

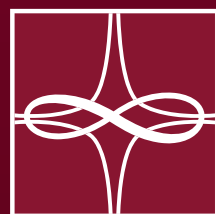


EVERYDAY

*Apostles*

Reflections from  
Fr. Frank Donio, S.A.C.

*Director of the Catholic Apostolate Center*





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# Foreword

**“The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence.” – Pope Francis, Gaudete et Exsultate, 1**

**During my undergraduate studies at The Catholic University of America, I took an overview course in Canon Law taught by a Dominican Sister who was working on a licentiate in the subject at the time. One day, Sr. Waldia came into the class which was filled with young men and women who were studying various subjects at the University and wrote the following on the board:**

**“Whole person holy.”**

**She then went on to explain that holiness is not something seemingly unattainable, meant for a few. Instead, we are all called to holiness. We were challenged by her to look at all aspects of our life – spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical. Sr. Waldia called us to use these God-given aspects of ourselves, not simply for our own good, but also in service to God and neighbor. Through the grace of Jesus Christ and the recognition of our own shortcomings, we could orient ourselves toward becoming a whole person and, therefore, a holy person.**

**Pope Francis seems to agree with Sr. Waldia when he says in his new apostolic exhortation, Gaudete et Exsultate:**

**“Discernment is not a solipsistic self-analysis or a form of egotistical introspection, but an authentic process of leaving ourselves behind in order to approach the mystery of God, who helps us to carry out the mission to which he has called us, for the good of our brothers and sisters” (175).**

**St. Vincent Pallotti understood this as well in his belief that all are called to be apostles, but in the everyday things of life, not simply in the extraordinary. One need not perform extraordinary deeds to become a saint or live a life of true holiness. Instead, Pallotti says that ordinary people and everyday things of life can be apostles:**



**“Everyone: priests, religious, lay men and women, can acquire the rewards of the apostolate, if all possible means, talent, knowledge, association, professions, occupations, human relationships, material things and prayers are used to renew faith in Jesus Christ and to increase love all over the world, even if all that they are able to do is to pray. Anyone can excel in the good of the apostolate and can indeed even exceed the achievements of the Apostles, because God judges the perfection and value of the work of his creatures according to the intentions of their hearts and according to the abilities of each” (OOCC, III, 145).**



**Whole person holy. Whole person apostle.**

**These considerations above lead us to this new e-book, Everyday Apostles. This publication is a bit different from our previous e-books, as it focuses on several of my writings from the past few years. I hope these reflections will also inspire you to lead others to the Christ, being an apostle to all you meet every day.**

**May the charity of Christ urge us on!**

**In Christ, Apostle of the Eternal Father,  
Fr. Frank**



## **A Note from the Editor**

**The following is a selection from the hundreds of posts that have appeared on the Catholic Apostolate Center's Ad Infinitum blog, written by the Center's director, Fr. Frank Donio.**

**As you read through the pages, you will gain inspiration from the saints, insights from Church leaders, and advice on how we all can deepen our faith life and become true missionary disciples.**

**As in our previous books, anytime you see something underlined or flash as you turn the page, feel free to click on the item to see sources and further resources.**

**I hope you enjoy the following pieces and pray that they may inspire you to continue our journey toward the Lord.**

**~Victor David  
Editor**

# Evangelization and Discipleship



# The Joyful Evangelizer

"The New Evangelization is accomplished with a smile, not a frown." – Cardinal Timothy Dolan  
(Address to the College of Cardinals, February 2012)

There is nothing simplistic about Cardinal Dolan's point above. Some, who are not examining it carefully, might see it as such. No, instead, in a short, pithy comment that is very emblematic of his style of speaking, he is summarizing his main point that "the missionary, the evangelist, must be a person of joy." Sadly, there are many dour people among the baptized who Pope Francis calls "sourpusses" in *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 85. Interestingly enough, Pope Francis uses this word not simply as a rebuke to those who hold a particular view, but instead as a call to trust in the One who sends us forth, Jesus Christ.

"One of the more serious temptations which stifles boldness and zeal is a defeatism which turns us into querulous and disillusioned pessimists, 'sourpusses'. Nobody can go off to battle unless he is fully convinced of victory beforehand. If we start without confidence, we have already lost half the battle and we bury our talents. While painfully aware of our own frailties, we have to march on without giving in, keeping in mind what the Lord said to Saint Paul: 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness' (2 Cor 12:9)."

The smile then on the face of the joyful evangelizer is one of confidence in Christ. Note that it is confidence, not arrogance. Some confuse the two and become self-proclaimed judges of the level of Catholicity of another. Instead, we are called to docility in Christ, a trait that is not practiced often enough. It is a humility that understands that no one person has every answer. We look rather to the community of faith, the Church, for our guidance, our deeper understanding, and our unity with one another amid our diversity. As Pope Francis teaches, "differences between persons and communities can sometimes prove uncomfortable, but the Holy Spirit, who is the source of that diversity, can bring forth something good from all things and turn it into an attractive means of evangelization" (EG, n. 131).

Let us go forth, then, joyfully – as evangelizers, as missionary disciples, as apostles – as those who are fully confident in the message that we have received, that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of all and that the Church shares this good news and continues his mission until he comes again.

May the Charity of Christ urge us on!



# Growing in Faith as Missionary Disciples

“Do we love the Church as our Mother, who helps us to grow as Christians?  
And how do we go beyond ourselves in order to bring Christ to others?”

-Pope Francis, General Audience, September 11, 2013

Stop for a moment and re-read again the two questions above. Reflect on how you would answer them. Pope Francis reminds us in his first encyclical, *Lumen Fidei*, that our growth as a Christian is not an individual act.

“It is impossible to believe on our own. Faith is not simply an individual decision which takes place in the depths of the believer’s heart, nor a completely private relationship between the “I” of the believer and the divine “Thou”, between an autonomous subject and God. By its very nature, faith is open to the “We” of the Church; it always takes place within her communion” (*Lumen Fidei*, 39).

The Church is the place where we are nurtured by Christ through the community of faith, where we grow in Christ through the sacraments, and where we encounter Christ in those around us, especially in the poor and the suffering. We cannot remain in our comfort within the Church, though. We need to move outward to others and assist them in encountering Christ.

Our growth as Christians is a life-long process. There is always more that we can learn, understand, and experience in faith, especially the teachings of our Church. Bringing Christ to others as an apostle or, as Pope Francis emphasizes, a missionary or missionary disciple, makes a demand on us to know and live the faith. Being catechized does not simply mean knowing the faith, it means witnessing to it in our lives. Ongoing formation in the faith, being catechized, is a dynamic process that is for life! Our growth in faith is not simply our action alone, however, it is the work of Christ within us and the relationship that we have with him nurtured through prayer.



## Same Lady, Different Dress

For over 140 years, on the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (16th of July), in my hometown of Hammonton, New Jersey, there is a procession through the streets of the statues of various saints that usually reside inside the local parish church. The faithful who are devoted to each saint distribute prayer cards of their patron as they process with the statues through the streets – St. Joseph, St. Anne, St. Anthony, St. Rita, St. Jude, St. Rocco, St. Lucy, St. Vincent Pallotti, and so forth. The Blessed Mother, while at the end under the title of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, appears also in the procession under various names – Milagrosa, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Our Lady of the Assumption, and the Immaculate Conception, whose Solemnity we celebrate today.

