



INTRODUCTION OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL TO THE PRESENTATION OF THE ACTS OF THE 2nd INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR OF PAULINE PUBLISHERS

The 2nd International Seminar of Pauline Publishers (2nd SIEP), held in Ariccia from 16 to 21 October 2017, was organized by the General Government (by the CTIA) to reflect on Pauline publishing, in view of the update, requested by X General Chapter¹, of the Document "Editorial Policies, Contents, Recipients of the Pauline Apostolate" (dated November 16, 2005).

The realization of the 2nd SIEP was opportune, not only to respond to a practical objective, but also to encourage a reflection on the publishing world in the current communication context, considering the changes that have taken place in recent decades, especially with the advent of digital technologies and online communication.

This meeting—attended by the General Government, the General Directors of the Apostolate, the Publishing Directors and some Paulines and members of the Pauline Family who are involved in an editorial apostolate to some extent—took place 29 years after the 1st Seminar (1st SIEP), which was the beginning of a new international reflection on the Pauline publisher.

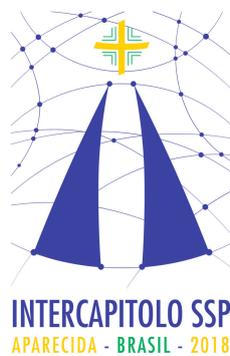
In this talk I will make some considerations, which I consider opportune, on the 1st and 2nd International Seminars of Pauline Publishers and I will also present a brief reflection on the theme: "Thought, action and organization in the logic of the Gospel".

I. THE 1st INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR OF PAULINE EDITORS

There is no need to make a detailed summary of the 1st SIEP at this time. I just want to underline that this Seminar, held at Ariccia and Milan from 17 September to 2 October 1988, dealt mainly with some issues pertaining to the situation of the Pauline publishing at that time,² in which we realized the need to open our apostolate to multimedia and to improve the organization (at the circumscription

¹ Cfr. X General Chapter, Operative Guidelines I.1.2.

² The 1st SIEP is still a point of reference for the reflection on our apostolate, omitting, obviously, the statistical data and the communicational and ecclesial contexts of that time. For the deepening of the concept "Pauline Publisher" it is worth reading, from the Proceedings of the Seminar, the articles: *Introduction to the International Seminar for Pauline Publishers of the Society of Saint Paul* (Fr Renato Perino), *The Concepts of Publishers—Publishing—Publication of Don Alberione* (Fr Giancarlo Rocca) and *How the publishing house of Fr Alberione was born and how it developed* (Fr Franco Pierini).



and international level)³. Among the practical results of this 1st Seminar we can point out the creation of the International Technical Committee for the Apostolate - CTIA (1988), of the international organizations by geographical area (CIDEP - 1991, CAP / ESW and GEC - 1992) and of the new logo (1991).

Continuing the reflection made in that Seminar, the VI General Chapter (Ariccia, 15 March-16 April 1992), decided, in the Priority III, *«to enlarge our sphere of communication of the Gospel, by means of a global multimedia project that, through the planning and the national and international coordination of people and means, reaches everyone, especially the poor, the distant, the great masses»*. In one of the operational guidelines, the Chapter was asking that *«the General Government provide for the drafting of a “Manual of Authority in the Society of Saint Paul” that defines the areas, expiry and competences of every Canonical Authority and Delegated Authority—Superiors, Directors of the Apostolate and of Formation, Secretaries, Administrators, etc.—with methods of management and control both for the apostolic and formative contents, and for the administration. The definitive text is to be submitted to the interchapter Assembly for approval»*⁴. Let us remember that the *Manual of Authority* was approved *ad experimentum* in 1995 and, definitively, in the General Chapter of 2004, with the title: *Service of Authority in the Society of Saint Paul. Manual*.

Two other decisions of the VI General Chapter worth highlighting were the realization of the "International Seminar on Pauline Formation for the Mission" (Ariccia, 12-23 October 1994) and the "Seminar on Jesus, the Master" (Ariccia, October 14-24, 1996). Furthermore, a round table discussion on "Apostolic organization and multimedia in the light of the third priority of the VI General Chapter", was held in Alba from 7 to 9 October 1992. From this meeting emerged the letter of the then Superior General, Fr Silvio Pignotti, with the title "Regarding the Third Priority", which was a document of orientation and programming, sent to all the heads of the Circumscriptions.

