gifts.

327. [The duration] The duration of this phase encompasses approximately the first five years following perpetual consecration or priestly ordination²⁶.

FORMATORS AND THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

328. [Daily life] In everyday life, even in its weakness and unpredictability, ongoing formation is still “carried on”. Concretely, this involves letting oneself be educated and formed by life and by daily relationships. The place of ongoing formation is thus common life, but also ministry, service to the poor, working days and ordinary activities, in short, the apostolate itself with its toil and its disappointments, its surprises and its encounters. But ongoing formation also includes extraordinary initiatives, which are organized, especially in this stage of formation, from *the central administration*. In other words, ongoing formation can and must be conceived of at various levels of intervention: the general-institutional level, the particular-

²⁵ *VC*, n° 70; cfr. *RdC*, n° 15.

²⁶ Cfr. VII Consultative Congress of Major Superiors, Konstancin-Poland, 2002, p. 19.

institutional level (provincial or regional) the local community level, and the personal-individual level²⁷.

329. [The central level] The Society of the Catholic Apostolate in its entirety, that is, in cooperation with the entire Union and its institutional organs, is a very important formative context for young Pallottine priests and brothers. Effective participation in the initiatives organized by the Coordination Councils and the already-constituted groups of the UAC must be envisaged in the programme of ongoing formation²⁸. It must be emphasized that all of the Society with its institutional organs should place itself within logic of ongoing formation, just as much on the level of values or fundamental objectives as on that of praxis or specific objectives. It is first of all, up to the Rector General of the Society, with his Consultors, to promote a mentality and press for a praxis of ongoing formation through the means available to him: through personal contacts, circular letters, the nomination of the members of the General Secretariat for Formation, the proposal of general themes for the whole Society, the programming of formation paths for a targeted time at the general or inter-provincial level, etc., in the conviction that investing today in the ongoing formation of all is to invest in the present and future of the Society²⁹.

330. [The provincial level] The indications of the central government, necessarily general, should be further concretised in order to become effectively viable, and may be adapted to the various local, regional, provincial or na-

²⁷ Cfr. *Faithful to the future*, Final document of the XVIII General Assembly, n° 6.2.2.

²⁸ Cfr. *General Statutes of the UAC*, nn. 41-62.

²⁹ Cfr. *Faithful to the future*, Final Document of the XVIII General Assembly, n° 6.2.2.

tional contexts. In fact, “the Provincial/Regional Rector, with his Consultors and after consultation with the Local Rectors, should establish some strong times or privileged moments for ongoing formation; annual exercises for all the confreres of the Province/Region; other meetings for special occasions: the visit of the Rector General, 25th and/or 50th anniversary of consecration or ordination, etc.”³⁰ Concretely, the true and proper definition of a plan of ongoing formation for the first years after perpetual consecration belongs to this level of government: the organization of extraordinary activities, the proposal of periodic initiatives or specialist studies, in line with the general programme of the Society interpreted according to local demands and possibilities.

331. [The local level] Ongoing formation gives the Local Community its natural educative and formative role, and requires that the one primarily responsible for it give it every attention, so that the community will interpret this role with the full involvement of all its members. “Every Local Community can become an effective place of reciprocal enrichment, of progress and of improvement, offering the possibility – while also opening itself to the other members of the Union – of praying together, of exchanging spiritual and apostolic experiences and of discussing numerous current questions”³¹. The task of the superior is that of promoting and activating all of those community means and times through which a community actually practices ongoing formation, such as planning, the community’s implementation and revision of apostolic initiatives, the sharing of spiritual gifts, community discernment and brotherly correction. In any case, it is important that during these first years of a more autonomous life,

³⁰ *Ini*, n° 6.2.2.

³¹ *CG*, n° 987.

young Pallottines find Local Communities to be living cells of Pallottine inspiration and activity; that precisely through them the Society ceaselessly renews its spiritual life; that the members help each other and that all together are responsible for apostolic tasks; that the communities, as dynamic centres, develop such initiatives as if each of its members were the founder of the Society³².

332. [The individual level] Ongoing formation is a *right* and *duty* of every single Pallottine. Nothing can replace responsible commitment to it, just as no one can ever cover for himself the itinerary of growth and renewal. Concretely, it is up to the person himself to seek the necessary aids to carry this personal path forward. Nevertheless, it is “important that young consecrated persons be supported and accompanied by a brother or sister who helps them to live to the full the freshness of their love and enthusiasm for Christ”³³. It would therefore be very good if every Province made available a more mature confrere to accompany young Pallottines for the first years of community and apostolic life after perpetual consecration or priestly ordination, in order for them to communicate and transmit to the latter their experience of life and of the apostolate³⁴.

³² Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 85.

³³ *VC*, n° 70.

³⁴ Cfr. VII Consultative Congress of Major Superiors, Konstancin, Poland, 2002, pp. 18-19. The same document has highlighted that the young Pallottine, in the first years, often suffers from loneliness, understood as a lack of communication and of transparent relationships with the members of the community; which appears to him to be prison from which he would like only to escape. Evidently all the blame cannot be attributed to the community. This courageous acknowledgement by the Major Superiors must not be undervalued, but rather faced up to with just as courageous a search of remedies. The young Pallottine has need of being personally accompanied and a more mature confrere can help him to bear his difficulties and transform them into an opportunity of human and spiritual growth. But it is also necessary to repeat here what is said in the apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* regarding the ancient wisdom of the

333. [Other educative settings] The Society’s programming does not claim to be the only possibility of ongoing formation for young Pallottine priests and brothers. The priest engaged in a parish could, for example, opportunely follow the formation courses provided for diocesan priests, but always remembering that the Society is the normal and natural place of his formation, because it is there that his identity is “hidden” and there that the Father continues to communicate his gifts to him. It so happens that a large part of ongoing formation also takes place in intercongregational centres of formation³⁵. With particular attention, formation initiatives at different levels of the Union of Catholic Apostolate organized by the General Coordination Council or by National and Local Councils could also be followed³⁶. For “an international association of the faithful of every state and vocation”³⁷ like ours, it is very important during these first years of ongoing formation to seek, in a united way, the path to be followed, *forming ourselves together*.

METHODS AND MEANS

334. [The beginning of pastoral activity] The ordinands of the Society have need of a special programme of ongoing formation to give continuity to ordinary formation and “to be helped to do well in the first steps towards autonomous pastoral service in the different fields of ac-

founders of monastic communities: “Significantis Saint Benedict’s reminder to the Abbot of a monastery, inviting him to consult even the youngest members of the community: “*By the Lord’s inspiration, it is often a younger person who knows what is best*”. And St. Paulinus of Nola urges: “*Let us listen to what all the faithful say, because in every one of them the Spirit of God breathes*” (n° 45).

³⁵ Cfr. *PI*, n° 69.

³⁶ Cfr. *General Statutes of the UAC*, nn. 41-62.

³⁷ *Ivi*, n° 8.

tivity in our Society”³⁸. They, moreover, have need of being introduced progressively into the lived understanding and richness of the gift of God: the ministerial priesthood³⁹. It is the task of the Provincial and Regional Councils to elaborate the chronological programme and plan for initial pastoral activity and to nominate a person responsible for the realization of this programme⁴⁰. Participating in it, the ordinands will be able to help one another with an exchange of experiences and reflections on the concrete translation of the ministerial ideal assimilated in the years of ordinary formation⁴¹.

335. [The first years of the brothers] The formation of the brother does not stop at perpetual consecration. This means that the accompaniment of the first steps of the brothers with suitable periodic plans of ongoing formation should be included in the programme of formation⁴². Moreover, a continuous renewal of identity and the full integration of the brothers in the SAC is a positive response to the challenge of the decline in brother vocations, since “there is [...] a natural link between ongoing formation and vocational animation”⁴³.

336. [Daily means and agents] If *docibilitas* is the challenge and the object of initial formation⁴⁴, it becomes above all the precondition for ongoing formation. Concretely, it involves a constant openness to learning, as much through the most humble and ordinary means as through those which are more explicitly formative: one’s relationship

³⁸ *Directives for priestly formation*, n° 76.

³⁹ Cfr. *PDV*, n° 76.

⁴⁰ Cfr. *Directives for priestly formation*, n° 76.

⁴¹ Cfr. *PDV*, n° 76; *Guidelines for ongoing formation*, n° 63.

⁴² Cfr. *The brothers of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate*, n° 36.

⁴³ *RdC*, n° 16.