Sometimes, these various titles and ways of representing the Blessed Mother can be confusing for some of those who line the streets of the procession route. My mother, Angela, who has been part of the procession for over 50 years, makes a float with a large Rosary and a statue of the Blessed Mother under the title of the Immaculate Conception on it, although some would call the statue "Our Lady of Grace." The statue, which is over 100 years old, is patterned after the image on the "Miraculous Medal," around which is inscribed the words, "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." Since many who come to the procession are not necessarily practicing Catholics, my mother always offers a form of "street evangelization" to those who come to her float to receive a prayer folder that provides instructions on how to say the Rosary.

Since the statue of the Immaculate Conception is on a special float, many will come and ask if it is of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Sometimes, my mother is asked what the difference is between the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. She responds cheerfully, "Same Lady, different dress." My mother then goes on to explain why the Blessed Mother has so many titles. She also assists these curious onlookers in understanding how Mary offers us the greatest example of how to follow Jesus as his disciple. She helps them learn that Mary was prepared from the time of her conception in the womb of her mother, St. Anne, to receive Jesus and did so throughout her life.

We, too, are meant to be prepared to receive Jesus into our lives in an ongoing way. We have not been conceived without sin, but we have been washed clean of Original Sin at Baptism (and all prior sin, if one was baptized as an adult). While we have all sinned since that time, our Baptism offers us a share in the mission of Jesus Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King. Though followers or disciples, he also sends us as apostles, or as missionary disciples, out into our challenging world to witness to him by what we say and do. The Blessed Virgin Mary offers us the best example of how to follow Jesus Christ. No matter what title of hers might appeal to us spiritually, she is always "same Lady, different dress." She was the same in her following of Jesus during her life and continues from her heavenly home to invite us to follow her Son, Jesus Christ, Our Savior and Lord.

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

# Pallotti: Apostle of Faith and Charity

On 20 January 1963, just over a month after the close of the first session of the Second Vatican Council, the rows of tiered seating on either side of the main aisle of St. Peter's Basilica meant to accommodate over 2000 Council Fathers filled to capacity again. The faithful came on that day for the canonization of one person, Vincent Pallotti (21 April 1795- 22 January 1850), a priest of Rome and founder of the Union of Catholic Apostolate. St. John XXIII, who canonized him that day, called Pallotti "an innovator of new ways whereby people could come to know and love God." For Pallotti this was the way of an apostle, one who is sent on mission, urged on by the love of Christ. As St. John XXIII explained, "the apostle does not nourish his personal concerns, nor seek his own glory, but he works for a reward far and eternal, happy to please God alone, and to bring souls, possibly all souls to his merciful love."

The Rome of Pallotti's day was not a place of peace and tranquility. His lifetime was punctuated by revolution and his witnessing three times over the forced absence of a pope. He experienced Catholics throwing off their faith and, therefore, saw a great need to "revive faith and rekindle charity" among Catholics and also serve the growing needs of the Church in the missions. On 9 January 1835, he was inspired to found the Union of Catholic Apostolate as a response to these needs of the Church. Pallotti called the Union an "evangelical trumpet, calling all, inviting all, rekindling zeal and charity in all the faithful of every state, situation and condition" that "would effectively cooperate in all evangelical undertakings, and in the growth, defense, and propagation of charity and of the Catholic faith" (OO CC I, 4-5).

In our time there is still an urgent need to revive faith, rekindle charity, and call all the baptized to live as apostles. As in Pallotti's day, so today, faith is being thrown off, not by revolution, but by indifference, lack of engagement, disinterest. The work of the New Evangelization as articulated by St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI and reflected upon at the Synod on the New Evangelization emphasizes the intrinsic connection between faith and charity for authentic Christian living, a deepening by Catholics of their baptismal commitment through active evangelizing of self and others, and support of the missionary efforts of the Church throughout the world. These priorities of the New Evangelization were the priorities of St. Vincent Pallotti as well. They are the priorities of the Union of Catholic Apostolate today. According to Fr. Jacob Nampudakam, S.A.C., Rector General of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate and Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, "the Pallottine response to the challenge of the New Evangelization is, therefore, to revive faith and rekindle charity as apostles of Jesus in a changing world, sinking roots into a passion, the passion of St. Vincent Pallotti for Christ!"

This passion for Christ in the spirit of St. Vincent Pallotti is manifesting itself for the twenty-first century in the response of the Union of Catholic Apostolate to the needs of the New Evangelization. The Union "promotes collaboration among all the faithful in openness to new forms of evangelization" (General Statutes, n. 12). The Catholic Apostolate Center in the United States of America is one of those responses. The Center is collaborating with various Church entities at the international, national, diocesan, and local levels to provide in-person and online formation programs for the New Evangelization and assists in fostering deeper collaboration and greater co-responsibility among all the baptized.

# Becoming Missionaries of the Church



Today we ask the Lord to become missionaries in the Church, apostles in the Church but in this spirit: a great magnanimity and also a great humility. - Pope Francis

Many people throughout the world whether Catholic or not have been affected by the humility of Pope Francis. His witness calls us to more, a more generous spirit that is not tied to things or honors or what we desire, but is instead showing love of God and love of neighbor in what we do and in what we say. This witness is not meant to be held within our families, among our friends, or in our churches. We are sent as apostles, as witness of faith and charity to a world that is in need of hope. Faith grounds us in the One who is beyond us all but is also the One who knows us better than we know ourselves, God, who is Infinite Love. We are called to share this love in our acts of charity, justice, and service - building up a broken world not for ourselves or our own benefit, but as co-workers in the mission of Jesus Christ.

Apostles are sent to not only preach, but to heal (Luke 9:2; 10:9). Our world is in need of so much healing. Look anywhere in the world and it seems that destruction and hate are much more present than life-giving love. We can and must be bearers of love! If we, as people of faith, as Catholics, are not apostles of faith and charity, then who do we expect to do it? What are we waiting for, an invitation? Look again at the quote above, it is not only a prayer, it is an invitation by Pope Francis to generously and humbly give of ourselves to Christ and to others.

Faith is not meant to be kept to ourselves or locked in our churches, it is meant to be shared in word and deed; we are challenged to deepen our formation so that we may more fully embrace our being sent as apostles of faith and charity.



# "Always Hoped I'd Be An Apostle"

Ever consider yourself an apostle? This question makes me think of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, Jesus Christ Superstar. The Apostles reflectively sing during the Last Supper, "Always hoped that I'd be an apostle, knew that I would make it if I tried," as if they really knew what they were getting into when they agreed to Jesus saying "Follow me!" Of course, they didn't. It would be like you saying, "Always hoped I'd be a volunteer, knew that I would make it if I tried."

