

Brigitte M. Proksch

Spread wide the place of your tent

Vincent Pallotti's Inspiration for a Church
of Greater Participation, Diversity and Dialogue

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Word of Welcome

*Spread wide the place of your tent,
and let the curtains of your dwelling stretch out – do not stint.
Lengthen your cords and strengthen your tent pegs. (Is 54,2)*

Everywhere in the world today, there is a concern about building the big tent. In politically divided countries, in places of economic disparity or in the many moments in which societies and communities are torn apart by strife, there is a burgeoning desire and cry to build the big tent.

Vincent Pallotti was concerned about just such a big tent long before globalisation and a modern world of startling complexity made it necessary. He was driven by a deep religious conviction that the big tent was God's vision for the world from the very start. And this conviction led him to the conclusion that a bigger tent for the Church would necessarily mean that room must be made for a greater participation of all who dwell within it, that greater diversity would have to be accommodated with the curtains of its dwelling and that greater dialogue must echo within its curtains.

I am very grateful to Dr. Brigitte Proksch for this book, which allows us to see Vincent Pallotti and his inspirations with fresh eyes. To Fr. Helmut Scharler and the Heart of Jesus Province I extend my gratitude for making this work available to the English-speaking world.

I warmly recommend this book to any and all who long for and strive for a broader and more gracious way of being Church. It is my hope that a renewed acquaintance with Vincent Pallotti and his remarkable, timeless intuition that such a Church is possible and desirable will rekindle our passion and strengthen our purpose in spreading wide the place of our tent for participation, diversity and dialogue. That would, indeed, be a gift to all the Church.

*Jacob Nampudakam SAC
Rector General
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Rome 2022*

Preface

This book is a special gift of the Heart of Jesus Province to the worldwide Pallottine Family and moreover to all people interested in serious and profound spirituality. It is based on a work of intensive research on the many writings of Vincent Pallotti, which was done in connection with the 50th anniversary of his canonization on January 20, 2013. – When John XXIII canonized Vincent Pallotti, he linked the memory of Pallotti once and for all to the epochal event of the Council and, of course, the memory of the Council with the personality of Vincent Pallotti. This fact may be taken as a symbol and indicates a direction for the permanent need to go back to the roots and to reinterpret our charism in the light of the present time.

The book contains neither a summary of Pallotti's writings nor of his life, but concentrates on his anthropology and ecclesiology and their implications for Christian life today. When it was published in German language in 2013, the response was tremendous. This encouraged us to make the book accessible to sisters and brothers in other cultures and to translate it into English. It is with pleasure and with pride that I am able to offer you this book with its far reaching perspectives, richness of inspiration and depth of theological reflection. I especially express my gratitude to the author, *Brigitte Maria Proksch*, a theologian living in Vienna/Austria and cooperating with our Province in many ways. After having done the research on Pallotti's scripts, Brigitte decided to join the Pallottine Union of Catholic Apostolate.

I am also very grateful to my confrere *Erik Riechers* for the translation of the book. Born in Canada and living in Germany Erik is bilingual. He is a member of the Heart of Jesus Province Germany-Austria and always has an eye on international needs and developments. The translation was a challenging work as the way of thinking and the structure of expression is very different in German and English. I wish to express my deep gratitude to him for his work.

It is my hope that this book will serve as an inspiration to the Pallottine Family in many ways.

*Helmut Scharler SAC
Provincial of the Heart of Jesus Province
Friedberg, April 2022*

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Introduction

The mandate, on the occasion of a special anniversary, to look again and anew at the founding figure and his heritage, as well as his inspiration for the present day and the future, combines the twofold perspective. There is a reflection on the charism of the origins and its original realisation together with the exploration and research of the concerns of the present day. In accordance with the intention of the Pallottines, that the 50th anniversary of the canonisation of Pallotti be employed in such a way that it contributes to spiritual growth.¹ The following reflections wish to place themselves at the service of this intention. They pursue the connection between the theology of the Second Vatican Council and the person of Vincent Pallotti on the occasion of the 50 years since the Council and 50 years since the canonisation.

