

**THE PAULINE'S IDENTITY  
IN ITS DUAL EXPRESSION  
*PRIEST-DISCIPLE***

Modules for reflection and study



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## ABBREVIATIONS

AA	–	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i>
AD	–	<i>Abundantes divitiae gratiae suae</i>
AE	–	<i>Apostolato dell'edizione</i>
CISP	–	<i>Carissimi in San Paolo</i>
CJC	–	<i>Codex Juris Canonici</i>
DC	–	<i>Documenti Capitolari 1969-1971</i>
DF	–	<i>Donec Formetur Christus in vobis</i>
EN	–	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>
GMIOS	–	<i>Gesù il Maestro, ieri, oggi e sempre</i>
GS	–	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
IL	–	<i>Instrumentum laboris, Sinodo dei Vescovi</i>
IM	–	<i>Inter Mirifica</i>
LG	–	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
MCS	–	<i>Meditazioni per consacrati secolari</i>
NMI	–	<i>Novo millennio ineunte</i>
PC	–	<i>Perfectae Caritatis</i>
PO	–	<i>Presbiterorum Ordinis</i>
Pr	–	<i>Prediche del Primo Maestro</i>
RM	–	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i>
SC	–	<i>Sacrosantum Concilium</i>
SdC	–	<i>Spiegazione delle Costituzioni</i>
SP	–	<i>San Paolo</i>
UPS	–	<i>Ut perfectus sit homo Dei</i>
TMA	–	<i>Tertio millennio adveniente</i>
VC	–	<i>Vita Consecrata</i>
VFC	–	<i>Vita fraterna in comunità</i>

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## Stages of Reflection

One of the recommendations of the 7th General Chapter of the Society of St. Paul (1998) was: “The General Government is warmly requested to hold a seminar on Pauline vocation, in its double expression of *Priest-Disciple (Integral Pauline Formation)*, recommendations a). The SSP Interchapter in New Delhi, India (2001) “saw the importance and the complexity of the subject.” However, given the time left before the next General Chapter, it concluded that the holding of such “seminar” would be difficult indeed. Still, the assembly felt that such a deepening is urgent and necessary, and therefore asked the General Government to assign the work “to a sufficient number of Brothers (not less than five)” and “to seek the cooperation of the members of the Congregation in ways and means that are appropriate.”

On June 7, 2001, the Superior General Fr. Pietro Campus wrote a letter to the members of the Congregation, asking for their contribution on this matter through their reflections, opinions and suggestions. In January 2002, he named an SSP study group which would work in the deepening of this theme. The body was composed of Fr. Andres Arboleda (General House), Bro. Luis Barrios (Argentina-Chile-Peru Province), Fr. Carlo Cibien (Italy, member of the Itinerant Equipe for Formation), Bro. Luca De Marchi (Italy), Fr. Jose Luis Quintana (Mexico), Fr. Antonio Rizzolo (Italy), and Bro. Blaise Thadathil (India). Fr. Manuel Galaviz and Bro. Francesco Chessa, General Councilors, joined the group to coordinate its work.

The group met twice at the General House, and in between the meetings, worked individually. They were aided by numerous contributions from the SSP members from all over the world. The first session—February 28 to March 6, 2002—was devoted to the reading of the contributions of the members; developing the theme, the topics to be discussed, and choice of methodology. The second session—June 16 to 27, 2002—was devoted to the gathering of materials that have been elaborated until a way could be found for such materials to be put to good use.

## Objective: A dynamic and integral fidelity

The General Government tasked the study group to offer the Congregation a renewed formulation of the theme through a serious and well-grounded study. The results were to be expressed in stimulating ways, accessible to the members. In this way, the study can easily be translated into practice, be it in the area of vocation promotion and formation, in the accomplishment of the mission today, in a style of life, or in the witnessing of Consecrated Life. In short, the scope of the study was to help every Pauline strain for a dynamic and integrated fidelity to his vocation. It was less about being made aware of the problems we face today as about finding the best way to respond to the “fourfold fidelity” which is being asked of a consecrated person:

- *Faithfulness to the man and woman of today,*
- *Faithfulness to Christ and the Gospel,*
- *Faithfulness to the Church and her mission,*
- *Faithfulness to Consecrated Life and to the Charism of the Institute*  
(cfr. *Religious and Human Promotion*, SCRIS, 1980).

The reflections that we are now presenting hope to respond to the task entrusted to us by the General Government. The times we are living, the Pope's exhortations to religious men and women, the fast changes that are happening in the world, and the men and women of today, are asking from us Paulines the courage of a prophet, authentic witnessing, creativity in expressions and in our projects. To ask ourselves once more about our identity, far from being a narcissistic act, is to examine ourselves on the gift the Holy Spirit has given us through our Founder, in order that we may witness to the men and women of the 21st century Jesus Master and Shepherd, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. This study, therefore, hopes to awaken in every Pauline the conviction that he has something to offer to the Church and to the world. We receive, in fact, the wealth of charism that is intended for the benefit of all, and the culture of communication today offers new possibilities for creativity in announcing the Gospel.

This study is not exhaustive; it is intended more "to disturb the water," to inspire a new creative impulse, to strengthen hope in God. For this reason, it is seen more as a **"working paper."** It is **open to more ideas; it is not something definitive.** It is therefore necessary to continue our reflections on both levels of the community and of the circumscription, personal and communitarian. We need to look at ourselves more profoundly, together with the roles we play in the Church and in society. Around us is a world in ferment, in search for new meanings, continually evolving. We cannot bury our heads in the sand; we are called to give an answer to the new challenges of the times.

### **"Identity" and "twofold expression"**

"Identity" and "two-fold expression" are the two basic concepts of this study. They need particular attention. The fact that the 7th General Chapter chose not to dwell separately on the identity of the Pauline as priest and that of the Pauline as Brother calls for a true change of perspective and for a new mentality. **The religious profession, be it of the candidate to priesthood or BROTHERHOOD, is the same for every Pauline.** By the fact that a person becomes a "Pauline," he receives the graces on one part, and on the other, the character of a Pauline. This unity and reciprocity are ordered towards the specific mission. They do not have just "functional" values; they are charisms. This is how the Constitutions is to be understood when it speaks of what makes us "Paulines" (art. 5). This change of perspective will enable us to understand better the peculiarities and the specific characteristics of the BROTHER and of the Priest, as a gift and as reciprocal service, as wealth of special graces that are put in common.

Identity is therefore the point of departure. But inasmuch as this word carries various meanings, some clarifications are in order. Without entering into philosophical discussion, let us accept the point of view that places "identity" on two elements: the unity *of being* (intrinsic inseparation) and the experience *of diversity* (difference from another reality). What confers on a being its uniqueness is at the same time what differentiates it from another. In common language, the same identity can be attributed to beings that are of the same substance, independent of the multiplicity of their manifestation. In this way, any man or woman is identified as a person. In a still wider sense, the same identity can be given to the components of a determined group, because these possess common attributes and they have made the same option in life. Of many physicians, for example, we recognize the identity of a doctor. When it comes to the identity of a Religious Institute and its members, common logic or common language is not enough. Faith and solid theology of Consecrated Life need to be included.

Our identity, in fact, can only be understood in the light of a particular vocation that comes from God. Responding to such call, we are consecrated by the Lord and are enriched with graces that help us arrive at sanctity to which we are destined, and do our specific apostolate through which we collaborate in the mission of Christ. The ecclesiology of communion, moreover, helps us to transcend differences in tradition, in order to apply ourselves to the dynamism of charisms for the common good.

**It should therefore be clear to every member of the Society of St. Paul that his identity is that of a consecrated person called to sanctification and to the evangelization of the present world through a witness of his life and the apostolate of social communications.**

To the common gift of religious consecration and to the particular gifts (ministerial priesthood, lay state, personal gifts...), we are obliged to correspond fully to the common ends of sanctification and of the specific mission. Because “*the state of consecrated life, by its nature, is neither clerical nor lay*” (CIC can. 688, par. 1), we should accept, in conclusion, that **consecration is the true source of our identity as Paulines**, while the state of being a Priest or a BROTHER is a gift given by the Spirit as a particular flowering of the same Paulinity: it is for us to make it fruitful for the common good—for the benefit of the Congregation, of the Pauline Family, of the Church, and of the world.

### **Methodology: the “four fidelities” asked of religious**

In the document *Religious and Human Promotion* published in 1980, the Sacred Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life indicates to consecrated people four important “fidelities” which should motivate and guide them in the integral human promotion, based on the Council's principles of renewal, and bearing in mind the situation of the world at present. These fidelities are: 1) to the human being of our time, 2) to Christ and the Gospel, 3) to the Church and to her mission in the world, and 4) to Consecrated Life and the charism proper to the Institute. These can be a reference point for the task of renewal of all consecrated people in every ambit and dimension of life. In our study we make use of this schema because we think it to be particularly rich and illuminating. In the light of these four fidelities, our reflection on the Pauline identity in its twofold expression of Priest-BROTHER ought to lead us to the source of our being and to the motivations of our actions. In this way, we can live in creative fidelity the gift God has given us through Father Alberione, for the service of the Church and of the world.

### **For whom the study is intended**

This study is intended for all the members of the Society of St. Paul and for those who prepare themselves to be so. It is therefore advised that the superiors and formators be the first to read this document so that they may motivate and guide the communities, the groups and individual members, and they in turn may profit from it. The help which this document hopes to provide will enrich the Congregation in accomplishing its mission along with the other members of the Pauline Family “*for the Lord and for the men and women of the new century*” (cfr. AD 15).

## **Guide to the reading of the document**

It is important that each one have an over-all view of the document and go through it for personal study and reflection. For group study and reflection, we suggest taking it by chapter (or two) at a time so that each participant can voice out his observations and further enrich the document by his suggestions and contributions.

It is for the local superiors and formators to guide this communitarian reflection, bearing in mind the orientation that may come from the major superiors or the coordinator of the of the Team for Vocation Promotion and Formation. Suggestions for the improvement and correction of the document and for ways to apply it are to be collated.

The exchange of ideas and views is never as important as it is now. This common reflection, especially when it deals with our identity, should not be lacking in our Pauline communities. For this reason, we don't see our study as a point of arrival, but rather as a starting point for this exchange of views. It is a working document. No one should be excluded; no one should feel excluded: young and old, Paulines from every part of the world.

For both personal and communitarian, or group reflection, it is also important to see the OTHER THEMES and the APPENDIX which are included in this study.

## **1. FAITHFUL TO MAN AND TO OUR TIME**

*To be faithful to humanity today, cognizant of the problems and expectations of men and women.*

*To be aware of the challenges of the modern world and of the new signs of the times.*

*These are necessary steps to understand our Pauline identity.*

*Words like “universality, inculturation, study and preparation, giving importance to the lay state , and work” ought to be part of our vocabulary and our apostolic sensitivity.*



## 1.1 Modern and post-modern society

We are totally immersed in the time we are living in. We should not forget that we are children of our time and are co-responsible for it. We all are formed by the characteristics of the civilization which animates our nations. In our choices and projects, we cannot dispense with our history. Thank God, we also have the possibility to choose from it the signs and the stimuli which are useful to improve the quality of our life and to respond to the fundamental choices we have made. On the occasion of his first trip to the Orient in 1949, Don Alberione wrote: *“The world is fast evolving; the population centers, culture, and commerce are moving. Peaceful and rapid revolutions are being made through the press, radio, cinema, television, air travel, and political, social and industrial movements... The religious should therefore bear this in mind: one makes use of all things in order to improve life on earth and to gain the glory of heaven. One who stops or goes slow is passed over; he will work in the field where the enemy has already harvested”* (CSIP, p. 1010).

Different epochs have passed in the course of history. Nonetheless, all have been determined by the dominant thoughts of the period. In other words, we can say that each epoch expresses a culture or civilization, more or less extended to the whole of humanity.

We lived the first decades as Pauline Family in what is now called the last phase of the **modern period**. It is an epoch characterized by the Western culture, seen as “contemporary” and “dominant.” The culture finds expression in the industry, mass communication; in general, it enters the globalization phase and involves the whole planet. The following are the principal characteristics of this culture:

1. Knowledge of the world no longer depends on the unconditional acceptance of religions and their dogmas, but is based on reason oriented to the acquisition of knowledge based on what is physically verified. This knowledge gradually extends to every ambience that surrounds us: economy, politics, justice, and human science in general.

2. The State is secular and democratic. The base of the State is the citizenry, independent of the religion they practice.

3. Technological reasoning—the development of knowledge of physical realities gives origin to technological progress.

4. Secularisation of culture. Whole areas of life—politics, society, ethics, economy, rights—are progressively detached from the religious sphere and become autonomous. This progressive invasion of rationalization in all spheres of human life creates a new culture because it demands a new way of looking at things.

By way of summary, modern man is convinced of being able to correctly determine the basic conditions of human life with the help of science, technology, organizations, and of being able to find in them the solutions to life’s problems. A vertical vision of man, oriented to eternity, diminishes in the contemporary world, until it almost disappears. The last reference points of man pass on to consumerism and personal realization, to material wealth that can be enjoyed in this world. In view of this anthropology, the great existential questions (the purpose of life) receive little or no attention at all, if they are not totally erased from the human mind.

**Post-modern society.** In the ‘70s, the culture of reason experiences a crisis. In the dreams of modernism, faith disappears more and more. The two world wars, holocausts, regional wars that are still being fought, the ecological crisis, the ever-worsening divide between the rich and the poor, the failure of totalitarianism, the problems of young nations freed from colonialism yet falling to populist dictators—these recent events leave

in contemporary man a feeling of insecurity, a disorientation which awaits satisfying answers.

The fall of ideologies, the rooting of pluralism in every aspect of human life, the simultaneous global transmission of information, the relativism which does not oblige the acceptance of every dogma, but leaves one free to accept from the dogmas what subjectively is useful for oneself—these are some manifestations of what is called post-modern culture. It is a culture filled with contradiction, in which contemporary man may see in the Pope a unique moral guide for humanity, yet does not think that it is necessary to follow his teaching in his daily choices, in private life, and in social solidarity. It is a culture which may push the person to get emotionally involved in the miseries of humanity, yet renders him incapable of making decisions that can change the direction of his life. The tragic fruit of this culture can perhaps be seen more dramatically in the little respect for life which is manifested in the world in different ways and forms.

Side by side with these negative expressions of the dominant culture in the world, possibilities of progress never reached in the past are being offered to society today.

This is the field where we ought to live and to work as apostles of our time.

## 1.2 Problems and expectations of men and women today, the new challenges and signs of the times

We are not strangers to today's world, to the problems and expectations of men and women of our time. Instead, we should have a greater sensibility to these as we, through our apostolate, find ourselves engaging in the world of social communication. The Pauline mission is not just for a certain group or sector of people: "*through the use of technical means, our mission is, instead, addressed to some degree to everyone: to every class, condition, age, nation and continent; preferably and realistically to the masses...*" (UPS I, 372, 373).

Consider who today is the **receiver** of communication. He is the human person in his geographical and historical situation, in his daily life. We should therefore not forget the phenomenon of human mobility, of the numerous hotspots of war, of external debts, of the search for a better life which, not rarely, is a matter of survival, which forces the inhabitants of poor countries to migrate to rich countries. The phenomenon of migration touches an increasing number of peoples. Meanwhile, in rich countries we see the phenomenon of an aging society with roots in Christianity. People are losing a great part of the values and certainty of the past. This, in turn, gives way to pragmatism, indifference, consumerism, individualism, and hedonism (see *Message for the World Day of Prayer for Peace 2002*, n. 4). John Paul II reminds us of the effects of the ecological crisis which is making vast areas of the planet uninhabitable and hostile to humanity; of the problems of peace which is so often threatened by the spectre of catastrophic wars; of the contempt for the fundamental rights of so many people, especially children. "Countless are the emergencies to which every Christian heart must be sensitive," writes the Holy Father (NMI, 51). He adds that a special commitment is needed with regard certain aspects of the Gospel's radical message which are often less understood, even to the point of making the Church's presence unpopular, but which nevertheless must be a part of her mission of charity. The Pope makes specific reference to the duty to be committed to respect of the life of every human being, from conception until natural death; to insist with firmness that those using the latest advances of science, especially in the field of biotechnology, must never disregard fundamental ethical requirements: "For Christian witness to be effective, especially in these delicate and controversial areas, it is important that special efforts be made to explain properly the reasons for the Church's position, stressing that it is not a case of imposing on non-believers a vision based on faith, but of interpreting and defending the values rooted in the very nature of the human being. In this way charity will necessarily become a service to culture, politics, the economy and the family, so that the fundamental principles upon which depend the destiny of human beings and the future of civilization will be everywhere respected" (NMI, n. 51).

Bearing in mind the **means** of our apostolate, we should not forget that the new technologies and the new language have revolutionized the world of communication. Multimedia, telematics, interactivity, hypertextuality—these look for adequate structures.

The one direction proper of the traditional media is now superseded. The great part of our apostolic works has followed this direction.

New frontiers are now being opened for the apostolate. They ask from us a change of mentality, of ways of doing things, of formation. They require adequate apostolic structures in the social ambience where we work.

Lastly, looking at the **contents**, “*because this has to do with Christianizing all*” (UPS I, 373), we have to bear in mind that while looking for freedom and autonomy, we may have caused the man of today to forget the fundamental aspect of human existence. This is limiting the knowledge of a human being and his story. This tendency is called secularism. New liberalism in the area of work, especially in commerce, seems to be undermining the concept of solidarity, inspired by the Christian message and promoted by the social teachings of the Church in the last century. The objective scale of values, known up to this time, appears to be substituted by one which gives more importance to public opinions than to the very values themselves. Together with this—but almost in contradiction—society has developed new religious behaviours, and is searching for a sense of the sacred outside of the Christian faith. Here enters the phenomenon of new religious sects, the New Age movement—born as alternative to the theism of the great religions and to atheism in practice and ideology. A culture often called “light” emerges, unstable and superficial. So does the “fast-food” culture where everything is seen as a product of consumerism, an object of exchange, be it in marriage, work, or personal life.

These elements, briefly presented, and others we have not mentioned, provide us with a task and a challenge. For us who are called to be apostles of communication, these are the “signs of the times” that need interpretation and answer in the light of the Gospel.

<p>A good knowledge of our Founder reminds us that he gave importance to the study of history and sociology. To accomplish our specific mission, we must have greater sensibility and sufficient preparation in these two areas.</p>
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### 1.3 Universality and inculturation in the world of communication

*“Let us feel like St. Paul and being in St. Paul: debtors to all—ignorant or educated, Catholics, Communists, pagans, Muslims. Let us love everyone. Our apostolate is for everyone” (Regina Apostolorum, April 1951).*

The universal push for evangelisation characterized the thought and work of Don Alberione from the start. Universality is a genuine “Pauline” trademark, based on the example and work of St. Paul who courageously and perseveringly went to the ends of the known world, not allowing himself to be discouraged by difficulties and suffering.

#### Globalisation and localization

As the world changes, so does the concept of society. We live and act above and beyond our frontiers. We belong to a society with no fixed boundaries; not exclusive, but open and inclusive. The means of communication make possible active, simultaneous, and reciprocal contacts among individuals, transcending frontiers of a country, religion, or continent. The opening of the world’s horizon, intensified in the last years, is given various names: planetisation, globalization, world in net. The more common name is globalization, a phenomenon which, beginning from the economy, extends to the social and cultural spheres. Side by side with this movement, there is also the rediscovery of the local cultures which is happening everywhere. If, on one hand, there is the move to uniformity (globalization), there is, on the other hand, the discovery and defense of the characteristics proper to a common grouping.

