

THE CULTURE OF COLLABORATION
FROM THE TIME OF ST. VINCENT PALLOTTI
“Rekindle the gift of God that is within” (2 Tim 1:6)

Séamus Freeman, SAC
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INTRODUCTION

One of the more significant decisions of the XVIII General Assembly (1998) was the unanimous vote calling on the General Council “to institute a Secretariat of Formation at the Generalate”. For a number of years prior to this decision, there was a growing feeling concerning the vital importance of formation for the welfare of our community. On the 31 March 1999, the General Council set up this new Secretariat. The members, all of whom were qualified and experienced as formators, set to work immediately, with determination and enthusiasm. They formulated for themselves a very demanding program. One of the highlights of the program is this “Formation Session”, but this is not all. In fact, we can say that the best is still to come. Today, on behalf of all of us, I wish to express a word of sincere thanks to the members of the Secretariat for all their hard work, for the relevant proposals they make, and for bringing the idea of a “Formation Session” to fruition in these days. It was their idea too to open this session to formators of other Institutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate (= UAC). To Fathers Jacob Nampudakam, Jeremiah Murphy, Paul Rheinbay, Júlio Endi Akamine, Stanisław Stawicki, Józef Lasak, and Kazimierz Czula (contact person of the General Council for the Secretariat). I wish to say, in the name of the entire Pallottine Family: Congratulations! Thank you!

This gathering of formators is neither a convention nor a symposium. The objective of the Secretariat is that it be a “meeting”, or “formation session”. I had nothing to do with the choice of the word “session”. However, I like that word, and it has a great deal of meaning for me, as a child of Irish culture. In Ireland, it is very common to hear the question: “Will you come to the session?”, or, “What sessions are on this week-end?”. In Ireland, the word “session” literally means - an evening whereby people gradually come together for an impromptu gathering of anyone and everyone to experience the best of song, dance and story - telling. In a way, it seeks to unveil the pure joy of who we are, and all we aspire to be. It leaves one exhausted. Our meeting here is just that, a “session”, a celebration of the pure joy of who we are, and all we aspire to be, as Pallottines. It’s a formation experience rather than a detached intellectual reflection. It’s an effort to give reason for the hope that is within us.

As a sub-title to this presentation, I have inserted the quote from St. Paul calling us to “rekindle the gift of God that is within” (2 Tim 12:6). These are the words that the present General Council chose as an inspirational guide for this six year term, and I also wish them to be the inspirational guide of all we say and discuss today. These scriptural words compose both a fact and a challenge. In these days, we are not going to re-invent the wheel. All of us received the call to be Pallottine, and so we are here together. All of us have had many years of Pallottine formation. The gift is and remains within us. However, we are challenged these days by the word “rekindle”. We can look at this word in two ways. We wish to rekindle all that has gone stale within us over the years. This session is therefore primarily for us and not for others in our care. To rekindle also means to make relevant for the time in which we live, with its particular issues, problems and graces. At a time like this, still so close to the Great Jubilee Year 2000, it is necessary to “rekindle the gift”. The Church reminds us that in order to realize this objective it is necessary “to remember the past with gratitude,

to live the present with enthusiasm, and to look forward to the future with confidence”¹. It is a time to plan for the future, and to review the actual situation. St. Vincent Pallotti speaks of the “actual situation” in two ways². First of all he speaks of “the actual needs of the Church”. Those he identified are as true for today as they were for his own time - the revival of faith, the enkindling of charity, and its propagation throughout the world³. We see here the principle arms of evangelisation: faith, love and mission. Secondly, our Founder’s idea foresaw that when we have a solid formation in faith, love and mission we will then be in a position to evangelise the “actual world situation”. In this project he held it essential to respond to the ever-increasing needs of the world “with the spirit that is without self-interest, with a spirit of true humility, seeking only the greater glory of God and the eternal salvation of souls”⁴. Vincent Pallotti wanted the involvement of all in this project. Today we pursue this same apostolic ideal. As we do so, various priorities take precedence over others, depending on “actual needs” *ad intra* and *ad extra*.

I wish to treat of the topic assigned to me under three main headings:

1) Collaboration: “the most Divine Gift”. This is certainly a priority of our Founder. Furthermore, it is a gift we need in order to offset the negative effects of a long history of the separate development of Institutes, communities, vocations, Provinces & Regions of the UAC.

2) The General Statutes: Instrument of “mutuality” to reveal new insights on our charism. No one Institute, community, or person, can fully define our charism. The communion of vocations often brings a rich and unexpected new understanding of particular aspects of our charism⁵.

3) Solid formation for collaboration of candidates and members in initial formation - the hope of the future. Throughout life, I would say that we act and react in ways that are the fruit of all we internalised in initial formation. It is very difficult to change our mind-set in later life. This fact indicates the precise objective of this third part of the presentation.

Both our present General Council and the General Coordination Council of the UAC have invested great efforts and energy with the objective to re-appropriate the fullness of our charism. This effort is solidly based on the writings of our Founder and on the decisions and proposals of General Assemblies and Chapters. We must do our best to involve all members in these processes of renewal. This is difficult but it should not discourage us. However, we really err, even sin, when we are incapable, or unwilling, to introduce formation in the spirituality of the UAC at all levels of our formation programs.

The thesis of this presentation is to highlight the immense significance of the word “collaboration” as the one word that gives an authentic, perhaps complete, insight into the Pallottine reason for being - *raison d’être*. At the outset, I would like to give a context to this word “collaboration”, a word which can also mean co-operation, communion, solidarity, mutuality, or togetherness. From a Pallottine point of view, the true and essential context of the word “collaboration” is to be found in our Founder’s foundational document of 1835, where we read that “there is the conviction, demonstrated by both reason and experience, that the good done individualistically is usually lacking, uncertain and of limited duration. Even the most generous efforts of individuals cannot be morally and religiously successful unless they are united and directed toward

¹ John Paul II, *Novo millennio ineunte* (6.01.2001), n. 1 (= *NMI*).