The Question and Considerations regarding the Methodological Orientation

If one approaches the biography and personality of Vincent Pallotti for the first time, then the date of his canonisation on January 20, 1963, in other words, during the Second Vatican Council, is one of the first and striking things to stand out. The anniversary of his canonisation is connected, therefore, to the anniversaries of the Council for all time. This suggests that the connections between Pallotti and the Council's content and its history of reception until the present day be reflected upon anew and repeatedly.

A first question already results from this connection. How is the life of the Catholic Church shaped 50 years after this outstanding and epochal Council, which not only ushered in new orientations, but a fundamental paradigm change? Can the upheavals and new structures, the hopes, questions, irritations and conflicts that characterise today's reception of the Council, gain trend-setting inspiration from the life and activity of Vincent Pallotti?

The fact that the Church and its members, its institutions and facilities are in constant need of reform became one of the programmatic phrases of the Second Vatican Council – *semper reformanda*. On the one hand, a never attainable term in view of the obsolete, the rigid, and that which went wrong, in view of sin and mistakes. On the other hand, a hopeful expression of persistence under the perspective of a dynamic of change toward an ever-greater identity, a word of yearning with eschatological connotations and never ending possibilities. How much out of the Church of the origins has

¹ Cf. Presentation by Francesco Todisco SAC on the occasion of the 20th. General Assembly of the Pallottines in Ariccia on Oct. 9th, 2010.

continually been developed, renewed, has been transformed into something more authentic, deeper and more mature and has contributed to purification and growth! – In view of religious communities, the Council specifies: The adaptation and renewal of the religious life includes both the constant return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original spirit of the institutes and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our time (*Perfectae Caritatis* 2). This provides the approach: to open the Pallottine sources anew in order to better and more deeply understand them in the context of contemporary life and thought, perhaps to discover new dimensions and then to translate the insights into the present day in the sense of modernisation that John XXIII desired for the entire Church.

A first glance at the person of Vincent Pallotti does not immediately unveil the timeliness of the saint, including and especially for today.² Pat Jackson observes that he would not only appear as too conservative in the context of political developments and as closed toward democratic processes.³ John Paul II, in his speech of April 12, 1985, was of the opinion that Pallotti's "idea found its definitive expression in the texts of the Second Vatican Council"⁴. Therefore, one could ask why the realisation of these ideas and, furthermore, the proposals attached to them, took until 2003 to find a legal foundation of the Catholic Apostolate, and why they are taking so long in general.

Biographers and other authors have concluded that Vincent was filled with prophetic spirit.⁵ In order to trace this dimension anew and to be able to discern the prophetic voice today, it is not enough to study the writings of the saint. Rather, it must be researched in the context and in the perspective of the times as well as through the prism of history of reception. This should not be driven in the first place by historical interests, which are already covered by the presence of a plethora of material, but by the search for prophetic suggestions for the present and specifically for an ecclesiology in its concrete ability to be lived and its concrete consequences, a "practical

² For example in 1975, Karl Stelzer gives as a reason for writing a short, new biography of Vincent Pallotti, upon the request of his superiors: "This biography of the 'Apostle of Rome' desires to demonstrate the astonishing contemporary nature of the saint even for our day"; cf. Karl STELZER, *Vinzenz Pallotti. Ein Heiliger für heute*, Friedberg 1975.

³ Cf. Pat JACKSON, *Die Liebe Christi drängt uns. Einführung in die Spiritualität Vinzenz Pallottis*, Friedberg 2001, p. 37.

⁴ Cf. ACTA SOCIETATIS APOSTOLATUS CATHOLICI (Acta SAC), Rom, Bd. XII, p. 111.

⁵ For example, . F. TODISCO, *San Vincenzo Pallotti profeta della spiritualità di comunione*, Roma 2004.

ecclesiology”.⁶ Vincent Pallotti is not primarily an academic theologian and did not want to be one, despite his studies and his teaching. Instead, perspectives can be recognised and implications can be drawn from his life and activity, which can pollinate today’s Christianity. Therefore, a systematic work tied into Pallotti is directed back to the origins, which lays in the historically concrete and personal witness of faith.

Thus, the one source of understanding consists of a pointed review of the origins in the life of the saint and the stream of life of the Pallottine family that flows from it, and the other in the, at least cursory, debate with present-day controversial and trend-setting topics of ecclesial life.