To what extent have these phenomena affected our life and our service of announcing the Gospel?
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#### “Catholicity”= universality

“Catholicity” is for the Church an ever-urgent call to promote authentic universality (unity in diversity). The homogeneity of the identity, however, is counterbalanced by the primacy of the person over every political or economic choice. The animating Spirit inspires the Church to intensify the process of inculturation and of incarnation in the local reality and its ties of communion with the worldwide reality. In the Church, and in the social reality, Consecrated Life rediscovers a new meaning and likewise finds answers to the challenges it faces.

In our Congregation, we should favour a mentality of “doing locally,” but of “thinking globally,” that is, courageously embracing openness which transcends the interests of our little sphere and emerges from the great and fascinating world of communication.
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#### Inculturation and communication

The use of the media is important for preaching, but evangelising the culture of communication is even more important: *“It is not enough to use the media simply to spread the Christian message and the Church’s authentic teaching... It is also necessary to integrate that message into the ‘new culture’ created by modern communications”*

(*Redemptoris Missio*, 37c). We should understand clearly that today “*communication is not the means taken together, but is a culture; it is not a new discipline in the formation of priests and religious, but a new inculturation of faith.*” Inculturation is, for the Christian, a process of evangelisation through which Christian life and message are assimilated in a culture so that they can be expressed not only through the elements of such culture, but so that they may become a principle of inspiration; in time it is a norm and force of inspiration which transforms, re-creates and launches that culture.

The General Government underlines in the final document of the “Seminar on Jesus the Master”: “*In order that our contemporaries may freely believe, evangelisation has the duty of bringing itself into various cultures, while choosing the path of inculturation... To inculturate the Pauline spirituality in the communication process requires that it be made alive and aware of the culture of communication, which is in continuous development, always thrust forward*” (*Document of the General Government*, 4.5).

Globalisation and localization, catholicity and inculturation, are a great challenge that confronts us. It is not enough to ask ourselves “What can we do to change the reality of this world?” or, “What can we do to change the Church?” We should, above all, ask ourselves what we can change in ourselves, in the level of mentality and also of structures, so that our Congregation may be a place of life and evangelisation for every cultural ambiance.

## 1.4 Culture and cultures: the importance of study and preparation

Culture, for the initial formation and ongoing development of the Pauline, is, above all, an outlook of life which gives prime value to one's natural capacities and which is equipped, through a systematic education, with theoretical knowledge and operative competence in view of the apostolic mission. Cultivated in view of mission, culture allows the Pauline to be, above all, attuned with the "men of today": of one's native country, of the continent one comes from, and of the entire world. Moreover, the Pauline puts his faith and his preparation in the service of the inculturation of the Gospel in the world and in the culture of communication: the explicit announcement of Christ and everything that is human in a Christian perspective.

The intellectual formation must be based on a plan of personal study which, following the obligatory curriculum of each nation, takes into account personal attitudes, vocational expressions, and the global needs of the Congregation.

The personalized plan of cultural formation asks of every Pauline some indispensable components for all: a general culture of human and technical knowledge, the religious culture on Pauline charism, knowledge of communication and cultural specialization in view of apostolic assignment, acquired with the openness of mind to inculturality, knowledge of the languages, etc.

Don Alberione writes: "*Our apostolate requires knowledge. First, general knowledge, then the knowledge of the means of communication: therefore, we must arrive at the publication not only of books and periodicals, but also at the other fields of the apostolate: like the making of movies, programs for radio, TV, discs, etc.*" (SP, March 1968). The Founder underlines that it is not enough to possess a culture rich in contents; we must have a culture which also has competence in expressive means. The needs of the recipients, the languages and the laws of the means of communication are important in the choice and formulation of the contents.

The task of the Pauline mission, which makes its own St. Paul's desire to be "all things to all men" (see *I Cor* 9:22), is being realized today in the context of multimedia communication, where the recipient is at the center. The cultural preparation must measure up to the needs of the mission: a "publication" which is born from hearing the recipient and from the knowledge of the culture of communication.

As purpose of his apostolate, the Pauline strives that the Gospel may become the foundation of every culture and all aspects of every culture. Don Alberione eloquently speaks of the universal perspective of the Pauline: "Publications for all categories of people, as well as all matters and events are to be judged in the light of the Gospel... to make the Church's presence felt in every issue: a spirit of adaptation and understanding for all public and private needs, for the whole of worship, for the law and the intermarriage of justice and charity" (AD 65).

Along with a wide-ranging and consistent culture, we Paulines are in need of knowing and understanding the various cultures, beginning with those of countries where we are present: history, language, religion, system of government, laws, family institutions, arts, traditions, etc. Without a solid grounding on cultures, we cannot speak of inculturation, much less of inculturality.



## 1.5 The richness of the lay state

Vatican II calls “laity” all the faithful, except those in holy orders and those in the state of religious life (*LG* 30). This means that the Church, by a vast majority, is composed of lay people. Their vocation is “to seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God” (*LG* 31). They are called in the world by God “that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as leaven” (*LG* 31).

In the Acts of the International Seminar of Pauline Editors (1988), Bruno Forte reminds us of the lay components of the Church: people who have their own competence, dignity, and intelligence—and these ought to be respected. That the Church is also “lay” involves a way of being Church and of evangelisation which recognizes the competence of each one. It means that no one knows everything, and that each one needs the honest, loyal, and serious competence of other people. It is for this that the Church is called the people of God: no one can assume for himself all the charisms and ministries. Preaching the Gospel is done together, allowing each one to contribute his proper gifts. We who evangelise through the mass media ought to respect this principle; we need to remember and respect the specific competence and professionalism in all levels.

The lay aspect of the Church also respects the fact of incarnation that she lives. It means that the Church, in proclaiming the Gospel, thinks of humanity it evangelises: the way human beings think and live.

Looking at the story of our Congregation and its specific apostolate, we may think that at times more attention was given to the autonomy promoted by the Founder rather than to involving the lay people in the apostolate. Now, we are able to appreciate the strong ecclesial vision of Don Alberione, how he strove that the lay people would experience sharing in the faith. He thought of gathering “persons who wanted to improve their Christian faith, in harmony with the Pauline spirit, by linking it to the apostolate carried out by means of prayer, works and offerings” (*AD* 122). He would tell us how to relate with them: “In the prayer that he offered every morning to the Lord with the chalice his first thought was for the area of the Cooperators that is at present still limited” (*AD* 25). He also asked us to get interested in lay persons who devote themselves to charitable and social works, to religious instruction and to worship in its many expressions (*AD* 329).

From these observations and from the very nature of our charism, we need conversion on how to view the lay people. Also in this regard, Paul shows himself as an excellent teacher. We cannot lay upon the shoulders of the laity the weight and the fatigue of our apostolic activities, having only a functional rapport with them. Don Alberione made them participate in everything: Pauline spirit, apostolic character of the project, merits...

The ecclesiology of communion invites us to value lay people not only for reason of their baptism, but also for their expertise in the culture of communication. Don Alberione is asking us to win to our side the intellectuals, artists, politicians, etc. He is teaching us to enter into dialogue with the world of today.

And we cannot excuse ourselves from the responsibility of helping form the laity, in order that they may assume fully and with balance their own part in the common mission of preaching the Gospel and of human promotion.

### **SOME QUESTIONS FOR THE CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS**

\* In what way and with what means are the Paulines trained to value the lay people and to work with them?

\* In what way are “the gift and the wealth of Cooperators” (AD 121, 123) being received and promoted within the Circumscription?

\* What is being done so that knowledge, promotion, and formation of the Secular Institutes aggregated to the Society of St. Paul be may accepted as the Congregation’s work?

## 1.6 Work: apostolic value, solidarity and sharing

Work, as a fully human activity, makes us imitate Jesus and unites us with the world of workers and their problems, expectations, and rights. In the world of work which is globalised, the rich and economically developed countries contrast with those still on the way of development. The majority of the Paulines find themselves in the midst of these contrasting realities. This situation pushes us the more to understand even more deeply the charismatic value of our work in order to derive from it moral and spiritual advantages. It likewise pushes us to become prophetic voices within society in order to defend the importance and the dignity of work, through which a man ordinarily supports himself and his family (see *GS* 67).

The work of the Pauline is joined directly to the apostolate and has a strong sense of the Trinity. Our work, in fact, is joined to the “editorial work” of the Father: “The heavenly and eternal Father is the Editor of the Son,” Don Alberione writes (*Unpublished manuscripts* from 1938. SSP Archives). With his work, the Pauline participates in the redemption achieved by the Son who “came to illumine every human being to answer to his more profound questions, putting him as the key, the center, and the goal of the whole human story” (*DC* 10). The Pauline receives from the Holy Spirit “pastorality” which is the inspiring force “to reach people, save people and come out with new means” (*Predicazione sull’apostolato*, p. 196). Our work takes the perspective of Paul: “You recall, Brothers, our toil and drudgery. Working night and day in order not to burden any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God... We urge you, Brothers, to progress even more, and to aspire to live a tranquil life, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your own hands, as we instructed you, that you may conduct yourselves properly toward outsiders and not depend on anyone” (*1 Thes* 2:9; 4:10-12).

“*The work of the Pauline,*” writes Don Alberione, “*has a particular trait: It is a direct apostolate. Through his work he gives the truth; he discharges a role of preaching which has now become mission and is approved by the Church... When we work in an apostolic way vocations increase, we pay for machines and houses, we conform to our mission, we win the approval of God and men, we win heaven*” (see *UPS* I, 457-458). All the specific apostolic activities are “characteristics of the members of the Society of St. Paul; therefore it is necessary for one to conveniently adopt the requirements, uses, and the needs of the apostolate” (see *DC* 9).

Starting from this premise and looking to the future, we see that the times are asking us to adapt ourselves to the new technologies and to assume apostolic responsibilities that are ever becoming more exigent. Before such urgency, it is fundamental that the Paulines be formed professionally, so that they may be capable of directing an undertaking understood thus today. In the apostolic activity of the future, the Pauline should be a leader capable of working creatively, at the level of the new developments in the apostolic organizations and of the constant needs of the times.

We can underline other aspects to reflect on in order to move according to our charism. In the first place, the **redemptive value of every work**, just like every activity on earth of the Son of God, is liberating. We should therefore form a **mentality of service**, promoting **every potential in the person**, not to make the person’s worth depend on the work he is doing or the salary he is receiving, avoiding the search for a fixed assignment. It is also necessary to help persons interiorise the **discipline of work** and cultivate the **creative aspect** of work. We should not forget that work elevates our dignity

as persons, because it gives us the possibility of developing our abilities and talents for the Gospel, and it leads us to our integral realization as human beings, Christians and disciples of Paul. It would be helpful to meditate upon *AD* 124-130.

## **2. With the transforming force of Christ and of the Gospel**

*In order to be truly faithful to today's humanity, we should go back to the spiritual roots of our identity: we are consecrated and sent by Jesus Christ.*

*He, the Master Way, Truth, and Life, is the center of our life, through his Word and the Eucharist.*

*Mary, Joseph, Paul are our models in the journey of configuration with Jesus.*

*Some typical signs of the transforming encounter with Christ: the need for humility and conversion, the spirit of reparation, liturgical sensitivity.*

*A vital synthesis: the spirit of the "Secret of Success."*



## 2.1 Disciples and apostles of Jesus Christ in the footsteps of St. Paul

*Born through the inspiration and impulse of the Holy Spirit and approved by the Church, every religious congregation has for its first and fundamental norm of life the following of Christ, clearly shown in the Gospel. The religious, in fact, are called and consecrated in order to live and to bear witness to Jesus who:*

\* “chaste and poor, redeemed and sanctified men and women (the whole creation) through obedience until death on the cross” (PC 1).

\* healed the sick and maimed, converted sinners to a better life, who in his solicitude for the youth and his goodness to all men, was always obedient to the will of the Father who sent him (LG 46).

Every congregation, besides having its specific characteristics and functions, participates in the unique mission which Christ entrusted to his Church when he said:

\* “You will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:9)

\* “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15)

In 1954, while almost making an accounting of the journey which the Pauline Family has undertaken in the 40 years of its life, Don Alberione underlined our indebtedness to the Apostle: *“In fact he is the Father, Teacher, model, protector. He formed this family with an intervention so physical and spiritual that even now, while reflecting on it, we can hardly understand, much less explain it”* (CISP, p. 147).

St. Paul is our model and guide as disciple and apostle. Thanks to his full communion with Christ and his imitation of the life of the Master, Paul sanctified every apostolic work and communicated Christ through preaching, witnessing, prayer, work, example of life: in short, with the whole of his being. Before writing his letters, he was the communicator of the Gospel through a process of human communication (see Acts 13:16-41; 17:22-31; 20:18-35).

To be a Pauline means to be St. Paul alive today, to live in Christ, to live for the Gospel. “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel” (1 Cor 9:16). To live in Christ means to be:

\* human beings renewed in mind and soul, sons of God;

\* alert in receiving all good things;

\* open to a dynamic vision of history according to the plans of God;

\* putting no limit to his love, in order to be “all things to all men” (see *Constitutions*, 8).

The Founder interprets in this way the call of St. Paul to the Pauline Family:

*“He says to the Paulines: Know, love, follow Jesus the Divine Master. ‘Imitate me as I imitate Christ.’ This invitation is general, for all the faithful and those devoted to him. For us, there is something more, inasmuch as we are sons. Sons possess the life of the father; they, therefore, take life in him, from him, with him, in order to live Jesus Christ. Meant also for us are the words for his children in Thessalonica, whom he reminds: ‘Ut nosmetipsos formam daremus vobis.’ Jesus Christ is the perfect original; Paul made him his pattern, and also made himself our model. St. Paul-model is not for physical reproduction of his corporeal similarities, but for fully communicating to us his person: mind, virtue, zeal, piety... everything. May the Pauline Family, composed of many members, be Paul-alive in a social body”* (From “Amerai il Signore con tutta la tua mente,” 1954; cfr. CISP, p. 1152).



## 2.2 The center of Pauline Life: Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life

*“The devotion to the Divine Master is not an accessorial devotion: it envelops our whole spiritual life, all our studies, the whole of our apostolate, all our external activities: everything” (Pr 6 [1958], 5).*

The title “Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life” expresses the “totality” of the person of Christ against any unilateralism or particularism. The insistence on the “integral Christ” on the part of Don Alberione is intended to avoid the devotionism of the time and the fragmentary presentations of the faith (see *AD* 159-160). The title “Master” does not just express the function of teaching, but includes all of Jesus’ functions as the only mediator: as light, guide, model and giver of life according to God.

The task of the Pauline is to welcome Christ, to be in his school (Eucharist and Word), allowing oneself to be transformed by him (see *Gal* 2:20), announcing him at every moment with the apostolate and life’s witness.

The way Don Alberione read the text of *John* 14:16 (“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life”) had a strong influence on his anthropological vision, which assigns three faculties to the human person: mind, will, heart (intellect, will, affection). Christ, in fact, becomes a model of the integral man, point of reference for spiritual life, and source of apostolic mission. St. Paul calls whoever is in Christ “a new creation” (*2 Cor* 5:17). Every Pauline therefore should tend to be conformed with Christ in **Truth**, up to the purification and transformation of the **mind**, assuming “the thoughts and the judgments of Jesus” (*DF*, 65). In this manner, Jesus becomes **Way** for discernment, in order to learn to use correctly one’s **will**. Conformed thus with the true **Life**, the Pauline can arrive at the sanctification of the **heart**... “Thus we shall become expert masters of the souls, because first we have been humble and diligent disciples of Christ.”

Here is the synthesis of our spirituality: “The Pauline Family strives to fully live the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life, in the spirit of Saint Paul, under the gaze of the Queen of Apostles. There are not many details, or unusual devotions, or excessive formalities. The aim is to live in Christ the Master and in his Church” (*AD* 93-94).

Who is the integral Christ, Way, Truth and Life? It is not only a formulation of concept or doctrine, or a slogan. In the trinomial Way-Truth-Life, Christ is presented in his fullness. We should not run the risk, which at times happens in theology, of limiting ourselves to an intellectual reading of this formulation. Jesus is the Truth because, being a true man, he teaches us the profound truth of the human being and presents himself as an ideal with whom we Christians should conform ourselves and whom we propose in our apostolate. Jesus in the Way because with his Word, he is the answer for the man of today: to his expectations, needs, questions. Jesus is the Life because even for us today he is the living Christ. Teilhard de Chardin describes him as a presence around us; he enters into and becomes part of the very ambience in which we live: the Christ Life which emerges from it is a living and life-giving being, not only for the human being and his spirit, but also for the whole created universe, in the fullness of interior and exterior life. Christ the Master, Way, Truth and Life should therefore become for us that fullness, not only intellectual, but vital, and which vivifies the universe and gives it the religious sense (think of the answer of the New Age: a distorted response to the authentic religious feeling).

From these, a threefold task emerges for us Paulines:

- to discover and deepen the fullness of Christ, Way, Truth and Life;
- to live this fullness in every aspect of our existence;
- to spread in a simple but full manner, bringing close to the sensitivity of the man of today, this wealth which transcends devotionism and particularism, following thus the way indicated by Don Alberione when he proposed to the Church and to the world the figure of Jesus.

### 2.3 The vital rapport with God in the “Secret of success”

Inserted in the vital flow of biblical covenant, in the measure of our faith, we know how to become the descendant promised by the Lord to his servant, Don Alberione. Primo Maestro, in fact, is our FATHER in vocation “because he was older, he had to take from the Lord and give to others” (AD 2). As a man of faith, he guides us on the ways of God that are always inscrutable, with the unfailing faith of Abraham, of Mary, and of Paul of Tarsus.

The Founder was conscious of his weaknesses and insufficiency, as well as of those of the members of his Family. Yet, he expected everything from the Lord, strengthened by the Word of God: “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides” (Mt 6:33).

The spirit of the “Pact,” lived intensely by Don Alberione and the first Paulines, provides for the new generation of Paulines of all time the guarantee (“Secret of success”) which comes from the promises of God, when a person corresponds to the Lord’s projects with his whole being, notwithstanding his limitations and insufficiencies.

Born of faith, the spirit of the “Pact” sustains us in our response to the call of the Divine Master, expressed in our daily “Yes” to him, and which makes believers of us. The words of our Founder bring us back to the spiritual climate which is truly intense, as at the time of the foundations: “We must have faith; the works of God do not begin with money, but with prayer and trust in God; one puts faith in God and moves on; to begin with money is foolishness” (Extract from *Diario del Signor Maestro don Timoteo Giaccardo*, p. 27).

The Secret of success was born at the time when the Pauline vocation, raised up by God in the Church with such a heavy prophetic responsibility, needed an unfailing faith. It is in the same climate that we are called to live today. We are called to answer the challenge which is even stronger, given the changes with the passing of time, and the coming of the new means for our apostolate.

The faith of the “beginnings” should also be ours today, not just for study but also for holiness, apostolate, and poverty, that is, the four basic foundations of Pauline life known in our tradition as the four wheels (AD 100). Moreover, Don Alberione underlines that not one wheel of the Pauline cart should be neglected: “*To set prayer aside in order to do more work is a makeshift solution. Work done at the expense of prayer is of no use either to us or to others; it deprives God of his due*” (UPS II, 9), and more: “*Cursed is study, apostolate, etc., for which prayer is set aside*” (CISP, p. 98). A choice of this kind, even in moments of particular necessity and urgency, puts more confidence in our capacity than in the help of God, which is contrary to the spirit of the Pact. On the other hand, not to dedicate oneself to the apostolic task entrusted to us by the superiors also runs contrary to the spirit of the Pact.