² Cf. San Vincenzo Pallotti, *Opere complete*, a cura di Francesco Moccia SAC, Curia Generalizia della Società dell’Apostolato Cattolico: Roma 1964-1997, voll. I-XIII (= *OCC*), here *OCC VII*, pp. 2-4

³ John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio* (7.12.1990), n. 2: “For in the Church’s history, missionary drive has always been a sign of vitality, just as its lessening is a sign of a crisis of faith”.

⁴ *OCC VII*, p. 3.

⁵ John Paul II, *Vita consecrata* (25.03.1996), n. 55 (= *VC*).

a common goal”⁶. The slogan “Together we journey: Together we serve”⁷ is an accurate definition of the Pallottine meaning of the word “collaboration”.

1. COLLABORATION - THE MOST DIVINE GIFT

In the General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, collaboration is set out as one of the key priorities of the Local, National and General Coordination Councils⁸. I will attempt to deepen our understanding of “collaboration” as the one word that can come closest to defining the Pallottine ethos.

Before speaking concretely about collaboration, it is necessary to say a brief word about its connection to a spirituality of communion. Theologically, the great intuition of our Founder was the need and value of a universal ecclesiology of communion. Today, we find that this is also one of the great priorities of the Church at the beginning of the Third Millennium. When Pope John Paul II, on the 6th January, 2001, celebrated the closing of the Jubilee Year 2000, he also launched a program, addressed to all members of the Church, with the name *Novo millennio ineunte*. This document, already cited, in the English translation is called: *At the beginning of the new millennium*. One of the priorities mentioned in this document is of particular importance to Pallottines. It is the section on the need and content of a spirituality of communion. The language of this section is very similar to the reflections of our Founder on this same topic. Let me mention the four points made. A spirituality of communion indicates:

- “above all the heart’s contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us;
- the ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound mystery of the mystical body, and therefore as «those who are part of me»;
- the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a gift for me;
- knowing how to «make room» for our brothers and sisters, bearing «each other’s burdens» and resisting the selfish temptations which constantly beset us and provoke competition, careerism, distrust and jealousy”⁹.

In this number 43 of *NMI* there is a very beautiful reflection on the relationship of love we ought to have with God and with each other. This ought to be of great importance to all of us in our endeavour to improve the quality of community. It’s about a mysticism of communion that underlies all our relations. The thought and the language is a wonderful expression of the life of *communio* and collaboration so central to the spiritual and apostolic thinking of our Founder. We are invited to promote a spirituality of communion, making it the guiding principle of education, formation, ministry, of families and communities. This spirituality “indicates above all the heart’s contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us”, *per se* living images of God - God of infinite love and mercy. This in turn leads us to think of all others, and of our confreres “as those who are part of me”, making us able to share in their joys and sufferings, sensing their desires and attending to their needs. This in turn “implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a «gift for me»”. Finally a spirituality of communion invites and enables us to know how to “make

⁶ *OCC* IV, pp. 122-123.

⁷ The Society of the Catholic Apostolate, *Together we journey together we serve*. Final documents of the General Assembly XVI, Rome 1990, pp. 44.

⁸ Cf. The Union of Catholic Apostolate, *General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate*, in *UAC Project 2000*, Rome 1999, art. 44, 50, 55 (= *General Statutes UAC*).

⁹ *NMI*, n. 43.

room” for each other, bearing “each others burdens” (Gal 6:2). This language is very Pallottine, and expresses very well the intuition of our Founder. However, number 43 of *NMI* concludes with a relevant warning: “Let us have no illusions: unless we follow this spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanisms without a soul, masks of communion rather than its means of expression and growth”. There are clear echoes of our Founder here: “(...) love, and if love is missing, the entire moral body, which was founded through divine mercy for the good of people and for the greater glory of God, will collapse”¹⁰.

This is the spiritual foundation on which we can base a reflection on collaboration, on its practical implications, and with an actual situation in mind. Of course, unless we build on this spiritual foundation, external structures of collaboration will serve very little purpose. Participation in this spiritual process was, for our Founder, a most divine gift. We could say that collaboration is the human face of a mystical communion.

Collaboration is one of the key words in the writings of our Founder, and perhaps the one word that provides the specific understanding of his charism. Collaboration is the very motor of his prophetic intuition regarding the Union of Catholic Apostolate. In his writings we note that the phrase “most divine gift” is always associated with the word “collaboration”. A computer search of the writings of the Founder, on the words “collaboration as the most divine of all divine gifts” reveals the use of this affirmation sixteen times. Perhaps there are other references. We will only know for sure when the CD of the writings of St. Vincent Pallotti is completed.

Let’s take a sample of his many formulations of this statement. “From among all the divine perfections, the most divine is to be collaborators of God for the well-being of souls”¹¹. We can draw two conclusions from these words. The collaboration is essentially and primarily with God. The implication of this affirmation is that when all people are united in God, they are lead to be united with one another.

Though these words were very central to our Founder’s thinking, they are not in fact original words of his. We find reference to the original words in his Appeal of May 1835. There we read: “God has created man in time and expects him to be happy in eternity. His desire is to see every person saved and enlightened by his divine truth. To this end Providence and Grace are directed. That is why St. Dionysius the Areopagite stated that the most holy, noble, august and divine of all divine works is the work of cooperating with the merciful designs, wishes and desires of God, for the salvation of souls”¹². However, our Founder did make these words his own in thought and action. In a four and a half page document - “Declaration and nature of the pious Union”¹³ - the importance of “collaboration” is stated six times.

