

## ORIENTATIONS RELATED TO VOCATION PASTORAL AND THE AIDS TO BE PREFERRED

The done analysis of the vocation material that has come to us approaching half of the *Vocation Year of the Society of St. Paul* asks us and allows us to offer to the Congregation the following *Orientations related to Vocation Pastoral and the Aids to be preferred* for this purpose.

1. We confirm above all the duty to assume the criteria contained in the *Constitutions and Directory of the SSP*, in the numbers 87, 88, 88.1, 88.2, 88.3 and 88.4. Our norms remind us that “*the future of our Congregation and of our mission in the Church depends on the incoming of new candidates and on their careful formation.*” From here comes the duty to promote “*vocations with all our forces,*” and the duty - common to all our communities and to every member - to contribute for this purpose prayers, sacrifices, witness and practical collaboration emanating from one’s apostolic sector (cf also *Operative line 2.2.5* of the VIII General Chapter of the SSP).

2. All the Circumscriptions without exception must count on a vocation project that is part of the *Formative Iter* and inspires the annual program of vocation work (cf *Operative Line 2.2.4* of the VIII General Chapter of the SSP). The principal agents of this need are the Superior of the Circumscription and the Coordinator of the Vocation Pastoral and Formation. Vocation work presupposes the direct entrustment of such task to one or more confreres, with the adequate involvement of all the confreres.

3 A well-defined and serious responsibility of the Governments of Circumscription, reconfirmed by the VIII General Chapter, is that of choosing “with special care and preparing conveniently for their task vocation animators and formators, so that they may know how to harmonize formation and apostolate.” (cf *Operative Line 2.2.3*)

4. Since the living testimony of consecrated persons is the first aid that can stimulate others to discover their own vocation, the Superiors of Circumscription should seriously program and promote permanent formation which is an essential means for the all-embracing renewal of all the members and a condition so that the communities, works and centers of apostolate may become an effective vocational motive. “*To live well the religious life: this is the first and principal means to obtain vocations that are not only numerous but above all well-chosen ones.*” (Bl. James Alberione, 1955) Let it be born in mind, moreover, that by their prayers and sufferings, our elderly and sick confreres offer a valuable contribution in favor of vocations.

5. Since the understanding of our charism and the concrete lifestyle of the Paulines cannot be separated from our mission, in proposing our vocation - and in the aids being used - the same should be presented in a way that is adequate, emphasizing above all the essential (it is the continuation of the work of Jesus Christ, a true evangelization, charity through spreading of the truth) and not only the means and the works to accomplish it. The operative line 3.1d of the *International Seminar on Pauline Formation for the Mission* held at Ariccia in 1994 clarifies: “*In particular, care should be taken so that the Pauline mission be placed*

*at the center of the vocational proposition: consecration of apostolic life and the service of communication through mass media have as goal evangelical commitment. Let it be done in a way so that it be seen that whatever aspect of the Pauline vocation is fully integrated with all the other aspects, and all aim at sanctification in the mission of communication."*

6. The vocational proposition should take advantage of the fascination that the person of Christ exercises, of his presence in the world, of his actuality and the necessity of his Magisterium, of the invitation that He extends to some believers so that they may follow him more closely and collaborate using new forms of evangelization for the world.

7. In the proposing of vocations, the testimony of Paulines are a strong attraction, but it must be remembered that they do not mean anything in themselves except in relation to Christ and to the actuality of his mission. This applies also to St. Paul, the Founder, and to any other model of Paulinity.

8. The actuality of Christ's mission to which we are called to share, can be understood if we reflect on the situation of uncertainty, of expectation, of bewilderment, of searching, of changing, etc. wherein society finds itself. In its programs and in its aids, Pauline vocational pastoral will take into account these realities.

9. The vocational proposition should carefully avoid every clerical connotation. It should show the Pauline vocation as a journey of complete belongingness to Christ in order to live his Gospel and to preach him to the men of today through the new means and language of communication. On this is based the twofold face of the Pauline: Priest and Disciple.

10. The Society of St. Paul should be presented as a part of the Pauline Family, "that is, of the complex of religious congregations, affiliated institutes and apostolic organizations founded by Fr. James Alberione." (Constitutions and Directory of the SSP, Art. 3) As far as possible, vocation promoters will create links of reflection and of an operational character with those responsible for vocation pastoral in the other institutions of the Pauline Family.

11. Pauline vocational pastoral is carried out with a deep sense of the Church: we work in the Church, with the Church and for the Church. This must be seen in the general structuring of the vocational plan, in its strategies and its means.

12. The vocational proposition is addressed above all to young men, but bearing in mind that the span of the age of youth is today considered to be much more broad than in the past. The choice will be made, however, among the candidates that show positive signs of fitness for the Pauline life, "giving particular attention to their basic motivations..." (cf Operative line 2.2.5 of the VIII General Chapter)

13. Even the "field" for the search and for the proposal of vocations is today broadened and thought of in a different way: it is not abandoning vocational promotion in the traditional "locations of faith," but of visiting also the "new fields" where the youth and many other persons of good will are found: the internet, the centers of communication and culture, the universities, the world of work, the migrants, volunteer workers, the new ecclesial movements, etc.

14. Vocational promotion needs an ever greater and intelligent use of the great means of communication, without doing away with the importance of graphic aids and traditional audiovisuals that are susceptible of a more targeted distribution. Not to be neglected are the vocational appeals - they are normally effective - by means of our periodicals. It is important, in every case, that the aid be of quality in its form and that the message be clear for the recipients for whom it is aimed: a message that is not anonymous or generic, but precise, expressed through correct "language," capable of arousing interest and feedback. The aid, therefore, will carry a clear identification of the Congregation and a practical indication of the person or office to which one can have a recourse to in order to start a dialog. Do in such a way that the same aids used for vocation promotion may be an example of communication. This pointer applies also for websites.

15. No aid, however excellent, can be identified with the whole vocation pastoral of a Circumscription, nor alone can it correspond to all the characteristics indicated in these *Orientations*. It is just a means whose value and influence depend on the whole vocation plan and on the complex of strategies utilized by such a plan. Every aid, however, must have a well-defined objective. More than ever, in an intelligent vocational pastoral many dynamic forces interact, making use of strategies and various aids in answer to a single plan and subject to regular check-up.

Rome, 31 May 2006