The grace of vocation and the apostolate is given to us who are weak, ignorant, incapable, and lacking in every way, so that, in the words of the apostle Paul, the power of Christ may be manifested in us. The power of Christ, in fact, shines more brightly in our weakness. The Pact obtains for us from the Lord increase of holiness and the fruits of the mission so that we may bring to all men and women of our time the salvation of Christ. We are sanctified that we may sanctify. In order to do our apostolate in a holy

manner, it is necessary for us to be available, opening ourselves to God, and be attentive to the signs of the times.

The Pact is part of the identity of our Pauline Family. It has the dynamism proper to the rapport of grace and response, and for goal, the arrival at the degree of perfection and heavenly glory to which we are called, and the exercise of our specific apostolate.

The “Pact” ought to be prayed, renewed with much frequency and awareness. It is particularly useful when we are faced with difficult situations or when we make important decisions, and when we pause from the regular rhythm of life and apostolate—as when we make the monthly recollection, the annual retreat, the religious profession, the renewal of vows, etc. Obviously, it should not be considered as one of the many prayers, nor to be prayed mechanically.

The formators and animators of the community have the responsibility to catechise, orient, exhort the Paulines at all levels, so that they may treasure this precious inheritance the Founder justly refers to as the “Secret of success.”

## 2.4 Mary, Joseph, Paul: life's models for the Pauline

*"At the center is Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life."* The Pauline spirituality is Christ-centered. Precisely for this, Don Alberione has always associated it with the persons of Mary, Joseph, and Paul as models for the Christification of the Pauline.

**Mary** is the creature the Holy Trinity has chosen for the incarnation of the Word. Inasmuch as our spirituality is that of the incarnation (*Gal 4:19*), the role of Mary is indispensable. Jesus was given over to Mary. He was formed by Mary. *"This is the way,"* the Founder comments, *"to honour, love, and entrust oneself to the Virgin Mary"* (*DF* p. 41).

Mary Immaculate has a precise and precious role in the formation of the disciple and the apostle. She is Mother, Teacher and Queen of the Apostles: she gives birth to, forms, and guides the apostles of all times. She guides all the apostles and through them she continues to give Jesus to the world.

Our Marian spirituality is admirably summarized in the prayer "Entrusting of Oneself to Mary" (*Receive me, Mary, Mother...*). Just as Jesus entrusted himself to Mary for his whole life, so also the Pauline entrusts himself to Mary. She guides and nourishes us in the school of the Master, she helps us become more diligent and effective in the apostolate every day. Mary, who is honoured as a shepherdess, helps us to know Jesus-Truth, to imitate Jesus-Way, to love Jesus-Life; in so doing, she enlightens our mind, fortifies our will, and sanctifies our heart. The goal is the same as the one mentioned by Paul: "Christ lives in me" (*Gal 2:29*); the apostolic result is dedication without measure.

Beside Mary stands the humble yet noble figure of **St. Joseph**. Joseph is the witness of the incarnation, the man the Three Divine Persons chose as guardian of the Holy Family and guide of Jesus from childhood to adolescence. Together with Mary, Joseph is our model for having the necessary dispositions for Jesus' incarnation in us: innocence ("conserved or reacquired," as Don Alberione states), and humility of heart.

St. Joseph is the first model of the Pauline BROTHER (*CISP*, see pp. 32 and 347). He is the model of lay people who must love and orient the whole of earthly reality in conformity with the plans of God.

St. Joseph is also an example of respect and friendship that should characterize the relationship between superiors and young people in formation. The Founder writes: *"In the Houses and the whole Institute, may there be intimacy, familiarity and cooperation between Superiors and the formandi, similar to those between Jesus and St. Joseph."* Such *"intimate, cooperative, sincere accord... is frequent communication between the Educator and the Pupil; it is life in the family; it is the fountain of many consolations; it assures the highest degree of success"* (*SP*, April 1950).

From St. Joseph, the Pauline shall ask above all these graces: *"Interior life, the sanctification of self in silence, in intimacy with Jesus and Mary, in accomplishment of daily duties, in the exercise of individual and domestic virtues. Then... the spirit of apostolate, collaboration with Jesus Christ and with the Church in the salvation of the world"* (*SP*, February 1953).

**St. Paul** is the most faithful disciple of Jesus, *"the most complete and faithful interpreter of the Divine Master"* (*DF*, 63). In him, the Holy Spirit bestowed "all the best gifts," in particular, the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. He is the example most capable of wonders which the Holy Spirit grants when a person is worthy. St. Paul has so fascinated Don Alberione because of the summit of mystical life to which the

saint was brought by the Holy Spirit: this configuration with Christ has precisely made the apostle the greatest for all times, the apostle par excellence.

Don Alberione wants the Pauline to take St. Paul as model. The apostle himself writes to the Thessalonians: “We wanted to present ourselves as a model for you, so that you might imitate us” (2 *Thes* 3:9). The Founder calls every Pauline to have Paul’s very aim: “Christ lives in me.” He clearly shows the way: “The spirit of Saint Paul is drawn from his life, his Letters and his apostolate” (AD 94). Every Pauline, therefore, will inwardly feel obliged to know the letters of St. Paul in order to learn their directions. Looking at his life and apostolate in the light of the letters will show that they express the spiritual experience, the marvels along with suffering, through which he was formed by the Master. Retracing the missionary activities of the apostle shows that these are the varied and fecund fruits of this experience. For this reason, in the mind of Don Alberione, every Pauline (and the whole Pauline Family) is (should be) “Paul alive today” (see above 2.1).

Beside St. Paul, the Pauline Family honours **St. Peter**, model of pastorality and point of reference for what Don Alberione calls “*la romanità*,” which refers to the unity of the Church and the assent owed her Magisterium: “St. Paul and St. Peter worked together, even if each one had his particular mission to accomplish” (CISP, p. 614). An aspect of the Pauline spirit, centered on the person of Christ, is a great love for the Church and filial adhesion to the successor of Peter.

## 2.5 The word of God: assimilated, lived and proclaimed

*“Let it be the principal study... the universal and necessary science” (DF, 51-52). “The Gospel should be the first reading, the first knowledge for all, before which no other spiritual reading has greater importance” (DF, 48-49). “The Word of God is nourishment for life, for prayer and for the daily journey, the principle of unification of the community in the unity of thought, the inspiration for constant renewal and for apostolic creativity” (Ripartire da Cristo, 24).*

### **“The Word of God is not chained” (2 Tm 2:9)**

The Bible is the Word of God. In it, the Divine Word is present and operating: Word that is revealing and revealed: proclaimed, awaited, incarnated, given to humanity for whom He is Master and Saviour. Jesus is the Word of God who remains with us until the end of time and whom we must proclaim to today's society. The Pauline spirituality, centered on the Divine Master, is necessarily biblical. To approach the Bible, the Founder suggests to us a spirit of humility, of faith, of prayer and ongoing conversion. Let us not make use of the sacred texts as an intellectual exercise, but make them the basic content and deep experience of our spiritual life and of our apostolic undertakings.

Don Alberione has shown a clear priority in the contents of the apostolate of social communication: Sacred Scriptures come first, then the doctrine of the Church, followed by morals, the liturgy, and everything that contributes to the progress of humanity (cfr. *AE*, 18).

The diffusion of the Gospel in particular, and of the Bible in general, is the principal duty of the apostolate of social communications.

The copies of Sacred Scripture that the Pauline Family has distributed up to the present are countless. They come in different forms and editions, with particular attention to the readers. The Founder insisted on the diffusion of the Word, but also on the pastoral care that the distribution of the Bible needs: it is not enough to “print” or distribute the Word, it is necessary to explain it, present it in a language that is alive and liveable. The Society of St. Paul should never tire of answering to these challenges and tasks with regard the Word of God: to know how to “translate” it into different social and cultural situations, to present it in a dignified and understandable manner, to “break” it in a language which, far from impoverishing it, makes it more vital, to bring it closer to and capable of questioning the different historical and political times, and to make it the object of devotion and veneration. The Word of God, alive and eternal, has need of an ongoing “translation” in history that it may be forever the Good News which consoles, encourages and saves. We should imitate St. Paul who knew how to incarnate, translate and bring the Gospel in communion with the other apostles, overcoming the inevitable difficulties and oppositions, without compromising or putting obstacle to evangelisation.

As apostle of the Bible, our Founder is worthy of a place of honour. The sacred Text was the object and principal content of his apostolic initiatives, his passion. To spread the Word of God, and to make it known and loved, he showed an unequalled creativity. He acted and moved others to act. The list of his initiatives is endless: translations, annotations, congresses, Bible days and weeks, correspondence courses, designs, diskettes, prints, films, etc. He wanted the Bible to be accessible to all, explained to all, received by all, venerated by all, be the foundation of every pastoral ac-

tion. He remains for us an example to follow. He even left a concrete initiative: the International Catholic Bible Society (SOBICAIN) which he himself founded in 1960. Pope John XXIII, with a Pontifical Brief, declared it a Primary Union.

**“Blessed are those who listen to the Word of God and put it into practice”**

*(Lk 11:28)*

The apostolate of the Bible is not limited to diffusing it: one makes it the foundation of his very own spirituality and effort in study and deepening in Scriptures. The Word of God can be the principal content of our apostolate only if we possess it in a very intimate way. We ought therefore to have a profound knowledge of the Word of God, meditate on it, let ourselves be examined by it, incarnate it, and render it visible through our personal and communitarian life. The biblical movement in the last century has given a notable push for the rediscovery of the Word of God, and Vatican II has many times underlined the importance it must have in the life of every Christian. Along with the breaking of the Bread, Jesus makes himself present in the Word (SC 7). When listened to and received in faith, it “converts” us through the Spirit, that we in turn may become word and sign which manifest the love of God.

## 2.6 The Eucharist: dynamic center of life

*“Our piety is first and foremost eucharistic. Everything flows from the Teacher in the Eucharist as from a life-giving spring. Born from the tabernacle, it is here that the Pauline Family finds its nourishment, its life, its way of working, its sanctification. Everything—holiness and apostolate—comes from the Mass, Communion, and the eucharistic Visit” (UPS II, 10).*

The Eucharist had a primordial and character-forming function in the experience of Don Alberione as a person and as founder. It is impossible to remove the story and the life of the Pauline Family from its original font, which continues to be its guarantee of growth and fecundity: *“A secret of success is to model oneself on God by living and working in the Church and for the Church; of being wild olives grafted onto the living olive, the eucharistic Lord; of reflecting on and nourishing oneself with every word of the Gospel, in accord with the spirit of Saint Paul” (AD 95).*

We are invited by the same Jesus Christ to *“take everything from him, the Divine Master dwelling in the Tabernacle” (AD 157)*. The divine Word, who “pitched his tent among us,” makes himself present and renews the offering of his sacrifice in every Mass and remains present in all the Tabernacles.

The eucharistic celebration is not an empty ritual nor it recalls to memory something that is already past. It is an event, a memorial, a sacrament which makes present the unique sacrifice accomplished by Christ in his death and resurrection. It is a sacrament given meaning by him who said: “Do this in memory of me.”

The eucharistic sacrifice constitutes the soul of the whole Christian life and ought to be the soul of the Pauline Family. It is a sacrifice that is not closed in itself. The authentic meaning of the Eucharist becomes in itself a school of active love for the neighbour. Union with Christ, Head of the Mystical Body which is his Church, should make us sensitive to every suffering and misery, to every injustice and hurt, and leads us to seek ways to remedy them. It is necessary to avoid the tendency to reduce the celebration of the Mass into an act of devotion, almost an intimistic one, narrowed to the participants. Don Alberione taught that to participate in the Mass *“with a social conscience is to transform it into the most lively apostolate” (Alle famiglie paoline, 1954, p. 81).*

The daily eucharistic celebration is the dynamic center of the religious life of the Pauline, a complement of his consecration at baptism and confirmation. This dynamism is shown in the fact that everything leads to the Eucharist and everything derives from it. For this reason, with the Eucharist celebrated in the community, the Pauline has another eucharistic practice: the daily “visit” before the Blessed Sacrament which has a communitarian spirit even if it has a more individual characteristic. These are two inter-related moments which make the Pauline day completely “eucharistic.”

The whole Pauline Family converges around the Eucharist for its nourishment. This being so, it expects from the Pauline priests a particular ministry. Something that is related to this is the specific mission of the Pious Disciples. And this is an aspect of the function of “altricità”—understood as the desire to put in the disposition of all one’s characteristic gifts—which, in the light given by the Eucharist acquires the connotation of service, gift, thanksgiving. The “thirst for souls” and *“venite ad me omnes”* (come to

me, all of you) of Jesus allow us to understand what “to be born from the host” means for Paulines.

In the eucharistic celebration the Word which makes itself Life (body and blood of Christ), becoming nourishment of the Christian community, a transforming force and power for mission, becomes a paradigm for the apostolic undertaking of every Pauline. In different ways, in fact, the Pauline Priest and the Pauline BROTHER, from the very start of their formation, are oriented to allow themselves to be transformed, and transform the divine Word as nourishment for the whole people of God.

## **2.7 The eucharistic Visit: gift and distinctive mark of the Pauline Family**

The eucharistic Visit is one the most precious gifts given by the Divine Master to the Pauline Family faithfully transmitted to us by the Founder. He lived it with intensity, presented it with clarity, and recommended it with insistence. It is a gift which distinguishes us and contributes in a determinant way to spiritual maturity and apostolic fecundity: *“The Visit is the practice which guides and influences our whole life and apostolate the most. It draws together the fruits of all our other practices and brings them to fruition. It is the great means for living the whole Jesus Christ”* (UPS II, 105). It is a condition for the development of the Pauline personality: natural, supernatural, apostolic: *“In the Pauline Family there are well-defined goals, as well as detailed and copious means. There is especially the time during the hour of adoration when the soul enters into communion with God. Here the soul develops, assimilates and applies what it has learned”* (AD 146).

Important practices of piety to which all religious are called (cfr. CJC, can. 663) find in the Pauline eucharistic Visit a unifying force, thanks to the method proposed by Don Alberione. He suggested that the first part of the Visit be dedicated to spiritual reading, preferably from Sacred Scriptures; the second part be dedicated to the examination of conscience or life’s revision, the third to colloquial or liturgical prayer.

Availing of this method, in the eucharistic Visit we honour with our whole being (mind, will and heart) the person of Jesus Christ who is Truth, Way and Life. We enter decisively into a relationship of assimilation with the Divine Master, always deepening our knowledge of the mystery of Christ, meditating on his virtues and obtaining the graces necessary for our sanctification and fulfilment of our mission: *“Given the Pauline Family’s particular apostolate the hour of daily adoration is a must. It should be taken as a tremendous responsibility even if it had not been prescribed because the Pauline religious would not have sufficient nourishment for his spiritual life and apostolate. Anyone who overlooks this assumes such responsibility himself; if superiors do not see that it is practiced they assume the responsibility”* (UPS II, 10). This *“assuming the responsibility”* (*farla praticare*) does not mean using force. But it is the duty of formators and superiors to see to it that practical means are taken so that the Visit may be done with faithfulness--like proper instructions, providing for adequate time and place, exhortation through one’s example. Even if this has to do with a very personal encounter with the eucharistic Master, the SSP *Directory* advises that *“as far as is possible the Eucharistic visit is to be made together in community”* (art. 54.1). This advice is a part of the needed stimulus which the members of the religious family are to dedicate themselves willingly.

Don Alberione, however, was the first to warn us about the danger of turning the Visit to a kind of formalism, a practice that one does mechanically, just to observe a custom.

*“The real Visit is a spirit which pervades the whole of our time, thoughts, relationships and the like. It is a sap or life-giving current which influences everything and communicates its spirit to the most ordinary things. It shapes a spirituality that is lived and passed on. It shapes the spirit of prayer which, once cultivated, changes all kind of work into prayer.*

*To achieve this unity there has to be a circulation of life's various parts. The Benedictines' life is liturgy, fully meditated on, experienced and practiced. It constitutes their spiritual, active and ministerial life. Likewise is the eucharistic Visit for the Pauline" (UPS II, 110),*

The instruction of the Founder continues with the "ifs" or the conditions of a true Visit and the fruits that would be derived from it. The most beautiful and consistent fruit is "transformation in Christ," the highest aim of any Pauline (cfr. *Gal 2:20*). Therefore, the Founder concludes, "*Life is transformed into prayer, prayer bestows life*" (UPS II, 111).

In order to illustrate the dynamism of the Visit, the Founder presents some striking illustrations: the destitute has recourse to Wealth, the blind seeks Light, the lost soul finds the Way, the parched drinks at the Source, the friend goes to the true Friend (cfr. UPS II, 104). But the image which he prefers and which he further develops in order to illustrate the lively sense of the Visit is that of the disciple at the feet of the Master: the Pauline goes every day to the school of the Master to listen to him, to reflect on his own life, to speak to him as he adores, thanks, intercedes, asks... The Visit is an encounter, an interview, a school, a training school for integral progress.

## 2.8 The Liturgy: “book of the Holy Spirit”

The Pauline has particular motives to study, love and live the liturgy:

- 1) His vocation to communicate calls for it: he should therefore be sensible and knowledgeable of the values of signs, of gestures, of movements, of words, of songs, of vestments, of the sacred arts, etc., and of their capacity to transmit what they express.
- 2) The Eucharist, center of the liturgy, is fundamental for the Pauline spirituality: the ministerial priesthood of Christ and the common priesthood of the faithful: the Pauline Priests and the Pauline BROTHERS participate in the liturgical action, and in particular, in the Eucharistic celebration.
- 3) The content of the Pauline apostolate should be the whole Christian message: dogma, morals, worship. “*The world will be saved only if it welcomes Jesus as he is: his whole doctrine, his whole liturgy. A Gospel full of catechism and liturgy; a catechism full of the Gospel and liturgy; a liturgy (the Misalette, for example) full of the Gospel and catechism*” (CISP, p. 599).

When Alberione was still a young seminarian, a theology of the liturgy was not yet fully developed. Towards the first decade of the 1900s, in Europe there arose the “liturgical movement” which was propagated and developed through those publications which the Founder was familiar with and which he referred to in number 71 of the *Abundantes Divitiae*. Possessing a profound knowledge of the history of Christianity, he understood at once that the people of God was to be nourished not only by “popular piety” or with the spectacle of solemn celebrations. The faithful were to be given the soul of the liturgy, making possible what Vatican II would call the “*actuosa participatio*” (the “active participation”). Along with the translations of the Bible should come Missals that were bilingual and commented upon, so that the faithful would understand better the celebrations that they were doing. The field of the catechesis of the sacraments in films would also be explored, and Don Alberione would even appear in one of the documentaries, taking the role of the priest who baptizes.

From these facts, it clearly appears that Don Alberione wanted to bring the liturgy to the faithful: “teanthropic” (divine-human) communication which became a salvific event which is shared and received. In this sense, he came close to the original meaning of the word *liturgia*, meaning, “service” (*ergon*) rendered “for the benefit of the people” (*laos*), lived in two ways: through the *apostolate* and in the “eucharistic” imprint of the Pauline Family, succinctly expressed in the complementariness of Priest-BROTHER.