Regarding the Format of the Study

Beginning with a look at the essential characteristics of the era in which Vincent Pallotti lived, his personal experience of Church will first be sketched out in order to present the context within which his life was lived and his diverse and numerous writings arose.

Thereafter, the work is divided into five chapters. In reading his writings, two topics stand out in particular. The first is Pallotti’s conviction that all people are created in God’s image and are, therefore, called by him (Chapter I). The second concerns the foundational holiness of all people, which is bestowed on them through creation, by their participation in the life of God and his infinite holiness, and then also becomes their vocation (Chapter II). Chapters I and II, based on the textual findings of Pallotti’s writings, present his Image-Theology and Image-Anthropology and the calling contained within them to pass on the love of God, to be an ambassador of God, an apostle of Jesus. For Pallotti, the human being as the image of God was not the representation of one who is absent, but of the presence of God itself. This presence of God in his creation and in humans effects a fundamental trust in the holiness of all creatures and has social as well as pastoral implications. In Chapter II it will be developed from the Old Testament *schekhina* over Eucharistic spirituality and the significance of the Holy Spirit and its consequences will be considered: God’s presence in creation as the motive for responsibility, love and dedication for all creatures. In a time of decreasing solidarity, an impulse can come out of the Pallottine approach for a Church that recollects anew the call to love and service.

⁶ Cf. the use of the term in Walter KASPER, *Katholische Kirche. Wesen Wirklichkeit Sendung*, Rom 2011.

Chapter III, based on the contents developed thus far, undertakes an analysis of Pallotti's charism and attempts to derive the approaches and mandates contained therein for the future. Here lays the first major focus of the study. A second one concerns the statements on the topic of "Church", which, in Chapter IV, places Pallotti's theology in relationship to the decisive statements of the Second Vatican Council. Thereby, the four *notae ecclesiae* set the framework for the structure of that section. This chapter contains Pallotti's great perspectives, which open the horizon to the future. This includes the connection between the holiness of all people, their absolute and unconditional dignity and rights. Then there is the existential meaning of human community which has its origins in the Triune God and which must lead to collaboration within the one human family. Finally, there is the topic of lay apostolate, that concern by which the Pallottine family became especially known, as well as the question of catholicity within the Church of today.

The vitality of the entire People of God in Pallotti's apostolate is one of the prevailing challenges in times of fearful revisionism and restoration of ecclesial life. John XXIII referred to them in his opening address "*Gaudet mater ecclesia*" to the Second Vatican Council as "the prophets of doom".⁷ That which in Pallotti's day led to tensions with the *Propaganda Fide*, which could not and would not support an explicitly apostolic activity for the laity, still is highly current today according to the present state of Canon Law and Roman Catholic praxis. Pallotti does not substantiate the universal apostolate judicially, but ontologically.⁸ He takes up Pet 2, 9,⁹ the priestly, kingly and holy people. The search for a suitable conciliar hermeneutic has, in the question of the priestly People of God and its apostolic task as a whole and for each individual, a focal point, which is tightly connected to the question

⁷ AAS (196), S. 786-796 (8) "It often happens, as we have learned in the daily exercise of the apostolic ministry, that, not without offense to Our ears, the voices of people are brought to Us who, although burning with religious fervor, nevertheless do not think things through with enough discretion and prudence of judgement. These people see only ruin and calamity in the present conditions of human society. They keep repeating that our times, if compared to past centuries, have been getting worse. And they act as if they have nothing to learn from history, which is the teacher of life, and as if at the time of past Councils everything went favorably and correctly with respect to Christian doctrine, morality, and the Church's proper freedom. We believe We must quite disagree with these prophets of doom who are always forecasting disaster, as if the end of the world were at hand."

⁸ Cf. Valentin PIZZOLATO, *Die Kirchengvision Vinzenz Pallottis*, in: Kirche im Wandel (Pallottinische Studien zu Kirche und Welt 2), St. Ottilien 1999, pp. 12-62, esp. p. 40.

⁹ 1 Pet 2,9: But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

of the Church's self-understanding in the post-conciliar era. The topic is highly current.