For our Founder, all are called to collaboration, not just like-minded people. On 9 April 1835, the Founder made the first list of members of the new Foundation. The composition of the list itself gives us an interesting insight into his priorities. There were 10 priests and 6 lay faithful. The priests were diocesan and religious; 12 Italians, 1 English, 1 French, 1 from Iraq, 1 Basilian Abbot (name, Zogheb, but country unknown to me - Armenian, I believe); there were three rites - a universal group that could only function in the context of new concepts of collaboration and co-responsibility. I think one can say that Pallotti’s primary idea was God’s call to all to collaborate with Him and with each other. This is the spiritual communion.

The secondary idea was to apply this ideal to any and every concrete apostolate. He did not mean us to cling to structures. They are to be continually evaluated. There was a difficult beginning to this prophetic aspiration.

In 1838, the name “Catholic Apostolate” was declared superfluous. In 1854 the name was

¹⁰ *OOCC* VI, p. 438.

¹¹ *OOCC* IV, p. 477.

¹² *OOCC* IV, pp. 124-125.

¹³ Cf. *OOCC* I, pp. 2-7.

changed. The works were affirmed and lauded, and developed in separate ways. But, without the name, the emphasis was ever so subtly moved from the importance of a prophetic animating principle to the valuable contribution we made to the mission of the Church. The essence of the charism was suppressed, but never forgotten.

The Vatican II decree on the up-to-date renewal of Religious Life challenged all Institutes to “a constant return to the sources of the whole Christian life and to the primitive inspiration of the Institute, and its adaptation to the changed conditions of our time”¹⁴. Furthermore, the decree stressed that “effective renewal and right adaptation cannot be achieved save with the cooperation of all the members of an institute”¹⁵. Each Pallottine Institute responded to this call, within its own juridical rights, and independently of each other, for the most part. I can only speak for my community. The members of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate renewal Chapter of 1968/69 did not find it easy to respond adequately to these guidelines. Being part of a larger Pallottine family required collaboration of all the parts in order to achieve an authentic renewal. However, at that time there were no institutional means whereby such collaboration could be achieved. As a result we have a situation whereby our Society, and the other Institutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, carried out a renewal and re-reading of the Pallottine charism, and initiated a re-writing of their legislation, but independently of each other.

One has to question whether, with regard to matters that have implication for the entire foundation, the conclusions reached for the internal life of our Society could possibly contain the full authenticity of renewal. In other words, the renewal process was fragmented, each Institute of the Pallottine Family going its own way, but not totally so. The members of the renewal Chapter were aware of the complexity of the situation. For this reason they were able to state: “At the time of our Founder the government of the foundation in its entirety lay in the hands of Pallotti and of the first members of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, a position the Society still holds. Whether this arrangement can and should be retained also for the future is a question which, in the present situation, need not be decided immediately. Hence the General Chapter gives the various provinces and regions the opportunity to experiment with different organisational and directional forms corresponding to their own situation, and at the proper time a final solution will have to be found”¹⁶.

Perhaps, with our present efforts to implement the General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, that “proper time” has arrived. Let us take a look at how these directives of the renewal Chapter were taken up in the life of our community and in the entire foundation of St. Vincent Pallotti. We can best do this by looking at the specific emphasis of the various General Councils, an emphasis they took from the General Assemblies, which elected them. It is worthy of note to point out that the role and force of General Assemblies is much stronger in these post-Vatican II times.

We begin with the Extraordinary Chapter of 1968/69. It achieved a great deal in terms of renewal for our Society, but in the wider context of the entire Pallottine Family could not come to some important conclusions. Every effort to arrive at a name for the entire foundation failed. No profound criteria for renewal in the global sense of the charism were presented. This is surely so because of the lack of the completeness of the “collaboration of all” that was required by the Vatican II guidelines. The good of this Chapter was that it did provide for the “opportunity to experiment”. Though this process began very slowly, we can say that in recent years it has been a very fruitful experience, and has been the constant guide of all recent developments.

The 1971 General Assembly again sought to find a name for the entire foundation, and succeeded. The title “Union of Catholic Apostolate” was chosen. Not everyone agreed with this. Not all were consulted. There was a long silence afterwards. It is as if there was the general feeling that this was not the opportune time. The General Council, besides, had other priorities. These were the

¹⁴ Vatican II, *Perfectae caritatis*, n. 2.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, n. 4.

¹⁶ *Documents of the Twelfth Extraordinary General Chapter*, Rome 1969, Ch. 5, n. 14.

years (1971-1977) when scholarly preparatory work, in the context of the *ad experimentum* period of promulgation, was being done on the re-elaboration of the legislation of our Society. In these same years, however, a definitive draft of the fundamental document of the Union of Catholic Apostolate - the Preamble - was finalised. The mood of these years is best described by the report on the Union to the XIVth General Assembly (1977): "After the Extraordinary Chapter there followed, at all levels of the Society, the intense work for the formulation of our new legislation. By way of conclusion, a new image of our Society, as fully inserted in the entire Pallottine foundation, found clear expression in the Fundamental Law (Preamble and Chapter 1). The reflection promoted by the Extraordinary Chapter did not remain a dead letter, but began to translate itself into a new way of understanding and operation. Questions regarding our identity as Pallottines in the Church of today were not lacking. Such questions dealt more or less with the forms and means. Perhaps they attempt to express the expectation of a practical manual of our apostolate which could promote clarity and unity and sustain all in a common project"¹⁷. Slowly, we have been moving towards that desired clarity, and a concrete unity of all Pallottine expressions.