The deepening of the Trinitarian theology in the aspect of the “economy of salvation”—or the manifestation of the Trinity in history—in the light of the thoughts of Canon Chiesa, brought Don Alberione a particular sensitivity for the *mysterium salutis* (history as “mystery of salvation”) of which he and the whole Pauline Family form a part (AD 1-6). In this sense, the typical expression is the “*via humanitatis*” which the Founder offered to the Pauline Family for Christmas of 1947 (see *The Prayers of the Pauline Family*).

The Paulines thus enter in this liturgy which is not only a local ritual event, but is part of history as sanctifying action (by the power of the Spirit) received and offered back to the Father in Christ. In this key of full communion with the whole Church and the Christian community of all times, the Paulines celebrate the time of God (*Liturgy of*

*the Hours*, celebration of the mysteries of salvation in the liturgical year and in the sacraments) and strive so that through their missionary undertakings (their direct apostolate, study, prayer, sanctification), God's work of mercy may spread, known, and lived.

On the liturgical level, we have something to say in the Church. We should not forget, among others, the presence in the Pauline Family of the Pious Disciples who have the liturgical apostolate as an important expression of their specific mission.

<p>On the practical level, it is opportune that our communities attend to the ongoing revitalization of our liturgical celebrations, be they daily or during the feasts in the universal calendar or of the Pauline Family.</p>
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## 2.9 Humility and ongoing conversion

In consecrated life, humility is an indispensable virtue, more necessary the higher the objective to be reached. Don Alberione writes: *“The Pauline religious has chosen the better part, that is, perfection. He does not have promotions that allure him; he is not aiming for recognition and titles; he does not have to achieve esteem or distinction; he is not concerned with salary. He has renounced even the ordinary consolations of the secular clergy... If the Holy Spirit enlightens us, and insofar as it is up to us, let us prefer humiliation to praise, poverty to wealth, oblivion to recognition, suffering to consolation and health. Let us consider ourselves the least; do not expect thanks, take second place to the secular clergy”* (UPS III, 58).

The process of ongoing conversion to which we are called is another reason to hold humility as an essential Pauline virtue: *“ ‘Sorrow for sins’ means a habitual recognition of our sins, faults and deficiencies. Distinguish between what is God’s and what is ours: to God all the honour, to us contempt. Then came the prayer of faith, ‘The Pact or Secret of Success’ ”* (AD 158).

In 1923, Don Alberione received a revelation contained in three phrases that adorn our chapels: “Fear not, I am with you. From here I want to enlighten. Have a contrite heart.” Added to this, as reported in *Mihi vivere Christus est*, is “remain in humility” (n. 139). The Latin original *cor poenitens tenete* is also translated as “live in continual conversion.” It is interesting to note the joining of conversion and humility, which are particular characteristics of a man who listens and allows himself to be led by the Spirit. How can we not remember St. Paul, whose conversion is not to be reduced to the Damascus event, but is understood as a way of living the whole of his mission? Conversion, in fact, is also that perspective which brings the apostle to look intently at the reality that surrounds him, to be attentive to the voice of the Spirit, and to allow himself to be guided by the same Spirit to take on the paths, at times incomprehensible, of the mission.

Neither religious profession nor baptism makes possible in us a once-for-all, total radical conversion. The perfect configuration with Christ (the “Christ who lives in me” of *Gal 2:20*) is a slow process of maturation which includes regressions and falls. Hence, the necessity of “dwelling” constantly in the heart of God, through prayers and the sacraments, above all through the sacrament of Reconciliation, in order to heal the wounds, cure the sickness, and receive the strength of the Spirit to continue the journey. Ongoing conversion is the red line that our mission should focus on: we have in fact the charismatic duty to be attentive to the new reality of the world, to know how to read the signs of the times, without enclosing ourselves in our comfort zone. At the same time, open to the Spirit who always speaks to his Church, we must have the courage to “correct” our lines of action when this is necessary to avoid taking in the aberrant or decisively worldly mentality.

Conversion and the following of Christ ask for a full openness to God, which is verified in a simple and humble disposition, docility to the Spirit, overcoming of every egoism, and abandoning one’s criteria, in order to see and judge the things of the world in the light of God. Of help to us is the revision of life (or examination of conscience), done personally or in the community.

We must have the courage not only to correct ourselves, but also to “convert” our structures, communities and apostolic undertakings, so as to “navigate” in those new and risky territories that await the saving message, of which, through the grace of God, we are announcers.



## 2.10 Spirit of reparation

As foundation for reparation, we are not to look into private revelations, but in the Revelation offered to all in the Scriptures and deepened by theological reflections. Its references are: the new presence of evil in the world and the new prospects of liberation.

To form the spirituality of reparation, it is important to revise the terminology being used and to consider the new expectations of salvation present in so many expressions of art, literature, daily information, films... Without abandoning terms like even the word reparation (and closely related terminologies: propitiation, oblation, reconciliation, intercession...) it is important to reinforce the doctrine with today's terminologies which are rich in meaning, words like: solidarity, participation, liberation, interaction, co-responsibility, unity, reciprocity.

The **weaknesses of an inadequate spirituality of reparation** (devotee intimacy, a vision of sin only as a moral or religious disorder, judgment of sinners as the "bad guys," bearing of the cross without a clear Paschal dimension and often as a pathological problem, etc.) should be balanced by a sense of **correct spirituality of reparation**. This springs forth from the twofold love of God and human beings and is founded on the mystery of salvation. We don't look at the person of Christ in isolation, but as one sent by the Father who, in communion with him and the Holy Spirit, accomplishes salvation. The intervention of God in human history is seen as a process that is always actual, which embraces the whole reality of man, and aims at universal restoration.

In this perspective, **the true repairer connects spirituality with apostolic undertaking**, in this way avoiding falling into an empty spiritualism or into an activism without soul. The spirit of reparation does not exhaust all the dimensions of the Pauline spirituality, but places it in the position of joining closely worship, mission and life. According to Don Alberione, the triad of the Pauline reparation is composed of life, piety and apostolate (cfr. *UPS IV*, 192).

If lived properly, the Pauline spirituality, because of its strong Eucharistic colour, leads almost spontaneously to acts of reparation, which draws from the sacrifice of Christ which is sacramentally renewed in every Mass. Every Pauline must bring to church all the joys and anguish of the world, in order to live it in the most sublime way in that union of God and humanity which is the Eucharist. He then goes out of the church carrying precise tasks for life and for apostolate.

The duty of reparation applies to all Paulines without distinction. The same theological reflection has recovered the certainty that this duty is for all believers, by reason of their consecration in baptism and confirmation. But it would be a grave error and an impoverishment if one were to take away the particular mission entrusted by the Founder to the Disciples of the Divine Master and to the Pious Disciples (cfr. *UPS I*, 223; *IV*, 191). The teaching on charisms enriched by the ecclesiology of communion recognizes that some people can receive as a particular trust the "ministry of offering" which is common to all the baptized. This is precisely the case of the Pauline Disciple. "*Particular character of the spirit of the Disciple of the Divine Master: reparation*" (*CISP*, p. 1449).

*For an ample reflection on this theme, turn to Appendix no. 6*

Within the Congregation, a concrete pedagogy to maintain alive and to pass on to the new generation the spirit of reparation seems to be wanting. To come out with such pedagogy is the responsibility above all of the formators and the animators of the communities. The circumstances that govern the world of today offer infinite possibilities for a sound re-proposal of this spirituality which is also a part of our identity.

### **3. IN COMMUNION WITH THE WHOLE CHURCH**

*Fidelity to the man of today, to Christ and the Gospel, is expressed in the spirit of communion with the whole Church. That communion is rediscovered by Vatican II as basic element of being Christians, people of God.*

*Our very own charism is a gift of the Spirit for the service of the Church, while the vow of fidelity to the Pope expresses our strong ties with the Magisterium.*

*Being faithful to the Church also means to take into serious consideration the juridical aspects which pertain to our Congregation.*

*It means not losing our prophetic obligation, and to remain open and active in the discovery of the value of the woman and the lay people in general, and in the new frontiers of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue.*



### 3.1 The Church after the Vatican Council II

In 1965 Don Alberione asserted: “*The Pauline Family was born when what the Holy Father then reigning said about the press was little listened to, and therefore something had to be done. The Pauline Family was born also for this: to address that tendency of persons who let the Pope speak and then teach the way they want, according to their own conviction, in the way they judge better, without taking into account someone who has the obligation, the duty and the power to direct Catholics on the way of the apostolate*” (*Pr VO*, p. 413). The Church is the ambit where the Pauline Family operates. From the Church the Congregation has derived the mandate for the apostolate. She has needs that come from within and from outside. Far from menacing the very existence of the Church, these needs seem to strengthen her in some way and help the process of renewal.

**Needs from within.** Vatican Council II had raised up a lot of hope for the renewal and updating in the Church. After more than thirty years, John Paul II asks questions in *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*: “An examination of conscience must also consider the reception given to the Council, this great gift of the Spirit to the Church at the end of the second millennium. To what extent has the word of God become more fully the soul of theology and the inspiration of the whole of Christian living, as *Dei Verbum* sought? Is the liturgy lived as the ‘origin and summit’ of ecclesial life, in accordance with the teaching of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*? In the universal Church and in the particular Churches, is the ecclesiology of communion described in *Lumen Gentium* being strengthened? Does it leave room for charisms, ministries, and different forms of participation by the People of God, without adopting notions barrowed from democracy and sociology which do not reflect the Catholic vision of the Church and the authentic spirit of Vatican II? Another serious question is raised by the nature of relations between the Church and the world. The Council’s guidelines—set forth in *Gaudium et Spes* and other documents—of open, respectful and cordial dialogue, yet accompanied by careful discernment and courageous witness to the truth, remain valid and call us to a greater commitment” (*TMA*, 36).

This series of questions made by the Pope is far from being simple rhetorics. Every sector feels a worrying deficiency in a determinate field of pastoral action or of Christian life. Notwithstanding the paths taken and the shining example of excellent Christians in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there remains the perception of violation and even betrayal of the Conciliar spirit on the part of the Church: both by faithful and hierarchy. John Paul II is therefore justified in inviting all to take up the documents of Vatican II in order to rediscover the treasure of doctrinal and pastoral stimuli contained therein. Of this task, we Paulines are called to be witnesses and agents.

**From outside, the Church** finds herself confronting the phenomenon of secularism which is getting stronger. When, in nations with long Christian tradition, the Church has lost her influence on the civil authority, there appear phenomena like the separation of the Church and the State, the autonomy of the State, the autonomy of science and commerce. The Church has lost its traditional position of pre-eminence; secularism seeks to impose itself on all human realities, relegating to the private sphere the religious values.

The exasperating secular mentality wants not only freedom of religion but freedom from religion. In many countries, religion has become purely cultural, and is no longer a source of meaning and motivation for life. The Church has in need, more than

ever, of establishing a serene relationship with the world and the secular forces; she needs to know how to adapt her means of evangelisation to the diverse geographical and cultural situations: also from here depends how she is perceived, in a sense or the other.

Catholicism still offers very valid answers to the existential and most profound questions of man on the meaning of life and on the reasons to hope. This fact can guarantee the continued presence of the Church. And in this complex context, the Paulines find themselves attending with force to their charism of service to man and to the Church.

### 3.2 The “Pauline charism” in the life of the Church

*“Every authentic charism brings an element of real originality in the spiritual life of the Church along with fresh initiatives for action. These may appear unreasonable to many, and even cause difficulties, because it is not always easy to recognize at once that they originate from the spirit” (Mutuae Relationes, n. 12, first part).*

**The Pauline charism.** – “One of the characteristic disposition of Primo Maestro is pastoral vigilance; that sensitivity of intuiting with penetrating clearness and with a strong sense of anticipation the needs of the people of God. Through the action of the Spirit, he felt the dynamic currents of his time and such intuition adequately provided for his works and foundations, at times to spiritually rescue men and women.” The manifestation given to our Founder by the Spirit for the common good is our charism (DC 1969-1971, n. 36). The charism of the Founder is concretised in the foundation of the Congregation and of the whole Pauline Family. With the approval of the Church, our specific apostolate has officially become part of her mission: action which is accomplished in the name of the Church, for the Church and as Church. “Faithfulness to the charism of the Founder therefore becomes faithfulness to the Church” (cfr. DC n. 41b).

*“The true marks of an authentic charism in any Institute demand, both in the Founder and his followers, a constant re-examination of their fidelity to the Lord, docility to His Spirit, prudent weighing of circumstances and careful reading of the signs of the times, the will to be integrated in the Church, awareness of obedience to the hierarchy, boldness in initiatives, perseverance in the gift of self, humility in the face of adversity. In a genuine charism there is always a mixture of new creativity and interior suffering. The historical fact of the connection between charism and the cross, apart from other factors which may give rise to misunderstanding, is an extremely helpful sign in discerning the authenticity of a call of the Spirit” (Mutuae Relationis, n. 12 second part).*

**Characteristics of a Pauline apostolate.**—Don Alberione insisted that the Paulines should have a deep theological culture and interior qualities in order to spread the Christian teaching with an unconditional fidelity to the Holy See. They should proclaim the Word of God with the same heart with which the Divine Master preached it, with the zeal of St. Paul, and with the humility of the Virgin Mary. The first priority for apostolate is interior life. Only in interior life will the Pauline find the capacity and the energy to live, and to help others live, Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life.

**Apostolic efficacy.** – In one of his most beautiful and lengthy reflections on the apostolate of the editions, Don Alberione in 1950: *“Printing, films, radio and television stations need big expenses and continuity. This presupposes organization, many prepared personnel, opportune substitute for this, and gathering of funds... It always involves taking tasks that are delicate morally and economically: on one part, there is need for religious of true observance, on the other, the norms of the Church are to be observed in the administration; and, furthermore, a continual vigilance of Superiors... May there be conviction that these apostolates ask for a greater spirit of sacrifice and a more profound piety. Empty attempts, sacrifices of sleep and of hours, money that is never enough, misunderstanding on the part of many, spiritual dangers of every kind, perspicacity in the choice of the means... Save others, but let us first save ourselves! Saints are needed who go ahead of us on these paths not yet taken and are not even in-*

*licated in part. This is not the business of amateurs, but of true apostles...*" (CISP, pp. 806-807).

*"At present, the press, motion pictures, radio, and television are the most pressing, rapid and effective means of Catholic apostolate. It may be that the future holds other, even better, means. But for the present it seems the heart of the apostle can desire no better means for giving God to people and people to God"* (UPS I, 313).

**Paulines for the new millennium.** – The prevision that Don Alberione made in 1960 has been proven true. Ours is a time of modern technology of communication. Computers and satellites are revolutionizing the world of communication which is forming the new generations. Everyone is eager to occupy the most cyberspace possible. Precisely because of the nature of our vocation, we Paulines play a guiding role in the culture of the media. We should apply our creativity and use our imagination in order to open ways for the Lord in the space of global communication, proclaiming with courage and with force that God wants to share his life with every human being. But it is indispensable that this should come from a heart of a true apostle.

### 3.3 To say and give “something” to the Church

“Our Father Alberione has given to the Church new instruments for expressing itself, new means to give vigor and amplitude to its apostolate, new capacities and a new awareness of the validity and of the possibilities of its mission in the world and with modern means” (Paul VI, 28 June 1969). With these words Papa Montini recognized a triple merit in that special gift of Don Alberione for the Church: instruments, strategies and mentality. A contribution which goes beyond the means.

The preceding paragraph of the words just cited, in the discourse of Paul VI, sees Don Alberione in this way: “Humble, silent, untiring, always recollected in his thoughts, which run from prayer to work... always intent on scrutinizing the ‘signs of the times,’ that is, the most inspired means for reaching souls.” Here is another lesson being offered to the Paulines of all times, so that they may give a valid contribution to the mission of the Church: to pass from prayer to action, from reflection on the situation of the world to proposals and concrete initiatives of apostolate.

Prayer itself is a precious contribution to the life of the Church Don Alberione teaches: “*Prayer for man, the Christian, the religious, the priest, is the first and foremost duty. We cannot give to the Congregation greater gift than prayer; no work is more useful for us than prayer; a priest can offer for the Church no greater work than prayer*” (20 April 1937, *CISP*, p. 87).

Authentic prayer comes from life and generates life. It is a part of a global witnessing, of the contribution which every Christian as an individual offers for the building of the Kingdom. For greater reason, the religious, whose state of life participates in the holiness of the Church, contributes to make the Church more beautiful and spiritually enrich her with his personal struggle for holiness. The Founder used to define religious life as “Christian life in high tension,” and would invite his children to be “true religious,” and not take shelter “in a form of religious amateurism” (cfr. *UPS IV*, 187-188). He would invite them to be saints so as to act like faithful and dependable servants in the Church, because “the works of God are being done by men of God.”

Pauline religious life derives its characteristics and particular gifts from the Lord. It is being sustained by a Christocentric spirituality, well defined and amply illustrated by the Founder (cfr., for example, *AD* 159-160). Hence, “Pauline spirituality is our prophetic voice in the Church within which we have a specific responsibility. Consequently it devolves on each one of us to make this spirituality known” (*Const.*, art 13). Obviously, the first duty of the Pauline is to know and live personally this spirituality: “*In order to save ourselves, it is necessary that we establish ourselves in Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life; in order to be Christians it is necessary to live in Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life; in order to be Pauline religious, it is necessary to live better in Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life; to do the apostolate it is necessary to give Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life*” (1958, *CISP*, p. 1219).

Don Alberione wrote in 1957: “*The Pious Society of Saint Paul has something to say to the world: we are put on the road not as if we have no idea where to go, but with a fixed goal and with means well-studied and perfected*” (*SP*, May 1957, *CISP*, p. 165). Our goal: evangelisation; our means for the apostolate: the fastest and the most efficacious; the spirit which animates us: that of St. Paul, disciple and faithful apostle of the Divine Master.

See also no. 4.11 (Pauline “prophetism”)



### 3.4 The vow of fidelity to the Pope and rapports with the Magisterium

Associated in the early history of the Church and in the liturgical celebration, the apostles Peter and Paul are inseparable. In Scripture, especially in the Acts of the Apostles, we are able to see the profound reason why the Church unites Peter and Paul. The two figures cover well this story. Peter is presented as the visible head and the point of reference of the unity of the Church. Paul represents the opening to the whole world and the expansion of the Church. While avoiding making absolute categorization, it is not without reason that Peter is recognized as the point of unity, the leader in a hierarchy of service (“On this rock I will build my Church”—*Mt* 16:18); and Paul is the leader of the missionary expansion (“A slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God”—*Rom* 1:1). The two leaders, the two forces—of unification and expansion—are present and at work in the Church. Both are necessary: they are complementary forces that integrate in vital equilibrium.

True devotion to St. Paul leads to true devotion to St. Peter, and for us this has wonderfully expression in our filial and diligent adhesion to the Pope, the Vicar of Christ.

Don Alberione thought necessary the vow of fidelity to the Pope in matters that regard the apostolate on account of the universality of the Pauline mission. This fourth vow is present since the beginning of the Institute: at that time, in fact, society and the Church were undergoing the period of contesting the directives of the Pope and the Holy See. The introduction of the vow of fidelity to the Pope, in the religious profession of the Paulines, is also based on the mystical experience of the Founder and his unitarian Christological vision (see *AD* 15, 20, 49).