In Chapter V, individual topics are taken up once more and with them, a glimpse into the future is undertaken. In exemplary fashion, possible perspectives for a renewed perception of the Church's self-understanding are presented. With the keywords of "participation", "unity in diversity", and "the dialogue as the carrying out of life", concrete topical examples are described in which Pallottine inspirations can and should have an impact.

The Attachment contains observations and reflections on the influence of Ignatius of Loyola on Vincent Pallotti, written by Bruno Bayer in German and translated by Erik Riechers into English. The special focus is on the role of the spiritual exercises of Ignatius in Pallotti's spirituality.

There are few comprehensive studies on Pallotti. This is an attempt to theologically reflect on his life and work. As the study has been made in German originally it is understandable that a greater part of the footnotes are in this context.

0.1 Time of Upheaval

Vincent Pallotti (April 21, 1795 – January 22, 1850) lived at a time of social and political upheavals in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution and its resulting consequences of the formation of new nation states, the manifold emancipation of the populace from the power structures and the separation of Church and state. For the most part, the Church had lost its authority. As a counter-reaction, it was the time of Ultramontanism, with which Pallotti and his family were associated. Even if Pallotti did not travel beyond Rome and its surroundings, he could still experience the various influences of this historical period locally. Italy was just before the foundation of the nation state. The Papal States fought for its survival. (Pallotti supported the preservation of the Papal States). The end of the 18th Century was a period of many more occurrences of decadence than of renewal in the Church. Over abundant power, wealth and privileges had shaken the reputation of the Church. The imbalance between a world, which, from an economic social and cultural point of view, was experiencing an enormous developmental leap, and a Church hierarchy detached from the world had lasting consequences. The Church leadership did not participate in the pressing questions and topics of the day, thus does Jedin describe the historical period.¹⁰ By contrast, at the grassroots a number of things were set in motion. Catholics, charismatic men and women, who noted the needs of the time, founded new initiatives and communities. The Roman Church, by contrast, looked on such movements with great distrust, which developed without hierarchy, such as the Vincent Conferences of Frederic Ozanam,¹¹ which developed in all of Europe as charitable lay organisations. The Church battled all reform ideas, which personalities such as Rosmini, Newman, Möhler or Pallotti tried to introduce.¹² Today, nearly two hundred years later, trend-setting inspirations can still be expected from their writings, but only some of it, perhaps little of it, has been realised. In the end, the Vatican beatified Antonio Rosmini-Serbati in 2007, John Henry Newman in 2011 and canonised Vincent Pallotti in 1963. It was only much later that they were rehabilitated and brought to the attention of ecclesial interest. Now there is nothing that stands in the way of the reception, evaluation and continuation of their ideas.

¹⁰ Hubert JEDIN (Hg.), *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte* VI/1, Freiburg i. Br. 1985, p. 3 f.

¹¹ Antoine-Frederic Ozanam, born 1813 in Milan, died 1853 in France. Husband, father and professor for commercial law in Marseille, was beatified by John Paull II on August 8, 1997.

¹² Cf. for the characteristic nature of the age the article by Valentin PIZZOLATO, *Die Kirchenvision Vinzenz Pallottis (1795-1859)*, in: Manfred PROBST / Paul RHEINBAY (Hgg.), *Kirche im Wandel. Pallottinische Optionen* (Pallottinische Studien zu Kirche und Welt 2), St. Ottilien 1999, pp. 12-52.

0.2 Restoration and Awakening – Tensions in the Life of Pallotti

Vincent Pallotti's religious upbringing took place in a protected familial framework. His parents, Peter Paul Pallotti and Magdalena, nee de Rossi, were both attached to the Church, faith and socially disposed people, who wanted to convey their religiosity to him and his four brothers and in whom Pallotti saw models.