Ever think of yourself as an apostle? We are. Each one of the baptized is an apostle of faith and charity to a world in need of the mercy and love of Jesus Christ. We share in his mission. This is our primary vocation (from Latin vocare – "to call") in life. We have a vocation to be an apostle. Don't believe me? I'm not the one who said it, St. John Paul II did. He was talking to my religious family, the Union of Catholic Apostolate, but his point was meant for all:

"Continue to multiply your efforts so that what was prophetically announced by Vincent Pallotti, and the Second Vatican Council authoritatively confirmed, may become a happy reality, that all Christians are authentic apostles of Christ in the Church and in the world" (Homily of June 22, 1986).

St. John Paul II was simply expanding on what was said during the Second Vatican Council in a document that he helped to write, the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity. But, what does it mean to be an "authentic apostle of Christ in the Church and in the world?" It means living as one who is sent, and not simply living for ourselves or being only a follower. We are sharers in the mission of Christ in his priestly, prophetic, and royal offices (CCC 783-786). We are "consecrated" through baptism (priestly) to "witness in the midst of the world" (prophetic), in service, especially to "the poor and the suffering" (royal). Nothing passive here! Our vocation as apostles of Jesus Christ is an active one that moves us outward beyond ourselves to a world in need of his presence through us.

Our vocation as baptized is our primary vocation. All of the other vocations as married, single, consecrated, or priest are all secondary to this primary vocation as follower of (disciple) and sent by (apostle) Jesus Christ. Each is a way one can live out the primary vocation. How does one decide? Through a process of discernment, one is called to be informed, pray, make a choice, and take action. I make it seem easy. The process is not an easy one, but necessary in order to make a truly informed choice about how to live our vocation as an apostle. You might not be ready to make a choice about what way to live this vocation for life, but living it out as an apostle is what you are already doing in your volunteer service and probably did long before now.

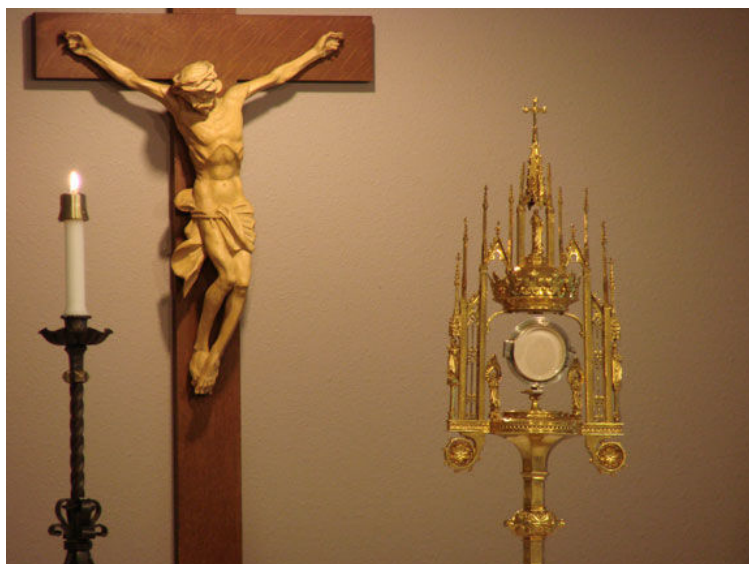
Maybe the Apostles in Jesus Christ Superstar were not so far off then, we do want to be apostles; we only need to try.

# Vocational Discernment

"The questions lurking in human hearts and the real challenges of life can make us feel bewildered, inadequate and hopeless. The Christian mission might appear to be mere utopian illusion or at least something beyond our reach. Yet if we contemplate the risen Jesus walking alongside the disciples of Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-15), we can be filled with new confidence"  
- Pope Francis, Message for World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Discerning one's vocation in life is not easy. It is a challenge, particularly if one thinks one is alone. But, we as baptized realize that we are not alone. Jesus Christ is walking with us in the same way in which he walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. He accompanies us through the community of faith, the Church. We encounter Christ and are accompanied on our journey in our participation in the Sacraments, through the teachings of our Faith, by the Church's ministers, and in communion with the People of God. In our personal prayer, he is present as well, but we need to quiet ourselves and hear the "tiny whispering sound" as did the Prophet Elijah in the cave (1 Kings 19:12).

As St. Vincent Pallotti taught in the nineteenth century, so does the Second Vatican Council and the Popes that followed, we are called to be apostles or missionary disciples. We have an apostolic vocation in life. Even those who are contemplative pray not for themselves, but for the whole Church. Whatever our particular vocation - marriage, Consecrated Life, or priesthood - we are all sent by God on mission to our brothers and sisters, witnessing Christ by what we say and do. We are called to accompany others in prayer and action in encountering Christ.



Over the last years, I have had the privilege of accompanying many young men and women as they discerned their vocation in life. As each would make her or his choice after a long questioning and search that was sometimes bewildering, a sense of profound peace would come upon them. This is the peace that comes from Christ in and through the Holy Spirit. It is the peace that he has left us as his missionary disciples so that we may go forth in his name!

May the Charity of Christ urge us on!

# Missionary Discipleship

"One of the great challenges facing the Church in this generation is to foster in all the faithful a sense of personal responsibility for the Church's mission, and to enable them to fulfill that responsibility as missionary disciples, as a leaven of the Gospel in our world. This will require creativity in adapting to changed situations, carrying forward the legacy of the past not primarily by maintaining our structures and institutions, which have served us well, but above all by being open to the possibilities which the Spirit opens up to us and communicating the joy of the Gospel, daily and in every season of our life." -Pope Francis

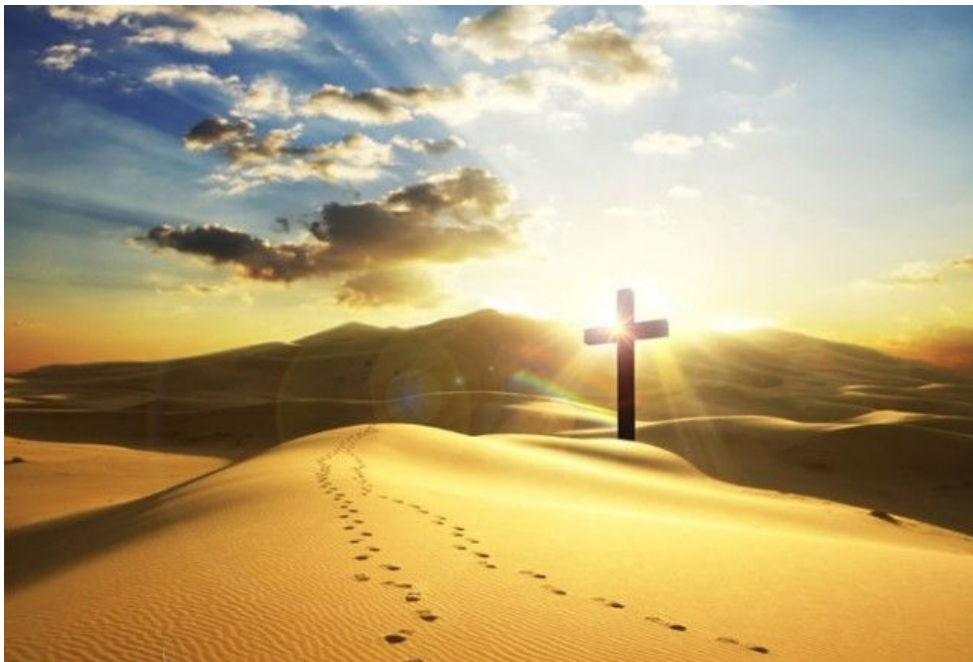
Change is a challenge. Throughout the United States and in many countries of the world, the way in which Catholicism is lived is changing. The Church calls us to encounter Jesus Christ every day, accompany others on the journey of faith similar to the Road to Emmaus, welcome and continually deepen discipleship in the community of faith through worship, faith formation, and service to others, and be sent forth as missionary disciples or apostles to proclaim in word and deed through sharing our faith in Christ and living lives of charity and justice.