The vow has an eminently apostolic content which is expressed as a vivid manifestation of belonging to the Church and as welcome to the teachings and pastoral directives of the Pope (*DC* n. 478). This strengthens in us Paulines the conviction that we must live, serve and work in the Church and for the Church (*AD* 95). The mission of Paul, in fact, has a universal scope and is to complement and be essential as that of Peter, expressed in the “romanità”: with the fourth vow, then, the Founder has left to us Paulines St. Peter also as charismatic inheritance (*AD* 157; *UPS* IV, 119).

The **universality** (*AD* 64) and the **romanità** (*AD* 115) are therefore inseparable aspects of the charism of the foundation of the Institute. This twofold dimension is beautifully expressed by Don Alberione: “The Congregation is not confined to national borders. Once an Institute becomes *iuris pontificii*, that is, directly subject to the Pope, it assumes universality” (*UPS* I, 52).

Following this vow means opening wide our missionary frontiers: nothing should stop us from doing our duty of bringing also to the farthest places the saving Word. This permits us to work with fidelity and creativity in the communications media.

The word “romanità,” today fallen to disuse, was dear to the Founder who did not take it lightly. In his *Catechismo sociale* (1949), on no. 100, he notes the characteristics of the Church: unity, holiness, universality and apostolic character. He then affirms: “*These characteristics can be summarized in a word: romanità or union with the Roman Pontif.*”

Independent of the “fourth vow,” and in any moment of its history, the Congregation is called to give witness to a great love for the Church, a particular adhesion to the Vicar of Christ and to a special docility and diligence in what regards the Magisterium.

In a particular way, the apostolate places us in the service of and collaboration with the local Church where we are present. Our evangelization thus becomes truly inculturated and we are in agreement with the pastoral program of the community where we find ourselves. If we are properly inserted within the local Church, we shall know better the situation and we will be able to address the needs of the receivers, without contradicting or opposing others pastoral workers.

The fourth vow inserts us permanently in the Catholic Church. We shall always be the bridge through which the directives of the Magisterium pass to the People of God who are hungry of the bread of the word and of fish multiplied, food which we, as apostles, are called to bread for the man of today.

### 3.5 Priest and BROTHER: some juridical aspects

The juridical question, even if an argument that has always been of interest to our Congregation, seems not to be one of the big preoccupations at present. More important to us is the rediscovery of our charismatic identity and providing answers to the expectations of the Church and of society.

In reference to the present *Code of Canon Law* (can. 588), the Society of St. Paul is a “religious clerical” Congregation of apostolic character (see *Constitutions* no. 2). The clerical aspect is determined above all by the scope of, and tasks proper to, the Institute. The Society of St. Paul is, in fact, a teaching Congregation: our apostolate is true preaching done “not only by virtue of the baptism and confirmation of its members and by virtue of an intrinsic mandate of the juridical kind, with which the Hierarchy would have appropriated as its mission and its preaching, but by virtue of the character of the sacred ordination of its priest-members” (*DC* 24). The gift of ministerial priesthood therefore belongs to the foundational charism not only of the Congregation but of the entire Pauline Family. The Pauline BROTHER does not therefore do a subsidiary or second-class activity. The BROTHER complements the Priest and is co-essential. Priest and BROTHER together are “Paulines.”

Rights and duties are common to all members, “except those coming from Holy Orders.” Every member has “in principle access to all forms of apostolate and offices of responsibility, based on a unique criterion: the gift of God, competence, experience, maturity and balance” (*DC* 26).

What other Congregations are discovering today, as they renew from within the physiognomy of the “Brother laity,” the Society of St. Paul already possesses as charismatic inheritance from the Founder.

As is well known, due to the existing laws, sacred ordination is needed for one who exercises the service of government. The *Manual of Authority*, explaining the juridical functions of the “delegated authority,” offers ample possibilities on this matter.

#### *Prospects*

Whatever answer may come from the Commission tasked to study the possibility for Brothers to also take the responsibility of governance (*VC* 61), the Pauline, whether Priest or BROTHER, is very much aware that the role of the superior is a service of animation and not as a position or a promotion to take advantage of. There is space for growth in the understanding of the prophetic role of the vocation to BROTHERHOOD: the full exercise of the priesthood of the laity, the continuing act of worship and “liturgy of life” (*Rom* 12:2). We, instead, are called to understand and live better the complementarity of the Priest and BROTHER.

These juridical considerations would remain empty words if these were not accompanied by daily life characterized by:

1. profound esteem for one another;
2. serious formative efforts on the part of all, formandi and professed members, independent of their specific calling;
3. heart-felt communication, sharing, co-responsibility in the elaboration of programs in the apostolate and administration, and succeeding verification.

In a world which gives importance to being first, ambition, success, the Pauline—  
Priest and BROTHER—should be a clear witness to a way of *kenosis*, of renunciation,  
and self-emptying (*Phil 2:5ff*) for the building up of the Kingdom.

### 3.6 The feminine presence

From 1908, “ever bearing in mind the future beginning of the Pauline Family, he [Don Alberione] was thinking of personnel who had to be prepared [and] looking for young boys and girls and training them” (AD 103). “Toward 1910 he took a definitive step. It became much clearer that the writers, technical personnel and promoters [would have to be] religious men and women” (AD 24). In 1916, after the initial steps and the accompanying great difficulties, he began to inculcate in the boys and girls who have followed him the true meaning of the foundation, that they had to divide themselves into three branches: branch of men religious, branch of women religious, branch of men and women who are lay (*Programma*, 15 August 1916). “For the Good Press women missionaries are necessary, as they are for the works of the propagation of the faith to unbelievers... Many mansions are proper for women: in many things... the daughters are more successful...” (UCBS, March 1922). Eighty years after that last statement, of the ten institutes that compose the Pauline Family, five are totally of women and two receive both sexes. Of the five Pauline congregations, four are of women and only one is of men. That the women have “weight” in the development of the Pauline Family is very clear. Also illuminating is what the Founder writes in *La donna associata allo zelo sacerdotale*: “Today’s woman should form today’s men” (p. 39), and “The woman is strong in heart... she does not reason out her ideals, but receives them through intuition, and makes them her very own; she loves them with her whole being, and cares for them with her whole strength; she passionately sustains them in the presence of the man” (p. 55). In this same writing of the Founder, the fields of apostolate for women in the Pauline Family are already pointed out. Let us not forget that the first edition of the writing was made in 1915; it was one of the first books printed by the newborn *Scuola tipografica “Piccolo operaio,”* and the Founder had thought of it from way back 1911 (see AD 109).

The dignity and vocation of the woman is, therefore, for us Paulines, a fact “theoretically” acquired: we are sufficiently instructed about her dignity, about the place she occupies or should occupy in the Church. The recent *Unitary Project of the Pauline Family: To give to the World Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life*, produced by an inter-congregational Commission of the Pauline Family (published in March 2001), illustrates the diverse wealth of charism which the “Pauline” woman represents.

However, the recognition that we are a true Family is a goal not yet fully attained. This is also true with regard our capacity for a full and mature collaboration, born out of knowledge and esteem, of our exchange and reciprocal enrichment in the common consecration and mission of “giving to the world Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life.”

Here, the effort can draw inspiration from a passage of the apostolic letter *Vita Consecrata* (n. 57): “Women’s new self-awareness also helps men to reconsider their way of looking at things, the way they understand themselves, where they place themselves in history and how they interpret it, and the way they organize social, political, economic, religious and ecclesial life.” We should strive to attain that full fraternity and sorority willed by our one Father if we want to become persons who operate in the Church: in fidelity to the specific individual charisms and to the unitary charism of the Family.

Overcoming every form of conflict of the sexes, we should seriously take the task of having an integral inter-congregational formation on all levels and all sectors, including that of interrelationship, both human and spiritual.
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### 3.7 The “lay element” in the Congregation

Even if the Society of St. Paul is a religious clerical Congregation in character (*Constitutions*, art. 2), in our specific apostolate, the lay element is fundamental. By this affirmation we refer to openness, actuality and novelty of the means we adopt for human promotion and for evangelization. The recipients of our apostolate are all categories of people; the fields of interest—all concerns of society; priority of contents in our apostolic work—the whole Christian teaching, the whole morals, the whole worship; the means and language—those of social communications, the most rapid and efficacious.

The “lay” element proper to the apostolate finds in the Pauline BROTHERS a special consonance that the Founder certainly perceived when he entrusted to them the technical and diffusion parts of the apostolate. Today, it is admitted by everyone that no Pauline—Priest or BROTHER—is precluded from any sector or phase of the apostolate. However, there remains the value of “specific space” or greater propriety in which the Special General Chapter (1969-1971) showed interest and which became a part of our *Constitutions* (cfr. Art. 5). If this was not the case, it would not happen, as sometimes it does, that some Pauline Priests would end up affirming that he does not know the reason of his ministerial priesthood. Evidently, because of the needs of the moment (as almost always), but also because of lack of formation (in many houses), a good number of Pauline Priests occupy offices or take roles that would be more consonant with the BROTHERS, while the number of Paulines working in the creative sector and other fields more consonant to or proper to the Pauline Priests is becoming smaller. In the report he made on the “Day for the Disciples of Jesus Master” in 1965, Don Alberione already underlined the need of not undervaluing what we call today “specific space”: *“Priests get discouraged when they are prevalently assigned to the technical sector. On the other hand, the BROTHER will be happier when he follows the direction of the apostolate proper to him”* (SP, January 1965, CISP, p. 1446).

The lack of deepening of the “lay element” of our mission and of the vocation of Pauline BROTHERS is one of the reasons why some, without reflecting, come to define the Pauline BROTHER in the negative sense: Paulines who are not ordained. Those who think this way do not take into account the teachings of the Founder, the norms of the Congregation itself, nor the teaching of the Magisterium. Vatican II’s *Perfectae Caritatis* clearly affirms that the religious life, undertaken by lay people is a state for the profession of the evangelical counsels which is complete in itself (n. 10). It is necessary to go to the roots and therefore the meaning of the “lay element” present in the Pauline BROTHERS and in the very heart of our Pauline charism; such roots are found in the ecclesiology of communion and come from the Gospel: Christ, through the Church, continues his work of liberation and salvation in history, in the midst of the realities in the world. He is present as Head; all the baptized are members of the Church which is his body.

The Master prayed thus for his disciples: “I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world” (*Jn* 17:15-16). He gave them this task: to be “salt of the earth” which does not lose its taste; “light of the world” which is not put under a bushel basket; “city set on a mountain” (cfr. *Mt* 5:13-15); “grain of mustard seed” which grows and becomes a tree (cfr. *Mt* 13:31-32); “yeast” which leavens the whole batch of wheat flour (cfr. *Mt* 13: 33). He sent them to the whole world and promised them his as-

sistance: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations... Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age” (*Mt* 28:19-20).

The Church, therefore, is active in the world, dialogues with society of every age, offers to all her message and the means of grace. Even if in history consecrated life first manifested itself as a flight from the world, from the very beginning it was aware that its purpose was to contribute to the salvation of the world. Very soon in religious life there appeared concrete apostolic initiatives in various fields.

From the beginning of his enlightenment, the Founder understood the urgency of the new forms of apostolate which, with a new spirit and with new means, would transform the new situations of society with the leaven of the Gospel. Then, “in a greater light,” towards 1910, his initial idea (a Catholic organization of writers, technical people, book-sellers and retailers) took a definitive step: “Writers, technical personnel and promoters [would have to be] *religious men and women*” (*AD* 24). This step had great advantages, be they for those called or for the mission they had to do. What did not change was the character of the apostolic service: open, relevant, addressed to all categories of people, responding to their real and urgent needs, assuming for the apostolate the instruments that human progress, by design of Providence, would offer for communications: the fastest and the most efficient means.

### 3.8 The ministerial priesthood in the Congregation

Our apostolate is **true preaching** that is realized “not only by virtue of the sacramental character of baptism and confirmation of the members and by virtue of an intrinsic mandate of the juridical type which the Hierarchy would associate with its own mission and with its own preaching, but also **by virtue of the character of the Sacred Ordination of the members**” (DC 24). The gift of the priestly ministry belongs therefore to the foundational charism not only of the Congregation but also of the Pauline Family.

The actual relevance, openness, and universalism of the Pauline mission (see “Lay element,” no. 3.7) is to be considered along with the sacredness and official character of preaching. All the baptized participate in the universal priesthood and all are called to announce the Truth which they received and which they believe. Nonetheless, the official and normative duty of preaching falls on the ministerial priesthood. It is one “among the principal duties of bishops”; along with them, priests are “consecrated to preach the Gospel and shepherd the faithful and to celebrate divine worship” (cfr. LG nos. 25 and 28). The instrumental (mediating) preaching which the Pauline does with his apostolate is true and proper preaching, official preaching, exercise of the mission entrusted by the Church. “Priests, in their function as collaborators, have above all the duty of preaching the Gospel of God” (cfr. PO 2;4). By the presence and exercise of the ministerial priesthood and based on the intimate association of Priests and BROTHERS in the Pauline undertaking, this becomes official preaching. This same reason allows Don Alberione to speak—with regards the BROTHERS—of a “quasi-priesthood” (cfr. AD 40). “*The Disciple acquires great dignity and privilege. This conforms with the spirit of Vatican Council II*” (SP, January 1965; CISP, p. 1145).

The Pauline Priest, therefore, whether in his editorial/creative activity (which is more proper of him) or in any other moment or field of Pauline apostolate, always acts as a consecrated person and as one who had been conferred with ministerial priesthood. He can never withdraw from the sacrament of Orders he received and the duties attached to it. His duties towards the Church, to the Congregation and to the Pauline Family are principally three:

1. The ministry of the Word (preaching the Word of God): in direct form, in the liturgical actions, and with the means of social communication, illuminating every reality, every human question with the light of the Gospel. The Pauline Priest must reflect deeply on the responsibility assigned to him (even if not exclusively) in the preparation and formulation of the contents, that is to say, in the field of “creativity.”

2. The ministry of sanctification which is accomplished with the administration of the sacraments and with the prayer of praise and thanksgiving for the people: Divine Office (cfr. SC 83-86, 90, 96, 99). The Pauline Priest will give particular attention to this, thus to the preparation and celebration of the Holy Mass: “Through the ministry of the priests, the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is made perfect in union with the sacrifice of Christ. He is the only mediator who in the name of the whole Church is offered sacramentally in the Eucharist and in an unbloody manner until the Lord himself comes” (PO n. 1).

3. The pastoral ministry, which seeks the unification of the people of God and to guide the moral formation of the brethren. The work of animation, in the wider and deeper sense of the word, pertains above all to the Pauline Priests, and not only with regard the SSP, but also the entire Pauline Family: “*Fervour and life-giving light must flow from the Pauline Priest, who has here a great and delicate ministry*” (UPSI, n. 20).

The insistent pronouncements of the Founder regarding the need for a greater number of BROTHERS in the total membership of the Congregation shall acquire a new value if we re-read them no longer in the light of attribution to the phases of the apostolate, but in the light of a more specific orientation and qualification. At the same time, there is need for a deepening—and transmitting with clearness in the formation—the official quality of the instrumental preaching of the Pauline, thanks to the participation of the ministerial priesthood.

The formation of the Paulines who are called to the ministerial priesthood ought to be given much care. Don Alberione writes: “*We need to exercise a very diligent choice, where there is the moral certainty of producing not only good but very qualified Priests, under every aspect*” (1951; cfr. *CISP*, p. 351).

### 3.9 Ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue: open frontiers

In the New Testament, it is St. Paul who warns most about any kind of division: “I urge you, Brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose” (*1 Cor 1:10*). And to those who cry out: “*I belong to Paul, I belong to Apollos, I belong to Kephas,*” he responds: “*Is Christ divided?*” (*1 Cor 1:12*).

Don Alberione had the same passion for unity. Already in 1935, he founded “Unitas” which would later be called “*Ut unum sint,*” and which would be declared a Primary Association through a papal decree. In 1970, this would become a juridical moral entity. Don Alberione wrote in 1960: “*The work promoted through the years by the Pious Society of St. Paul for unification, which had taken the name Ut unum sint, comes from the spirit of the Institute. We are not sent to a city or a nation, but to the entire world; to carry in our heart the entire world, just like St. Paul; all nations, all continents... Consider yourselves apostles of mankind and apostles of unity*” (see DC 83).

In the last century, the ecumenical movement has moved the Church to reflect on dialogue and collaboration with the Churches and the Christian communities. Vatican Council II and the pronouncements of the Magisterium, which have followed in these years, give us clear indications on “dialogue” in a wide sense: dialogue and journey towards unity with the Christian confessions, dialogue and search for harmony and peace with other religions, dialogue and reciprocal enrichment with non-believers.

*“Openness to all men, in order to communicate to all the Christ, accepting all the positive means which human history offers, and, at the same time, the desire for unity and for synthesis (scientific, religious, ecclesial, global) in constant tension of updating and of renewal, other than being felt needs of our time, corresponds exactly to the thought and work of our Founder” (DC 82).*

We must examine ourselves on the ecumenical sensitivity proper to our Congregation and to the Pauline Family, on our being true followers of St. Paul and Don Alberione, whose apostolic life was marked by the desire for unity. Internal unity, collaboration with the Churches and, in the light of the new paths which the Spirit indicates, open dialogue with the human race. More so in time like ours in which masses of people migrate from one continent to another, bringing with them their way of life and their own faith. In dialogue and in active collaboration with the Christian churches with whom we live together. In respect of other religions and in search of peace together. In open dialogue with a society which does not have the courage to believe, but which feels a great need of spirituality...

We cannot limit ourselves to addressing our message to our captive Catholic audience. Don Alberione reminds us: “The thought, sentiment, aspiration of a true Pauline reflect the supernatural aspect of ‘super-temporality’: it goes not to the narrow confines of the family, diocese, or ground where the hierarchical church is established, or those already conquered for Christ. Onward! Always onward!: (CISP, 1073).

*“That they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me” (Jn 17:21).*



#### **4. IN DYNAMIC FIDELITY TO OUR CONSECRATION, ACCORDING TO THE PAULINE CHARISM**

*A creative fidelity to the charism which God has given us through our Founder.*

*Here is what humanity, the Lord, the Church, ask of each one of us today.*

*In order to rediscover our identity as consecrated persons, the fundamental values of our life.*

*In order to understand the greatness, the urgency, the prophetic obligation of our mission.*

*In order to be aware of the great gift of being a Pauline in complementarity, in the reciprocal gift of priesthood and Brotherhood.*

*In order to value more our being a Pauline Family.*



## CONSECRATED PERSONS

### 4.1 All men and women are called

*Called to life.* Every kind of call which a human being receives from God is wrapped in mystery. For sure, the call is always prompted by his love for us. To every human being born in this world and to those still to be born, the Lord can say: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you” (*Jer 1:5*). No one can boast before the Lord for any reason whatsoever, why he should be born into the world: it is his act of infinite love alone which calls a man or woman to life, each in a special way. However much we ask ourselves or we study, we shall never find an explanation, humanly possible, for our presence in the world: billions of other persons could have been born in our place. Our life, therefore, is not the casual result of some chemical reaction. God the Father has wanted all of us, each in a special way.