Pallotti was from the start, as a matter of course, formed by the church and raised to be loyal. Nevertheless, he did was not uncritical. For example, this is demonstrated in his sceptical remarks toward Pius IX, which were later a reason why his beatification was delayed.¹³ He also raises his voice against corrupt clerics, vanities, and the abuse of power. He bemoaned the drifting apart of laity and clerics, the abuse of the real and mystical body of Christ.¹⁴

However, he was essentially a child of his time, had a part in highly ambivalent ecclesial positions, the restorative attitude of the hierarchy and the new approaches, a quiet awakening of parts of the members of the Church. He was opposed to processes of democratisation and emancipation, against secularity and rationality and its apparent delineation toward ecclesial authority. Pallotti studied under notable theologians of his day. The Roman canonists Muzzarelli, Devoti uad Cappellari, all supporters of Tridentism are only a few of those who formed him. In the pope, Pallotti saw the single, divinely ordained center of all religious and political power, his image of the Church was apologetic, centralized and Tridentine. B. Forte sees the defining characteristic of the Catholic Church of this period in the rejection of world of the laity.¹⁵ Nevertheless, there were people, within the Church as well as without, in whom discomfiture was awakened by the political, ecclesial-political and social circumstances and who initiated the reforms or also revolutions.

Perhaps less out of theological reflection than from an intuitive insight into an urgent necessity, Pallotti initiated precisely in this context something new: a model of collaboration with all people, men and women of the Church, regardless of this state, without being fully aware of the scope of this approach. It was a prophetic and epochal proposal in whose divine inspiration Pallotti had no doubt, after he had his thinking examined by people he trusted. Therefore, he too did not escape the tensions and resistance, which

¹³ Cf. FRANK II, 610; TODISCO, 750 f.

¹⁴ OCCC XII, 55, where Pallotti speaks of the twofold abuse of the real and mystical Body of Christ.

¹⁵ Valentino PIZZOLATO, *Die Kirchenvision* ... (see Note. 8), p. 22 f.

innovative measures in the Church normally had to suffer. On his deathbed, Pallotti was still certain, despite all such negative experiences, that his inspiration and his work would continue, after his death even better than during his lifetime.¹⁶ Pallotti is not alone or isolated with his approaches, far more; he should be viewed in the context of his time. Impulses in the social, charitable realm, but also on the pastoral and theological level, began to break ground during his lifetime in several places. Independent of the question as to what extent Pallotti knew the thinking of his contemporaries such as Ozanam or Rosmini, certain developments, comparable to contemporary phenomena, were to some extent in the air.

0.3 Diversity and Community

Pallotti's relationship to the Church is multi-faceted. Out of his rich life in and with the Church, a few striking individual observations will be mentioned in what follows, which are of interest in connection with this study.

A first observation is the following. In Pallotti's biography something remarkable, certainly unusual, is noticeable which seeks an interpretation. He took up various directions of spirituality in his own life, belonged to different communities and associations and drew from so many different sources, that the influence of various personalities and from varied literature can be discovered in his notes and writings. At first glance, that might not appear to be unusual, but it is, based on the enormous fullness integrated through him. Like a smelting furnace, Pallotti took up an unbelievable number of elements and united them to his new whole, nourished his spiritual life from it and attempted to make this fruitful for others as well.

When Pallotti received the tonsure in 1811, his decision for the path of the priesthood became permanent. He could not become a Capuchin due to his fragile physical constitution, yet he remained faithfully connected to the order and its spirituality throughout his life. Some influences of the spirituality of Francis of Assisi can be found with Pallotti. In the year 1816, when he was ordained a sub-deacon, he already belonged to ten different religious brotherhoods. In the year 1842, he was a member in 35 of them. It is not easy to imagine the management of these appointments in daily life, despite the enormous zeal and industry, which the biographers attest to him.

Pallotti gathered everything that appeared to him as important, good or helpful for the spiritual life. Conversely, through his participation in the va-

¹⁶ FRANK II, 660.



Jawlensky „Salvator“, copyright: wikimedia commons

*I imagine that I see the living image of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the crucified Lord in all. (Vincent Pallotti)*

Wonder is not only the beginning of philosophy,³⁰ but also of theology, „the speech about God“, for the mouth speaks of that of which the heart is full. (Mt 12, 34). That applies to Vincent Pallotti as well: His emotion, his deep concern and his fiery love are striking when we read his writings. He is a man of deep wonder. While the talk of God's love in the daily life of the Church often appears to have become routine and for the most unspectacular, the great triggers of this wonder for Pallotti were precisely the infinite love and mercy of God. Pallotti's wonder has its beginning in the fascination with the reality of creation. God's love and mercy can be made immediately manifest in the reality of creation, an utterly incomprehensible event for Pallotti. For Pallotti, the fact that the infinite God, who needs nothing and no one, who is the author of all creation, created human beings above all other creatures is an expression of an incomprehensible love and mercy.