⁴⁴ Cfr. n° 74 of this *ratio*.

with God and with the brothers, the Word for the day and the words of every day, the parish and the work environment, the Local Community and people in general, events and even incidents, superiors and humble people, the signs of the times and the charism of the Society, the more ordinary day to day and also the unexpected. Everything can become a providential means through which the Father forms the sentiments of his Son in the Pallottine if he allows himself to be formed by him and by his mediations. Initial formation is thus a process or a path which continues in time. This is because ongoing formation involves the different dimensions of existence: from the spiritual, human, and community, apostolic, intellectual, cultural and professional to the relational and interpersonal. A similar integral approach applies to all the phases of life since the elements here enumerated have the aim of inspiring not only the first years of the full insertion of the Pallottine into apostolic activity, but also the successive phases of middle and old age.

337. [The human dimension] In order to reach the human dimension of the Pallottine, ongoing formation proposes: to help him to arrive at a full awareness of the gifts received from God and to recognize his own limits, avoiding either misleading enthusiasm or mistrust in himself; to accompany his maturation in living out his definitive decisions and their consequences; to take care of his physical needs (food, balance between work and rest); to pay attention to his psychological necessities and affective maturation; to encourage his human development with respect to a realistic understanding of self, of reality and of others; to integrate self-realization and self-transcendence; to learn to manage the complexity of life in order to find the balance whether at the personal level, or in the multiplicity of

relationships, or in relation to men and women⁴⁵. “In present-day circumstances, special importance must be given to the interior freedom of consecrated persons, their affective maturity, their ability to communicate with others, especially in their own community, their serenity of spirit, their compassion for those who are suffering, their love for the truth, and a correspondence between their actions and their words.”⁴⁶.

338. [The intellectual dimension] The period of the initial years is opportune for a rediscovery of this dimension and its vital integration with the other dimensions. In this sense, the intellectual dimension assures young Pallottines of a more mature synthesis of the diverse elements of the spiritual, cultural and apostolic life⁴⁷; it informs and intensifies the spiritual dimension, acting as a stimulus for contemplation and prayer; it gives an impulse to the human-relational dimension, encouraging dialogue and collaboration; it enriches the pastoral dimension, improving our judgement on values and on the adequacy of new means and methods of apostolic action; it opens the mind and heart to the new challenges of history and to the new appeals which the Spirit directs to the Church; it involves the personal integration of truth, that is, it does not limit itself to a communication of contents, but implies and requires personal involvement with the Gospel⁴⁸. Such an aim can be served by meetings for study, for communal reflection and for cultural updating⁴⁹; personal study which does not limit itself to pastoral pragmatism but which is directed to true Christian wisdom and to specialist studies on diverse

⁴⁵ Cfr. nn. 151-155 and 164-169 of this *ratio*. See also: *Guidelines for ongoing formation*, nn. 14-20.

⁴⁶ *VC*, n° 71.

⁴⁷ Cfr. *PDV*, n° 80.

⁴⁸ Cfr. *Guidelines for ongoing formation*, nn. 39-46.

⁴⁹ Cfr. nn. 49 and 52 of this *ratio*.

areas of knowledge: philosophy, theology, modern science, art, etc. In every case, the intellectual dimension, as a commitment of apostolic love and of creativity, must respond to the situation of constant evolution of the world and of the Church, and requires the cultivation of study as an expression of the infinite hunger and thirst for God and as a way of combating superficiality and a sense of inadequacy in the apostolic commitment.

339. [The spiritual dimension] The spiritual dimension points to several concrete choices in order to ensure the integral growth of the young Pallottine: the rediscovery of personal, community and liturgical prayer as a source of apostolic commitment; the responsible integration of apostolic action in the life of prayer; the continuous apprenticeship of intimate fidelity to Jesus in the midst of daily emergencies; the continuation and development of the practice of personal devotions; the acquisition of the capacity to find the proper monthly, annual or seasonal rhythm thanks to particular experiences of the Liturgical year, of monthly spiritual retreats or of yearly spiritual exercises⁵⁰. These moments are not simply a pedagogical space for checking one’s process of growth, but above all are an occasion for more prolonged and calm prayer, for rediscovering fresh motivation for fidelity and apostolic urgency. A privileged place must be given to the *Liturgical year* as an experience of progressive and structured identification with the mystery of the Son. In fact, the Liturgical year, place and space for the conforming of the identity of the Pallottine to that of Christ, Apostle of the Father, becomes a true master of formation, a providential time of ongoing formation.⁵¹ Finally, we point out the practice of *spiritual direction*. It is a classical means which has lost noth-

⁵⁰ Cfr. nn. 48 and 50 of this *ratio*.

⁵¹ Cfr. *LSAC*, nn. 42-47; *CG*, n° 707; *RdC*, n° 15.

ing of its great value, “a very delicate pedagogical tool, but of very great value; it is a pedagogical and psychological art carrying grave responsibility for the one who exercises it; it is a spiritual exercise of humility and of trust in the one who receives it”⁵².

340. [The community dimension] The transition from seminary life to full insertion into the Local Community requires an awareness of the members of other generations and the realistic recognition of their values, their limitations and of the necessity of reciprocal dialogue; the building of genuine relationships with confreres and the overcoming of attitudes of a merely contractual nature and of narcissistic closedness, which limit self-giving and full belonging to the community; attention to numerous levels of relationship, with the superiors, with the brothers and sisters of the UAC, with the laity, above all with those who are collaborators in the apostolate, with those who are entrusted to our apostolic and pastoral care; a balance in our communities between intimacy and openness in the practice of welcoming and in the exercise of hospitality⁵³.

341. [The apostolic dimension] Ongoing formation in this period includes several priorities: providing young Pallottines with the appropriate means for their full insertion into apostolic work, helping them to integrate the formation received with the work practice; the logic of the incarnation and of inculturation which help to restrain the demands for comfort in living quarters and maintenance, thus adopting in a spirit of solidarity the socio-economic situation of the people where the apostolate is carried on; the overcoming of “doing” in favour of “being an apos-

⁵² PDV, n° 81. See also: *Guidelines for ongoing formation*, nn. 31-38.

⁵³ Cfr. *Guidelines for ongoing formation*, nn. 21-30. See also: *Fraternal life in community*, n° 43.

tle”, avoiding the split personality which divides life from the apostolate⁵⁴ (the apostolate cannot be done “part-time”); passion for communion which is expressed concretely in planning and working together with other confreres and members of the UAC; the capacity to integrate the Cross in one’s own apostolic life, knowing that the apostolate is not always gratifying, but that this does not mean that it is without salvific value. In practice, this will mean updating the methods and aims of apostolic activities in faithfulness to the spirit and aim of the Founder, with constant attention to the changed historical and cultural, general and local conditions of the environment in which we work⁵⁵.

342. [The charismatic dimension] “In the dimension of the charism proper to each Institute, all the elements are united as it were in a synthesis which calls for a constant deepening of one’s own special consecration in all its aspects, not only apostolic but also ascetical and mystical. This means that each member should study diligently the spirit, history and mission of the Institute to which he or she belongs, in order to advance the personal and communal assimilation of its charism”⁵⁶. A programme of ongoing formation of young Pallottines thus requires the re-discovery of the Pallottine charism and implies a deepening of the meaning of consecration as a personal response to vocation and to the reality in which they live and carry on the apostolate; the awareness of those aspects not sufficiently deepened regarding the charism,

⁵⁴ The necessary union between life and apostolate is clearly highlighted in the vocation of the first apostles: “He now went up into the hills and summoned those he wanted. So they came to him and he appointed Twelve; they were to be his companions and to be sent out to preach, with power to drive out devils” (Mc 3,13-14).

⁵⁵ Cfr. VC, n° 71; see also n° 53 of this *ratio*.

⁵⁶ VC, n° 71; PI, n° 68.

spirituality and history of the SAC and UAC, and the studying of them as a response to the challenges of the reality in which we live and work; the exercising of an attentive reading of the signs of the times in the light of the Pallottine identity.

THE MIDDLE AGE

GOAL AND CHALLENGES

343. [The phenomenon of *mid-life*] Middle age, approximately from between 35/40 to 45/50 years, also called “second age”, can be considered in general as a “stage” of maturity and of growth, or of “crisis”, in the development of the person. Entering middle-age means on the one hand feeling the years of formation and of the initial en-grossing apostolic experiences to be by now a bit distant, and from the other grasping that you are risking living a “routine”, with repetition of gestures and words which are already well worn. Not uncommonly, consecrated persons face, in this phase, the so-called *mid-life crisis*, which can occur under pressure from external factors such as, for example, changes in apostolic activity or of place, failure, the experience of fruitless efforts and of the difference between the ideal and its concrete realization, misunderstanding or the feeling of marginalisation, problems with difficult interpersonal relationships or even more personal factors, such as spiritual dryness, strong temptations, crises of faith or of emotions or both together⁵⁷.