This document refers, with some practical consequences, to various topics especially concerning the organization: *«The mission is at the center of everything; all and everything for the apostolate; training for the mission; culture of the entrepreneurial organization working with projects, objectives, function manuals, organization charts; ordinary canonical authority and delegated canonical authority; organization at the general level (CTIA), linguistic / continental and of circumscriptions (Director General of the apostolate); collaboration of the laity and with the Pauline Family; take multimedia. The*

³ *«Organization is a key word in Alberionian language. In the very brief Abundantes Divitiæ alone, for example, the word occurs at least ten times. It is an insistence that begins to appear in his writings from the moment when the foundations have become sufficiently solid, and to be able to progress they need to be organically linked at national and international level»* (Renato Perino, *Saint Paul living today. The “novissima verba” by Fr. James Alberione on the mission of the Pauline Family*.
(http://www.paulus.net/doc/archivistorico/successori_2.pdf).

⁴ VI General Chapter, Operational Guideline 15.



corporate model of reference for the Pauline apostolate remains the Italian one (*Periodici San Paolo*) and partly of Latin America»⁵.

After some length of time we can ask ourselves: what are the concrete results of all these goals? In a very succinct analysis we can say that, without doubt, especially after the 1st SIEP, the Congregation (considering the different circumscription realities) has made significant progress in the organizational aspect, for example in establishing the figure of the Director General of the apostolate (with his Council), in the elaboration of the Apostolic Project of Circumscriptions, estimates and budgets, organization chart and function manuals, etc.

On the other hand, the Congregation experienced some *«limits in planning capacity in the face of the transition from mass media to multimedia and to web communication; confusion of roles on the one side and the other between the heads of ordinary and delegated authority; little attention to changes in the methods of diffusion and, above all, in market research and analysis of the actual results of our products, etc.»*⁶. It should also be noted that, in general, the Circumscriptions have failed to elaborate an *Iter* of Formation attuned to the Apostolic Project, causing a deficit of Paulines prepared for our specific mission. With regard to the necessary harmony between apostolate and spiritual life, we might raise some doubts, asking ourselves whether we have succeeded in integrating spirituality-prayer-community life-formation-mission, making the Gospel the light for our life as a whole.

2. THE 2° INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR OF PAOLINE EDITORS

What mainly emerges from the 2nd SIEP is the reality of the changes that have come about in the culture of communication in the last two decades, especially with the development of digital technologies and online communication. To study in depth and understand this phenomenon is extremely necessary for us who have this area as an integral part of our charism. It is within this reality in profound transformation that we are called to proclaim Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life, that is, to penetrate all human thought and knowledge with the Gospel, not only talking about religion, but speaking of everything in a Christian way⁷.

Knowing the communicational context in which we must develop our pastoral care is essential, because this not only allows an updating of our apostolate, but also because the changes that occur rebound, to a certain extent, in all dimensions of Pauline life: in community and spiritual life, in vocation ministry and in formation, in organization, in administration and in the economy but also in the methodology of work, in our relations with society and, finally, in our lifestyle.

⁵ *The Pauline publisher: 1914-2014*, speech prepared by Fr Silvio Sassi († 14.09.2014) for the Frankfurt Book Fair, 7-13 October 2014, published in the *San Paolo*, Year 90, n. 447, January 2015.

⁶ Silvio Sassi, Meeting of the Directors General of the apostolate of Europe, Rome, General House, 8-10 June 2009. Report presented on 9 June 2009.

⁷ James Alberione, AD 87-88.



With regard to Pauline publishing in this new context of communication, I want to underline three aspects that appeared in the 2nd SIEP and which, I think, it is important to underline, so that they may receive attention during the presentation of the contents of that meeting.

I. The identity of the Pauline publisher

The first aspect that should make us reflect, due to changes in the field of communication and which we have investigated in the second SIEP, concerns the identity of the Pauline. *«The recurring emergence of the question about our identity is certainly a source of consolation, both because we need to ask ourselves often about what we are or what we ought to be, and because our young people want to know precisely their identity within the Religious family to which they are incorporated»*⁸. So, the question arises: how should we be present with our "Pauline" identity in the current communication environment and even more so in digital networks?

We are convinced that the Pauline *«finds his own identity in following Christ to the point of identifying his life with his own, in the footsteps of Paul who could say: "My life is Christ" (Phil 1:21, cf Gal 2,20)»*⁹, assuming this commitment in the context of the "Pauline" consecrated life, in conformity with what the Constitutions propose. To situate Pauline identity in this perspective necessarily supposes to refer to our vocation as "publisher"¹⁰, in the light of the sense that our Founder has given to this term: *«Heavenly Father ab æterno is the Publisher of the Son ...; the Divine Son, Publisher of the Gospel ...; the Holy Spirit is the Author and the Publisher of the Holy Scriptures ...; imitate God, Writer and Publisher. Mary is the Publisher of the humanized Word ...; the Church is the Publication and Publishing house...; Mary is also Mother, Teacher and Queen of Publishers and Publications»*¹¹.