With the change of General Administration in 1977, there was also a change of emphasis. The process of the revision of our legislation was by now nearing completion and was definitively promulgated on the 25th of March 1981. The main emphasis of this period was the further elaboration of the document called "The Preamble", and its acceptance by the Congress of the General Administrations of the Institutes of the Pallottine Family, which met two times, in 1979 and 1981¹⁸. The import of these meetings is profound and cannot be ignored. Let me quote from the minutes of the 1979 meeting. "It is obvious that with the name Union of the Catholic Apostolate, used in the Preamble, the nature of the Foundation of St. Vincent Pallotti remains unchanged: priests and brothers, sisters and laity are all integrating parts, with equal right, each according to one's own proper structural features. This meeting has the merit of having strongly underlined this truth. For this reason, this same description of the nature of the Community of Priests and Brothers, today known by the name of Society of the Catholic Apostolate, specifies that it is «an integrating part» of the Foundation of St. Vincent Pallotti"¹⁹. We can see here a definitive move in the direction of the "collaboration of all" and the willingness and even courage to interpret one's particular legislation by means of the guide of consensus revealed from the communion of "the integrating parts" of the entire foundation.

In 1983 there is a new General Administration in our Society and it lasts until 1992. 1983 begins a period of intense commemoration. We had the Jubilee Year of 1985 (150 years of Foundation). We had the Bicentennial Year of 1995 (200th Anniversary of the birth of St. Vincent Pallotti), and - now just celebrated - the Millennium Jubilee Year of 2000, which was also the 150th anniversary of the death of our Founder, and the 50th anniversary of his beatification.

1983 marks a further extension of the principle of the "collaboration of all". Up to this time there was the communion of the Institutes of the Pallottine Family. However, with the publication of the preparatory document for the 1985 celebrations, and with the title "One hundred and fifty years of the Union of the Catholic Apostolate (1835-1985)", there was a new development. The signatories of the document extend the circle of participation to include those who are not members of Institutes, but who have a consciousness of being members of the foundation of St. Vincent Pallotti. From this point on, the process of discernment avails of the participation of all expressions of membership of the Union of Catholic Apostolate. A passage from the document itself can explain the nature of the transition that took place: "Vincent Pallotti explicitly recognised that the lay Christian is not a mere co-operator of the priest. The lay person has his or her own unique apostolic vocation, which corresponds to a state in life and is essential for the Church. Vincent Pallotti

¹⁷ *Acta SAC VIII* (1971-1977), pp. 432-433.

¹⁸ Cf. *Acta SAC IX* (1979), pp. 254ff.; X (1981), pp. 407ff.

¹⁹ *Acta SAC IX* (1979), p. 257.

visualised a form of cooperation with lay people that gave complete scope to their proper role in the Church and in the world. In his vision of the Catholic Apostolate he clearly indicated the specific mission of lay people of every state, talent, and situation. Therefore, we priests, brothers, and sisters, in the light of how the Second Vatican Council amply explained and promoted this fundamental nature and task of the mission of lay people, are not entitled to act as if lay people have no other choice but share in the patrimony reserved to the priestly office or religious state”²⁰. A “collaboration of all” has been firmly established.

There are different types of collaboration, and we have seen all of them in action in our recent history. There is “collaboration for (...)”. The nature of this type of collaboration is the classical participation in the role of the other. The other makes all the decisions, arranges all the planning and looks for “volunteers” to help with the details. It is a passive collaboration. This can be a necessary service, but it is not what we mean by the collaboration of all, in the Pallottine sense. Then there is “collaboration with (...)”. Here there is some active participation, but of a limited type. The initiative comes from some one person, and along the way others are invited to have a say in the final content of a document or project. This is the type of collaboration, which animated the life, and initiatives of the Jubilee Year of 1985.

A new type of collaboration emerged at the end of the Jubilee Year of 1985. All the expressions involved in the celebrations were called together to discern the spiritual and apostolic fruit of the year, to discern the needs that require a response. It is the first time in a long history that such discernment - with universal participation - takes place. The fruit of this endeavour was the establishment of “Commission ‘86”, an initiative which gave concrete expression to what we now call “a communion of individual persons and of communities”²¹. This type of collaboration also has a name. I heard it mentioned for the first time at the Synod of Bishops on Consecrated Life, namely, “collaboration from the beginning (...)”. The very birth of ideas and decisions comes from an act of communion, which in our case brings together a global representation of all authentic expressions of the Pallottine charism. The first fruit of this initiative was a renewed stress on the importance of formation for a clearer understanding of our charism in the context of “serving and journeying together”. The Manual “Called by Name”, published in six languages, has the advantage of being an instrument common to all, and also has the need of being adapted to local conditions.

Collaboration from the beginning is the dynamic which enabled the setting up of the General Coordination Council of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, and the National and Local Coordination Councils of the Union. These are the “places” where “collaboration from the beginning (...)” can guarantee the fullness of spiritual and apostolic life of our charism, and with a creative fidelity. “Collaboration from the beginning (...)” is the dynamic which gave birth to the important document “Memory and Prophecy of the Union of Catholic Apostolate”, an act of communion that accompanied our every celebration of the Bicentennial Year of 1995. It is the dynamic that inspires our present efforts to implement the General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate. This is the great priority of the present General Coordination Council. Our expectation was that, by the end of the Jubilee Year 2000, the structural instruments of Pallottine collaboration would be established. To date we can say that National Coordination Councils are established, or about to be established in 16 countries. This is a good response, and includes the vast majority of the countries where Pallottine presence is of greater historical and numerical significance.