344. [The aim] The phase of maturity, together with personal growth, can involve the danger of the development of in-

⁵⁷ Cfr. *PI*, n° 70; *VC*, n° 70.

dividualism, above all in those of a vigorous and efficient temperament. This individualism can be accompanied either by fear of not being adequate to the times or by phenomena of becoming rigid, closed, slack. The aim of Ongoing formation here is to help not only to recover a higher tone of spiritual and apostolic life, but also to discover the distinctiveness of such an existential phase. In on-going formation the gift of self rises to God with greater purity and generosity, as some aspects of the personality have been purified, and so the result is brothers and sisters who are calmer and more reasonable and at the same time more transparent and rich in grace. It is the gift of the experience of spiritual fatherhood and motherhood⁵⁸. It is therefore necessary to help the middle aged Pallottine to overcome moments of strong crisis of faith positively, that is, in the light of the Gospel and of charismatic inspiration⁵⁹.

THE CONCEPT, CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY OF THIS STAGE

345. [Purification and renewal] Even in the midst of inevitable crises, every phase of life is marked by the carrying forward of a task⁶⁰. The Pallottine can live this season of existence as a seeking of the essential. This phase of life is favourable to the purification of aspects of the personality, in view of a renewed deepening of the gift of self to God and to the brothers. On the one hand it signifies the attainment of balance, of interior stability and of social integration, which come from the assimilation of values; on

⁵⁸ Cfr. *PI*, n° 70 e *VC*, n° 70.

⁵⁹ Cfr. nn.5-53 of this *ratio*.

⁶⁰ In this sense the Pope affirms: “There is a youthfulness of spirit which lasts through time; it arises from the fact that at every stage of life a person seeks and finds a new task to fulfil, a particular way of being, of serving and of loving”(VC, n° 70).

the other the mature member can begin to experience an existential anguish at the lack of realization of his youthful goals. This is the favourable moment for a revision of personal plans, for a second conversion, for choosing priorities and abandoning old attitudes for love of the mission of the SAC⁶¹.

346. [The symptoms] Physical changes also bring psychic changes. “Symptoms” which highlight a problem or crisis, in a cumulated form, are: disgust, loss of interest, sense of uselessness, boredom, dissatisfaction, doubts about the validity of renunciations made or tasks taken on, increase in insecurity, anxiety and emotional instability, depression as a response to the feeling of “loss”. A very common phenomenon in this period of life is “lamentation”, which however also represents a process of healing. Three distinct phases can be noted in the adult experience of crisis: the beginning, duration and solution. The crisis may arise gradually or suddenly. The sudden loss of a person held dear can throw someone into the trauma of crisis, but also a crisis which develops in a more gradual way can bring with it an equally profound experience of suffering.

347. [The solutions to crisis] The ways out of the crisis can be varied: **a.** the *creative solution*, which leads one to concentrate on the essential; **b.** the so-called *panic solution*, caused by a consciousness which “avoids” the possibility of new vital expression, which leads to changing work, friendships, lifestyles and vocation. A sign of this panic is the high number of people in this age group who divorce, leave the priesthood and religious life; **c.** the *resigned solution*, which leads, for example, to emphasising more and more the loss of a taste for life; **d.** the *hypocritical solution*, in

⁶¹ In this sense *PDV*, n° 77, refers to middle aged priests, but it can also be applied to brothers.. See also: *Guidelines for ongoing formation*, n° 9.

which a person never goes into crisis, but rather denies it, since such people who only play a role live through crises hidden behind a persona.

348. [A new faithfulness to the charism] Ongoing formation offers to mature members the opportunity to pause, to stop, in order to have a new encounter and new faithfulness to the Pallottine charism. In this phase aspects which seemed fascinating are no longer sufficient, and the necessity of authentic and all-encompassing motivations based on the fundamental values of the spirit of the Founder becomes clear. In this phase of life the apostolate must also be deepened, rediscovered and realized in a more coherent way. Pallottine life will be much more apostolic the more intimate the dedication to the Lord Jesus, the more fraternal the community way of life, the more ardent the involvement in the specific mission of the entire foundation of St. Vincent Pallotti.

349. [The positive characteristics of middle age] If every age of life is called to sustain the others, from middle age is expected: more ease and simplicity; calmness and humour; a minimum ability not to take oneself too seriously and of interior peace; a loving ability to understand the heart, the fruit of practical wisdom, of experience and of the gift of the spirit; the capacity to show that, with a little trust in Providence and surrender to God, the right path is found even in situations which appeared to be blocked; the capacity to live together with novelty and diversity; the capacity to gather soberly the value of all the little daily things, to value with simplicity all the relationships of the ministry and to pray even in moments of dryness. A middle age thus lived has the value of collective example and thus of a providential message for our confused and bewildered so-

ciety, in which the mid-life crisis is becoming the pretext for breaking the greatest commitments of life⁶².

THE PERSON CALLED

350. [A constant warning] Ongoing formation is a constant warning to avoid the temptation of considering ourselves “adult” and self-sufficient, with the presumption of no longer having the need of continuing the path of identification with Christ. In fact, “None are exempt from the obligation to grow humanly and as Religious; [...] At no stage of life can people feel so secure and committed that they do not need to give careful attention to ensuring perseverance in faithfulness⁶³.”

351. [Vigour and enfeeblement] Middle age is considered “the apex of life” of every Pallottine⁶⁴. At the beginning of this state, one is, in fact, generally in full psychophysical vigour, which allows the taking on of commitments and responsibilities in a growing way. In other words, middle age is normally a time of full physical health, that is, an age in which adults suffer from few acute illnesses. But since this period is normally long, the person also experiences the lessening of youthful vigour and physical energy. This is the time in which health is spoken of with greater frequency and preoccupation. Physical decline marks that something is changing in our vital rhythm, that life is beginning to locate itself in the horizon of death. Thus, middle age is a time in which the person places himself “for the first time” before the possibility of his own death.

⁶² Cfr. Card. Carlo Maria Martini, *The middle age of the cleric*, Milan 1996.

⁶³ *VC*, n° 69; cfr. also SAC Renewal 2000 [6]. *The Promise of Perseverance*, Rome 2004.

⁶⁴ Cfr. *CG*, n° 983.

352. [The two areas] In the “journey” of the whole person towards a “*re-motivation* at the midpoint of life”, two areas are important and reciprocally intertwined: that of psychology and that of spirituality. Among the important tasks of this period are: **a.** to accept the past, taking on the future realistically, and to make use of one’s own capacities and limitations; **b.** to give a meaning to limits and to sin, reinterpreting one’s own history as an “history of salvation”; **c.** to face envy, rivalry and power, suppressing the “mechanism of comparison” with others, which is very intense in middle age; **d.** to integrate the opposing forces within ourselves, that is to rebalance in one’s life the following “polarities of the personality”: old/young, destruction/creation, masculine/feminine, exterior environment/interior world, **e.** to face one’s own “real world” with faithfulness, that is being what you say you are; **f.** to reassess one’s own life structure, that is, gathering up the central thread of one’s own life and letting go of schemes, ideas, stereotypes, unresolved problems, in order to live what is essential; **g.** to face loss, pain and death, that is, discovering the Paschal dimension of one’s own life and commitment; **h.** to channel one’s energy and creativity, which is to abandon a self-centered life in order to go out to others and be attentive to them without developing controlling tendencies; **i.** to acquire wisdom and flexibility, that is, living more and more from within; **j.** “being born again”, that is, discovering the predominance of faith and of the necessity of considering that “all is grace” in the process of formation.

FORMATORS AND THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

353. [The Local Community] The privileged place of ongoing formation is community life. In fact, in every phase of Pallottine life, “Local Communities are living cells of Pal-

lottine inspiration and activity”⁶⁵, and members find the basis of unceasing renewal of life in them. “Religious community is, for everyone, the place and the natural setting of the process of growth, where all become co-responsible for the growth of others”⁶⁶.

354. [The liturgical year] If ongoing formation extends over all the time of our pilgrimage towards our homeland in heaven, the celebration of the mystery of the liturgical year gathers up all the seasons of life, every month, week and day as a time marked by the salvific action of God. The rhythms of the liturgical year, which organise and structure in time the totality of the mystery of Christ, are a permanent invitation for the Pallottine to conformation with Christ. They have a profound correspondence with the apostolic life and its events: waiting, desire and its fulfilment in Advent, purification, the drama of the passion, death and resurrection to the new life of Easter, the mission of Pentecost. The Pallottine can conform himself to Christ precisely because nothing of his life is left outside of the incarnation. “People in ongoing formation take advantage of time, they don’t submit to it. They accept it as a gift and wisely enter into the various rhythms of life itself (days, weeks, months, years) with wisdom, seeking the harmony between them and the rhythm, fixed by an immutable and eternal God which marks the *days, centuries and times*”⁶⁷.

355. [Spiritual direction] Spiritual direction is not exclusive to the younger age, but is a precious instrument of growth and support principally in moments of crisis. When faith-

⁶⁵ Cfr. *LSAC*, n° 85.

