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50° ANNIVERSARY OF PALLOTTINE PRESENCE IN INDIA  
PALLOTTINE CONGRESS 2001

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The Pallottine Congress was an occasion  
for celebration, reflection and thanksgiving.

The yearlong celebrations of the Golden Jubilee of the Pallottine presence in India came to a close at Pallottine Animation Centre, Nagpur. During the Jubilee year, a number of programmes were organized at various places to mark the occasion, notable among them was "Jubilee Houses for the poor". The culmination of the renewal programme of the province was a retreat on Pallottine Charism, which helped us to strengthen our missionary life envisioned by our Holy Founder St. Vincent Pallotti.

From 1st to 4th February, a gathering of Pallottines from all over India and some guests from abroad was held in Nagpur. It was a great landmark, which will go down in the history of Indian Pallottines as a unique event. Golden Jubilee celebrations culminated at P.A.C. in the form of "Pallottine Congress 2001". It was a celebration of joy, a celebration of coming together as Pallottine Family, and a celebration of looking back at our history and recalling the joyful and painful memories of the past. It was indeed an important moment of grace, a moment of God's intervention, a moment of sharing and a moment to look ahead to the future with hope. Pallottine Congress was not limited to SAC confreres. Many of our co-missionaries like Missionary Sisters of Catholic Apostolate, Sisters of Catholic Apostolate and Khristsevikas were invited. They joined us to thank the Lord for the wonderful things the Lord had worked through us all over India. It was really a "home coming" for the Pallottines even as the process of transformation is in full swing. The theme of the Congress was "Pallottine Charism in the service of the Indian Church". This theme helped to look deeply into our charism and revitalize the dream of our Holy Founder. It came as an opportunity to re-dream our charism in our concrete situation.

The Pallottine Congress was inaugurated on 1st February. Very Rev. Fr. Séamus Freeman, the Rector General, Very Rev. Fr. Fritz Kretz, the Provincial of the Sacred Heart Province, Germany, Very Rev. Fr. Mathew Panakal, the Provincial of Prabhu Prakash Province, some of our beloved missionaries of yesteryears, and representatives of Pallottine Sisters and Khristsevikas lit the lamp.

Having lit the lamp, we invited Christ the Light of the world in our midst and we plunged into different deliberations. The deliberations were more than intellectual presentations. It helped us go beyond our differences and strengthen the bond of friendship. Transformation and change are always painful processes, but Pallottine Congress was a unique experience of coming together and dealing with this necessary pain. In ways small and big, the papers presented helped to examine our past, evaluate our present and journey toward the future with a vision.

On this joyful occasion, Very Rev. Fr. Séamus Freeman, the Rector General, spoke to the audience about the Pallottine ethos and the need to collaborate and grow together as a family. He emphasized the need to work together as a family to create a better world. Speaking on the occasion and recalling the past, Very Rev. Fr. Fritz Kretz, Provincial of the Sacred Heart Province, Germany, took us down the memory lane. He presented a meticulously prepared paper on the mission and historical development and stressed the need for continued collaboration between the Provinces. Mission has been a child dearly brought up by the Pallottines and, therefore, we should never forget that child in the spirit of collaboration, he said. Latter part of the day witnessed a well-prepared historical analysis of the growth of the Pallottine community and apostolate in India, by Rev. Fr. Vensus George. All the presentations and group discussions brought the members close to one

another and gave the Society in India certain pointers for the enhancement of the Pallottine Ministry in India. Members have been touched and enriched by the interactions during this coming together.

The Golden Jubilee celebrations of Pallottine presence in India reached its peak during the Thanksgiving Eucharistic Celebration. It helped us recall the long fifty years of hard work and rededicate ourselves as Pallottines in the service of the Church in India. The participants expressed their hope that the purposefulness and determination shown by the confreres in various new initiatives will certainly lead the Province on the path of progress. The celebrations reminded everyone again and again that we are one family and that we have one heritage, one Master to serve, and one goal to achieve.

The great success story that the Province can proudly claim for itself, is nothing but the grace of God in action. That grace has come in the form of generous help from our benefactors who have supported our endeavours with material and spiritual strength. That grace has come in the form of numerous collaborators. The grace has come in the form of many young men with prophetic vision and unwavering dedication and steadfast courage. The Congress was a time to thank God for all these. “Thanks for what has been; Yes to what will be”!

