

TO GIVE TO THE WORLD
JESUS CHRIST WAY, TRUTH AND LIFE

THE PAULINE FAMILY UNITARY PROJECT

*Inter-congregational Study Commission
On the Charismatic and Ministerial Identity of the Pauline Family
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ABBREVIATIONS

- AD *Abundantes devitiae gratiae suae*, SSP, Ediz. critica, Roma, 1985
- ADds *Abundantes divitiae gratiae suae*, dattiloscritto (typewritten)
- Arch. *Archivio* (cassettes with recording of the homilies of Fr. Alberione to the Apostoline Sisters)
- ATP02 *Appunti di Teologia Pastorale*, 2^a edizione, Marietti, Torino 1915
- BM *Brevi Meditazioni per ogni giorno dell'anno*, 2 volumi, FSP, Roma 1948
- CGSp *Documenti del Capitolo Generale Speciale 1969-1971* – Figlie di San Paolo
- CVV *Considerate la vostra vocazione*, Circular letters and directives for the FSP, Roma, 1990
- DA01 *La Donna associata allo zello sacerdotale*, 1^a ed., Scuola Tipografica, Alba 1915
- DF *Done formetur Christus in vobis*, Meditation notes and instructions of the Primo Maestro, SSP, Roma 1985
- EMC *Esercizi e meditazioni del Primo Maestro*, FSP, Derby, NY 1952
- ESM *Esercizi spirituali, Prediche alle Maestre*, [gennaio-febbraio 1966], FSP, Roma 1967
- HM I *Haec meditare, in his esto*, Serie prima, Retiri mensili, 4 volumi, FSP, Alba-Roma
- HM II *Haec meditare*, Serie seconda, Esercizi spirituali, 8 volumi, FSP, Alba-Roma, 1941-1942
- MCS *Meditazioni alle consacrate secolari*, [1958-1067], EP 1976
- OgFs *Ordinamento generale della formazione e studi* – Figlie di San Paolo, 1995
- OSO *Orientamenti e Scelte Operative*, Suore di Gesù Buon Pastore, 1975
- PA (followed by year: e.g., PA65) *Alle Suore di Gesù Buon Pastore*, 10 volumi, SGBP, Roma
- PD (followed by year: e.g., PD63) *Alle Pie Discepole del Divin Maestro*, 15 volumi, PD, Roma
- RF *Ratio Formationis della Società San Paolo*, Roma 1990
- SdC *Spiegazione delle Costituzioni* [FSP], Ariccia, maggio-giugno 1961, FSP, Roma 1962
- SP (followed by date: month and year) *San Paolo*, Bollettino interno della Società S. Paolo
- SPa *Spiritualità paolina*, Devozioni della prima settimana del mese, FSP, Roma, 1962
- UCBS *Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa*, Bollettino dei Cooperatori Paolini, 1018-1928
- UCAS *Unione Cooperatori Apostolato Stampa*, Bollettino dei Cooperatori Paolini, 1928-1949
- UPS *Ut Perfectus sit homo Dei*, 4 volumi, Esercizi spirituali di un mese, aprile 1960, SSP, Albano 1960-1962
- VH *Via Humanitatis*, Roma 1947
- Anthology*
- CISP *Carissimi in san Paolo*, Lettere, articoli, opuscoli, scritti inediti di don Giacomo Alberione dal 1933 al 1969, SSP, Roma 1971.

Introduction

The reflection on the charismatic and ministerial identity of every religious Institute, begun by Vatican Council II and gradually developed until today, has induced different Institutes composing the Pauline Family to ask themselves not only on the diversity of charisms that are at the origin of each one, but much more on the unity of one gift, multi-form and varied, given by the Spirit of God to the Church in the person of Fr. Alberione for evangelization along the new frontiers of multimedia.

In the development of the reflection, has arisen a question to which we intend to respond by interrogating history and reading it, from the theological perspective, as history of salvation that reveals God's work in Jesus Christ, Master, the Way, the Truth and the Life of humanity.

Is the Pauline Family characterized by a single charism, or has it more charisms?

It is a question that appears very simple and it invites us to deepen reflection not univocally but chorally, as Family precisely. In truth, to this initial question is reconnected a whole corollary of other questions that do not fall short of having very concrete repercussions on the operative level.

Let us try to list the more significant ones:

1. Is the bond among the Institutes composing the Family only of historical order inasmuch as they are founded by the same Father – Fr. Alberione in our case – or is it also on the theological order, that is, charismatic and ministerial?
2. Every Institute is recognized as such in the Church and by the Church because it has in itself a specific and autonomous charismatic and ministerial identity: can, within an Institute, a “specific” charism and a “common” one, precisely that of a Family, live all at once? In the case of the affirmative, ought one speak of two charisms?
3. To speak instead that the Family has a single charism, can it not run the risk of flattening and hence negating the variety of the different Institutes thus impoverishing the Church and somehow betraying the legacy that the Spirit of God has entrusted to the Founder from the beginning?
4. To affirm that the Family, from its origin, in the person of Fr. Alberione, has a charism and a specific ministry, would it not induce one to think of the Family charism as an unformed sum of charisms, different among themselves and equally traceable in a single charismatic legacy given to the “head of family”?
5. Or is it licit to think, precisely by virtue of being family, of a unitary project that gathers the specific charisms and articulate them in unity, while safeguarding and promoting its specificity, according to the vision of St. Paul on charisms and ministries in the Church of God?

Let us then, chorally, as family – that is as members of different Institutes gathered together for reflection¹-- attempt at a historical-theological reading of our being in the Church and in today's world: “many in a single body” according to a precise project that we recognize as having been entrusted by the Holy Spirit to Fr. Giacomo Alberione as charism of the Founder and participated in by us in order that it be lived in creative fidelity.²

Inasmuch as we intend to reread the saving action of God in Jesus Master and Shepherd Way, Truth and Life, in the Pauline Family in behalf of today's humanity, and we want to give reason to the faith and to the apostolic charity that bind us together, it is our objective to offer, within the historical process, a theological reflection on the Family unitary project as it was entrusted to us by Fr. Alberione, the recipient of a gift of the Spirit.

This study is developed in three instances, distinct but attached to one another:

1. Above all, let us go through *the story* of the Family and the perception of this “being Family” that, especially after the Founder's death, every Institute has cultivated and developed by itself. From this emerges a unitary project that articulates the different parts and the individual instances. Sources of this study are the preaching of Fr. Alberione to every Institute, the Constitutions, the Statutes and each one's own official documents;
2. As a second moment, -- based on the *Progetto teologico dell'enciclopedia su Gesù Maestro*, which we hold as the synthesis of the mind, the ascetics, of the mysticism and of the apostolate of Fr. Alberione – let us try to *read from within the unitary project*. At the center we find the Person of Jesus, Master-Shepherd, Way and Truth and life: “*Omnia instaurare in Christ.*” With references that are derived from it:
 - *Trinitarian* reference: “Jesus Christ, the perfect image of the one and triune God”;
 - *Anthropological* reference: “Mind, sentiment and will glorify the Son, the Holy Spirit, the Father”;
 - *Ecclesiological* reference: “In the Church: Christ teaches, Christ legislates, infuses grace.”
 - *Eschatological* reference: “In Glory [Christ] reveals himself, is possessed, glorifies the good”.³

¹ This study, willed by the General Governments of the Pauline Family, has been made by an Inter-congregational Commission composed of a representative of every Congregation making up the Pauline Family: Fr. Guido Gandolfo, SSP; Sr. Christina Schereil, FSP; Sr. M. Micaele Monetti, PDDM; Sr. Emanuela Ciccomartino, SGBP, Sr. Franca Laratore, AP. For various reasons, representatives of the Aggregated Institutes Our Lady of the Annunciation, St. Gabriel Archangel, Jesus Priest, and of the Association of Pauline Cooperators do not systematically participate.

² Cf. *Vita consecrata*, Pope John Paul's apostolic exhortation on consecrated life and its mission in the church and in the world, nos. 36-37.

³ The quotation is taken from the aforementioned *Progetto di un'enciclopedia su “Gesù Maestro”* (14/5/1959). Cf. CISP, pp. 1225ff.

3. According to the manner with which every Institution of the Pauline Family refers to Christ, we shall gather *the elements that bind us together* and *those that distinguish us* as Institutes diverse and united in fraternal reciprocity.

Meanwhile:

* In the first place, let us go over the Family *history*, that has been a growing together, coordinating, not always in a linear manner, unity and autonomy and, within this history that unites and differentiates, let us present the different Institutes composing the Family in their singular relationship with the Founder and in the fraternal reciprocity with the Pauline Congregations and Institutes. In this rereading clearly emerges, as gift from above, the unitary project that is at the origin of being and living as Family; while autonomy and peculiarity of each Institute are safeguarded.

* Following this historical research, finds development the reflection more properly theological on the unitary project of Family, already articulated by Fr. Alberione and entrusted to his sons and daughters. His, in fact, is the theological synthesis centered on Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life, following the year dedicated to Jesus Master (1955), and presented to the Family in 1958: a synthesis that is fruit of prayer, of study and of apostolate shared for years in a special manner with some close collaborators:

The Pope [Leo XIII in the encyclical *Tametsi Futura*] establishes or better interprets and proposes what Jesus Christ has established: the three principles. He who wants to live “in Christo et in Ecclesia” has to be formed in Christ in manners of living, in thoughts, in means of grace and life eternal; he shall be able to affirm “vivit in me Christus.”

This spirit has entered Pauline life: piety according to Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life. Study according to Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life; the apostolate according to Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life; religious discipline according to Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life.

(...)

The Pauline Family has received it as a sacred heritage; this knowing that to receive Christ according to the “three necessary principles for salvation” is a matter of life and perdition for all; and to receive it more fully means being Paulines.⁴

In this “sacred heritage” we seem to gather in synthesis the theological setup that fuses the charismatic and ministerial identity of the Pauline Family.

We shall then seek to develop it in the second part of the study, by bringing to light the Christological centrality and the Trinitarian, anthropological, ecclesiological and eschatological turns that are contained in them.

* Finally, a comparative reading of the essential elements of the charism of every Institute shall allow us to highlight the aspects that are found in all the Institutes – which consists the *common patrimony*, -- and the aspects that characterize the identity and the mission of every individual Institute.

⁴ SP, genn. 1958; cf. CISP, pp. 1220, 1224

CHARISM: A GLOBAL LIFE PROJECT

The research starts off with a brief description of the term “charism,” as seen in the Scriptures and in its application to consecrated life.

The charism

“Charism” is a noun derived from the Greek verb *charizomai*, which means to be kind or generous, to give something as gift. The suffix *-ma* expresses the product of the action. Charism therefore means a generous donation, a gift.

In the Greek OT it appears only in two variations of Sirach: *Sir 7:33 Sinaiticus; 38:30 Vaticanus*.

In the NT it is relatively frequent: it is used 17 times, of which 16 in the Pauline letters and once in *1 Pt 4:10*. In some cases, the term is used more specifically, with the meaning of *a special gift distributed according to the pleasure of God for the good of each one and usefulness to all*.

In the Documents of the Magisterium prior to Vatican Council II, the term is utilized with reference to the hierarchy or to persons exceptional in virtue and miracles.

The doctrine on charisms can be traced in Vatican II either by taking leverage on passages wherein *charism* is mentioned (15 passages), or by the various terms (as vocations, munera, proprias partes, etc.) that the Council has introduced to express the same concept.

A significant point is the recourse on the theme of the various members of a single body, a theme broadly developed by St. Paul (*1 Cor 12* and *Rom 12*). The numerous Pauline passages, taken in their wholeness, allow one to understand charism as a *global life project*, thus avoiding to narrow attention only to some of its components.

Let us cite here the “notes” on charism on which scholars agree, elaborated on the basis of Pauline theology and on the principal Documents of the Magisterium.

The charism of consecrated life

In order to understand the charism of consecrated life in its entirety and of the Institutes in particular, the *Relatio ante disceptationem* held by Cardinal G. B. Hume at the Synod of Bishops on consecrated life in 1994 is enlightening:

The theological category now widely used and held as more suitable to express the variety and internal unity of the consecrated life is that of **charisms**. The term can be used *in general terms*, “the charism of consecrated life,” to indicate all forms of consecrated life, and in a *specific* sense to indicate the unitary synthesis of the various aspects of every particular Institute (no. 8).

The term *charism*, used in an inclusive and generic manner, designates all forms of consecrated life that, as a whole, constitute a state or an order of life distinct from lay persons or from sacred ministers (cf. *IL 67*). It can be used to indicate some common characteristics of the nature of consecrated life. During these years, the magisterium has clearly defined the fundamental elements that constitute consecrated life, the meaning and the expressions of its prophetic character that are not to be reduced to the socio-economic or political spheres.

It seems to us useful instead to recall some common characteristics that are at the base of understanding and of the renewal of the consecrated life: its pneumatic origin, the following of Christ, ecclesial nature, and consecration (n. 9).⁵

In order to explain the diversity of the various forms of consecrated life and the peculiarity of each Institute, the term *charism* is used in a specific manner. In this sense charism implies a specific manner of being, a specific mission and spirituality, a style of fraternal life and structures of the Institute, at the service of the ecclesial mission.

The *Instrumentum laboris* makes an abundant use of this category, indicating its elements (cf. 6; 11; 81), deepening the different dimensions (cf. 41-46), putting it in relation with the local Church (cf. 73-77), with inculturation (cf. 94, 102), with communion of various charisms (cf. 40). It recognizes that it is the global key of interpretation (cf. 11;46) that has been of valid help for renewal (cf. 23; 34). Because of this, each Institute has to deepen the essential nucleus of its own charism (cf. 46) (...).

The charism of an Institute:

- includes an *originating and vivifying relationship* with the Spirit and an *experience of Christ* giving a special place to his mystery and/or ministry of his;
- states a *special relationship with the Church*. This being ecclesial is the basis of communion and of the specific service (cf. *IL* 2; 14; 56; 68; 72-74; 76-77; 110-111);
- indicates the *integration and the synthesis of the different elements* that influence each other reciprocally: consecration, spirituality, mission, fraternal life, structure.
- *requires continuity with the charism of the Founder*. Thus as a famous text of *Mutuae relationes*, along the lines of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Paul VI, expresses it: “The same charism of the Founders is manifested as an experience of the Spirit, transmitted to their own disciples so that it may be lived by them, watched over, deepened and constantly developed in harmony with Christ’s Body in perennial growth” (*IL* 45). It is then in faithfulness to the charism of the Founder that it is “necessary to make the synthesis of the various elements, of consecration and of the mission, through the faithful actuation of the legislative dispositions of each Institute” (*IL* 86e; cf. 23; 47; 60-63; 77; 85-86; 97) (no. 14).

Some distinctions⁶ in the phenomenology of charism

In the attempt to specify, scholars often take recourse at a varied terminology:

- *Charism as to a founder*: a gift of the Spirit to a Christian in view of the creation of a new institution of consecrated life in the Church. It includes: inspiration (direct or indirect) to found; the successive interventions of God that have benefited the preparation and the gradual growth of the new institution.
- *Charism of the founder*: “an experience of the Spirit, transmitted to his own disciples so that it may be lived by them, watched over, deepened and constantly developed in harmony with Christ’s Body in perennial growth” (*MR* 11);
- *Foundational charism*: the charismatic experience of the founder shared by his men and women disciples of the “first hour,” who have contributed, in a more or

⁵ For the explication of these last aspects cf. nos. 10-11.

⁶ These distinctions, conceptually useful for understanding the wealth and the complexity of the phenomenon, if *isolated*, can be subjected to the danger of fragmenting the *unitary* experience of the Spirit that accompanies the whole life of the founder and the history of the Institute. In fact, one can encounter numerous Documents of the Magisterium and some scholars reducing the aforementioned topics to a dual typology: *charism of the founder* (that includes the *charism as to a founder*, the *charism of the founder* and *foundational charism*) and the *charism of the Institute*.

less active manner, to bring it to reality and to transmit it to the following generations;

- *Charism of the Institute*: the charismatic experience of the origins destined to last through history in the measure in which it develops and, progressing, grows.

Relationship between gift of God (charism) and man's response (ministry)

Inasmuch as the charism, in a state of perennial ecclesial service, is expressed in a ministry, we recognize in the specific identity of every religious institute a dimension of free gift that comes from above (charism) together with the responsibility that elicits in each one in the industrious response of the apostolate (ministry). Meanwhile, every identity has a double connotation: the charismatic and the ministerial.⁷

Family charismatic and ministerial identity

From the observation of the studies conducted till now in the Pauline Family, it appears that individual Institutes rather emphasize their own charismatic identity. This is due probably to the fact that a study *as Family* has not been conducted yet, a study that bears in mind the different foundations of Alberione, considered in their wholeness.

Prof. Mario Midali, sdb, a scholar of the charismatic and spiritual identity of the Salesian Family, in a paper presented to the General Governments of the Pauline Family (1995) has offered an enlightening vision also for our reality:

Utilizing rigorously the Pauline language of charisms, one could speak of a *common* charismatic and spiritual experience, shared by those belonging to them to distinct groups that constitute a family, precisely according to the charismatic project of the founder. It is the charismatic experience of being family, of feeling family, of living as family and of working as family. Such a charismatic and spiritual experience concerns not one or the other component of the founder's project but all the components...

Nonetheless, such a common charismatic and spiritual experience is not uniform or flat, but *diversified*, that is, lived with characteristics that is proper to those belonging to distinct groups or branches of the single Family.⁸

⁷ Cf. B. Forte, *Le forme di concretizzazione sotrica della chiesa*, *Credere oggi* 4/1985, 28, pp. 52-64.

⁸ M. Midali, *Caratteristiche del carisma del fondatore e della fondatrice* in *La Famiglia Paolina "comunione"*, alla ricerca dell'identità carismatica. Ed. dell'Archivio storico generale della Famiglia Paolina, no. 24, Roma 1955, p. 115. Cf. Idem, *Carisma del fondatore e della fondatrice*, in *Come rileggere oggi il carisma fondazionale*, Ed. Rogate, Roma 1995, p. 46.

I. TO RECOGNIZE THE PROJECT

1. GENESIS AND PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF A UNITARY PROJECT

On the occasion of the month of Spiritual Exercises,⁹ preached in 1960, Fr. Alberione entrusts to his sons the complete description of the work that the Lord had entrusted him: the institution of a Family of different religious Institutes by now defined in their individual parts.

The progressive steps in the institution of the Pauline Family – “the foundation, development, spirit, expansion and apostolate”—have been achieved under the sign of “the hand of God”.¹⁰

The institution is proposed with unmistakable characteristics¹¹:

- * It refers to the Family of religious institutes, the “marvelous Pauline Family,” that is composed of 10 Institutions, each with well-defined specific tasks;
- * the different Institutes are united by a common origin: general end, the same Pauline spirit; convergent, cooperating, dynamic activities, nourished by a single lymph, Jesus Eucharist;
- * every institute has its own approval, its own government, its own Constitutions, its own administration, its own apostolate.

Presenting the Church as *a great parish*, Fr. Alberione locates these religious institutions within it as the “directive”¹² part; that is, in order to indicate the teaching and pastoral responsibility of their members.

To them is entrusted the duty of “representing” the Master-Shepherd who introduces himself to men as Truth, Life and Way of humanity (cf. *Jn* 14:6); Christ Jesus, who is at the center, rather, the center of the history of salvation, according to the saving plan of the three Divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, through the four manifestations: creation, redemption, the Church’s era and eschatology.¹³

The description of this spiritual and apostolic body as Family can be considered as the conclusive moment of a long journey of listening to the Lord’s appeal in industrious response through his practical actuation. It is an itinerary that developed in more than fifty years and which is shown as having remained substantially faithful to what Fr. Alberione had received, although in germinal form, in prayer and in reflection ever since his adolescence and his first years of priesthood.

⁹ Preached in Ariccia in 1960 for a whole month to those who, among the Paulines, were authoritative recognizes as “the seniors,” provincial superiors and not. The *Istruzioni* have been gathered later in the book, *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei* (UPS). (Translator’s note: The text used in this translation is the translated version by Fr. Mike Byrnes, SSP, Society of St. Paul, General House, 1998).

¹⁰ Cf. UPS I, p. 17.

¹¹ Cf. AD 3; UPS I, p. 381ff; UPS III, p. 185.

¹² Cf. UPS I, pp. 372ff.

¹³ Cf. G. Alberione, *Via humanitatis*, Christmas 1947.

In fact, just as he witnesses himself in the charismatic history *Abundantes divitiae gratiae suae*, the Pauline Family was the “second idea” that Alberione, then a young priest, presented to the Lord in his morning prayer until the years following the “definitive step” taken in 1910:

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 (December 1953) still limited: for [their] intellectual, spiritual and financial cooperation. His second thought was the Pauline Family (AD 25).

On the gradualness of development and understanding of God’s work entrusted to him, Fr. Alberione, many years later had this to say:

The Lord lights the lamps, ahead of me, gradually as I walked and as needed, he does not light all of them at once at the beginning, when they were not yet needed; he does not waste light; but he always gives it at the “opportune time.”¹⁴

In fact, feeling profoundly obliged to serve the Church and mankind of the new century with whom he would live, he oriented his whole self – his thoughts, his prayer, his spiritual work and his aspirations – to see to it that his inner inspiration should find, progressively, concrete turns. He remembers this himself:

From then on these thoughts were the inspiration of his reading, his study, his prayer and the whole of his formation. This idea of his, which at first was quite confused, became clearer and with the passing of time became more specific.¹⁵

God showered many riches on the Pauline Family: “*divitias gratiae*”. Some seemed to come more as a natural result of events; others more often from the good example of enlightened and holy people who supervised the period of the preparation, birth and early life of the Pauline Family. [But] other riches were more clearly the work of God’s action.

At times the Lord constrained him in a paternal way to accept gifts for which he felt a natural repugnance. The same was true for certain promptings to push ahead. Ordinarily nature and grace worked together in such a way that one could not distinguish between them but [it was] always in the same direction.

For greater tranquility and trust he has to say:

1) That both the beginning and the continuation of the Pauline Family always proceeded in a twofold obedience: [to] inspirations received from the Lord in the Eucharist and corroborated by his Spiritual Director, together with the express will of his ecclesiastical superiors.¹⁶

It is in the environment of the diocesan Seminary of Alba (Cuneo), at the school of Canon Francesco Chiesa,¹⁷ that he learned the importance of integrality and of completeness for Christian life in the approach to the Lord Christ, in the vision and understanding of man, in the missionary urgency that is expressed through pastoral action.

Thus could we synthesize his ideal of life:

* the Master to know and assimilate is Jesus, the Divine Master, the complete Teacher, the Way and the Truth and the Life, the Good Shepherd;

* the person, to whom the message of salvation is addressed, is to be considered in the globality of his faculties: mind, will and heart;

¹⁴ SP, aprile-maggio 1959.

¹⁵ AD 21; cf. also AD 20.

¹⁶ AD 27-29.

¹⁷ Cf. AD 191ff

* The Pauline apostolate, inasmuch as it universally addresses “to all, in all ways, with all means” have to be characterized by an intense pastoral longing;

* The proclamation of the whole Jesus Christ to all men – that the Pauline Family, “in the spirit of St. Paul,”¹⁸ feels “indebted”¹⁹ to the whole world – this must be brought to reality through “the fastest and most fruitful means for doing good”²⁰ and the expressions that technological progress continually offers.

1.1. *The influence of Tametsi futura and of Teologia Pastorale by C. Krieg*

Under the guidance of his theology teacher, Can. Francesco Chiesa, Fr. Alberione sensed ever more the preoccupation that the message of salvation should reach all men, and the whole man, in the integrality of the person. This is thanks to the assimilation of the encyclical *Tametsi futura* of Leo XIII during his formation years in the Seminary in Alba.

The Pope, presenting Jesus redeemer of mankind, recalls that redemption is perpetuated through the centuries on “three necessary principles of every salvation”²¹:

- first principle of salvation: Christ Way
- second principle of salvation: Christ Truth
- third principle of salvation: Christ Life.

And he concludes: “Therefore, common good requires that we return to where we should never have distanced ourselves, to Him who is Way, Truth and Life; let not just individuals return but the whole of human society. We need to reintegrate in it, as his possession, the Lord Christ, and to see to it that the members and the parts of the social organism, the codes of law, the national institutions, the schools, the family and marriage rights, the

¹⁸ AD 93

¹⁹ Cf. *Rom 1:14*

²⁰ Thus did the Founder write in the *Relazione* presented to the Bishop of Alba on 23 November 1921 and by him annexed to the letter written on 31/12/1921 to the Sacred Congregation of the Religious, with which he asked the *nihil obstat* for the erection of the SSP as diocesan congregation (Cf. G. Rocca, *La formazione della Pia Società S. Paolo, 1914-1925, Appunti e documenti per una storia*, Roma, 1982, p. 565).

Concerning the apostolate of the Pious Society of St. Paul, Fr. Alberione clarifies, from among the means, “especially that of the good press”. It has to be underlined that the good press is to be seen as *a means* although the first and the principal. The accent, however, also here, is decisively placed on the person of Christ Jesus: it is his Kingdom that is to be “spread”, and “the salvation of souls” is always his work. As for the rest, Fr. Alberione knew how to transmit such a concept very clearly and the first young people proved that they understood it well! The young Giaccardo proves it, he who talks about the good press as the *actual mission of Jesus Christ*. One reads, for example, the following passage written on 28/2/1917: “This idea, in all its parts, is developing in me: the Press is the actual mission of Jesus that must, with faith in Jesus Christ, penetrate the society of Christian civilization; it is the mission of propagation and penetration of the Gospel, hence a mission *proper* to Priests and hence there ought to rise the missionaries of the Press. I second to this idea, just as it is already written in the preceding note. Everything considered, I can see myself in these days of formation: or in the days during which Jesus, formator of Clerics, missionaries of God, founder of the Church, directs my spirit, defines my sphere of action, determines and reveals to me my mission in the Church and forms me for it” (Cf. G. T. Giaccardo, *Diario, 1913-1925; 1942-1946, pagine scelte*, Ediz. CSP, Roma 1997, pp. 44-45).

²¹ Leo XIII, *Tametsi futura*, novembre 1900, n. 6

houses of the great and the workshops of the laborers, quench their thirst and drink of that life that flows from Him”²²

Furthermore, in the same period, Fr. Alberione “took a great deal from two great teachers” of pastoral, *Swoboda* and above all *Krieg*. Of this last author, the young Alberione read, adding on it some personal notes, the work *Teologia Pastorale*, published in 4 volumes in the Italian translation of 1913.²³

Precisely in this work of Krieg, and precisely in the first volume *Cura di anime speciale*, we think we can find the principal elements for the understanding of an organic pastoral project centered on Christ, Way and Truth and Life, a project that could eventually be found in the foundation of the articulated Pauline Family.

Cornelio Krieg speaks of three *benefizi* (benefits), either as work of Christ or as a need of the soul:²⁴

1. The “Word” eternally true. One could achieve salvation in Christ only by assimilating the *truth* through the path of morality; preaching is the first “path of grace”.
2. The “Sacrament”: performs justification and reconciliation on the soul, hence, “*life*”.
3. Jesus leads us with his Spirit, with his strength he sustains us, with doctrine and example, he teaches us the right discipline and with the positive law of the Church he draws the “path of life”: *way*.

From these springs flows the water of new life:

* on the pulpit is written in invisible letters: Ego sum Veritas;

* on the altar: Ego sum Vita;

* on the confessional: Ego sum Via (the way of new life).

Certainly, this division is theoretical-scientific. In practice the three offices form a single unit and they are fused together, just as in the person of Christ all three undividedly put together.

Unity then is guaranteed by the constant reference to the person of Jesus Christ, from where spring also a three-fold diaconate, with multiform demands in such a way that these are expressed according to specific gifts:

The priest exercises a three-fold diaconate of Christ and of the Church, and each requires the specific gift proper to it, intellectual and moral, as if a special vocation, proper disposition and formation, inasmuch as also the demands of each of the three offices are different.

Indeed, the curate is an individual person; in each duty he has to put in the service of God and neighbor all of himself, entirely consecrated to God: preacher, proclaimer of God’s word, sheds light from above and effectively projects it on hearts; liturgist..., celebrates the divine sacrifice drawing from it, with the Sacrament, the beneficial waters for souls... The director of souls, however, as tasked with the third office, has duties that are truly special... In no other ministry, as in the individ-

²² Leo XIII, *Tametsi futura*, novembre 1900, no. 20 (translation ours).

²³ Cf. AD 84

²⁴ Cf. C. Krieg, *Cura d’anime speciale*, 1913, pp. 43-44.

ual care of souls, the person is in contact with the very person... Already the word care for souls says by itself personal contact with the faithful.²⁵

Forty years later, our Founder would pick up these features with which Krieg describes the tasks of the Pastor of souls in notes of considerable importance for the charismatic history of the Pauline Family:

It pleased the Lord for us to have four Congregations; but we can say, “Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor... Simul ergo cum in unum congregamur, ne nost mente dividamur, caveamus.”

There is a kinship bond among them, because all of them issued from the Tabernacle. [There is] a sole spirit: those who represent everyone in their prayers for intercession at the Tabernacle; those who spread, as from above, the doctrine of Jesus Christ; and those who are in direct person-to-person contact.²⁶

Another of Krieg’s work, that has strongly influenced the line of thought and on the methodology adopted by Fr. Alberione, is the *Enciclopedia scientifica e metodologica delle scienze teologiche*.²⁷

In particular, dealing with pastoral theology, Krieg affirms that it “embraces three particular disciplines.” That is:

1. The science of administering the *truth of salvation*, that is, of the magisterium, indicating pastoral didactics...
2. The science of the ministry of the priestly office of *saving grace*, so called Liturgy, because of which the science bears the name Liturgical.
3. The science of managing the *kingly office or of regimen*, ecclesiastical discipline, or special Pastoral.

As it appears evident, this layout by Krieg sheds light on the choice made by Fr. Alberione towards pastoral theology and on the “synthesis” achieved in the trinomial Truth, Way, Life. It is an orientation that also marked, and decisively at that, his line of action in the foundation of the Pauline Family, performed, so we think, according to a harmonious project.

1.2. The foundational writings of Fr. Alberione and the Pauline Family project

The authors who, in the Seminary, formed the pastoral mentality of the future priest Giacomo therefore prove to be a credible source for a deeper study on the unitary project of the Pauline Family. Furthermore, to find, also in the first publications of the young Fr. Alberione, the presence, although in *germinal* form, of this Family project is useful to describe the genesis: to reconstruct this background allows us to go to the roots of our history in order to better locate in it its development. Proceeding chronologically, let us examine the two most important publications:

²⁵ C. Krieg, *Cura d’anime special*, 1913, pp. 66-67.

²⁶ AD 33-34.

²⁷ Along this theme, cf. F. A. Da Silva, “*Evoluzione del pensiero di Don G. Alberione*,” paper presented at the “Corso di formazione sul carisma paolino,” Rome, November 1997, unpublished.

* *Appunti di teologia pastorale* (1 ed. 1911; II ed. 1915)

Going through the pages of the book *Appunti di teologia pastorale*, we do not find explicit references from the author that directly make one think of a proximate and intentional foundation of religious Institutes or even more of a ‘Family’ of Institutes. Nonetheless, the pastoral ‘passion’ that moves Alberione, the ardor with which he wants to reach *at everything* and *to all*, and, even more, the global perspective that foresees around the pastor *all the human resources* concentrated on the proclamation of salvation, induce us to think that he was already well oriented on what to do ‘for the Lord and for the women and men of the new century with whom he would spend his life,’²⁸ with the help of ‘generous people... teamed up into an organization.’²⁹

In particular:

- * the pastor must possess a broad vision, rather complete, of the needs of the parish, confronted with the needs of the whole Church and of the world;
- * the qualifying note of the priest is zeal for souls;
- * the zealous pastor knows how to involve in pastoral action all the categories, ecclesial and social, of his parish;
- * the pastor must not miss the animation and care of vocations;
- * he has to pay a special attention at the good press and its spread;

There are places where a proper society, so-called ‘La società della buona stampa’ takes care of the diffusion of pamphlets, books and good newspapers. Use has to be made of roving libraries and also of bargain subscriptions to the better newspapers; he covers the expenses with many means among which are collections and lotteries.³⁰

It is not to be forgotten that also eventually Fr. Alberione thought of and spoke of the Pauline Family by comparing it to ‘a great parish’:

These institutions [Institutions of the Pauline Family] are, as it were, the steering committee, just as in a big parish you have the pastor, the assistant pastors, Catholic Action, counselors for catechetics, the movies and the press, leaders for youth activities, sodalities for men, those in the arts; groups for the sick, vocations, church music, social and political action, charitable works, the conversion of separated brethren, atheists, unbelievers, and the like.³¹

Furthermore, not to be left unmentioned, is that precisely while Fr. Alberione was engaged in drawing this pastoral manual for the Alba clergy, he, in the Seminary as spiritual director, was carefully following up the formation of the first young man of the future Pious Society of St. Paul: Giaccardo, Giuseppe, ‘who had to be prepared for the Pauline Family’:

In 1913, a further step was taken toward the fulfillment of his desires...³²

Ever bearing in mind the future beginning of the Pauline Family, he was thinking of personnel who had to be prepared [and] looking for young boys and girls and training them.

²⁸ AD 17

²⁹ AD 19.

³⁰ ATP02, p. 279.

³¹ UPS I, p.381.

³² AD 101

At Narzole (Cuneo), where he worked in parish ministry for nine months (in anticipation of the end of his studies) in 1908, he found boys with good qualities of mind and heart. Among them was the pious and intelligent Giuseppe Giaccardo. He started him off in the seminary, underwriting his expenses. When he was transferred to Alba (end of 1908) as Spiritual Director of the Seminary, he cultivated his spiritual life, preparing him for the Pauline Family.³³

* **La donna associata allo zelo sacerdotale (1 ed. 1915)**

In this work, the young Fr. Alberione, after having written at length about women – moral assistance to man and of the duty of the priest in the formation of women for Christian apostolate – in a reference to sisters, makes to appear an organic and articulated “project” wherein to gather the forces of good in order to be more effective in the work of evangelization.

Regarding apostolic zeal, in fact, he invites the religious women to organize forces in order to become more incisive in action: many although distinct, “common end, according to each one’s spirit and according to one’s sphere of action”:

As regards to zeal, it would be good to remember the letter sent by Princess Cristina Giustiniani-Baudini, President of the Union of Catholic Women of Italy, to all the institutes of religious women. With full approval of the Holy Father Pius X, she invites the communities of women religious to adhere to the general feminist-Catholic movement. And this has a singular value: inasmuch as there is no doubt that these aforementioned communities constitute a truly considerable force: on one hand it is very clear, for him who considers things from above, that there are cases wherein it is absolutely indispensable to be as if one body, all guided by the same head.

It is well known: each institute shall contribute to the common end, according to its own spirit and according to its own sphere of action, but unity of direction, in common interests, and this constitutes the strength that individuals do not have. Is it not perhaps the religious institutes that are the target of anti-Christian sects? Now it is just proper and also duty-bound that they defend themselves with all their strength. In Italy the female religious congregations are strong, if they counted themselves they would be so charged, if they acted *in external action*, with a single directive, they would achieve much.³⁴

It is precisely during the years when comes to light this book--wherein Fr. Alberione describes his vision regarding women, pastoral ministry and the ministry of priests--would be born, at short distances from each other, the first Pauline religious Congregations:³⁵ on 20 August 1914 the *Pious Society of St. Paul* is started and, following, in 1915, the *Pious Society of the Daughters of St. Pau*; in 1924, it would be the turn of the *Pious Disciples of the Divine Master*, the third congregation of the Pauline Family.³⁶ Since their beginning, they, in the intention of the Founder, are closely bound to each other in an apostolic

³³ AD 103-104. Confront in the following numbers the same intentions as regards Torquato Armani and Costa Desiderio.

³⁴ DA01, pp. 335f.

³⁵ A documentation regarding the historical events of these Congregations could be read in: G. Rocca, *La formazione della Pia Società S. Paolo, 1914-1925, Appunti e documenti per una storia*, Roma, 1982; C. A. Martini, *Le figlie di San Paolo, Note per una storia 1915-1984*, Roma, 1994; R. Cesarato, G. Oberto, *L'albero visto dalle radici*, leaflets 1-2, Roma 2000.

³⁶ It is significant that in the following years, the Founder did not tire of reminding these Institutes, and also the Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd born later, that he had them already present in his heart since he was writing the book, *La donna associata allo zelo sacerdotale*.

project of broad horizon, as he himself lucidly documents during the following years in an autographed note addressed to the Pious Disciples:

In 1908 I started to pray and asked others to pray so that a religious Family of withdrawn life would be born, a family dedicated to adoration and to the priestly and liturgical apostolate: entirely Jesus the Divine Master's, present in the Eucharistic Mystery. Why? Because they would become the source of graces, from which other religious Families, more specifically dedicated to the apostolate, would draw.

Eventually, while continuing to pray, the manner of life of this Family and the concrete form of relationships with the Families to be founded, became better delineated.³⁷

To this body of religious men and women would be united, since the first years, a group of lay cooperators and benefactors which, through time became ever more numerous: this active presence of the laity in the Pauline Family today is called the *Association of Pauline Cooperators*.

In 1916 and subsequently, following the start of the Pious Society of St. Paul, he felt he had to add a kind of Third Order. [It would consist of] persons who wanted to improve their Christian life, in harmony with the Pauline spirit, by linking it to an apostolate carried out by means of prayer, works and offerings: "Unione Cooperatori apostolato edizioni".³⁸

The style of life, the spiritual environment, the organization of the apostolate wherein these institutions live and grow present an explicit physiognomy of "family". This is further documented by the term "*Casa*" (House) ordinarily utilized in publications and in communications addressed to friends and cooperators to inform them regarding the development of the Pauline body³⁹ that in these years had begun to manifest itself in its foundational relationship with Jesus Christ Master.

1.3 *Jesus Truth-Way-Life: criterion for the spiritual and apostolic formation of the Pauline Family being born*

In the *Casa*, the principal devotion is given to the *Divine Master: He is the way, the truth and the life*, and also the priests of the *Casa* were called, in His honor, *maestri* and the Daughters of St. Paul, *maestre*. To Him, present in the Eucharist, perpetual adoration is made, to Him are dedicated the *Disciples of the Divine Master* and the *Pious Disciples*.⁴⁰

The charismatic principle on which it is founded is the fact that everything in the *Casa* is complementary⁴¹ and the Pious Disciples "know how to love much and serve well the Divine Master and those that preach his Gospel"⁴² by giving, with the Daughters of St. Paul, an organic vision of the Divine Master, synthesized in the binomial Gospel-

³⁷ PD46, 21-22.

³⁸ AD 122,

³⁹ An abundant documentation of this lexicon is found in *Primavera Paulina* and in the *Diario* of Blessed Giaccardo.

⁴⁰ Cf. UCBS, no. 6-15 giugno 1924; no. 8, 15 luglio 1924, in *Primavera Paolina*, pp. 369-371.

⁴¹ Fr. Alberione indicates the theological roots of the unity of the Family in the Divine Master: cf. AD 33-35. Cf. also CISP.

⁴² UCBS giugno 1924 in *Primavera Paolina*, p. 370.

Eucharist. “The Daughters of St. Paul take care of the Gospel of the Divine Master... the Pious Disciples take care of the Divine Master and of his ministers.”⁴³

Beside the foundation of the male branch, the gift of female discipleship expressed since the beginnings of the *Casa* with the presence of the Daughters of St. Paul and of the Pious Disciples, of the men and women Cooperators, in the ecclesiology of communion, remains a great challenge even today.⁴⁴

In the month of January **1924**, the explicit coupling between the Christological title of “Master” and the trinomial “Way, Truth and Life” of John 14:6 appears to have been achieved.⁴⁵ In the same year, there is the news of the book exposition of the Gospels on the Altar and beside the Tabernacle, and in other places of the *Casa*.⁴⁶ Fr. Alberione taught that the same devotion to the Tabernacle be given to the Gospel: “The Divine Master, in order to unite to himself the whole man, gave us his teaching and himself: The Gospel and the Eucharist.”⁴⁷

The Pauline Cooperators, readers of the bulletin *Unione operatori buona stampa*⁴⁸ are also informed that the “Month of the Divine Master” has been established with the explanation that “we celebrate it in *January*: a month of meditations on the teachings and on the graces that the Divine Master grants us”, he who “is in the midst of us and from the Host, wants to enlighten us”. Thus he reveals himself precisely as “the Master” inasmuch as he “is *the way* that leads, *the truth* that illumines, *the life* that sanctifies.”⁴⁹

The apostolic prayer⁵⁰ of the *Casa* was expressed in those years also with the *Pauline of-fertory* prayed in the male and female communities in order to educate everyone to feel the “thirst for souls as Jesus.”⁵¹

The Founder himself, since his most serious sickness in 1923, found himself associated as *small victim* at the Lord’s Easter. It was not just a matter of a *formula prayer* to be recited as much as it was in order to transmit to the members of the *Casa* a profound spiritual experience of identification with the Divine Master⁵² and of a precise itinerary of discipleship ratified in the *dream*⁵³ wherein the words written in all Pauline chapels throughout the world: “*Nolite timere, Ego vobiscum sum. Ab hinc illuminare volo. Cor poenitens tenete.*”

⁴³ UCBS 15 novembre 1924 in *Primavera Paolina*, p. 374.

⁴⁴ Cf. UCBS ottobre 1923 in *Primavera Paolina* p. 274.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Primavera Paolina* p. 209; Sgarbossa E., *Gesù “il Maestro”, Excursus storico-carismatico*, p. 40-41; Cesarato R., loc. cit., p. 175-176.

⁴⁶ UCBS ottobre 1923 in *Primavera Paolina*, p. 296

⁴⁷ UCBS 29 dicembre 1924 in *Primavera Paolina* p. 849.

