

Communication 3 - Sunday 26 April

The first phase of the Seminar concluded on Friday, 24 April 2009 at noontime with two strong reminders concerning the relevance of the message of Paul by those who addressed us in his name: **Andrea Riccardi**, founder of the community of Saint Egidio, and **Neil Elliott**, the American Episcopal biblicist. Both agreed that Paul urges us on with a double drive: one that leads us to embrace the complex areas of contemporary multiculturalism, without fear of confrontation; and the other that brings us to synchronize our pace with the entire body of Christ, above all with those who still experience it in the mystery of the passion and cross.

In the afternoon, **Fr. Silvio Sassi**, Superior General of the Society of St. Paul, summed up the first stage of our work which was characterized fundamentally by exegesis. According to Fr. Sassi "the effort we are carrying out together, that is, to think so as to work, is a contribution of creative fidelity to Saint Paul, Fr. Alberione and the Pauline Family of today and the future."

The participants have contributed to reflection on the first part by sharing what seems useful for living out the second and third stages of the Seminar.

This stage began with a talk by the Superior General which presented Fr. Alberione as an interpreter of Paul. Putting aside other pathways of holiness, the Founder of the Pauline Family chose a method that draws from a precise experience of faith: *life in Christ* expressed in passages like "for me to live is Christ" (Phil 1:21) and "it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

St. Paul is like a mirror in which the Paulines must see their own identity reflected. Fr. Alberione, though not an exegete or theological specialist in Paul, grasped the heart of the experience of Christ lived by the Apostle, grafting into it a complete project of new evangelization and carrying it out with a pastoral mentality and methodology.

Today the Pauline Charism needs to re-propose with renewed biblical, theological, spiritual and ecclesial foundations a pedagogy for Christification, capable of transmitting itself with a missionary and operative vision. The experience of faith – Fr. Sassi reaffirmed – is authentic only if it lives the double component of love for God and love of neighbor, of contemplation and action. As Paulines, we must not remove ourselves from either the gift of Christification or the effort to know, in all its complexity, the culture of communication which surrounds us as we strive to acquire theoretical and practical competence. The Pauline Family itself, even with the diversity of its components, is called to converge in this commitment to *evangelization in communication*.

Fr. Sassi's talk was followed on Saturday by those of **Fr. Antonio Girlanda** and **Sr. M. Cristina Cruciani**, who reinforced his contents by presenting the figure of Paul in the History of the Pauline Family and then in the architectural and artistic complex of the Temple of St. Paul in Alba respectively.

The afternoon was marked by a pilgrimage made by the participants with the Pauline Family to the tomb of the Apostle Paul. In the portico of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, Paul is well depicted by an imposing statue which shows him with his head bent and his sword pointed toward heaven, and he seemed to await us, almost eager to listen, weigh and restore all that we have been reflecting on these days, in the light of the pages of Scripture and the treasures hidden in the history of the Pauline Family.