Such Councils constitute the prophetic basis that ought to animate our every particular service to the Church and world of our time, and in every place where we serve. This is also a consequence of the decisions of the General Coordination Council, in its meeting of 18 September 1999, and published in the booklet “UAC Project 2000”.

²⁰ *One hundred and fifty years of the Union of Catholic Apostolate (1835-1985)*, Rome 1984, n. 8.

²¹ Cf. Society of the Catholic Apostolate, *In the Union to Evangelize*. Final Document of XVII General Assembly, Rome 1992, n. 16.

The recent developments of the General Secretariat in Rome are also significant. The presence of a full-time secretary (Patrizia Modica) has enabled us to initiate an information Newsletter with a world-wide circulation. The hope is that this instrument will succeed in generating an exchange of information on the life-experiences of the UAC throughout the world. This initiative can eventually provide a major impulse to the ongoing task of generating and safe-guarding the internal unity of the Union. It will also help to highlight the problems and challenges we face, and from the communion of different experiences, help to find solutions of creative fidelity to our charism, for an ever-effective evangelisation presence in the vineyard of the Lord.

Today, we live this originality, “because priests, brothers, sisters, and lay faithful come together as partners in one union to work together for the accomplishment of the apostolic mission of the Church in the world”²². In this journeying and serving together, the autonomy of the single communities and of groups belonging to the Union of Catholic Apostolate must be respected, but at the same time there is a felt need to be connected by a profound sense of belonging.

2. GENERAL STATUTES OF THE UNION OF CATHOLIC APOSTOLATE

In the preceding section, I made brief mention of the General Statutes of the UAC. I would now like to inform you of the actual situation of these Statutes. It is important that you have a good knowledge of this important process.

At the end of the Jubilee Year 1985, General Statutes were mentioned as a possible task for the newly formed “Commission ‘86”. However, the decision was put the emphasis on formation and communication. In 1988 there was a growing feeling of the need of some organisational guidelines. This felt need was soon realised into the “General Guidelines for the animation, coordination and guidance of the UAC”, published 16 June 1989. These guidelines were primarily for the regulation of the initiatives and workings of the UAC at a General level here in Rome. However, by 1992, all were in agreement of the need of General Statutes for the entire Pallottine Family. The importance of the “Preamble Document” was seen as the basis for the elaboration of General Statutes. This developing situation was concretised for the SAC (priests and brothers community) by the following statements of the 1989 General Assembly:

a) “To further a single physiognomy in all the UAC, the General Administration will indicate basic, common guidelines. This will have the advantage of avoiding wasted initiatives in which, at times, it is also difficult to recognise common roots and to find ways of communion”;

b) “It is proposed to hasten the work for the preparation of General Statutes of the Union and to take steps toward the formal approval of the Union of Catholic Apostolate in the Church”.

I believe that these proposals were an effort to respond to preoccupations. Firstly, the history separate development of the Institutes and communities of the Pallottine Family led to ever greater difficulties regarding the capability of accepting discernment on the charism that did not take place within one’s own community. Therefore, there was the idea to develop structures that could bring all expressions of the UAC into a common Cenacle of discernment. This, of course does not solve all problems. In the light of the weights of history, it is not easy for many to “see” the sense of everything that is proposed. In the second place, there was the consciousness that many other ecclesial initiatives in the Church, akin to the charism of St. Vincent Pallotti, were in fact more known and recognised by the Church. Such preoccupations convinced all that there was need to take new initiatives.

Our General Council presented these proposals to the International Council. They were supported unanimously. It was decided to ask Fr. Hubert Socha SAC, to prepare draft Statutes for the Union of Catholic Apostolate. The process of the elaboration of a Statute was one of multi-

²² Union of Catholic Apostolate, *Memory and Prophecy of the Union of Catholic Apostolate*, Rome 1993, n. 23.

faceted dialogue. The initial dialogue was between Fr. Socha, as juridical expert, and the International Council of the Union. The process began with a list of 18 questions from Fr. Socha to the International Council. On the basis of the replies, he wrote a first draft, bearing in mind the common ground the Union had developed by means of the "Preamble Document". A feature of the draft was the number of possible options presented. The international Council took a position on these options. A draft with the title "A Working Document" was then sent out in seven languages to all expressions of the Union for consultation. A commission evaluated the consultation results. Again, with the help of Fr. Socha a second draft was prepared and circulated, with the sub-title *ad experimentum*. This was an effort to verify and/or initiate the life experiences and expectations of UAC members. A second commission, of juridical experts and of members aware of the life experiences, met in Rome, May 1998. Consequent to the suggestions of this commission, the International Council met twice. It was decided to present the new approved draft to the XVIII General Assembly, 1998. This draft was known by the sub-title, "Ad experimentum '98".

The draft was presented to the XVIII General Assembly of the Priests and Brothers community. The result of a profound discussion was the following: "Following the decisions of the XVI and XVII General Assemblies, the XVIII General Assembly considers the General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, accepted on 10 June 1998 by the International Council, a solid and prophetic basis for the journey of our Society in the Union and with it. Therefore, the XVIII General Assembly establishes the following Decree. The General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate are approved *ad experimentum*, and their application is decreed, with the exception of the articles that presuppose the public juridical capacity of the Union (art. 8, 11, 64 and 68-71). It delegates the General Council to: make the amendments to the General Statutes decreed by the XVIII General Assembly; take the necessary steps for the application of the Decree; arrange its promulgation and the date when it will come into force; ask the Apostolic See for recognition of the Union; perform these tasks in collaboration with the present International Council of the Union"²³. The final phrase here merits special emphasis.