⁴⁸ Cf. Sgarbossa E., *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

⁴⁹ That month of meditations was preached every day by Maestro Giaccardo. Cf. *Primavera Paolina* p. 211.

⁵⁰ Cf. Cesarato R., Oberto G., *L'albero visto dalle radici*, pamphlet 2, pp. 21-24.

⁵¹ Cf. UCBS 26 febbraio 1924; Colacrai, A., *Per chi sente sete di anime come Gesù*, ASGPP, 1985.

⁵² “The Pauline families are the result of countless sacrifices, prayers, offerings over many years”, AD 163. Cf. AD 64, 151, 161-164.

⁵³ Cf. AD 151-158.

In the following years, the 30s, Fr. Alberione utilizes more explicitly the Johannine tri-nomial “Truth-Way-Life” (cf. Jn 14:6) in order to motivate unity and multiplicity of the Institutes making up the Pauline Family from its beginning and in its progressive development.⁵⁴ Let us not forget, in fact, that since the first years of life, missionary expansion characterizes the different Congregations and the Pauline Institution knows no bounds: the opening of new houses abroad, in all continents, follow one after the other. A beautiful testimony of the Pauline Family as unitary life project we have in the letter written by Fr. Alberione on 4 August 1931 to Fr. Saverio Boano and to Fr. Benedetto Trosso, the first two Paulines who crossed the ocean for the Americas. In this letter, program guidelines for future foundations were drawn.⁵⁵

In **1933**, the Founder clearly indicates the purpose and the program of the Mother House of the Daughters of St. Paul in Borgo Piave (Alba), under the light of Truth-Way-Life: “The new quarters must be a center of light, a center of virtues, a center of grace: 1) *Center of light and of truth...*; 2) *Center of virtues...* 3) *Center of prayer...*”⁵⁶

On October **1936**, Fr. Alberione applies, even more clearly, the same scheme to the Institute of the Daughters of St. Paul: “You are a teaching institute above all through the Apostolate of the Press. Let your Institute be complete, that is, representing Jesus-Truth through teaching, Jesus-Way through the exercise of Religious Virtues and Jesus-Life through prayer. In this manner you shall represent the whole Master. But in order to give to men Jesus-Truth, you need studies and editorial work, of technical work and diffusion.”⁵⁷

The Founder enunciates such affirmations in a sermon entitled, *Direzione spirituale e natura del nostro Istituto - Gesù Verità*. Fr. Alberione bears well in mind the distinction of the Daughters of St. Paul into “Paoline” and “Discepole”⁵⁸ and, as regards this last, he underlines silence⁵⁹ as their characteristic, an expression of their eucharistic-liturgical apostolate. The coupling Jesus Truth-Paulines (press apostolate) seems already present.

In April **1937**, the Prima Maestra, Tecla Merlo, announcing the birth of a new Institute for women in *Eco di Casa Madre*, writes that the Lord “calls the Daughters of St. Paul for other works of Apostolate” and she introduces the new “Group” of the *Casa* “that shall take care of Pastoral works” having as their primary purpose “the glory of God and their own sanctification by living Jesus, Good Shepherd” and as a secondary end “to ω-

⁵⁴ For this section, cf. F. A. Da Silva, “Al centro sta Gesù Cristo Via, Verità e Vita”, *sintesi delle relazioni del Seminario sulla Spiritualità della Famiglia Paolina* (2984), complete paper at the International Seminar on “Jesus, the Master,” Ariccia 14-24 October 1996, unpublished.

⁵⁵ The letter is published in *Mi protendo in avanti*, Ed. Paoline, 1954, pp. 138-139.

⁵⁶ Cf. UCAS, 11-12 (1933) 20-21. Cf. C. A. Martini, *Le Figlie di San Paolo, Note per una storia 1915-1984*, Roma, 1994, p. 195.

⁵⁷ G. Alberione, *SS. Spirituali Esercizi, Istruzioni alle Maestre* – Ottobre 1936, Roma-Alba, Pia Società Figlie di S. Paolo, pp. 122-123.

⁵⁸ For example, “The Daughters of St. Paul and the Pious Disciples are on the same level” (*Ibid.*, p. 18).

⁵⁹ “The Paulines shall be watchful to respect the silence of the Disciples and these shall be watchful in observing it.” (*Ibid.*, p. 68). “The Disciples have their wealth especially in silence; for as long as they remain silent with men in order to speak with God, they shall remain rich! So is it with the Paulines” (*Ibid.*, p. 146).

operate with and serve the zeal of Pastors of souls, with a triple action”. This triple action is founded clearly on the trinomial Truth-Way-Life: “*CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION: Catechism..., Conferences, the Press... Other means of culture., CHRISTIAN FORMATION... CHRISTIAN SANCTIFICATION.*”⁶⁰

At the end of **1938**, when the institution for women of the *Casa* already appears formed into a single congregation with three branches, Fr. Alberione applies once more the scheme Way-Truth-Life, being careful to lead to the “Good Family of Saint Paul”:

From the Baby Jesus I ask for you good vocations for the three Apostolates: of the press, liturgy, pastoral, according to the divine will; but the whole Family shall be united in the devotion to Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life; and in the joyous obedience to the Prima Maestra, who, above all and first of all, takes care of the persons and the religious sanctification of all the Sisters belonging to the three apostolates and, as mother, guides the three sisters that are journeying side by side, extending their hands to one another.⁶¹

We find here the “three apostolates” (press, liturgical, pastoral) placed in relation with Truth, Life and Way; although the correspondence among the works and the Christological trinomial of *Jn 14:6* is implicitly clear. The unity among the three Institutes is given by the total dedication (which falls under the name *devotion*) to the person of Jesus Christ and by obedience to her who represents him (the Prima Maestra); the distinction, although in the order of unity, is expressed in the different forms that the apostolate assumes: press, liturgy, pastoral activity.

Even more explicitly, we find this correspondence in an unsigned text, perhaps of **1940**, where the Christological title of Master is indistinctly pointed at the three groups concerned:

In the single Congregation, there are, however, three Apostolates: that of the Daughters of St. Paul, that of the Pious Disciples and that of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

They honor the Divine Master, Way, Truth and Life: the Daughters of St. Paul more directly attend to the works of the press apostolate, Truth; the Pious Disciples attend more directly to Eucharistic and liturgical worship and to the family chores, Life; the Sisters of the Good Shepherd attend more directly to the works of Christian formation, seconding the zeal of the pastors of souls.

... As the Daughters of St. Paul zeal, in a special manner, for the *Famiglia Cristiana*, so the Pious Disciples for the *Bollettino Liturgico*, and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd for *Vita Pastorale* and *Pastor Bonus*.⁶²

1.4 The Family grows. In spite of difficulties and misunderstandings the project remains the same: Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life.

The same correspondence between the works of the institutions for women and the trinomial Truth-Life-Way we find clearly expressed in a text of 10 July 1941:

Your Institute has the purpose of reproducing integrally Jesus Christ. Hence, your position, your mission, is very high. In order to reproduce Jesus Christ integrally, there are the Daughters of St. Paul,

⁶⁰ Cf. D. Ranzato – G. Rocca, *50 anni di una presenza pastorale. Le Suore di Gesù Buone Pastore, 1938-1939*, Roma 1988, pp. 34 and 185.

⁶¹ Cf. CVV 75.

⁶² Cf. D. Ranzato – G. Rocca, op. cit., p. 199.

the Pious Disciples, the Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd: Truth, Life, Way. The three parts reproduce the whole of Christ: the merit of one part redounds for the advantage of the other two.⁶³

In a climate of obvious difficulties in the relationships among the three “parts” forming the Congregation for women and also with the Pious Society of St. Paul,⁶⁴ during the Spiritual Exercises to the Daughters of St. Paul in October 1941, Fr. Alberione declares:

Every soul that wants to live charity ought, in imitation to Jesus, to give to souls the truth, to give good example (way) and grace, with prayer (life). But also as Community, we need to have this charity and to reproduce Jesus Truth, Way and Life.

Now, your Congregation is complete in its parts, because there is one that gives the truth, another to perform the works and another, to give the Eucharist.

The Community, composed of the Daughters, of the Pastorelle and of the Pious Disciples, must be the true image of Christ, of His mystical body. Hence, intimate charity must circulate among you. Say: Among us all, we reproduce Christ. And the more perfectly the truth, the works and grace is given to souls, the more perfectly is Jesus Christ reproduced. It is then a threat to the Community to sustain disagreements among the three groups. It is to destroy Christ’s work. If in other Congregations failures in charity have a certain weight, in yours they have more serious weight.

Unity is found in Christ and in the obedience to the Superior General. Failures lead the Community to destruction. We ought to serve the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ. ‘Pro corpore Eius quod est Ecclesia.’⁶⁵

Also in his preaching, gathered in the same text, *Esercizi alle Maestre*,⁶⁶ he reaffirms:

You do not have a generic end, but a special end: your apostolate, and each in her proper place...

If you will be faithful to your apostolate, you shall always be worthy daughters of the Church and Jesus shall always be with you. The Institutes flourish by the degree they remain faithful to the interior life and to their specific apostolate.

During the first years of my Priesthood, I had the occasion to find myself in a village of about 4000 inhabitants. There was a most zealous Pastor who, in 20 or 25 years that he found himself there, had renewed everything in the village after the system of Cottolengo, rooting his work aside from the Clergy, also on the Sisters.

He had with him a Vice Pastor and a Chaplain; but, inasmuch as these were very busy with priestly ministry that demanded much work as one should think that in that village 2000 of 4000 persons approached the Sacraments weekly, he could not reach everyone as he would have wanted. So, he had a group of Sisters come. To them he entrusted the charitable works: hospital, old folks’ home, the poor, and also other small activities as the distribution of St. Anthony’s bread, etc.

Seeing that these sisters were not enough, he had other two or three Sisters of the same Institute come and to them he entrusted the care of the Church and the organization of the parish activities: sacred songs, cleanliness, vestments, preparation for ceremonies, etc. Eventually, he had other Sisters come (always from the same Institute) and he entrusted to two the elementary schools and the teaching of Catechism; to others, he gave the care of the parish library and of the bulletin; to others he entrusted the care of a work shop and then also of the young and of the women to whom they were conducting conferences. He established then the perpetual adoration. In short: in a short time that village was completely renewed. And the Sisters were only twelve: always moving about and active. During the war, they even had an information office for the prisoners. In all their apostolates, these Sisters depended, aside on the Superior of the Mother House, on the Pastor who distributed the various activities through the local Superior.

See, then, how we can be united with the Priest! For you, your Priest is the Society of St. Paul and your Superior is the Prima Maestra...

⁶³ In C. A. Martini, *Le Figlie di San Paolo, Note per una storia 1915-1984*, Roma, 1994, no. 85, p. 227.

⁶⁴ Cf. AAVV, *L’eredità cristocentrica di Don Alberione*, pp. 86-87.

⁶⁵ *Esercizi alle Maestre*, Ottobre 1941 (private), Roma-Alba, [1942], pp. 107-108.

⁶⁶ *Esercizi alle Maestre, 1941*, pp. 110ff.

If we walked precisely according to the spirit of your institution, we ought to arrive at this: Italy should be as if a great parish wherein the Pastor, not being able to perform all the tasks, make use of you and you, in his dependence, ought to renew all souls through your apostolate. This ought to be your position.

Unity in diversity was certainly not achieved easily. We know the declaration of Fr. Alberione himself, contained in *Abundantes divitiae* that bears witness to the suffered and complex path traversed by the Founder and by his young sons and daughters in view of the constitution and of the canonical approval of the Institutes making up the Pauline Family.

From 1914 until 1944, there was always a certain internal agony due to the fundamental problem: how to keep unity of spirit and at the same time the administrative and directive independence among the four Pauline Congregations.⁶⁷

More clearly yet:

Conform with the Canon Law existing since 1917 and seek spiritual unity in Jesus Christ Divine Master⁶⁸. There was a long period of experimentation and wavering, not without its suffering.⁶⁹

Fr. Alberione had, all the while, clear conviction: “oneness of spirit,” “spiritual unity,” in Christ Master. As for the practical actuation, he was not lacking in “internal pain,” with different experiments and “wavering.”

1.5 Towards the progressive juridical autonomy of the Institutes: 1946-1948

The years following World War II see our Founder engaged in the more precise definition of the Institutes for women, specifically, in the canonical recognition of the Pious Disciples. From 1945 to 1948, the history of this Institute and, as a consequence, also of the Daughters of St. Paul, documents an alternation of requests for the Pontifical Approval until the *Decretum mortis* of the Pious Disciples dated 24 August 1946. The solution of the delicate situation would be had on 12 January 1948 with their Pontifical Approval.

During this time, Fr. Alberione, in order to clarify the specificity and the autonomy of each Institute constituted in the unity of the Family, thus expresses himself:

The three institutions: Daughters of St. Paul, Pious Disciples, Pastorelle, are well distinguished as to their end, in means, in spirit, destined to carry out three marvelous missions in the Church; in these missions they have means of livelihood and of sanctification.

The manner with which they are born and the first steps have brought about uncertainties and some communion of apostolate. But at the point that they have reached, it is time that they are differentiated by their activity, their way of presenting themselves, in the spirit: before God, before the Church and before the faithful.

Hence:

- 1) Let their respective Constitutions be well read: performing deep considerations before the Holy Tabernacle.
- 2) Let the Sisters of each institution wear only, always, everywhere their own habit.
- 3) The Sisters of each institution shall exercise only, always, everywhere, their own specific apostolate. If for some serious reasons and temporarily in the actual moment some excep-

⁶⁷ ADds, p. 20.

⁶⁸ The manuscript text says “Jesus Christ Master and Shepherd”, eventually modified with “Jesus Christ Divine Master.”

⁶⁹ AD 132.

tions should occur either as to the habit, or as to the apostolate, from case to case basis, the consent of the Superior General of the Sisters, whose habit they wear and whose apostolate they would want to exercise, is needed, while noting that:

- a) The press, the provision, and the diffusion of books and periodicals belongs to the Pious Society of St. Paul and to the Daughters of St. Paul: hence, reference is to be made to them as for the acquisition of books or for the assignment of territories. They, Pious Society of St. Paul and Daughters of St. Paul, should abide with the established rules.
 - b) The manufacture of religious objects belong to the Pious Disciples, concerning this, reference has then to be made to them.
 - c) The parish action is proper to the Pastorelle.
- 4) Each institution shall pay to the others and to the Pious Society of St. Paul, and this to them, as regards work, provisions, services, etc.
 - 5) A just compensation for religious services shall be established, everywhere.
 - 6) The Pious Society of St. Paul shall render just compensation for the services of the Pious Disciples.
 - 7) As soon as possible, each institute shall document to its name, assume the titles and administer the properties that belong to them, performing the divisions, where needed: where possible.⁷⁰

1.6 On the occasion of the 40th foundation anniversary: *Mi protendo in avanti*

About the 1950s—when the canonical approvals have by now leveled the delicate controversy between unity of spirit and independence of the Institutes and the Congregations are assuming autonomous development as regards formation of members, the apostolate and government—in the preaching and in the writings of the Founder we find more explicit and organized his references to the Pauline Family as a conglomerate articulated in Congregations.

The celebration, and the related preparations, of the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the Society of St. Paul and of the Pauline Family (1954) were the propitious occasion for expressing with greater clarity also to lay cooperators and collaborators, the charismatic and ministerial identity of the numerous Family of religious Institutes. For this occasion, Fr. Alberione, not without any resistance, entrusts to his sons who insistently requested it from him, manuscript notes wherein he narrates very explicitly his experience as Founder: it was as if a charismatic testament. Already somehow utilized in the commemorative book *Mi protendo in avanti*, it eventually found place in different publications for the Special Chapter of the SSP and of the FSP in 1969 with the title *Io sono con voi*. The final critical edition bears the title of *Abundantes divitiae gratiae suae*, and all the Pauline Institutes recognize it as the *charismatic history of the Pauline Family*.

It pleased the Lord for us to have four Congregations⁷¹; but we can say, “Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor... Simul ergo cum in unum congregamur; ne nos mente dividamur, caveamus.

There is a kinship bond among them, because all of them issued from the Tabernacle. [There is] a sole spirit: to live Jesus Christ and to serve the Church. [There are] those who represent everyone in their prayers of intercession at the Tabernacle; those who spread, as from above, the doctrine of Jesus Christ; and those who are in direct person-to-person contact.

There is a close-knit collaboration among them [on the] spiritual, intellectual, moral and economic [levels],

⁷⁰ SP, ag.-sett 1947.

⁷¹ We are in the year 1953.

As regards government and administration there is separation; but the *altrice* of the other three Congregations is the Pious Society of St. Paul.

There is separation, but there is, too, a deep-rooted bond of charity that is more noble than blood ties. They are independent of one another, but there is an exchange of prayers and help in many ways. There is a separation of activities, but there is a sharing of joys and sorrows, and of the eternal reward.⁷²

Furthermore, always in the same climate, in a *handwritten text* of Primo Maestro, written in Rome on 23 May 1954, without any title, one could easily capture the harmonious vision of the Family as a whole, an icon of the Divine Master Way, Truth and Life: an icon that proclaims the truth that inspires grace, and communion of life, that exhorts to conversion and apostolate. Autonomy and union are well defined in order to facilitate the achievement of particular and general ends together: an organic synthesis, fruit of a long and also suffered experimentation, certainly, but above all gift of the Spirit of God who, through charity, builds unity in diversity, just as in the different parts of the same body (cf. 1 Cor 12-13).

Gathered in *Carissimi in San Paolo*, it bears the editorial title, THE PAULINE FAMILIES: CENTERED ON THE DIVINE MASTER:

In the complex of the four Pauline Families, the Divine Master is represented as one who presents to men the truth, the way, the life. The Pious Society of St. Paul with the Daughters of St. Paul represent Jesus who says: 'I am the Truth'; the Pious Disciples represent Jesus that says, 'I am the life'; the Pastorelle represent Jesus who says, 'I am the way.'

The four Families complete one another for the achievement of the common goal, to save souls: then to the Society of St. Paul is given the Christian doctrine in general; while to each is the application, with the prayer of the Pious Disciples and with the action of the Pastorelle.

There is among them a right separation and in each one a right autonomy; while among them there is union and tight spiritual, economic, moral, intellectual collaboration. Autonomy or separation has the purpose of easing the achievement of the ends of each one; of making government more simple, agile and active; more real and appropriate are formation and preparation for the religious life and the apostolate; more secure is the development of persons and works; more serene is the living together, better controlled is administration, which is in itself difficult because of so many needs for means and of initiatives.

⁷² AD 33-35. – Fr. Alberione would reaffirm the same concepts ten years later, in 1964, for the "celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Paulline Family":

"It pleased the Lord to prepare for the service of the Church and of souls a Family married in its mansions, but spiritually guided by the Pauline Priests.

"This varied Family is always the same in the spirit: the devotions to Jesus Divine Master, to the Queen of Apostles, to St. Paul the Apostle.

"The different institutions have their own tasks, but they are really one in their end: to serve the Church according to the needs of the times.

Such institutions were born according to the needs and the ways opened by the Lord.

The preoccupation has always been this: to unite the contemplative life to the active. Active life has its source in the contemplative life.

"Another idea that served as guide: the use of the means of today; and thus utilized to correspond to current needs...

"On the 50th year from the start: the grace and the will of the Lord was clearly manifested... The Pauline Family was born under the eucharistic light of the Gospel, to live the Gospel, to communicate to men of today the Gospel, especially with today's means" (cf. AAVV, *50 anni a servizio della Chiesa coi mezzi di comunicazione sociale, la famiglia paolina dal 1914 al 1964*, EP 1964, pp. 5-7).

Every Congregation has duties so complex that if they were gathered in one Institute, we would have disorganization and continuing suffering in everything and in everyone.⁷³

1.7 The Family grows with new members

* The Institute Regina Apostolorum

San Paolo of July 1957 publishes the meditation that Fr. Alberione made at the Regina Apostolorum Sanctuary on 29 June, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination. Thus he introduces the *Institute Queen of Apostles*,⁷⁴ which is being born:

Immense are the needs of humanity, of the Church and of souls; and it is understandable that everywhere works and initiatives are proposed, but works will not be done if there are no people; and these will produce much by how much they are grafted in Christ. There is electricity at low and high tension. The religious life is the spiritual current at high tension, it is the poetry of the personality in Christ, the generator and nourisher of heroisms. Hence comes the need for vocations in all religious and ecclesiastical sectors, in the spirit of the two pontifical works for vocations, for the secular clergy and for the religious life. On this directive the Institute Regina Apostolorum for vocations is built. It goes ahead according to Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life: his example and his teaching. Good and sufficient vocations constitute the great current need of the Church in all parts of the world.

On December 1957, the Founder is happy to present the first activities of this new Institute:

The Institute "Regina Apostolorum" for vocations has opened a "Course on life orientation" by correspondence, in which could join all young men and women who must still choose their state in life: from 9-10 years of age to about 18-20. It would be useful also for those who should direct the youth in their choice of state in life...

The initiative can be advantageous for every vocation house in Italy, because the Institute "Regina Apostolorum" shall take care of informing each House about the best elements of its area. In other countries a similar course, promoted by Catholic universities, has brought forth fruits."⁷⁵

The foundation of the new Congregation can be understood as a response to the urgency for vocations that accompanies, from the first Seminary years, the whole life and the works of Fr. Alberione. On this regard, to reread what the young Giacomo already noted in his *Diario*, circa the years 1901-1902, could be significant:

Man must follow his vocation.

1. Because it is only in this way that he shall find satisfaction of his desires.
2. Because only in this way shall he find happiness.
3. Because only in this way can he certainly achieve his goal.
4. Because it is only in this way that God has sowed the necessary graces.
5. Because every other way is not in conformity with his inclinations, with his subjective dispositions.
6. Because man must concur to what is in himself to form the unity that God wills in nature.
7. Now God has wanted that for this unity every man should follow the path traced by Him. Hence man must concur to form such unity.
8. God has known this truth, that is, we shall enter this defined path (the Word) and He loves him (love).

⁷³ CISP, pp. 137-138.

⁷⁴ By expressed indication of Fr. Alberione the official foundation date of the Institute is 8 September 1959, feast of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the day wherein the first religious professions were made privately in Castelgandolfo (Rome).

⁷⁵ SP, dicembre 195

9. Now we must love God and do what He wills, but this does not happen if we do not love what He loves, that is, the truth, and in our case that determined way. Hence we must love and first know and then follow that path.
10. Then, he who does not take that path cannot love the truth; and he who does not love the truth does not love God, and hence he cannot obtain His graces, and neither can he pursue it.
11. Besides, how can man be happy if he does not follow his inclinations, his choices, supported by reason? He shall not be able to acquire honor in his state; he shall never be able to say: *Desiderio desideravi*, I willed, I so believed and thus I do; for every trouble, for every sacrifice he shall lament: Oh! If only did I not take this path! But this would cause sorrows, remorse; it would heighten pains, hatred towards his life, against himself; every little thing will seem to him serious, painful; he shall lose peace, he shall be unhappy.
12. Hence, do you know your life? Follow it, you shall love it. Is it perhaps a despised path, full of sacrifices? Better yet. You shall show the world that you are of strong spirit, a spirit that is not that vile as to be ashamed of the truth, as to fall before danger, before an obstacle; you shall make sacrifices, but remember: sacrifices done for love ennoble and strengthen the spirit, it brings the spirit to paradise, they make love grow, they make of life an antechamber of eternal repose. On the other hand, God does not forget anyone and his graces shall be sowed on that path that he has indicated you.⁷⁶

* The Institutes aggregated to the Society of St. Paul

The Apostolic Constitution *Provida Mater Ecclesia* on Secular Institutes, issued by Pius XII on 2 February 1947, offers Fr. Alberione the occasion to reflect, pray for and work so that the Pauline Family would be enriched with this new and precious form of consecrated life. After a period of silent, but well directed, attempts, in 1958, three Institutes are added to the well provided number of Pauline religious Congregations: the Institutes *Jesus Priest*, *St. Gabriel Archangel*, and *Our Lady of the Annunciation*. And this is either in view of a numerical growth of persons involved in the Pauline spiritual and apostolic adventure, or for enriching the Family with a new presence, different from the preceding, by its form of consecration in the world. Faithful to his objective of “totality” and “integrality”, by which he has been moved since youth, Fr. Alberione still desires to involve “*all men, with all the strengths, through all vocations, by means of all apostolates*” so that “*the whole Christ may reach the whole man.*”⁷⁷ Thus we have diocesan priests, consecrated lay persons, men and women, who, although remaining with their families and in their work environments, aggregated to the Society of St. Paul, the *altrice* of the Pauline Family, participating at the Pauline vocation, consecration and mission of “*giving to the world Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life.*”

1.8 *The definitive synthesis contained in Ut perfectus sit homo Dei*

As it is known, in the month of April 1960, the Founder convokes in Ariccia the more senior confreres for a special course of Spiritual Exercises lasting for one month. He is well aware of his being near the final accounting. From here comes the great value that the members of the ten Institutions of the Pauline Family attribute to the words that Fr. Alberione says in this circumstance – words collected into four volumes, *Ut Perfectus sit*

⁷⁶ Cf. *Sono creato per amare Dio*, pp. 25ff.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Offertorio vocazionale* given by the Founder to the Apostoline Sisters.

homo Dei (UPS) – and this is also understood by all as the spiritual-apostolic testament of the common Father.

The Founder affirms that the Family unitary project is, by now, considered finished.

In the course of *Instruction I*, during the first week of the Exercises, he narrates:

As regards the component parts of the Pauline Family, I was guided every step of the way by obedience concerning their foundation, development, spirit, expansion, and apostolate.

In a matter of such great responsibility three ingredients have proved necessary: the assurance of divine inspiration, the advice of the spiritual director, dependence on legitimate superiors..

These are the ways that the Church teaches and makes available “*ne in vanum currerem aut cucurissem.*”⁷⁸ These were the ways I followed exhaustively, making use of the insight of people more learned, pious and trustworthy.

I have felt the hand of God; a fatherly and wise hand, in spite of the countless shortcomings, for which I recite, trustingly, in the Offertory prayer: “*pro innumerabilibus peccatis, offensionibus et negligentis meis.*” The houses sprang up and developed almost spontaneously, following the line my superiors taught me, arranged for and had me fulfill from 1900 onwards...

We shall present the Lord with a second report. This will deal with our priestly ministry, apostolate and office: “*ut referat unusquisque propria corporis, prout gessit, sive bonum sive malum.*”⁷⁹

The PAULINE FAMILY is now complete.

1. The *Pious Society of St. Paul* which is, as it were, the Mother of the other Institutes, and has to give them the Pauline spirit, while it fulfills its apostolate in conformity with the second article of the Constitutions.
2. The *Daughters of St. Paul* who have a corresponding apostolate, but directed from the point of view of women, in harmonious cooperation, in accordance with the thinking of the Holy See.
3. The *Sisters Pious Disciples of Jesus Master*, with their apostolates: eucharistic, priestly service in the houses of the Pious Society of St. Paul, liturgical.
4. The *Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd*, whose purpose, in accordance with their talents and condition, is to cooperate with parish priests; they bring the Pauline spirit into direct contact with individual persons and people at large.
5. The *Sisters of Mary Queen of the Apostles*, who are still in their adolescence; their goal is prayer and vocation initiatives, with the motto “all vocations, for all the apostolates.”
6. The secular Institute of “*Jesus the Priest*” for the diocesan clergy, with the characteristics, the benefits, and the duties attached to similar institutions.
7. The secular Institute of *Saint Gabriel [the Archangel]*, whose members are men consecrated to God and dedicated to the apostolate in the world and with the means of the world.
8. The secular Institute *Our Lady of the Annunciation*, whose members are women consecrated in the Lord and dedicated to apostolates in the world and with the means of the world.
9. These three secular Institutes form, as it were, a Pauline union; they are aggregated to the Pious Society of St. Paul and are definitively approved; first of all, they cooperate with it [SSP] in the world; they profess the three usual vows, which they practice in conformity with the pontifical documents, under the guidance of the Superiors of the Pious Society of St. Paul.
10. The *Cooperators’ Union* embraces those lay people who, in accord with their status, want to imitate the Pauline life and give it their contribution of prayer, works, and offerings.

With these characteristically international organizations, each with its own apostolate, the Society of St. Paul can extend its riches to all and give Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life to the world.

Such fervor and life-giving light must flow from the Pauline priest, who has here a great and delicate ministry. Thus, secondly, what is needed is his updating to the various Institutes, so as to give what is his to give, in conformity with the rules of Canon Law, and to receive in exchange that which conforms to the nature and the spirit of the Church.

⁷⁸ “... that I might be running, or have run, in vain” (Gal 2:2).

⁷⁹ “... that each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil” (2 Cor 5:10).

A great responsibility! There must be that one *spirit* which filled the heart of Saint Paul: “*cor Pauli, cor Christi*”; the devotions are the same; and the various goals are geared to a common and general goal which is to give the whole Christ to the world, in the way he defined himself: “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” (Jn 14:6).⁸⁰

Then in the course of *Instruction XII*, always of the first week, he reaffirms:

[I wish] to clarify several points in this instruction: What is the task of the Pauline Family? What is its make-up? What means does it use? To whom does it address itself?...

It has pleased the Lord to continue to give me the health and the possibility of being able to complete the Pauline Family with the three Secular Institutes begun after the 1957 General Chapter. They are making headway, with Aspirants, Novices and professed members...

These institutions are, as it were, the steering committee, just as in a big parish you have the pastor, assistant pastor, Catholic Action, counselors for catechists, the movies and the press, leaders for youth activities, sodalities for men, those in the arts; groups for the sick, vocations, church music, social and political action, charitable works, the conversion of the separated brethren, atheists, unbelievers, and the like.

These Institutes find their link in:

1. their common origin;
2. their general purpose;
3. their same Pauline spirit, albeit in the diversity of their tasks;
4. their converging, interacting and dynamic activity which is nourished by the one sap...⁸¹

Furthermore, in the course of *Instruction VII* of the third week, he says:

Thus Divine Providence has placed side by side with the Pious Society of St. Paul, the Sisters Daughters of Saint Paul, the Pious Disciples, the Pastorelle and the Apostoline Sisters (Regina Apostolorum).

Completing the Pauline Family are:

The Institute of Our Lady's Annunciation;

The Institute of Saint Gabriel the Archangel;

The Institute of Jesus the Priest.

These are parts of the Pious Society of St. Paul; they depend, in accordance with their own rules, on the Superior General.

They have pontifical and definitive approval.

Each Institute has its approval.

Each Institute has its own government.

Each Institute has its own constitutions.

Each institute has its own administration.

Each Institute has its own apostolate.

All the Institutes taken together form the Pauline Family.

All the Institutes have a common origin.

All the Institutes have a common spirit.

All the Institutes have converging goals.⁸²

1.9 A handwritten declaration of 1963

Although in the vision of 1960 the Founder presents the Pauline Family as “completed,” in reality, afterwards, the heart of Fr. Alberione does not cease to expand, pushing him to new horizons. What has been achieved till now is only “a beginning” as one can read in the following handwritten *Declaration* left to us in his *notebooks*.

⁸⁰ UPS I, 17, 19-20.

⁸¹ UPS I, 372ff.

⁸² UPS III, 184ff.

Declaration

Our Institutes for women, according to divine inspirations, ought to have at their sides, with parallel goal, a respective institute for males (Example: Salesian men and Salesian women). Thus the Daughters of St. Paul has beside and with parallel goal, the Society of St. Paul.

In concrete:

Pious Disciples for the liturgy and Priests for the liturgy and adoration.

Pastorelle and Pastors.

Apostoline and apostles.

It has not been possible for me to accomplish everything inasmuch as young people have to be trained until the priesthood. It has been started: the Sisters prepare young people in pre-vocation institutions, some will reach the priesthood – in the Society of St. Paul – in time, after the course of pastoral they shall constitute aside nuclei and shall form the male part of the female Institutes already consolidated and operational.

This is the holy inheritance to my successors: to complete the work.

Ariccia, 19 August 1963

Sac. Giacomo Giuseppe Alberione

1.10 *The spiritual testament*

Fr. Alberione, by now aging 83 years, writes his spiritual testament on 6 August 1967. Like an old patriarch, he entrusts to his sons and daughters his last desires and last recommendations, whatever was most precious that guided his life and intends to leave them as a spiritual heritage. In these few but final lines still emerge the *unum necessarium*: the incomparable gift of the “Divine Master Jesus, Way, Truth and Life” and the immense value of life entirely dedicated to Him: a religious and apostolic life geared towards the highest perfection.

Dear members of the Pauline Family,

as temporarily we part ways, trusting of being reunited eternally together...

I thank one and all for the patience with me; I ask pardon for what I have not done or have done badly. I am nonetheless certain that the direction I have given is substantially in conformity with God and with the Church.

Of infinite value, as life and devotion: Jesus Christ, Divine Master, Way and Truth and Life; may he illumine the whole process of religious perfection and apostolate.

According to my heroic act for the deceased and the many liturgical Masses for the priestly Congregations (before 1914) of St. Philip, of St. Francis de Sales and of the Castagnole (high parish) that I have always accomplished: I expect the Masses in my suffrage, as it is my right. – I have accomplished everything for all the Brothers.

The Brothers, the Sisters and the Cooperators and friends whom I have served: I expect suffrages and Holy Masses as your duty of charity.

Always follow St. Paul the Apostle, teacher and father; always follow, love and preach Mary, our Mother, Teacher and Regina Apostolorum.

Benedicat omnipotens Deus, Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus: omnes.⁸³

On 26 November 1971, when Fr. Alberione closes his earthly days and joins the numerous Pauline community that has already passed to eternity: surrounded by his numerous sons and daughters, he assures his participation with the Pauline Family on earth and in Heaven.

⁸³ SP, dicembre 1971, pp. 3-4.

I intend to belong to this marvelous Pauline Family, both now and in heaven. There, I shall concern myself with those who use the most effective modern means to do good: [working] in holiness, *in Christo [et] in Ecclesia*.⁸⁴

It is precisely in such a circumstance that his last dream is realized: married couples ready to embrace the proposal of consecration, according to their state of conjugal life. Thus is born the *Institute Holy Family* in completion to the aggregated Institutes already well established.⁸⁵

2. THE PATERNAL HERITAGE GATHERED BY SONS AND DAUGHTERS

2.1 *The Center of Pauline Spirituality in Ariccia (Rome): an attempt at Family spiritual animation*

The awareness that the spirituality, centered on Jesus Master and Shepherd Way, Truth and Life, is common to the whole Pauline Family and that the Society of St. Paul has, in this matter, a precise duty of animating the different Institutions of the Family, suggested to the Chapter Assembly of the Society of St. Paul in the years 1969-1971 the institution of a “Center” that, precisely, should study and promote the spiritual heritage received from the Founder.⁸⁶

The members of the CSP

The Center had to be presided by a priest assigned full time, and by a group of priests who would periodically meet.⁸⁷

The General Governments of the Congregations for women of the Pauline Family, eventually, took into consideration the proposal of integrating to the Center of Spirituality, permanently, those sisters representing their own Congregations. In fact, Fr. Giovanni Roatta affirms – we are now in October 1974 – that “from some Pauline Government” there is “a clear and decided will to give to our spiritual life that attention and that organ-

⁸⁴ AD 3.

⁸⁵ Romano Paolo, *Chi ha fondata l’Istituto Sacra Famiglia*, in *il Coopertore Paolino*, gennaio 1999, pp. 12-14. Furthermore, see the witnessing of Gauss, Fr. Furio in *Pastor Bonus*, dicembre 1972, pp. 13-16 and giugno-luglio 1973, pp.27, 46-48.

To the Institute Holy Family may be applied the saying: “last in execution, first in the intention.” In fact, already about the years 1930, Fr. Alberione, regarding the vocation of the *religious*, wrote: “also special possible conditions for the married person and for the secular, for as long as he is in the condition of performing his duties” (DF 236)

⁸⁶ The constitution of the Center of Pauline Spirituality (CSP) was unanimously decided upon by the General Chapter of the SSP, on 19 June 1971 (cf, SP, *Informazione sul Capitolo Generale*, n. 20, p. 7), upon the proposal of Fr. Giovanni Roatta.

⁸⁷ At the beginning, the CSP was presided by Fr. G. Roatta; eventually, aside from the priest, the presence also of Bro. Disciples was foreseen.

izational vigor that is indispensable to it, in view of the revival of our internal and apostolic vitality. Then it was thought that a greater consistency, in personnel and possibilities, be given to the miniscule Center of Spirituality existing in Ariccia. The subject matter soon extended to the Government of the five Pauline Congregations, and this has marked the first impulse towards a plenary meeting, on the level of the entire Pauline Family.’⁸⁸

Duties of the CSP

1. Study and spread of the spirituality of Christ Master and of the spiritual and pastoral doctrine of St. Paul.
2. Study of Mariology according to Vatican II and our Founder.
3. The collection and presentation of the writings of Fr. Alberione.
4. Study of Pauline spirituality along the line of social communication...
5. Study of the manner with which to place under the disposition of the Church... the Pauline spiritual vision.
6. Relationships with Institutes and Periodicals on spirituality, with participation in congresses and ecclesial initiatives.
7. Availability towards Superiors for eventual retreats and spiritual exercises.
8. Availability towards the Superior General for the spiritual activities that he shall deem opportune for the Congregation or for the Pauline Family.⁸⁹

The aims of the CSP

The CSP, in its renewed form, officially constituted on 12 May 1975 by Fr. Zanoni, Superior General of the SSP, now included representatives of almost the whole Pauline Family. In the official “Orientamenti”, the *aims* of the CSP were thus expressed:

- a) The study of the spirituality common to the Pauline Family, as lived and taught by Fr. Alberione, with due respect and promoting, in the deep unity of spirit willed by him, what differentiates and characterizes the individual Congregations and Institutes.
- b) The spiritual animation within the Pauline Family and, progressively, within the Church, according to opportunities and the manners that would become available.⁹⁰

The activities of the CSP

Since about 1976, the CSP in Ariccia continued its activities above all in the person of Fr. G. Roatta and of Fr. A. da Silva (since November 1975). The Pious Disciples gave full-time contribution through the presence of one person at the Center of Spirituality.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Cf. *Camminiamo anche noi in novità di vita*, no. 17, marzo 1975, p. 33.

⁸⁹ Cf. SP no. 10, ottobre 1971, p. 11.

⁹⁰ Cf. *Camminiamo anche noi in novità di vita*, Supplement to no. 18, 1975, p. 2.

Fr. G. Roatta, wrote in 1978: “As we moved on, the idea of the Center was perceived by the various Pauline Congregations as an initiative of common participation, inasmuch as all, although with their own nuances and wealth, participate in and live intensely of the same single spirit. The initiative has made modest progress, and continues to exist, although it has become aware, above all, that everything has still to be studied more deeply, lived and led to better accomplishment.”⁹²

During those years, from 1974 to 1984, Fr. Roatta carried out an intense activity as writer and spiritual animator, publishing, among others, the three volumes on *Punti di riferimento della nostra vita spirituale* and preaching and organizing spiritual exercises and courses until 1984.

The prospects of the CSP

Always according to the reports of Fr. A. da Silva in his “Appunti”, by the start of September 1985, a meeting had been programmed to study the prospects of the CSP. It was precisely during those days that Fr. Roatta died.⁹³

The meeting took place on 30 October that year, with the participation of Fr. R. Perino, Fr. G. Giraud and Fr. A. da Silva. Examined were the various stages of the Center and some hypotheses on its future physiognomy.⁹⁴

2.2 The meetings of the General Governments of the Pauline Family: in the horizon of ecclesiology of communion

The meetings of the General Governments of the Pauline Family are by now fundamental stages for the journey towards the understanding and the actuation of the unity in diversity and multiplicity. From 1983 to today, annually, the meetings are held regularly; together are taken matters for further deepening, common problems, interests that could help the sense of belonging to the Pauline Family grow and spread: mutual knowledge has grown, and with it, a clearer perception of possessing a common charismatic heritage. Even just the list of the themes discussed offers us the possibility of appreciating the journey taken.

- 1983: The bulwarks of Pauline Spirituality
(Spiritual Exercises preached by Fr. Roatta)
- 1984: For an itinerary of sanctification according to St. Paul
(Spiritual Exercises preached by Fr. Gandolfo)
- 1985: The Christocentric spirituality of Fr. Alberione
- 1986: The mission of the Pauline Family
- 1987: The ministry of unity of the Pauline Family
- 1988: Lay persons and the Pauline Family – I

⁹¹ Sr. M. Luisangela Ghigi, PD stayed from 1972 to January 1986.

⁹² *Camminiamo in novità di vita*, no 29, 1978, p. 20.

⁹³ Fr. Roatta dies in Ariccia on 2 September 1985.

⁹⁴ Eventually, CSP changed location and physiognomy. Having transferred to the General House of the SSP, it has lost this connotation of Pauline inter-congregational presence although keeping its purpose of research and study of the sources and of the works of the Founder.

- 1989: Lay persons and the Pauline Family – II
 1990: Lay persons and the Pauline Family – III
 1991: The Word of God in Fr. Alberione
 1992: The biblical mission of the Pauline Family
 1993: Planning the future journey of the meetings of the General Governments of the Pauline Family
 1994: To deepen the identity of the Pauline Family in the Church in a culture of communication and experience of communion
 1995: Charism of the Pauline Family
 1996: The Pauline Family together towards the years 2000
 1997: The Pauline Family journeying towards the years 2000
 Fixing sight on Jesus the Master
 1998: The Pauline Family journeying towards the years 2000
 The Holy Spirit in the life and in the mission of Fr. Alberione
 1999: The Pauline Family journeying towards the years 2000:
 Face to face with the challenges of the culture of communication
 2000: The Pauline Family, witness of a charismatic experience—
 common and differentiated ministry
 2001: In the new century with the heart of Alberione.