*Called to Christian life and to holiness.* The gift of Christian life, conferred by the Father to a part of the human race, is likewise a mystery. Jesus Christ came on earth for the salvation of the whole mankind, but only a small part came to know him: he can be known by pure grace, not on account of personal merits. St. Paul reminds us of this: “For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son” (*Rom 8:29*). What the Father awaits from Christians is a response of perfection, whatever state the believer is in. Paul writes to the Christians in Colossae: “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another... And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection” (*Col 4:12-14*). Every Christian, making the gifts received bear fruit through the accomplishment of his daily duties, ought to advance through a lively faith, faith which enlivens hope and works through love... All the faithful of Christ are invited and tasked to pursue holiness and the perfection of their state (*LG 41, 42*).

*Called to a special following of Christ and to a specific contribution to the building up of the Kingdom.* From those called to Christian life, the Divine Master invites a number of his disciples to a special kind of following: some are called to follow him in the priestly ministry, to renew daily the sacred ministries for the benefit of the whole people of God, others (priests and lay) are invited by him to follow him in the way of the evangelical counsels. While the call to married life, sign of God’s love for his Church, assures the accomplishment of the divine command for the continuity of the human race (*Gen 1:28*), the call to priesthood perpetuates the means of grace needed by the faithful to be true to their Christian vocation.

The practice of the evangelical counsels, embraced under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit, gives in the world an outstanding witness and example of the holiness of the Church (*LG 39*). All Christians, by virtue of baptism, are called to announce the message of Christ: the religious, united in a special way to the Church through the evangelical counsels, are called to work in the forefront, according to the power and form of apostolate of their own Institute, be it through prayer or action, to implant and strengthen the Kingdom of Christ in souls and to extend that Kingdom to every clime (*LG 44*).

The Pauline is, first and foremost, a person called. From the strength of this conviction, much depends: the integral progress of the person, his self-giving, his fundamental joy, his apostolic creativity, and his coherence. Even the choice—Priesthood or BROTHERHOOD—in the Pauline religious life is above all the answer to a call.

## 4.2 Theology of consecrated life

**Frame of reference.** — The frame of reference which allows us adequately to locate the theme of *consecration*, above all that of *religious consecration*, is the *following of Christ*: the evangelical following of Jesus. Christ personally calls persons to live with him and with his fellows (fraternal life in community), to live as he did, sharing and continuing his mission of preaching the gospel (*Eph* 1:3-14).

**The word consecration.** — It expresses both the act of *consecration* as well as of *being consecrated*. “To consecrate,” in theological sense, is fundamentally the same as “to sanctify,” “to divinise,” “to make sacred,” to “sacrifice.” The terms imply putting in relation or relating directly with God, introducing or being introduced in the sphere of the Sacred, of the Divine.

**Juridical and theological meaning.**— In *juridical* sense, the term consecration points to any type of relationship with God or of reference to him, applied indistinctively to things, places or persons. It is a dedication to a cult and to service of God, more than a giving to God himself. “Consecration” in *theological* sense, instead, implies and is a strictly personal relationship with God. It is a direct and immediate reference to him, applicable only to a person. It is a real transformation of the person, a true configuration with Christ, a sanctification.

**Christ, the Consecrated One.** — Christ is by definition the *Anointed, the Consecrated, the Messiah*: “He whom the Father consecrated and sent to the world” (*Jn* 10:36). In him, the strictly theological concept of consecration is realized, because he is God-made-man, that is, the absolutely Holy who assumes the human nature in order to bring it to the sphere of the divine.

**Baptismal consecration** — Through baptism God makes us his sons through the Son and in him makes us Brothers of all men and women. God truly *consecrates us*, configuring us with the Consecrated One in his divine sonship and in his universal Brotherhood. Our whole Christian life is and should be an uninterrupted process of growth in this double filial and fraternal condition. This consecration constitutes and defines the identity and the proper and cannot be given up mission of the Christian in the world.

**Religious consecration.** — Religious consecration is *grace*. For this reason, it is a divine action which transforms man in his being and in his action. Through religious consecration, God configures the Christian with Jesus Christ himself in the essential dimensions of his human project of life: chastity, poverty, and obedience. In fact, the so-called evangelical counsels are not simply “edifying examples” or virtues of Jesus, but his vital and total choice of life: he lived chastity-poverty-obedience as an expression of total and full giving of himself to the Father and to the brethren. Religious life as profession through public vows, is a true consecration: through this profession, God confers on the Christian a new and special consecration, configuring him with Jesus in these three essential dimensions of his life. This is a consecration that is rooted in the baptismal consecration and brings it to fullness. Through the religious profession, the person, in his totality, is consecrated, offered to God, and is possessed and sanctified by God. The trilogy of the evangelical counsels wants to express really the totality of the human person.

**The consecrated Pauline.** — Don Alberione himself explains why he wanted a *religious* congregation and not simply a Catholic organization. The reasons are given in AD 23-24:

\* to lead the members to the loftiest perfection (through the evangelical counsels and the apostolate).

\* cohesion, stability, continuity and supernatural sense of the apostolate.

\* total dedication

\* pure doctrine

\* integral love of God with the whole mind, strength and heart.

Even if the “instrumental” reasons in view of the apostolate seem to prevail here, in reality, the more profound motivations are evident: the journey of the *sequela Christi* and the total configuration with Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life in the integral offering of the whole person (mind, will, heart).

### 4.3 Primary goals: holiness and evangelisation

Having a clear idea of the finality of their being and action, the first generations of Pauline lived their consecration with enthusiasm. “From the very first days, we were aware of his intentions, to which he wished to lead us... The Founder wanted to found a religious Congregation which would multiply with new means the pastoral work of priests, of parish priests, of the bishops” (*Quaderni di spiritualità*, n. 4, 1981, p. 14). “We no longer belonged to ourselves, we felt we belonged to God, tied to Him and to the good press. Our life was and felt like only one. We among ourselves: we with the Father, united, joined together, not students of a school but members of one organism, first living stones of a magnificent building” (Excerpts from the *Diario del Signor Maestro don Timoteo Giaccardo*, p. 17). To know well the meaning and value of one’s being and action strengthens fidelity and assures perseverance in any undertaking.

*The Constitutions and Directory* (art. 2) express our goals:

1. “the perfection of charity of its members,” which is equivalent to holiness understood also as living fully Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life, in order to give him to the world;
2. “the evangelisation of humankind through the apostolate by the means of social communication.”

These goals are pursued “though the spirit and the practice of the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, and fidelity to the Pope, in common life.” The Pauline finds the meaning of his being and action in these two basic principles of his life. These are the lighted beacons for the journey towards the future, without which there would be darkness.

For the Pauline, **holiness remains to be the first preoccupation of life**. In it his being and action find harmony and unity. The Pauline understands holiness as allowing Christ to live in him, giving his very self to Christ as a response to the love of God who has loved him first.

**The evangelisation of men and women through the instruments of social communications** is the mission entrusted to the Pauline, his very apostolate, and the way by which he responds to the love of God and expresses his love for the neighbour.

Living fully these primary goals, the Pauline assumes his proper charismatic personality and his apostolate. In his being and action, they become a unique experience of being intimately related to Christ, so as to say: “It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me” (*Gal 2:20*).

In the light of these goals, we can see more clearly the identity and the dual expression of the Pauline: All, Priests and BROTHERS, are called by God to the same goal.



## 4.4 Prophetic character of the religious vows

The Pauline religious are distinguished, other than through their vow of fidelity to the Roman Pontiff, by the way they highly live the three vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. Thus, looking intently through the specific Pauline charism, the vows appear in a new garment and assume for the Church a prophetic character.

Let us examine them one by one.

*Chastity.* — Chastity, like the whole Pauline life, also asks for integrality of love, or the fruit of an education or of formation which had led the person or the community to the development of all personal wealth: “All human gifts of our body and our spirit, and all our personal relationships with all human beings” (see *Constitutions* 26). In this sense, what the Constitutions say in chapter 3 on *Community of Life* enters in the vow of chastity, helping us to rethink the testimony of “agape,” of reciprocal fraternal love which flows over to the rapport of Priests and BROTHERS, and to the exercise of being “altrice” on the part of the Society of St. Paul as regard the whole Pauline Family.

To the common aspects is therefore joined the “extraordinary fecundity and apostolic paternity” which applies our energies to the direction of the double “triad of reference” (the *Trinity* and the *Family of Nazareth*); let alone the non-underlining of the aspects of the necessary “renunciation” and the explicit “witness of joy and serenity” which finds its motivation in the finding of the “buried treasure” (*Mt* 13:44 and *Const.* 32).

*Poverty.* — Along with piety, study and apostolate, this virtue is one of the pillars of Pauline life, or better, one of the “wheels” which move what the Pauline transmits to the man of today. This implies a total and creative surrender of self to God and to the Congregation. It means full and diligent dedication. The “fruit of labor” of the Pauline is immediately offered to God as testimony to the precious “uselessness” of the true servant of God. To the “fruit of labour” is also joined the personal will, “sacrificed” on the altar of apostolic, communitarian work for the people of God. The appreciation of time, concentration of energies, creativity, a life given... are all aspects which become prayer in the “secret if success.”

*Obedience.* — Turned to God, to the superiors, to the pastors of the Church, the Congregation searches for the will of God with respect to the community (*Const.* 43). This requires a listening heart that is attuned to the Spirit and to one’s Brothers who are the Spirit’s voice. In explicit reference to the apostolic activity, this needs avoiding passive submission, or even worse, servility or disinterest. It asks of a person to “put his whole being” to what he does, because to serve God is to reign (*Const.* 41). For the Pauline, to obey means to “collaborate,” to “dialogue with the community,” to give of oneself based on one’s real capacity and competence (“active and responsible obedience”), to accept with joy the decisions taken.

Each vow plays a special role in the daily witnessing, putting to question the “values” of the world: a greater and definitive love, a well-exercised and generous freedom, a wealth totally capable of “doing everything for everyone.”

Don Alberione teaches: “To the young Paulines, insist above all on integral education: natural and supernatural, mind-heart-body, for the present life and for the future Pauline life; acquisition of docility together with the capacity to rule over one-

*self; for a universal love, to make oneself chaste; for the ineffable wealth, to make oneself poor; to guide people, to make oneself obedient. Religious chastity is true love, poverty is true wealth, obedience is to enjoy true freedom” (CISP, p. 762).*

## 4.5 Fraternal life in community

“For us, life in common stems from the apostolate and in view of the apostolate. This type of society characterized by a purpose includes, to be sure, the common good of the members; at the same time, however, the very observance of conventual life has an organization which takes into account the fact that ‘we are at the service of people’s souls’: we are religious-apostles” (*UPS I*, 285).

The vision of life in community in view of the apostolate, as the Founder transmitted to us in the above words, enriched further by the ecclesiology of communion born of the Council, is also present, in substance, in the other teachings of Don Alberione. The document *Vita Consecrata* teaches us: “In community life, it should in some way be evident that, more than an instrument for carrying out a specific mission, fraternal community is a *God-enlightened space* in which to experience the hidden presence of the Risen Lord” (cfr. n. 42). And *Fraternal Life in Community* teaches: “The love of Christ has united... a great number of disciples, because like him and thanks to him, in the Spirit, they could respond to the love of the Father, loving him with the whole heart, with the whole soul, and with the whole strength, and loving the neighbour as oneself. Of these disciples, those united in religious communities, women and men of every nation, race, people or language, were and still are a particularly eloquent expression of this sublime and limitless Love. Born ‘not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man’s decision but of God’ (*Jn 1:13*), of a divine calling and of a divine attraction, the religious communities are a living sign of the primacy of the Love of God which shows its marvels, and of the love for God and for the brethren, as it was manifested and practiced by Jesus Christ” (cfr. n. 1) The witness of the Love of God is the first reason of life in common for all religious, a witness that needs to manifest itself in the exercise of the apostolate.

From this premise, we deduce that the Pauline common life must be characterized by communitarian apostolate, fraternal collaboration, friendship, availability and mutual help, constant attention to the Brother (*Const.* 15). These dispositions are the base for fruitfully operating and for giving maximum value to the instruments proper to a Pauline community: daily Eucharist, Eucharistic Visit, common meals, time for programming the apostolate and time for personal and communitarian growth, time dedicated to cultural and spiritual updating, verification moments and time to relax..., in the course of the year, to program retreats and spiritual exercises.

These moments lived intensely must be a constant characteristic of all communities, independent of geography, history or culture. They are elements of life which should never be wanting, but should be inculturated in the various regions for a better realization of the charism. All communities must have a style of life which they should embrace in common, like the same “trademark” which we reproduce in our apostolic products.

Two other elements in our community which should express the wealth and unity of our vocation and its dual expression are:

- daily and concrete trust and reciprocal esteem,
- constant effort of every community to promote vocations.

*“Life in community in the religious sense depends on the nature of the society, whether it is called congregation, institute, or religious family. It is always an association of people who want to help one another in the pursuit of holiness... It requires*

*a commitment and emulation in spiritual progress. Common life which is displayed especially in assistance in old age and sickness, in death and in suffrages. It is something alive, not a machine; but the individual is at the service of all, and all are at the service of the individual” (UPS I, n. 284).*

## SENT

### 4.6 Men of communion

“Creating the human being in his own image and likeness, God created him for communion. God the Creator revealed himself as Love, Trinity, communion, has called man to enter into intimate rapport with Him and into interpersonal communion, that is, to universal Brotherhood. This is the highest call of man: to enter in communion with God and with other human beings, his Brothers and sisters” (VFC 9).

Man has a communitarian call; in his innermost nature he is a social being: unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential (GS 12d). John Paul II, in his apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Inuente* (n. 43) applies this reality on the ecclesial level, calling the Church to become a school of communion that she may be faithful to the plan of God and may answer to the profound expectations of the world.

The extraordinary Synod of Bishops of 1985, basing itself on the teaching of Vatican II, emphasized that the ecclesiology of communion is the foundation of the order in the Church and of a correct relationship between unity and plurality of forms within her (IL 66).

Paul’s image of the Church as a body (Rm 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:12ff; Eph 4:4) shows both the unity and diversity of her members. *The Church is a communion, founded on her sacraments, ministries and charism*: many are the gifts of the Spirit and therefore diverse are the ministries and functions of the members of the Church; all, however, are united by the action of the one Spirit (IL 67). Love constitutes the determinant fundamental principle of the genuine novelty in the life of the Church and in the operative interdependence of every authentic charism (IL 67).

Ecclesial communion is the central and fundamental idea of the documents of the Council. This permits the understanding of the presence and mission of consecrated life within the organic communion of the Church, which is not uniformity, but a gift of the Spirit who is present in the variety of charisms and states of life. These will be all the more helpful to the Church and her mission the more their specific identity is respected (VC 4).

The congregations should not act as if they are independent from each other. Their mission asks them to take into account the needs of the universal Church and the diocese where they find themselves. They should also relate with one another, agree with one another, decide together, and at times group together, unite with one another.

Regarding this spirit of communion, Don Alberione writes in *Catechismo Sociale* (n. 30): “*Man has the right to form a society because God created the human being social, in need of others, and has granted him the orientation to integrate his insufficiency in society in order to arrive at his perfection.*”

The Founder writes further: “*Sociability is an essential quality for one who wants to enter a society, much more a religious society. It constitutes a positive sign of vocation, just as non-sociability constitutes a fundamental impediment and is a clear sign of lack of vocation.*”

*For the Pauline, sociability asks for:*  
*respect for common life, in the religious family: towards the Brothers, the Superiors, the subjects;*  
*respect for other religious Families;*  
*respect for other Pauline Congregations;*  
*respect for individual believer or a group;*  
*respect for the citizens, subjects and officials;*  
*respect for the whole human family;*  
*respect for the whole Church: militant, suffering, triumphant” (CISP, p. 1063).*

Sociability is a constitutive element of the Pauline identity: in order to be a “man of communication,” the Pauline must, above all, be a “man of communion.” Conflicts at all levels, are fundamentally traceable to lack of communion; they arise from immaturity in this essential dimension of the life of the Congregation and of the Church.

In the course of verification and evaluation of the various stages of formation, it is necessary to give importance to the level of sociability of the candidates.

## 4.7 Open to the world of communication

Communication was, be it at the time of the foundation or during the successive evolution, the characteristic element of the apostolic anxiety of Don Alberione. At the beginning, the forces revolved around the *apostolate of the press*; then the *apostolate of the editions* was assumed. To it would be progressively incorporated the moving pictures, radio, records, television. In the end, under the influence of Vatican II, Don Alberione would speak of the *apostolate of social communications*. The change of names to indicate the Pauline apostolate expresses the conviction of Don Alberione: “*The fastest and most efficacious means for the apostolate.*”

Communication, understood as invention and perfection of technology, as variety of languages, and as a complex social phenomenon, has undergone great changes in the last two centuries: from communication considered from the level of *individual instruments* for communication, we passed to communication considered in its globality as a true *culture*. We are arriving fast at a model and means of communication which can simultaneously be massive and personal (satellite communication or through cables, personal communication through internet), which can make of humanity a “global village” or reduce it to a colourless and anonymous grouping. “Dot communication” (communication through internet) is widely diffused, with linguistic codexes and its own economic mechanisms, and asks for an updating in both forms of expression and structures of operation.

A new humanity is on the rise today with the mass media. If we want to communicate with today’s people, we must learn the language of today’s media (images, sounds, movements, virtual reality, inter-activity); the generations are being educated and are communicating through them. If we don’t learn the new languages of communication, we shall be speaking with them with yesterday’s language. It is a deceiving danger, writes Don Alberione, “*to wait to be interested in the press, motion pictures, radio, television when they are already organized by adversaries. We need the preventive method...*” (CISP, 806).

Considering the reality and the complexity of the world, the Congregation is asked to mobilize globally for a “creative fidelity” to all aspects of life and of mission: spirituality, formation, apostolate, community life, and authority.

Because communication, by the explicit and repeated will of the Founder, is not a simple means but a new form of preaching of the whole Christ, it is necessary that in the initial, specialized, and ongoing formation, communication itself be assimilated by the Pauline in its complexity: technology, languages, profession, culture.

If the Congregation wishes to have in the Church also a pioneering role in communication at the service of evangelisation, it is necessary to promote initiatives to “think” of communication as culture and inculturation of faith in communication: “*The radical changes of communication should not leave the Paulines indifferent, neither in their apostolic activity nor in spirituality, which motivates their mission with supernatural value. Creative fidelity is not exhausted by considering the computer as a “new machine” which communicates to be adopted for the betterment of the apostolate. The computer is only the top of the iceberg of technology-communication as culture*” (GMIOS, p. 564).

We should therefore speak of the **apostolate of social communication** understanding communication in its vast sense, which includes technology which is being perfected, miniaturized, pervasive and inevitable, but which configures as a true culture in itself. This inevitably brings us to widen our **mentality** in order to embrace and insert ourselves without fear in the **culture of communication**. Thus, we can be faithful to the mandate which the Church has given us, “to do the charity of truth” (*7th SSP General Chapter, 2M*).

## 4.8 Contents and recipients of the mission

The specific aspect of our mission, which forms part of our identity and of our witness, is exercised not only in the choice of the means which we put at the service of evangelisation, but also in the choice of contents and the recipients. A firm and illuminating point, in this regard, was made in the conclusion of the International Seminar of Pauline Editors (Ariccia-Milan, 17 September—2 October 1988).

Putting at the base pastorality, globality and contemporaneity which ought to characterize the Pauline apostolate, the choice of contents includes, in the first place, Sacred Scriptures (the whole for all), catechesis, liturgy, theology and, in general, “whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious” (*Phil* 4:8). We must, however, always bear in mind what serves the total liberation of the person, the integral promotion of the human values, the universal Brotherhood and the inter-religious dialogue and dialogue with the different cultures.