All are co-responsible for the mission of Christ and his Church. Simply maintaining our parish programs and ministries is not enough. Working together collaboratively through discerned action in and through the Holy Spirit offers us a way forward.

In July 2017, the Bishops of the United States issued an unprecedented invitation to Catholic leaders to join with them in discerning together with all the faithful the ways in which the Church in the United States can more fully live the joy of the Gospel each and every day. The Catholic Apostolate Center was honored to collaborate with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) on this important event in the life of the Church called the "Convocation of Catholic Leaders: The Joy of the Gospel in America." We were also pleased to work with the USCCB on the development of a new leadership resource for evangelization and pastoral planning called, *Living as Missionary Disciples: A Resource for Evangelization*.

The Center continues to provide resources and consultation which aid in personal and communal discernment and action so that all the baptized may live as missionary disciples. We are simply continuing the vision of St. Vincent Pallotti (1795 - 1850) who called all the faithful to be apostles of Christ in the Church and in world. As a ministry of the Immaculate Conception Province of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (Pallottine Fathers and Brothers). The Center offers its resources at no cost as a service to the missionary and evangelization efforts of the Church. We invite you to share our many resources with others. Our prayers are with you in your continued deepening and living of missionary discipleship.

# Christian Living





# The Call to Holiness in Today's World

"Blessed Paul VI, in referring to obstacles to evangelization, spoke of a lack of fervor (*parrhesía*) that is 'all the more serious because it comes from within'. How often we are tempted to keep close to the shore! Yet the Lord calls us to put out into the deep and let down our nets (cf. Lk 5:4). He bids us spend our lives in his service. Clinging to him, we are inspired to put all our charisms at the service of others. May we always feel compelled by his love (2 Cor 5:14) and say with Saint Paul: 'Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel' (1 Cor 9:16)."  
– Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 130.

In the passage above from *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad), an apostolic exhortation on the "call to holiness in today's world," Pope Francis offers a concise summary of over forty years of papal teaching on evangelization as well as over two thousand years of the Church's missionary efforts of the baptized going forth to all in word and deed in the name of Jesus Christ. Over fifty years since the close of the Second Vatican Council, the teaching that holiness is possible for all (*Lumen Gentium*, 11) or the "universal call to holiness," seems to be still a teaching that is not fully received by all the baptized, partially because of an understanding on the part of some that growth in holiness needs a special and particular way or is only possible for certain people. Pope Francis disagrees with this view:

"We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer. That is not the case. We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves" (*GE*, 14).

But, just what is "holiness?" Pope Francis offers a definition of Pope Emeritus Benedict, "holiness is charity lived to the full" (*GE*, 21). It is the charity of Christ living in and through us. Pope Francis, continuing to quote Pope Benedict, provides further reflection: "As a result, 'the measure of our holiness stems from the stature that Christ achieves in us, to the extent that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we model our whole life on his'" (*GE*, 21)

Modelling our "whole life on his" needs to be done through moving outward on mission (*EG* 18-34) in mercy and love toward our brothers and sisters who are near us every day (*GE*, 63-109). It is done through our discernment (*GE*, 166-175), prayer, and worship (*GE*, 147-157) in the community of faith, the Church (*EG*, 140-146), resisting evil and doing good (*GE*, 158-165).

"Accepting daily the path of the Gospel, even though it may cause us problems: that is holiness." (*GE*, 94).

# St. Vincent Pallotti: A Life of Action

"Remember that the Christian life is one of action; not of speech and daydreams. Let there be few words and many deeds, and let them be done well." – St. Vincent Pallotti

Blessings to all on the feast day of St. Vincent Pallotti!

Today's feast is not celebrated universally in the Church, even though it is listed on the Vatican's calendar of saints. And yet, this humble Roman priest who was ordained 200 years ago this coming May 16th, by his deeds and words still affects the lives of people around the world through his legacy, the Union of Catholic Apostolate.

The Catholic Apostolate Center is a 21st century expression of the charism of St. Vincent Pallotti as articulated in the General Statutes of the Union, particularly number 12:

"The Union of Catholic Apostolate participates in the mission of the Church to reawaken faith and an awareness of the vocation to the apostolate, to rekindle charity among all the members of the People of God, so that they be ever more united in a commitment to spread charity and so that there be, as soon as possible, one flock under one Shepherd (cf. Jn 10, 16). Therefore, the Union, in communion with the competent Pastors, promotes collaboration among all the faithful in openness to new forms of evangelization."

The action that we take is not simply on our own, but is in collaboration and union with others and fosters greater co-responsibility for the mission of Christ and his Church.

As we celebrate this special feast day today, please know that our prayers are with you. May you continue to revive faith, rekindle charity, and form apostles wherever you are and in whatever you are doing. May your words and deeds be done well!

May the Charity of Christ urge us on!



# Experiencing God's Mercy

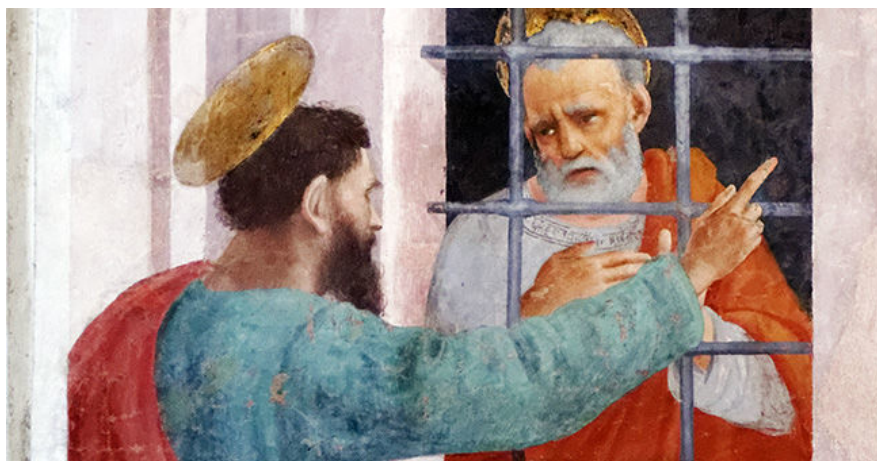
In 2016, during a parish mission for Lent that focused on the Jubilee of Mercy, I found that a simple review of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy had a profound impact on those who participated. My short reflections on the works of mercy were not meant to be at time of group guilt about what had not been done, but instead provided an opportunity for the participants and for me to reflect, and then - hopefully - act. In the reaction of the participants, I witnessed a revival of faith and a rekindling of charity that, I believe, will lead to deeper living as apostles or missionary disciples.