In the 5th meeting, held in Ariccia from 12 to 29 September 1987, the participants confronted themselves with the theme, *The ministry of unity of the Pauline Family*, and they produced a document with some conclusions that, in the order of our reflection, has not to be forgotten.

It is in the horizon of the ecclesiology of communion that the unity of the Pauline Family expresses its full value and its reason of being in the Church and for the world. Such unity originates from the Trinitarian communion, manifested in Jesus Christ, the Divine Master and Good Shepherd, and it is a gift to watch over and to let grow, it is a responsibility to promote and defend. Fr. Alberione, beyond all theorizations, has captured since the beginning of the century the urgency of unity for the Christian life, for the religious life, for the effectiveness of the evangelical proclamation; and in constituting ourselves as Family he prophetically responded, in docility to God's spirit, to this universal appeal by assuming the devotion to the Divine Master as the entrusting of the whole man, mind and will and heart, to the whole Christ, the Way and the Truth and the Life.

Specifically, the concluding Document affirms:

- 8 The unity of the Pauline Family, rooted in ecclesial communion, has a specific element that we call "Pauline spirit": to live Jesus Christ Way and Truth and Life, Master and Shepherd and to proclaim him to all men with all the means, in every time, according to the charism proper to each Congregation (AD 132; *III Incontro Gov. Generali Famiglia Paolina*, 1985). From it comes a biblical, liturgical, ecclesial, spirituality with a strong missionary charge.
9. The Pauline Family, made up of men and women in communion of the service of the Kingdom, renders alive and working the Founder's charism, in a dynamics of history of salvation, through a plurality of charisms. By virtue of Baptism, that makes us participants of the common priesthood, and by peculiar vocation, every charism becomes ministry at the service of the Church, of the world and of the Pauline Family itself in a reciprocal exchange of each one's own gifts.

The reflection on the charismatic and ministerial identity as Pauline Family starts off precisely from the awareness of the gift of unity in the wealth of a plurality and variety of "charisms", all oriented towards communion, all articulated to live and make live Jesus Christ Way and Truth and Life.

Beside this initiative on the level of General Governments, let it not be forgotten that this charismatic heritage of our Founder is shared also in other expressions of inter-congregational collaboration that cover diverse sectors: vocation animation, early formation, spiritual animation, etc.

2.3 The Pauline Family in the preaching of Fr. Alberione to individual Congregations and Institutes

*** TO THE SOCIETY OF ST. PAUL**

Addressing himself—either with preaching or with his writings—to the Society of St. Paul, the Founder very frequently made references on the whole Pauline Family, recalling that the Congregation has to be seen in the unitary project and inviting everyone to always keep the point of view of Family.

From among these texts, we shall quote here only those contained in the internal bulletin *San Paolo* and those taken from the *Instructions* held during the month of Spiritual Exercises in Ariccia in 1960 and collected in *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei*.

Celebrating the 40th foundation anniversary of the Society of St. Paul, together with his 70th birthday, the Founder remembers—“pensive and humiliated”—the “richness of graces” extended by the Lord to the Pauline Family:

The Pauline Family must be St. Paul living today, according to the mind of the Divine Master, working under the gaze and with the grace of Mary, Queen of the Apostles.

Having reached this hour—FOURTIETH YEAR—with the great moment of rendering an account approaching, I remain pensive and humiliated for how much the Lord expected from us; and these were not done! Does this expression make anyone wonder? It should not! Divine Goodness has accumulated on the Pauline Family such richness of graces and has opened paths so wide so that, even more, it can and must work.

Principal grace: Priests most worthy for their intelligence, dedication, faithfulness; Disciples, who are thrust forward with new initiatives; Sisters: Daughters of St. Paul, Pious Disciples, Pastorelle who are full of zeal and working in many directions...

The Pauline Family has established in its Houses about 150 tabernacles.

The Pauline Family has in its Houses about 5,000 persons.

The Pauline Family lives and works in Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, England, Ireland, Switzerland, Germany, Poland; works in Japan, the Philippines, India; works in Canada, the United States of America, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Cuba, Australia.⁹⁵

In 1957, pointing out what important steps has already been done and are being done for the different Institutions of the single Family, Fr. Alberione affirms: the Constitutions, the spirit and the apostolate of the individual Institutes “can render saints to heaven and apostles to the Church”:

Notable is the current circumstance. Three General Chapters for the three Institutions have been celebrated; while for the fourth the “Decretum laudis” is in process; and the fifth is being eagerly expected and is moving with silent, but secure steps, protected as it is by our common Mother, the Queen of Apostles, from whom it takes its name. The fundamental question that we were asking ourselves, during brief pauses, examining the past and scrutinizing the future, was this: Do these families, in their constitutions, spirit, apostolate, organizations, have a spirituality and an apostolate with

⁹⁵ SP, luglio-agosto 1954.

which to render saints to heaven and apostles to the Church? No one has raised any doubt. And the Authority invited by us has wanted to see well inside; and also on its part, there is no doubt...

* * *

- I. – A first word for the Priests. The sacerdotal office is this: to be Master Way, Truth and Life...
The Disciples with the technical part multiply what is written by the Priest and diffuses it with a wise diffusion: with the result of a single apostolate: the same are the end, the object, the destination, the fruit, the merit...
- II. – The Daughters of St. Paul, guided in wisdom by the Prima Maestra, who is always ready to accept every good initiative, thank Jesus Master who has brought them to such a holy apostolate, so fruitful with what is good...
- III. – If we consider well our principal devotions, to Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life, to the Queen of the Apostles, Mother of God and ours, to St. Paul the Apostle, in whom Jesus Christ lived and worked, we can well understand how the Pauline Family wants to give with St. Paul and with Mary the same Jesus to the world, how also He has given himself. We can therefore explain the Pious Disciples, the Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd and the Institute Regina Apostolorum for the vocations⁹⁶...

In 1959, indicting the *gathering* of the first brothers for the Spiritual Exercises that would be held the following year in Ariccia, the Primo Maestro underlines that an “aggiornamento of the members... to the Pauline Family” shall be proposed by it:

Nonetheless in our case there is another purpose: the *aggiornamento* of the members to the Congregation and to the Pauline Family; and as a spiritual testament, conclusive of the mission that the Lord has imposed on me.

I do not intend to sadden anyone; but I would invite us to reflect how we walk; and to understand well, on the other hand, the Pauline Family and its beautiful path... The Lord lights the lamps, ahead, gradually as we walk and as needed; he does not light up all, at once at the start, when they were not yet needed; he does not waste light; but he always gives it at “opportune times.”⁹⁷

At the conclusion of the Spiritual Exercises, Fr. Alberione observes that the program has been executed well, with satisfaction on the part of all the participants, starting from the foreseen “aggiornamento of the Institute to the Pauline Family”:

Humanly speaking, it could not have gone better; as regards the spirit, it was something divine; updating of our life to the Constitutions; updating of the Institute to the Pauline Family; programs for recruitment and training of vocations; re-examination of the four parts (or wheels); piety, study, apostolate, economy (human); link-up of same-language countries in view of the press and film apostolate production; updating on many points which led to such expressions as: “This is progress!” “A real eye-opener,” “This has cleared up many things.”⁹⁸

It mattered to the Founder to assure every individual Institution of the Pauline Family that he always moved “guided by obedience”:

As regards the component parts of the Pauline Family, I was guided every step of the way by obedience concerning their foundation, development, spirit, expansion, and apostolate.⁹⁹

Characteristic of the whole Pauline Family must always be the “most humble and devout service” to the Pope and to the Church”:

The Pauline Family, inserted in the Church with its apostolate following definitive approval, has the duty of rendering a most humble and devout service to the Pope in his immense parish, joining forces with the gospel sowers with the use of its own technical means. It occupies a place of great responsi-

⁹⁶ SP, luglio 1957.

⁹⁷ SP, aprile-maggio 1959.

⁹⁸ UPS I, 8.

⁹⁹ UPS I, 17.

bility, participating in the mission of the apostles, and carrying out the divine mandate: “docete omnes gentes.”

[I wish] to clarify several points in this instruction: What is the task of the Pauline Family? What is its make-up? What means does it use? To whom does it address itself?

The Pauline mission is universal as regards mankind... as regards the technical means...towards the times... as regards the object...¹⁰⁰

Fr. Alberione holds that he has by now completed the Pauline Family:

It has pleased the Lord to continue to give me the health and the possibility of being able to complete the Pauline Family with the three Secular Institutes begun after the 1957 General Chapter. They are making headway, with Aspirants, Novices and professed members.

Our life began in Jesus Christ and, like Jesus Christ's, it began in the crib: “Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.” I can assure everyone that everything has been done, only and always, by the light of the Tabernacle and in obedience. The approval then of the Church is an assurance that the Institutions are good, can lead to holiness, and conform to the needs of the times.¹⁰¹

The only origin for the whole Pauline Family has been Jesus Eucharist living in the Tabernacle:

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.¹⁰²

The Pauline Family finds unity in the common spirituality:

Union of spirit is of the essence. The Pauline Family has a sole spirituality and that is to live the Gospel in its entirety; to live in the Divine Master inasmuch as he is Way, Truth and Life; to live the Gospel as his disciple Saint Paul understood it.

It is this spirit that forms the soul of the Pauline Family, notwithstanding that the individual members (constituted by the union of Institutes) are different, and work in various fields; yet as a group they are united in Christ and in the goal of the Incarnation and Redemption, “Glory to God and peace among men.”¹⁰³

In the mission of the whole Pauline Family the presence of Mary is inexchangeable:

The Pauline Family has the mission to make known, to imitate, and to live Jesus Christ inasmuch as he is our Teacher; it will fulfill this privileged mission in a holy way by training people to know, to love and to pray to Mary, our Teacher: *dedit orbi Magistrum Jesum, qui est benedictus fructus ventris sui.*¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ UPS I, 372-373

¹⁰¹ UPS I, 375.

¹⁰² UPS II, 10.

¹⁰³ UPS III, 188

¹⁰⁴ UPS IV, 242

* TO THE DAUGHTERS OF ST. PAUL¹⁰⁵

In his preaching to the Daughters of St. Paul, the *texts* of the Founder that refer *explicitly* to the Pauline Family are not very frequent. Nonetheless, there are some significant ones:

We find a first reference to the Pauline Family in a course of spiritual exercises (of 1941) to the *Maestre* of the then three Congregations (or sectors) for women, where the Primo Maestro speaks of “Fraternal charity”:

... we need to insist and hold well that there is an obligation of love for persons in our Pauline Family (p. 103).

Further on, he continues:

... your Congregation is made up in its parts because there is one that gives the truth, one that works and one that gives the Eucharist. The community, composed of the Daughters, the Pastorelle and the Pious Disciples, must be the true image of Christ, of his mystical body... Let us say: among us, we reproduce Christ (p. 103).

We have to bear in mind that at that time, the Prima Maestra Tecla was the Superior General of the three Congregations for women, although these were already living autonomous lives.

On another occasion, in 1951, the Primo Maestro, rereads the components of the Pauline life and of their role of mediator and exhorts:

Let us love one another well: very well; just as night and day I keep all of you in my prayers, all: living and dead. I thank the Lord who wanted to give to the Pauline Family so many beautiful souls (*Lettere circolari* 184, P. 401).

While Primo Maestro is holding fraternal visitation in the communities of men and women in the United States (1952), he summarizes for the Pauline Congregations their characteristic as Pauline Family:

The Pauline Family is made up of four Congregations, well distinct from one another in government, administration, end. But among them there is coordination, a union of spirit and of mutual help that can render abundant fruits. So much separation to assure freedom of action, respect, spirit of initiative; so much union of spirit to bring about contribution of prayer and edification to one another... (*Lettere circolari FSP* 196, pp. 449-450).

Preaching the Spiritual Exercises to the FSP in Grottaferrata in 1954, the Primo Maestro affirms:

The Pauline Family [is distinguished] from the other religious families that have different apostolates... There is the diversity. Are we truly along the spirit of St. Paul? It is precisely this: It is he who points out the Divine Master, and that is, he has taken up the Gospel over which he deeply mediated and then he has adapted it to the world, to the needs of his time and to the needs of the different countries... (p. 29).

Always in the preaching of 1954 (*Pr.*, marzo-dicembre) and of 1955 (*Pr.*, gennaio-dicembre), speaking of the apostolate, the Primo Maestro affirms:

Let us consider the Pauline Family as a gathering of apostolic souls who offer themselves and commit all their strengths for mankind. We can say at the end of life: I have not spared anything for them (p. 141).

¹⁰⁵ Sources: *Esercizi Spirituali*, FSP, Alba ottobre 1941; G. Alberione, *Considerate la vostra vocazione – Lettere circolari e direttive alle FSP* (1951-1964); *Prediche del Rev.do Primo Maestro*, EP 1954 e 1955; *Appunti delle Conferenze tenute nella Settimana di aggiornamento*, FSP, Roma 1955; *Spiegazione delle Costituzioni in Esercizi spirituali straordinari*, Ariccia 1961; G. Alberione, *Vademecum – Selezione di brani sulle linee qualificante del suo carisma*, EP, 1991.

Furthermore:

Preaching can be done either with the voice or with writing; and it can be transmitted in various manners, for example, through television, radio. But editorial work is always involved: whether it concerns the press or movies or radio or television. The object is the same: the word of Jesus Christ, the word of the Church. Hence, we must consider as sacred the apostolate of the Pauline Family... (p. 131f).

We must further add that, in general, what is written by the Pauline Family, what is printed by the Pauline Family, what is diffused by the Pauline Family has greater blessings from God... It is a matter of evangelization (p. 71).

Still referring to the Pauline apostolate, during a sermon to the Pauline Communities in the “Regina Apostolorum” Church (1954), he affirms:

When a beautiful book comes out, not much is said about the author, or of the printer, or of the diffuser; we say: The Pauline Family has published such a book. This manner of saying indicates that the Family is united and forms a single thing (*Pr.* 1957, p. 137).

Always addressing himself to the FSP, he exhorts:

Our houses get by well if we make a Pauline center where all the Families are represented and let there be understanding and the mutual spiritual assistance not only through prayers, but also by good example and the holy emulation in zeal (*Collezione FSP*).

In the preaching of 1954, speaking of the “Cooperators”, the Primo Maestro refers in this context to the Pauline Family. The most significant text:

At the start, the Pauline Family had a great number of Cooperators. I hear that at times things that do not correspond to fact, to history are said. How many souls have surrounded the first birth, the crib of the Pauline Family... (p. 157).

Always referring to the Cooperators, he exhorts the FSP:

Let their strengths converge on the ends of the Pauline Family, which is the spread of the Christian doctrine through the most modern means (p. 159).

The Founder, referring himself to the problem of want of money for apostolic initiatives, strongly holds:

God wants it, and when He wants it, He prepares the means and the graces...

The Pauline Family must live on the earnings of the apostolate and when it is well established in a Country, it must raise the money for extraordinary expenses and for the development of the apostolate itself. But it must be founded on God: greater faith in the extraordinary expenses and forward with the Divine Providence (p. 147).

On the fortieth anniversary, the Primo Maestro presents a brief history of the Pauline Family, illustrating the charismatic meaning of “Fear not. I am with you...”:

Alba at daybreak, and moves on, and it reaches its splendid noontime. The work of evangelization of the Pauline Family here had its Dawn [Alba (it)=Dawn (Eng)], or beginning: it is progressing, and with the press, the movies, radio, television, it is serving the Church in the work entrusted to it by the Divine Master: ‘go and teach the nations’... St. Paul the Apostle is our Father, Teacher, Protector... The life of the Pauline Family comes from the Eucharist; but it communicates the way of St. Paul (*Circolare* 212, 1954).

Illustrating the meaning of the divine call, Primo Maestro invites work for vocations in collaboration with the Pauline Family:

We will have to take into consideration that the Pauline Families can and must render mutual service to one another, especially in this work (*Circolare* 224, 1956).

In 1960, when he introduces the great instances of the Vatican II Ecumenical Council, Fr. Alberione exhorts:

... the Pauline Family comes to bring its contribution of prayer and mortifications; according to the Pope's invitation (*Lettere circolari* 253, p. 600).

Speaking to the FSP regarding *aggiornamento*, he intends it for the whole Pauline Family:

Our Religious Family was born just recently; it is growing in persons, in the spirit and in the apostolate... We ought, nonetheless, according to the Council, review: the Pious Society of St. Paul, Daughters of St. Paul, Pious Disciples of the Divine Master, Pastorelle Sisters, the Institute Regina Apostolorum, Gabrielites, Annunciationists, Institute of Jesus Priest. Added are the Cooperators (*Circolare*, 279, 1967).

During the course of the *Extraordinary Spiritual Exercises of 1961*, the Founder reflects with the FSP on "Feeling the Apostolate" and enumerates the people who live on earth, saying:

These men who show so much activity in a continuous progress on all directions, seem all alive, while in reality they are dead, because they are without spiritual life. What must the Daughters of St. Paul do then? The Pauline Family as a whole? It tries to do what the Divine Master has done: "Dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri": turn them to children of God; that is all! (p. 232).

During the same course of *Spiritual Exercises*, the Primo Maestro also makes reference:

... to the contribution that woman can bring to the Church, to humanity with her dedication and with the strength that comes to her from her nature. Because of this the Pauline Family was not thought of only as composed of men. The Lord has willed it made up also of women (p. 362).

At the death of Prima Maestra Tecla (1964), the Founder writes:

You shall have other Prima Maestras, but only she has been above all Mother of the Institute. Perhaps this point has been less emphasized: how she directly or indirectly, and not only with much prayers, but, in various forms and ways, she contributed to the other foundations of the Pauline Family: the Society of St. Paul, the Pious Disciples, the Pastorelle Sisters, the Apostoline Sisters, the Priests of Jesus Priest, the Gabrielites, the Annunciationists, the Cooperators... (CCV 264; cf. AD 236-237 in Martini C. A., *Le Figlie di San Paolo*, p. 313).

We are in 1961 and the "*Ut Unum Sint*" Center is in full development. The Primo Maestro dedicates, during the *Extraordinary Spiritual Exercises*, a sermon on the "problem of unity," to history and, in particular to the activities of the center. Close to the Founder's heart, however, was the unity of the Pauline Family:

Ut unum sint in the Pauline Family, in the Pious Society Daughters of St. Paul, in families... finally union among Christians (p. 247).

Let us conclude this brief review with the longing of Christ which was also that of our Founder for the Pauline Family:

Ut unum sint... "Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are." The union Jesus wants is that of letting one be formed on a most high ideal: like the Father and the Son are only one, so among Christians has to be lived a unity similar to that which is among the most holy Persons (p. 247).

* TO THE PIOUS DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE MASTER¹⁰⁶

On Christmas of 1946, in a precious handwritten text addressed to the Pious Disciples, tried at that moment by the *Decretum mortis*, Fr. Alberione confides:

¹⁰⁶ Source: *Alle Pie Discepole* (PD).

I allowed myself to be guided by what my Spiritual Director always told me: “Before you undertake any work, assure for yourself a proportionate group of souls who pray, and, if necessary who offer themselves for the work itself, if you want it to be vital.”

You have a fundamental and vital mission, hidden like the roots but these nourishes the trunk, the branches, the flowers, the leaves, the fruits.”¹⁰⁷

Fr. Alberione, making fun of his own family name, compared the Pauline Family to an *alberone* (a big tree) with the deep roots and the wide branches, making numerous Biblical references with them: we then understand the meaning of this rural parable, simple and effective at the same time.

Since 1908, when the young Piedmontese priest, moved by the Spirit of God, was preparing to give life to a new religious organization intensely committed to apostolic activity, he prays and makes the clerics of the Seminary of Alba pray so that a new Congregation may be born:

A congregation of withdrawn life, dedicated to the adoration and to the priestly and liturgical apostolate: all of Jesus Divine Master present in the Eucharistic Mystery. Why? Because it should become the source of grace, from where the other Religious Families more specifically dedicated to apostolic life, would draw.¹⁰⁸

Since the beginning, the third-born among the Pauline congregations is distinguished immediately for its prayer of extended and uninterrupted adoration, for its simple, austere and joyous life, marked by an intense rhythm of work in the *Casa*, lived in an almost complete silence, in the ordinariness of domestic life modeled after the Holy Family of Nazareth. In spite of the initial limitations of their own range of action, the prayer and the life of the first Pious Disciple sisters open up to universal horizons and knows no going back. The Founder in fact remembers that one of the first charismatic intuitions has been revealed in the context of a lesson in history to the clerics of the seminary.¹⁰⁹

Guided by the Founder and by the example of Mother M. Scholastica Rivata, the Pious Disciples attach together in simplicity *ora et labora* (pray and work). Days are spent in the witnessing of the absolute primacy of charity that becomes dedication to the Eucharistic Divine Master with an intense life of prayer and habitual recollection together with a service that knows not rest and that comes to the rescue over the many needs of the *Casa*, in constant increase of members. The presence and the ministry of the Pious Disciples are always directed to watching over the natural and supernatural life by assisting its growth with a motherly heart, until its full maturation. It is the continuation of the mission of Mary Most Holy and of the women disciples of the Gospel, those who followed the Divine Master during his public ministry and shared with him and at the end there is the paschal destiny.

The reason of the presence of the Pious Disciples in the Pauline Family is expressed by the living voice of the Founder in terms of fidelity to the foundational origin:

How can one change into apostolate this [special] fruit [of the Mass]? The Pious Society of St. Paul offers for its benefactors and cooperators about 2300 Masses annually. Much more do they participate in these masses, the members of the Pious Society of St. Paul, the Pious Disciples, the Daughters of St. Paul, the Pastorine. The Disciple hears Mass for all the Disciples, for the Priests, the Religious

¹⁰⁷ PD46, 23-24. Cf. also AD 248, UPS I, 377>

¹⁰⁸ PD46, 21-22

¹⁰⁹ PD47, 42-44

and members of the Pious Society of St. Paul, the Pious Disciples, the Daughters of St. Paul, for the Pastorine. She has to feed and sustain all, and for all she must obtain good spirit and the grace they need. The Pious Disciple shall have the merit of all the Pauline Families, she shall take part at the good deeds that all are doing.¹¹⁰

The more the years pass and the Family acquires with greater clarity a juridical, spiritual and apostolic configuration, the more does the Founder reaffirm before the Pious Disciples a task of primary importance for unity in the diversity: to live and see to it that the members of the Family live, understand, love and defend the devotion to Jesus, Divine Master, Way, Truth and Life. Bearing in mind that before the Pontifical Approval the preaching of the Founder is addressed to the reunited communities of women, the FSP and the PD, we quote from the meditations to the Pious Disciples (1947-1968), some of the more significant passages wherein we can better gather the essential elements of this presence in and for the family.

The Pious Disciple shall have the merit of all the St. Paul Families, shall participate in the good that all accomplish. You, with your life of prayer and of sacrifice, nourish the roots and you give life to the trunk, the branches, the flowers, the fruits.

Would that the root is holy, or blameless; that it is well fertilized, and hence a religious life truly lived; may it be fed with the eucharistic life and well watered with prayer. Remain in humility, well hidden. Are they saying that you are servants? And Our Lady, did she not call herself the servant of the Lord? She who is at the root of the Church and of every apostolate. May you have the thirst for hiddenness as Jesus loves to hide under the Eucharistic species.

I think there should only be one fear: that of not understanding enough the nobility, the greatness, the sublimity of your call. Be even buried, take in peace the wrongs, pray the Lord He sends you so many humiliations as many as necessary for you to become roots that sink and give the grace that nourishes.

Let yourselves as well be fertilizer, compost, water, all these things are absorbed by the plants and become lymph that rises and gives life. (*PD47* [404-405]).

Then, you still have another mission, which is that of obtaining from the Lord the grace that all the members of the Pauline Family deeply possess this spirit, that they live and find in it the spirit, the peace, religious observance, sanctification and the apostolate; and not only that, but also the joy of dying in Christ and of being joyful in Christ for all eternity. (*PD57* [373]).

Bind yourselves with this commitment: "Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus, give us saints, make us saints." However, do not include only yourselves, for then you will not perform the apostolate either of prayer or of suffering. No, you should include all. The Visits would not have enough spirit if one thinks only of herself or only of your religious family. It should be an eucharistic apostolate, that is, eucharistic prayer for the whole world, in a special manner for the Pauline Family. This is fundamental; it is the first reason of your Family, yes. To obtain the salutary lymph for souls, that is to obtain that spiritual nourishment that comes from Jesus Christ and that he, as the vine, transfuses the Lord's love to all, stabilizes good will, holy desires. Yes. (*PD60* [101]).

The whole Pauline Family, its individual parts and the mission that it has in the world, is not yet understood. It is God who has wanted it. And your consecration is a special consecration, yes. Feel yourselves members of the Pauline family and feel that you complete each other. Hence, collaboration when possible. Then, you have the part of collaboration of prayer and of priestly service and of the eucharistic apostolate, therefore, the special part. Since you have a very delicate special part that influences the other parts, let there be greater attitudes of silence. It seems to me that there is need of this. Granted that there is little in the Centers; a little there is in the Pauline Family; a little of it, because there are various relationships that are not necessary in life, in society, in the Church, I think that greater attitudes for silence ought to be recalled a little more (*PD63* {168}).

¹¹⁰ PD47, 404.

The only way for reaching holiness is Jesus Christ. And this is so not only for holiness, but also for salvation.

In the Adorations, interpret the thoughts, the sentiments, the desires of the divine Host; of Jesus, in the Mass; of Jesus, in your heart when you receive him sacramentally or when you make spiritual communion.

The Christian “Pauline” spirituality: in Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life. Now, for you this is easy enough. However, pray that the whole Pauline Family takes up this spirituality and lives it and makes it live by means of the various apostolates (*PD64* {264}).

Now, then, it is time to think of that, which is your particular spirituality, which, as for the rest, must be for the whole Pauline Family. It is so in a special manner for you, because you are the Pious Disciples of Jesus Master. This means in order to live Jesus Christ. But you have as mission, as your part... that which constitutes your role in the Pauline Family, which is to obtain that particular spirit of the Institute, that is: to live Jesus Christ Master, Way, Truth and Life (*PD63* [779])

And this to live Christ and to obtain the Pauline spirit. These two tasks. Understand well your vocation; and then to obtain that this spirituality be spread to all the persons of the Pauline Family and that it is spread in the whole world. Why? Because no one reaches holiness if there is no profound faith; and docility, that is, to follow Jesus Christ, the examples of Jesus Christ, and then the grace that the Lord infuses in us, this second life, the life of grace. Then, it is how we arrive! As for the rest, there is no Christian spirit either (*PD65* [787]).

Oh, all those that belong to the Pauline Family, today, let them think of heaven. And if there are already many members (and the list is always getting longer), of members who passed on to eternity, let us ask the Lord that if they are not yet up there, that tomorrow they may enter the heavenly Jerusalem. And, for this it is up to us, tomorrow evening let there be no one still waiting. Let every man and woman be blessed, and that up there they then make an army, a choir of supplications to the Lord in order that the Pauline Family that remains on earth become holy, be holy; that no sin is ever committed; that everyone truly wants to live the embraced life, the life of consecration to God (*PD ap* [323]);

* TO THE SISTERS OF JESUS GOOD SHEPHERD

In the rich preaching addressed to the sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd, the Founder, although strongly underlining the specific elements of their spirituality and apostolate, invites them, with notable frequency, to have a precise Family horizon.

They must not “feel alone”; but *of* the Pauline Family, which is “entirely inspired for pastoral.”

Let us quote some of the more significant passages:

[616b] And so you see that, in the Pauline Family, the fundamental articles of the Constitutions are precisely this way:

- to comply with Jesus Christ way, truth and life in piety;
- to comply with Jesus Christ, way, truth and life in study;
- to comply with Jesus Christ way, truth and life in the apostolate;

and to comply with Jesus Christ way, truth and life in religious discipline, in living the day-to-day life, in usages; and then there are the constitutions that explain how we, in the particularity of life, have to live Jesus Christ way, truth and life (*PA57*, p. 294).

[617] The Shepherd who is way, truth and life, the Divine Shepherd: oh, this is the spirit of the Pauline Family; the spirit, that is different from the body (*PA57*, p. 294).

Do not feel alone, but feel belongi9ng to one Pauline Family. Do not feel alone: one harmony, one union, one charity! Open up your heart, love so much, because the Lord has been good, is so good! And he did not mind either our unworthiness or our sins; he has abounded in his mercy. Yes, the

Oremus of the mass of tomorrow says that it abounds always; he gives us more than what we desire and what we ask. The Lord is very good! And you have him always with you, in your house. So there, feel that you are members of the Pauline Family. Oh, if you want to reach this spirit, if you feel this, let us say, the strong spirit of union, of charity, the Lord shall do other things for you. Who knows what he would have written in those books! He disposes of everything in wisdom and love. And so: wisdom and love (*PA59*, p. 76).

[281] For two years now, the Pauline Family has added the three secular institutes. The secular institutes are composed of the Annunciationists, the female part; and Gabrielites, St. Gabriel protector, male; and Jesus Priest, the priests. These are consecrated to God as well and in their own time, after novitiate, their vows, their profession. They have their own trial period, their novitiate...

[285] Do also this apostolate of contributing to the Pauline Family. You see, they remain as external members, and among the apostolates that we advise and that we intend that they do, there is always this: an apostolate that serves to help our apostolates, for example the press, for example the movies, for example the catechetical activities in the parish, for example guiding the Catholic Action for women or also for men, as the case may be...

[289] Thus, the Pauline Family has grown and continues in its journey, ever forward. Other than this, there also are, outside the Pauline Family, the cooperators. (*PA60*, p. 128).

[361] You, too, belong to the Pauline Family and you also ought to look for vocations for the Pauline Family, in a special manner. The spirit you have taken from the Pauline Family, as you have received the spirit also this is useful for preserving your spirit and may it strengthen all the institutions of the Pauline Family.

[362] And we have the Pious Society of St. Paul, which has—let's say—some influence on the others. Then there are the Daughters of St. Paul, there are the Pious Disciples, there are the Regina Apostolorum Sisters, there are the Gabrielites and the Annunciationists who finished their exercises yesterday in Ariccia with a good number of professed members. Oh, then there are the priests of Jesus Priest. And, that is, those priests who, wanting to live a more pious life and to associate the religious life with the priesthood, can enroll in the secular institute Jesus Priest. These shall do their exercises now, at the middle of September. They had a course in January, now there is going to be a course about the middle of September (*PA60*, p. 141).

[59] Oh, the Pauline Family needs, all together, to reach a development that is abundant, more abundant, very abundant, and that on earth the different nations – the continents – are punctuated with houses of the Pauline Family and punctuated by small groups and especially marked by so many tabernacles where lives Jesus, who is in the midst of us. *Vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem saeculi* (Mt. 28:20).

The Tabernacle built wherever there is a group, there is a small department, small or big, of the Pauline Family (*PA61*, p. 34).

[315] And then the Pauline Family was started, thinking that St. Bernard had two qualities: knowing how to unite contemplative life with active life, that is, piety and at the same time apostolicity. Hence, he is a saint of high spirituality, a doctor of the Church! And together with an extraordinary activity, although he was a Cistercian. In order that in the Pauline family there is always a profound spirituality: and you shall do the exercises and shall do all the daily and monthly and yearly practices, and more the daily ones. And then the apostolic activity, suited for the times (*PA63*, p. 119).

[325] If you know a bit better the Pauline Family, it is entirely inspired for pastoral. The whole. That is for the souls. And if there is the press, and if there are the movies, and if there is liturgy, and if there are the sisters who must work for vocations and those who are aggregated: the priests of Jesus Priest and then the Annunciationists and then the Gabrielites: all are for the souls. Then you have the exponent of action in this. Of action, and hence you must be so intimate with the Pauline Family as to

give and take. You take and then you must be in contact directly with souls. Direct contact with souls (PA65, p. 154).

* TO THE APOSTOLINE SISTERS

Addressing the Apostoline Sisters¹¹¹, Fr. Alberione does not fail to bring to mind the reference that they must have with the whole Pauline Family. As members of the same Family, they are called to share the common spirituality and the mission of giving Christ Master, Way, Truth and Life, by living and working in the specific vocation apostolate. We quote some significant passages:

And, therefore, the mission: go, preach, teach by participating, as women, in the priestly action. Which means: *The woman associated with the priestly zeal*, the book of directions for all the sisters of the Pauline Family: the foundation is there, right there. And it was specifically written, even before opening the first house, the first institution, before gathering the first beloved daughters. Even three or four years before it was published, in order to then give in its own time to the daughters so that they may read it and orient their life. The woman associated with the priestly zeal, just like the woman of the family is associated with her husband in order to form in a Christian manner the family, to educate the children for the present life, and educate the children in a way that they may gain the future life, the eternal salvation. In the same manner, the woman is associated with the priest, just as Mary was associated with Jesus: Jesus, the Redeemer, Mary the co-redeemer.¹¹²

Today in the Pauline Family there are the sisters Daughters of St. Paul, there are the sisters Pious Disciples, there are the Pastorelle sisters and there are the Apostoline sisters. These four kinds of sisters are of the Pauline Family, they are all consecrated to the Lord and they live in the Church, and more, there is the secular Institute of the Annunciationists, which, I have already said, requires so much generosity.¹¹³

Hence, the circular letter that I am writing to send to the Pauline Family, both the male part and the female part: this year is dedicated for special sanctification, beginning on 25 January, feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, until 25 January of the following year '64. It is a special year of sanctification, intimate, internal. And what is this internal sanctification? It is the exercise of the virtue of faith, of hope and of charity, the ever more perfect exercise.¹¹⁴

We are like a cart, the Pauline Family could resemble a cart, that has four wheels, that is, the spiritual part, the intellectual part, the apostolic part, the formation-religious part. Yes. But this cart is but God. It is only he who makes it run, who started it off and keeps it running. God alone! ... It is he who gives light, it is he who moves, it is he who vivifies, it is he who brings forward in the realization of his plans... Do you think, for example, that I have made one vocation? I have done nothing! It is God who called you, it is he who created you, and he called you for this vocation. Hence, nothing is ours, everything. And every person who belongs to the Pauline Family is an act of God's mercy, he who has given the vocation and has given guidance so that that vocation should arrive at consecration, and then, consecrated to God, that soul might arrive at sanctification.¹¹⁵

Just as Redemption has been accomplished, so now the application of Redemption, the application of the grace for the salvation of souls, still Jesus and Mary, it is God's design. And there are the priestly vocations and there are the vocations of woman consecrated to God and associated with the priestly zeal. This is the highest vocation, this is the best possible way of spending our life. And therefore the great reward, the great reward that is reserved to the soul that consecrates herself to the Lord and then works.. Now, the institute of the Pauline Family is entirely made thus: there is the contemplative part and the active part, together. Contemplative, that is prayer: there are the prayers, there is the medita-

¹¹¹ The texts of the preaching of Fr. Alberione to the Apostoline Sisters (*Fonti*) are until now in the stage of publication.

¹¹² Arch. 91.

¹¹³ Arch. 134.

¹¹⁴ Arch. 134.

¹¹⁵ Arch. 143 a.

tion, there is communion, there is the mass and the hour of adoration, there are the recitations of the rosary and there are many practices. Yes!¹¹⁶

Oh! Now you must think that in the Pauline Family there is a wealth of spirituality that is a gift of the great God. It is not any spirituality whatsoever, no! A full spirituality... But real work indeed! And in this sense it is one of the institutes that guides even more the interior work of sanctification. The institutes, that is, the Pauline Family.¹¹⁷

Give much importance to the Visit! It is a great gift that the Lord has given to the Pauline Family: the adoration! This time, in which the soul orients itself, has a better look of his life, directed to heaven: do what is possible to earn heaven, as much as possible for becoming saints.¹¹⁸

In the Pauline Family, the most substantial book that must be read, reread, that forms the habitual object of meditation, of spiritual reading, what should it be? It should be the New Testament, that is, the Gospel, with the Acts of the Apostles, the Letters of St. Paul and of the other Apostles and till some chapters of the Apocalypse, and of the New Testament, above all the Gospels and the letter of St. Paul.¹¹⁹

What we have meditated till now, yes, it is of maximum importance: we all are pressed by necessity, not only of the importance, here have been organized prayers in abundance for the preparation of this vocation day, but in the Pauline Family and especially with the adorations, night and day, continuous, prayers have been offered since the first announcement, rather, since the first invitation has been received from the diocese that here a Vocation Exhibit should be held.¹²⁰

* TO THE AGGREGATED INSTITUTES

In his preaching to the members of the Aggregated Institutes, the Founder repeatedly inculcated to them the conviction that they are part of the Pauline Family. Fr. Alberione has taken care to make them understand that they should feel fully situated within the Family, with the commitment of taking up the spirituality and to collaborate, even in some special manner, with the Society of St. Paul in letting the Christian message penetrate all the spheres of society.

With the birth of the Aggregated Institutes, Fr. Alberione deems the body of the Pauline Family complete: "The Pauline Family is completed" (*UPS I*, p. 19); and he remembers that they "carry on in the world the activities (even just one of them) of the Pauline Family" (*UPS III*, p. 105).

These Institutes, to which would be added the Institute "Holy Family," are parts of a big Family, born of the Eucharist:

The Pauline Family, of which you are a part, is born from the Eucharist the night of 1900, the night between the preceding and the new century, that is, the present century. And now the entire Pauline life is founded on the Eucharist and on the Bible, in the interpretation that the Church gives to it (*MCS*, p. 471).

While working in the world, they are called to cooperate in the activities of the Pauline Family, of which they ought to feel "truly members":

The special end consists in exercising in the world the apostolate, by cooperating with the particular activities of the Pauline Family; while noting well that you yourselves, when you have professed the

¹¹⁶ Arch. 183bis.

¹¹⁷ Arch. 141.

¹¹⁸ Arch. 118.

¹¹⁹ Arch. 119.

¹²⁰ Arch. 113.

vows, belong to the Pauline Family, in a different degree, inasmuch as there is no religious habit and common life, in the strict sense of the word but you shall be members of the Pauline Family (*MCS*, p. 257).

It would be a mistake if the Aggregated Institutes considered themselves groups on their own: they are, instead, part of “a big family...”:

However, it is useful that you considered yourselves not a group on your own: you joined the Pauline Family. You know it partly, and perhaps not entirely... Feel that you are a large family, spread in many nations, 24, 26 nations; and wherever, in these nations the Pauline Family is being established. In various nations it has been established solidly.

And so I recommend to you: first, to pray for all vocations. You can do so many apostolates on the occasions that you encounter in life, but above all prayer for vocations (*MCS*, 407s).

The Aggregated Institutes are invited to give their contribution for the progress of the Pauline Family, especially in sanctification. Everyone shall direct his/her gaze on paradise, where one day the whole Family shall be gathered.

Thus the Pauline Family grows and gets sanctified. And to think of the day wherein the Family shall be gathered in Paradise, everyone happy, singing the Glory of God for all eternity; and, singing this glory, each shall have the eternal happiness, because our eternal happiness is in recognizing and in giving glory to the Most Holy Trinity (*MCS*, 408).

The apostolate of each individual Institute is a participation to the “very broad range” that the mission of the Pauline Family has:

The Pauline Family has a very broad range, it is as if a universal initiative. To everyone it is quite successful doing good and there are the means for being able to do good a bit everywhere.... In whatever part, one can do good, all the initiatives that have the approval of the Church and that are useful for the salvation of souls, all of that is good, nothing is excluded. On the other hand, it is better to invent new initiatives while they invent so much new evils and new disorders (*MCS*, 483).

Also in introducing to his children the Aggregated Institutes (at first they were thought of as “Secular Institutes”), the Founder brings to mind the great usefulness of their presence in the Pauline Family:

The Pauline Family in its specific end with such help should find its apostolate strengthened and its influence increased (*SP*, aprile 1958).

* TO THE ASSOCIATION OF PAULINE COOPERATORS

As it is known, Fr. Alberione has a decisively broad concept of cooperation and he was thinking of different manners of realizing them. In a particularly important moment, in 1953, the Founder explains that the idea of cooperation is born with the foundations, rather, precedes them. In fact, he was cultivating the idea of the Cooperators as early as 1908, seeing it founded on the gospel episode of the miraculous catch (*Lk* 5:1-11), in particular on the behavior of the apostles: “They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them.”

The cooperation is understood for the apostolate with all the means, or better still, for all the apostolates of the Pauline Family.

In the mind of Fr. Alberione, the Pauline cooperator has precise duties: individual duties of formation of self and apostolic duties. The two levels of growth are both important and have to be developed with extreme care.

The potentials of the Pauline lay cooperation are varied: in the spiritual, apostolic, ecclesial, social, universal-ecumenical, pedagogical, secular dimensions, each of which is susceptible to reflection and of fruitful developments of collaboration with the life and the mission of the Pauline Family.

Here is how Fr. Alberione speaks about it:

The Cooperator... cooperates through prayer, work, offering in order to spread the Catholic doctrine.

- a) *through work*: to bring in vocations and help them to correspond; to contribute in the editorial by writing or translating books; by establishing libraries or centers of diffusion of books, periodicals, films; to make known the Pauline Family by word, through writings, through advice, etc.; to promote days or feasts of the Divine Master in order to spread the Gospel and Pauline publications; to send good offerings for Masses for Pauline priests; to work zealously for the recruitment and the instructions of other Cooperators, to work for the subscription of periodicals and publications of the Society of St. Paul, to help and to offer hospitality to persons who dedicate themselves to diffusion, etc.
- b) *with prayer*: to use the book of the Pauline Cooperator and to follow its practices: meditation, monthly recollection, frequenting the Sacraments, examination of conscience, visit to Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist, monthly retreat. For the Pauline Family and its works one can, for example, offer a communion, a Mass, or a third part of the Rosary every week, or also to recite one of the three prayers to the Divine Master, or to the Queen of the Apostles, or to St. Paul, or else to recite daily one Hail Holy Queen, one Hail Mary. Something very good is to accomplish the devotions of the first week of the month, to St. Paul, to the Souls in purgatory, to St. Joseph, to the Guardian Angels, to the Divine Master, to the Queen of the Apostles, to the Most Holy Trinity. Above all, to possess the Pauline Spirit and the manner of accomplishing the practices of piety, with the acquisition of the indulgences granted by the Holy See to the Cooperators (*SP, aprile 1951*).