⁶⁶ *Fraternal life in community*, n° 43.

⁶⁷ *RdC*, n° 15. On the eucharistic dimension of the life of consecration see: *ibidem*, n° 26.

fulness is more difficult, there is a need to offer the person the support of a greater trust and a more intense love, whether at the personal or community level, and this support takes the form of the affectionate closeness of the superior and the qualified help of a spiritual director, which can lead to the rediscovery of a sense of the covenant, which God established in the first place and does not intend to deny⁶⁸.

356. [The formation of formators] For an indispensable improvement in quality, called for by the present situation, it is urgent to aim for quality in the people called to carry out the service of formation: the major superiors and those entrusted with formation at all its levels⁶⁹. The choice and preparation of formators and of the *team* of formators constitutes a priority task for major superiors, since it is precisely the formators who will be primarily responsible for the transmission of the spirit of the Founder and thus of the UAC and SAC to new generations who must and who want to reappropriate the Pallottine charism. Moreover, the formation of formators in the diverse areas of the human sciences is urgent in order “to guarantee professional help to confreres in crisis”⁷⁰.

⁶⁸ Cfr. *VC*, n° 70.

⁶⁹ “Because sensitive tasks are involved, the training of suitable directors of formation, who will fulfil their task in a spirit of communion with the whole Church, is very important. It will be helpful to establish appropriate structures for *the training of those responsible for formation*, preferably in places where they can be in contact with the culture in which their pastoral service will later be carried out. In the work of formation, the more solidly established Institutes should help those of more recent foundation by contributing some of their best members.” - *VC*, n°66.

⁷⁰ *VII Consultative Congress of SAC Major Superiors*, p. 19. The document continues: “The formator, however, is only one who accompanies; the witness of the community and the role of the superior are complementary”.

357. [The apostolate] The apostolate has an intrinsically formative potentiality because it is a school of service and of charity. After all the apostolate is a gift, which grows and matures only if and when it is exercised. Apostolic commitment is not, however, to be confused with activism, competition and productive narcissism. “While the apostolate marks the external image of the Society particularly, the love described in 1 Cor 13, is the soul which penetrates everything and must [...] characterize the life and activity of the members, as also the structure and government of the Society”⁷¹.

METHODS AND MEANS

358. [The directorate]⁷² “When, at the end of about ten years of perpetual profession, the risk of living by habit and of the loss of every impulse appears, a prolonged period of detachment from ordinary life seems necessary in order to reinterpret it in the light of the Gospel and of the thought of the founder⁷³. In fact, in order to keep alive the willingness to “instruct oneself without ceasing”⁷⁴, it is necessary to offer all the members of the Society this time of deepening, and the possibility of meeting each other at a provincial, regional or general level every five years, for ex-

⁷¹ CG, n° 211. See also: General Statutes of the UAC, nn. 14 and 88 of this *ratio*.

⁷² Thus Pallotti describes the *thrust* of this formation: “Everyone, returning to the Directorate not as a formality but in a true spirit of wishing to profit from it, none presuming to be perfect in the ways of God but each having on the contrary to regard himself as a child, and it could be said even less than a child, all will enter as if the last among the Postulants, and as the last in the House of the Lord; and all, like children, will submit themselves to all the rules of the Directorate; and all, as if they were the most ignorant and inexperienced, will let themselves be instructed.” - OCCC VII, pp. 67-68.

⁷³ PI, n° 70.

⁷⁴ Cfr. n° 45 of this *ratio*.

ample, for at least a month of ongoing formation⁷⁵. The programme of this *Directorate* will be an updating which is not only pastoral, but also spiritual, Pallottine, intellectual, cultural and of community life⁷⁶.

359. [The regular meetings] Places of ongoing formation should also be encounters with confreres who work in similar apostolic areas. Formators, preachers of retreats, teachers, members involved in apostolic works of editing or of social communication, vocations animators, parish priests and other groups of pastoral workers should have the opportunity to meet at regular intervals for an exchange of experiences, ideas and information. In the same spirit, Major Superiors of the Society should consider their meetings a time of ongoing formation⁷⁷.

360. [Sabbatical periods] Sabbatical periods also serve as means of ongoing formation and personal renewal. Their aim is to reinforce the spiritual and apostolic life of the member with a particularly intensive programme, yet they must not be considered a right of members nor a holiday⁷⁸. A strong harmony between the member who presents the request and the Provincial Council, which receives it, helps to maintain the character of ongoing formation of sabbatical periods. This ensures the growth and development of the individual and the right of the

⁷⁵ Cfr. n° 51 of this *ratio*. In fact Vincent Pallotti proposes a *Directorate* of one month every five years to the members of the Congregation. Missionaries must do it every three years for fifteen days and those who cannot travel so often will do it for three months once they have arrived in their country; Cfr. OCCC VII, pp. 63-68.

⁷⁶ Cfr. VII Consultative Congress of Major Superiors, p. 10.

⁷⁷ Cfr. *Guidelines for ongoing formation*, n° 64.

⁷⁸ Cfr. *ibidem*.

community to spur him on to a greater growth, beyond personal preferences⁷⁹.

361. [Spiritual exercises] Annual spiritual exercises and monthly days of retreat are also important occasions of ongoing formation, and must not be exchanged for times of theological and pastoral updating; neither should they serve principally for offering opportunities for socializing or creating community⁸⁰. Their primary task is to intensify the spiritual formation of the members and the content should be chosen with care, so as to develop the themes of consecrated and Pallottine life. To profit from them to the full, Pallotti advised withdrawing to a house suited to this type of exercise and performing them “behind closed doors”⁸¹. Special retreats on the thought and ideals of Vincent Pallotti, as also special spiritual courses on the most important writings of the Founder, should be offered to all the members⁸².

362. [Other means] “In every institute the superiors will designate a person responsible for ongoing formation⁸³. Every Major Superior of the SAC must therefore delegate to one individual, to a commission or to a secretariate the task of preparing, promoting and giving impetus to a programme of ongoing formation in his jurisdiction. “Each Province on its own, or in cooperation with others, must provide initiatives for ongoing formation. Such initiatives will be so organised that members are free to avail themselves of the various opportunities offered outside the Society”⁸⁴. In fact, there are numerous initiatives, which offer

⁷⁹ Cfr. *ibidem*.

⁸⁰ Cfr. n° 50 of this *ratio*.

⁸¹ Cfr. *ibidem*.

⁸² Cfr. Guidelines for ongoing formation, n° 64.

⁸³ *PI*, n° 71.

⁸⁴ *LSAC*, n° 308.

highly valid means for ongoing formation in our Provinces and Regions⁸⁵. At the central level, the General Secretariate for Formation, with the help of the Secretariate for the Apostolate and the Institute of Saint Vincent Pallotti of Rome, must take on the task of giving life to initiatives of ongoing formation for the whole Society. Similar initiatives with the whole Union of the Catholic Apostolate must also be favoured⁸⁶.

363. [The means at our disposal] “Certainly, we admit, we are all weak, but the Lord God puts such means at our disposal that, if we wish, we can do much. Without these, however, it will not be possible to keep faith with the obligation of our own vocation. Take the case of a priest who, although recognising the duty of temperance, of having to give the example of strict and holy morals, then refuses every mortification, does not fast, does not pray, loves less-than-edifying conversation and familiarity; how could he be equal to his office?”⁸⁷. The only power we have is to use or not use the means which the Lord puts at our disposal. For this, Pallotti esteemed greatly “the means which God suggests or proposes to us”⁸⁸.

⁸⁵ For example, courses held in various jurisdictions of the SAC like the *Pastoralththeologisches Institut der Pallottiner* in Friedberg and *Instituto Superior de Estudos Pallottinos* (ISEP) in Santa Maria - Brazil.

⁸⁶ Cfr. *Faithful to the future*, Final document of the XVIII General Assembly, n° 6.2.2.

⁸⁷ From a discourse of St. Charles Borromeo, *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis*, Milan 1599, p. 1177.

⁸⁸ Cfr. OOCX, p. 605; See also n° 70 of this *ratio*.

THE ADVANCED AGE

GOAL AND CHALLENGES

364. [Preparation] “Consecrated persons also should prepare themselves long in advance for becoming old and for extending their “active” years, by learning to discover their new way of building community and collaborating in the common mission, responding positively to the challenges of their age, through lively spiritual and cultural interests, by prayer, and by continued participation in their work for as long as they can render service, even if limited”⁸⁹.

365. [The challenges] “At no stage of life can people feel so secure and committed that they do not need to give careful attention to ensuring perseverance in faithfulness; just as there is no age at which a person has completely achieved maturity”⁹⁰. Ongoing formation must therefore also concern those Pallottine confreres who because of advanced age are called *older people*⁹¹ and who in some Provinces and Regions form the greater part of the Society. Like every phase of life, old age too poses new problems and faces its own temptations. Difficulties can include: illnesses and progressive physical decline, moral weariness, withdrawal from tasks and from apostolic activity, taking refuge in nostalgia, the melancholy of regret, loneliness and a sense of apparent uselessness.