God's mercy and love are offered not just for a moment, but forever. Lent is a perfect time to experience again God's mercy and live well the works of mercy. As we continue through the season of Lent, we strive to know Jesus Christ more fully through the Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Sometimes almsgiving is seen as something simply monetary. If almsgiving, however, is not only related to our treasure, but also to our time and talent, then we can see how easily the corporal and spiritual works of mercy can help us express all three aspects of this Lenten practice.

Pope Francis invites us to reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy in his Lenten Message,

"For all of us, then, the season of Lent in this Jubilee Year is a favorable time to overcome our existential alienation by listening to God's word and by practicing the works of mercy. In the corporal works of mercy we touch the flesh of Christ in our brothers and sisters who need to be fed, clothed, sheltered, visited; in the spiritual works of mercy - counsel, instruction, forgiveness, admonishment and prayer - we touch more directly our own sinfulness."

May the charity of Christ urge us on to live well the works of mercy!



# Making Good Soil

Growing up in a farming community in southern New Jersey (yes, New Jersey does have farms, that is why it is called the Garden State), I learned a little something about soil that is good for planting and soil that needs work, sometimes a great deal of work, until planting can happen. Good soil does not just "happen". There is preparation and proper nurturing, even times of rest so that the soil is best. In his encyclical *Lumen Fidei*, Pope Francis talks about "good soil,"

"In the parable of the sower, Saint Luke has left us these words of the Lord about the 'good soil;' 'These are the ones who when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance' (Lk 8:15). In the context of Luke's Gospel, this mention of an honest and good heart which hears and keeps the word is an implicit portrayal of the faith of the Virgin Mary" (*Lumen Fidei*, n. 58).

On Marian feast days, such as the Solemnity of the Assumption, we are offered by the Church the great example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, ever-faithful disciple, who witnesses for us the way to live well our baptismal call as disciples and apostles of Christ.

"By her complete adherence to the Father's will, to his Son's redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity" (CCC, n. 967).

By witnessing faith and charity we live well our baptismal vocation. Our vocation as baptized is our primary vocation. All of the other vocations as married, single, consecrated, or priest are all secondary to this primary vocation as follower of (disciple) and sent by (apostle) Jesus Christ. Each is a way one can live out the primary vocation. How does one decide? Through a process of discernment, one is called to be informed, pray, make a choice, and take action. I make it seem easy. The process is not an easy one, but like making "good soil," it is necessary in order to make a truly informed choice about how to live our vocation as a disciple and apostle. You might not be ready to make a choice about what way to live this vocation for life, or maybe you have done so already, but living it out as a disciple and apostle is what all of us are called to do. The Blessed Virgin Mary can assist us in our discernment of our apostolic vocation in life and in living it out faithfully and well, truly being "good soil."

May we join together in the prayer of Pope Francis at the conclusion of *Lumen Fidei*.

"Mother, help our faith! Open our ears to hear God's word and to recognize his voice and call. Awaken in us a desire to follow in his footsteps, to go forth from our own land and to receive his promise. Help us to be touched by his love, that we may touch him in faith. Help us to entrust ourselves fully to him and to believe in his love, especially at times of trial, beneath the shadow of the cross, when our faith is called to mature. Sow in our faith the joy of the Risen One. Remind us that those who believe are never alone. Teach us to see all things with the eyes of Jesus, that he may be light for our path. And may this light of faith always increase in us, until the dawn of that undying day which is Christ himself, your Son, our Lord!"



# The Joy of Consecrated Life

"In the world there is often a lack of joy. We are not called to accomplish epic feats or to proclaim high-sounding words, but to give witness to the joy that arises from the certainty of knowing we are loved, from the confidence that we are saved"  
- Pope Francis (Rejoice!, n. 3)

In July 2014, Pope Francis went for lunch at the Generalate of the Jesuits. As I reviewed the pictures from his visit, joy and happiness are very evident. He appears very comfortable and relaxed with them, even though he may not know them well individually. Why is he comfortable? As a member of a religious community, I think that I can venture an answer. He is among those who shared a similar formation as he did as a member of the Society of Jesus. Technically, he formally ended his time as a Jesuit when he became a bishop. Bishops cannot be under the authority of the superior of a religious community. They can, though, ask to continue to use the religious initials of their community as well as wear the habit. Cardinal O'Malley, the Archbishop of Boston, continues to use the initials of the religious community that he came from, the Capuchin Franciscans, as well as wear the habit. Many religious communities even officially continue to count bishops among their membership. Some might think this strange, but the reality is that once a person is part of a religious community, it is part of who that person is and how the person approaches God, life, ministry.

When you share a common formation and lifestyle from a relatively young age, that formation does not simply go away. It is a lifestyle that one freely chooses and it forms and informs the person. Once committed to, consecrated life (CCC, n. 913-933) is not something that can easily be cast aside. Even those who have left religious communities often continue to live the spirituality of that community as a single or married person or diocesan priest. I have seen it time and time again.



I made my First Consecration of Promises as a member of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (Pallottine Fathers and Brothers) over twenty-five years ago. Our six promises of poverty, chastity, obedience, sharing of resources, spirit of service, and perseverance have provided me with a way, within the context of our community life, to live the charity of Christ. I make no claim to live it perfectly, but I try to live it as authentically as possible. The way that I live more authentically is through the assistance of the members of my community who "urge me on" to live more fully in Christ's love.

Please join me in praying for those in consecrated life!

# Prayer for Christian Unity

"Commitment to ecumenism responds to the prayer of the Lord Jesus that 'they may all be one' (Jn 17:21). The credibility of the Christian message would be much greater if Christians could overcome their divisions and the Church could realize 'the fullness of catholicity proper to her in those of her children who, though joined to her by baptism, are yet separated from full communion with her' We must never forget that we are pilgrims journeying alongside one another. This means that we must have sincere trust in our fellow pilgrims, putting aside all suspicion or mistrust, and turn our gaze to what we are all seeking: the radiant peace of God's face" (Evangelii Gaudium, n. 244).

Over the nine years that I was at St. Jude Shrine in Baltimore, Maryland, I had the opportunity to participate in and then to host an annual prayer service for Christian Unity. It became a very popular celebration and leaders from various Christian communities participated, including the Archbishop of Baltimore. To me, though, the most important people who participated were the people who went week to week to their faith communities in various parts of Baltimore, but never had the opportunity to pray together with Christians from other communities. Prayer is powerful and to underestimate its power to unite us leaves us lacking in the virtue of hope. Such hope is not naïve, but is based on firm trust in the work of the Holy Spirit.