One should not consider as Cooperator only he/she who offers money; but in the first place he/she who offers prayers and perhaps part of his/her life to the Pauline Family; then he/she performs the work, for example, of recruiting vocations, writing books, articles, zeal for the diffusion, etc. These are enrolled and they participate at the Holy Masses.

To educate Cooperators means to make them live according to their state and possibilities and as much as possible, the Pauline life, the Pauline devotions, the Pauline mentality (*SP, gennaio '53*).

The Cooperators are thought of this way: persons who understand the Pauline Family and form with them a union of spirit and of intentions. They embrace, in manners possible to them, the Family's two principal goals and they give support that is possible to them; while the Pauline Family wants to promote their Christian instruction, lead them to an exemplary life and make them participants of the goods of the Congregation and the merit of the apostolate.

There is a true friendship, which is in the exchange of goods...

The Pauline Family entrusts to them its projects, gives direction for the work to accomplish, makes them participants with the pains and the joys, points out the means of sanctification through the periodical, "The Pauline Cooperator". Furthermore, the Pauline Family prays for the Cooperators, celebrates or applies for them 2400 Masses a year, be they living or dead (11 giugno 1954, *CISP* 384).

The Cooperators therefore understand the dual end of the Pauline Family, and they understand at the same time the state of the current society, the needs of the current society, the effectiveness that these means of progress for the service of man and for the service of the apostle (*Prediche del Primo Maestro, Marzo-Dicembre 1954*).

To cultivate the Cooperators means to work on these well-disposed souls in order to lead them to a more perfect Christian life, to a life richer in merits, to an eternal more abundant glory in heaven. This is the first condition and the first bond that the Pauline Family has with the Cooperators, this commitment. Hence, the publications that are done about the Pauline Cooperators are geared to this end, in the first place.

Oh, furthermore, these Cooperators must help the Pauline Family and, that is, to participate with the zeal of the Pauline Family, to participate in the apostolate in ways that is suitable and possible in their state of life (*PD58, n. 56, 58*).

2.4 The Pauline Family in the existing Constitutions and in the official Documents of the individual Institutions: the sense of belonging and the relationships among the institutes according to the charism of each.

* THE SOCIETY OF ST. PAUL¹²¹

Premise

The belonging of the Society of St. Paul to the *Pauline Family* and the close bond that binds it with the different Pauline institutions – the Family “experience” – are affirmed clearly and repeatedly in its specific documents. Considering that they express what has been thought of and lived since the birth of the Institute, we can say that the belonging of the Society of St. Paul to the Pauline Family is an essential given in its genetic map. Therefore, one cannot think or talk of Paulines outside the relationship with the only Founder and Father, Fr. Alberione, and with the numerous brothers and sisters; all of whom, although in the variety of forms, are committed to a single apostolic project: to give to the world, Jesus-Christ, Way, Truth and Life.

1. BELONGING

In the *Constitutions-Directory* (1984) the belonging of the Society of St. Paul to the Pauline Family is explicitly affirmed only in article 3: “*a part... of the Pauline Family*”. Other different articles, however, recall such belonging, especially when they deal with the relationship of the SSP with the different Institutes and Congregations that make up the Family itself.

The belonging to the Pauline Family is probably a fact so rooted that it seems not to need, in these texts, any further affirmation: in fact, one practically breathes it above all while reading the articles regarding Pauline Spirituality (art. 7-13) and regarding prayer life (art. 51, 52, 54, 57,1). The following confirmations attest nonetheless an inseparable bond because it is vital with the Family, given exactly by its precise belonging to it.

More explicit on this matter is the *Ratio Formationis* (1990). An entire paragraph (arts. 24-26), entitled *The Pauline Family*, located within the 1st Chapter regarding our Charism, affirms and demonstrates the belonging of our Congregation to the unitary spiritual and apostolic project that is the Family. It is defined “*as a reality that constitutes a very important aspect of our life*” (art. 24) and as a concrete response to the a sign of the times: the courageous overcoming, *in the field of the apostolate, of the sharp separation between men and women* existing during the Founder’s times and not completely disappeared even today in some church environments. The great number of sisters and brothers *alongside the Society of St. Paul* is gift of *Divine Providence* (art. 25). The common origin, the common spirit, the convergent end constitutive of the Family is expressed *in a single spirituality: to live integrally the Gospel; to live in the Divine Master inasmuch as he is Way, Truth and Life; to live him as his disciple St. Paul understood it.*

¹²¹ Sources: *Constitutions-Directory* (1984); *Capitular Documents* (1969-1971); *Ratio Formationis* (1990).

This spirit forms the soul of the Pauline Family (art. 25.1, 2). And in this spirit we recognize one another.

The note at the foot of the page regarding such an entire paragraph seems illuminating in understanding the reason of this affirmation and the most reflected description that the *Ratio Formationis*, in comparison with the *Constitutions*, present. Certainly, the annual meetings of the General Governments of the Pauline Family, started in 1983, have greatly contributed for the growth in everyone of the sense of belonging to the Pauline Family not only because they are bound with the same father, but even more because they are supported even today and always by a fraternal bond of the spiritual, apostolic order that sinks its roots, since the origin of the Institutions, in the foundational project.

2. SPECIFIC VOCATION IN RELATION TO THE OTHER PAULINE INSTITUTIONS

The vocation and mission of the Society of St. Paul are well determined in the writings and in the teaching of the Founder. From the pages of *San Paolo*, Fr. Alberione recalled them continually:

Wanting even more is that spiritual bread that Jesus Christ has brought us from heaven, and which is He himself: "I am the bread of life." Numerous people live totally unmindful of their destiny... The apostle of the editions is another Jesus Christ who repeats to men of all times and places what Jesus Christ preached in his temporal life (*SP*, luglio 1946).

With the apostolate we contribute in forming an environment favorable to the Kingdom of Christ; in the world, let there be a single school, the Christian; just as one is the Truth, one is the Master. To us [belongs] the task of preaching Jesus Christ with ever better chosen, ever more pastoral, more diffused, publications (*SP*, maggio 1947).

All for the apostolate: you Pauline men and women. Editorial, technical, diffusion. Publications in print, movies, radio, television. God wants it: the Church wants it, and we also want it. The sons and daughters receive the inheritance of the Father. Sons and Daughters of St. Paul, receive with joy the inheritance of the Father, of St. Paul, his wisdom, his counsels, his example of every virtue, his spirit of piety, his zeal for all the souls, for all the peoples. Always bear in mind the different countries: there are no races, but only souls created for heaven and redeemed by the blood of Christ; and Jesus invites all to his school: "Venite ad me omnes." May the light of Jesus Christ illumine us, may the power of the Father comfort and support us, may the infusion of the Holy Spirit console and sanctify us (*SP*, aprile 1952).

The IV General Chapter of the Society of St. Paul celebrated in 1980 has delineated the profile of the Pauline as follows:

THE PAULINE: a person called by God and consecrated to Him in order to be, in communion with many brothers, "St. Paul alive today," having as end "to live and to give Christ Way and Truth and Life to men" through an evangelization that makes use of the means of social communication.

It is a description that reaffirms what the Chapter Documents already affirmed:

Paulines are consecrated persons called by the love of Christ to bear witness of the Gospel and to serve the Church by announcing to man the fullness of the Mystery of Christ, by means of the media of social communication. (no. 32).

In their turn, the *Constitutions-Directory* (1984) affirm that the Society of St. Paul

... sets as its goal for its members the perfection of charity – to be obtained through the spirit and practice of the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience and fidelity to the Pope, in common life, in accordance with the norms of the present Constitutions – and the evangelization of humankind through the apostolate by the means of social communication. (art. 2).

Such a norm, however, does not fail to underline that neither the spirituality nor the mission can live adequately without the constant involvement of the different institutions of the Pauline Family:

1, Regarding Pauline spirituality, defined as “our prophetic voice in the Church” (art. 13), superiors are invited to see to it that there are religious well-versed on the subject and to promote “the formation of centers of spirituality” so that with “the participation of the various branches of the Pauline Family,” would be made known “the richness of this spirituality in all its varied forms” (art. 13.1).

Furthermore, in the context of the search for the *only vital synthesis* in Christ, the Constitutions (art. 58.1) remind the Paulines of the “prayerful presence of the Sisters Disciples of the Divine Master who, in the institutional design of the Founder, ‘are at the roots of the Pauline family in order to obtain by means of unceasing prayer the lymph that will nourish the plant.’”

Finally, with a global outlook, the Constitutions recommend (art. 86) that “Relations between the Society of St. Paul and the other Institutes of the Pauline Family are to be marked by a close collaboration on the spiritual, intellectual and apostolic level, while the distinction and independence of each Institute concerning matters relating to governance and administration of goods are to be respected.”

2. Concerning vocation pastoral, and Pauline formation, the Constitutions (art. 88.4) underline that “we can count on the collaboration of the *Sisters of the Queen of Apostles* for vocations.”

3. As regards the apostolic life of the Society of St. Paul, it is reaffirmed that “collaboration is essential if our mission is to be accomplished and this both within our Congregation and within the context of the Pauline Family” (art. 85).

In particular:

In our relations with the *Daughters of St. Paul* on an apostolic level it will be especially borne in mind that, in accordance with the charism of the Founder, we have in common with them a single mission, and as such it must appear before the Church” (art. 86.1)

For the message of our apostolate “preached from the rooftops” to filter down into everyone’s conscience, the collaboration of the *Sisters of the Good Shepherd* (Pastorelle) who “carry out their mission by direct contact with persons and with families” is particularly invaluable (art. 86.2).

Relations with the Institutes of *Jesus the Priest*, *St. Gabriel the Archangel*, *Our Lady of the Annunciation* and the *Holy Family* will be conducted in conformity with the respective statutes. In their state as seculars and in the context of their commitments in society, the members of such Institutes promote the spread of the message of salvation principally in accordance with the mission and the spirit of the Society of St. Paul and of the Pauline Family (art. 86.3)

In accordance with the Founder’s design provision is to be made to promote the vocation and the formation of Pauline cooperators (art. 86.4).

Equally, the *Chapter Documents* (1969-1971) do not fail to underline important elements for our reflection.

The Pauline priest is called to be the spiritual animator through the ministry of the Word and of the Sacrament within the Congregation and the Pauline Family (no. 33), while the promotion of apostolic collaboration belongs above all to the Superior General of the Religious Society of St. Paul who, personally, must give particular care over the Congregations and Institutes that form the Pauline Family with the end in mind of helping in their apostolate as well as in the common spirituality (no. 319).

We need to delineate the principles that must bind together, in a fraternal communication of apostolic work, the members of the Congregation, while at the same time opening them up for complementarity and subsidiarity existing within the Pauline Family and in the collaboration with lay persons (n. 35); meanwhile, we should not forget the general principles contained in AD 34-35, that regulate the apostolic relations of the Congregation with the other Congregations and Institutes that make up the Pauline Family (no. 316ff).

In order to remain faithful to the work and to the spirit of the Founder, to contribute with the maximum of effort to the apostolic coordination among persons, institutions and works existing in the Pauline Family is necessary (no. 320); the love that unites the community must be open to all the Institutes that form the Pauline Family and that they are united to us “by common origin, by the same general end, and for the same Pauline spirit” (no. 359). The Congregation is called to assume the ecumenical-universal dimension that is proper to the entire Pauline Family (no. 82).

The *Ratio Formationis* (1990), in its turn, reaffirms clearly the same concepts:

- The spirit of Pauline Family is “a point of reference and convergence” of the apostolic service that we are called to render (art. 131);
- It is founded in the common origins, in the same spirituality and mission that the common Founder has entrusted to us (*ibid*); to find and create moments of communion among the various Institutes of the Pauline Family ought to be considered a true “commitment of formation” (art. 131.1);
- It should not be forgotten that only the Pauline Family, in its wholeness, constitutes “that unitary apostolic project developed by Fr. Alberione starting out from the Eucharist and the priesthood” (art. 132);
- To-be-St.-Paul-alive-today constitutes a “very specific and precious ideal” that has to be lived in communion with the whole of the Pauline Family (art. 132.1).

Reflecting on the specific vocation of the Society of St. Paul in relation with the other Pauline Institutions, we have to say a word on the role of *altrice* (nourisher) entrusted to the Society of St. Paul by Fr. Alberione himself, in view precisely of unity of the whole Family.

The *Constitutions-Directory* recall, in art. 3, that the Society of St. Paul is “a part and *altrice*” (nourisher) of the Pauline Family. Regarding this term, quite unusual and often fallen in disuse, the V Meeting of the General Governments of the Pauline Family (1987) has undertaken an interesting study.

In the conclusive Document issued in that circumstance, in no. 10, one reads:

The Society of St. Paul exercises the function of *altrice* through a service of unity, of discernment, of coordination of the charisms, and of ministerial animation. In the service of animation, it proposes the evangelical values beginning from the Word of God and the charismatic values of the Pauline Family.

Also the *Ratio Formationis*, in no. 26, 26.1, affirms:

The Society of St. Paul is the “altrice”, that is, it is “like the mother” of the whole Pauline Family by virtue of its particular charismatic, eucharistic, ecclesial and apostolic function: “it has to give them the Pauline spirit.” It is by virtue of this fact that the ministry of unity falls within its jurisdiction for it is necessary for the Founder’s original insight to be ongoing. His insight was to incorporate in one great, unified operation a number of groups that, while preserving their own autonomy as regards government and organization, have their profound roots in one basic movement, spirituality and mission.

The delicate balance between *close collaboration* and *separation-independence*, while it commits us all to grow in the art of dialogue and of discernment, enables us to bear witness by proclaiming that among us *there exists a bond of charity, more noble than the bond of blood* (cf. AD 33) in a world that is ever more fragmented and a Church ever more tempted by divisions.

- THE DAUGHTERS OF ST. PAUL¹²²

Premise

Reading the *Constitutions (Directory and Sources)* and the *Chapter Documents* of 1969-1971), the *Acts* of the General Chapter 1995 and the *General Guidelines for Formation and Studies (GGFS)* of the FSP, one can clearly see that the Congregation of the Daughters of St. Paul considers itself belonging to a bigger and articulated body composed of different Institutes (Const. n. 2), willed by their Founder, Fr. Giacomo Alberione, and called by him Pauline Family.

The first steps of the “Pauline vocation” are described by the Founder who speaks about the first night of this century as “decisive for the specific mission and the particular spirit in which the Pauline Family was to be born and to live” (cf. *Cap. Doc.* n. 153).

1. BELONGING

For us, FSP to belong to the Pauline Family means to keep alive the sense of common origin, of the same Pauline spirit and of ends that converge into a single mission: “to communicate Jesus Christ to the world” (cf. *Const.* no. 2).

In particular, the Pauline spirit that the Founder has communicated to us and which establishes our existence in Christ Master Way, Truth and Life constitutes the bond that unites us with the other Institutions of the Pauline Family (cf. *Const.*, no. 11). The same concept

¹²² Sources: *Constitutions/Directory/Sources, Capitular Documents DSP 1969-1971, Acts VII General Chapter 1995; General Guidelines for Formation and Studies (GgFS)*. In particular: *Constitutions FSP*: nos. 2; 11; 29;29.1; 29.2; 29; 3;81.3; 124.1; *Sources FSP*: pp. 12ss; 19-20;28.30ss; 34;55-56;92-94; *Directory*: 22.2; 29.2; 68.1; 72.2; 81.3; 87.1; 124.1; *Capitular Documents FSP, 1969-1971*: p. 366; *Acts – VII General Chapter Daughters of St. Paul 1995*: pp. 52, 74, 86.91,120; *General Guidelines for Formation and Studies* 1.1; 2.1.3; 3.1.7b; 5.4.2.

is affirmed in *GgFS*, no. 1.1., where our *charismatic heritage* is described: “The commitment to follow Jesus Master is personal and communitarian. Discipleship describes the life and characterizes the institutions of the Pauline Family, which were all born of the Tabernacle, and which are all vivified by a single spirit: to live Jesus Christ and communicate him to the world” (cf. also *Chap. Doc.* no. 171/*UPS II*, p. 10).

Father Alberione saw in St. Paul the model of the faithful man, straining forward to reach Christ. Thus, aware of his role as mediator, he invites us to refer to St. Paul for the form of our discipleship of Jesus Master: ‘Everyone must consider only the Apostle Paul as the father, teacher, model and founder, for this he is indeed. Because of him the Pauline Family was born, by him it was nourished and brought up, and from him it took its spirit’ [*AD 2*] (*Cap. Doc.*, no. 16; cf. further *GGFS*, 3.1.7b).

The belonging to the Pauline Family is, hence, an *essential charismatic element* (cf. *Const.* n. 2) that determines the life and, not the least, the survival of every individual institute.

3. SPECIFIC VOCATION IN RELATION WITH THE OTHER PAULINE INSTITUTIONS

As members of the Congregation FSP, we are called to realize as community our specific vocation in the Church and in the world; at the same time, as FSP, we are called to integrate ourselves with the Congregations and Institutes of the Pauline Family. In fact, as Institutions, we are characterized by “a kinship bond... because all of them issued from the Tabernacle. [There is] a sole spirit: to live Jesus Christ and to serve the Church” (*AD 34*)” (cf. *Cap. Doc.* no. 134).

Aware that, as a Pauline Institution, we are “united with the bond of spiritual fatherhood of the same Founder” we have taken up some directive principles of the Primo Maestro that underline our specificity and, at the same time our belonging to a broader family, the Pauline Family.

The principles, in synthesis:

- *Respect the competencies*

“Let every Institute journey on its own path, that one marked by the Constitutions...”

- *Maintain the unity*

“Love one another, and love one another much, intimately, always. An offense done against one group is done against the whole Congregation.”

- *To collaborate*, helping one another through prayer, work, material help; this cannot happen without sacrifice.

The Founders says: “Sine effusione sanguinis non fit remissio. This is one of the first statements on which I reflected when the Pauline Family was but in my heart” (*Esercizi spirituali*, 1955, p. 151) (cf. *Cap. Doc.* no. 139).

-- Number 29 of the *Constitutions* explicitly states: “So that our Congregation may fully live up to its vocation, we will progress in dialogue and collaboration with the Society of St. Paul and with the other Institutes of the Pauline Family so as to be able to work in communion with them, respecting their autonomy and valuing the charism of each.”

-- In the *Acts* of the General Chapter 1995, the Superior General, speaking of collaboration, affirms: “For us, unity with the Society of St. Paul and with the other Institutes of the Pauline Family is both an element of our charism and a precious heritage. It is therefore essential that we make the effort to concretize our reality as a ‘Family’ also on the level of collaboration with all the Pauline Institutes and in particular with the Society of St. Paul” (p. 52). And, referring to the relations with the Governments General of the Pauline Family, she says: “We have made collective progress in coming to a deeper sense of ourselves as a ‘family’ and consequently have been better able to share with each other the life of our Congregations... In these last years we reflected in greater depth the charismatic identity of the Pauline Family. An inter-congregational Pauline commission was set up to continue this reflection...” (p. 68). She further reaffirms that as regards collaboration among us (FSP) “it would be well for us to keep in mind another challenge: *the unity of the Pauline Family* and in particular collaboration with the SSP. We must respond to this challenge by seeking to foster collaboration at all levels, feeling our responsibility to transmit to our younger generations the charism of our ‘Family’ as a whole” (p. 78).

-- One of the pressing thoughts of the Founder is “to form apostles who would work as an ‘organization’”. Our apostolate, in fact, demands a continual interdependence, which means reciprocal collaboration and support within the community and throughout the whole Congregation, and with the other Congregations of the Pauline Family and with outside organizations.” (cf. *Cap. Doc.*, no. 282).

-- With reference to the “directive principles,” in no. 140 of the *Capitular Documents*, it is affirmed: “For reciprocal growth in spirit and in apostolic collaboration, it is necessary to deepen our understanding of our *existence* in the Church as a family of Institutions, to know clearly the goals proper to each Pauline Institute, and to seek together the concrete possibilities of integration.”

-- At the point wherein we find ourselves *today* and *in view of the future* as individual Institutes and as Family of Institutions, the need of deepening, promoting and bearing witness to *our being* in the Church and in the world *as Family* is ever more impelling (cf. *Directory* no. 124.1; cf. also CgFS, 2.1.3 and 5.4.2)

-- Still in the *Acts*, page 120 where the Superior General speaks of the *areopagus of communication*, she underlines: “In this context of change that involves all peoples and all cultures, we cannot work alone, but only in synergy, in communion and in collaboration among us, with the SSP and with the Pauline Family, with the whole Church and with the various local churches wherein we live...”

To conclude: In the Constitutions and in the official documents of the FSP, the reality of the Pauline Family is perceived with clarity, conviction, according to the inspiration of the Founder. To translate being “family” into life, that is to integrate it through dialogue, communion and collaboration with the other Institutes of the Pauline Family, aside from its being already a reality, shall always be a goal towards which to journey in workaday life as individual religious and as Congregations.

* THE PIOUS DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE MASTER¹²³

Premise

The analysis that follows is based on three documents: the *Constitutions*, the *Directory* and the *General Plan of Formation*, wherein is gathered the reflected and clear awareness of the charismatic and ministerial identity in relation with the Pauline Family. Furthermore, the *Acts* and the *Decisions* during the last two General Chapters reflect a journey of the Congregation and assumed by all in Plans of Action geared towards executing the decisions taken in the Assembly.

1. BELONGING

To belong to the Pauline Family is an *essential element* of the specific charism of the Pious Disciple.

The Documents that regulate the spiritual, communitarian and apostolic life, the legislation and the formation of members of the Institute, by thus drawing the essential elements of the charism, present with absolute clarity a profound sense of belonging of the Pious Disciples to the Pauline Family.

The *Constitutions*, from the very first articles where the elements of our vocation and mission are defined, place our Institute *in* and *for* the Pauline Family: “called and sent” in the Pauline Family. There are four articles (art. 5-8) meant to explain this common matrix of Family, in the peculiarity of our praying and animating presence for the Pauline spirituality and mission. To these articles are added others in order to underline the vital bond of prayer and industriousness that binds us to the Pauline Sisters and Brothers: in the sections regarding spirituality (art. 14) and prayer (art. 23), the style of life and asceticism (art. 62), the apostolate (arts. 82, 83, 86, 87, 90).

The *Directory* expresses this living sense of belonging with numerous practical indications: from the first articles (arts. 1-7) the Directory places the Pious Disciples *in* and *for* the Pauline Family. Furthermore, the life of prayer, the apostolic commitment, the vocation pastoral and the ongoing self-formation are marked by this Family genetic map.

The *General Plan of Formation* (1996) even more, wider in coverage, reflects the awareness of belonging to the Family that matures, in the first place, in persons. In this document, the belonging to the Family appears to be constitutive of the charismatic identity of the Pious Disciple: in this atmosphere, in this environment of Family, one must be formed in growth, while finding her own origins and maturing in the apostolic dimension in order to give Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life to today’s world.

The *Acts of the IV, V and VI General Chapters* reaffirm the belonging and the growth of the Family awareness as a certain and undiscussed given either in the respective reports of the Mother General at the opening of the Chapters themselves, or in the Plans of action that emanated from the Chapters.

¹²³ Sources: *Constitutions and Directory* of the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master (1984), *Acts of the General Chapters* (1987, 1993, 1999); *General Plan of Formation* (1996). In particular: *Constitutions*: art. 4, 5-8, 14, 23, 61, 82, 83, 86, 87; *Directory*: art. 1-7, 10, 11, 17-19, 52, 84, 86, 89-95, 106-108, 140.

2. SPECIFIC VOCATION IN RELATION WITH THE OTHER PAULINE INSTITUTIONS

The handwritten text of Fr. Alberione to the Pious Disciples, dated Christmas 1946 and taken up by article 5 of the Constitutions, presents the reason of being of this Institute within the Family:

In 1908, I started to pray and asked others to pray so that a religious family of withdrawn life, dedicated to adoration and to the sacerdotal and liturgical apostolate would be born; it had to be entirely of Jesus Divine Master, present in the Eucharistic mystery. Why? Because it ought to become the spring of grace from which may draw other religious families, more specifically dedicated to the apostolic life.

Hence, it is a life relationship that is expressed primarily in the order of grace: born in prayer and from prayer, this Congregation is the bond of unity in the Eucharistic and liturgical prayer for the entire Family: the different Institutes, more specifically dedicated to the apostolic life drawn from it as if from a *spring of grace*.

Every Congregation and Institute of the Pauline Family knows how to count on the prayer of adoration, supplication and petition of the Pious Disciples in a communion of goods that manifests communion of life. Specifically article 7 of the Constitutions reaffirms it by quoting *AD*:

We are aware of our specific duty as Pious Disciples: ‘to represent everyone in prayers of intercession at the Tabernacle,’ in order to spiritually sustain those who spread the doctrine of Jesus Christ as if from above, those who accompany souls, those who in various ways and situations work in order to achieve the same end. On earth, participation in the apostolic labors, in the joys and in the pains; in heaven, participation of the eternal reward..

To the duty of prayer is added a style of life and an asceticism that characterize daily life:

We have the duty to keep alive the Eucharistic dimension of the Pauline life and apostolate. We assume at the same time the ‘fundamental and vital mission’ entrusted to us by the Founder. By virtue of such a mission, united with Jesus Eucharist, through a hidden life of faith and of prayer, we tend to bring to reality the words of the Founder: to be the ‘root’ and to obtain the ‘lymph’ that nourishes the life of the big ‘tree’ of the Pauline Institutions (art. 7).

The uninterrupted, also nocturnal, Eucharistic adoration is for the Pious Disciples a means of reparation and mediation that, in union with Jesus Christ, we offer to God the Father to implore particular graces for the operators and recipients of mass media (cf. art. 82)

Our mission at the service of the Eucharist, of the priesthood and of liturgy is, for the whole Pauline Family, the place of encounter with Jesus Word and Bread of Life. Towards the Brothers, priests and disciples of the Society of St. Paul, the Pious Disciples, from the very beginning, have expressed the wealth of their womanly ministry while varying, as years passed, the concrete expressions of their service of support, of help and of animation. Insofar as “women associated with the priestly zeal” in the spirit of Mary Most holy and of the women of the Gospel, we welcome the challenge of a precious vocation lived in the maturity of faith, with competence and according to the demands of charity. Everywhere the fullness of the received charism is transformed into service either in some communities of the Society of St. Paul (cf. art. 86 and 87) or in other priestly houses of ordained ministers in need or in helping the People of God to rediscover and value the baptismal priesthood that enables them for the celebration of liturgy and of life.

In the *Directory* the relations with the other Congregations and Institutes composing the Family are expressed in numerous initiatives geared to specify our role of spiritual animation of the Pauline apostolate, either in the order of evangelization achieved with the means of social communication, or in the order of pastoral action. Suggested are meetings of community prayer, formation courses, reciprocal communication of initiatives and apostolic experiences in order to nourish the one Pauline Spirit, to savor the joy of feeling “Family” united “in the intimate bond of charity that is more noble than the bond of blood.”

The Pious Disciples, in order to maintain unity in the Pauline Family, seek to:

- understand the others in communion of spirit, of thought, of will of aspiration;
- respect and esteem the specific goal, the peculiar condition of every Institute;
- to coordinate itself, by cooperating in due measure, to the completion and enrichment of the marvelous Family.

They are committed to distinguish themselves in their own style of life (cf. art. 7) that the assiduous frequenting of the Eucharistic Mystery educates to the joyous giving of self, thus manifesting the primacy of charity. In this manner, they shall, for the brothers and sisters of the Pauline Family, be the memorial of the communion of that communion drawn from the Eucharist, source and apex of every apostolic and charitable activity of the Church.

The *General Plan of Formation* sets up the whole formation itinerary, from entrance into the Congregation to the whole arc of life with the ongoing formation of the professed sisters, in relation with the whole Family, in order to assume an authentic ecclesial atmosphere. The formation encounters, the knowledge of the history and of the specific charism of the different Institutes and Congregations, the collaboration in the vocation animation and in formation to the sense of Family, the moments of prayer and of fraternal happiness are beneficial to growth in unity and in charity.

The *Acts of the General Chapters* (IV, V and VI), after having made aware, through these last years, of the growth in the awareness and in the participation to the reality of Pauline Family, in their successive Plans of action urge the community and individual religious to *deepen, develop, assume the gift of the charism received in its constitutive elements*, one among which is precisely “to be and to live in Family.”

In conclusion

The analysis, although brief, of these documents leads to some important conclusions in order to better understand and live the relationship of Pauline Family, in the order of a single Founder and of different Institutes that, in the convergence of project, compose it. The texts taken into consideration reflect an awareness assumed by each member of the Institute in the religious profession: the awareness of having received a gift, of being custodians of the life of this Family, thus eliciting personal and communitarian responsibilities, in the Church and in the world.

The charismatic and ministerial identity of the Pious Disciple, in fact, cannot set aside a living sense of belonging to the Pauline Family, in which she locates herself, as a person and as community, according to her own *style of life*, of *prayer* and of *apostolate*.

The *Acts* of the last General Chapters verify and project the life of the Congregation in its different ecclesial and socio-cultural conditions always in view of our radical belonging to the Family, knowing that this comports considering ourselves daughters and sons of the same Founder, Fr. Alberione, and now more than ever, to be and to live as brothers and sisters in the ecclesiology of communion, that is respect of the diversity of each one, in the complementariness of the differences and reciprocity of collaboration.

* THE SISTERS OF JESUS GOOD SHEPHERD¹²⁴

Premise

The belonging of the Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd to the Pauline Family is a presupposition inherent in the origin itself of the Congregation inasmuch as it locates itself in the common foundational fatherhood and takes form along the historical path the Institutes already formed were drawing.

The sense of belonging, then, inasmuch as it is in this that the understanding, assumption and re-expression by the Pastorelle Sisters take place, goes alongside with the historical evolution itself of the Congregation on the passage from the foundational phase to that institutional phase of consolidation and of development. The constitutional documents and other official acts of the Congregation are the authoritative location of this.

As a constitutive element of the Congregation, the sense of belonging reflects the spiritual and apostolic foundations entrusted by the Founder to all his children; inasmuch as it is connected with charismatic elements proper to the Pastorelle, it must be expressed in its 'particularity', always in a significant and collaborative relationship with the other Institutes.

1. BELONGING

The first articles of the *Rule of Life (RdV)* place the Congregation within the Pauline Family and they recognize that "*the spiritual and apostolic project of the Pauline Family is a charismatic element,*" hence, essential also for the Pastorelle (*RdV*). In n. 16, it is further affirmed, "*Faithful to the heritage of Fr. Alberione we are to discern in our pastoral mission the signs of the times and to use advantageously the means of social communion, sharing in the spirit of the Pauline Family*"; in no. 16.1 of the Directory: "*There is to be a family relationship between the Congregation and the other Pauline foundations, the objective of which is to preserve the unity of Pauline spirit, to work in communion and in complementarity with them, while respecting the character and autonomy of each one.*"

¹²⁴ Sources: *Rule of Life and Directory (RdV)*; *Acts of the General Chapters 1975, 1981, 1987, 1993*; *Pre-diche alle Pastorelle del Rev.mo Primo Maestro (PA)*; AAVV, *Un Carisma Pastorale*; Ranzato-Rocca, *50 Anni di una presenza pastorale*; AAVV, *La Spiritualità Pastorale delle SGBP*.

The Pauline spirit is fundamental because it allows us “to share in the building up and growth of the Christian community proclaiming the whole Christ to the whole person and to all men in the apostolic spirit of the Founder.” (RdV no. 13).

During the summer of 1984 the first international seminar on the Charism is celebrated and the publication of the *Acts* represents up to now a basic text for the life of the Pastorelle Sisters. In the introduction of *Un Carisma Pastorale*, one reads: “... our vocation and mission are to be sought within a framework of basic reference, that is, in the context of the Pauline Family:” further on, it is written: “The first part (of the Seminar) traces the horizon wherein a correct reflection on the charism of the Pastorelle is to be locate, a horizon that is at the same time spiritual and hermeneutic, made up of the Pauline Family. Outside such context the discourse on the identity of the Pastorelle Sisters runs the risk of being impoverished and of becoming a deviation” (p. 8). This Seminar is a real turning point for the reflection on the Pastorelle/Pauline Family relationship. Since then the awareness of being of the same Family was bound to the fact of having the same Founder and to an individual reading of practical experience. In a synthesis proposal of the clarifying concepts in the seminar, among the clear and convincing acquisitions, it is quoted: “The belonging to the spiritual and apostolic project of the Pauline Family, wherein our pastoral characteristic has Pauline connotations, and the Pauline nature of the Alberione Foundations presents a clear pastoral connotation.”¹²⁵

2. SPECIFIC VOCATION IN RELATION TO OTHER PAULINE INSTITUTIONS

Pivotal points of the life and of the ministry of the Pastorelle Sisters are “the person of Jesus Good Shepherd loved and lived as way, truth and life” and the participation to His pastoral ministry to gather into one people all the dispersed children of God. The pastoral characteristic has a strong Christological and ecclesiological connotation, thus incarnation and communion are the two categories with which we think it necessary to interpret the common features of the spiritual and apostolic project of the Pauline family, if seen from the perspective of pastoral characteristic.

:”The Shepherd who is Way, Truth and Life, the Divine Shepherd: oh, this is the spirit of the Pauline Family... to establish yourselves in this fundamental devotion means to establish yourselves in vocation; it means to live in Christ and in the Church” (PA57, 617). The pastoral perspective characterizes every aspect, every action either of the charism or of the spirituality of the Pastorelle Sisters. In fact, Fr. Alberione tells them clearly: “What has become of the Sunday pastoral? Arm yourselves as of the strong woman. They shall no longer listen to the Pastor, to the priest, they shall listen to you. It is a mission that you have to consider ever more, but above all, live it. Live it, because the whole Pauline Family is geared to pastoral: there are those on one part, and others in another. The spirit of St. Paul, especially when it comes to reading matters, hence the books, the periodicals, the spread of the Bible, etc.” (PA63, 400).

The first document wherein the Pastorelle Sisters expressed explicitly and officially the need to clarify the relationship existing between the Congregation and the Pauline Family seems to be “*Orientamenti e Scelte Operativi (OSO 1975)*. It points out that: “The very spirituality and complementarity of the apostolates require a particular collaboration among the various Institutes and the Pauline Family.” It further declares in art. 69: “It is

¹²⁵ Flavia Mercurio in *La Missione della Famiglia Paolina*, p. 109.

hoped that the role of the various institutions within the Pauline Family be clarified and the relationship of collaboration be intensified. Towards this end, it is proposed that there be an exchange among the relative Governments General either on the spiritual or apostolic level and a mutual exchange of information.”

In the text *50 anni di una presenza pastorale*, in the synthesis reflections a broad paragraph is dedicated to this theme. It is noted that until the seventies, the Pastorelle were engaged more in underlining its own autonomy from the other Institutes, and then later, starting from *OSO*, “... they have become more desirous to clarify their place within the Pauline Family.” The text concludes with an interesting emphasis: “It seems licit to conclude that... the reflection on this point is not adequately deepened and there still remains a certain space for clarification” (pp. 173-174).

In the Inter-chapter of 1990 among other commitments was assumed the commitment to “undertake apostolic experiences with the Pauline Family, where it is possible.” From these last documents, one can observe how the belonging to the Pauline Family has become, for the Pastorelle, a point of necessary and coherent reflection.

In the Acts of the V General Chapter it is written: “We have made ours methods and dynamic and participative processes that connect with the directives of the Founder and the method Way, Truth and Life proposed by him to the Pauline Family... Fr. Alberione’s proposal remains valid for us who share with the Pauline Family and the whole Church the search for methods that value every resource for the improvement of Pastoral.”

In 1994 *La spiritualità pastorale delle suore di Gesù Buon Pastore* is published. We read in it that it is necessary “to let bloom the pastorality of the Pauline Family: to be the reminder of the pastoral mission that animates the whole Pauline Family” (p. 74).

Finally, the “*Piano General di Formazione e Studi*” produced by the Pastorelle in 1997 indicates what “criteria and modalities of admission to the novitiate and to the profession: love for the Congregation and to the Pauline Family.” Furthermore, all the stages of the journey of formation foresee, under the heading *Mezzi*, the participation in meetings and celebrations of the Pauline Family. The more suggestive part of the document, however, in reference to the sense of belonging to the Pauline Family, comes from paragraph 49 wherein it is affirmed:

We belong to the Pauline Family, which has in Fr. Alberione its common father and founder, and a single spiritual and apostolic project: TO COMMUNICATE JESUS CHRIST MASTER AND SHEPHERD TO THE WORLD. Between the Congregation and the other institutes of the Pauline Family there run relationships geared toward unity of Pauline spirit and the search for complementarity in work, while respecting what is specific in each institute, in the common pastoral characteristic (*PGF* p. 22).

To conclude, one has the impression that the research on the real import and the implications coming from the Unitary Project of Pauline Family awaits a more determined development. It is necessary to recognize that broad theological breadth within are founded and which impedes possible but also false alternatives, for example, between Peter and Paul, between evangelization and communion, between universal church and local church... Meanwhile we trustfully welcome the Founder’s wish: “If you arrive at this strong spirit, if you shall feel this in union of charity, the Lord shall still do other things for you. Who knows what he has still written in his books...” (*PA59*, 99).

* THE APOSTOLINE SISTERS¹²⁶

In the official Documents of the Apostoline Sisters, the reference to its belonging to the Pauline Family is constant and concerns the person of the Founder, the common origin, spirituality, collaboration among the institutions, formation, reference to the Superior General of the SSP.

CONSTITUTIONS

Common Founder and belonging to the Pauline Family

As Apostoline Sisters, we read our remote origin in the vocation journey of Fr. Alberione and we recognize to be already present on that night of adoration that marked his life in the desire of serving people of the *today* of his time (cf. art. 1).

The belonging to the Pauline Family is a charismatic element and is drawn from the common origin, from the common spirit with convergent ends for a single mission: “To give Christ to the world, in a complete manner, as He has defined himself: I am the Way, the Truth, the Life” (cf. art. 2).

Spirituality and mission

Our mission draws nourishment from the same spirituality that Fr. Alberione has given to the Pauline Family: “*if we consider our principal devotions: to Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life; to the Queen of Apostles, Mother of God and ours; to St. Paul the Apostle, in whom Jesus Christ himself lived and worked, we can understand how the Pauline Family wants to give, with St. Paul and with Mary, the same Jesus to the world, as He has given himself*” (art. 7). This spirituality, which allows us to “be and to work in fullness, that is in sanctity... is the profound bond that unites us with the members of the Pauline Family and makes us, each in her own specific vocation, be bearers of Christ Way, Truth and Life to the world” (art. 14).

Collaboration

Regarding collaboration with the Pauline Family, article 106 of the Constitutions says: “We shall always take care that a special collaboration is established and developed with every individual Congregation and Institution of the Pauline Family, in mutual respect of the diversity and in valuing the specific charism of each one. Such collaboration is required by the common belonging to the “Family,” so inspired by God in Fr. Alberione, in which family there exists “an intimate bond of charity, more noble than the bond of blood.” It shall then be our commitment to continually weld this bond above all in the exchange of prayer from where is collaboration in trust and in charity is born.”

¹²⁶ Sources: *Costituzioni, Documento Capitolare 1997*. In particular, *Costituzioni*, arts. 1, 2, 7, 13, 14, 73, 76, 81, 106, 110, 118, 121, 145, 257; *Documento Capitolare 1997*: nos. 5, 9, 10, 21, 84, 92.

Formation

The formation principles that Fr. Alberione has given to the whole Pauline Family are held indispensable for the formation of every Apostolina (cf. art. 110).

In the journey of conformation to Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life the goal is to be able to affirm, “it is not longer I that lives, but Christ who lives in me.” It also is true for the Apostoline what Fr. Alberione says: “The Pauline Family must be St. Paul alive today, according to the mind of the Divine Master; working under the gaze and with the grace of Mary Queen of the Apostles” (cf. art. 233).¹²⁷

In this itinerary of configuration, Mary Queen of the Apostles and St. Paul accompany us (cf. arts. 118-120-121).

Reference to the Superior General of the SSP

Regarding this matter, article 257 has this to say: “The superior general, having to take decisions of special importance regarding the government, studies, the apostolate, administration, shall take counsel, upon her judgment, with the superior general of the Society of St. Paul.”

CHAPTER DOCUMENTS

The Document of the 1st General Chapter has these references regarding the Pauline Family:

In number 7, the synthesis of the charismatic heritage that Fr. Alberione has left to the Pauline Family is recognized in the definition that Jesus gives of himself: “I am the way, the truth and the life.” We feel that we are integrated with this wealth that unites us by “common spirit” and, hence, we are called to share and deepen our heritage “with and in the Pauline Family” (cf. n. 22). Because of this, we have chosen to adhere, within the limits of our possibilities, to those Family initiatives that can make us grow in this direction.

In numbers 11-12 we are reminded how the Pauline Family is centered on the Eucharist inasmuch as the same family “is born of the tabernacle,” and in it finds nourishment, its life, its way of working, its sanctification” (UPS II, p. 10). Also concerning life of prayer, the Founder invites us to draw from the heritage common for the whole Family, although we read, with a specific meaning for us, the self-revelation of Jesus: “I am the way, the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6): “In a particular manner, this ought to concentrate in the mind and towards this end: that Jesus be our life, that is, our manner of seeking and forming vocations... “I am the way,” that it teaches us the way he followed. Second: “I am the truth”: the things that we ought to say as regards vocations... And third: “life”: that Jesus may accompany us with his grace and that we may have so much grace in our heart that we attract souls to God.”