In this perspective every Pauline is called to be a "publisher", that is, someone who has something to "say" and "offer" regarding the Gospel. This calls for and evidently brings into play personal testimony, both as a "man of communication of the Gospel" and using all forms of communication to proclaim it to all peoples.

Even our Congregation as a whole, as Fr. Alberione teaches us, is a "publisher"¹². All sectors of the apostolate form the Publishing House. For example: *«The book*

⁸ Raffaele Tonni, *Letter from the Superior General "Identity of our religious life"*, September 8, 1975.

⁹ Renato Perino, *St. Paul living today. The "novissima verba" of Fr. James Alberione on the mission of the Pauline Family*, in http://www.paulus.net/doc/archivistorico/successori_2.pdf.

¹⁰ It is necessary to keep in mind the evolution, in the Congregation, from the idea of "authors" to that of "publisher". Cf. Silvio Sassi, *Il Paolino Editore 1914-2014*, Speech prepared by Fr Silvio Sassi († 14.09.2014) for the Frankfurt Fair, 7-13 October 2014 (San Paolo - Year 90 - n ° 447 - January 2015). It is useful to read also the article *The Editing*, by Fr. Valentino Gambi (San Paolo, February 1955) and the Conference on *The Italian Editorial Office and installment sale*, transcribed in *UPS III*, pp. 146-179.

¹¹ James Alberione, in *Vademecum* n. 919

¹² *«Basically, it seems that evolution has shown the existence of two different editorial lines: the first one, by Fr. Alberione, of a popular character, linked to the priesthood as a guarantee of authenticity, made by oneself, and that develops from the origins of the institute until about 1950; the second one, which begins after 1945 and which also considers the dissemination of texts by others, as is done for the diffusion of the thought of the*



centre reflects the entire Institute St. Paul. It is the point of contact between the Institute and the people; it is the centre of diffusion of all the initiatives of the Pauline apostolate. It is the Publishing House of God»¹³. Evidently, it is not just a "publishing house", but a "house" that brings a new style of apostolic life and a new way of evangelizing inserted into the culture of communication. In conclusion, the question we have to ask ourselves is: how do we present ourselves and act as "Paulines" in today's constantly changing communication culture?

2. The content of the message

The 2nd SIEP showed that the future of publishing, in the universe of digital communication towards which all the media today converge, is not only in technology but, very clearly, in content. This reality, among other things, makes us think about the level of attention we give to our formation, both the initial and the ongoing one. To what extent do we give importance to study in the sense of "studiousness"? Are we offering "integral formation" to our young people, preparing them to produce contents and thus to carry on the mission with a "Pauline color"?

Unfortunately, *«the emphasis placed on corporate functioning has, almost paradoxically, overshadowed the reflection on the contents: how to draw inspiration from Saint Paul characterizes the contents of our publishing»*¹⁴. Attention to contents is fundamental as a first step in order to adapt it later to the various communication platforms. As already explained by Fr Alberione in his time, *«The word "publication" has many applications: publication of the periodical, publication of the one who prepares the script for the film, who prepares the program for television, who prepares things to communicate through the radio. "Edidit nobis Salvatorem" says the Liturgy»*¹⁵.

Although the 2nd SIEP has emphasized the digital environment, we note that printing is still the means of communication in which our mission grows much and also sustains us economically. On the other hand we cannot forget radio and television, which are still channels that have a significant presence in many realities and that we cannot discard. The question, regarding the contents, becomes more radical: are we prepared to offer such "contents" on any platform that presents itself as a new opportunity?

It is therefore necessary to think seriously about the formation, to prepare the Paulines in the various areas of the sciences that concern our mission: the Bible, Communication, Theology, Sociology but also Psychology, Pedagogy, Administration, etc. In the context of communication, we need Paulines also prepared to carry

Pope, of the bishops, of the Fathers of the Church. [...] Today, it is clear, the preaching is no longer linked to the priest and it is obvious to consider preaching, at least in a broader sense if not on a par, also the diffusion of the thought of others, be they priests or laymen» (Giancarlo Rocca, *The concepts of Editor-Publishing-Publication in Don Alberione*, in *Proceedings of the International Seminar on Pauline Publishers*, Ariccia-Milan 17 September-2 October 1988).

¹³ James Alberione, *UPS IV*, p. 162.

¹⁴ *The Publisher Pauline: 1914 – 2014*, cit.