⁸⁹ *Fraternal life in community*, n° 68.

⁹⁰ *VC*, n° 69.

⁹¹ Many terms describe this phase of life: old age, old, senility, etc. The terms “older person”, “old age”, “third age”, “advanced age” are adopted in order to avoid connotations linked to the declining and the pathological. Pope John Paul II addressed himself to these very people with the same word: “To my old brothers and sisters!” – *Letter of the Holy Father to the elderly*, October 1st 1999, Enchiridion Vaticanum 18, EDB, Rome.

366. [The aim] An aim of ongoing formation is to involve the older member within the entire community in understanding and living out fully old age. It does not involve helping the Pallottine simply to accept the inexorable law of time and of old age, but also to live through this passage spiritually and apostolically as an *event of grace* and an experience freely welcomed and accepted on the psychological level.⁹² Another aim is that of helping the older person to continue his service of the Church and the Society in a fertile and fruitful way. Ongoing formation will help to keep alive the conviction of continuing to be active members in the Catholic Apostolate and in the building up of the Church, especially with prayer and their union to Christ: “I complete in my body what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ, for the sake of his Body which is the Church” (Col 1, 24). The older Pallottine is deprived neither of the present nor the future⁹³. His present and his future consist in a matured witness of wisdom, understood as an overall vision of human and spiritual life.

367. [The rhythm of waiting for the Lord] The vocation of the Pallottine in the Church, like that of every consecrated person, involves the serious task of continually keeping in mind “that terrible and glorious day” which is certain, even if God has kept hidden the day and the hour. Ongoing formation also makes its own this rhythm of waiting for that day. Only if he has roots well fixed in this future of the divine shore will the Pallottine, like the tree of the prophetic vision, bear fruit in every season. Only waiting for the encounter with Him frees time from the fear of

⁹² An eloquent example of highly formative experience of *old age*, lived as a being “immersed in an immense Sea of divine Mercy”, may be found in the spiritual Testament of the Founder: *At my death*, OCCC III, pp. 23-33.

⁹³ “The human event, also subject to time, was placed by Christ in the horizon of immortality” – *Letter to the elderly*, n° 2.

death, and generates everyday saints and martyrs. Time will be definitively fulfilled when this encounter comes about. Evidently, the closeness of death does not exclusively characterise this season of life, because it is present in all stages of the process of ongoing formation. In any case, death is not only the goal to which our life is drawn, but is also an element of formation. In other words, ongoing formation possesses intrinsically this rhythm of waiting for the Lord, but this is possible only if the roots of hope have been deepened during all stages of life.

THE CONCEPT, CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY OF THIS STAGE

368. [The total gift of self] Advanced age has, specifically, an overall sense of life insofar as, in the logic taught by Jesus Christ, it is a gift freely received and freely given: “You received without charge, give without charge” (Mt 10, 8). He was the first to put it into practice, living his life as a gift received and transformed into a good bestowed; in fact all of his earthly life was a progressive giving of himself over to the Father and to others unto death on the cross. Thus this phase allows the Pallottine to participate in this total gift of self.

369. [Configuration to Christ] “Advanced age poses new problems, which can be prepared for by a discerning programme of spiritual support. The gradual withdrawal from activity, sometimes caused by sickness or forced immobility, can be a very formative experience. Often a time of suffering, advanced age nonetheless offers to elderly consecrated persons the chance to be transformed by the Paschal experience, by being configured to the Crucified Christ who fulfils the Father's will in all things and abandons himself into the Father's hands, even to the surren-

dering of his spirit to him. This configuration represents a new way of living one's consecration, which is not tied to effectiveness in carrying out administrative responsibilities or apostolic work.”⁹⁴

370. [The end and the fullness] Old age can be lived out by the Pallottine as the period which offers to an even greater extent the possibility of configuration to Christ, who has given his life; it can be the time of pure and perennially young love. It is also the time of waiting for the Lord. In this sense the elderly person can help the members of the community greatly to prepare themselves to live this phase of life as the *end and fullness* of the mysterious process of formation. Nevertheless this period of life is not dominated by death and its approach. True consecrated Pallottine life is always a vital communication with God and the brothers, since it aims at total configuration to Jesus Christ in eternal life.

THE PERSON CALLED

371. [The final season] Advanced age is the final existential season, spanning from 60 or 65 years upwards, from the active years in which an activity is carried out officially or a responsibility is borne until progressive retirement and then to death. It is necessary during this “final phase” that the elderly Pallottine feel anew and profoundly in his being the experience which the apostle Paul described in his path towards the resurrection: “That is why there is no weakening on our part, and instead, though this outer man of ours may be falling into decay, the inner man is renewed day by day”(2 Cor 4, 16)⁹⁵.

⁹⁴ VC n° 70.

⁹⁵ Cfr. PI, n° 70.

372. [The elderly person as subject] Every member of the Society is just as responsible for his own ongoing formation as for that of the other members. If every member is called to act as if he were the founder of the Society, it is of vital importance that he imitate the zeal of Pallotti himself in all areas of the life of ongoing formation, for the infinite glory of God.⁹⁶ The older person in this sense remains the subject of his own formation and actively contributes to that of the others. He is not simply accompanied, sustained, comforted and supported, but is called to bear witness to the primacy of being over acting, of substance over the technical and of grace over exterior efficiency.⁹⁷ In fact, old age constitutes, be it for the Pallottine who has reached this age or for the younger ones, “a very formative experience”⁹⁸.

FORMATORS AND THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

373. [The apostolate] Withdrawal from activity or its reduction does not necessarily imply the end of apostolic commitment, since it does not consist in doing but in being an apostle. Anyway, it is important and necessary that withdrawal from activity not be total and that the older person be entrusted to the extent possible with a minimum of apostolic service⁹⁹. The programme of ongoing formation for the older Pallottine will therefore bear in mind the distinction and fact that not all people are retired from work. There are older members who are still involved in apostolic activity and carry out tasks which are important and

⁹⁶ Cfr. *Guidelines for ongoing formation*, n° 65.

⁹⁷ Cfr. *Ivi*, n° 12.

⁹⁸ *VC*, n° 70.

⁹⁹ The Pope recalls how older people can carry on the apostolate: “The elderly are called in many ways to live out their vocation: by persevering prayer, by patient acceptance of their condition, and by their readiness to serve as spiritual directors, confessors or mentors in prayer” - *VC*, n° 44.

full of responsibility. Ongoing formation will help them on one hand to continue in that dedication and service to the Church and to the Society but, on the other, to allow themselves to be replaced at the opportune time and not make tasks dependent on themselves and not make themselves indispensable and irreplaceable.

374. [The Local Community] There is need to avoid the creation of an artificial setting which would generate only loneliness in the older members and isolation from the younger ones and vice versa. The presence of the older person in the community has a formative value in itself: it is a strong recall to a greater coherence of faith and constitutes a vitalizing energy for community life. The presence of older people in communities can therefore be very positive. An elderly Pallottine who does not allow himself to be overcome by the ailments and limits of age, but keeps joy, love and hope alive, is an incalculable support for the young. His witness, his wisdom and his prayer constitute an ongoing encouragement in their spiritual and apostolic journey. On the other hand, a young Pallottine who takes care of his own older confreres confers evangelical credibility on the Society as a true family called together in the name of the Lord¹⁰⁰. So the community can assume a significant and truly formative role when it keeps its older confrere truly integrated in the reality of the community dynamic, appealing to his resources of witness and prayer and valuing his wisdom and experience.

METHODS AND MEANS

375. [Stretch out your hands] The Apostle Peter, after having received the immense task of tending the flock of the

¹⁰⁰ Cfr. *Fraternal life in community*, n° 68.

Lord, heard himself being told: “When you grow old you will stretch out your hands, and somebody else will put a belt round you and take you where you would rather not go” (Jn 21, 15-19). The older Pallottine must live out these moments as a unique occasion for keeping alive the conviction of letting himself be formed for the whole course of his life and especially, because of his union with the suffering and risen Christ, to relive the spiritual experience of the apostle Paul who said: “It makes me happy to suffer for you, as I am suffering now, and in my own body to do what I can to make up all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church” (Col 1, 24).

376. [The programme] Ongoing formation for older members will not involve so much the tasks of studying, updating and cultural debate as the serene and reassuring confirmation of the role which they are still called to carry out in the apostolate and in community life. The community will have to provide for older Pallotines with great attention, so that they feel included in the life of the Society, participants in its mission, involved in its apostolic dynamism in a new and effective way. “However invisible, their fruitfulness is not less than that of more active communities. These derive strength and fruitfulness from the prayer, the suffering, and the apparent lack of influence of the elderly”¹⁰¹.