¹²⁷ SP, Luglio-Agosto 1954.

Just as how it has been for the whole Pauline Family, “also our Congregation has had its beginnings in Bethlehem”: in no. 85, the need is affirmed that poverty should continue to shape all the personal and communitarian aspects of our life because this is one of the fundamental elements of the Pauline spirit.

In no. 93, we remember yet that to be Family requires from every Apostolina that she natures in the sense of solidarity and participation to all the events that the Pauline Family lives, be these joyful or painful.

To conclude: In our Constitutions and Chapter Documents we recognize in the Pauline Family its own sphere within which our Congregation is born, grows and develops, and we feel the duty to collaborate, in the part entrusted to us, so that it may grow and develop the way it is and in God’s plan.

* THE AGGREGATED INSTITUTES: ST. GABRIEL ARCHANGEL, OUR LADY OF THE ANNUNCIATION, JESUS PRIEST AND HOLY FAMILY

Premise

These Institutions of the Pauline Family, for lay persons, are characterized by their aggregation to the Society of St. Paul, thus setting themselves apart from the traditional configuration of the secular institutes in the Church: they are, in fact, aggregated institutes and not secular institutes as often they are improperly described.

1. BELONGING

The belonging of these Institutes to the Pauline Family is to be traced in the first place to the common fatherhood in the person of Fr. Alberione: he carefully followed the birth and the development of the different institutions and he wanted to characterize the specific Pauline peculiarity of their presence by aggregating them to the Society of St. Paul insofar as it is the “altrice” (the nourisher) in the Family.

Meanwhile the common Statute that regulates the life and the apostolate of these institution expresses in many articles their aggregation to the Society of St. Paul and, hence, through it, their belonging to the Pauline Family.

Specifically, we quote the articles:

1 – The Institutes: “Jesus Priest,” made up of secular priests; “St. Gabriel the Archangel,” made up of laymen, and “Our Lady of the Annunciation,” made up of lay women, are organizations of the Society of St. Paul and are aggregated to it...

2.1 – Under his (Fr. Alberione’s) guidance, they have assumed, gradually, the present physiognomy that finds them associated in the work of evangelization of the Society of St. Paul.

The sense of belonging is strengthened also by the common spirit specifically described in articles 6-9 of Chapter II on “Spiritual Life”:

6.1. – In order to communicate to man the fullness of the mystery of Christ, the members of the Institutes live and work in the integral Christ (Master, Way,

Truth and Life) as St. Paul lived it, in the climate of the Virgin, Queen of Apostles. In him they are nourished through the Word and the Eucharist, in him they unify prayer, study, apostolate, consecration, thereby bringing everything to a vital synthesis in love.

Still, regarding the apostolate:

30 – Inasmuch as “the Pauline Family aspires to live integrally the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life in the spirit of St. Paul, under the gaze of the Queen of Apostles,” and makes of this ideal the reason of its apostolate that, in turn, inserts it ‘in the deeper part of the ecclesial life of our times,” the members of the Institutes commit themselves to cooperate so that Christ may live in every person, according to the spirit of St. Paul.

2. SPECIFIC VOCATION IN RELATION TO THE OTHER PAULINE INSTITUTIONS.

The vocation and mission of these Institutes are in relation with the Pauline Family through their aggregation to the Society of St. Paul. The Statute clearly points it out in every chapter.

Regarding the Nature and End:

3 – In their condition as seculars and in the environment of their social commitments, the members of the Institutes dedicate themselves, “for an effective evangelization”, to the spread of the message of salvation principally according to the apostolate and the spirit of the Society of St. Paul and of the other Congregations of the Pauline Family, thus expanding to different sectors the action and the influx of its specific mission.

Regarding the Apostolate:

27 – For the members of the three institutes, the apostolate is essential.

- “The apostolate faithful exercised not only in the world but with the means of the world, by making use of professions, activities, strengths, places, circumstances that respond to the conditions of seculars:... taking recourse as well of what is new and wanted, always however in the spirit of the Church and according to one’s rules.” They shall nonetheless have a particular attention regarding the use of modern technical and organizational means for apostolic goals.
- The members shall always remember that, while “they exercise the apostolate with their action for evangelization and sanctification of people,” they shall have to unite it with their own personal holiness, inasmuch as “he who sanctifies himself contributes to the sanctification of the whole Church.”
- Associated, through a particular gift of God, to the Society of St. Paul, the members shall always bear in mind that their apostolate is real preaching, that is, “a salvific act inasmuch as it produces faith—itself the presupposition of the supernatural order—without which it is impossible to please God.”

28 – 3) In the performance of the apostolate care must be borne to keep present the directives, the spirit and the methods of the Pauline Family, whose end is “to save souls.”

Finally, regarding the Government:

52 –The Superior General of the Society of St. Paul is also the Superior General of the Institutes “Jesus Priest,” “St. Gabriel Archangel”, and Our Lady of the Annunciation.

§ 1. The Vicar General of the Society of St. Paul is also the Vicar General of the three aforementioned institutes.

§ 2. The Institutes follow the territorial division of the Society of St. Paul.

* THE ASSOCIATION OF PAULINE COOPERATORS

Premise

Tirelessly, during the arc of his life, Fr. Alberione explains the presence of the Pauline Cooperators in the Family he founded.

The Pauline Family, since its birth, had help in so many ways. Rather, we have to say that many intelligent and generous persons concurred at its very birth: prayers, counsel, material help. I recall so many names that have already achieved the prize; only the Lord has repaid them according to charity, charity done almost always in silence; it shall be made manifest on the great final day, at the face of the whole world (*manuscript*, nov.-dic. 1965, in *CISP* 389).

BELONGING

Regarding the belonging of the Cooperators to the Pauline Family, their Statute affirms clearly:

1.5 The Cooperators’ Association, like the other components of the Family of Fr. Alberione, is bearer of the common Pauline mission, and is co-responsible of the apostolic project of letting Christ Way, Truth and Life be known in the world. It brings to the Pauline Family the specific values of secularity, in recognition to the identity and autonomy of every congregation and institute, and lives in a particular relationship of communion with the Society of St. Paul, wherein it finds its historical and spiritual roots.

1.7 The Cooperators’ Association makes its own the end of the Pauline Family, which is to live integrally the Gospel in the Spirit of St. Paul, under the gaze of the Queen of the Apostles (AD 93) and to communicate it to the world in the exercise of the apostolate with those means that better correspond to the nature of each individual institute.

Furthermore, the Cooperators are invited to work always “in harmony with the Pauline Family and with the constant preoccupation of the Church” (Statute 1.8).

SPECIFIC VOCATION IN RELATION WITH THE OTHER PAULINE INSTITUTIONS

Being a lay Association that has been present and working since the origins of the Pauline Family, the Cooperators live their specific vocation in different ways, but always

in relation with the mission of the same Pauline Family. The reference to the Superior General of the Society of St. Paul and the cooperation with the various forms of Pauline apostolate are clarified in the Statute:

7.1 – The Cooperators' Association refers to the Superior General of the Society of St. Paul who, as willed by the Founder, has the duty of promoting the unity of the Pauline Family.

7.4.1 The Cooperators work in the environment wherein they live (work, parish, diocese, social and religious realities); the ways of working shall be taken in communion with the persons responsible of them, the delegates and the Pauline Institute with which they refer; they shall bring to reality the Founder's apostolic project in manners that are more consonant to the environmental reality wherein they work.

7.5. Where there exist the "Diocesan and parish centers of social communications," the associations of liturgical, pastoral and vocational animation and the pastoral councils, the Cooperators shall offer that service that comes from their specific charism. In environments wherein these organizations are not yet instituted, they shall solicit their formation and render their generous collaboration.

3. A COMMON AND DIVERSIFIED CHARISMATIC-MINISTERIAL EXPERIENCE

The revisiting of the spiritual experience, the writings and the work of Fr. Alberione has demonstrated that the Lord had led him to give life to a family of Institutions.

This fact can also be read from the perspective of the "signs of the times". In fact, today, speaking of consecrated life, it is more widespread to make reference to Families of Congregations: Salesian Family, Franciscan Family, Dominican Family, Pauline Family, etc. and, after the Synod on consecrated life, statements on the matter have been numerous.¹²⁸

Utilizing the language originating from the letters of St. Paul regarding charisms, Mario Midali, sdb, holds that in this specific case one can speak of a 'common charismatic and spiritual experience, shared by those belonging to it to distinct groups that constitute, precisely, according to the charismatic project of the Founder, to a single family. It is the charismatic experience of being and feeling family and to living and working as family. Nonetheless, such a common charismatic and spiritual experience is not uniform and flat, but *diversified*, that is, lived with characteristics proper to those belonging to the distinct groups or branches of the single family. Such diversity has to be attributed to the following factors that are charismatic in nature:

- the differing *anthropological qualification*...
- the differing *ministerial qualification*...
- the differing *form of life*...
- the differing *relations with the world*...
- the differing *juridical configuration*...¹²⁹

¹²⁸ M. Midali, *La famiglia salesiana identità carismatica e spirituale*, Università Pontificia Salesiana, Roma, 1994.

¹²⁹ M. Midali, *Caratteristiche del carisma del fondatore o della fondatrice*, in *La Famiglia Paolina "Comunione"*, 12 e 13 Incontro dei Governi Generali della Famiglia Paolina, Roma 1995, p. 115.

The reality of the Pauline Family seems to fit well this description.

Considering the project as the organic and arranged composite of elements arranged in such a way that they respond to a precise design, we can affirm that the Pauline Family, in the mind and in the will of the Founder, is the realization of the ideal of St. Paul, “for me to live is Christ” (*Phil 1:21*; cf. also *Gal 2:20*). The Pauline Family has the duty of being the living icon of Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life, for mankind of today, with the means of today.

This unitary project is not therefore a simple list of Institutes, or much less, an abstract reference of which everyone speaks without knowing the concrete implications. The coordinates that support the charismatic and ministerial identity of the Family are clear and precise as:

For the *Pauline Christology*:

- we all have to take in its entirety, the spirit, the life of Jesus Christ, and, to better consider it: the Master Way, Truth and Life;

For the *Pauline anthropology*:

- we, men and women, live in Jesus Christ with our mind, our heart, our will and our activities.

For the *Pauline ecclesiology*:

- the Pauline Family mirrors the Church in its members, in its activities, in its apostolate, in its mission;

For the *Pauline religious life*:

- formation, apostolate, the government, the organization of each institute aim at making Jesus Christ live and to serve the Church;

For the *Pauline eschatology*:

- on earth, one Pauline Family; in heaven, one Pauline Family.

Seen in this manner, the historical succession of the stages of realization of the Pauline Family project stays now to introduce us *within* the project itself in order to know more closely its content and individual aspects.

THE “OMNIA INSTAURARE IN CHRISTO”
(The “To restore everything in Christ”)

1. THE THEOLOGICAL VISION OF THE PROJECT IN SOME WORKS OF FR. ALBERIONE

The historical research conducted in the 1st Part has shown that our Founder, in obedience to a divine plan that gradually became clear to him, has instituted a Family of Congregations and Institutes with the single purpose of living and giving to the world Jesus Master Shepherd Way Truth and Life.

A question now rises: What precisely did the Founder want to do with this program? What is the deeper meaning, and what are the consequences for us?

Once more we inquire from the *texts* that constitute the heritage of the Pauline Family and are for us the undeniable point of reference.

The research is conducted on two directions:

- a. Texts of the Founder recognized by all the members of the Family as a common heritage:
 - the *Pact* or Secret of Success (1922),
 - the *Donec formetur Christus in vobis* (1932),
 - the *Via humanitatis* (1947),
 - the *Introduzione* to the Fr. Stefano Lamera's book, *Gesù Maestro Via, Verità e Vita* (1949),
 - the *Abundantes divitiae gratiae suae* (1954),
 - the "short works" gathered in *Alle Famiglia Paoline* (1954) and *Santificazione della mente* (1956),
 - the *Progetto di un'enciclopedia di Gesù Maestro* (1959)
 - the *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei* (1960).
- b. The preaching of Fr. Alberione addressed to each Institute and each one's normative documents.

We venture into them with the purpose of better penetrating into the *mens* (the mind) of the Founder and *to read within* the unitary project.

We take as a key of interpretation that which seems to us the more mature expression and hence more complete of the theological synthesis of Fr. Alberione: the *Progetto di un'enciclopedia su Gesù Maestro*, published in 1959.

We are publishing the typewritten *Introduzione* inasmuch as it shows in outline the general plan of the work:

Introduction

God is light-truth. The Father generates the Son-Wisdom "lumen de lumine"; from their mutual love proceeds the Holy Spirit.

God wanted to reveal and reveals Himself in the Son: "erat lux vera": this progressive revelation: four steps can be distinguished:

- I. Creation (revelation through the created things);
- II. Supernatural revelation (The Old and the New Testament)
- III. Revelation by means of the Holy Spirit (in the Church)
- IV. Eternal revelation (in the beatific vision)

We thus have as if an arising, an advancing, an achieving and a fulfillment of an illumination that shall be eternal: “splenda ad essi la luce perpetua” (“may eternal life shine on them).

This revelation is the Magisterium of the Son of God: who, having been incarnated or having humanized himself, became the visible Master, in order to then live and teach in the Church, his mystical Body, and, glorified in heaven, sheds light on paradise “lucerna eius est Agnus,” (the Lamb is the Lamp), through the light of glory.

The purpose of the encyclopedia is the glorification of Jesus Christ Master: Master in so far as and inasmuch as Way Truth and Life: that is, complete Master in whom every man finds the truth, justice, peace.

Every article has this principle as basis;

It is developed according to this idea;

It tends towards the glorification of Jesus Christ Master!”

The Encyclopedia project dreamed by Fr. Alberione consists of the following four parts:

1. Jesus Master Way Truth Life revealer of the Father in the Holy Spirit,
2. the vision of man in Jesus Christ himself,
3. the vision of the Church and of her mission,
4. until the vision of fulfillment in glory.

All this in a progressive itinerary that begins with Creation, is manifested in the Revelation and Redemption, work in the Church until the fulfillment in the eternal glory. It is a bright vision that embraces the entire reality of creation: originated from the Most Holy Trinity, it returns to the same Trinity in a cyclic movement that insures the completeness and dynamism, stability and becoming.

A summary reading underlines that the Christological setup of this project summarizes the Trinitarian vision, Christian anthropology, ecclesiology and eschatology in a mutual relationship that is so coordinated that one cannot analyze only one aspect without necessarily referring to the others.

The idea appears even clearer if one confers them with the Founder’s notes in the Archives of the SSP General House and published in *Carissimi in San Paolo*.¹³⁰ Introducing the theme with the subtitle OMNIA INSTAURARE IN CHRISTO,¹³¹ Fr. Alberione offers an effective synthetic vision of the whole history of salvation starting from the Person of Christ Master.

Although he starts with man, created after the image and likeness of the Trinity and fallen into the consequences of sin, Fr. Alberione immediately sets up theologically the theme, that is, on the work of the Son of God, Master Way Truth and Life himself, who by virtue of his incarnation restores in man-sinner the original plan: that he be conformed after the image of the Son Jesus. And this is through Baptism, hence through the Church’s mediation, to reach the beatific vision of God, at the end of an existence lived in *faith* – through the Truth that is Christ Master; in *hope* – through the new and living Way that is still

¹³⁰ CISP, pp. 1225-1230

¹³¹ Cf. Eph 1:10

Christ himself; -- in *love* – through the way of grace in which the Master, who is way, puts us.

For greater clarity of method, we shall move along the following outline:

1. Trinitarian dimension: *Jesus Christ, man-God, perfect image of the One and Triune God.*¹³²
2. Anthropological dimension: *Man in Christ reaches his perfection—of mind, sentiments, will.*¹³³
3. Ecclesiological dimension: *In the Church: Christ teaches. Christ legislates, infuses grace.*¹³⁴
4. Eschatological dimension: *In glory [Christ Master] reveals himself, is possessed by, beatifies, the good.*¹³⁵

These four dimensions are founded on numerous biblical references that Fr. Alberione personally meditated upon at length and re-proposed frequently to his sons and daughters:

For the *Trinitarian dimension*:

- Jn 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”
- Jn 16:28: “I came from the Father and have come into the world. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”
- Jn 14:26: “The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.”

For the *anthropological dimension*:

- Gal 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me.”
- Gal 4:19: “My children, for whom I am again in labor until Christ be formed in you!”
- Rom 8:29: “For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”

For the *ecclesiological dimension*:

- Jn 20:21: “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’”
- Eph 3:10: “So that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the principalities and authorities in the heavens.”

¹³² CISP p. 1226

¹³³ CISP, p. 1227.

¹³⁴ CISP, p. 1227.

¹³⁵ CISP, p. 1225.

For the *eschatological dimension*:

- Mt 25:21: “His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.’”
- Col 3:3-4: “For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.”

These four coordinates—which recur in the charismatic and ministerial identity of every form of consecrated life in the Church—constitute the basic structure of the spiritual-apostolic vision of Fr. Alberione, centered on Jesus Christ, Way Truth and Life.

We find it beautifully evident, recurring in the texts considered to be the *common heritage* of the Pauline Family.

1.1 *The Pact or Secret of Success*

Among the many prayer expressions that make up the heritage of the Pauline spirituality, that which seems to us as absolute type either in the historical or charismatic order, is “the prayer of faith” (AD 158): the *Pact* or Secret of Success.

The *Diario* of Maestro Giaccardo¹³⁶ documents for us how, after having many times explained to the young the necessity of faith, “essential in the spirit of the *Casa*,” Fr. Alberione, on 17 January 1919, as first, “recited the formula of the pact” and, among the young, “whoever wanted to recite in his heart.”

In this research, we refer to the formula of 1922, held to be the first edition of the Pact.

Lord Jesus, accept the pact that we present to you in the hands of St. Paul and of Mary, Queen of the Apostles.

We must acquire a very high degree of perfection, higher than that of the religious of contemplative life: and yet our practices of piety shall be less numerous; we ought to have knowledge greater than that required by any other profession; and yet our hours of study shall be much fewer; we must succeed in our work for the press more than any other printer: and yet we work less than the others and with imperfect teachers; we ought to be well provided materially as to food, clothing, etc.: and yet our resources are almost nil.

Hence, convinced that you want from us all this, a pact we make with you, a pact that wells from our confidence that we have on these words of yours: “Whatever you ask in my name, you shall receive.”

On our part, we promise and oblige ourselves:

- 1) to do the best we can in study, work, prayers and in the practice of poverty;
- 2) to do everything and only for your glory;
- 3) to work one day for the apostolate of the Press.

We pray you to give us the knowledge we need, the holiness that you expect of us, the ability to work that is necessary for us, as much as it is useful for our natural needs, in this manner: making us learn *four times* to one, giving us holiness *ten times* to one, the ability to work *five times* to one, material goods, *six times* to one.

¹³⁶ Cf. G. T. Giaccardo, *Diario*, Edizioni Centro di Spiritualità Paolina, Roma, 1996, pp. 195-196 and 250-252.

Most certain that you will accept our pact, also as proof of many years, we ask you forgiveness for our little faith and of our unfaithfulness and we pray you to bless us and to make us faithful and constant till death.

From the analysis of the text, all the elements of our research, although in nutshell, are present:

Trinitarian dimension:

The theological dimension is evident in the fact that the *Pact* is addressed to the Lord Jesus;¹³⁷ in the reference to the promise of Jesus: “whatever you ask the Father in my name will be given to you;” in the commitment to seek always and only the glory of God in a continuous fervor of sanctification.

Anthropological dimension:

The image of a person praying that this prayer transmits is that of him who entrusts his mind, will and heart to God in the Lord Jesus, because he has the clear awareness of his own limitations. He is certain that knowledge, ability, means of apostolate and holiness shall not be wanting to him.

Ecclesiological dimension:

The presence of the Church is, since the first lines, expressed in the mediation of St. Paul and of Mary, Queen of the Apostles. Furthermore, the very *Pact* itself is fundamentally apostolic: everything is geared so that the apostolate may better serve the Church.

Eschatological dimension:

The *Pact* concludes with the request for fidelity and constancy “till death”. The succeeding editions develop more widely this dimension: “extend to us the mercy you used with the Apostle Paul, so that faithful in imitating our Father here on earth, we may be his companions in the glory of heaven.”

1.2 *Donec formetur Christus in vobis*

The booklet *Donec formetur Christus in vobis* (DF) was published in 1932 with the subtitle *Appunti di meditazioni ed istruzioni del P. Maestro* (*Notes for meditation and instructions of the Primo Maestro*). This work was rediscovered as of primary importance for the entire Pauline Family.

In fact, in it we find, although in an extremely concise form, the first formulation of the formative-spiritual proposal of the Founder as he himself was experiencing it for some

¹³⁷ The formula of the Pact, in this edition of 1922, is addressed to the “Lord Jesus,” in the succeeding editions it would be addressed to “Jesus Master.”.

years already during his courses of spiritual exercises and in the years of novitiate: the whole Christ Master living in the whole human person.

The underlying idea could thus be summarized: life is a journey of trial that man “issued from God’s hands in order to glorify him in eternity,” undertakes, as his return to the Father. The preparation becomes suitable if man *conforms himself* after the Son, the Divine Master, the model given him by the Father as the Way and the Truth and the Life. It is indispensable that Christ gradually *is formed* in man (cf. *Gal* 4:19). Conformation involves the whole person in his three faculties: mind, will, heart. The supernatural life of souls is “communicated, developed, perfected, consummated” under the animating action of the Holy Spirit.

Trinitarian dimension:

Even from an initial approach to the volume, the marked Trinitarian structure that Fr. Alberione wanted to give *DF* appears evident. Each of the three parts of the work respectively begins with the subtitles: *Gloria al Padre* (17ff), *Gloria al Figlio* (97ff), *Gloria allo Spirito Santo* (172). Furthermore, in the manuscript, beside the titles “Via purgativa”, “Via illuminativa”, “Via unitiva”, he placed the expressions as follows: *Teologia del Padre*, *Teologia del Figlio*, *Teologia dello Spirito Santo* thus making clear his Trinitarian explanation of the traditional ways of spiritual life.

To man fallen due to original sin, God the Father has come to his aid with the incarnation of *Jesus Christ*, his Son, who came into the world as *Master*, in order to form the whole new man.¹³⁸

He became and manifested himself as *Truth*, by revealing to us a doctrine that must be the supreme object of study, the norm and criterion for every Christian (129ff), a doctrine that comes to us through the Holy Scripture and Tradition.

He made himself and was revealed as *Way* or model: his entire life “was most holy” and Jesus is the “model of all, easy, divine” (105), specifically in the fulfillment of the divine will (114ff), in the most intimate union with the Father (121) and in deeds so that these be acceptable to God and are meritorious (123).

He made himself and was revealed as *Life*, by redeeming us from sin and obtaining for us the grace that is supernatural life of the soul. Jesus himself is the grace, “and he communicates this to us in baptism, strengthens it in confirmation, nourishes it in the Eucharist, repairs it in confession, purifies it in extreme unction...” (145).

Christ illumines us, guides us and sustains us: the Father has sent his Son to “point out, go through, make himself vehicle of man” (cf. 92).

God is revealed to us by Jesus as the *Father*, “the necessary existing being,” most perfect, “in knowledge, power, eternity, omnipotence, glory,” “most happy in himself”. He is God *Creator*, who called to existence the universe and man: he is the *Governing God*, who

¹³⁸ It is the content of the *Via illuminative*.

defends all things and supports all things with his providence, towards the achievement of the end.¹³⁹

God the Father has called us to life so that in heaven we might be sharers of his happiness (23). Creatures do not have any value as end but only as means: “All evil lies in making as end the means” (265): face-to-face with these, we ought to become “indifferent”: we use them or abstain from them inasmuch as they are of help or of obstacle to us in the achievement of our end.

Sin is “destruction” (67), “the true disaster” (71) in the journey towards our end. It leads to eternal destruction (72). God the Father, however, comes to us with his mercy (80): he has given us the sacrament of confession, which is reparation for the past, a means of conversion for the future.

“The Son has proposed his divine truths: the *Holy Spirit* keeps them, makes them understood and used. The Son has obtained the grace, repurchasing it: the Holy Spirit applies it to us in view of sanctification by communicating it to each one.”

We prepare ourselves for the action of the Holy Spirit “through hatred of sin, with the desire for grace and sanctity; with acts of faith, hope and charity.”

The Spirit creates the human-divine life of Jesus Christ and brings to reality our “second life” through the sacraments.¹⁴⁰

Anthropological dimension

Another fundamental concept in Fr. Alberione’s setup and broadly developed in *Donec Formetur* is the tight bond between the Person of Jesus Master Way Truth and Life and the human person.

Fr. Alberione sees the conformation to Christ Master as a process that appeals to the human person in the totality of his faculties and initiatives. This is a concept that is explained with three applications:

- in the *mind*: to indicate that the action of the mind (thoughts, reason, reflections, evaluation and judgment) must be conformed after the mentality of Jesus Christ Master;
- in the *will*: to underline that what comes from and is moved by the will (words, work, practical choices, orientations in life, etc.) must be conformed after the obedient manner with which the Master responded to the will of the Father;
- in the *heart*: to indicate that the heart must have the same sentiments and desires as those of Jesus.

Thus shall the whole man be formed after Christ and the work of formation shall achieve its highest goal that is to reproduce Christ in the disciple: *Donec formetur Christus*.

Christian perfection can be had in every state of life: by way of the commandments lived in the lay state; by way of the priestly state lived after the way of the commandments

¹³⁹ It is the content of the *Via purgativa*.

¹⁴⁰ It is the content of the *Via unitiva*.

united with ministerial zeal; finally, by way of the religious state lived after the way of the commandments with the practice of the evangelical counsels.

Ecclesiological dimension

The mission of Christ and of the Spirit is accomplished in the *Church*, Christ's Mystical Body and temple of the Holy Spirit: "One who does not have the Church as mother cannot have God as Father" (175; cf. *St. Cyprian*). The Spirit assists the Church and confirms her in the truth (174ff); He acts in the souls and urges them to perfection and to union with God through the infusion of the supernatural virtues of faith, hope and charity (180ff); He sanctifies them by the special means of grace that are the sacraments (189ff).

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is the example par excellence of adherence to God's project. Fr. Alberione proposes her to us (263ff) because he sees in Mary above all as she who became the attentive and faithful disciple of the Divine Master, she who allowed herself to be enveloped entirely by the Lord's action; it is she who every Pauline man or woman can and must copy in order to assume Christ's "form", the form of the Divine Master incarnate in us. Furthermore, Mary is the stairway "that from God draws grace so she may give it to us; she takes away from us self-love and exchanges it with the love of God" (36).

On the *Apostle Paul* the Holy Spirit was pleased to pour "all the better gifts," synthesized in the theological virtues lived wholly in a superlative manner: "indestructible faith, most firm hope, most ardent charity." Of special interest is the accentuation on the gift-conquest of the "most lofty knowledge".

His peculiar qualification is that of being the *Doctor gentium*, the teacher of the gentiles, the pagans whom he "enlightened" and above all who led them, as "gain", to faith in Christ Jesus. His apostolate—by his enthusiasm, dedication and indefatigable zeal, till heroism—is synthesized by Fr. Alberione as a "continuing miracle." As a protector in heaven, he is "most powerful," and the preferred graces he will obtain for us are, significantly, "ardor, conversions, the apostolate."

Eschatological dimension

The Father expects man in heaven for him to be happy forever.

At the close of his life, man shall be judged if he shall have become conformed after the image of the Son (92). Heaven is the only "true property of man," "entirely and only our destiny" (12). The desire for heaven must become "the king of desires, bearing the fruit of thirst for merits, for perfection, for souls" (33). In order to reach heaven, God's help and our cooperation are necessary.

Can we know we can be saved? "In an absolute sense, no; in a relative sense, yes. Because... God is faithful to him who has done well: God is merciful to the sinner" (41).

The thought of eternity in us is destined to produce: "great solicitude...; we build our own eternity...; life is a preparation to eternity and the foretaste of him who, also at the price of great pains, is saved; foolish is he who, laughing, is damned" (63).

Meanwhile: the choice of one's state in life shall be accomplished "according to God's point of view and our eternal advantages." And it shall always be decisive to the effects of eternal beatitude "to consider things under the light of eternity" (64f).

1.3 *Via humanitatis*

The booklet *Via humanitatis*¹⁴¹ -- a gift of the Founder to the Pauline Family on Christmas 1947—marks one of the highest moments of his project to unify in Christ "all things," through the intercession of Mary and thanks to the work of the Church. As he himself commented, the *Via humanitatis* "summarizes the entire history of humanity until the fulfillment of God's desires."

The core idea is clearly presented in the Premise:

Everything comes from God-Beginning, to return to God-End: for his glory and the happiness of all people.

Mary guides us to the sure way, which is Christ, in the Church founded by him. In Christ Way and Truth and Life we are adopted and made heirs; sons and daughters of God. Through the invisible Christ, in the visible Church, humanity possesses temporal and eternal good.

All of us are awaited in the home of the heavenly Father; through Mary everyone can find Christ, in the visible Church, humanity possesses temporal and eternal good.

All of us are awaited in the home of the heavenly Father; through Mary everyone can find Christ the Way. May everyone point out this way in the spirit of charity and apostolate.

Trinitarian dimension

In *Jesus Christ*, Divine Master, we have the center of the Trinity's redemptive work. Jesus is the Word Incarnate, "true God and true man, the promised Messiah, the Divine Master, the eternal Priest" (VII).

In Bethlehem, "He began to teach virtue, truth, goodness. He humbled himself to become a human being so as to raise men and women to God" (VIII): towards this end, "he taught by example" by which "He made man and woman, the family and civil society whole" (IX). Then at the mount of beatitudes, "he began the school of the spoken word" (X). Finally, he "offered himself to the Father as a victim of satisfaction and supplication. He died in order to be our life on earth, by means of grace, and in heaven, by means of glory" (XII).

Through the sacraments and above all in the mystery of the Eucharist, "Jesus Christ always remains among us and communicates the fruits of his presence" (XXI).

Jesus is the best gift of *God the Father*, "the prime and final goal of all creation" (I). It is the merciful Father who "foretold that a Woman would crush the head of the serpent in view of the Son, the Repairer and Redeemer" (III).

God the Father "arranged the times and prepared humanity to receive the Redeemer" (IV), gives Moses the Law: raises the prophets: "in Christ, the Father was reconciled with us, paradise was reopened" (XII).

¹⁴¹ The booklet in manuscript bears the title: *Via vitae, via humanitatis*.

Through the work of the *Holy Spirit*, descended upon Mary, Jesus, the Son of God is conceived. The Holy Spirit, invoked with Mary, “descended on the apostles and filled them with wisdom, fortitude and zeal” (XV). The task of the Spirit, sent by the Father is “to enlighten and sanctify the Church” (XV).

All believers are invited to pray to Mary: “Prepare hearts, Mary, and obtain for us the Holy Spirit” (XVI). On all those called and the apostles of all times and place, “give them the Spirit of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, piety and holy fear of God” (XV).

Anthropological dimension

Commenting on the *Via humanitatis*, Fr. Alberione affirmed, “Man shall not achieve his peace, order, tranquility if not in Jesus Christ, in his Church.”

Man and woman, created by God, placed in the earthly paradise, are “elevated to the supernatural order, favored with great privileges” (II); “they fell into sin, and were deprived of their privileges and heavenly gifts” (III).

In order to bring human beings back to God, Jesus came down to man: as the Son has pleased the Father, so whoever is likened to Jesus shall please the Father (VIII).

Jesus made man and woman, the family and civil society whole. He “repaired the ruin caused by the devil and by our passions” (IX).

Thereby comes the prayer of every believer: “You are my all; and I want to be totally yours: mind, will, heart” (X).

Ecclesiological dimension

Jesus Christ chose the Twelve, the apostles, “to continue and extend in the world his mission. He founded the *Church*, the ‘nation of believers’ and his Mystical Body” (XI). The Church, established by Christ to be “in her, way, truth and life”; she is our “mother, teacher and guide” (XI).

The Church is illumined and sanctified by the Spirit (XV); she is the “downfall of those who reject her, the salvation of those who accept her” (XVI); “One must believe in the Church as in Jesus Christ himself” (XVIII). The Church, like Jesus Christ, is “teacher of holiness” (XI), “teacher of prayer and of the spiritual life” (XX). “In the Church Christian civilization finds its fulfillment” (XXIV); in her “there is unity of faith, of government, of charity” (XXV).

Jesus has established *Peter* “as his visible Vicar. He entrusted to him all the faithful and their shepherds. He made him infallible in teaching; he gave him authority in service and charity in sanctifying” (XIV). He who is with Peter is with Jesus; he who detaches himself from Peter is a branch cut off from the vine (XIV).

For Fr. Alberione, at the heart of the history of salvation, we find *Mary*.¹⁴² She “guides us to the sure way, which is Christ”; “through Mary everyone can find Christ the Way” (*Premise*).

Mary is already foreseen in God’s mind as “the masterpiece of creation” (I). She is promised as she who “would crush the head of the serpent, in view of the Son, the Repairer and Redeemer” (III); she is “the new Eve, hope of the human race” (III). She “accepted the admirable mission” of the divine motherhood (VII). She is she who prays the Holy Spirit for the Apostles and obtains him for the apostles of all times (XVI).

The Church is entrusted to Mary, “in creation, in redemption, in the distribution of graces and in the order of glory, Mary occupies a preeminent place” (XXII). Whoever is a worthy son of this Mother is a worthy son of God (XXV).

Mary is asked to “arouse in everyone a strong desire for salvation in Christ and in the Church” (XXX).

“Faith is the foundation of my salvation... Strengthen in me a lively, active, radiant faith (XIII). “Grant that all people may believe, profess, nourish and live their faith.” (XIII).

“I thank you, Divine Master, for the hope you have instilled into my soul. I believe and hope in eternal life” (XXVIII).

To Peter, Jesus “gave... authority in service and *charity* in sanctifying” (XIV); in the Church “is unity of faith, of government, of charity, even amid the multiplicity of peoples and of cultures” (XXV).

Eschatological dimension

When our life of trial is over, the Father “calls each one to judgment. Jesus Christ will cast on the soul a light in which it will see what it has done and what it has omitted. In relation to that, there are three possible sentences; heaven, purgatory, hell” depends on how one’s life has been (XXVI).

Jesus “wants everyone to be saved and to come to the truth” (XXX).

Heaven is the eternal reward “for those who have obeyed”. Paradise is the vision of God, merited by faith; it is the possession of God merited in the accomplishment of his will. It is the enjoyment in God, merited with love (XXVIII).

“The mercy and the justice of God will be glorified; the redemption will be exalted; the merits of the elect will be recognized; all the wicked will be put to shame” (XXIX).

1.4 Introduction to the book, *GESÙ MAESTRO VIA, VERITÀ E VITA*

The *Introduzione* that Fr. Alberione did, dated 6 August 1949, for Fr. Stefano Lamera’s book, *Gesù Maestro Via, Verità e Vita*, is another successful expression of the Founder’s theological vision, always with a Christocentric point of view.

¹⁴² The *Via humanitatis* expresses the peak of Fr. Alberione’s Mariology. The figure of Mary is present in almost all the 30 frames of the itinerary.

In fact, we read in the last lines:

Creation, the promise of the Redeemer, the Incarnation, the life of Jesus Christ, the work of the Church, our sanctification and the future life in heaven have all a unifying thread: at the center is Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life; at the end, the glorification of God: One in nature and Three in Persons.

At the center of the whole movement, we find Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life. It is from him that the elements of Christian anthropology receives light, so do the ecclesiological and eschatological references.

Beginning from the exegesis of Jn 14:1-9, Fr. Alberione synthetically presents his thought that we can also gather around the four dimensions.

Trinitarian dimension

Jesus introduces himself as and is the Divine Master, Way, Truth and Life! To comprehend the reality of his Person is “a theological thought a bit high in itself,” but the Holy Spirit “can reveal to souls his light and make it understood.”

We need to go back to the work of the Trinity: “every Divine Person marked in man a natural stamp and a spiritual one”... Sin, however, came in and because of it “everything was ruined, poisoned, overturned: intelligence, will and sentiment.” Thus came the saving intervention of the incarnation of the Son of God: Jesus Christ in his public life defined himself: “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life.”

Anthropological dimension

Referring to the Constitutions of the SSP, Fr. Alberione underlines that piety, formation, study and apostolate make each other up and they have their foundation in Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life: “The whole of piety and spiritual formation is made up of and is substantiated by Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life. The whole of apostolate is directed to give to mankind Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life.”

Man reflects in himself the Divine Trinity. He is one, but God the Father has impressed on him the print of his Person, and so has the Son, and so has the Holy Spirit. Man has in his will the print of the Father, in his mind the print of the Son, in his heart the print of the Holy Spirit who is love.

The Christian’s education is like the formation of an ‘alter Christus.’ So Jesus Christ Truth is for our intelligence; Way, for our will; Life, for our heart and sentiment. The more man shall live in Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life, the holier he is going to be.

Ecclesiological dimension

Today, Jesus Christ continues to hold his position as Divine Master in the Church, his Mystical Body. “*Sicut misit me Pater et Ego mitto vos*” (*Just as the Father has sent me so I send you*): Just as Jesus came into the world Way, Truth and Life, so I send the apostles with the task of being in the Church Way, Truth and Life. “Hence the Church is infal-

lible when teaching: She is Truth; the Church has the authority in governing souls: She is Way; the Church has power to confer grace through the Sacraments: She is Life.”

Consequence for us today: “Be devotees and docile disciples of this divine Church...”

And we have to follow the liturgy of the Church. Through this book of his—Liturgy, that can be called also the book of the Holy Spirit—the Church accomplishes the mission assigned to her by Jesus Christ: “*Euntes docete omnes gentes*” (*Go and teach all nations*).

Eschatological dimension

Man’s entire life on earth, “is a preparation for Heaven.” This takes place through the “sanctification of his whole being: mind, will and sentiment”: in fact, eternal life is the vision of God (for the mind), possession of God (for the will), enjoyment of God (for the heart). Each shall be remunerated according to his behavior.

The final destination of every Pauline man and woman is stupendous: “When the soul shall present itself before Jesus Judge, he shall see it as if another He himself...; He shall present it to God who shall see in it the similitude with the August Trinity, a similitude re-established by Christ himself. He shall be pleased and the soul shall sing forever: *Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritu Sancto*”.

1.5 *Abundantes divitiae gratiae suae*

Under this title, are gathered the “notes” that in 1953 Fr. Alberione submitted to the first Paulines as a rereading of his experience as Founder. These are held as the *charismatic history of the Pauline Family*, and they constitute a document of primary importance to our study.

Let us analyze also this text¹⁴³ under the point of view of the four dimensions.

Trinitarian dimension

Jesus Christ Master is at the center of the entire work that God was able to perform through Fr. Alberione. “We find all this in the Divine Master”: natural sciences that we come to know through “the natural light of reason”; theological sciences revealed by *Jesus Christ*, that we accept “through the light of faith”; until the “vision of everything in God, in eternal life, through the light of glory” (no. 194).

Jesus invites us to himself: “*Venite ad me, omnes...*” (no. 15). His invitation can be understood, as it happened to young Alberione, thanks to the “particular enlightenment” coming from the Host.

To live integrally the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, Way, Truth and Life is the greatest aspiration of the Pauline Family (no. 93). It is only in *Jesus Christ* Divine Master that it is possible to find “spiritual unity” (no. 132). To live in *Jesus Christ* is a “secret of greatness”

¹⁴³ We follow the *typewritten* text, extracted from the handwritten text and directly revised by Fr. Alberione.

inasmuch as it leads one to “model oneself on God” (no. 95): to this follows the urgency 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”.

The “program of life, apostolate and redemption” of the Divine Master, sung by the angels, is normative for the Pauline Family: such a life-style brings everything “in one great ‘*Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus*’... in honor of the *Blessed Trinity*” (no. 183).

The purpose of the incarnation of the Son of God was “to seek out humans, lost sheep, and lead them back to *God, the Father*” (no. 188). In this sense, Jesus Christ is “the way to God” (no. 186); it is always in Jesus Christ that God, in his goodness, has extended abundant richness of graces to the Pauline Family: everything, in fact, “is from God,” just as everything should lead us to the Magnificat (cf. no. 4).

The role of the “profound sciences” is to prepare us “to receive the revelation of Jesus”: He, as God, “while creating things, enlightens humans to know those profound sciences, willed to reveal other truths not impressed in nature, in order to uplift humans [and] thus prepare them to see God, welcomed and believed through revelation, if they have used their reason properly” (no. 186).

Anthropological dimension

The portrait of the human person, which emerges from the description of the spiritual experience of the Founder in this book, is extremely realistic and at the same time profoundly Christian. Fr. Alberione, and so every Pauline man or woman, cultivates in himself two attitudes:

- incessant *gratitude* to God, expressed by the “*Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus*,” because of the “Divine Mercies” obtained from above;
- the profound sense of *humiliation*, expressed by the “Miserere” due to “lack of conformity to the overabundance of divine love” (no. 1).

The mystical experience lived in the historical night has marked Alberione’s entire person in such a way that his intelligence, will and heart were now filled only with those spiritual realities: “the Eucharist, the Gospel, the Pope, the new century, the new means... the need for a new band of apostles, that from then these things dominated his thoughts, his prayer, his spiritual work and his yearnings” (no. 20).