I make this emphasis in order to indicate that our community, though very anxious to move the process of renewal forward, wants the point of reference for renewal to be the General Coordination Council of the UAC. At two meetings of the UAC General Coordination Council (24 October and 19 December, 1998) the decisions of the SAC Assembly were discussed, and an acceptable solution to the questions raised by the SAC General Assembly was found. This same meeting decided to prepare all the necessary texts and materials for submission to the Pontifical Council for the Laity (= PCL), with the petition to be recognised as a Public Universal Association. The petition was made to the Holy See in a letter dated 4 March 1999, and signed by the three Superiors General referred to in number 29 of the General Statutes, that is, those "with the task of guaranteeing the unity and apostolic efficiency of the total Union", and in accord with n. (i) of the "Preamble Document".

The letter of petition, dated 4 March 1999, together with copies of the General Statutes of the UAC in Italian and English, was delivered to the PCL on 8 March 1999.

In a letter dated 4 September 1999, we received a reply from Archbishop Stanislaw Rylko, Secretary of the PCL. The letter raised a question regarding the competence of the PCL being the competent Dicastery of the Holy See to give eventual recognition to the Union of Catholic Apostolate, and approval of its Statutes.

The General Coordination Council studied the letter and decided that the best response would be to seek a meeting with Archbishop Rylko. On 15 October, I had a meeting with the Archbishop. We had a dialogue of great openness. The central point of the discussion was to try and understand if the approval of our Statutes is the competence of the PCL, or of another Dicastery. For my part, I stressed that we were of the conviction that the PCL was the competent authority to give eventual

²³ Society of Catholic Apostolate, *Faithful to the Future*, Final Document of XVIII General Assembly, Rome 1999, n. 5.2.3. This decree is obligatory for SAC members only, i. e. Priests and Brothers community.

recognition to our Statutes. Archbishop Rylko suggested that we should prepare a Juridical Motivation, justifying our decision to send our request to the PCL. He stressed that the motivation should be juridical, be based on the Apostolic Constitution Pastor Bonus 1988, and be prepared by one or more juridical experts.

On 28 December 1999, the General Coordination Council accepted the invitation of the Holy See its own. Fr. Socha agreed to elaborate a juridical motivation which justifies *ex natura* the decision to seek approval of the General Statutes from the PCL.

On 3 June 2000, Fr. Socha presented a first draft of the “motivation” to the General Coordination Council. A second draft was presented at the meeting of 9 December 2000. At this meeting it was decided to subject the “motivation” to experts in Canon Law, both within the UAC and outside, in order to gather valuable suggestions. On 24 March 2001, the General Coordination Council examined the comments of the experts, suggesting the necessary amendments to the text.

At the meeting of 2 June 2001, the General Coordination Council approved the amended text presented by Fr. Socha, and decided to present the “motivation” to the Holy See. Work then began on the preparation of the final revision and on the preparation of the text in Italian. At the moment, we are ready to make contact with the PCL and submit this juridical motivation. Such is the actual situation of the General Statutes of the UAC.

One could ask: What does all this mean? I would like to make the following brief reflections.

1) I think we must be very grateful for the fact that the PCL gave us the possibility of a dialogue. This will certainly help us to purify and deepen our presentation of the charism of St. Vincent Pallotti.

2) This dialogue does not mean that our internal process of promoting the UAC must stop until we receive official ecclesiastical approval. On the contrary, we, like many other “new ecclesial expressions”, must intensify our efforts to show and witness to concrete apostolic and spiritual fruits of all that we proclaim to be.

3) What we propose to the Holy See for approval is new in the Church. Therefore, we should not expect definitive approval in the short term. This is as it should be. We should have patience with the organic spiritual and ecclesial development of a charism. On the other hand, the Holy See will want to see and know the concrete fruits of our contribution to the mission of the Church.

4) Our dialogue with the Holy See is also an invitation to give more attention to the internal process of communion among the diverse expressions and structures of the Union, a process affirming the parallel stories that at the same time experience convergence.

5) Conscious of the many challenges of internal communion that we experience, the time of waiting is a time of purification, and especially a time to introduce, by means of renewed formation processes, all our new members to the self-understanding of ourselves proposed in the General Statutes. This brings me to the final part of this presentation: Formation for Collaboration.

3. FORMATION FOR COLLABORATION: SOME PRINCIPLES AND MODELS

Globalisation, of itself, is neither good nor evil. It can be a useful instrument for the breaking down of barriers of prejudice, fear, inequality. It can be a negative instrument if it in any way destroys variety, diversity, uniqueness. Collaboration could have the same range of virtues and vices. Collaboration rooted in Trinitarian love specifies the uniqueness of every vocation. Collaboration that tends in any way to be merely sociological and that is not rooted in Trinitarian love becomes similar to the “great leveller” - a form of death. What kind of collaboration do we seek? I believe we need go no further than the Post-Synodal Document *Christifideles laici* for an adequate answer. Collaboration is best understood as “an «organic» communion, analogous to that of a living and functioning body. In fact, at one and the same time it is characterised by a diversity and a

complementarity of vocations and states in life, of ministries, of charisms and responsibilities”²⁴. In fact, without diversity there can be no complementarity, no real collaboration. Collaboration must not mean a leveling out of charisms and functions. Collaboration is more a process of mutual respect and affirmation of the unique call of the other - be it person, family, group, community, institute. It is vital that our new and young members have an adequate formation in what Trinitarian communion, collaboration really means.

An adequate pedagogy for formation in collaborative processes - spiritual and apostolic - is no easy task. But, we must try. It is vital to begin. I wish merely to suggest some possible principles and models. Then, let time and discernment teach us the way.