¹⁵ James Alberione, *Sermons of the Founder 5*, 1957, p.137.



forward the Pauline Centers for Studies in Communication. Four of these are already in full operation; they are a reality of the Congregation, while the Circumscriptions that are planning the construction of similar centres must now prepare Paulines to take up this specific apostolate. Finally, we cannot forget the harmony that must exist between Formation Iter and the Apostolic Project.

3. Human relationships

We are a "Pauline" Publisher, which needs "Pauline publishers", not "in theory" but fully integrated into the social and ecclesial reality to bring "contents" that respond to the need of the people who seek God. The 2nd SIEP has given emphasis on the aspect of "human relations" as a first requirement to prepare and convey contents.

This is a fully Pauline attitude, recalling that the Apostle Paul, before writing his letters, had a direct relationship with his recipients. Our Founder was already referring to this aspect of the publisher's work: *«The Editorial office studies the current needs of the Church and the society; it writes and inspires competent writers, directing and organizing their work for the good result, according to the spirit and the letter of the Constitutions»*¹⁶.

Creating relationships with the recipients is fundamental, also because communication today becomes more and more on the internet, that is, relational. In this regard, we can recall the words of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, when he speaks of the need for a profound missionary renewal of the Church: *«The first step is personal dialogue, when the other person speaks and shares his or her joys, hopes and concerns for loved ones, or so many other heartfelt needs. Only afterwards is it possible to bring up God's word, perhaps by reading a Bible verse or relating a story, but always keeping in mind the fundamental message: the personal love of God who became man, who gave himself up for us, who is living and who offers us his salvation and his friendship»*¹⁷.

The declaration of the X General Chapter reaffirms that *«we are Church and we want to be a Congregation that goes out with the Church», bearing in mind that "going out towards others to reach the human peripheries does not mean running towards the world without a direction and without meaning»*¹⁸. For us Paulines it is not a question of wasting our energies with personal projects, where everyone does what he wants, but of going out starting from a pastoral project that is an expression of the Congregation, which organizes resources of people and means in a complex project that considers people, initiatives, contents, means, recipients but also human relationships, team work, contact with the ecclesial and social world. This is to be done without forgetting communion and collaboration with the institutions of the Pauline Family. "Organize the good", Don Alberione insisted, but considering the

¹⁶ James Alberione, *UPS* 3, 1962, p. 131.

¹⁷ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 128.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, n. 46.



persons, avoiding falling into «a depersonalization of pastoral care that leads to pay more attention to the organization than to people in such a way that they are enthused more by the "roadmap than the journey itself»¹⁹.

For us Paulines, the first places of contact with our recipients are our bookstores, which can not only become points of sale but, as Fr Alberione said, «a centre of culture, source of diffusion of holiness, as temples of sanctification of yours and of the world»²⁰. Spreading of "holiness", not a market where everything is sold, as if it were a bazaar.

In the reflections made during the 2nd SIEP it emerged that we cannot forget other places of contact with the people, today present in the Congregation: the Pauline Centers for Studies in Communication, the conferences on various topics related to Communication or other topics (organized in some Circumscriptions), courses on the Bible (for example, those organized by SOBICAIN); the cultural centers, the Biblical Festival, the Bible Quiz, the International Center for Family Studies (CISF), etc. What other initiatives can we undertake, in the field of our apostolate, to facilitate contact with our recipients?

4. THOUGHT, ACTION AND ORGANIZATION IN THE LOGIC OF THE GOSPEL

After the realization of the 2nd SIEP, and considering also the many initiatives that were born in the Congregation after the 1st Seminar, I see it opportune to deal with a theme that mainly concerns the people—the Paulines—who have to carry out the various projects. It is true that Fr. Alberione insisted on organizing the apostolate. In fact, we all know how it is necessary to pay attention to the organizational, administrative and economic aspects, and to material and professional resources, etc. However, we must pay attention to everything, be attentive also to the market situation, but at the same time, be very cautious, so that the market itself does not "eat" us, as it has done with many "companies" all over the world.

Our Founder was already warning that «the Congregation must never lower itself to the level of an industry, of a trade; but always remain at the human-divine level of the apostolate, exercised by the most rapid and fruitful means, in a pastoral spirit ... Those who lower themselves to the level of an industrialist, or of a merchant, would contribute to a fatal deviation. Not negotiation, but evangelization»²¹; «There was no need for a religious institute to create industry! You do not need people consecrated to God to do business!»²². These warnings were repeated and repeated by all the Superiors General. It is urgent to listen to these warnings coming from our Founder before it is too late!

¹⁹ Ibidem, n. 82.

²⁰ James Alberione, *To the Daughters of St. Paul*, 34, p. 87.