From here comes the commitment to further develop all the faculties of the human person “in view of one’s own salvation and in view of a more fruitful apostolate...: mind, will, heart” (no. 22). The personality’s development ought to be complete: “natural, supernatural, apostolic” (no. 146). For such a development are not wanting in the Pauline Family the *means* “especially the time during the hour of adoration when the soul enters into communication with God. [Here the soul] develops, assimilates and applies what it has learned” (no. 146), and reaches a point when “directives are finely balanced with freedom and a spirit of initiative” (no. 146).

Thus comes the serious *work* for everyone: “moral, intellectual, apostolic, spiritual” (no. 129).

The secret remains always to be the self-surrender that every Pauline man/woman does of himself/herself, with all his/her faculties—mind, will, heart, body—to Christ Master: “The whole person in Jesus Christ, in view of loving God completely [by means of one’s] intelligence, will, heart and physical strength. Nature, grace and vocation: everything [is] for the apostolate...” (no. 100).

Such a spiritual-pedagogical program “completely embraces and conquers the human person. Piety is complete and the religious, like the priest, thus grows in wisdom (study and heavenly wisdom), age (virility and virtue), and grace (sanctity) on up to the fullness and perfect age of Jesus Christ; on to Christification...” (no. 160).

Ecclesiological dimension

The broad ecclesial range that marked the life of our Founder covers the entire experience told in the *Abundantes divitiae*. From this text, in itself quite shortened, let us attempt to gather the more significant topics.

There is a well-defined plan: “Thus the notion of 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 – [is] always to be crystal clear” (no. 95).

The characteristics of this vital grafting are traceable to fidelity to the Church Magisterium and to live the service to the Church understood as “*Romanità*” (no. 56).

The Pauline apostolate is distinguished by the *social spirit* with which it is undertaken (nos. 58-63), by the *universality* it covers (no. 65). *Pastoral spirit*, that animates the entire Family, pervades every expression of service (nos. 82-86). Source of every intellectual, practical, economic and spiritual initiative is the *Gospel* (nos. 136-145), the *Eucharist*, the *liturgical spirit* (nos. 71-77) and *catechesis* (nos. 78-81).

The Pauline Family, made up of Congregations and Institutes with close relations and independence among them, has a precise duty: “to live Jesus Christ and to serve the Church” (nos. 33-35; 131-135).

Mary, Mother of the Church, is introduced as co-apostle and coredeptrix (nos. 181-182) and *Mater divinae gratiae* (*Mother of divine grace*) (no. 201).

The apostle Paul is recognized as the founder of the Pauline Family (no. 1), the saint of universality (no. 64), the great traveler (no. 117), the disciple who knows the Divine Master in his fullness (no. 159).

The passage “from organization to the religious common life” in the history of the Pauline Family is inspired by God: the intention is “to form an organization of religious.... (where) efforts would coalesce, dedication would be total and the doctrine purer” (no. 23-24). Noticeable in these notes of charismatic history also is a specific way of life for the members that belong to the Pauline Family: the novelty and the broadness of apostolate taking part in the Church riverbed of religious life.

Eschatological dimension

The explicit references to the eschatological dimension are traceable to but a few passages. Nonetheless, the general setup of the work manifests the continuous tension towards the final realities of life that, in some ways, already accompanies our day-to-day living.

He who does good to the Pauline Family in turn receives the incorruptible recompense: the Pauline is obliged to be grateful in such a way “that all those who do good to the Pauline Family... may be saved, and that on their death they may, at once or as soon as possible, contemplate, possess, love and enjoy God for ever” (no. 123).

It is Jesus Christ, Way, Truth, Life who manifests in himself the eternal vision of God: “We find all this in the Divine Master: natural sciences that we come to know through the natural life of reason; theological sciences revealed by Jesus Christ, that we accept through the light of faith; a vision of everything in God, in eternal life, through the light of glory” (no. 194).

1.6 *The short pieces gathered in Alle Famiglie Paoline (1954) and Santificazione della mente (1956)*

During the years 1953 and 1954, Fr. Alberione wrote and published in the house bulletin of the PSSP, the *San Paolo*, some “short pieces”: short treatises, through which the Founder intended to develop themes and monographic topics to which he gave special importance.

In a first series, he published the following:

- Formazione umana [human formation] (*San Paolo*, ottobre 1953)
- Per una coscienza sociale (o: Formazione sociale) [For a social conscience (or Social Formation)] (*San Paolo*, novembre, 1953).
- Il lavoro [Work] (*San Paolo*, gennaio 1954)
- La Provvidenza [Providence] (*San Paolo*, gennaio 1953)
- Portate Dio nel vostro corpo [Bear God in your body] (*San Paolo*, marzo 1954)

In a second series, to which he dedicated five issues of *San Paolo* (September 1954, October 1954, January 1955, March 1955, May 1955), he developed and interpreted for the Paulines the commandment of God: “*You shall love your God with all your mind,*” as expressed in Dt 6:5.

What is worth underlining here is the fact that, immediately after having presented this material to his brothers, Fr. Alberione had it gathered into two booklets and offered them *for the reflection of all the members of the Pauline Family*.

The first five short pieces (Formazione umana; Per una coscienza sociale; Il lavoro; La Provvidenza; “Portate Dio nel vostro corpo”) were gathered in the booklet *Alle Famiglie*

Paoline (FP). The Primo Maestro gave it as a gift to the Pauline Family on the occasion of the feast of St. Joseph in 1954, when he celebrated his 70th birthday.

The five monographic issues dedicated to the theme, “*You shall love your God with all your mind*” were gathered in a booklet and entitled *Santificazione della mente* (Sanctification of the mind) (SdM) and given to the Pauline Family on the occasion of the feast of St. Joseph in 1956.

From the reading of this precious material, it appears evident that the thought and the proposition of Fr. Alberione, although when at the start he addressed himself to a single Congregation, moved always from the point of view of Family, and they bore in mind the needs as well as the expectations of all the Pauline Institutions.

Trinitarian dimension

Jesus Christ is the Father’s apostle, gifted with the “perfect disposition of his faculties, on one hand, according to God; on the other and together, according to reason.” He, as Apostle, did not have any other purpose than to “seek God’s glory and the salvation of man” (FP, pp. 5-6).

In his priestly prayer, Jesus lent his voice to the prayer of humanity: for four times he asked the Father unity among the Apostles first, then among the faithful with themselves and with the Church Hierarchy (FP, p. 39).

Jesus Christ intended to overcome the barriers of a limited mission: he, in fact, came for all men. Because of this he “enjoined” the apostles, “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.” Besides, it was the Heavenly Father who promised the Son, “dabo tibi gentes,” all the nations of the world (FP, p. 47).

In honoring and praying to the Father in heaven, Jesus could present to him hands not only pierced with nails, but also “callous because of the carpenter’s saw, hammer and plane” (FP, p. 63).

Jesus invites us to trust God! “He always is Father!” With this term did Jesus address himself to him, also at the peak of his sufferings: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (FP, p. 87).

The objective of the sanctification of the mind originates from the awareness that “Jesus Christ is Divine Master and the only Master; in the first place because he is truth himself, essential and eternal truth: *Ego sum veritas*; he is the Word that the Father eternally generates” (SdM, p. 6).

The first period of the “eucharistic visit” foresees *Adoration*. This is addressed to Jesus Christ Divine Master, whom the Father has sent to communicate wisdom: adoration

as to Him who is the essential and eternal truth, the Father’s splendor;

as to the Author of our intelligence and having the full right to have our assent;

as to the Author of all the teachings contained in the catechism, in theology, in sacred preaching; as to the Master, the only Way, Truth and Life; Author of the Gospels;

as to the Founder of the Church, Teacher, that is his Mystical Body;

as to the Resident of the Tabernacle from where he teaches, enlightens, comforts, guides, consoles souls; *lux mundi* (*SdM*, pp. 8-9).

Anthropological dimension

The believer's life is preparation for eternity; and the secret for better preparation consists in adhering *with one's whole being* to Christ Jesus: to "establish our whole being in God: mind, will, heart, body: through Jesus Christ, in Jesus Christ, with Jesus Christ" (*SdM*, p. 18).

The religious who tends to pattern himself after the Master finds himself entirely involved with him and urged as well by a generosity that calls on every faculty: "He who is generous accomplishes his job and his mission by employing in them his mind, will, heart, physical strength". Every faculty performs a precise role: "The mind for understanding the work, for studying the means towards good results; the will, by utilizing all means, physical and moral strength; the heart, with which to love his own apostolate and perform it with joy and merit (*FP*, p. 70).

Meanwhile, here is the fundamental norm: *redo unity in Christ!* In fact, "man had to have unity or integrity: that is, the powers of man—mind, will, sentiment—ought to be integrated". Sin broke that unity in man thus came the imperative: "Redo unity in Christ," which means that "the mind be grafted into the mind of Christ; the will, in the will of Christ; the heart, in the heart of Christ" (*SdM*, p. 20).

To graft our faculties into Christ means to elevate them into an extraordinary dignity, in such a way that what they perform becomes an action of Christ himself: "human actions, performed in Christ with the right exercise of the mind, will, sentiment, are absorbed and done as by Jesus Christ himself; hence, they are raised to produce new and immense glory to God and grace and merit to him who performs them. Through this obligatory passage—Christ, the Mediator—works are transformed into his..." (*SdM*, p. 89).

After the tragic disobedience of man's sin, God, in his infinite mercy, wanted to show a way, an object of hope: the future Redeemer. "In Christ Jesus man can be remade: in his mind, by believing in Him; in his will, by following his examples; in his heart, through the grace merited by him; in the *crucified body* and conformed with the body of Jesus Christ" (*SdM*, pp. 18-19).

Ecclesiological dimension

Those who intend to give themselves to the Church and to Christianity find, as "special foundation of sociability," the doctrine of Christ's Mystical Body. With such an expression one means that "among the living members of the Church the same blood of Christ circulates, that is, his same life that animates all: in such a way that one body with many members is produced, with Jesus Christ himself as head. Let us form the Church" (*FP*, p. 34).

According to the teaching of the Gospel, it shall be important "to suffer with him who suffers; to rejoice, with him who rejoices. To live in union of mind, will and heart with the Pope: this means to participate at the universality of his concerns" (*FP*, p. 35).

Never forget, meanwhile, that “no one becomes a Pauline for one specific country, much less his own; it is in order to go to that part wherein one is assigned for the goals of the glory of God and of the good of souls. We are citizens of the Kingdom of Christ, which is the Church, and in whatever country we may be, we always belong to her inasmuch as the Church is catholic...” (*FP*, p. 35).

As a consequence, the habitual feeling of every member of the Pauline Family shall be *catholic*, that is, universal as the Church. “Thought, sentiment, aspiration of a true Pauline reflect this supernaturalness and supra-temporality (*sit venia verbis*): not within the narrow confines of family, diocese or earth wherein is established the ecclesiastical hierarchy, or to those already conquered for Christ. Get on ahead! Always get on ahead!” (*FP*, p. 48).

The Virgin Mary, Mother of Good Counsel and Seat of Wisdom, has always intervened in order to obtain light and to defend the Church. “The Theologians and Doctors of the Church, like the faithful, always turned to her in moments of difficulty, in order to erase errors and heresies. Mary intervened in order to confirm, clarify, defend the doctrine of her Son and of the Church” (*SdM*, p. 35).

Therefore, let there be great thanksgiving to the Lord: “because he gave us the Church, guardian and interpreter of revelation and infallible Teacher of truth” (*SdM*, p. 10).

Eschatological dimension

For Fr. Alberione, the wish for one *to rest in peace* “does not mean to wish idleness or sleep.” In heaven, in fact, man “reaches the maximum of activity and, participating in the divine activity, the soul united with the transformed body through the qualities of the risen Jesus Christ, participates in the Divine Nature” (*FP*, p. 51).

In the eternal life, the body of the elect shall reveal the virtues and the good done; the body “shall have the qualities of the risen body of Jesus Christ itself; and shall enter heaven with the soul, according to divine justice which wants that the whole man, body and soul, should have due recompense. Every sense, every struggle, every mortification, every meritorious act will be glorified. The whole human person shall be rewarded (*FP*, pp. 196-197).

Celestial beatitude shall be in God. We are destined “to see God face to face, to know him in the way that he knows himself, to function in God, to enjoy in God, aside from every creature.” The members of the Pauline Family, meanwhile, will want to prepare themselves for eternity with the purpose of establishing his/her whole being “in God: mind, will, heart, body: through Jesus Christ, in Jesus Christ, with Jesus Christ. The present life must present on its own the form and the specific characteristics that make up a true preparation for the eternal beatitude: the means is Jesus Christ” (*SdM*, p. 18).

1.7 *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei*

Let us allow ourselves to be guided in this our analysis by *Instruction XII*, held by the Founder during the gathering of Ariccia in 1960.

There is a straight line running between “*in principio erat Verbum; et Verbum erat apud Deum*” [In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God] and the end of time and our eternity in God through Jesus Christ. This line (or way) is Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life.

In God there is one nature and three Persons. To these three Persons we attribute power to the Father, wisdom to the Son, and love to the Holy Spirit.

What God does *ad extra* is the work of the three Persons. God said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” But each one of the three Persons communicated something of his attribute. God’s design is attributed to the Son: “*Per [quem] omnia facta sunt.*” [Through whom all things were made]. As God is one so is man one; but man is gifted with three faculties which reflect the Father’s omnipotence (the will); the Son’s wisdom (intelligence); the Holy Spirit’s love (feelings).

God raised man to the supernatural order; he conferred divine grace on him; it is a gratuitous gift, precisely because it is grace. This grace, reflected on man’s intelligence gave rise to faith; reflected on his will it communicated a special strength “*erat simul condens naturam et fondens [infundens] gratiam*” [He was at the same time creating nature and infusing grace], God.,

Adam sinned. He lost the grace that made him a friend of God and was *in deterius commutatus* [Changed for the worse], as also were his mind, feelings and will. He needed to be restored to his primitive state through grace and the benefits connected with grace. The Son of God came to repair the original construction, and to restore man and his faculties.

Thus the Son of God restored man’s mind (He is Truth), his will (He is the Way), and his feelings (He is Life).

Jesus Christ lives in the Christian who is refashioned in the image and likeness of the Triune God; the Christian lives in Jesus Christ in heaven, in Jesus Christ of whom he is a member; and through Christ he will be immersed in the Triune God. All three divine Persons contribute to the blessedness of man and his three faculties. So that this happiness will be complete each faculty will achieve its pinnacle.

It is the beginning of eternal happiness; the way was Jesus Christ; the straight line has reached its goal.

The whole world is a complete exemplar of the Triune God.¹⁴⁴

This is a page that is extremely synthesized and dense: it becomes even more enlightening if it is integrated with *Instruction VII* of the second week.¹⁴⁵

It is not difficult for us to see in this marvelous biblical-theological synthesis the four dimensions that characterize Alberione’s vision of the “*omnia instaurare in Christo*” (To restore all things in Christ).

Trinitarian dimension

Jesus Christ is at the center of the plan of salvation thought of by the Trinity: he is the way, or the straight line, that connects the beginning of time to its final consummation.

Through the Son all things were made. As to man, the masterpiece of creation, every Person of the Trinity has impressed a specific print: the Father has imprinted his own seal in man’s will; the Son, in his intelligence; the Spirit, in his heart.

In order to repair the damage done by the original sin, the Son of God became incarnate, he who “came to restore the primitive construction,” bringing man back to his original beauty, more, by producing a “second edition,” as Fr. Alberione loves to say.

¹⁴⁴ UPS I, 368.

¹⁴⁵ UPS II, pp. 149ff

Anthropological dimension

Original sin has seen to it that man remained *in deterius comutatus* (changed for the worse): “the mind inclined to error, the will inclined to vice, sentiment inclined to superstition, false worship, and eternal death” (*UPS II*, p.149).

The Son of God, having been made incarnate, “restored” with the three dimensions of His Person, the faculties of man: as Truth, he restored the intelligence; as Way, he restored the will; as Life, he restored the heart.

Jesus prolongs his presence in the Christian every day by conforming him gradually to himself. In such manner, the human person, called to become image of the Lord Christ, can grow in the conformation of all his faculties to the Divine Master: and achieving such conformation, he becomes unified in himself and responds as well to his own identity!

Ecclesiological dimension

The presence and the role of the Church find, in this context, only a fleeting reference that we read in *UPS II*, p. 149: “to know ever better Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life and his Mystical Body that is the Church.”

Nonetheless, every Pauline knows well that the ecclesiological dimension has been one of the key points of the teaching of our Founder. At this point, he considered already assimilated by his children what he emphasized and continually affirmed with extreme emphasis.

The Pauline’s mission is fully integrated in the Church: from the Church we receive the mandate and in the name of the Church we fulfill it. From here comes fidelity to the magisterium of Peter; the awareness that we have been called to be Paul alive today, the conviction that the magisterium and the Pauline discipleship shall be more effective the more it is grafted in Mary, Queen of the Apostles.

A qualifying element of the Christian life style is his theological life: it is “set out... in the acts of faith, hope, charity” (*UPS II*, p. 150).

Eschatological dimension

This is one aspect that is emphasized with special attention. Man, after having ended his journey of trial, “shall be immersed through Christ in the One and Triune God”. Just as the believer has sought all his life for communion with the three Divine Persons, now each of these Persons shall contribute to the beatitude of man in his three faculties: his intelligence shall achieve the vision of God; his will shall achieve the possession of God; his heart shall be satiated by the joy of God.

And it shall still be Jesus who shall welcome the faithful in heaven and to introduce him to the Father for his endless happiness.

With the appeasement of the aspirations of every faculty, eternal happiness shall be “full”. And with the start of happy eternity, the righteous finds fulfillment: each shall experience with immense joy that “the way has been Jesus Christ.”

2. THE THEOLOGICAL VISION OF THE PROJECT IN THE PREACHING OF THE FOUNDER AND IN THE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS OF EACH INSTITUTE

* THE SOCIETY OF ST. PAUL

Fr. Alberione's preoccupation, that everything—from the Trinitarian sphere to the creation of the universe, to the Church, to the human person, to the mission, to the return to the Father—be considered starting from the Divine Master, finds a clear formulation in his teaching and in his preaching to the Society of St. Paul.¹⁴⁶ The Congregation has faithfully received such an orientation by the Founder, and it has codified it in its official Documents and in the Constitutions.

Trinitarian dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

Let us take into consideration the house bulletin *San Paolo* (SP), with which Fr. Alberione dialogued with his children during the entire arc of his life, and the *Instructions* given to the priests-disciples of the first hour in the course of spiritual exercises in Ariccia published with the title, *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei* (UPS).

House bulletin San Paolo

From the very first years Fr. Alberione introduced to the Paulines the Person of the Divine Master so that each one might see in him the Truth to know, the Way to follow, the Life of which one has to nourish himself. However, he saw to it that the Master was seen always in his precise Trinitarian placement.

The vision of the *history* that the Pauline is called to have locates at the center of everything the Divine Word who “has opened the course of history on the day that he called to existence everything from nothing.” Meanwhile, to “make real history” is “to describe how the Father has adapted the ages to his Divine Son and how the Holy Spirit accomplishes the work in time” (SP, 15 Febbraio 1935).

Man is wise if he pays continuous attention to salvation for which “Jesus has poured all his divine blood”. In such a saving initiative, the whole Trinity has intervened: “Salvation is the work of the Father, of the Son, of the Holy Spirit...” Could anyone of us remain indifferent to such a great grace? “So much has the Father did, so much the Son, so much

¹⁴⁶ We saw earlier the important page taken from the 1st volume of *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei* (UPS I, pp. 368ff). Among the other principal passages, let us recall: *Brevi meditazioni per ogni giorno dell'anno*, II, p. 49; *Introduzione*, in *Gesù Maestro Via, Verità e Vita*, by Stefano Lamera (pp.11-13); *Schema di Enciclopedia sul Divin maestro*, in SP, settembre 1959.

did the Holy Spirit for our eternal salvation, and what do we do about it?" (*SP*, 28 ottobre 1936-XV).

What is the contribution of the *religious* in building Christian civilization? "The religious who give Jesus Christ to the world imitate the Father; they take part in His intentions and they work in Jesus Christ; with the Holy Spirit they take and give the goods of the Son" (*SP*, maggio 1947).

This *Trinitarian dimension* touches one of the peaks of the marvelous summary vision expressed in *San Paolo* in the August-September 1963 issue.

Meditate and teach: our spiritual life is a circular movement that *starts* from the Most Holy Trinity to *return* to Himself.

- 1) It is "the river of living water (grace), clear as crystal"...
 - 2) It flows into the sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ..., Head of humanity...
 - 3) The living water thus gathered... *overabundantly* flows on the soul in grace...
 - 4) This is the work of the Holy Spirit in redeemed humanity... in order to make it participant of his light and of his glory...
 - 5) Grace (divine water) is a participation to the divine nature as such, to the intimate life of God himself. The intimate life of God is Trinitarian life... Grace is the mirroring of the intimate Trinitarian life of God in the soul: God is reflected ineffable for his being supernatural, that is through grace (St. Thomas).
 - 6) In order to bring the soul in Jesus... in the bosom of God One-Three, from Whom it came...
- In this manner the circular movement closes—in eternity.

*Ut perfectus sit homo Dei*¹⁴⁷

As regards the norms and the very practices of piety themselves, the Pauline is invited to assume his specific spirit, "for it shapes the Pauline day and apostolate". Through such a spirit, he is equipped to live in Jesus Christ, directing everything for the glory of the Father, and receives "the grace of the Holy Spirit, who is the soul of the soul" (*UPS I*, 310).

The importance of evangelization of peoples through the apostolate with the means of social communication is underlined, in the negative, also by the consideration of the "teaching chairs" that the technical means at times raise against Jesus Christ, who "used the time of his earthly life in order to bear witness to the truth": in reality, such "teaching chairs" are raised against the Father who spoke through the Son, and against the Holy Spirit, "who is the spirit of truth" (*UPS*, p. 317).

What is fundamental is that we model ourselves after the Master, by meditating on the examples of his entire life. He, guided by the Spirit, did not have any other objective than to do the will of the Father since his Incarnation until the "*inclinato capite emisit spiritum*" (...*bowing his head, he handed over the spirit*), and until his Ascension into heaven" (*UPS I*, p. 524).

IN THE CHAPTER DOCUMENTS (CHAP. DOC.)

In sketching the Pauline identity, the *Chapter Documents* (Chap. Doc.), the fruit of the Special General Chapter 1969-1971), affirm that Paulines have as fundamental objective that of forming themselves after Christ Master, given by the Father as his image: "follow-

¹⁴⁷ For the most significant texts, see above, p. 78. Here we limit ourselves to other short references.

ing the example of the Apostle Paul, their father and teacher, they shall try above all to conform themselves in Christ (*Rom* 8:29), Word and Image of God invisible, who, in order to become the perfect Communicator, has chosen to be similar to the recipients of his message” (*Chap. Doc* 32).

The task of Paulines: to make present in the world the love that runs among the same Divine Persons: “we have come together ‘as members of Christ, living together as brothers’ (PC 15) in order to incarnate the love that exists in the Divine Persons” (*Chap. Doc* 330).

Thanks to the “free intervention of God and Father of Jesus,” in the Body of Christ the Holy Spirit consecrates us so that we come to the Father’s possession: “Our religious consecration is authentic and fruitful in the Body of Christ because it is the Holy Spirit who consecrates us” (*Chap. Doc* 415).

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

The Constitutions of the *Society of St. Paul*, approved in 1984 after the last revision, offer the juridical-ascetical formulation of the orientation given by the Founder: center everything in Christ Master.

The Paulines are called to the following of the Divine Master who “asks of us a communion of life like that of the divine Persons,” with the end in view of living united “heart and soul” (art. 16).

The following of Jesus Christ is rightly presented as a response to the appeal of the Spirit: “With a free response to the appeal of the Holy Spirit, we have decided to follow Christ” (art. 1). “Religious consecration... makes well up in us a more intense way of life under the inspiration of the Spirit, who has deputed us to a specific service in the Church” (art. 23).

A characterizing element of the Pauline is his conformation to Christ Jesus in the vision of St. Paul, with a total reference to the Father and with full self-giving to human beings: “The Christ that St. Paul presents is the One who calls all human beings to learn of him in order to be for them:

- the Way towards the fellowship with God and with their fellows;
- the Truth who makes clear and absolute the vision of God the Father and of human beings themselves—their history and their noble purpose;
- the Life, the source of their complete needs, for left to themselves they are unable to reach the fullness for which they were created, that is, their supernatural end” (art. 9).

The practice of the vows incline us “to love our brothers who are given to us by the Father, not with the ties of flesh and blood but with a more profound and lasting affection that issues from the Spirit” (art. 25), at the same time it allows us to be better conformed with Christ Jesus. In particular, the obedience of the religious is the taking up of the same attitude of Christ towards the Father: “Obedience is, therefore, in the first place, a relationship with God, who indeed merits to be obeyed since he alone is truth; he alone is able to compel us to do his will while respecting our freedom” (art. 40).

IN THE RATIO FORMATIONIS (RF)

Published in 1990 as an aide and guide for the formation of Paulines, this important document affirms in a very effective manner the Trinitarian dimension of the orientation of “instaurare omnia in Christo” (to restore all things in Christ).

Our spirituality places Jesus in close relationship with the Trinity: “The spirituality of Jesus Way and Truth and Life has important biblical links. First of all it shows us Jesus in relationship with the Trinity: He is the revelation of the Father’s truth, the way to the Father in the Spirit, divine life according to the same Spirit, life of the Holy Trinity” (RF 73-74).

The goal of Pauline formation is to be conformed after the Divine Master. And this brings to one’s becoming perfect as the Father: “The ultimate goal of the formation process for the Christian and even more for the religious is identification with Christ. Our Founder had the habit of saying, ‘Put on Christ!’... Jesus himself said to his followers, ‘Be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.’”

Anthropological dimension

We are aware of the insistence with which Fr. Alberione inculcated in the Pauline the need that the *whole* human person—in his faculties: mind, will, heart—be grafted into the *whole* person of the Divine Master. The Christ-centered Pauline Spirituality marks decisively the Pauline anthropology: “the whole man in Christ...” (cf. AD 100).

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

House Bulletin San Paolo

Aside from the important texts gathered in the booklets *Alle Famiglie Paoline* and *Santificazione della mente*, already considered in their places, we find frequent reminders in the House Bulletin *San Paolo* that we consider the person as a harmonic and organic whole—mind, will and heart—that finds perfection when it is grafted on the *whole* of Christ Master.

In 1937, at the approach of the feast of the conversion of St. Paul, Fr. Alberione invites his children to pray so that in each of them may take place the dynamism of conformation of the whole person in Christ, just as it took place in the Apostle: “let your the forces and energies be directed to the Lord with total self-giving; in order that these energies of mind, will, heart be strengthened as in St. Paul by the extraordinary grace...” (SP, 21-1-1937).

Two years later, the Founder feels he has to “insist much” so that preaching may be complete, embracing “dogma, morals, worship.” This is due to the fact that one must reach man in all the aspects: of mind, of will and of heart, in order to transform him into an other Christ. “Our particular spirit invites us to insist: first on the truth, then on the way, then on life: mind, will, heart. We must be the mouth of the Church inasmuch as her ministers are clothed in her, who is teacher of truth, of morals, of prayer” (SP, 15 marzo 1939).

Defining the characteristics that ought to qualify the catechetical magazine *Via e Verità e Vita*, Fr. Alberione affirms that it “considers *the whole* man inasmuch as made up of soul and body; and inasmuch as he is gifted with mind, will, sentiment: in order to bring the whole of him to God in the beatific vision of God, at the possession of God, at the beatitude of God”. The same eschatological perspective, in fact, is referred to the integrality of the person: “Man has been created by God and for God. The present life is a preparation of the mind, will, heart, body for Paradise. Our permanent home is in eternity; it is either we are saved with God, or forever damned in hell” (*SP*, ottobre 1952).

At the same period, the Founder affirms that it is indispensable that we establish rapport with God, in Christ Jesus, with all our faculties: “Our prayers bring before God our being, mind, will, heart, body. Our prayers come from fundamental dogmas of the Church, are directed to form the Pauline religious and apostle, while they are full of strong and pious sentiments” (*SP*, dicembre I 1952).

Distinction must clearly be made between a vocation and a mere occupation. This, precisely because vocation, a gift of Jesus Christ, “fills one’s being human and Christian,” it touches the essence itself of being human: “Vocation is profoundly different from the attraction to a civil profession or an occupation. Vocation clothes the whole of being human and Christian. Mind, will, heart, body are involved in it. The whole of being human: intelligence, character, tendencies, health, mentality, physical constitution, feelings, habits, purity, etc.” (*SP.*, genn. 1956).

More. What is the objective of the Spiritual Exercises? Only one: to let Jesus Christ live in us, which is equivalent to: “sanctifying the whole man: mind, will, sentiment.” And it is because of this that the themes for meditation should concern dogma, morals, and worship: “There are Spiritual Exercises of conversion; others, of perfection; others, for vocation; others, for the religious life and the priestly life. But their general use is always to bring us an integral renewal in the practice of religion, either interior or exterior, in private and in public. In fact, the aim is to sanctify the whole of man; mind, will, sentiment; according to one’s state in life or vocation or environment: hence, meditations have to be on dogma, morals, and worship” (*SP*, agosto-settembre 1956).

Ut perfectus sit homo Dei

Fr. Alberione loved to make use of the biblical image of *grafting*. The Divine Master, working within man, transforms his three faculties, elevates them and enables them to produce new fruits: “This graft, carried out on man, must raise his mind, heart and will to produce new fruits in accordance with the nature of the graft and of the person ‘grafted’. Thus it is that Jesus *Truth* works on the mind and confers faith; Jesus Christ is the *Way* and works on the will, which then complies with God’s will; Jesus Christ is *Life* and works on the feelings, conveying a supernatural life” (*UPS* II, p. 148). Whoever responds to that graft shall arrive at the goal: *Christ lives in me!*

The gradual *implantatio* (implanting) of the Master in the Pauline takes place through the action of the sacraments and of the practices of piety. Of great importance is *meditation*, in its classical three moments: “*The first part.* After reading the topic of the meditation, sum it up briefly... You will thus exercise your mind and the Divine Teacher will

enlighten you with his moral and practical truths...’ *The second part*. This is to stir up the will to an intense desire for holiness of life and to follow Jesus who precedes us on the way to heaven...” *The third part*. Here it is necessary to pray and to ask for the grace of perseverance; that what we have not yet put into practice because of human failing may, through God’s bountiful help, be made possible, easy and joyful...” (*UPS II*, p. 62).

Moved by the action of the Holy Spirit, Paulines shall arrive at living ever more in Jesus Christ, who is Truth for the mind, Way for the will, Life for the heart: “Above all, there is the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is the soul of the soul. Through grace, we experience living in Jesus Christ: in him-Truth, the working of our intellect; in him-Way, the working of our will; in him-life, the working of our heart, feelings (*UPS I*, p. 310).

IN THE CHAPTER DOCUMENTS

The integrality of the person unified in Christ Master is understood in the very concept of “Pauline Spirit”:

In order to communicate to man the fullness of the mystery of Christ, the Pauline community lives and works in the whole Christ (Master, Way, Truth and Life) as St. Paul lived it, in the atmosphere of the Virgin, Queen of Apostles. In Him it is nourished through the Word and the Eucharist, in Him it unites prayer, study, apostolate, religious consecration, by bringing everything to a living synthesis of love (*Chap. Doc.* 382).

In fact, the whole person is called to establish itself in Christ:

... it is the person in its fullness that must approach Christ and receive from him the deep touch that liberates it and makes it fully mature... The Founder invites us to take God as model God’s pedagogy: The divine method is that which looks after *the whole man*, that is, that one that wants to bring the whole of man to God...” (*Chap. Doc.* 399).

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

The Constitutions pick up the thought of the Founder and reaffirm the commitment of the Pauline to live in Christ with the totality of his being:

“To live in Christ” implies the total commitment of our being and exacts an integral response that we will seek to give in every aspect of our life, ‘First and foremost among the things to be learned in the Pauline Family is devotion to Jesus Master. This devotion... embraces the whole person; it is to be applied to spiritual work, to study, to the apostolate, to the whole of religious life.” (art. 10).

Formation has as its objective that Jesus Christ the Divine Master be always better known, loved and imitated so that he assumes form in the person:

The principle that oversees the formation of the Pauline is the one that was formulated by St. Paul: ‘that Christ may be formed in us.’ Formation will therefore be arranged in such a way that we will advance more and more in knowledge, love and imitation of Jesus Christ the Divine Master. Thus, having first been faithful disciples of Jesus Christ we shall become skilled in teaching others (art. 90).

IN THE RATIO FORMATIONIS

The application of Jesus Way, Truth and Life on man is “spiritual anthropology”:

When the motivating principle – Christ Way and Truth and Life – is applied to the human being it becomes spiritual anthropology and strengthens his whole personality: the whole human being—mind, will and heart—is oriented towards Christ (*RF 75*).

In Christ Jesus the whole man is recomposed in unity:

Harmony-unity: everything is oriented in an ordered way to the one goal: love of God and the apostolate; and the whole human being is renewed because all that is at variance in him is brought together in Christ and he finds his unity once more (RF 77.2).

Ecclesiological dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

House bulletin San Paolo

The Founder clarifies well the role of the Congregation: *to know and spread the doctrine of the Church...*

The Pious Society of St. Paul has come to being for the Apostolate of the Press. It tends to make known and spread the doctrine of the Church with the press like preaching with the living voice... On the other hand, it is precisely for this that it is different from what is industry or commerce (SP, 15 maggio 1935).

Meanwhile, it is indispensable that we feel we are living members of the Church in every activity;

We have to comprehend the whole mind of the Church. She always presents to us dogma, morals, worship; although according to particular purposes and circumstances one of the parts prevail. On the other hand in the Liturgy the Church wants to bring man entirely to God: according to his mind, will, heart... Uniting ourselves with the Church, great Teacher of Prayer, we unite ourselves to Jesus Christ Himself: through Him, with Him, in Him we send our acts of adoration, thanksgiving, propitiation and supplication to the Heavenly Father (SP, 15 dicembre 1935).

Paulines shall always want to remain with the Church inasmuch as she, perpetuating the Divine Master's presence, teaches (*Truth*), is the sure guide (*Way*), "sanctifies" (*Life*).

The Church is the extension and continuation of Redemption. She offers us three orders of means: Teacher of truth and of faith, she offers us a compendium of instructions; and we, docile disciples, must listen to her; she reigns, and we must be children to her, observant; she sanctifies souls with the sacramentals, and we must receive them as much as we can... (SP, 28 Ottobre 1936).

Only in Christ and in the Church are there the way, the truth and the life for the individual and for society: through time and eternity... (SP, marzo 1950).

Mary is the marvelous model in our mission of cooperating with the Church in giving Jesus to the world:

She has given Jesus to the earth... She, in our frame of mind, summarizes the idea of the Eucharist made with her virginal blood; she offers us her blessed fruit, Jesus, presenting him as if holding with most gentle hand the living Host, holy, pleasing to God. She also gave Him to the Father who, through Jesus Christ, receives new, infinite glory. She showed Jesus to the shepherds, called to be first around the crib of the Redeemer... (SP, 1 Maggio 1935).

Ut perfectus sit homo Dei

The Pauline, instructed by St. Paul, can well understand his belonging to the Church:

St. Paul is the foremost interpreter of the Divine Teacher. Jesus taught him without recourse to intermediaries just as was the case when he was converted.

In the twenty or so places where Paul mentions the mystery of Christ he speaks of the relationship between Christ and Christians as members of his mystical Body. In Paul's words we are incorporated in Christ our Head; we are part of the building which is the Church; we are grafted into him, and thanks to a successful graft, we, a wild olive, become a new and fruitful olive (UPS II, p. 148).

The apostolate—“propaganda”(promotion) in particular—is a contribution so that the Divine Master, apostle of the Father, may continue his work in the Church:

For the apostle, promotion is the extension in space and time of the work of the Divine Teacher... Therefore, just as in the Church the real presence of Jesus Christ is perpetuated in the Eucharist, and his authority in the sacred ministers, so, likewise is the spread of his doctrine perpetuated. You can easily see that promotion, understood in this sense, is essentially different from the selling of books (*UPS IV*, p. 85).

The apostle is above all a witness, committed to let himself “disappear” in order to give voice to God and to present in the first place the doctrine of the Church:

The less the human side appears in our writings and words so as to make room for God and the Church, so much more effective and listened to will the apostle be... This is great wisdom and a guarantee of success. The Church is infallible in matters of faith and morals; the Church has a mandate: “go and preach”; it propounds its doctrine with the authority of Jesus Christ; there is the greater sanction: salvation or perdition; man is free to accept it or refuse it (*UPS IV*, p. 235).

Secret of speedy conformation to the Master and of apostolic efficacy is to take *Mary* as our way to Jesus:

To make this conformation to Jesus Christ easier, the Lord, in his infinite love, willed to help our weak human nature. He showed us a simple and easy way. That way is *Mary*, a most lovable and holy creature., *Mary* is the way to Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ is the way to the Father in heaven... This is what Jesus has done; every action of his is directive, rather, law... He came as a Teacher through *Mary* our Teacher (*UPS IV* p. 235).

IN THE CHAPTER DOCUMENTS

Paulines are men called by the love of Christ in order to proclaim to man the fullness of the mystery of Christ and to serve the Church:

Paulines are consecrated persons called by the love of Christ to bear witness of the Gospel and to serve the Church by announcing to man the fullness of the Mystery of Christ, by means of the media of social communications... Accomplishing their mission of communicators, the authentic expression of the Founder’s charism, Paulines are aware of continuing the same mission of Christ Jesus, Divine Master... (*Chap. Doc.*, 32).

It is indispensable that the apostolic activity of the Pauline is inserted in the organic pastoral action of the Church:

The “*sensus Ecclesiae*” (our awareness of being God’s people), which is above all the expression of our faith on her role as the “universal sacrament of salvation,” must lead our pastoral dialogue with the world to the saving action, that is, the pastoral action of the Church... One of the principal commitments regarding the apostolate must then be that of inserting ourselves in the Church’s organic pastoral action (*Chap. Doc.* 95-96).

Through the religious consecration one participates in the same “anointing” of Christ:

“With this consecration, our Community is profoundly introduced:

-- into the climate of the Bible, wherein one breathes the Alliance with God...

-- into the Ecclesial reality, wherein the Son of God... calls us to share of his same anointing... (*Chap. Doc.*, 413).

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

The mission of the Society of St. Paul is to proclaim the whole Christ, revealer of God and revealer of man, according to the magisterium of the Church:

The subject-matter that we will constantly seek to communicate concerns, first of all, faith, morals and worship as they flow from the well-spring of sacred scripture, tradition, and the living magisterium of the Church. Still, following the teaching of Christ, who reveals both God and man to man himself, the Pauline apostle will give his contribution as well to the development of the human spirit and to the advancement of progress in its many-faceted aspects (art. 72).

The religious profession consecrates us “more intimately at the service of God and of the Church”:

With the public profession of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience, and the vow of fidelity to the Pope, Paulines are more intimately consecrated to the service of God and of the Church and effectively incorporated as members of the Society of St. Paul (art. 22).

Likewise, it is in the name of the Church that mission is accomplished:

The Church has entrusted us with our mission and we have to carry it out in its name. It is the Church and the Church alone who hands on to us with guaranteed authenticity and genuineness the “wisdom of God in all its varied forms: that we are called upon to propagate (art. 70).

Consecration expresses our belonging to God and, at the same time, to the Church:

We constitute a consecrated community, affirming our belonging to God whose Spirit chose us, and to the church which associates our self-offering with the sacrifice of the Eucharist (art. 24).

At the same time: obedience and collaboration with the pastors of the Church:

Over and above the obedience due to the pastors of the Church in those matters that refer to the care of the souls and the public exercise of divine worship, Paulines are to collaborate in the local pastoral setting within the specific context of their own apostolic aims (art. 42).

The *Virgin Mary* allows the Pauline to assume the features of the apostle:

Our character as consecrated persons and apostles is also given to us by the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. She is venerated by us as the Queen of Apostles since she is ‘the model of that motherly love with which all who join in the Church’s apostolic mission for the regeneration of humankind should be animated’ (LG 25) (art. 11).

Remain and act always in the spirit of *St. Paul*:

The Founder’s spiritual approach mirrors the Christocentric view of St. Paul. He invited us to come to an understanding of the total mystery of the Son of God by means of the gospel concept of “Master”. Since “he is the Way, the Truth and the Life, he fulfills all the expectations of the human person’s spirit, indeed he infinitely surpasses them.” The Christ that St. Paul presents is the One who calls all human beings to learn of him ... (art. 9).

IN THE RATIO FORMATIONIS

The mission of the Pauline is at the service of God and of the Church:

Apostolic dimension: the human being, God’s image in his being and acting, projects this identity through the strength of his inner life and through his apostolic action. It is to will what is good as does the Father, to be God’s Word—his transference—as the Son, and in Him to live and breathe the love of the Holy Spirit (RF, 76.3).

The communitarian dimension is seen as the “main framework” of the service that we intend to render in the Church:

The person called to Pauline life embraces consecrated life in community as the underpinning for the mission or service that he intends to give to the Church and, in the Church, to humanity (RF, 42).

Mary, disciple and teacher, introduces us to the school of Jesus:

When Fr. Alberione speaks of Mary he loves to present her to us above all us a ‘Disciple and Teacher’; in other words, as the ideal tutor who leads us to the school of Jesus. She is the ‘way to Christ and the way of Christ’ (RF 84).

From *St. Paul*, every Pauline takes the qualifying “form”:

In fact, the basic outline –the “mould”—for the formation of every Pauline was taken from St. Paul, as Fr. Alberione continually pointed out: “Until Christ is formed in you.” (RF 88).