377. [Sickness] In order that no one feels alone in this decisive and difficult moment of uniting oneself with the supreme hour of the passion of the Lord, spiritual and material assistance to those who are seriously ill is one of the most delicate tasks which greatly expresses the fraternal

¹⁰¹ *Fraternal life in community*, n° 68.

link with the community; or better still, it is a precious mediation of ongoing formation in this phase.¹⁰²

378. [Death as the greatest conformation] Death is the conclusion of the whole formative process because it is the moment of greatest conformation to the life and death of Jesus Christ in the hope of the new life of his resurrection. It represents the vocational moment *par excellence*, condensing all the preceding calls, and contains the truth of the person. Ongoing formation in this case means the accompaniment of faith and love, of prayer and of the presence of the confreres, so that death does not take us unprepared but rather marks the sublime high point of the path of ongoing formation, that is, the moment in which each one may finally exclaim: “I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2, 20).

¹⁰² “Caring for the elderly and the sick has an important place in the fraternal life, especially at times like the present, when in some parts of the world the percentage of elderly consecrated persons is increasing. The care and concern which these persons deserve arises not only from a clear obligation of charity and gratitude but also from an awareness that their witness greatly serves the Church and their own Institutes, and that their mission continues to be worthwhile and meritorious, even when for reasons of age or infirmity they have had to abandon their specific apostolate. *The elderly and the sick have a great deal to give* in wisdom and experience to the community, if only the community can remain close to them with concern and an ability to listen. More than in any activity, the apostolate consists in the witness of one's own complete dedication to the Lord's saving will, a dedication nourished by the practice of prayer and of penance” - *V/C*, n° 44.

ECCLESIAL AND PALLOTTINE DOCUMENTS ON FORMATION

The principle recent ecclesiastical and Pallottine documents which could be of special interest for formation are indicated.

Reference to documents of the Second Vatican Council, the Code of Canon Law, and documents of Episcopal Synods and Post-Synodal Exhortations is presumed.

As far as the Pallottine documents are concerned, reference is made only to the fundamental and official Pallottine documentation, to recent General Assemblies, and to the interventions of Rectors General and their Consultors dealing directly or indirectly dealing with formation.

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ANALYTICAL INDEX

ACCOMPANIMENT

- Pallotti, accompanied to accompany, 57;
- choice of formators, 175;
- personalized, 226, 229, 234;
- of the candidates, 231, 239;
- formation as a., 244, 321;
- to discern the vocation, 207, 212;
- in ongoing formation, 332, 335;
- in the moment of illness, 377;
- in the moment of death, 378.

ADMISSION

- to postulancy, 218, 221, 228;
- to Preparatory Formation, 228, 235, 268;
- to first consecration, 269;
- to perpetual consecration, 275-276.

ADVANCED AGE

- challenges 365, 369;
- goal of the formation of the elderly 366;
- period of waiting 367, 370;
- the elderly Pallottine as subject of formation 371, 372;
- elderly members in the community 374, 376.

AGE

- differences of age in formation 208, 242, 274;
- in the admission of the candidates 222, 228.

ANTHROPOLOGY

- Christian and Pallottine, 10, 115;
- criteria of Pallottine Anthropology, 63, 170;
- human beings according to Pallotti, 78;
- interdisciplinary, 115;
- and the mystery of incarnation, 121;
- *homo viator*, 126;
- living image of God, 127;
- "nothingness and sin", 128.

APOSTOLATE

- formation for apostolate, 33;
- universal apostolate exercised in the footsteps of Christ the Apostle, 68, 70;
- charity as source of apostolate, 88, 92;
- and holiness, 93;
- and Church, 105-106;
- as service to the world, 110-114;
- universal apostolate and Procure, 112;
- for justice, 113;
- as redemptive mission, 139, 207;
- effectiveness of the apostolic life, 176;
- and prayer, 296, 308, 339;
- pastoral experiences during the time of studies, 306-308;
- requires a deeper knowledge, 308;
- in the first years, 341;
- in middle age, 348;

- formative potentiality of the apostolate, 357;
- in advanced age, 373-376.

AVAILABILITY

- docility to be formed 35, 74, 232, 323, 336;
- constant availability 317.

BAPTISM

- and consecration 178-179;
- to live in God always 185;
- and Christian vocation 198, 213.

BETHLEHEM

- reception of new members 30;
- crib of our charism 99;
- Mary in Bethlehem, 99;
- B. model for the house of formation, 224;
- model of community life, 259.

BROTHERS

- Brothers and candidates for the ordained ministries 271, 284-286;
- specific aspects of formation for the Brotherhood, 285-286;
- the B's role in the community 285;
- B. in Ongoing Formation 335.

CANDIDATE

- every c. is a gift of God 30;
- and growth, 205, 215, 219, 221, 222, 228;
- and discernment, 206, 211, 215-218, 222, 228;

- diversity of candidates 208, 222, 228, 242, 274;
- and community 224-228;
- introduction to the UAC 225, 227;
- and accompaniment 231, 239;
- primary responsibility for formation 241, 254;
- open to cooperation 227, 263.

CENACLE

- Mary in the C. 101, 103;
- model of community life 259.

CHARISM

- Original 8-9;
- personal and of the community 215, 280, 311;
- of the foundation 229;
- and Ongoing Formation 320;
- fidelity to the c. 323, 348.

CHARITY

- constitutive essence 8, 66;
- Caritas Christi urget nos: 88, 138;
- origin of the apostolate 88, 92;
- spirit of charity. 92;
- "New Vision of Charity" 114;
- man, the image of charity 137, 187.

CHASTITY

- fundamental value 145,
- formation of the celibate 169;
- expression of our self-gift to God 181;
- in the consecration 189.

CHURCH

- ecclesiology of cooperation and communion 8, 107-108, 278;

- love for the C. 67;
- the UAC as a way of being C. 105;
- and apostolate 105-106, 216, 218;
- union with the C. 184;
- C. and vocations 201-202, 207, 215-216, 221;
- law of the C. and formation to priesthood 268, 283.

- COLLABORATION** – see also **COMMUNION**
- in the UAC for formation 7, 278, 303, 313;
 - among members of the community and other people in formation 218, 227, 288;
 - formation to c. 227, 278;
 - c. among institutes for formation 266, 267, 304-305, 313.

- COMMUNION**
- the ecclesiology of communion. 8, 108, 277;
 - spirituality of c. 71, 277;
 - God communicates himself 82, 91, 208;
 - the Holy Spirit among men 91;
 - co-responsibility of all the baptized 108;
 - with others 119, 341;
 - of goods 181, 191, 196.

- COMMUNITY**
- reciprocity in the c. 76;
 - models for our c.: Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jerusalem 37, 215, 224, 259;
 - attitudes of community life 192, 261;

- the c. and the candidates 215-216;
- ability to live in c. 219;
- formation for community life 226, 259-261, 290, 309-310;
- community life as a prophetic sign 273;
- c. and the individual 284, 290.

- CONSECRATION** – see also **PROMISES**
- disposition to consecrated life 23, 211;
 - three specific promises 72;
 - answer to love 92;
 - evangelical counsels 177;
 - God's gift 177, 181-183;
 - baptismal 178;
 - theological sense 179;
 - union with the Church 184;
 - in the SAC 184-186, 190;
 - in the thought of St. V. Pallotti 187-191;
 - purpose 194-195;
 - preparation for consecration 219, 221-222;
 - first c. 230;
 - and spirit of service 298;
 - promises 298, 309;
 - and Ongoing Formation 315, 318, 325, 342, 369.

- CONTRACT** – see also **CONSECRATION**
- affiliation to the Society 188;
 - solemn 188, 190;
 - bond of vote 188, 190.

- COOPERATION** – see also **COLLABORATION**
- initiation into c. 32;
 - continuous 34;
 - prayer and c. 61;

- “pulsating heart” of formation 64, 227;
- c. with confraternities and Third Orders 71;
- the art of c. 71;
- and reciprocity 76;
- holy c. 77;
- the ecclesiology of c. 107;
- c. from the beginning 107;
- in the Pallottine family 225, 227;
- c. of the candidate with the formators 241;
- Novinpal 266.

- CRITERIA** – see also **ADMISSION**
- of Pallottine formation 63-77;
 - c. of a true vocation 202, 222.

- CULTURE**
- spiritual, scientific and ministerial 17;
 - and the person 156;
 - necessity of inculturation in formation 157, 341;
 - cultural context of today 158-160;
 - basic culture 268.

- DEATH**
- life in the horizon of death 351-352;
 - as a coming of the Lord 367;
 - end and fullness 370-371;
 - maximum conformation 378.