With regard the recipients of our apostolate, these are all the social categories of persons, with a special preference for the great masses, without putting aside those far-off, the poor, those excluded; at the same time, we should put to realization the dream and the indications of the Founder: “*Love all, think of all, work with the spirit of the Gospel which is universality and mercy. Venite ad me omnes*” (*UPS* IV, 117-118). This “think of all” requires, however, a clear knowledge of the various social levels, of the different categories of persons to whom we turn. The Founder never succumbed to a universalism without distinction. The proofs of his preoccupations that our “big parish, the world” might take a precise account of the diverse categories of recipients, are abundant. Here is an example: “*Toward graded order in our publications: first, to serve the clergy, children, youth, the masses and those who exert greater influence over them, such as teachers; then the missions, social questions, the intellectuals, etc.*” (*AD* 69). In these last years, the number of social categories which may be called new, has been increasing, and so has the number of those who are forgotten and even excluded. We should be thinking of all.

The coverage of our mission asks of us an open heart and a consistent preparation, along with a great capacity for inventiveness.

In a meditation given to the Annunciationists of the early beginnings, Don Alberione thus invited them to an apostolic creativity: “*The Pauline Family accepts all pastoral activities, praises all, encourages them, sustains them. In whatever area one can do good, all the initiatives which have the approval of the Church and which serve the salvation of souls, all that is good, nothing is excluded. In fact, it is good to come out with new initiatives, even as new evils and so much disorder are being invented*” (*MCS* 483).



## 4.9 Our apostolate is preaching: Attention to the “languages”

Preaching (proclamation, evangelisation) is first made with one’s life, with example. But the love which Don Alberione nurtured for all peoples of the world brought him, drawn by the Spirit, to widen the horizon and to use the means which more effectively permit him to put into realization the command of Christ: to bring the gospel to every creature.

*“By ‘apostolate of the edition’... we understand a true mission which can appropriately be defined: ‘preaching the divine word through the means of the edition.’ ‘Preaching the divine word’ or proclamation, evangelisation of the gospel, of the truth which saves. Preaching to be done in every time and place, according to the divine precept: ‘Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature’ (Mk 16:15)... Preaching which is nonetheless original, made through the edition. Like oral preaching, that which is written or printed spreads the word of God, multiplying it, that it may precisely reach every place, even what one cannot reach or where one cannot keep the word unaltered” (AE 12-13).*

These words of Don Alberione, later confirmed by Vatican Council II, give us the key to understanding his apostolic works, which at times is indicated as “the charity of truth”: a doable charity which is translated into written words, printed, illustrated, in order to arrive in an efficacious way to the most number of persons. The gospel proclamation should not fear the means but use them to the maximum for human and spiritual growth of the people.

The intuition of Don Alberione, which should bring us to examine ourselves and to be enthusiastic about the future, not only means “going out of the sacristy,” but using also the means which were looked upon with diffidence by the official Church. This intuition, this searching should continue also today with the one goal of bringing to all, through the most efficacious and complete means, the saving Word, a preaching which is hope for the man of our time.

The parish-world (or the *parish of the Pope* as Don Alberione would express it) waits from the new pulpits this proclamation which, in order to be understandable, should use the language of the age of communication in which we live. A language which is always new and continues to evolve, just as the means which carry them are always new and are evolving. We have perhaps to reflect on whether it is the means that “create” the new laws of communication or whether, vice versa, it is our desire to communicate, innate in man, to “invent” new means to spread and diffuse one’s thought.

Language in itself, however, needs content, otherwise it remains to be a technical exercise. This is the reason why Don Alberione systematized, in a precise manner and with a rigorous language, also the content of the Pauline preaching, starting always from the Bible, from the Magisterium and from Tradition, until one understands every useful element of human and spiritual growth of man, seen in his integrality. *“Because the souls do not go to God all in the same manner, and they have more individual needs, the apostle should learn from his model the art of ‘being everything for all men’ and that elasticity of adaptation which is seen in the Apostle, in his various ways of dealing which men according to physical, intellectual, moral, religious and civil conditions” (AE 37).*

The total Christ, the whole of man, for all men and women.

## 4.10 The Pauline “writer”

*The Pauline “writer”* (understood in the wider sense of author, elaborator of contents, and therefore also editor, creative writer...) is identified with *a person who, by natural inclination, professional competence, vocation, charism and valorisation on the part of the Congregation* brings out from his treasure both old and new things for common use—because nothing is given to us for ourselves alone—knowing that he himself is a word not completely said. The first book and the first article that he puts at other’s disposition is his humanity: “the whole man.”

In as much as he is *Pauline* (Priest-Disciple), he lives, gives witness and writes—according to fitness, choice and competence—for all categories of persons, on all problems, all facts: reality which he ponders upon in the light of Jesus Christ Master and Shepherd, Way and Truth and Life, penetrating with the Gospel the thought and knowledge of man, not dealing only with religion, but with all things in a Christian way. “All” and “whole” are terms which are not understood in massive form, but personally: all and whole are joined, but every person or other realities as seen as original and unique (Paul VI, *EN 45*).

The Pauline “writer” is formed in the universal and ecumenical spirit of St. Paul, in a perspective which includes not only those who are near, but also those outside and far-off in a more urgent and ample sense, asking “the great problem: where this humanity which always renews itself on the face of the earth journeys, how it journeys, and towards what goal.” Therefore, even if some people have tried to understand and dilute “all” and “whole” by an unqualified “tuttismo,” the Pauline “writer” “sees” all realities and the whole reality with the eyes—but, above all, with the mind and heart—of God, who loves “beyond time and space”—but always in a personal way—you and me, united with other persons.

The Pauline “writer” performs his apostolate in the Pauline editorial organization. “Being a Pauline does not necessarily make us good writers,” wrote Fr. Gambi. “I wish with all my heart that one day a legion of Pauline writers will be able to write well and so put into our publications more numerous, but above all, more books of quality which we may not have today” (see internal bulletin of the Collegio Internazionale Paolino, *Noi e gli altri*, 15 December 1968, pp. 9-10).

What sustains the Pauline “writer” in the fatigue is the imponderable urgency and “hunger of souls.” The Pauline “writer” gives all in order to offer other possibilities to people who want to be nourished by Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life, and by the Gospel, not just the printed one, obviously, but one made flesh in his life and writing: “If Jesus Christ is the unique and perfect health, it is necessary to look for it in him alone. A great part of the world today lacks material bread. There is even more lack in spiritual bread which Jesus Christ has brought us from heaven, which is he himself: ‘I am the bread of life’” (Alberione, *Pensieri*, Rome 1972, p. 40).

Since his field of apostolate is evangelisation through social communications, it is natural for the Pauline to assume the physiognomy of a communicator of the masses. As “writer” the Pauline has to know the contents of the Gospel message, how to elaborate them in order to communicate them. The recipients vary from the most erudite to the simple ones, from rich to poor; they are of different nationalities and languages, of diverse cultures and social conditions, etc.

Because of this, the Pauline has need of information and instructions, without falling in superficiality, even if not proper of specialists, at least in all fields of human knowledge. A vast culture is expected of him. It is not necessary, but neither is it precluded, that a Pauline becomes an expert in a given field. But it is necessary for him to know how to treat all possible topics that interest his recipients.

The requested elaboration consists first of all in observing, judging and evaluating the subjects in the light of the Gospel and in knowing how to communicate the themes so that the recipients may understand and apply them into their own lives.

For the Pauline, true evangelisation is to let Christ live among the recipients, that is pass on to them the way of thinking, judging and loving—from the “old man” born in sin to the “new man” born in Christ.

*For a more ample reflection, turn to Appendix no. 7.*

## 4.11 The Pauline as a “prophet”

Inasmuch as he is baptized and he lives the life of religious consecration (*LG* 44), the Pauline possesses and lives a prophetic dimension of life.

The prophet is a **man sealed by a strong and unique experience** of God. He lives a life which “marks” him in a symbolic way, other than visible, as one separated for God, seized by him, and at his total disposition (*Jer* 1:4-10). He is a **man of the Spirit**: the Spirit puts in his heart love which guides and moves him, directing him to men (*Is* 61:1-3). He is a **man of the Word**, a word which in him becomes effective, alive, incarnated, free (*Ez* 3:3-10). He is a **man who listens** to all the signs of the times, which he interprets evangelically (*Mic* 3:1-12). He possesses a **sense of history**: he is capable of getting involved in historical events, he knows the contradictions of the human heart, how to anticipate with intuition the fecund turn of events, and human hopes (*Hos* 1:2-8). His is a **life given to others**.

In our post-industrial society, man thirsts for values, hope, visible charity, and he desires being sustained, accepted for who he is and not for what he has... We Paulines, with prophetic spirit, need to learn how to perceive these desires and **come out** with new means **to proclaim** the “good news,” and thus **illumine** the choices of life of our contemporaries. Without coming less to the task of **denouncing** with courage the modern slavery (indifference, solitude, anonymity, emulation...) **to correct** with charity but with clarity. We should be like the sower who prepares the land through hard work, throws the seed and lets it die in the field and waits for the new growth that sprouts and bears new fruit. It is the capacity to sow an idea, a proposal, a value; of starting an evolution; of maintaining hope alive; of knowing to wait when and how it occurs... **And perhaps not to see the fruits...**

Before a scarcity of vocations, we can be prophets also within our community and... **sow**. Without waiting for immediate results. But with the certainty that we are not working for ourselves but labouring in the field of God.

And we cannot put aside that special task which Don Alberione left to his sons and the Church and which we find towards the end of *AD*, in the chapter entitled “Things to be achieved.” There the Founder expounds one of his dreams which he did not yet see realized: the unification of all the sciences in Christ. We re-read numbers 185-189 of *AD* and then, in confirmation of the validity and actuality of the task that they enclose, we read numbers 83 and 85 of the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* of John Paul II. Here is a passage from the encyclical: “*I wish to affirm strongly the conviction that the human being can come to a unified and organic vision of knowledge. This is one of the tasks which Christian thought will have to take up through the next millennium of the Christian era.*”

*Regarding Pauline as a “prophet,” see also outline 3.3*



## 4.12 A new “creativity of charity”

In *Novo Millennio Inuente*, John Paul II urgently calls our attention to the many needs which demand a compassionate response from Christians. “Our world is entering the new millennium burdened by the contradictions of an economic, cultural and technological progress which offers immense possibilities to a fortunate few, while leaving millions of others not only on the margins of progress but in living conditions far below the minimum demanded by human dignity.” And after describing the scenario of traditional forms and newer patterns of poverty, the Holy Father calls for a new “creativity” in charity to ensure that help is effective and to “get close” to those who suffer (cfr. *NMI* 50).

Don Alberione said in 1961: “*Like in times past when, in general, soup was being distributed at the doors of convents, and bread was and is still being distributed in many places, so at the doors of convents truth must be distributed. That which man needs: to know God, to know his eternal destiny*” (*Pr A*, p. 193). And in *The Publishing Apostolate* (1944), he teaches: “*The apostle who undertakes this [promotion] must be like the Good Shepherd who, knowing the faithful flock is safe, goes out and risks his own life for the lost sheep. Consequently, the apostle’s preferences are to be for the outcasts of society; for his adversaries; for the impoverished, and for those hesitant to feed on the bread broken from the pulpit for the mass of the faithful; for heathens, who are uninformed about the true God or the work of Redemption or the Gospel; for those whose faith is undermined by the evil actions of the emissaries of Satan, the world, and the flesh, and by the teachings of the press and the worldly maxims... for the irresolute and for those caught up in the concerns of government, responsibility and work. He must be the good angel who reminds everyone of their eternal destiny and the ways of salvation; the angel who speaks of heavenly things to those children of God whose concerns are with this world alone*” (n. 384).

In the Introduction to the *Ratio studiorum* of the Society of St. Paul (*UPS II*, 195), *Eph 4:15* is cited in reference to the unification of the natural and supernatural sciences in one complete body which has Jesus Christ as its head, to whom every man must render homage just as he must love his fellow men, in accordance with the saying ‘*veritatem facientes in charitate*’... The “truth in love” obliges every Pauline to live his mandate with joy and creativity.

True love (*agape*) is always full of creativity. To have an idea, it is enough to see a family drawn to a project. We are the Pauline Family. We cannot say that the Founder lacked creativity when he called us together. It is up to us now to enkindle the flame of this creativity: that which is feminine, lay, praying, missionary... This involves embracing the love of God and letting his Spirit work in us. Creativity and Pauline complementarity.

The Pauline is therefore invited to work with two criteria constantly activated in a complementary way, that of *truth* and that of *love*: he should not be content with “hearsays,” with the hypothesis of the masses; but neither with opinions that are not completely true, with adjustments in favour of a vision only of a part

This asks also for a proper consideration of what the vow of obedience asks of the Pauline. If on one hand it requires him to remove every kind of polemics from his search (*in charitate*), on the other hand it requires him never to judge by appearances,

but through a hard search for the truth of Christ, illumined by the Spirit which scrutinizes the profundity of God.

In sum, this was the attitude of Paul in accomplishing his tasks.

## AS PAULINE BROTHERS AND PRIESTS

### 4.13 One identity and mission: dual expression in ministering

In article 2 of our Constitutions we read: “The Society of St. Paul is a religious clerical Congregation of apostolic life. It sets as its goal for its members the perfection of charity—to be attained through the spirit and practice of the vows...” In article 4, we also read: “The members of the Society of St. Paul, priests and Brothers, profess the same religious vows. They form a community of life, prayer and apostolate. They are governed by the same norms, they share in the same spiritual benefits, and they have common rights and duties with the exception of those deriving from the sacrament of Order.” The principal goal of every Pauline, Priest and BROTHER, is his own sanctification.

Being a Priest or a BROTHER in the Society of St. Paul is a question of vocation, depending upon the call of God, and in every call there is a big space for mystery. The fundamental dimension of every vocation, however, is to become a saint by doing the will of God: “Becoming a saint does not depend on doing one thing or another; it depends on doing what is really the will of God for each one of us.” Be it the vocation to the Priesthood, or to the BROTHERHOOD, it has for basic parameter the search for the will of God for the specific individual.

When we think of the beauty and sublimity of our religious consecration which makes of us Paulines, **our attention should focus more on the goal** rather than the means to attain it. The call that the Lord made to each one of us, to be a Priest or a BROTHER, does not add to our importance or greatness. What counts is living our consecration to God as Paulines, as members of a Congregation the principal goal of which is sanctification, the perfection of charity.

Therefore, the Pauline is, above all, a person loved by God, called by him to proclaim Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life in every time, to all peoples, with the fastest means, according to the spirit of St. Paul and the mind of Don Giacomo Alberione. This charismatic identity of the Pauline is incarnated in the twofold expression: Priest-Brother.

Priest and BROTHER together constitute the Pauline; they are two “complementary and co-essential” elements. If one of the two expressions of Pauline identity is lacking, there is no more the Pauline as wanted by Don Alberione.

Bringing this affirmation to its most radical conclusion, we should say that in every community—save for real impossibility—we should give witness to both expressions of the Pauline vocation. We are aware that in some places this can be particularly difficult: but we should give assurance of giving this testimony in a short time possible.

An essential element, common to the Pauline BROTHER and Priest, is the religious consecration through the profession of the evangelical counsels. But there are other elements proper to the Priest and BROTHER that are also essential, such as, respectively, **the ministerial priesthood** and **the lay element** (see outlines 3.7 and 3.8).

Joined to these particularly essential gifts are specific duties that are not to be put aside, as, for example, the particular responsibility of animation and of sacramental service on the part of the Priest, and a particular participation of the BROTHERS in the task of reparation assigned by the Founder to the Congregation and to the whole Pauline Family.

Not secondary is the close relationship that should be present in the identity of the Pauline in as much as he is consecrated and the spirituality lived in all its dimensions, starting from one's proper condition as Priest or BROTHER. In the Society of St. Paul, to the gift of consecration, common to both Priests and BROTHERS, are added the gifts proper to one or other expression of being a Pauline. But neither the Pauline Priest nor BROTHER has his own gifts only for his own: giving each other their proper gift, the Priests and BROTHERS mutually constitute themselves *Paulines* (*Const. 5*).

#### 4.14 Understanding the complementarity

*“In its spirit and in its apostolate the Institute has a lot of novelty for its particular apostolic goal, for spirituality, for the union of Priests and BROTHERS” (CISP, p. 159).* This novelty referred to by the Founder on the occasion of the First Chapter of the Congregation (1957) was not dented but rather underlined and enriched by the teaching of Vatican II and subsequent reflections, in particular those dealing with the ecclesiology of communion and consecrated life.

Our actual *Constitutions*, definitively approved on 4 April 1984, states that “the union between Priests and BROTHERS... was seen by the Founder as one of the characteristics or ‘innovations’ peculiar to the Congregation” (see art. 5). The special rapport Priests-BROTHERS is a gift and as such should be lived and given witness to. First condition: understand well this complementarity.

The members of the Society of St. Paul—BROTHERS and Priests—have the same mission, and are “*united in the same apostolate*” (CISP, p. 159). From the very beginning, this was seen by the Founder as a true and official preaching, through the active presence of the ministerial Priesthood and the inseparable association of the BROTHERS to it.

The old outline “editorial-technical-diffusion” has undergone radical transformations and today there is need to re-read the Alberionian direction which entrusted the first phase to the Priest and the remaining two to the BROTHERS. Nowadays, it is admitted by everyone that “*there are no debarments or exclusive roles as regards our apostolic activity; orientation to such activity is to be based on aptitude, preparation and experience. All Paulines can carry it out in its various stages*” (Ratio Formationis, 21.1). Nonetheless, we should not undervalue but also deepen the meaning of the “typical space” recognized as proper to the Priest and that attributed to the BROTHERS (cfr. *Const.*, art. 5). If we consider these “typical spaces” not as excluding but as qualifying, we shall find greater light for appreciating and promoting all the more the orientations which are more consonant to the Pauline Priest and to the Pauline BROTHER, while standing firm on the non-exclusion of any one.

The union of Priests and BROTHERS is not only an operative fact, but a charismatic one. “*The Brother by himself is a worker, not a Pauline; the Priest by himself, even if he is a writer, is not a Pauline. Priest and BROTHER together, united in the same apostolate, are both Paulines,*” declares Don Alberione (CISP, p. 159). And the *Constitutions* declare: “the union... mutually constitutes them ‘Paulines’” (see art. 5). The ecclesiology of communion offers new light for better understanding this rapport between Priest and BROTHER. The variety of gifts at work in the Church are expressions of the graciousness of the Holy Spirit to all the members of the Mystical Body of Christ, for their unity and their mission in the world. One does not put more importance on the hierarchical dimension but rather on the reciprocal ministerial dimension, that is, on reciprocal service. Every charism and every particular gift must be received and shared, that is, put to the service of others in order to enrich the whole. To the gift of consecration—common to all Paulines, Priests and BROTHERS—are added particular gifts of one and other expressions of being a Pauline (see outline 3.7; 3.8; 4.13). The concept of complementarity should be well understood and practiced. It is more than a simple complement; it does not involve filling a lack, but a mutual conferment of a dy-

namic grace which provides, and to the Priest and BROTHER, gives the fullness of the Pauline identity.