*God, happy in himself, impelled by His infinite love and his infinite mercy, accomplishes the work of creation, in order to communicate Himself fully to His creatures.*³¹

This is what Pallotti writes at the start of his meditations. It was toward the end of his life, during the chaos of the revolution in the year 1849, because of which he withdrew for several months into the Irish College. There he composed the short writing “God, the Infinite Love”. The complicated and not entirely explicable background to these meditations is summarised by Ansgar Faller in the preface of his edition. It remains unclear to him, why Pallotti did not ensure the dissemination of his writing, which was to become a kind of spiritual testament of his life. For he was otherwise very anxious to pass on the treasures of his faith to others. This writing was at first neither printed nor noted by others. “Don Vincent knew that his days were numbered. Then he bemoaned, perhaps not without wistfulness, the imperfection of his final book. As incomplete as it was, he never published it. Furthermore, he measured his own work with an increasingly smaller scale. Thus it came to be, that the writing, which was born out of a deep inner desire, was unread and unnoticed for decades.”³² One can refer to it as a “prayed dogmatic theology”, yet more a prayer than dogmatic theology, more meditative prayer than an explanation of the faith.³³ It is the work, which, according to Faller, reveals Pallotti as a “religious genius”, a writing, which presents his most personal thinking in the fullness of maturity

³⁰ So Aristotle and Plato.

³¹ Vinzenz PALLOTTI, *Gott, die unendliche Liebe*, hg. von Ansgar Faller, Friedberg 1981.

³² Ibid., p. 19.

³³ Ibid., p. 21.

shortly before his death and which, to some degree, communicates the life of his soul.³⁴

In the light of the reality of creation, Pallotti is to a certain degree speechless. To start with, he believes: The mystical is not *how* the world, but the fact *that* the world exists.³⁵ To put into words the dimensions of the reality of creation transcends his and all human possibilities. A term that he employs repeatedly serves him as a code word to escape this inability. It is the term *infinity*, be it as a noun or be it as an adjective or as a mathematical sign. The following text from the first chapter of the aforementioned writing is an example thereof:

My God! From all eternity and in all eternity you are infinitely happy within yourself. You need no one. Why, therefore, did you form the loving decision from all eternity to create heaven and earth?

*Oh, my God, the faith tells me: You are infinite goodness and as such You wish to pour Yourself out infinitely. From all eternity, with infinite love, you determined, full of mercy, the indescribable work of creating the world, in order to pour Yourself out entirely into your creatures, You, the Eternal, the Infinite, the Unmeasurable, the Incomprehensible.*³⁶

As incomprehensible and beyond all spoken communication that this God seems to him – and apparently encounters him – he thus becomes the goal of all his praying and activity. The yearning for the infinite God is characterised by Francesco Amoroso as the foundational element of Pallotti's spirituality.³⁷ It is already documented in the younger years and is a recurring theme throughout the writings.

The statement about the infinite God in his love and mercy, expresses at the same time – the opposite side of the coin – the created reality of the human being. God wanted to pour himself into his creatures. Therefore, God himself is present in them. Consequentially, we can deduce that the human person is in some fashion capable to comprehend and receive at least something of God's care in its infiniteness. This thought, too, especially in its development of the presence of God in human beings, is a guideline in the faith and life of Pallotti. The numerous textual examples in which Pallotti speaks thereof, that the human being is created in the image and likeness of God, shows this, for example, in the following:

³⁴ Ibid., p. 22 f.

³⁵ Ludwig WITTGENSTEIN, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, Frankfurt a. M. 2003, p. 6, 44.

³⁶ Vinzenz PALLOTTI, *Gott, die unendliche Liebe*, p. 60.

³⁷ Francesco AMOROSO, *Griff ins Grenzenlose. Der geistliche Weg des hl. Vinzenz Pallotti*, Limburg 1986, p. 14.