- DIRECTOR OF PREPARATORY FORMATION**
- formation entrusted to the D. 243-244;
 - the qualities of the D. 245.

- DIRECTORATE**
- rules of the Directorate 51;
 - meeting for Ongoing Formation 358.

- DISCERNMENT**
- d. and the goal of the Congregation 27;
 - discerning together 53;
 - formation for spiritual discernment 60;
 - the signs of a true vocation 148;
 - accompaniment as d. of spirits 175, 201-202, 206, 208;
 - significance in the NT 198;
 - of the signs of times and the presence of God 198, 206-208, 211;
 - the origin of the practice in the NT 202;
 - in the Pastoral Care of Vocations 205-207, 218;
 - in the Postulancy 206, 215, 219;
 - in Preparatory Formation 257;
 - community 260;
 - in the decision to commit for life 275.

- DURATION**
- of Postulancy 220-221;
 - of Preparatory Formation 236;
 - of the second period of formation 276;
 - according to Provinces and cultural contexts 276;
 - of the first years in Ongoing Formation 327;
 - of the phase of “middle age” 351;
 - of the phase of “advanced age” 371.

EUCCHARIST

- daily participation 258, 295.

EVANGELICAL COUNSELS

- see **PROMISES**

FORMATION

- integral 1-2, 221, 272;
- gradual process 3;
- final goal 4-5;
- the history of f. in the SAC 6, 8;
- formative action of Pallotti 16, 212;
- according to a plan 19;
- spiritual 42, 215, 221, 230, 250;
- intellectual, studies 43, 221, 250, 299-308;
- pastoral 44, 263;
- for all 46;
- cultural 52;
- necessity of an inculturated f. 156-157;
- Pallottine formation as an answer to the needs of the times 162, 203, 250;
- human and fundamental 163, 250;
- of the conscience 167;
- for celibacy 169;
- affective 169;
- of young people 212;
- models for the communities of f. 224;
- in community 224, 250;
- for the UAC 225;
- initial f. 229, 257;
- authentic 232;

- interdependence between Initial F. and Ongoing F. 232, 315, 323, 324, 326, 336;
- principal tasks in Preparatory Formation 240;
- means for human f. 251;
- means for spiritual f. 258;
- means for apostolic formation 268.

FORMATIVE ENVIRONMENT

- in the Pastoral Care of vocations, 215-216;
- in Preparatory Formation, 233;
- favourable to vocational growth, 248;
- in Ongoing Formation, 333.

FORMATORS

- formation of the formators 7, 223, 288, 303, 336, 356;
- Pallotti as model of formators 18;
- formation according to Pallotti 54;
- Pallotti's idea of the formation of the clergy 55;
- the Holy Spirit as f. 96;
- need for well-prepared f. 175;
- nomination of those responsible for formation 214, 223, 243-244;
- all the members are f. 214;
- team 214, 244;
- cheerful testimony of the formators 217, 229, 241-242;
- the quality demanded 223, 245, 289;
- in Preparatory Formation 243-247.

FREEDOM

- and sin 120;
- to love 143;
- limits of freedom 166;
- vocation as call to freedom 200;
- free to be formed 232.

God

- Infinite and Merciful Love 62, 81, 124, 125, 131, 133;
- experience of God as Trinity 80;
- Infinitely Communicable 82, 91;
- glory of God 83, 172, 185, 187, 205, 323, 372;
- Jesus Image of the Father 172;
- imitation of God with all the gifts of nature 187.

HOLINESS

- h., wisdom, health 38;
- imperfections and desired holiness 59 130,;
- and the Holy Spirit 93;
- and apostolate 93, 280, 296;
- call to holiness 198;
- salvation and vocation 208;
- greater sanctification of the soul 212, 172, 187.

HOLY SPIRIT

- and joy 75, 95;
- in the spirituality of V. Pallotti 90-96;
- “eternal communication” in God 91;
- and holiness 93, 198;
- and unity 94;
- Formator 96;

- the human being, living image of the H.S. 127;
- and consecrated life 177, 185;
- action of the H.S. 200, 208, 211, 215, 222, 227;
- openness to the H.S. 338.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

- see also **MATURITY**
- the process of development 45, 150-155, 176, 234, 251, 270;
- as a mystery 115;
- evolutionary situations and maturity 154-155;
- progress and regression 155.

IDENTITY

- Pallottine 7-9, 14, 221;
- sexual 169, 251;
- integration of the values of Christ in human identity 174.

ILLNESS

- and admission 228;
- difficulty of advanced age 365;
- Easter experience 369;
- assistance to the sick 377.

IMAGE

- the human being, the image of God 116, 118, 137;
- Jesus the image of the invisible God 132;
- the human being, image of charity 137.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

- reciprocity in the community 76;

- called to communion with others 119, 216;
- necessity to develop I.R 253.

JESUS CHRIST

- imitation of Jesus and formation 4, 5, 64, 195;
- Apostle of the Eternal Father 5, 64, 85,87, 88, 90, 108, 113, 183, 203, 323, 339;
- imitating Jesus C. 25, 86;
- following C. 31, 178, 210;
- in the spirituality of V. Pallotti 85-90;
- apostolic dimension of his life and death 85;
- “Daily Practical Memorandum” 89;
- present in love 92;
- the new man 121;
- miracle of the love of God 131;
- image of the invisible God 132;
- divine model of perfection 133, 163;
- first-born among many brothers 134;
- complete transformation into C. 86, 135, 378;
- supreme friend 162;
- model of integrative formation 174;
- model of humble life, poor 193;
- to love as J. C. 200;
- the order to build his Church 207;
- conformation to C. 295, 317, 354, 368-370, 375-378;
- waiting for the Lord 367, 370.

LOCAL COMMUNITY

- formative role 216, 331, 353, 374, 376;
- natural environment of formation 224, 248, 290, 309;
- Pallottine 231;
- and apostolic purpose 310;
- insertion into the L.C. 340;
- and the elderly members 366, 374;
- open to the members of the UAC 331, 340.

LOVE – *see also* CHARITY

- soul of the Congregation, 66;
- for the Church, 67;
- “*loving objectives*”, 113;
- inability to love, 129;
- Jesus, fire of love, 136;
- called as a response to the divine love 142;
- measure of growth, 172;
- basis of every formative dimension, 173;
- the commandment of love; 200;
- for the Founder, 247;
- for the community, 261;
- perennially young love, 370.

MARY, QUEEN OF APOSTLES

- model of self-gift to God 65;
- in the spirituality of V. Pallotti 97-103, 258, 263;
- Mother 97;
- Bride 97-98;
- at Bethlehem 99;
- at Nazareth 100;
- in the Cenacle 101;
- royal priesthood 102.

MATURITY – *see also* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

- towards the human maturity 1, 3, 151, 160, 164, 208;
- integrating sufferings 40;
- limits and fragility 117, 162;
- the principal objective of human formation 165;
- affective 168-169, 213, 252, 293, 337;
- formation of the will 251;
- sexual 267, 268;
- Christian 268;
- growth in self-knowledge 292;
- danger of self-sufficiency 314, 350, 364.

MIDDLE AGE

- stage of Ongoing Formation 343-363;
- crisis of middle age 343-347;
- and purification 345;
- positive characteristics 349;
- apex of life 351;
- Directorate 358;
- regular meetings 359.

MINISTRY

- preparation for the ordained ministry 36-44, 211;
- spirituality of the priesthood and the community 284.

NAZARETH

- pedagogy of N. 37;
- place of formation 100, 215, 224;
- Mary of N. 100;
- model of community life 259.

NOVITIATE – *see* PREPARATORY FORMATION

OBEEDIENCE

- fundamental value 145;
- expression of our self-gift to God 181;
- and consecration 189.

ONGOING FORMATION

- formation to “always more” 36;
- according to Pallotti 45-54, 317;
- means for O.F. 47;
- interdependence between initial and O. F 232, 315, 323, 336;
- danger of a reductive vision 314;
- and the UAC 316. 329;
- O.F. and vocational animation 316.335;
- a theological way of envisaging the consecrated life 317;
- creative fidelity 318;
- according to the LSAC 319;
- plan of O.F 320, 342;
- primary purpose 320;
- pedagogy 321;
- first years 322-342;
- passage from the initial formation to Ongoing Formation 324, 326;
- global process of renewal 325, 336, 338, 339;
- duration of the first phase 327;
- the levels of O.F 328;
- those responsible for O.F 328-332;
- and daily life 328.336;

- at the general level 329, 362;
- responsibility of the Province/Region 330, 334, 362;
- at local level 331;
- right and duty 332;
- personal responsibility 332, 372;
- diocesan courses of O.F 333;
- inter- congregational 333;
- and the beginning of pastoral activity 334;
- the first steps of the brothers 335;
- human dimension 337;
- intellectual dimension 338;
- spiritual dimension 339;
- liturgical year as place of O.F 339, 354;
- communitarian dimension 340, 353, 374;
- apostolic dimension 341, 357, 373;
- Pallottine dimension 342;
- and purification 345, 348, 352, 354.