During the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Christians are invited to pray that "they may be one." St. Vincent Pallotti, patron of the Catholic Apostolate Center and founder of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, worked diligently for unity in the Church, using the liturgical Octave of the Epiphany in Rome as a means to unite in prayer members of the Eastern and Western traditions of the Catholic community who were rather disconnected from one another. This celebration was held in the city of Rome from 1836 until 1968. His feast day, on January 22nd, is in the middle of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Collaboration of all Christians can lead us toward Pallotti's vision, hope, and prayer that one day we may be "one fold, under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ" (Cf., Jn 10:16)

Since our mission as the Catholic Apostolate Center is derived from the charism of St. Vincent Pallotti, who fervently prayed for such a day, we invite you to pray not only individually, but draw other Christians together in prayer. Prayer, though, is not the only thing that we can do. We can learn more about what the Roman Catholic Church teaches about the needed work for building unity among Christians. We invite you to explore the many resources that we have on our new Christian Unity page. May we also take up the call of the Catholic Church spanning from the time of the Second Vatican Council to the appeal of Pope Francis today:

"The search for unity among Christians is an urgent task... We are well aware that unity is primarily a gift from God for which we must pray without ceasing, but we all have the task of preparing the conditions, cultivating the ground of our hearts, so that this great grace may be received" (Address to the Delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, June 28, 2013).

# Seasonal Writings



# Encountering Christ

When we enter the season of Advent and a new liturgical year, we enter an important time to watch, wait, and reflect on the coming of Jesus Christ and on our encounter with him. He is encountered in the mystery of the Incarnation, which we represent by Nativity scenes placed in our churches, chapels, and homes. We could limit ourselves to only looking at the beauty of the artistic scene and not move into deeper reflection on the fact that God, who is infinite love and mercy, sent his only begotten Son to save us.

Christ is also encountered in the Eucharist, most significantly during the celebration of the Mass. Pope Francis describes this coming of Jesus:

"Mass is prayer; rather, it is prayer par excellence, the loftiest, the most sublime, and at the same time the most "concrete". In fact, it is the loving encounter with God through his Word and the Body and Blood of Jesus. It is an encounter with the Lord."  
(General Audience, November 15, 2017).

And Christ will come again in all his glory at the end of time. We need to be prepared for this time not simply through passive waiting, but by active watching for the Lord and encountering him in our brothers and sisters who are most in need, especially the poor, the vulnerable, and the voiceless (Mt. 25:31-46). As baptized members of the Body of Christ, we are co-responsible for the mission that he left us until he comes again - for the salvation of souls - not only focusing on eternal life with God, but also on how we are collaborating with the Most Holy Trinity to build the Kingdom of God on this side of life.

Pope Francis reminds us of the connection of the Immaculate Conception to the salvific plan of God.

"In the Immaculate Conception of Mary we are invited to recognize the dawn of the new world, transformed by the salvific work of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The dawn of the new creation brought about by divine mercy. For this reason, the Virgin Mary, never infected by sin and always full of God, is the mother of a new humanity. She is the mother of the recreated world." (Homily for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, 2015)

We have not been conceived without sin, but we have been washed clean of Original Sin at Baptism (and all prior sin, if one was baptized as an adult). While we have all sinned since that time, our Baptism offers us a share in the mission of Jesus Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King. Though followers or disciples, he also sends us as apostles, or as missionary disciples, out into our challenging world to witness to him by what we say and do. That is why we are told at the end of each Mass to "Go". We are sent on mission by Christ and the Church as joyful witnesses of God's love and mercy.

Our best example of how to be a missionary disciple of Jesus Christ is the Blessed Virgin Mary. She followed Jesus as his disciple unfailingly during her life and continues from her heavenly home as Queen of Apostles to invite us to encounter her Son, Jesus Christ, Our Savior and Lord.



# Remembering Christ this Christmas

In the rush of all of the “things we must do” do we stop and reflect on the one who is the true must for us, the Incarnate Son of God, Our Lord Jesus Christ? Stop for a moment and look at a Nativity scene. I mean really look. What do you see? Do you see simply art, or a depiction of a past event, or do you see the one who is the Incarnate Son of God? Our God, who created us, came to us, is with us, is for us, to save us! We are not alone in the vast universe, left adrift. No, our God came to us in a way that we would not expect of one who is all-powerful, he came in the innocent helplessness of a baby. This baby was not born in a palace or even a house, but in a borrowed spot out back where only animals lived. The first people who visited him and his parents were not friends and family, but poor shepherds. The King of Kings came as the Poorest of the Poor. He came to save us not just in the future, but now. We are to assist him in his mission as the third verse of the Christmas carol “O Holy Night” tells us:

Truly He taught us to love one another;  
His law is love and His gospel is peace.  
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother;  
And in His name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
Let all within us praise His holy name.

Like the shepherds and all who have gone before us in faith, our encounter with the Prince of Peace offers us the opportunity to be freed from all that oppresses us in life and the mandate to help others to find this freedom. As Pope Francis teaches us:

“The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew... I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since “no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord.” (Evangelii Gaudium, 1, 3).





# Ash Wednesday

Prayer, fasting, almsgiving. These are the usual Lenten practices. At first glance they may come across to some as fairly easy and to others as tremendously phrase associated with Lent!

"Tremendously difficult" seems more appropriate. If Lent is simply about will-power and individual spiritual "achievement", then it will be fairly easy. If Lent is lived with the belief that spiritual accomplishment is somehow done mostly by us rather than primarily by God who forms and transforms then it will be tremendously difficult. Pope



Francis, though, calls us to the balance that we need during this holy season of renewal:

"Lent is a favorable time for letting Christ serve us so that we in turn may become more like him." (2015 Lenten Message).

Christ is offering through these three traditional ways of prayer, fasting and almsgiving an opportunity for us to be served by him. He wants to be in regular, consistent, and open communication with us (prayer), to help us use only what we need and even deny the desires of self in order to be more fully for him and for others (fasting), and to give of our time, talent and treasure to our brothers and sisters, especially the poor (almsgiving).

As a way to assist you in your renewal this Lent, the Center offers not only a page of many Lenten resources, but also our prayerful solidarity. We join also with the aspiration of Pope Francis expressed at the end of his Lenten Message:

"It is my prayerful hope that this Lent will prove spiritually fruitful for each believer and every ecclesial community."

# Hope Lives!

Hope lives! It might seem to be a strange phrase at first, but if we replace the word “hope” with “Jesus” or “Christ,” then it immediately makes sense to a believer in the Resurrection. The 50-day Easter season is a celebration not simply of an event that happened in the past, but is also a season filled with the hope that comes from belief in the Risen One, Jesus Christ.