Eschatological dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

House bulletin San Paolo

The great relief that the Founder attributed to the eschatological perspective wherein the Paulines are invited to live daily is well known:

Men are united in God, the Father, on earth: in order to be united in Christ in the eternal and happy possession of the Summary Good, eternal happiness. There follows the obligation to cooperate with this unity through the spread of doctrine, of morals, of Catholic worship (*SP, marzo 1950*).

Our destiny: to see “God, to know him fully, to work and be happy in Him:

Beatitude is the fullness of being: our being belongs to God. Hence, beatitude shall lie in resting, being in one form with, belonging, to God... (*SP, settembre 1954*).

Life is the preparation for Heaven. Paradise shall be the vision, possession, enjoyment in God, through Jesus Christ:

Paradise as vision, possession, enjoyment of God. Let us orient and prepare ourselves for heaven through faith, grace, interior and exterior holiness (*SP, settembre q956*)

In heaven, the vision of God; the possession of God; man possessed by God; eternal life in God; through Jesus Christ who enlightens, who is the head of the members, who sets man in communication with the most blessed God: having reached the end ‘instaurare omnia in Christ...’ (*Eph. 1: 10*) (*SP, settembre 1959*).

Once more, in January 1963, while inviting his sons to a “year of particular sanctification” (*SP, gennaio 1963*), the Founder does not get tired to reaffirm that we have been *created* for sanctification, made *Christian* in order to “live as true children of God,” *invited to heaven*, where everything is most pure and holy...

Ut perfectus sit homo Dei

The Pauline shall always have the “distinct awareness” of the blessed inheritance that awaits him, and he shall want “to remember continually” the eternal truths:

An all-round conscience must be based on a clear understanding of life: present life and eternal life; on the notion of an all-wise God, our Creator and Redeemer; on the conviction that, having come from the creative hands of God our Father, we shall return to him to render an account of the talents and graces we have received... These truths have to be inculcated in an ongoing way so that they become the guiding light of every project, thought, feeling, opinion and action (*UPS I, p. 518*).

Eternal happiness in heaven shall be the sharing of the same glorification of the Divine Master who shall be imitated in life.

The Lord created us for happiness in heaven. He arranges and permits everything that will ensure us arriving at this goal...

Jesus the Divine Teacher preceded us espousing the will of his Father from the moment of the Incarnation right up to the *inclinato capite emisti spiritum* (*He bowed his head, and gave up his spirit*), even up to his Ascension to heaven. At every moment and in the smallest detail he could say: “*quae placita sunt ei facto semper*” (For I always do what is pleasing to him). The crib, the flight into Egypt, his life at Nazareth where he was “*subditus Mariae et Joseph*” (*Subject to Mary and Joseph*); his public life, the passion, his death on the cross—all this is summed up by St. Paul in the expres-

sion: *Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis (Christ became obedient unto death, even death on a cross)*” Going on, he shows what the reward of Jesus’ obedience was: *propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum... (therefore God has highly exalted him...)*”

What is there left then to do? There is the final obedience to the invitation: *“Euge serve bone et fidelis, intra! (Come, faithful servant, enter!)* by responding: Yes, I am coming! (*UPS I*, pp. 521, 524, 527).

IN THE CHAPTER DOCUMENTS

Here is a very enlightening guiding thought: “Just as we have been bound together in the profession of faith, let us keep ourselves bound in suffrages and in intercession”: “The love that binds us in life continues and is fortified in the direction of our deceased brethren. What the Founder wanted to be carved in the funeral chapel if the Mother House can serve as a guide for us: “As we have been bound together in the profession of faith, let us keep ourselves bound in suffrages and in intercession” (ut professione fidei, ita suffragiis et intercessione jugamur)...

In the Directory for the Congregation, we find the fundamental norms regarding suffrages” (*Chap. Doc. 519*).

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

The public profession of the vows is witness and prophesy of the future life:

Choosing to renounce a number of highly valued goods of this world we witness to the reality of heavenly goods already made present in this world and, ever vigilant, we await their fulfillment and revelation in the world to come (art. 24).

The Pauline’s life is entirely qualified by the vigilant waiting for the Lord:

Since “there is no eternal city for us in this life” we live in expectation of the Lord, in fellowship with the whole Church, with Mary the mother of Jesus and our own, with our holy mediators before God and with all those who have died, especially those who were united with us by the same faith and the bonds of the same consecration (art. 64).

The bond of fraternal love established in life lasts in eternity:

The charity that binds brethren during their life must continue beyond death as well. To this end, all the members of the Congregation are to be notified immediately on the death of a confrere religious so that generous suffrages, as outlined in the directory, may be offered for him to the Lord (art 65).

IN THE RATIO FORMATIONIS

Concerning the formation of the person, the Ratio recalls the wise admonition of the Founder:

“The aim of education is to form a human being to use his freedom correctly: in this world and in view of the world to come. To achieve this what is required are: ‘instruction, profound convictions’...(*RF*, 76.1).

To become authentic Paulines, we have to grow in the spirituality of Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life, until the fullness of eternal life:

And we can add: We shall be better Paulines if we continue growing in this spirit, “right up to its fullness” in eternal life, certain that in this way we shall continue to carry out in the most complete and valuable way possible our permanent Pauline apostolate (*RF* 246).

* **THE DAUGHTERS OF ST. PAUL**

Premise¹⁴⁸

Among the writings, fruit of the preaching of Fr. Alberione to the FSP, related to my research, I have chosen some more significant passages: some gathered in the booklet *Haec Meditare*,¹⁴⁹ others in various texts of the *Esercizi spirituali* and *Brevi meditazioni*. From the whole “daily” preaching of the Founder to the FSP, one could easily draw the four dimensions with which our study has been set up.

As regards the *Official documents*, my attention was limited on our latest Constitutions (1984), on the Documents of the Special General Chapter (1969-1971); on some affirmations of the Acts of the VII General Chapter (1995) and on the indications of the General Guidelines for Formation and Studies (1995).

Trinitarian dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

When Fr. Alberione speaks of the Most Holy Trinity in his preaching to the Daughters of St. Paul, it is along the line of the theology of his time. But what distinguishes his Trinitarian theology is that it starts from Jesus Christ. At the center of his thought there always is Jesus, the Christ, Master Way and Truth and Life: Jesus Truth “... is the Wisdom of the Father, personal, uncreated, eternal Wisdom...” Jesus Way – “He came from the Father and came to the world (Jn 16:28)... to take to himself fallen humanity and place it where the Heavenly Father had destined it.” Jesus Life – “he draws life from the Father and communicates it to us from his fullness...”

... And it is the will of the Father that we receive life from Jesus” (*SPa*, pp. 229, 309-312).

Meditating on the Most Holy Trinity, Fr. Alberione takes the cue from the Gospel event of Jesus’ Baptism, where there is “the presence of Jesus the Son of God, who is baptized; the Holy Spirit under the form of dove and the Father who makes his voice heard.” With a beautiful imagery, he tries to bring closer to human understanding this great mystery. He explains: “Just as in the same fruit there are the color, the taste and the smell, so in

¹⁴⁸ Sources: G. Alberione, *Spiritualità Paolina*, vol. I, *Haec meditare* (exclusive to the FSP alone), Roma, dicembre 1962, internal use only (cf. pp. 237-242) (*Spa*); *Prediche del rev. Primo Maestro*, (Pr) agosto-novembre 1952; *Alle Famiglie Paoline; Esercizi spirituali – Prediche tenute alle Maestre*, gennaio-febbraio 1966 (ESM), Roma, 1967; *Brevi meditazioni per ogni giorno dell’anno*, vol. I, Alba 1948 (BM); *Prediche del rev. Primo Maestro* (Pr) gennaio-dicembre 1955, EP, Roma 1958; *Esercizi e meditazioni del Primo Maestro* (EMC), FSP, New York, 1952; *Prediche del rev. Primo Maestro*, (Pr), marzo-dicembre 1954, EP, Roma 1957; *Spiegazione delle Costituzioni* 1962.

Constitutions and Official documents: *Constitutions and Directory* 1984 – Daughters of St. Paul; *Documents- Special General Chapter 1969-1971* (C. G., Sp); *Acts of the VII General Chapter* 1995; *General Guidelines for Formation and studies* 1995 (O.G.F.St.).

¹⁴⁹ The meditations contained in *Haec meditare* have been re-edited in two volumes, *Alle Figlie di San Paolo, 1940-1945; 1946-1949*, FSP, Casa Generalizia 2000.

God there are Three Persons... And man also reflects in himself the Trinity of God: 'God the Father has set his own mark in man's will; God the Son, in the intelligence; and the Holy Spirit, in the heart...' (*SPa*, cf. pp. 237-242).

But then, "man, sinning, has become disoriented. Thus, the Father has sent the Son who, by becoming incarnate through the work of the Holy Spirit, has made himself the way to the Father" (*ESM*, p. 28). "Those who welcomed the Son of God incarnate, obtained (the grace) of becoming children of God by adoption in the Holy Spirit..." (*BM*, p. 15). "God and man meet and renew their union in Christ. The picture of the Holy Trinity disfigured by man comes to be re-polished and renewed by the divine hand, by Jesus Christ..."

Our Way to go to the Father is therefore Jesus and the Father "does not accept as child if not he who is presented under the specie and appearance of his only-begotten Son. From here comes the absolute necessity for us to imitate Jesus, our Model..." (*SPa*, p. 311), model of the highest perfection and holiness.

Thus, in her life, every Daughter of St. Paul shall have to gradually enter into intimate relationship with the Trinity: by trying to restore a profound relationship with the Father in continual adoration of his mysterious presence in persons, in events, in her own history, while recognizing that one's entire life is a great pilgrimage towards the Father's house; by deepening the relationship with Christ Master, in the reception of his Word, in the faithful following to his call and by participating in his Paschal mystery; by opening herself up to the action of the Holy Spirit who animates her in her intimate self and makes her reach that spiritual maturity for which she becomes sign of the love of Christ also in the difficult field of the communications media.

IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE SPECIAL GENERAL CHAPTER

These documents, elaborated during the two Sessions of the Special General Chapter of 1969-1971, were drawn under the light of the Conciliar Decrees of Vatican II and of the Pontifical documents and, substantially, they reflect the thought of our Founder.

The Trinitarian dimension surfaces in various passages and, as if always a model for us inasmuch as "God is communion and he calls us to form a community in order to live united in love of the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit"... so that in this manner we can be sacrament and sign of Christ in the Church (no. 195 and cf. no. 223).

The "mystery of man draws its true light" from the mystery of Christ, He being "the key, the focal point and the goal of man, as well as of all human history." It is Christ, the new Adam, "who fully reveals man to man himself and makes him aware of his most sublime calling." Consequently, the human mystery can be understood solely in Christ, who is at the same time the image of the invisible God and the firstborn of every creature.' (no. 70; cf. *GS* 10, 22).

This Christological vision, with which our spirituality is characterized, requires that we "keep open to the urgings of the Spirit who, in the Church, gradually introduces us to the knowledge of Christ, perfect Communicator of the Father to men and fullest response—"Amen"—of mankind to God" (cf. no. 163).

In our consecration is found "a complete response to our Founder's concern to form apostles whose personality would be totally developed and unified, capable of surrendering themselves totally to the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit" (no. 224; cf. G. Alberione, *Meditazione alle Neo-Professe*, Roma, giugno 1961).

Where the *Document* speaks of communication in the Christian vision, reference is made to “communication of the Trinitarian love” that is “offered progressively to men through creation, through the Incarnation and Redemption, and to be culminated in the Parousia—is shared and received by human history, which is thus transformed into salvation history” (no. 93).

From here comes the apostolic commitment of every Daughter of St. Paul to proclaim to all men, with all the means of media communication, Christ Master, Way and Truth and Life, as the Revealer of the Father and the Savior of man.

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

The Trinitarian aspect is present in the last *Constitutions*, approved in 1984, from the Prologue and goes through, like a red line, the entire text. Since our coming into this world, we have been chosen by the Father “Through Baptism... to live in his Son. In calling us among the Daughters of St. Paul, he has consecrated us to himself more intimately to send us to proclaim the unfathomable riches of the mystery of Christ. He renews in us the gift of the Spirit bestowed on Father James Alberione so that we may bring it to life and make it operative in the Church and in the world” (no. 4).

In three different contexts, reference is explicitly made to our participation at the “Trinitarian communion”: the first refers to ‘prayer; the other, to “fraternal communion” and the third, to “chastity for the sake of the Kingdom”.

“The Spirit, who prays and works in us, conforms us to Christ the Master, Way and Truth and Life, helps us grow in wisdom and grace and leads us to the knowledge of the Father in the mystery of Trinitarian communion” (no. 69). As an expression of our ecclesial community, “our community is a gift of the Father and shares in the mystery of the communion in the Trinity” (no. 58). In thanking for the gift received, “we will renew our *yes* every day, allow the Spirit to lead us into the mystery of Trinitarian love in a more and more dynamic way” (no. 40).

The Son of God, “having come into the world to do the will of the Father,” (no. 51) is our Model (no. 53) on the path of the evangelical counsels inasmuch as he is the Revealer of the Father “for us, Christ is the Master, the Way, the Truth and the Life (cf. nos.7, 11); the “perfect communicator” (no. 19); Living Word (no. 55); he who has revealed “the Father’s love for the world” (no. 14; cf. also Formula of Profession, no. 109)..

Through our consecration we are fully inserted “into the mystery of God’s covenant with his people” (no. 6).

From the Trinitarian perspective, the Eucharist is fundamental for our spirituality:

In the Eucharist we enter into communion with the Master, so that we may be offered with him to the Father and become bread broken for the life of many. We bring to him the hopes, the joys, and the anxieties of the world, in order to adore, to intercede and to discern the new ways which the Spirit is opening for the Word” (no. 8).

IN THE GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR FORMATION AND STUDIES

The formation commitment of the Daughters of St. Paul

... is centered on Christ the Master Way, Truth and Life... the Revealer of the Father, the path that leads to him, and life in all its fullness and perfection. In corresponding to the action of the Spirit who configures us to the Son in his mystery of death and life, we grow in Christ and with him become way, truth and life for our brothers and sisters (1.1 cf. also 1.2.1 and 1.2.2).

The principles of Pauline formation find their foundation in Christ the Master Way, Truth and Life. Fidelity to humanity, to the Church, to history and to our specific charism comes into being as a consequence of our fidelity to Christ, the sole way to the Father, in the Holy Spirit. Every aspect of our personality and every dimension of our life is modeled upon and unified in him: consecration and mission, formation and study, spirituality and poverty (1.3).

The formative process of the Daughters of St. Paul is linked to the plan of the Father, the mission of the Son, and the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Father who freely and lovingly takes the initiative, calling us and sending us out. It is the Lord Jesus who, in the fullness of time, through his sacrifice, brings the Father's plan to completion, establishing the Church as the community of those who have been called (1.7.1).

It is Christ, in fact, who reveals the Trinitarian economy and brings to full light the history of salvation. It is only in reference to him that we are able to understand the mystery of the Church and her sacramental action. It is through him that one is able to launch out on the path of discipleship (2.3.7).

Formation should lead each Daughter of St. Paul to become a communicator of Christ, making herself, like Paul, all to all in order that the Gospel, announced with all the means, may permeate consciences, penetrate hearts... (cf. 1.2.2).

IN THE ACTS – VII GENERAL CHAPTER

The VII General Chapter, celebrated in 1995, invites every Daughter of St. Paul to undertake “a journey of theological and spiritual deepening, an understanding and an experience of the following of Jesus Master Way Truth and Life under the Trinitarian perspective” (p. 122).

We must always bear in mind “the goal of our spirituality, characterized by a communicative interior life, that “is to live in Christ’ just as the Christ lives in the Father: in order to become communicators of his love for the world...” (cf. p 118). This requires from each one of us to cultivate a contemplative prayer of praise, of intercession and of reparation, that flows from meditation on the Word, from eucharistic adoration and from preoccupation over the needs of men and women of today.

Anthropological dimension

This dimension is more than evident in the preaching of the Founder to the Daughters of St. Paul, in the Constitutions and in the official documents, taken in consideration here. Substantially, it concerns the conformation of the person, in its integrality, to Christ Master Way and Truth and Life.

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

In one of his sermons to the Daughters of St. Paul, Fr. Alberione says: “Man, created by God, one and three, bears in himself the image and the mark of unity and of Trinity of his Creator. At man’s creation, the heavenly Father concurred with his power; the Son, with his wisdom; the Holy Spirit, with his love” (*SPa*, p. 192). “If in man’s creation the three Divine Persons concurred and what resulted was the image of God, redemption restores

and lets live in man, in a superior manner, the image of the most Holy Trinity. Sn, however, overturned everything..." (*SPa*, p. 152).

The Primo Maestro heavily accentuates the reality of sin. For him, sin is "an assault, an offense against God; it is a deprivation of grace, of God's friendship..." (p. 22). Because of this, he affirms: "Do not be afraid of anything but sin, all the rest is not real evil..." (*EMC*, p. 23).

Then, Christian life "is the application to man of the whole redemptive work of Jesus Master and it is the cooperation of the whole man with Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life, through the life of hope, of faith, of love" (*Pr*, p. 193). Jesus Christ, "working in the Eucharist makes the soul more credible in its faith, more active in its hope, more loving in charity, till the perfection of Christian life, till the consummation in heaven, which is the vision, possession, eternal love in God, One and Three" (*SPa*, pp. 195-196; cf. also p. 266).

The Founder further reaffirms: "Doing this work of sanctification, we give to God the greatest glory and in paradise we shall contemplate the Host Holy Trinity and, glorifying Him, we shall have our eternal happiness" (*ESM*, p.27).

IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE SPECIAL GENERAL CHAPTER

In the Documents, it is reaffirmed that

"the 'mystery of man draws its true light' from the mystery of Christ,' He being 'the key, the focal point and the goal of man, as well as of all human history. It is Christ, the new Adam 'who fully reveals man to man himself and makes him aware of his most sublime calling'. Consequently, the human mystery can be understood solely in Christ, who is at the same time the image of the invisible "God and the firstborn of every creature" (no. 70; cf. *GS* 22).

The Pauline community's attitude of faith and of hope is translated into a constant effort to live the experience of the discipleship in everyday life. It is Christ, the Master, who delivers us from the slavery of ignorance, of incommunicability, of the dichotomy which splits up our life. In a continuing paschal growth, He helps us achieve the stature of the Son of Man...(no. 170).

Hence, the Daughter of St. Paul strips herself of the greatest goods of life in view of configuring herself after "Christ in his mystery of death and resurrection" in order to offer herself with him to the Father with a total, undivided, final love, in order to dedicate herself to the proclamation of his Word of truth (cf. no. 221).

The concept of the integrality of the human person is fundamental in the Alberione anthropology. Fr. Alberione thus expresses it: "The whole person must live in Jesus Christ, for a total love of God: mind, will, heart and physical strength; everything—nature, grace, vocation to the apostolate..." (no. 157; cf. *AD* 100). Truly, everything is redeemed in Christ, all the technical means, and the "charity of the apostolate calls all creatures to preach God..." to praise the Creator (cf. no. 107).

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

The Constitutions reaffirm the "integral vocation" for which every human being is called, and Christ, "revealing the Father's love for the world," has unveiled to us also this mystery (cf. no. 14; 79). He is the "unifying center in whom every human being and the whole of history find fulfillment" (no. 7). With great respect, let us open up ourselves,

then, to every human person and to authentic values; we shall promote with the means of the apostolate what is true, just, pure and lovable “so that every person may know the dignity to which God calls him” (no. 37).

“We expect everything from Christ the Master, according to the promise which characterizes the story of our call: ‘Do not fear: I am with you. From here I will cast light. Atonement for sin’ (no. 8). “Growing in a spirit of praise and thanksgiving, we learn to discover the presence of Christ in history, to understand people, and to love and serve them as he did” (no. 70).

IN THE GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR FORMATION AND STUDIES

“The desire that the entire person finds total fulfillment in Christ implies that the formative process must respect the principles of integrality, formation for the mission and in the mission, universality, and inculturation (1.3 f).

“At the origin of our life is the loving plan of the Father who, through baptism and religious consecration, chooses us to live in the Son and to announce to everyone the mystery of salvation.” “This interior anointing shapes a new personality within us, launches us into a process of growth and continued dynamism, helps us race towards our goal which is Christ known and announced in the manner of Paul” (1.2.1, p. 25).

In the Pauline and Alberione vision, the person is taken hold, overcome by Christ Master, to the point of being able to exclaim, ‘It is no longer I that lives, it is Christ that lives in me’ (1.1, p. 24).

However, aware that we remain always subject to sin, we expect everything from Christ Master, “according to the promise which characterizes the story of our call: ‘Do not fear: I am with you. From here I will cast light. Atonement for sin’ (no. 7)

IN THE ACTS OF THE VII GENERAL CHAPTER

Also in the Acts, it is reaffirmed that the goal of our spirituality and formation, characterized by a communicative interior life, remains always the ‘*to live in Christ* as Christ lives in the Father, in order to become communicators of his love to the world’ (p. 118f).

“In faithfulness to our charism and in view of the future, we are called to ever more become ‘apostles of Jesus Christ in the world of communication’. This title presupposes in us an intimate relationship with Christ, to whom we belong by virtue of Baptism and of the religious profession, in a new awareness of the challenges of our apostolic mission in the culture of communication” (p. 93).

Every Daughter of St. Paul, aware of her responsibility before the Church and to the world, must hence always tend to the realization of an authentic contemplative life that casts its rays and is expended in action.

Ecclesiological dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

“The Church communicates to us the teaching of Jesus Christ, the only, infallible Master, whose doctrine is eminent, certain, indestructible. He “is the Teacher of truth, of holiness, of true worship” (*Spa*, p. 267f). Fr. Alberione, a devout son of the Church of his historical time, expresses his ecclesiology with the language of his time; but on the level of ecclesial initiatives, many times, he anticipates his own times.

His love for the Church and the anxiety for her unity makes him say: “We must not ask the Lord that his Church be loved, be known, be spread throughout the whole world and gather in her bosom the whole of humanity; let us ask that he makes the whole world an only fold, that there be only one shepherd, one school, that of Jesus Christ so that he may gather all of us one day in that perfect Church up in heaven” (*Pr*, p. 170).

The establishment of the then Ecumenical Center “*Ut unum sint*” is one of those initiatives—ecclesial—promoted by Fr. Alberione that confirms his passion for the unity of the Church.

Today, the Church continues to proclaim Christ’s message. She has “the mission to teach like Jesus, to lead souls on the way to heaven, to sanctify them” (*Spa*, p. 270). She extends through time and space the mission of Christ, who is the Word addressed by the Father to entire humankind.

Christian life is hence “the cooperation of the whole man with Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life through life of hope, of faith, of charity” (*Spa*, p. 193). Our life in Christ and in the Church is brought to realization in the following of the Master and in the specific apostolic commitment.

For our Founder, what is the apostolate? It is “To give Jesus to the world... Not a sectioned Jesus, but the whole Christ who is resurrection, life and salvation for the whole world...” (*Spa*, p. 314).

The purpose of the apostolate is “to let Jesus Christ be known, to spread love for Jesus Christ, to let Jesus be prayed to, to orient souls towards the Church which is the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ...” (*Spa*, P. 355). Because of this, according to Fr. Alberione, St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans should be for us the example on which “our preaching, the editorial and diffusion should be modeled after” (cf. *Spa*, pp. 88 and 92). Our ministry, hence, “is a Pauline ministry” (*Spa*, p. 54).

In one of his sermons to the Daughters of St. Paul, the Primo Maestro raises this question: “What are you?” He replies, “I should say deaconesses, I should say priestesses! In the manner we speak of Mary. Hence, gratitude to the Lord who has given you this mission” (*Pr*, p. 57). In another occasion, addressing himself to them, he says: “We need to reflect on the contribution that woman can bring to the Church, to humanity, with her dedication and with the strength that comes from here nature. Because of this we cannot think of the

Pauline Family as composed only of men. The Lord has wanted us made up also of women” (*SPa*, p. 362).

In the context of the Pauline Family, Mary “has the mission of letting known, letting imitated, of letting live Jesus Christ as Teacher” (*Sp*, p. 82). Fr. Alberione proposes to us Mary as “Queen of the Apostles”. She is so due to her mission and because she has accomplished the greatest of apostolate: “that of giving Jesus Christ to the world” (*Pr*, p. 121).

The Apostle Paul, our Father, has a particular significance for us Daughters of St. Paul. “From him we have to draw the spirit, the mentality, the love for Jesus Christ and love for souls” (*SPa*, p. 930). He is before us as the great teacher of the gentiles (cf. *SPa*, p. 458); he is as he who has a “heart that is rarely found, a heart of a mother and a father at the same time: of a mother who loves immensely, of a father who sustains and strengthens” (*SPa*, p. 50).

Consecrated Life – in the Church, “the religious life is a gift of God... it is the fruit of faith alive, of hope better established and of charity more ardent: (*Pr*, p. 143). Faith, fused with love and nourished by hope, is central in Pauline life.

IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE SPECIAL GENERAL CHAPTER

This text broadly considers the Church in her being communion and mission. “The Church prolongs in time and in space the mission of Christ, who is the Word sent by the Father to all mankind. The Church must bring to all men of all times the message of truth and salvation that is Christ. In fact, in Him who was constituted head of the New Covenant by the Father, mankind is fused in unity and becomes the new people of God” (no. 29).

“Our Congregation participates in the prophetic and evangelizing mission of the Church, announcing the mystery of salvation through the means of social communication, according to the mandate of Christ, ‘Go forth and preach’” (no. 31). Therefore, we must be animated by a profound ecclesial sense, and “feel that we are Church and that we contribute to the building up of the Church by the measure in which we are faithful to the specific task entrusted to us by the Congregation.” Because of this, our apostolic action has reasons to exist inasmuch as it is in Christ and in the Church. The Founder exhorts us: “In order to live your vocation, it is imperative that you graft yourselves into the Church and through the Church in Jesus Christ” (no. 32).

Furthermore, “the ‘ecclesial sense,’ the expression of our faith in the Church’s function as ‘the universal sacrament of salvation,’ must initiate and harmonize our dialogue with the world in the saving and pastoral action of the Church.” For this reason, one of our principal commitments must be “to become part of the organized pastoral activity”... (cf. no. 33).

“Adherence to the Magisterium, the concrete expression of our being Church, will enable us to walk with the Church who is sensitive to the signs of the times and does not bind herself to structures of the past and contingent forms, but grasps the needs of the moment in order to work out the necessary adaptations” (no. 81).

We, “called in the Church by Christ, ... are constituted by him in the Christian community as witnesses of the transcendence of His love and of future goods. According to our special gifts, we walk together in the footsteps of St. Paul, by living our specific mission...” (no. 270).

“On the path of liberation in the Spirit, the Church and our Founder offer us two exceptional guides and models: Mary, Queen of the Apostles, and St. Paul, in whom people of the most varied characters can find themselves and receive enlightenment and example for a total response to God” (no. 263).

Our Pauline life in community must be characterized by our response to God’s gift “in the atmosphere of Mary, Queen of the Apostles...” (cf. no. 164).

In St. Paul, Fr. Alberione, “saw the model of the faithful man, straining forward to reach Christ. Thus, aware of his role as mediator, he invites us to refer to St. Paul as the mould of our discipleship of Jesus Master...” (no. 161; *AD* 2). Also “the ecumenical and universal dimension of our mission,” aside from the Word of God and to the listening to the Spirit, also from St. Paul... “so that everything might be brought together under Christ: (cf. no. 62). According to the words of the Founder, “Let us consider ourselves apostles to all mankind and apostles of unity” (no. 59; cf. *Spiegazioni delle Costituzioni*, p. 82).

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

In our Constitutions, our Congregation is drawn as an expression of the ecclesial community, called “to serve the Church and with the Church to serve humanity” (no. 30). Christ, sent by the Father, sends us, through the Church sends us to preach the Gospel to every creature (cf. no. 12). “It is from the life-giving wellspring of Sacred Scripture and of Tradition—the life of the Church, her liturgy and her teaching—that we draw ‘the manifold wisdom of God’...” We proclaim the Gospel message above all “with the ardor of our faith and the witness of a life of consecration...” (no. 13).

“... We are transformed in him at the table of his Word and of his Body; it is here that we strengthen our bonds of communion and learn to spend ourselves lovingly for the salvation of all peoples” (no. 72).

“Following the example of Mary... and of St. Paul... we open our heart to hope and we affirm that God is the supreme good and that he takes care of our lives (no. 41).

From St. Paul “we learn to live in Christ with thanksgiving and always to strain toward the goal. We learn to feel with the Church and to have a Christian vision of the world, growing in that universal outlook which makes us open to all nations and commits us to assume in a pastoral spirit the concrete situations in which we are called to live and work” (no. 9). For this, we commit ourselves to collaborate, according to our possibilities, with the bodies of the Church, especially in the field of media communication.

“Consecration inserts us fully into the mystery of God’s covenant with his people and makes us partakers in a specific way in the life and mission of the Church... (no. 6).

“We are called to live and work in a Church rich in charisms and open to ministries—a Church which grows through the coordination of each one of these. While gratefully recognizing the gifts of the others, we will endeavor to make ourselves accepted with our

specific gift. Thus, in collaboration and ecclesial communion, we will discover new forms of sharing, and we will understand even better the breadth of our mission and the possibilities it offers” (no. 32).

“To the extent that this sense of belonging to the Institute and to the Pauline Family grows, so does our ‘being Church’ become a more visible sign for the people of God; thus our communities will attract vocations...” (no. 64).

IN THE ACTS OF THE VII GENERAL CHAPTER

The urgency to have to “proclaim the person of Jesus Christ as the only true good of the human person” was strongly felt at the VII General Chapter. Called “to live today in a new missionary dynamism,” in a renewed fidelity to the “heritage of the past and in search of new methods and new expressions for speaking to the hearts of men and of women of our times, in order to preach Christ through medial communication” (p. 91).

“Sensitive to the appeals of humanity, we have been sent to meet our brothers and our sisters in order to proclaim, like Christ, ‘a time of grace’ and of liberation, a time of hope” (p. 117ff). “Our work of evangelization and of proclamation of the Kingdom of God to nations is undertaken in the Church that Vatican Council II has defined as communion. This requires of us a constant commitment for communication, communion, ecclesial collaboration: three indispensable aspects of the dynamics of our mission, in fidelity to the Magisterium and in openness to the signs of the times” (p.97).

Furthermore, “in our mission, we are called to live ‘the grace of unity’... in order to bring into the sphere of social communication... the requisites of consecration, more refined each day in the following of the Master...”

The mission then becomes, according to the Primo Maestro’s expression, the place wherein the clear glass lets light pass through (cf. *SdC*, p. 235). And it is precisely in this grace of unity that our prophecy finds meaning” (p. 88).

“Living the apostolic consecration in fraternal communities, we are called today: to ‘vivify the gift received’ with the Pauline vocation in the Church...; to improve the quality of our life... to live in the spirit of the Pact...” (p. 95).

IN THE GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR FORMATION AND STUDIES

The Daughter of St. Paul is consecrated to the Lord Jesus, Master Way and Truth and Life in order to serve God in the Church and in the world. Christ, the Revealer of the Father, is the way to go to him, is the full and perfect life. Adhering to the action of the Holy Spirit, she is configured to the Son in his mystery of death and of life, grows in Christ and with him becomes way, truth and life for her brothers and sisters (cf. 1.1).

“Each vocation comes into being, develops and is strengthened in the light of the Trinitarian and ecclesial mystery. It is the person herself who, within the context of this dialogue of salvation and in complete freedom, assumes responsibility for her correspondence to the Lord’s call” (1.7.1).

For Fr. Alberione “Mary’s presence and action in the work of formation is necessary...” (1.2.3). “Mary is the first apostle because she gave Jesus. It is she who imprints on us our apostolic features. It is from Mary Queen of Apostles that we learn to welcome, preserve and live the Word and announce it in total self-donation, that is, in the complete gift of self that every genuine act of communication requires” (1.2.3).

From St. Paul, model of our configuration to Christ Master, every Daughter of St. Paul learns in a special manner to live Christ, to live the mandate, in faithfulness to the Lord and to the Church... (cf. 1.2.3).

As it appears in the plan of formation, one of our principal preoccupations is pastoral: it must “permeate all the stages of our formation and root itself in the method of integrality which thoroughly penetrates the person in all her dimensions” (cf. 1.3.2).

Eschatological dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

In the preaching of Fr. Alberione the thought of the “last things” is always present.

God has wanted that the creatures, called to life through his goodness, should participate in “the eternal joy of his eternity” (*ESM*, p. 24). Our life must then be a preparation for heaven: “preparation of the mind for the eternal vision of God... preparation of the will... preparation of the heart...” Then ‘intra in gaudium domini tui’ (enter into the joy of your master) (cf. *Pr*, pp. 24 and 25).

Because of this, we must continuously “nourish in us the desire for Paradise,” that this may be our “dominant thought” (cf. *SPa*, p. 320).

“O paradise, you are ours...” thus the Founder exclaims: “Paradise is an eternal good, that is, stable. This life is short. Days fly, years pass and they seem to get shorter as they increase in number. Paradise will never end: it is eternal. Our motherland is paradise. There, there shall be days without sunsets; there shall be youthfulness without old age; there shall be joy never disturbed by fear of pain...” (*SPa*, 322).

“The principal grace to ask... is faith in Paradise. Raise our hearts by thinking of Jesus who, with his earthly life over, ascends into heaven and sits at the right hand of the omnipotent God the Father and there prepares a place for each of us and it is waiting for us” (*Pr*, p. 33).

IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE SPECIAL GENERAL CHAPTER

In these Documents the eschatological aspect is explicit and it is referred to our day-to-day life. We have the duty “to strive wholeheartedly to bring about in our communities ‘true communion of life,’ which will witness to the final and full communion of the Kingdom, be a sign that the world can be transformed and offered to God in the spirit of the Beatitudes...” (no. 193). Meditating on the Word, “the community is introduced into the secrets of the Kingdom and awaits the return of the Lord...” (no. 181).

Fr. Alberione has also given to the “Visit a strong eschatological dimension, because it anticipates the perfect communion of love with the Master...” (no. 178).

In the “eschatological vision, we accept the invitation of our Founder to celebrate the first Sunday of the month solemnly, as the beginning of a new period of time, in which we must honor Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life in a special way, with our whole mind, will and heart” (no. 189).

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

Also in the Constitutions, in the chapter “In fraternal communion” and in the “Conclusion,” the thought of eschatology is present: “the communion of faith and of vocation that unites us in life, strengthens us in our journey towards the Lord..., -- journey towards the fullness of charity--... (cf. no. 6), to a new life in the resurrection...” (no. 68). Certain of Christ’s promises, we put our trust that the Father “who has begun this work of sanctification in us, will see that it is finished when the day of Jesus comes” (cf. no. 192).

Conclusion

These few chosen texts from the preaching of the Founder to the Daughters of St. Paul, from the Constitutions and from some official Documents, manifest that the Christological setup of Fr. Alberione’s project contains the Trinitarian, anthropological, ecclesiological and eschatological dimensions: these dimensions are so connected among them that one cannot consider one of them without neglecting the others. Furthermore, these writings reveal some elements that continually recur and they offer a synthetic vision of what Fr. Alberione mean with indicating Jesus Christ as Master Way and Truth and Life to live and to communicate to the world.

In his thought, he begins with man, created after the image of the Triune God. God has wanted to reveal himself in the Son for which the Way to go to the Father is Jesus, our Model and Teacher, the Way and the Truth and the Life. Our following of the master is achieved therefore from the Trinitarian perspective.

One key word of the Founder for our life is integrality on all levels of life, of thought and of spirituality: the whole man, intelligence, will, heart, physical strength; nature, grace, vocation (apostolic), formation, all the technological means; not a sectioned Jesus, but Christ Master in all his integrality as Way, Truth and Life.

In this aspiration for integrality, human limitations, sin, are always present, thus follows the “*cor poenitens tenete*,” that is another fundamental concept in the life and spirituality of Fr. Alberione and, hence, of the members of his Foundations.

Our life in Christ becomes visible and functional in the Church, of which we are members, consecrated to the following of the Master for the proclamation of his message to the world with all the means of communication, in the spirit of St. Paul and under the protection of Mary, Queen of the Apostles.

Growing in our belonging to the Institute and to the Pauline Family, “our ‘being Church’ becomes a visible sign for God’s people.”

Finally, the dominating thought of our life must be the “desire for Paradise”. For this, what is asked of us is “the preparation of the mind, of the will and of the heart” in order to enter the “Lord’s joy.”

*** THE PIOUS DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE MASTER**

Trinitarian dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

The Trinitarian theology, as it appears in the preaching of the Primo Maestro to the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master, follows after the canons of the Neo-Thomist dogmatic theology, distinguished in the two tracts *De Deo uno* and *De Deo Trino*, describing the Trinity in His immanence and the Trinity in the history of salvation.

For Fr. Alberione, to speak of God is hence always to refer to the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with the *ad intra* and *ad extra* dynamics proper to them.

Nonetheless, we can recall some recurring themes:

1. Access to the Most Holy Trinity is given by Jesus Master inasmuch as he is “the Second Person of the Trinity,” made man in order to teach us, through the word, example and the gift of his own life, to live in the Trinity (cf. *PD57*, 200-201; *PD64*, 448ff; *PD65*, 348-355). Jesus Master “teaches” the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity (cf. *PD57*, 48ff).
2. Jesus Maser is Way, Truth and Life because the Trinity is Way and Truth and Life in Himself, thus revealing to us his true nature with which, through the grace of baptism and of the religious profession, we have become participants (cf. *PD66*, 386-392).
3. For the Pious Disciples, the sphere of understanding, of communication and of conformation to the Trinitarian dynamics is given by the Eucharistic Jesus Master (cf. *PD57*, 358ff, *PD66*, 267-276).

The most effective synthesis of the Trinitarian dimension in the life of the Pious Disciple, along the four Pauline coordinates—prayer, apostolate, poverty and study—is given by the great doxology of the Eucharistic prayer: *Through Christ, with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours Almighty Father forever and ever. Amen.* To live it, pray it, apply it in every moment of one’s life is the objective of every Christian and, in a special manner, of the Pious Disciple (cf. *PD63*, 223ff, 285-289).

If the Eucharist is the Bread of life, it is the Word of the Divine Master, it is the seat of the Most Holy Trinity. From this comes that a Eucharistic life cannot but have a great Trinitarian breath (cf. *PD47*, 26-41).

The origin, the end and the method of every perfect worship is the glorification of the Father, of His Son Jesus, and of the Holy Spirit:

Liturgy is the book of the Holy Spirit, just as creation is the book of the Father and the Holy Scripture is the book of the Son.¹⁵⁰

The operative consequences are numberless, with highly detailed practical turns: whoever participates in the Eucharist becomes a tabernacle of the Trinity and must behave consequently. The celebration and adoration of the Eucharist have always a Trinitarian note through the only and eternal Way that is Jesus Christ, the Master: otherwise, everything would be reduced to individualist and sterile devotionism (cf. *PD62*, 144ff; *PD66*, 263-266).

In this horizon, whatever expression of apostolate is glorification of the Most Holy Trinity; one's life style is modeled after the Trinity, until the fulfillment of the desire to contemplate one day the face of God and hence to become full participant of the Trinity's glory (cf. *PD47*, 100ff).

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

By Trinitarian dimension we mean to underline the theological root of our charismatic and ministerial identity.

According to the text of the Constitutions, for the Pious Disciple the Trinitarian references are developed beginning from reference to the Divine Master, the essential reason of our life and of our mission (cf. art. 3). In fact, our life in relation to and in union with Jesus Master, Son of the Father and giver of the Holy Spirit, acquires a profound Trinitarian breath.

Hidden with Christ in God the Father, we have an animating mission in relation with the Pauline Family for which in Christ, the only Mediator, and moved by the Holy Spirit, we praise, worship, make reparations and pray for grace, especially for the apostolate with the means of social communication. This Christocentric-Trinitarian dimension has concrete consequences in our day-to-day life by fusing together a specific contemplative-apostolic active style of life assumed in behalf of the Pauline Family and of the Church. What follows is a style of life that is expressed in joyous silence, recollection, austerity, contemplation and openness to the demands of charity (cf. art 4, 5, 7, 57).

It is the contemplative mystery of Jesus, his prayer and praise to the Father, in the exultation of the Spirit that we propose to imitate, to represent and live today in the Church in the name of entire humanity: and this we achieve especially with a eucharistic life intensely lived, in a direct apostolic service to obtain the grace that humanity turned to the only Master, Christ Way and Truth and Life (cf. art. 10, 11, 16). The method of prayer that integrally forms us in the Mystery of Christ, contemplated as Truth, Way and Life and which, following the precise indications of the Founder, we prefer to follow in the daily eucharistic adoration, is developed precisely by virtue of this Trinitarian dynamics that envelopes our whole life (cf. art. 81).

This love relationship among the Persons of the Trinity supports the personal and communitarian life of the Pious Disciples. The Eucharist Jesus Master, Way and Truth and Life is the dynamic and vital center of our communities in order to bring about the project

¹⁵⁰ *PD47*, 469; cf. also *PD65*, 332-336.

of God in the performance of the mission entrusted to us by the Founder and ratified by the Church (cf. art. 51-52). Thus it is in the apostolate that we perform starting from the Eucharist, from the priesthood and from the liturgy (cf. art. 81, 86, 92).

IN THE GENERAL PLAN OF FORMATION

For the Pious Disciple the relationship with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the General Plan of Formation, there is an obligatory path: the person of Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life. He is the door that introduces into the Trinitarian dynamics of the Christian life and, in our specific case, of the Pauline religious life.

Some explicit passages recall this fundamental principle. These are placed precisely at the opening of the description of the dynamics of integral formation of the human person in its different stages:

The economy of salvation, in fact, passes through Christ the Truth who, through the Holy Spirit, introduces us to the knowledge of God the Father and his project of love, helping our mind to open itself to the light of faith (p. 25).