PALLOTTI

- Pallottine trinomial 17;
- model of formators 18, 212;
- and the prayer for vocations 20, 209, 217;
- formator of the clergy 55;
- confessor for all 56;
- a guide who was himself guided 57;
- instrument of divine Mercy 62;
- penetrating psychologist 63;
- spirituality of P. 78-114;
- mystical experience 79;
- Spiritual Marriage 91, 98;
- project of the Procure 112;

- his vision of the human person 122-140;
- desire for transformation into Christ 135;
- “Retreats” of the Pious Society 187;
- Rules of the “Congregation of Priests and Coadjutor Brothers” 188-189;
- and the true vocation 204-207, 227;
- and his followers 231.

PASTORAL

- pastoral formation 2, 44;
- apostolic experiences 17;
- serving the world as the task of the UAC 110-114;
- pastoral experiences during the time of studies 306-308;
- pastoral plan of formation 307-308.

PEDAGOGY

- p. of Nazareth 37;
- p. of balance “neither too much nor too little” 71, 73;
- Pallottine 171;
- structural change in the dynamics of the person 174-175;
- in conformity with formation 233, 242;
- harmony among the different elements in formation 270-272, 277;
- open, inclusive and universal 281;
- of Ongoing Formation 321.

PERFECTION

- Jesus the model of divine p. 5, 133;

- the human being, the reflection of divine perfection 127;
- desire for p. 130;
- love as a fundamental rule of p. 169.

PERSEVERANCE

- gift of perseverance 72;
- and formation of the conscience 167;
- expression of our self-gift to God 181;
- Pallotti introduces p. into the act of consecration 189-190;
- and Ongoing Formation 250, 365;
- in the gift of self 323.

POSTULANCY

- according to Pallotti 25-29;
- time of preparation 220-221;
- duration 220;
- entry 221 228,;
- activity during the P. 226;
- age of candidates age 228;
- admission 228.

POVERTY

- fundamental value 145;
- expression of our self-gift to God 181;
- and consecration 189.

PRAYER

- spiritual exercises, p. and silence 50;
- and cooperation 61;
- apostolic 180, 187-188;
- consolation in p. 202;
- p. for vocations 209;
- means to discern vocation 215;

- for the growth of vocation 215, 217-218;
- personal 258;
- and apostolate 296, 366, 376;
- and intellectual formation 338;
- the rediscovery of prayer 339;
- in advanced age 364;
- the support of p. 374, 378.

PREPARATORY FORMATION

- formation during P.F according to Pallotti 30-35;
- means for P. Formation 41;
- preparation for P.F 219, 221, 228;
- task of initial formation 229;
- challenges and goal 230-231;
- general indications 233;
- admission 235;
- duration 236;
- Spiritual Year 237-238;
- phase beyond the Spiritual Year 238;
- integral vision 239;
- programme 241, 250;
- diversity of candidates 242;
- place 249.

PRIESTHOOD – *see* ORDAINED MINISTER

PROMISES

- three specific promises 72, 190-193, 196;
- p. and vows 92, 188, 190;
- recipient 186;
- adherence to Christ 195.

PSYCHOLOGY

- psycho-social factors 146-147;
- unconscious 147, 149, 169, 206, 219;

- psychological problems 166, 169;
- psychological examination 228;
- importance of p. in formation 233;
- value and limits of p. 292.

QUEEN OF APOSTLES –
see MARY

RATIO INSTITUTIONIS SAC

- invitation of *Vita Consecrata* 6;
- tasks of the Secretariat for Formation 6;
- XVIII and XIX General Assemblies of the SAC 6-7, 9;
- and the General Council of the SAC 6, 13;
- a Pallottine profile 7, 14;
- the two parts 10-11;
- for the whole SAC 12;
- formative programmes of the Provinces/Regions 12;
- guarantor of unity 13.

RECEPTION

- of new members, 30, 221, 228.

RECTOR

- Local Rector 54, 209, 217, 331;
- Provincial 214, 236-238, 243, 246, 330, 362;
- General 236, 244, 329.

RESPONSIBILITY

- moral and juridical responsibility toward the SAC 186;

- of all for formation 214, 223, 246, 287, 289;
- for the formation of formators 223, 246, 287, 289;
- of the person called for formation 241, 282;
- of the director of Preparatory Formation 245;
- of the Major Superiors for formation 246, 330, 329, 362;
- for the second phase of formation 287;
- of the formative community 288;
- of the Local Rector 331.

SEXUALITY – *see also*
CHASTITY, CELIBATE
and MATURITY

- deviations 160;
- sexual identity 169;
- integrate sexuality in the requirements of vocation 252;
- sexual equilibrium 268.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES – *see*
DISCERNMENT

SIN

- the reality of sin 117, 120;
- “nothingness and sin” 128;
- consciousness of sin and the desire for perfection 130

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

- responsibilities and qualities of the Spiritual Director 54, 243-245;
- importance of the S.D 56;
- by correspondence 58;
- in the Vocation Promotion 215;

- the most important means of formation according to Pallotti 258;
- in the second phase of formation 297;
- in Ongoing Formation 339, 355.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

- method of the Exercises. 50;
- in vocation promotion 215, 218;
- yearly 339;
- in the Ongoing Formation 361.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

- spiritual conferences 48;
- spiritual retreats 50;
- action of grace in the spiritual life 200, 208, 211, 215, 222, 227;
- discipline and order in S.L. 208;
- meditation on the Word of God 215, 258, 295;
- spiritual reading 215, 258;
- silence 257, 296;
- liturgy of the hours 258;
- sacrament of reconciliation 258;
- essential elements 294.

SPIRITUALITY – *see also*

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES,
PRAYER and SPIRITUAL
LIFE

- s. of communion 71, 108, 277;
- of V. Pallotti 78-114;
- priestly 167.

SPIRIT OF SERVICE

- one of the three specific promises 72, 196;

- the mark of Catholic Apostolate 114, 280;
- attitude of total availability 193;
- and consecration 298.

STUDIES

- s. and learned clergy 43;
- lectures of study 49;
- in the Postulancy 219, 221, 226, 228;
- in Preparatory Formation 255, 265;
- and spiritual impulse 279, 294;
- and the goals of the community 279;
- unity of the disciplines 283;
- and human growth 299;
- philosophical 300;
- theological 301;
- tasks of our institutes of formation 302.

UNITY – *see also*

COOPERATION and
COMMUNION

- and the Holy Spirit 94;
- one flock and one Shepherd 106;
- apostolic unity 108;
- UAC as instrument of unity 109.

UNIVERSALITY – *see also*
APOSTOLATE

- universal apostolate, universality of methods 70;
- pedagogy 281.

UNION OF CATHOLIC
APOSTOLATE (UAC)

- unifying principle 7-8;

- General Statutes 8-9, 265, 312;
- Original vision 8, 104;
- “Evangelical trumpet” 68;
- spirituality of the UAC 104-109, 263-266;
- and Church 105-106, 109;
- “Auxiliary Body of the Church” 105;
- the lay vocation in the UAC 207;
- experience of the UAC 216, 218, 221, 227, 278, 291;
- formation for the UAC 225, 227, 278, 308, 312;
- collaboration in the UAC for formation 303;
- and Ongoing Formation 316, 325, 329, 331, 333, 340-341, 348, 362.
- call and response 141-142, 198-201, 204, 207-208, 211-212, 222, 227;
- as call to freedom 143, 201;
- to the consecrated life 177;
- apostolic 185;
- to holiness 198;
- meaning of human life 199, 203, 213;
- signs of vocation according to Pallotti 204-205;
- difficulties in the people who are called 213;
- means and environment that help growth in vocations 215, 216, 219, 222;
- death as a vocational moment 378.

VALUES

- instrumental and ultimate 51, 145;
- the weakening of religious values 161;
- social virtues 253.

VOCATION – *see also*

VOCATION PROMOTION

- God's gift 20, 209;
- human commitment 21;
- signs of true vocation 22, 202-203, 222, 228;
- illusions and false signs of vocations 26;
- quality and not quantity 28;
- communion with others 119;
- to participate in the redemptive mission 139;
- Christian 141-145, 184;

VOCATION PROMOTION

- according to Pallotti 20-24;
- as form of accompaniment 207-208;
- and prayer 209;
- and personal experience of Jesus 210;
- Youth vocational promotion and Pallotti 212;
- youth apostolate 212, 223;
- collaboration in the Church and in the UAC 216, 218, 227;
- methods and means 218.

WORLD

- seeing and serving the world 110, 221;
- the world's needs 111;
- sanctification of the world 111-112;
- present cultural context 158-161.