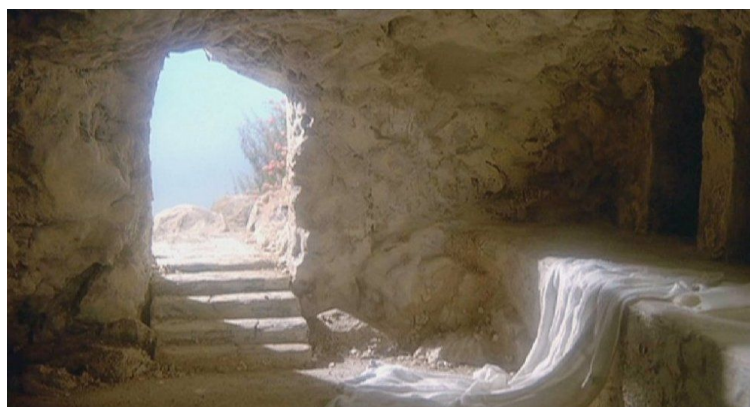
What is this hope? It is the hope that all believers in Christ have that they will rise with him. It is the hope of salvation that comes through him. It is the hope that no matter the suffering, pain, challenge, and difficulty that is encountered in life, our lives as Christians belong to Christ. Our lives are meant to serve him, rather than self-serve—to do his mission, rather than our own. None of this is easy; it requires hope in the One who lives! As Pope Francis tells us, “He who hopes, hopes one day to hear these words: come to me my brother, come to me my sister, for the whole of eternity.”

The way to the hope of the Resurrection is the way of the Cross. Only through the painful experience of Good Friday do we come to Easter joy and hope. Most of us want to avoid pain as much as we can. However, I have learned the most and deepened my faith, trust, and hope, as well as become more loving and compassionate, as a result of painful, cross-like experiences. Some will say that suffering is meant to test us or is sent by God. Instead, I prefer to believe as my mother does, and say, “Stuff happens.”

Indeed, it does. Suffering happens as a consequence of personal sin, the sins of others, and also the action of evil. What do we do when these things happen? Do we curl up into a fetal position in the corner of a room and wait for life to end? No, as I learned well during my years at a Pallottine shrine dedicated to the patron saint of hopeless cases, St. Jude. The pilgrims who came there taught me by their lives and their joy that even in our suffering, in our experiences of the Cross, we strengthen our belief that hope lives. Christ calls us to continue moving forward in life and in love, sharing what we have found in him with all those we encounter.

As the Father raised the Son on that first Easter, God still provides for us today. He saves us from our sins and gives us hope. We are called to see with the eyes of faith in Christ, feel the love of Christ, and be filled in our hearts with the hope of Christ – a hope that lives now and forever.

Amen! Alleluia!



# St. Joseph: Model of Perfection

"In the Gospels, Saint Joseph appears as a strong and courageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love. We must not be afraid of goodness, of tenderness!"

- Pope Francis (Homily for the Beginning of the Petrine Ministry of the Bishop of Rome)

Blessings on this Solemnity of St. Joseph! As we celebrate this feast day of the Patron of the Universal Church, we also celebrate the fifth anniversary of the beginning of the Petrine ministry particularly for this event and later inserted an invocation of St. Joseph into all the Eucharistic Prayers, not simply Eucharistic Prayer I (Roman Canon). Pope Francis not only invites us to see St. Joseph as protector of the Universal Church, but also calls us all to be protectors who live with tenderness that shows the love of Christ. What does it mean to be a "protector"? In the same homily quoted above, he offers us an answer, which he witnesses as pope.

"In [St. Joseph], dear friends, we learn how to respond to God's call, readily and willingly, but we also see the core of the Christian vocation, which is Christ! Let us protect Christ in our lives, so that we can protect others, so that we can protect creation! The vocation of being a "protector", however, is not



just something involving us Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply human, involving everyone. It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as Saint Francis of Assisi showed us. It means respecting each of God's creatures and respecting the environment in which we live. It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about. It means caring for one another in our families: husbands and wives first protect one another, and then, as parents, they care for their children, and children themselves, in time, protect their parents. It means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness. In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God's gifts!"

The Pope's actions toward those on the peripheries witness to how we can both protect and show tenderness, "responding to God's call" as St. Joseph did. For as he said also in his homily, "only those who serve with love are able to protect!"

# The Most Holy Name of Mary

Both of my grandmothers had great devotion to the Blessed Mother. I remember going to their homes and seeing statues of Mary and other saints, prayer cards, and crystal and silver rosaries. I learned much from them and my mother about devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Back in 1901, on the feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary, my grandmother, Millie Donio, was born. During my childhood, though, I did not know that it was a feast day, because with the reform of the liturgical calendar in 1969, the feast was removed. Restored by St. John Paul II in 2002 in the revised Roman Missal, it is now an optional memorial. Interestingly, there is only one other feast related to the name of a person, the Most Holy Name of Jesus, celebrated on January 3rd. This feast day was restored in 1996.

The name, Mary, could mean "sea of bitterness" or, possibly, "beloved". Consider for a moment how many situations Mary found herself in that could have resulted in bitterness. When the unwed young Mary was told by the angel Gabriel that she was pregnant by the "power of holy Spirit," she did not focus on her own situation, but made herself available to her cousin Elizabeth (Lk 1:39-40). When her son, Jesus, went off preaching suddenly, the scriptures show no evidence of her complaining about it. Instead, she says, "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5). When she is at the foot of the cross watching her son die before her eyes, powerless to do anything about it, she accepts being given over the care of the Beloved Disciple, he as her son, she as his mother (John 19:26-27). Sorrow, yes. Bitterness, no. A "sea of bitterness" around her, but she, being the perfect disciple, shows us the way to be. She shows us how to live as beloved by God.

My grandmothers showed me how to live as one beloved by God. They each had their various hardships in life – physical sufferings, emotional difficulties, financial challenges – but each held firm to her faith and it was faith in God that sustained them. They each moved outside of themselves and cared for others, even in the midst of their own struggles. I will never forget going with Grandmom Donio quietly dropping off bags of fruits and vegetables at the back doors of the homes of people she knew were in need of them, but were not able to ask others for help. No words exchanged, we were not even seen, just an action done for good because the other is beloved by God.

Being beloved by God does not mean there will be no suffering or challenge in life. Being beloved by God, called by our name in Baptism, which claimed us for Jesus Christ, we are not left alone to simply move through life. We call also on the names of the other baptized in the community of faith, the Church. We call out with all of our needs as we live in what can seem at times like a "sea of bitterness." But, we are not meant to be bitter in life, no matter what we experience.

What are we to do then? Not live in bitterness, but witness as ones beloved. We are to call others by name and assist them in being good disciples of Jesus Christ, following the pattern of life and asking the intercession of the one called Mary.



# What Are We Thankful For?

The end of a liturgical year and the beginning of a new one always has readings at Mass related to the end of time and our preparation for the second coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. The situation of the world at the moment gives us an opportunity to stop and reflect on our lives and how we live them. We are challenged to live in and for Christ and for nothing else. As Pope Francis reminds us:

"Before so many lacerations in the world, and the too many wounds in the flesh of men, we ask the Virgin Mary to sustain us in our commitment to imitating Jesus, our King, making present His Kingdom with acts of tenderness, compassion and mercy" (Angelus, November 22, 2015).

During November we reflect particularly on those who have gone before us and keep them in our prayers. We also ask for the prayers of those who have arrived in heaven. Many of the faithful departed were probably models for us of how to live the life of faith. May we learn from their example and be thankful for them!