3.1 Collaboration depends on dialogue

Dialogue has to be a “trialogue”, for, without God, there can be no authentic collaboration. The following words of our Founder help us to understand this dynamic. “I see you in God; I treat you in God; I greet you in God; I love you in God and in God I find myself always united to you and to all your undertakings”²⁵. The Post Synodal Exhortation *Vita consecrata* describes this dynamic in terms of an exchange of gifts. “One of the fruits of the teaching of the Church as communion has been the growing awareness, that her members can and must unite their efforts, with a view to collaboration and exchange of gifts, in order to participate more effectively in the Church’s mission”²⁶. The principles of dialogue can help us to build a culture of collaboration. These principles are well expressed in a 1993 document of the Holy See²⁷. I refer in particular to number 172 of that document, and which has many suggestions for the development of a culture of collaboration. I merely mention the suggestions made:

- Dialogue is at the heart of collaboration and accompanies all forms of it;
- Dialogue involves both listening and replying;
- It seeks both to understand and to be understood;
- It is a readiness to put questions and to be questioned;
- It is to be forthcoming about oneself;
- It is to be trustful of what others say about themselves;
- We must be ready to clarify our ideas farther;
- We must be ready to modify our personal views and ways of living and acting;
- We must allow ourselves to be guided by authentic love and truth;
- We must seek reciprocity and mutual commitment;
- We must develop the sense that the partners are together on an equal footing;
- We must seek to know one another;
- We must seek the authentic common ground;
- We must seek the roots of differences and evaluate them;
- We must confront differences in the light of all we hold in common.

3.2 Collaboration is a mutual encouragement

I wish to draw your attention to number 7 of the General Statutes, which in my opinion contains the essence of a culture of Pallottine collaboration. I quote: The UAC is “expressed in a plurality of vocations to the lay life, the consecrated life, and the ordained ministry, which are so

²⁴ John Paul II, *Christifideles laici* (30.12.1988), n. 20.

²⁵ San Vincenzo Pallotti, *Lettere*, a cura di Bruno Bayer SAC, Curia Generalizia della Società dell’Apostolato Cattolico: Roma 1995-2002, voll. I-IV (= *OCL*), here *OCL* III, p. 245.

²⁶ *VC*, n. 54.

²⁷ Cf. *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, Vatican City, 1993.

interrelated that each keeps the others vigilant, in continual growth, and dedicated to its own proper service". This means that, within the UAC, each member has a responsibility for the authentic expression of the vocation of the other.

3.3 Collaboration requires perseverance

I wish to refer to a passage in the writings of our Founder that gives us the key to the leaven of collaboration:

- Collaboration means suffering;
- A profound expression of Christian humility is required;
- Collaboration is a real trial of our sincerity;
- In times of trial, we need to invest more energy, zeal, and love;
- The exercise of humble charity is the true distinguishing quality of the true follower of Jesus Christ²⁸.

3.4 Collaboration requires models, models that promote and protect a spiritual and apostolic culture.

Our Founder strongly recommends two models, vital for himself:

- "Wherever I am I intend to find myself in the Cenacle"²⁹. The purpose of this model is to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I find this to be the ideal model for the Union of Catholic Apostolate. It respects the autonomy of groups and individuals.

- "All who are in the Sacred Retreats should imagine being at Nazareth"³⁰. This model is specifically for more co-ordinated groups, but also contains an important aspect of spirituality for everyone. Both models require much more attention that they are actually receiving at present³¹.

5) All the words I've used, and all the thoughts

I have shared with you, are of no real importance, are mere vanity, unless they find their ultimate authenticity in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. There is where we encounter the communion of the Trinity. There is where we hear God's word, and if we truly hear it, we already obey it. There is where we can experience a personal encounter with the way, the life, and the truth of the living Christ. The celebration of the Eucharist teaches us that "we must not just «speak» of Jesus Christ. We must make Him «visible» by means of the audacity of our witness of faith and charity"³². There is where we can truly encounter each other in pardon and in God. There is where we can celebrate thanksgiving, renew our enthusiasm, and confirm the hope that is within, for "we are energised not by that which we already possess but by that which is promised and about to be given"³³. There is where the desire to possess gives way to the creative waiting for the revelation of the gift that is within. The Eucharist is the center of our day and the source of all renewal³⁴. It is the

²⁸ Cf. *OOCC* I, p. 227.

²⁹ Cf. *OOCC* X, pp. 86-87.

³⁰ Cf. *OOCC* II, p. 104.

³¹ Cf. Pat Jackson SAC, *Empowered by Love, an active spirituality for contemplative Christians*, Martini Publishing: Victoria 1994, pp. 56-63.

³² John Paul II, *Address to Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life*, 21 September 2001.

³³ Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, Fortress Press 1981, p. 23.

³⁴ Cf. *Law of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate*, Rome 2001, n. 45 and n. 249.

most precious moment, rich in the graces we need and the source of the order and quiet that our lives require³⁵.

We could summarise these five points by saying that collaboration requires a basic attitude of perseverance, trust and the willingness to give up unhealthy reservations in order to encounter one another. Collaboration involves us in a “continual moving towards” the realisation of our ideals. Collaboration also includes a mutual obedience. The Founder writes: “(...) we must live in obedience (...) not only to superiors, equals and inferiors of the community (Nazareth concept), but also to others - externals of whatever state, condition class (Cenacle concept), in that which is not opposed to the Law of God, Church (...) and this obedience to externals is necessary in order to collaborate more effectively in all undertakings for the greater glory of God”³⁶.