*The human being is created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, he is, in the essence of his createdness (in the essence of his creatureliness) an image and likeness of the essence of love.*³⁸

To be the image of God and thereby the image of his love entails a responsibility. Pallotti repeatedly speaks of the fact, that the human being should be, indeed must become, a “living image of God”. To this end, he should employ his willpower and his freedom. Creation signifies a mandate. To be human entails in its creatureliness a vocation, which will be examined more closely later on.

We are all a living image of the intrinsic purity, because we are created in the image and likeness of God, who is purity in its essence (the absolute purity, purity in its being). Consequentially, we are obligated to make use of our free will in order to perfect ourselves in order to become truly living images of purity itself.³⁹

In two parts, Chapter I deals with this fundamental thought of Pallotti about the reality of creation and the divine calling to the apostolate connected with it. Like the focal points of an ellipse, the further topics let themselves be connected with them and revolve around them. Under the perspective of these two aspects, the Pallotti’s basic thoughts are ordered, that does not result in a striving for or presentation of a completeness of his topics

1 Pallotti’s Image-Theology

Just as God is infinite love, the human, created in the image of God, becomes, on the one hand, the representative of this love and, on the other hand, sent to realise this love. In this correlation, an anthropology is established whose consequences largely determine Pallotti’s work and which becomes the highest possible motivation for his activity. It is the topic of the theology of creation, which has biblical foundations. It was already extensively developed in the early Christian literature in the East and the West and found different interpretations during the various phases in the history of theology. Pallotti’s study of theology, including Patristics, certainly brought him in touch with this theme. In the end, it proves to be the core of his spirituality

³⁸ OCCC III, 151: “L’Uomo è creato a immagine, e similitudine di Dio. Dunque l’Uomo secondo la essenza della sua creazione è una immagine, e similitudine della Carità per essenza”.

³⁹ OCCC II, 44: “[...] Tutti siamo viva immagine della Purità per Essenza perché siamo creati ad immagine, e similitudine di Dio, che è Purità per essenza, onde tutti siamo obbligati a profittare del libero arbitrio per perfezionare noi stessi in quanto siamo immagini vivi della Purità per essenza; [...]”.

and relationship to God and comprises the entire framework of meaning for his life as well as the arc of his entire activity.

To be created in the image of God to become like him, that is for Pallotti simultaneously the special expression of the Love of God and a unique dignity, but also a challenge to the creature. God created humans out of pure love in order to pour himself into them. Being a creature is an unmerited gift of God. The more a human being starts to understand this, the more the resulting obligation becomes clear. The love of God effects at the same time the election and calling of the human being. Being a creature, being an image of God is, therefore, not only the beginning and origin, but also the goal and fulfillment of his life. Pallotti draws the entire program of his life out of this conviction.

Pallotti says that it is the faith that teaches him, that he and all people are created as the image and likeness of God out of love and mercy, and are his created in his likeness. In doing so, he refers in the first instance not to his knowledge of the catechism or the content of his studies, but to his insight into the faith, an experience that is vitally present in him.⁴⁰ Here, already, a decisive and original connection for Pallotti's spirituality shows itself, between reflection and theology on the one hand, and the lived faith, theopraxis, on the other. This will need to be developed more later on. It is only with a view to God that Pallotti learns to understand himself and he finds in equal measure challenge as well as motivation and task. It is to enter into an interior development, which brings this image of God in him to fulfillment, in an almost unbearable tension between the presence of the infinite God and his inability to comply with him and to answer him fittingly. This path is a process of dialogue with God, who communicates himself and gives himself to his creatures, but at the same time remains infinitely removed, totally there and yet totally hidden. Pallotti believes this presence of God to be at work in him and in all creatures gifted with reason. Therefore, he wants to revere God himself in human beings and to seek him in no other place than there, where his living image is present.

What in Pallotti's case can here be referred to as *Image-Theology* is not simply identical with the Pictorial Theology, developed in the past years, which deals with the connection between religion and images and, therefore, primarily if not exclusively, with the phenomenon of the pictorial arts. There are certainly points of contact and linkages that encourage further development. At any rate, it becomes clear that a drawing near to the *Image*

⁴⁰ Cf. i.e. OCCC IV, 172: „L'Uomo è creato, come c'insegna la S. Fede, ad imagine e similitudine di Dio [...]” or OCCC IV, 221 and other passages.