As the people of the United States celebrate Thanksgiving, we at the Catholic Apostolate Center are thankful for all those who have taught us and continue to show us how to witness Christ in the Church and in the world.

May the charity of Christ urge us on!







# Gaudium Et Spes Award Remarks

*The Catholic Apostolate Center and our Director, Fr. Frank Donio, S.A.C., were honored with the Gaudium et Spes Award from the National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM) at an awards luncheon jointly hosted by NALM and National Conference of Catechetical Leadership (NCCL).*

*The award recognizes an outstanding individual or organization for promoting understanding of the Church in the world according to the vision of Vatican II. It is the highest honor that the association can bestow. Although the award has been given eighteen times since its inception in 1989, NALM has only recognized an individual and an organization together once before.*

*Fr. Frank and the Center were chosen for this award because of the extensive collaboration they engage in through his ministry as a Pallottine priest and the work of the Center. The Center was recognized for its ability to provide extensive resources to individuals and ministries so that many can revive faith, rekindle charity, and form apostles.*

National Association for Lay Ministry  
Gaudium et Spes Award  
Catholic Apostolate Center  
and Fr. Frank Donio, S.A.C.  
Chicago, IL  
June 1, 2018

On behalf of the entire Catholic Apostolate Center team working on three continents, I wish to thank Deacon Keith Davis, his predecessor as Board Chair, Mark Erdosy, the National Association for Lay Ministry Board of Directors and the members of NALM for this Gaudium et Spes Award.

In recognizing the Center and me, you are also recognizing the charism of St. Vincent Pallotti. He believed that all are called to be apostles and created in Rome in 1835 a co-responsible and collaborative association of lay people, religious, and clergy called the Union of Catholic Apostolate; whose mission was and is to be what he called "an evangelical trumpet, perpetually calling everyone and awakening the zeal and charity of all the faithful" (OOCC I, 4-5). You are also recognizing my fellow members of the Immaculate Conception Province of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, the Pallottine Fathers and Brothers, who as a Province have an almost seventy-year commitment to lay apostolate and after Vatican II to lay ministry as well, including founding the Catholic Apostolate Center in 2011 as an official ministry of the Province. Finally, and very importantly, you are recognizing the team of mostly young adults who comprise the staff of the Catholic Apostolate Center.

The Center, while not a young adult organization, is an organization that is open and welcoming to young adults. We provide accompaniment and mentorship and show how that can be done not only with peers, but with all in Church leadership. We welcome and utilize the creativity of young adults and provide leadership opportunities. All of this is also done in collaboration with many Church entities such as the USCCB, various national Catholic organizations, including all the sponsoring groups of this conference, dioceses, movements, and associations as well long-serving professionals in ministry.

We use collaborative and technological means to accomplish our mission to provide formative evangelization resources for active Catholics to help them become apostles or missionary disciples sent to assist others in encountering Jesus Christ and the Church. We develop greater collaboration and co-responsibility among Catholic leaders. We do this through living our vision that comes to us from St. Vincent Pallotti – reviving faith, rekindling charity, and forming apostles. Our hope is that our model of a Catholic organization, ever open to the initiative of the Holy Spirit, can assist others in moving beyond “We have always done it this way” ([Evangelii Gaudium, 33](#)), while at the same time keeping continuity with the tradition and teachings of the Church.

Again, many thanks to the National Association for Lay Ministry for this recognition. We promise to deepen our efforts to assist the Church in its “duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel” ([Gaudium et Spes, 4](#)).

May the Charity of Christ urge us on!





## About Fr. Frank

Fr. Frank S. Donio, S.A.C., D.Min. is Director of the Catholic Apostolate Center. He is former Provincial Rector of the Immaculate Conception Province of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (Pallottine Fathers and Brothers). Fr. Frank holds additional provincial, national and international leadership positions in administration, formation, development, and finance in the Society of the Catholic Apostolate and in the Union of Catholic Apostolate (UAC), an international public association of the faithful founded by St. Vincent Pallotti in 1835. Some of his prior assignments include Provincial Director of Formation, Pastoral Director of St. Jude Shrine in Baltimore, MD and Chaplain of Bishop Eustace Preparatory School in Pennsauken, NJ.

Fr. Frank is a Consultant to the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. He also collaborated with the Conference on the development of *Living as Missionary Disciples: A Resource for Evangelization* and on the Convocation of Catholic Leaders. Fr. Frank has served as Consultant to the Archdiocese of Baltimore for pastoral planning and assisted in the development of its *Be Missionary Disciples* planning process. He has made presentations on evangelization, co-responsibility and collaboration in ministry and apostolate, pastoral planning, Church leadership and management, and Pallottine spirituality at various universities, schools of Theology, dioceses, and national and international conferences, including the University of Notre Dame, Australian Catholic University, The Catholic University of America, Catholic Theological Union, the Archdioceses of Baltimore, Cincinnati, Dubuque, Hartford, and Washington, the Mid-Atlantic Congress for Catholic Leaders, the Leadership Roundtable, the National Association for Lay Ministry, the Catholic Campus Ministry Association, the Catholic Mission Congress, the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership, and the JS Paluch Vocation Seminar.

Fr. Frank is an Adjunct Professor at St. Joseph's College of Maine in the online Theology program and at Fordham University in the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education. He is also a Lecturer in the undergraduate Theology program in the School of Theology and Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America. He teaches in the areas of Catholic mission, pastoral ministry, spirituality, ecclesiology, and Church management and leadership. Fr. Frank has an extensive background in young adult ministry, particularly at the collegiate level, and has assisted pastorally at various universities in Maryland and the District of Columbia over the last twenty-one years. Currently, he assists the Office of Campus Ministry at The Catholic University of America. Fr. Frank is also significantly involved in chaplaincy with the Knights of Columbus, including three terms as State Chaplain of the District of Columbia. For the past eleven years, he has served as Chaplain of The Catholic University of America Council 9542.

Fr. Frank holds a Doctor of Ministry in Adult Spiritual Formation from The Catholic University of America (CUA), as well as a Bachelor of Arts in History (summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa) and a Master of Arts in Church History from CUA. He also holds a Master of Divinity from Washington Theological Union and a Master of Science in Church Management from Villanova University School of Business.

Born in 1966, Fr. Frank is originally from Hammonton, New Jersey, the oldest of four sons of Frank (deceased) and Angela Donio. He made his first consecration as a Pallottine in 1986 and his ordination to the priesthood was in 1994.

# Acknowledgments

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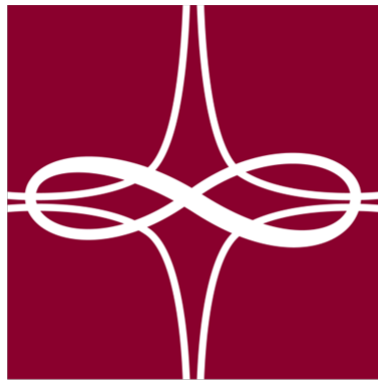
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If you would like to learn more about the work of the Catholic Apostolate Center or to read more of Fr. Frank's writings please go to:

**[www.CatholicApostolateCenter.org](http://www.CatholicApostolateCenter.org)**





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