CONCLUSION

I thank you for the invitation to share these thoughts with you. I hope they will bear fruit for you and for all of us. I pray that our Lady, Mary, Queen of Apostles, will intercede many blessing for you in your work as Formators. Let us pray for each other. Let us pray, in particular that as we journey and serve together, we may never lose sight of the call to “rekindle the gift of God that is within”, and to deepen and develop practical collaboration rooted in spiritual communion as the concept that best describes the dynamic of our charism.

I will conclude with a statement from Scripture: “A wooden beam firmly bonded into a building is not loosened by an earthquake; so the mind firmly resolved after due reflection will not be afraid in a crisis” (Sir 22:16). There are ever more expressions of crisis in today’s world. Our community depends on you the Formators to give our young members the strength, the faith, to survive the moments of crisis. We count on you to give them a love for fraternity that will make them builders of communion and collaboration wherever they go, wherever they serve the Lord - “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever” (Heb 13:8).

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SOMMARIO della relazione di Séamus Freeman SAC, *Cultura della collaborazione dal tempo di san Vincenzo Pallotti*.

Si vuole presentare il tema in tre parti: nella prima si parla del concetto pallottino di collaborazione; nella seconda si spiegano le linee principali dello Statuto Generale dell’Unione dell’Apostolato Cattolico; e infine nella terza si danno le indicazioni per la formazione alla collaborazione.

La collaborazione è profondamente collegata con la spiritualità della comunione. La più grande intuizione teologica di san Vincenzo Pallotti fu il bisogno e l’importanza di una ecclesiologia universale di comunione. Questa è anche una delle grandi priorità della Chiesa all’inizio del terzo millennio come indica la lettera apostolica di Giovanni Paolo II, *Novo millennio ineunte* (= *NMI*). Spiritualità della comunione e della collaborazione “significa innanzitutto sguardo del cuore portato sul mistero della Trinità che abita in noi, la cui luce va colta anche sul volto dei fratelli e delle sorelle che ci stanno accanto”(NMI, n. 43) e che sono immagine vivente di Dio - Dio dell’amore infinito e della misericordia. Il paragrafo conclude con un avvertimento pertinente: “Non ci facciamo illusioni: senza questo cammino spirituale, a ben poco servirebbero gli strumenti esteriori della comunione. Diventerebbero apparati senz’anima, maschere di comunione più che sue vie di espressione e di crescita” (*Ibidem*). Rileviamo in queste parole chiari echi del pensiero del nostro Fondatore: “(...) Se andasse a mancare la Carità, crollerebbe tutto il morale edificio che per la divina Misericordia con

³⁵ Cf. *OOCC* VII, pp. 73-74.

³⁶ *OOCC* III, p. 50.

tanto vantaggio delle anime a maggiore gloria di Dio è stato innalzato” (OOCC VI, p. 438). La partecipazione a questo cammino spirituale era, per il nostro Fondatore, l'accettazione del “più divino dei doni”, come espresso in queste sue parole: “Fra tutte le perfezioni divine la più divina è l'essere cooperatori di Dio nella salute delle Anime” (OOCC IV, p. 477).

Il decreto del Concilio Vaticano II sul “Rinnovamento della vita religiosa” *Perfectae caritatis* ha posto una sfida di “continuo ritorno alle fonti di ogni forma di vita cristiana e all'ispirazione primitiva degli istituti, e il loro adattamento alle mutate condizioni dei tempi” (*Ibidem*, n. 2). Ogni Comunità pallottina ha risposto a questa chiamata, secondo la propria legislazione giuridica e ognuna indipendentemente dall'altra. L'Assemblea Generale del 1971 ha scelto il nome di “Unione dell'Apostolato Cattolico” come denominazione dell'intera fondazione del Pallotti. Negli anni 1971-1977, è stato elaborato il testo definitivo e fondamentale dell'Unione dell'Apostolato Cattolico, cioè il Preambolo approvato nel 1981 dal Congresso dei Regimi Generali degli Istituti della Famiglia Pallottina.

Negli anni successivi sono stati fatti vari sforzi per la promozione dell'Unione dell'Apostolato Cattolico, cosicché dall'anno 1992 tutti convenivano sulla necessità di avere uno Statuto Generale per l'intera Famiglia Pallottina. Il testo base per l'elaborazione dello Statuto era considerato il “Preambolo”. È stato deciso di affidare a d. Hubert Socha, SAC, la preparazione di una bozza di Statuto dell'Unione dell'Apostolato Cattolico. Dopo molto lavoro il testo finale dello Statuto e la motivazione giuridica sono stati sottomessi al Pontificio Consiglio per i Laici con la richiesta di riconoscimento dell'UAC come associazione pubblica e universale. Tale richiesta è stata inoltrata alla Santa Sede con una lettera datata 4 marzo 1999, firmata dai tre Superiori Generali, cioè da coloro che, secondo il numero 29 dello Statuto Generale, “hanno il compito di garantire l'unità e l'efficienza apostolica di tutta l'Unione”, in sintonia anche con il n. (i) del “Preambolo”. Siamo aspettando una risposta.

La collaborazione è un processo spirituale, vitale ed apostolico non facile da realizzare. Perciò è importante che sia presa in considerazione fin dall'inizio nella formazione pallottina dei giovani e nuovi membri. Si avverte l'urgenza di avere un'adeguata formazione alla collaborazione. A questo scopo si possono indicare alcuni principi e modelli: 1. La collaborazione si basa principalmente sul dialogo. Il dialogo deve avere una triplice dimensione, perché, senza Dio, non ci può essere nessuna autentica collaborazione; 2. La collaborazione è incoraggiamento reciproco; 3. La collaborazione richiede perseveranza; 4. La collaborazione richiede modelli, che promuovano e garantiscano una cultura spirituale e apostolica; 5. La collaborazione trova la sua autentica espressione nella celebrazione eucaristica.

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