²¹ James Alberione, *CISP*, 808-809.

²² James Alberione, *Haec meditare II*, 8 (1948), pp. 173-174.



We all know that a "radically" corporate model, when adopted for a Circumscription (and here I refer specifically to human relationships, which are an essential reality in any institution), creates a split between those Paulines that are valued within the corporate structure and those who, while wanting to exercise the Pauline apostolate, are kept out. Experience has shown us that the search for a "completely" effective and efficient organization with an unbridled emphasis on professionalism causes a religious institution more damage than good.

When we observe this situation we find that one of the reasons that damage the religious institution is the fact that we tend to see life and mission more in the logic of the market than in the logic of the Gospel. In this perspective, the first area to suffer is that of human relationships, because it gives way to the possibility of generating tensions and ruptures: relationships are no longer those between brothers but become more similar to those that exist between the boss and the subject; the fundamental work in synergy gives way to competition; the focus is on efficiency and not on giving a life to the mission; the contents of the publications are not so much based on "pastorality" (pastoral needs) as on salability (even though it is necessary to pay attention to this aspect for the survival of our apostolate), etc.

It takes a lot of attention to internal human relationships. It is worth reflecting on what recently, Pope Francis said to the consecrated persons: *«Today's frantic pace leads us to close many doors to encounter, often for fear of others. Only shopping malls and internet connections are always open. Yet that is not how it should be with consecrated life: the brother and the sister given to me by God are a part of my history, gifts to be cherished. May we never look at the screen of our cellphone more than the eyes of our brothers or sisters, or focus more on our software than on the Lord. For whenever we put our own projects, methods and organization at the centre, consecrated life stops being attractive; it no longer speaks to others; it no longer flourishes because it forgets its very foundations, its very roots»*²³.

It takes balance! Another problem is regarding the difficulty, seen in some Circumscriptions, to include in the Apostolic Project all the initiatives, not only those that are within a corporate structure, but also the other Pauline activities that could be very well integrated into the whole of the Project itself. We had already spoken about this with the Directors General of the apostolate on the occasion of the 2nd SIEP.

We have reminded, at that time, that the role of the General Director, as a delegated authority, is not only that of the management of human and material resources, but also one of animator, promoter of a communication that humanizes and fosters team work and unity in the apostolate. If the function of a General Director were only that of a "manager", he need not have been necessarily be a Pauline. This service is rightly assumed by a Pauline so that he can bring the "Pauline

²³ Pope Francis, *Homely in the Mass: Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, XXII World Day for Consecrated Life*, 2 February 2018.



colour" even in human relationships, in our structures, in the methodology of work, etc.

It is opportune to consider what the first article of our Constitutions states: *«With a free response to the appeal of the Holy Spirit, we decided to follow Jesus Christ, and to consecrate ourselves totally to him. In order to be a sign and witness of his love, we have come together as his own in a fraternal communion of life, in the Religious Congregation of the Society of Saint Paul»*²⁴. Let yourself be enlightened by the Gospel!

In the Gospel Jesus tells us: *«You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. “It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many»* (Mt 20,25-28). The Gospel is the only way to save the meaning of religious life and to begin a journey towards true humanization.

The VIII General Chapter produced a beautiful Declaration entitled "A Preferential Apostolic Option: Humanizing to Christianize", which, at a certain point, states: *«Since there are evident signs of a very strong crisis of humanity in our world today, our mission of evangelizers will assume as a preferential apostolic option the commitment to humanize society»*²⁵. We recall that the humanization of society begins by humanizing it from within—that is, starting from the persons and structures that are at the service of evangelization.

In this sense it is necessary that prayer and the Eucharist, which are part of our daily life, enter into our real life, penetrate human relationships: *«[...] Worship or prayer on the one hand is one of the fundamental duties towards God, on the other hand it is an indispensable means for obtaining the graces necessary for eternal health. To saturate our whole life, the press, preaching, education, with this conviction will be a great merit, a vivifying light, an indispensable virtue»*²⁶.

It is urgent to seek a balance between spirituality, formation, apostolic life, organization and appreciation of people. Will it be possible? In this journey the role of the Circumscription Superior and his Council is fundamental. They must be the first to work in animation and help the confreres on their journey to "humanize to Christianize" the Congregation—in the light of the Gospel—so that, as a true "Pauline publisher", it can play its part in the humanization and Christianization also of society.

²⁴ *Cost. and Dir.*, Art. 1.

²⁵ VIII General Chapter, *Declaration: "A Preferential Apostolic Option: Humanize to Christianize"*.

²⁶ James Alberione, *CISP*, p. 29.