Then if we take into consideration the theology of consecrated life, we shall discover other important aspects of the dynamism of reciprocity: for the choice—whether BROTHER or Priest—a call is needed. In the discernment, the particular inclinations which come from nature and grace count a lot (cfr. *UPS I*, p. 150). But the fact that vocation is a mystery remains always true; it is not a choice alone on the part of the person, but above all a choice on the part of God. And in the plan of God, there are so many particular graces at the service of the person called and of those he should journey with, sharing the same mission, and also at the disposal of the recipients of his apostolate.

Understanding and living the gift of complementarity of Priest and BROTHER is for us SSP members the first step in opening ourselves to the understanding and experience of the complementarity and reciprocity of gifts on the level of the Pauline Family.

## 4.15a The three phases of apostolate and the “typical space”

### *The “three phases” of apostolate in the vision of Don Alberione*

The apostolate of the editions “has three parts: editorial, technical, diffusion; but the three parts form one and only apostolate. The first part, the editorial, is proper for the Priest; the second and the third, that is, the technical and diffusion, are proper for the BROTHER. Priest and BROTHER united together in the editions merit therefore the name of Apostles” (UPS III, 127). “Necessary for the Institute are two thirds of BROTHERS and one third of Priests dedicated to the apostolate” (SP June-July 1966).

These are some of the affirmations of the Founder to which we usually refer; but for a correct interpretation of the roles of Priest and BROTHER in the Pauline apostolate in the thought and constant praxis of Don Alberione we need to refer also to other basic phrases: “writers, technicians, propagandists, but *religious ones*” (AD 23); and “...why not give to the BROTHER a sharing in the zeal of the Priest; give him a quasi-priesthood?” (AD 40).

The connection of “quasi-priesthood” of the BROTHER, of the Pauline sister and lay persons with the Pauline ministerial “priesthood” is motivated by the ecclesial vision prevailing at the time of Don Alberione. According to this vision, preaching belongs to the clergy and by nature hierarchical (Pope, bishops, priests); the lay persons have a marginal role and they “collaborate” in the measure that the Church hierarchy requires or recognizes it expressly. But Don Alberione’s full agreement with the ecclesiology of the time should not take us away from the original vision of Pauline apostolate he formulates: “With the name apostolate we intend a true mission that can be defined as preaching of the Word of God with the technical means through the edition... It is the announcement of the Good News, of the truth; therefore, it is a real evangelisation” (UPS III, 123). The “oral” preaching is entrusted to the priest; the “written” preaching, having the same dignity, is also entrusted to the priest.

### *A renewed ecclesiology*

Now we know that with the ecclesiology of Vatican II, a remarkable progress was made. It defines the Church as “People of God” (LG chap. II), speaks about “common priesthood of the faithful” (LG chap. IV), describes the nature of the “apostolate of the laity” (AA) and affirms that the commitment of the Church in the social media of communication is true “preaching” (IM 3, 13).

This new Church vision allows us to rethink with theological categories the motivations of Don Alberione on the relations between “quasi-priesthood” and “priesthood” in the realization of the Pauline apostolate understood as “real preaching.” It is no longer sustainable for *ecclesiological reasons* to maintain the division of roles in the Pauline apostolate as it was originally conceptualized by Don Alberione. The work in the editorial, technical, and diffusion is based on baptism and it is to be chosen and entrusted to people taking into account the natural gifts and professional capacity.

The centrality of the Pauline “ministerial priesthood”, on the other hand, is indispensable in affirming the “theological reasons” of the newness (cfr AD 110) of the Pauline charism: the editorial, technical, and diffusion are phases of the “written, audio-

visual, medial and multi-medial preaching” which has a “sacramental efficacy,” because it is the equivalent of “oral preaching”, not just a simple Catholic editorial activity. The “common” priesthood and the “ministerial” priesthood can be also applied to the originality of the unique Pauline vocation. The Pauline apostolate is “official” preaching, the exercise of the mission entrusted to the Church (see section 3.8).

### ***Rethink the “typical spaces”***

What has been said so far permits us to reconsider in a new way the so-called “typical spaces” elaborated by the special General Chapter of 1969-71 and carried in number 5 of our *Constitutions*.

First of all, we have to remember that **“typical space” does not mean “exclusive,”** but characteristic and inclusive. Moreover, that typical space is not to be determined only by apostolic activity as in number 5 of the *Constitutions*, but rather by the integrated and integral Pauline in the dual expression of Priest and BROTHER. The following section (4.15b) is an attempt of definition and elaboration of the “typical spaces.” It puts in the light spaces still unexplored and not yet fully understood and lived.

#### 4.15b Redefine and amplify the “typical spaces”

**The BROTHER** – Wanting to offer an exemplification about the BROTHER we could indicate at least the following points:

--in spirituality:

--**Reparation**: as Eucharistic imprint of prayer, as silent industry, as positive reparation (to promote the constructive use of the mass media) and negative reparation (to block the abuse of mass media with prayer and action.

--**Assimilation of the virtues of St. Joseph**: his silence, his industry, his care for the family of Nazareth, his trust in Providence.

*“Jesus Master is the restorer. This is his essential mission. He redeemed mankind from error, vice, sin, and death. He took upon himself the debts of the human race, carried them to Calvary, and washed them with his blood... The BROTHER repairs in three forms: with his life, with his piety, and with his apostolate. Thus the life of the BROTHER is inserted in the big river of reparation, the source of which is Jesus Christ” (CISP, 370).*

*“Like St. Joseph, they do a tiresome work to cooperate in the advent of the Kingdom of God” (CISP, 347).*

--in formation:

--The **heart**: a formation involving the heart. A more intense prayer. A self without pretension and a self that knows to resist temptation of money, honor, position; a self that serves and collaborates; a self that has passion for God and for the people.

--In the **period of formation**: need for the presence of the BROTHER among the aspirants; need for formative spaces proper for the BROTHERS; need for a specific and specialized formation for the spiritual life and for the apostolate.

--in the apostolate:

--**Preparation**: specialized in the sectors of communication, above all (but not exclusively) in the technical side of the apostolate as well as in marketing.

--**Collaboration**: with the Priest, the lay person, and attentive to the world of today.

*“The BROTHER has his own attitudes, energies, and mentality. It is important to study, guide, and uphold them... The care for the vocation of the BROTHERS is more difficult on some points than that of the aspirants for the priesthood. The BROTHER needs a piety made of practices that strike his fantasy, his eyes, his ears, the senses in general” (CISP, p. 88).*

**The priest** - Wanting to offer an exemplification about the priesthood (cfr. LG 28 and PO 1-6, 12-19), we could indicate the following spheres:

--in ministry:

--of the Word: to transmit the word of God, not his own; to enlighten with it the problems of the time; to invite the people to conversion and faithfulness.

--of **sanctification**, through the administration of the sacraments: the Eucharist, “source and summit of evangelisation” (PO 5); confession which reconciles men with God and with one another; Prayer of the Hours that prolongs during the day the Eucharistic praise.

--**Pastoral ministry**: for the guidance and moral formation of the people; for the unification of the people of God in the name of Christ, Head and Shepherd.

--*in sanctification*:

“Configured with Christ the Priest through the sacrament,” the priests have obligations to Christ and to themselves:

--To strive after perfection of life by virtue of the sacred actions they do, rendering their configuration with Christ effective; in docility to the Spirit; to be recognized as “ministers of Christ and dispensers of his mysteries.”

--To follow and imitate the Good Shepherd in the way of holiness: by meditating *on the word of God*, to preach it in a convincing manner; by living the *Eucharist and the sacraments* that they administer; by imitating the care and pastoral charity of Christ and the Apostles.

--*in the apostolate*:

--Greater attention and sense of responsibility regarding the contents; constant updating, pastoral vigilance, working contacts with the organs of the local Church, research and formulation of the contents with suitable language.

## AS PAULINE FAMILY

### 4.16 Belonging to the Pauline Family

“Be faithful to the unity that characterizes you together, as well as to that unity proper to each of your Institutes, thus maintaining the various physiognomies and promoting your respective charisms within the common and big Pauline Family”(Paul VI, Nov. 28, 1974).

Immediately after the memorable month of spiritual exercises (April 1960), Don Alberione expressed his satisfaction on the good result: “*Humanly speaking it could not be better; as to the spirit, it is divinely assisted: updating of our life vis-à-vis the Constitutions; updating of the Congregation in relation to the Pauline Family; programs for the recruitment and formation of vocations; review of the four wheels...*” (SP, April-May 1960; CISP p. 197). In that gathering, the interventions of the Founder regarding the Pauline Family were numerous and precise (cfr. UPS). Other important declarations are contained in AD 33-35.

The Special General Chapter (1969-71) took into serious consideration the peculiar charismatic unity of the Pauline Family and the role of *altrice* that the Society of St. Paul has. Belonging to the Pauline Family is considered as charismatic element of the Institute. It is part of the Pauline identity. Our Constitutions, as well as the Constitutions, rule of life or statute of the other Pauline institutions reaffirm it.

The *Unitary Project of the Pauline Family* elaborated by the Inter-congregational Study Commission on the Charismatic and Ministerial Identity of the Pauline Family: *To give to the world Jesus Christ Way, Truth, and Life* (March 19, 2001) is until now the most meaningful attempt made at the level of the religious Congregations of the Pauline Family to initiate a deep reflection on our identity as a Family and to bring this reflection to practical consequences in the mission.

Anticipating that which would be the ecclesiology of communion rediscovered by Vatican II and the reality that many religious institutes of old foundation are trying to revive and value such communion, our Founder indicated in the Pauline Family its ecclesial matrix: “*The Pauline Family mirrors the Church in its members, activities, apostolate and mission... One origin: Jesus Christ, Master, whom we do not consider in parts...but we have to take the integral spirit and life of Jesus Christ... Hence, the institutes have to live a common spirit with a colour that determines its particularity, but the general principles are all equal, that is, the spirituality is always in Jesus Christ, Way, Truth, and Life... what is basic is common to all parts of the Pauline Family. (...) We are reflected in the Church, more than reflected, life in the Church, in Christ and in the Church. Physical Christ, mystical Christ in the Church*” (*Retreat to Sister Disciples, 1963*), in *Unitary Project*, pp. 228-229, Italian edition).

We are aware that this aspect, highly prophetic for the Church, is still to be understood and, above all, lived by us, and should be a challenge for the new generations of the Pauline Family, together with the dual expression of the Society of St. Paul. They are models of communion indicated by the Founder in the light of Christ Way, Truth, and Life, which ask from us and from the whole Pauline Family that “Pauline competence to communicate” which the Church expects.



#### 4.17 Society of St. Paul as “altrice”

**In his writings and sermons.** Don Giacomo Alberione declared that his foundations were born as a “family” and as a family they have to stay united. To ensure this unity is a role assigned to the first-born Congregation, the Society of St. Paul, which he defines as “altrice” (from Latin *alere*, thus *altrix*), word that includes the meaning of being a *nourisher, mother and care-giver*). The role of *altrice* is explained in this way: “The Society of St. Paul is like a mother... The warmth and the vital light should come down from the Pauline priests, who have a noble and delicate ministry” (*UPS I*, 19-20). From here (SSP) is spread the spirit, organization of the various activities, the divine word that enlightens... (It) exercises a wide influence, comforts and sustains; it shows the way of salvation and holiness; it coordinates the actions from all parts through exhortations” (*UPS I*, 20; 375).

The role of *altrice* of the Society of St. Paul in the thought of Don Alberione consists, therefore, in “keeping the whole Pauline Family in the genuine spirit proper of the institution” (*Letter of Don Alberione to SCRIS*, 1.3.1956). In the Alberionian concept it is above all connected with the Priest: “*The priestly office is this: to be Teacher, Way, Truth, and Life*” (*CISP* p. 180). So the Pauline Priest nourishes, above all, the spirit, in particular with the devotion to Jesus Master, Way, Truth, and Life, which has the Eucharist as its vital center. “Everything flows from the Teacher in the Eucharist as from a life-giving spring. Born from the tabernacle, it is here that the Pauline Family finds its nourishment, its life, its way of working, its sanctification” (*UPS II*, 10). However, the exercise of ministerial priesthood is an important expression, but it is not the only role of the Society of St. Paul as *altrice*. In fact, “the Society of St. Paul is composed of Priests and Brothers” who together represent the direction of the pastoral work entrusted to the Pauline Family in the “parish of the Pope.” Such work is done by the Priests and Brothers, “*each one with his own role*” (*UPS I*, 375), that is, with his own specific assigned task, with his own talents, specialization, competence. If somewhere the Founder attributed to the BROTHERS a “quasi-priesthood,” here he reserves to them that function that later one will be said to be “complementary and co-essential” to that of the Priests (*Const.* 5). So, the role as *altrice* is exercised by the whole Society of St. Paul.

**In the actual interpretation.** Having acquired a greater awareness of self, the Pauline Family feels the demand to reflect on its being a Family *in the horizon of Church-communion*. We cannot speak of *altrice* without referring to the unity of the whole Pauline Family inserted in the unity of the Church, the People of God on journey. Composed of women and men in communion in the service of the Kingdom, the Pauline Family renders alive and working the charism of the Founder through a plurality of charisms. The Society of St. Paul exercises the role of *altrice* through the *service of unity, discernment, coordination of charisms, and ministerial animation*.

Such role as *altrice* is primarily concretised by the service done by the Superior General of the Society of St. Paul in relation to the whole Pauline Family (*Const.* 201-201.1). This services consists in promoting principally the unity of the Pauline Family in the diversity of the single institutes, respecting and valuing the charism of each one and the reciprocity man-woman. In particular, it is his competence:

- to keep mutual rapports with the general governments of the other Congregations of the Pauline Family;
- to convoke the general governments for the annual meeting;

--to gather the Superior Generals of the women Congregations to discern and to propose together initiatives of spiritual and apostolic animation in the level and for the benefit of the whole Pauline Family.

#### **4.18 The contribution of the BROTHERS in the role of “altrice”**

*Can we talk of the contribution proper of the BROTHERS in the role of “altrice”?*

The participation of the BROTHERS in the *altrice* role of the Society of St. Paul in the Pauline Family is not only possible but hoped for. It is based not only on the updated reinterpretation of the spirit of the Founder, but also on new ecclesiology, on the theology of religious consecration, on the charisms and co-responsibility for the evangelisation.

Here are some ways of participation:

1. *Ministry of unity-communion. The altrice role of the BROTHERS can be expressed:*
  - with exemplary life and through instructive and exhortative interventions;
  - with service of communitarian animation;
  - by organizing Pauline Family gatherings for particular occasions.
  
2. *Spiritual and apostolic animation:*
  - by giving classes, catechesis, conferences, retreats;
  - by sharing their vocation story and what sustains them in the mission;
  - by sharing their experiences in the fields of specialization, and in the various branches of their apostolate;
  - by effectively helping others in the spirit of Brotherhood in the Family.
  
3. *Animation of our specific charism inside the big “Pauline parish”:*
  - through an enlightened and competent creativity in the new horizons opened by the information technology;
  - by courageously leading the laity in christianising communication;
  - by being missionaries in the spirit of St. Paul.



## THE PAULINES OF TODAY AND OF TOMORROW: PROMOTION AND FORMATION

### 4.19 The positive signs of Pauline vocation: clarity in the call

We reaffirm the importance of the four indications that the Interchapter (New Delhi, Feb. 26-Mar 10, 2001) gave for the care of vocations.

1. The duty of all the circumscriptions, without exception, to draw up and apply a program on vocation care, entrusting the direct responsibility to one or more members, but involving all members: sensibility, prayer, example, availability to collaborate.

2. The courageous use of the media of communication to advertise vocation; the need of an attractive witness in the local Church and of a presentation of the Congregation as member of the Pauline Family.

3. The need to use new methodology and to go to new geographical areas and to approach people belonging to different cultural backgrounds.

4. The need to insert vocational care in other kinds of involvements like youth groups, without losing its objective.

To these principles we add other conditions that are already good in theory but poor in practice:

--Clarity and completeness in the presentation of the Pauline vocation, but with a particular attention to the choice of religious life; avoiding any stress that amounts to "clericalism."

--Promotion of vocational care in the field of ongoing formation.

--Insertion of both the BROTHERS and the Priests in vocational care. The exemplary life is always the most attractive.

--Recourse to the assistance of experts in vocational care.

Traditionally, and Don Alberione is no exception, there should be positive signs of vocation in the possible candidates. Not just generic signs, but signs suited to the Pauline religious life.

Among the positive signs Don Alberione gave due importance to moral, intellectual, physical, and psychological qualities of the candidate, together with equilibrium and sociability. Don Alberione indicated in some occasions the specific positive signs for the Pauline religious life in general and signs for priesthood or Brotherhood in particular. In this regard we find rich sources in the bulletin *San Paolo* (see *CISP*) and in the retreat of April 1960 (*cfr. UPS* and *Alle Famiglie Paoline, 1954*). Particularly important are the instructions V and VII of the first week in *UPS*.

A rereading of what Don Alberione said about positive signs for Pauline vocation should make us take into account the remarkable changes in society today, and thereupon, form certain criteria of accompaniment for Pauline vocations of today.



## 4.20 Integrality and specificity: substantial characteristics in formation

The formation of the Paulines should be “Christocentric”; the Founder also called it “unitary,” “complete,” and affirms that it must promote a “synthesis of life,” that is, a “balanced fusion of all the elements,” a “balanced and integral sanctity,” constituting a “new personality,” an “elevated personality,” the true “Pauline personality,” so that the Pauline becomes “in due proportions, also the way, the truth, and the life” (cfr. *UPS II*, 191-192).

“Vital synthesis,” “unity of life,” “integrality,” “totality of the person” are, in the Pauline vocabulary, equivalent concepts with which we refer to the full and balanced development of the Pauline personality, according to his own charism.

In the Special General Chapter (1969-71), the Congregation has taken this search of integrality or preoccupation for the “whole” bequeathed by the Founder as element of Pauline identity. The Chapter document affirms: “*Integrality is the focal point of the Pauline spirit: it has its center of emanation in the totality of Christ*” (n. 381). To this affirmation must correspond a particular pedagogy in the formative process in all levels. We therefore propose some practical criteria:

1. So that integrality be truly a substantial characteristic in the formative process, it should be taken not only as an objective, but most of all as a point of departure and as a methodological reference throughout the itinerary of the Pauline development. In fact, formation embraces all the aspects of the person: the man, the Christian, the religious..., and all the expressions of life: spirituality, study, spirit and practice of the apostolate, Brotherhood...

2. Since all the formative process and the various expressions of Pauline life flow in the mission (cfr. *Const.* art. 66), the promotion of integrality demands a constant dialogue between the formators and those responsible of apostolic activity.

3. The principle of integrality must be clear in the directions of the formative *iter* and of the apostolic projects of the circumscription, as well as in the testimony and accompaniment on the part of the direct formators and those responsible of apostolic activity.

4. To promote in all Paulines the spirit of integrality, the formators and animators of the communities should seriously undertake verifications and necessary orientations to avoid whatever focalization or partial, inarticulate, disproportionate, static attitude, and foster totality or completeness, unity and harmony, equilibrium and dynamism.

5. The promotion of integrality in formation should be something permanent. Only in this way the communities will be formative. The promotion of permanent integral formation is one of the most delicate duties of the superiors in the circumscription and of the directors of formation.

The completeness and equilibrium proper of integrality give its precise meaning and efficacy to the specificity of Pauline formation.

*For further reading on integrality, refer to the appendix no. 2*