The dynamism of Way orients the energies of the will toward the entrance into the plan of salvation which has been revealed by the Father in Christ and in the Holy Spirit (p. 27).

As the culminating and inseparable moment of the preceding (Truth and Way) follows the dynamism of Life: Jesus Master, through the effusion of the Spirit, offers the possibility of full communion with God to each person and gives her the potential of opening her heart to the love of neighbor (p. 28).

As a disciple everyone is to love the Lord and other persons with all of one's mind, strength and heart, participating in the Paschal Mystery with Christ our LIFE and opening herself to communion with the Father in the Holy Spirit (p. 29).

IN THE FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE 6TH GENERAL CHAPTER

The Most Holy Trinity manifests his internal dynamics of love in the life of every ecclesial community: in fact, the Church is *the people gathered in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*. The itinerary that has led us to the 6th General Chapter and from where we shall depart unfolds precisely on the renewed awareness of the baptismal and Pauline vocation that is a Trinitarian vocation. Jesus Master is the door of access and communication to the Trinitarian Life:

The Trinity is the source of contemplation and of history as well as the origin of the relationship of continuity and of fidelity which unites us to Jesus Way, Truth and Life, Master and Shepherd, the Sacrament of encounter between God and the person, between God and the events of daily life. In Him, as Disciples, we present to the Father, in the Spirit, humanity's need for salvation and continue his priestly ministry of mediation" (p. 11).

Anthropological dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

The Pious Disciple of the Divine Master, a woman totally consecrated to honor, love and serve the Divine Master present in the Eucharist, in the Church, has a precise role in the Pauline Family:

If in the Pauline Family the devotion to Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life has to be practiced by all, this refers especially to you who are the Pious Disciples of Jesus Master. Oh, so, the whole of piety conformed to this devotion... Then practice it in life, and that is: always growth of faith in order to

honor Jesus who is “Truth”. Always growth in docility in following, in imitating, Jesus, who is “Way”. And always the increase of grace from Jesus, who is “Life”. And life that sprang from calvary and which extends, through rivulets, rather, to rivers of grace that extends to all the directions of the world... Then, after having practiced this devotion, it is for you to ask the Lord for the grace that this devotion penetrates everyone, especially in the Pauline Family. To conform to this devotion means to conform piety, as I have said, but also to conform study, to conform the religious life, to conform the apostolate. In this sense: to always honor the Divine Master inasmuch as he is the truth, inasmuch as he is the example, inasmuch as he has won for us the grace that brings us to life eternal, yes. But you have to ask for this grace, for all. From this devotion, how many blessings shall come to the Pauline Family! Rather, I believe that it is not an exaggeration to say that souls progress so much—I mean the souls that belong to the Pauline Family—the more they penetrate and practice this devotion (*PD60*, 67-68).

The Pious Disciple is a woman of faith, of hope and of charity. She grows in the school of the Divine Teacher in the adherence of her mind, of her will and of her heart to Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life and who wants to make us ever more conformed to him, until the achievement of the Pauline ideal: it is no longer I that lives but Christ who lives in me (cf. *PD60*, 61ff; *PD63*, 248ff; *PD64*, 441).

She commits herself to accomplish whatever ministry, beginning from the Eucharist, from the priesthood or from liturgy, in the unity of life and of intentions with the religious and ecclesial community and with the Pauline Family, aware of her responsibility of caring for life. In fact, in the Pauline Family, it is she who must make visible Jesus, life of the world and life for the world.

Cooperation of women. First, according to nature, in the family; second, woman’s cooperation in redemption: Mary at Jesus’ side, Jesus the Great Priest. Mary who served at the same time, her Son—the eternal priest *secundum ordinem Melchisedek*—and served St. Joseph, religious, the first lay religious, just as Mary is the first religious among souls who consecrate themselves to God. In like manner do the Pious Disciples have to accompany the entire Pauline Family with the necessary contribution and of the first order and of greater effectiveness: prayer, Adoration. This is because the other contributions are of minor importance, although each of them has its importance, yes; contribution, hence, first prayer, adoration.

And this is inasmuch as the Pauline Family has its own soul, its own spirit, that needs to be interpreted exactly, that is, the Gospel, Jesus Christ, Savior, Master, Priest, in the manner that he is presented to us by St. Paul in his Letters. Hence, the Pauline spirit: the interpretation of St. Paul, interpretation of the Gospel. He, St. Paul, who was taught directly by the Divine Master in his ecstasies, in his contemplations, especially during the time that St. Paul spent in the desert for about three years, the transformation of himself into Christ: “My being alive, my life is Jesus Christ,” *vivit vero in me Christus*, and the other phrase that is still more significant, under a certain aspect, which is: *my life is Christ, mihi vivere Christus est* (*PD63*, 332-333ff).

The style of life that follows is turned to the awareness of the gift received and hence to keep in the inner self the soul of every apostolic expression of the Institute itself and of the Pauline Family.

These are needed:

- profound faith, firm hope, ardent charity as gifts of God in order to give light, corroborate and nourish the person in his integrality of mind, will and heart;
- intelligence and broadness of mind because the values for which she is called to watch over and to let grow are always at risk and they need constant aptitude for discernment;

- capacity for listening and for interior life in order to watch over the word, divine and human, to the point of making its maturation and communication favorable.
- creativity and imagination, fruits of love that multiplies its own inventions so that life, the true one that Jesus Christ Master, be diffused;
- humility and tenacity of him who has a clear awareness of having a ministry of intercession to accomplish in behalf of the life and the spread of the Gospel.

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

“Disciples of the Divine Master: not a title but a program of life.” The name given us by the Founder from the very beginning expresses in extreme synthesis the charismatic identity of the Institute and speaks of a profound relationship with the Divine Master. Inasmuch as the disciple is made so by his Lord and Master, she learns from him the art of relating herself with the God the Father, with humanity of all times, and with herself. From the union with Jesus Master originate and find impulse love of neighbor and service to the Church, expressed in the *forms of apostolate proper* to the Congregation (cf. art. 2). Hidden with Christ in God, we have an animating mission *in relation to the Pauline Family*, for which in Christ, the only Mediator, we praise, worship, make reparation, ask for grace, especially for the apostolate with the means of social communication (cf. art. 4, 7, 82, 83).

Jesus Master, always in communion with the Father, is the source and the model of our contemplation, either in our life of prayer or in our apostolic activities at the service of people (cf. art. 57).

This relationship demands that his disciple should live in constant listening and communion with God: the fundamental condition of a life of faith, hope and charity (cf. art. 11), while cultivating a profound interior life that spreads out in the exercise of fraternal life and of apostolate, after the example of Mary, Mother and Queen of the Apostles and of St. Paul, faithful interpreter and disciple of the Divine Master (cf. art. 12-14).

The community life of the Pious Disciples draws inspiration from the communion of the Divine Master with his disciples and from the first Christian communities (cf. art. 52). What follows is a style of life that is expressed in joyous silence, recollection, austerity, contemplation and openness to the demands of charity.

In our life as Pious Disciples, we look on to Mary as the first and perfect Disciple who always listened, meditated on and lived the Word (cf. art. 57).

According to the Founder’s teaching, the Pious Disciples consider *integrality* as one of the key points in the concept of formation; and that is, formation directed to the maturation of the person in her fundamental dimensions, summarized in mind, will and heart (cf. art. 109).

Formation consists in one’s becoming more and more a disciple of the Divine Master, in a process of continuing conversion and in the configuration to Christ, until one can say, “it is no longer I that lives, but Christ lives in me” (cf. art. 153).

The Pious Disciples cultivate study in such a way that Jesus Master Way and Truth and Life is better known by them and is formed in their minds, will and hearts. They seek to feel ever more intimately with the Church, by living her spirit of universality, adhering to her teachings and her dispositions. Entering into the spirit of the Constitutions and of the directives of the Founder, they learn also the manner of utilizing what they study, for piety, for life and for the apostolate (cf. art. 157).

IN THE GENERAL PLAN OF FORMATION

The relationships of the Pious Disciple with herself and with the community are described broadly in the General Plan of Formation along the different stages that accompany the development of the Pauline religious life. Defining the features of the identity of the Pious Disciple mention is made in the first place of our consecrated femininity modeled after that of Mary Most Holy, Virgin and Mother of God.

The itinerary of formation is developed after the Pauline dynamics that involves the whole person, mind, will and heart, in the gradual and progressive process of conformation to the Divine Master, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, following the program of the Apostle Paul: It is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me.

In order to enhance the vitality of the formative itinerary in all the different stages of life, as persons and as communities, we favor human, spiritual, charismatic and apostolic formation in such a way that every Pious Disciple “assumes in the continual dynamism of growth, the values and richness of her being a consecrated woman, with a specific charism in the Church; she unites in Christ, Way, Truth and Life her whole being and her own personal history; she lives out her self-oblation to her brothers and sisters” (cf. p. 86).

IN THE FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE 6TH GENERAL CHAPTER

This deals with being disciples of Jesus Master today, with following him and meeting him in the inevitable conflicts that life has in store, and in solidarity, sharing fully “the joys and the hopes, the sadness and anguish of people today” (cf. *GS* 1)(no. 9), living in communities centered on the Word of God and on the Eucharist, directed to live in the unity of the Congregation’s Pauline mission.

We are called to be women who listen and who dialogue in view of a great apostolic zeal.

Dialogue is indispensable for our international and missionary Congregation in which sisters from various cultures live and interact. It is, therefore, necessary to promote dialogue through the various means available, including the human sciences. We are called to follow a path which entails mutual acceptance, trust in relation to the values and traditions of other people, in order to establish a dialogue of life and of heart in which the daily experience becomes the “setting” for a mutual exchange which enriches all (no. 51).

Ecclesiological dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

“To be living and active members in the Church” is a pervading motif that runs through the whole of Primo Maestro’s preaching, his directions for operation and the experience of prayer for each of our communities. It is a Church wherein the Pauline Family finds its own image as “a single body of many members,” and each Institute and Congregation has its own reason for being, with an apostolic spirit, in view of the building in holiness and in the apostolate of the same Body of Christ, which is the ecclesial community.

The characteristic of the Pauline Family is precisely that of having a pastoral spirit and that means, helping souls. Feel the apostolate directed to the salvation of souls, directed to make the Church ever more beautiful, to always better serve her and hence to cooperate with her for the salvation of souls, for the building up of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ that is the Church, so that redemption might be applied.

The apostolate of the Pious Disciple has always to take into consideration the mind of the Divine Master and according to the teaching of the Master. That is, what Jesus wants, that for which he became incarnate: the souls. *Propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem...* Keep your mind fixed on the goal: glory to God and salvation of people, that is, man’s peace. The program, the spirit must not be lived only in part, but in its entirety, in all its complexity... If rites are made solemn and beautiful with good songs, if we have beautiful vestments that truly conform to the spirit of the Church, then we make contributions to worship. And if in the Centers this is always the spirit that dominates, and that is, love for the Church, love for God and love for souls, then, we perform real apostolate... Hence, activities in pastoral spirit. And you, in general, do it through the Center and through work.

Then the Pastorelle Sisters go directly to souls. Hence, if we give the printed catechism or the printed book of liturgy, they will place it in the hand of the child and they explain it and hence they come truly in contact. In this spirit, you have to pray so that their institution may develop and could accomplish what is in the Divine Master’s plans. Nonetheless, the spirit of the Pious Disciple must be, in the end, the same. It concerns with difference in manner and not in the thing. It is a matter of the way of exercising, of accomplishing the same thing and of being animated by the same spirit. It is only one. The apostolates are the means, but the spirit is the same: to glorify God, bring grace, peace, salvation to people. Penetrate well this point in order that it may dominate your whole mind, feelings and especially the activities, also the exterior ones, of the apostolates. And pray that this spirit becomes more profound in the Pauline Family, in all its parts and, at the same time, examine ourselves how we live this spirit and how we ask for this spirit. It is necessary that each one who goes ahead and seeks the Profession should live of this spirit: religious spirit, spirit of the apostolate. And then pray so that “there would be only one fold and one Shepherd,” according to the desires of the Divine Master, especially on the occasion of the Ecumenical Council” (*PD61*, 138-139).

The Pious Disciple, in communion of life with the other sisters, gives herself so that Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life may be understood, followed and loved, Jesus who is present and working in the Eucharist, in the priesthood and in liturgy. These are the three dimensions wherein is expressed the radical self-giving to the only Master and Lord, Jesus Way, Truth and Life.

A special expression of the Pauline apostolate for the Church is the uninterrupted Eucharistic adoration wherein the Pious Disciples represent the entire Pauline Family, taking to themselves the apostolic activity, in solidarity and in participation.

To exercise the eucharistic apostolate means: -- to understand the mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist; -- to comprehend that souls must nourish themselves of the Eucharist; -- to pray to the Lord and act so that it reaches them. You have to pray and work in this direction. You also ought to write, to publish, to diffuse. You have to lead souls to the Mass, to the Visit, to communion; to establish the Forty Hours, eucharistic triduum; to prepare for First Communion, to the Communion of the Viaticum; to pray that churches be built, that the residences of Jesus Eucharist may multiply. See how much and how immense is your apostolate; it is the first thing I had in mind. I saw and studied the Priest Adorers, but I imagine also the woman: apostle of the Eucharist! It is thus that I thought from the beginning, since I came to understand that this chosen group of souls is willed by God" (PD47, 350).

In a world wherein the means of social communication is the fastest and most effective way also for the proclamation of the Gospel, the Pious Disciples are committed to support through prayer, sacrifice and activities all those who, workers and recipients, work on these new frontiers of evangelization. And their very own apostolic commitment should not neglect these challenges. Opening up his heart on contemporary culture, the Founder invites us to honor the Divine Master – Truth:

First among our intentions: to bear in mind the teaching of the Pope. The Pope is the vicar of Jesus Christ. The Pope has been established, by Jesus Christ, as universal teacher: *Tu conversus confirma fratres.*

Second intention, in adorations: the school. When we say "the school" we understand nursery schools, the little children, the elementary schools, the middle schools, the high schools, the higher level schools: the academies, the universities, of all that complex of teaching that comes in many forms not only in Italy, not only in Europe, but in every part of the world. Also as to conferences, to particular courses, particular teaching as regards philosophy, pedagogy, sociology, law, etc., that teaching which has repercussions and practical applications on the life of nations.

Third intention: catechism. What is catechism? Catechism is the summary of religious teaching. One part reflects Jesus Christ Truth: the Creed, and the explanation of the Creed. One part reflects Jesus Christ Way: the commandments, the virtues, the evangelical counsels. And one part reflects the means of grace, Jesus Christ Life, hence; the sacraments, the Mass, prayer in general.

Fourth intention: the press. The press is a teaching that arrives every day, one can say, in every house, or at least it comes sometimes... Oh, how many are the books that are contrary to the Gospel. How many of them have been printed in Italy, last year, for example. Their number truly scares us. The periodicals, some more doctrinal, others, instead, more frivolous, or magazines that reflect the costumes, magazines that reflect social ideas, moral ideas, commercial. And then politics. Would that the press were healthy! Would that it be healthy! And would that Catholics understand its value and, as Leo XIII used to say, "may they oppose bad press with the good and may they become aware",,, Pray so that Catholic writers, so that Catholic publishers, that Catholic technicians, that Catholic diffusers be blessed by God and, in the first place, that they be multiplied and that they may have a heart full of Jesus Christ, full of love for souls. Keep away so many horrible sins! If in one night those presses bring out, say 6 million copies of protestant newspapers, oh, in the morning there would be 6 million persons reading them. And we are speaking only of one newspaper. Let us just think of the many newspapers that there are.

Furthermore, pray so that the modern means for spreading thought conform with the Gospel and with Christian principles and with the principles of right reason: radio, cinema, television, painting, sculpture, and all those means that are used to communicate thought, that's it.... So the intentions should be these: that the word of the Pope be listened to, that schools be in conformity with the Divine Master; that the press accomplish its true mission; and that catechisms be followed and made well; and that the modern means of communication of thought be used according to God, not against God (PD58, 11, 13-16).

Mary Most Holy, Mother, Teacher and Queen of the Apostles, is she who teaches the art of Christian discipleship. At her school, the Pious Disciple learns to make of her life a total self-giving to the Divine Master, with love, with discretion and competence. The

statements of the Founder on this theme are numberless; two sermons gathered in the *Opera Omnia* are adequately indicative: *PD46*, 1-20; *PD47*, 1-33.¹⁵¹

St. Paul, apostle and mystic, is the disciple, in love with Christ, who has greatly fathomed the mystery in order to live it in depth. He is, for the Pious Disciples, a teacher of interior life and of apostolate, formator of hearts opened wide by the Spirit of God towards humanity, formator of minds that confront cultures and peoples, formator of forces endlessly engaged so that the person of the Divine Master reaches the boundaries of the world.

It is said that St. Paul is difficult. St. Peter was also saying it a bit; speaking of the letters of St. Paul, he was saying that there are some things quite difficult in the letters of St. Paul. But for the Pious Disciple, it should not be that difficult because she has already considered the words of the Divine Master and she, Pious Disciple, has understood him a little. So she finds herself flanked and preceded by St. Paul as a more intelligent disciple, more profound, and exemplary disciple, that's it, and through him she shall better know Jesus Christ, yes, because St. Paul, being the first disciple, that one who has better heard, understood and proposed the Master to the knowledge of people; he also obtains those particular graces for whoever wants to know Jesus (*PD56*, 502).

We say: our spirituality. It is the Christian spirituality, but we can also add "Pauline" in the sense that he who has known more deeply the mystery of Christ in souls has been St. Paul. Hence, it is a deeper Gospel, according to how St. Paul taught it. And so we have to follow. So then, now you have entered into this school of the Divine Master.

What do we intimately need? Two dispositions, always, in one's whole life, in whatever place: humility and faith: "By myself I can do nothing, with God I can everything" (*PD64*, 294).

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

From the union with Jesus Master originates and finds impulse the love of neighbor and the service of the Church, expressed in the apostolic forms proper to the Institute (cf. art. 2).

Through the religious consecration, we belong with full title, to the mystery of the Church and in it we are called to undertake a specific Pauline ministry, beginning from the Eucharist, from the Priesthood, and from liturgy. Mary, Queen of the Apostles, icon and mother of the Church, and St. Paul apostle, disciple of the Lord Jesus and untiring pastor in numerous Christian communities, are for us traveling companions and models of ecclesial dedication.

We have an animating mission in relation with the Pauline Family which, in a single spirit, is called "to live Jesus Christ and serve the Church." Meanwhile we assume the "fundamental and vital mission" entrusted us by the Founder; by virtue of such mission, united with Jesus Eucharist, through a hidden life, of faith and of prayer, we are thrust forward to bring to reality the word of the Founder: to be the "root" and to obtain the "lymph" that nourishes the life of the great "tree" of the Pauline institutions (cf. art. 4, 5, 7).

Mary Most Holy is Mother, Teacher and Queen of the Apostles. We refer to her so we may be guided in the journey of Christification: "I have been crucified with Christ; the life I now live is not my life, but the life which Christ lives in me." We are called to con-

¹⁵¹ This handwritten text of the Founder is considered of great historical and charismatic significance.

tinue in time, to extend in space, her presence and we are united to her in interior life, in communitarian life and in the apostolate (cf. art. 9-13).

We are aware of having to ever more enter into intimacy with Jesus Way and Truth and Life according to the preaching, the writings and the example of St. Paul. In the meditation of his writings, in the imitation of his zeal, in the commitment to configure ourselves to Jesus Master, we aim at the peak pointed out and reached by the Apostle: “Christ lives in me” in order to bring to reality the program assigned by the Founder: to be living and working members in the Church (cf. art. 14).

We feel living and working in the Church: by honoring Jesus Master Way and Truth and Life present in the Eucharist and in the Church and by the love for his Person the different ministries, in their many forms, originate (cf. art. 75). Through the mediatory function of art, similar to that of the priest, we accomplish our ministry in the Church to communicate the re-creating presence of God and to raise the human world to God, to his ineffable kingdom of mystery, of beauty, of life (cf. art. 95).

IN THE GENERAL PLAN OF FORMATION

The community, as the protagonist and depository of the formative action, by itself takes part in the ecclesial dimension of the project regarding the charismatic and ministerial identity of the Pious Disciple. In this document a broad space is dedicated precisely to the active role that the whole community performs in the formative caring of all the members of the Institute, under the sign of reciprocity and co-responsibility.

Called by Jesus Master to his following, we are sent by him as apostles to proclaim him to the world through the different ministries that flow from the Eucharist, the priesthood and from liturgy: by praying and multiplying the apostolic initiatives, in communion with the brothers and sisters of the Pauline Family, while keeping alive the sense of Church, people of God, with due attention to the cultural context.

Mary Most Holy, Mother of God, first and perfect disciple of Jesus and St. Paul the Apostle, the disciple who knows the Divine Master in his fullness and lives him entirely, are the models and mediators in living this ecclesial dimension.

IN THE FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE 6TH GENERAL CHAPTER

“The ecclesiology of communion, rediscovered with the Second Vatican Council, manifests a Church which is ministerial, participative, ecumenical, in dialogue with history, a reality which gradually penetrates and exerts its influence within our communities” (no. 1). Thus begins the final document of the 6th General Chapter giving the eventual development a specific setup. The triple dimension of the apostolate is tackled starting from its root: the unity of our mission in the Church and in the world, assuming the perspective of “communicating Jesus Master from within cultures.”

Two biblical icons become points of reference in the exercise of the apostolate (cf. no. 8):

* *Mary of Nazareth*, Mother of Jesus and Queen of the Apostles, who receives the divine Gift and returns it to the Father. She is a pilgrim with her people, the model of every disciple in listening to the Word, in her total surrender, in her song of the Magnificat, in her

intercession. Joining her are the numerous women of the Gospels: Martha and Mary of Bethany and those who, on Easter morning, met him on the road to the empty sepulcher.

* *The Apostle Paul*, grasped by Christ, who lives and casts the rays of unity of “life in Him” (*Gal* 2:20), in the liturgy of offered body (*Rm* 12:1-2), of the proclamation of the Gospel (*Rm* 25:1ff), of charity-sharing (*2Cor* 8:1ff). The style of the Apostle Paul who “made himself everything for everyone” (cf. *1Cor* 9:22) invites us to enter in relationship with the different cultures in an atmosphere of respect and of freedom (n. 49).

Eschatological dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

The end of Pauline consecrated life is the greater glory of God and the sanctification of persons. All this finds its fulfillment at the end of life spent in fervor and faithfulness to the gift received. In fact, daily, in one’s thoughts, words, work, in decisions to take, the criteria of discernment is ruled by keeping one’s gaze fixed on the realities that remain beyond the caducity of earthly life: “Heaven! Always, everywhere, in everything let your gaze be directed above!”

In Heaven, the Pious Disciples shall be united with Mary Queen of the Apostles and St. Paul in the glorification of the Most Holy Trinity (cf. *PD47*, 98-118). The Divine Master shall present himself as in a big, big monstrosity around which the Pious Disciples and the whole Pauline Family shall be gathered for a perpetual adoration. Uniting their voices to those of the Angels they shall perpetuate the song of the Incarnation, “Glory to God in the highest heavens and peace on earth to all men whom he loves.”

Liturgy on earth accompanies the soul till the gates of Heaven. Here he leaves it because the more beautiful, more perfect Liturgy, the eternal one above, begins. Oh, then what an intimate communion with God, what intimacy of life with the Most Holy Trinity!

On earth there is a most beautiful Liturgy, in the majesty of the rites, in the solemnity of the hymns, in the totality of well-ordered ceremonies. One could feel the beauty of God and the greatness of our religion... How shall it be then in Heaven! We shall see the Angels, the Seniors, the martyrs, the Confessors, the Virgins, the Patriarchs, the Prophets; we shall see the Most Holy Virgin, we shall see Christ resplendent in his glorious wounds; we shall contemplate the Most Holy Trinity and we shall hear sung the eternal: Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus! (*PD47*, 476).

What you have to do now on earth: find in the Eucharist all your delight, your sweetness, your joy; you will do it, you will have it also in Heaven. Up there joy shall not only be virginal, but also beatifying; an immense joy, different than what you can taste down here. Jesus shall show himself in a monstrosity, like Heaven, and you shall be gathered around in order to adore him, love him, sing him praise. Make up there your meeting place; there shall all be the souls of your Family, around the great monstrosity, with Mary Most Holy, first Pious Disciple, blessed Virgin. She shall intone the Magnificat, the eternal canticle, to which all of you shall echo, in a perpetual and blessed youthfulness (*PD47*, 110).

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

With the eschatological dimension we intend to express above all the radical reference to the final realities of Christian life: in the journey of trial of life we keep our gaze fixed on Christ, the author and the perfecter of our faith, so we may meet him one day beyond death and be introduced by him into the eternal wedding banquets, as prudent and wise virgins.

This Christian dimension of life assumes for us an intense Pauline color, according to an explicit desire of the Founder who wanted to express the unity of the Pauline Family also in the visible sign of the tomb.

On earth we share in the apostolic labors, in the joys and in the pains, in Heaven, we shall share in the eternal reward (cf. art. 7).

The eschatological vision directs us in the life of faith, hope and charity to the following of Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life with the totality of our persons: mind, will and heart (cf. art. 11).

This vision becomes even brighter with the passing of years: sickness and old age offer the interior and more free vision of the transitoriness of earthly life and dispose one in peace trustful at the meeting with God, at the new canticle, a hymn of eternal joy in the heavenly Jerusalem (cf. art. 65).

Inasmuch as in the earthly Liturgy one participates, pre-tasting it, with the heavenly one, let us keep alive the desire of finding ourselves together with the members of our family, either natural or religious, to enjoy God's glory, to contemplate his face, to sing for ever his praise.

We commit ourselves to live such a spirit and to communicate it through the specific apostolate, in order to reawaken in the world Christian hope and to transmit the strength to live the Passion and Death of Christ thereby we become participants of his Resurrection (cf. art. 70).

IN THE GENERAL PLAN OF FORMATION

The only objective of the entire formation itinerary in its various stages is to tend towards the full maturation of Christian life till the identification with Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life according to the teaching of the Apostle Paul: *donec formetur Christus...*

From here follows that, although in this document there are not many or explicit references to the eschatological dimension of our life, the same life appears thrust forward to the final realities through the gradualness of the different formative stages.

In effect, at the last period of life, what has been the objective of a consecrated woman is made manifest: a delicate and precious moment in which the Pious Disciple is progressively drawn to God.

Allowing herself to be penetrated by the Paschal experience, she lives her consecration until the total consummation. Thus the faithful and loving Spouse and disciple awaits, with her lamp burning, the return of the Spouse as she prays, "*Come, Lord Jesus!*" (cf. p. 86).

IN THE FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE 6TH GENERAL CHAPTER

The final document, *Communicate Jesus Master within cultures* directs the reflection towards the horizon of unity of the mission in the plurality of cultures, in view of the Christian third millennium.

To bring this program to reality, it is necessary to have the gaze of one's heart on the perennial dimension of Christian life: on what will be left beyond human finiteness. Although our document does not have any explicit reference on eschatology, one can suppose a tenacious rootedness of life on the final end: eternal glorification.

* THE SISTERS OF JESUS GOOD SHEPHERD

Premise

In the manifold production of texts, preaching or writings from Fr. Giacomo Alberione to the Pastorelle it is, to say the least, evident how Jesus Good Shepherd Way, Truth and Life is the center of the whole life, spirituality, formation and desires of the sisters.

It is a centrality that, after the example of Mary, brings us to the Father, who, knowing and loving humanity restores and redeems it; who weds his Church and takes her to himself and loves the principles: that he prepares us to eternal life: "the only purpose of our life" (cf. *Alla Sorgente*).

On the occasion of the Special General Chapter of 1969, the sermons held by the Founder to the Pastorelle during the first ten years of the congregation's life were gathered in a small booklet to which was given the title: *Alla Sorgente*. This little book represents a true source of indications: theological and pastoral, spiritual and of method. In the introduction, this is said: "here our spirit and our apostolate must always find nourishment, after having found in the Word of God and of the Church the foundation for an authentic witnessing of Christ."

Trinitarian dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

In all things, the first intention: God's glory. Direct all our intentions to the Trinity and his glory, then to peace to men.... Always know God more and his works... Glorify the Trinity.¹⁵²

The primacy of God's glory and the attention to peace to men, expressed in this passage¹⁵³ of Alberione, of 1948, clearly says how the Founder of the Pauline Family had in mind an inclusive theology wherein everything must start with and converge at the Trinitarian dimension.

First of all, the Trinity and then peace to men. Although primacy of the Trinity is affirmed, there is no failure to express attention to the human Person.

Man's journey is made up of search, knowledge and continuous glorification of the Trinity wherein God the Father is our beginning, our end and he who governs; Jesus Christ is

¹⁵² PA48, 1.

¹⁵³ One of the very many. But one can also see: PA49, 124-125; PA52, 38ff; PA53, 175ff.

the way for reaching the Father; the Holy Spirit is he who gives us the capacity, the means for good, in order to merit eternal life, Paradise.

The whole life is directed to glorify the Trinity, through created things, for redemption, through the work of the Holy Spirit. In fact, Baptism, penance, death...: in the name of the Trinity.

Hence, the relationship among the Divine persons and the essence of their nature are expressed by Alberione according to the canons of classic theology. From the texts themselves one could surmise that the presence of the Most Holy Trinity in the human person produces a natural spiritual tension for God.

The sister of Jesus Good Shepherd shall hence be committed to the search of a synthesis between spirituality and mission, between living Christ Good Shepherd Way, Truth and Life and living her mission in the parish ministry.

IN THE RULE OF LIFE

Also in the Rule of Life of the Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd, the Trinitarian dimension has a defined Christological connotation:

With deep gratitude to the Father who has called us to follow Jesus, Good Shepherd, we accept the pastoral charism... as a particular gift of the Spirit (art. 3).

The Pastorelle Sisters must "make their own the spirit of Jesus Good Shepherd so as to be a sign in the midst of God's people of the unwavering and thoughtful goodness of him who knows and lays down his life for his sheep ever-mindful of the helpless, ever-seeking out the lost (art. 6).

More: "The person of Jesus the Good Shepherd is the center of our whole life. He is loved and lived by us as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the fullness of revelation and salvation, the reconciler of the whole universe, as he was preached and lived by the Apostle Paul" (art. 7).

We have to note that every Divine Person is described in relationship with His self-revelation to the human person.

-- Regarding the Father, the attitude of love, of grace, of faithfulness towards the person is described (cf. art. 39, 57, 53). He calls us to follow the Son (cf. art. 36, 77, 85); He forms through his Spirit (cf. art. 53); consecrates (cf. art. 36, 85); sends (cf. art. 70); has a plan of salvation (cf. art. 49).

-- Regarding the Son, who is cited as Christ, Shepherd, Lord, Jesus Way Truth and Life and very much as Jesus Good Shepherd (cf. art. 14, 17, 40, 91), are emphasized his compassion for his people, grace, fidelity, love. He gathers his people, knows them and gives his life for him (cf. art. 4, 6).

-- Regarding the Spirit, who, aside from being the giver of gifts, is the intermediary of the Father in consecration, forms the person (cf. art. 1, 3, 27, 36, 53, 59, 69).

IN THE ACTS OF THE 6TH GENERAL CHAPTER

The Acts of the 5th General Chapter celebrated in 1993 have been drawn according to the Christological perspective given by "Jesus Good Shepherd Way, Truth and Life," with which is made to correspond the look-judge-act dynamics; as a whole the Acts traces for

the Pastorella the journey of the assumption/contemplation of reality, of prophecy and of pastoral charity.

The same methodology was used also for the Acts of the 6th General Chapter, of 1999, and again the Trinitarian dimension emerges as foundation and model of inspiration of the life of communion expressed in fraternal life and in being sent as communities for the pastoral mission. Furthermore, a development of the Trinitarian dimension of spirituality is hoped for.

Under the light of this theology, the sister is called to be sign of Jesus Good Shepherd Way, who works for communion and lives communion. She must express a prophetic capacity, in the sense of seeing with the heart and the mind of God, and she can do this only if she is open to the listening to the Spirit, in faith and in inner freedom.

The Pastorelle Sister has to undertake the path of service, not of power; she must live the Paschal experience of death and of resurrection in the sharing of the pastoral mission.

The Trinitarian dimension of the Acts of the Chapter gives prominence to the Christological perspective of Christ Shepherd Way Truth and Life, to whom the Father and the Holy Spirit communicate their permanent and dynamic action.

It is not by accident that the Report of the Superior General for the six-year period 1993-1999, proposed to the Chapter, opens and concludes with an effective inclusion, with a Trinitarian logic. She begins thanking the Good Shepherd for having “watched over the Congregation” and “by Himself guiding our family, by sending His Spirit during the difficult moments “so that we might welcome the grace of conversion and to discern the Father’s will with free and peaceful heart.”¹⁵⁴ She closes paraphrasing St. Irenaeus of Lyon¹⁵⁵: “In this year of the Father, let us be embraced by him with strength of his Word and the consolation of his Spirit.”¹⁵⁶

IN THE GENERAL PLAN OF FORMATION AND STUDIES

With great clarity and force, the GPFS underlines that:

The Trinity is origin, model and goal of every person and of the Church...We recognize that the salvific plan of God, the initiative belongs to the Father who *‘has loved the world so much as to give His only begotten Son.’* The Son, in obedience of love, pronounces His ‘Yes’ and in the incarnation enters in the world, going through all the human condition until death, and rising again, overcomes death and gives to all life without end. The Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of the Risen Christ continues his work in the hearts of all believers till the CHRISTIFICATION...¹⁵⁷

The practical application appears to be of particular concreteness, translated in terms of spiritual journey of this ‘origin, model and goal’ that forms every Pastorella.

It seems important to us, because it is truly incisive, to quote number 18 which places the relationship the Founder’s teaching, the Word of God and the human experience in suggestive synthesis that has to be gone through in the initial formation:

¹⁵⁴ Atti VI Capitolo Generale 1999, p. 30.

¹⁵⁵ St. Irenaeus of Lyon: *The Father comes to meet us with his open arms that are the Word and the Spirit.*

¹⁵⁶ Atti VI Capitolo General 1999, p. 81

¹⁵⁷ CPFS, p 12.

In the spiritual and charismatic proposal of Fr. Alberione the Trinitarian vision is linked very well with the Christocentric formation, typical of the Pauline theology. In *Donec Formetur*, the Founder outlines the Trinitarian dynamics of the spiritual journey which we can summarize thus: The Creator Father calls us to COME OUT from ourselves *'The life I live now is not my own,'* in order to CROSS the desert of the human condition on the footsteps of the Redeemer Son, who guides us to ENTER in full communion with Him through the Holy Spirit *'Christ lives in me = Christification'*. It is the same dynamics of the Son who, with the Incarnation comes out from the Father's bosom through the resurrection: He is the Good Shepherd, Way, Truth and Life. The person also lives the same dynamics between the past, present and future, from the old man to the new Adam, from the I to the you, and to the we, from the PURGATIVE way to the ILLUMINATIVE way until the UNITIVE way.¹⁵⁸

Anthropological dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

It would please Jesus that we speak of man, who was made by God... We have been made by God, after his image and likeness. Man is a reasonable being, free. Great respect is due to man. We must love our brothers, our sisters, because they are images of God. A man, even if he were bad or has fallen in the mud, has to be taken up, and like Our Lady's medal, is to be kissed.¹⁵⁹

After this image of great tenderness towards the human being (but it does not exclude the centrality of Jesus Christ), chosen as if a premise, let us now try to understand what might be Fr. Alberione's idea of the person.

"The Pastorella has a broad spirit; what is good is dear to her."¹⁶⁰ Statements like this, and those that are even better known involving the mind, the will, the heart, the physical forces, have produced in the Pastorella a mentality that always betrays the instinct of non-exclusion of anything or of anyone.

With constant reference to the humanity of Jesus Christ, Alberione preaches to the sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd a unitary humanity and considered wholly: "... we must always consider that we are body and soul... body and soul are two companions that walk together and together earn heaven."

Among the "means of sanctification" he points out to us the imitation of Christ—above all in the love of the Father and of our brothers—as the most effective, and to accomplish perfectly the will of God, with the mind, will and heart.

In order not to run the risk of making a treatise, which the available material would allow, let us say that the consideration of the Person on Fr. Alberione's part is most lofty and concerns *the whole* of man: either concerning his commitment to God, to himself, to the others: "Do the apostolate of prayer, of spirituality: love souls as Jesus has loved them; keep in your heart a dual flame: love of God and of souls"¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ CPFS, p. 13.

¹⁵⁹ PA48, 39.

¹⁶⁰ PA48, 10

¹⁶¹ PA58, 106.

More: “Jesus is the Good Shepherd, the Pastorelle are his. They have the same manner of thinking, of doing, of praying; what beautiful happiness! You are not of this person or of that, ‘you are of Christ and Christ is of God’ (cf. *1 Cor* 3:23).¹⁶²

But the most famous quotation remains to be that which has been transcribed also in the Rule of life and which has given the theme to the V Chapter:

Study the life of the Good Shepherd, know him, imitate him. There was a moment wherein I had the temptation of not giving any rule to the Pastorelle, but this alone: ‘Always look at Jesus Good Shepherd and live according to Him’. This thought must always be constant in your life (AS 70).

Finally, here is an inspired, almost moved, quotation from the Founder, done at the close of a sermon:

May blessings come on all humanity. Keep in your heart people of all races, all families, every individual. What a beautiful vocation you have! If you have given up families don’t you feel your heart open up? You are the mothers (PA48, 136).

IN THE RULE OF LIFE

The essential features of the nature of the Sister of Good Shepherd are easily traceable in the articles of the Rule of Life.

First of all the instinct of globality: *We share in the building up and growth of the Christian community proclaiming the whole Christ to the whole person and to all men in the apostolic spirit of the Founder* (art 13).

The SJGS belongs to, loves, is faithful to, lives the Good Shepherd (art. 7): *In imitation of Christ the Shepherd, obedient even to death on a cross, we commit our whole life to the Father’s plan of salvation carrying out our pastoral mission* (art. 49).

Article 8 appears like the photograph of the sister’s personality: *‘Following the example of Mary, the Mother of the Good Shepherd who offered herself as a ‘generous,’ humble associate in the plan of salvation, our collaboration in Christ’s pastoral ministry is lived out by our becoming mother and sister of all those who make up God’s people.’*

In order to fully become good Pastorelle, a solid and continuous formation is indispensable, a formation with which *“we open ourselves to Christ’s action and readily welcome the particular grace of the Father who forms us with his Spirit”* (cf. art. 543).

Drawing from the Trinity, therefore, the Pastorella is in constant journey towards an integral and harmonious growth: *“In this gradual and existential process of growth our aim is to develop the various areas of the person—the human, the spiritual, the cultural—so as to be in the midst of God’s people faithful servants of His Word and of his mystery of love for man”* (art. 54).

IN THE ACTS OF THE 6TH GENERAL CHAPTER

Along the line of what was taken up by the preaching and the formation received from the Primo Maestro, the Pastorelle express their love to Jesus Way, Truth and Life and to humanity also in the official documents. The theme of the 6th General Chapter is easily

¹⁶² PA47, 129.

readable under the anthropological key, starting from the title: *Tend God's people in the third millennium*. It is understandable that the attention spread over the whole chapter reflection is for humanity. It is not by accident that a whole session of the Chapter was dedicated to the deepening of theological anthropology and, very effectively, to a certain point it is affirmed that the meaning of "tending", for the Pastorelle, is '*spiritual motherhood*, that is, to take care of life, where life is and to promote it, in the awareness that we are not masters of life.'¹⁶³

The anthropological vision assumed and lived by the sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd is expressed in full in those that have been defined as 'priorities' for the next 6 years of the Congregation's life:

In our personal, communitarian, ecclesial life, let us give priority to the relationship with Jesus Good Shepherd, crucified and risen, Way, Truth and Life as fountain of all the relationships for tending the People of God in the culture of communication "while remaining" in the complexity of the current era in a spirit of discernment.¹⁶⁴

Also the objective is entirely centered on the person. In fact, the recipients are God's people, understood as humanity; the principal categories are relationship and poverty; the attitudes are humility and dialogue; the means of achieving is the care of relationships on all levels.¹⁶⁵

IN THE GENERAL PLAN OF FORMATION AND STUDIES

Concerning the formation of the sisters, it is easy to imagine that, in this document, the anthropological dimension would be dealt with special care. Not even the social, cultural-religious, political-social and economic aspects of human life were neglected. In our context, however, we shall point out those aspects that are more descriptive of the person. The explanatory notes mention clearly the development undertaken in the various points and it is for this that we quote them eventually and in whole: *Person, being in relationship, created in the image of God, in reciprocity man-woman, aware, open to the gift of self, wounded by sin, but redeemed and called to Christification*.

Recognizable is the spirit of Alberione, essential and all-embracing, and in a more specific manner it is affirmed that

Our Congregation makes hers the anthropological vision that defines the human *person being in relationship*... mirror of the dialogical relationship among the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit... We believe that the human person is free and responsible subject...in the diversity of the masculine and feminine types, is called to the relationship of reciprocity and dialogue... On the scene of the new millennium that opens, the woman is the new historic object. Happy of being women, we commit ourselves to grow in self-awareness and to develop all the potentialities of our femininity, participating actively to the elaboration of a new culture of life based on acceptance, on reciprocity and on peace.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Atti 6^o Capitolo Generale 1999, p. 120.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 149.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. ibid. p. 152.

¹⁶⁶ GPFS p. 9-10.

Ecclesiological dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

The ecclesial sense of Fr. Giacomo Alberione respects universality—otherwise always demonstrated, also in his preaching to the Pastorelle—universality taught and lived, naturally, by Jesus Good Shepherd:

We need to be persons of profound faith, to believe that the Institute is made for the universal Church, not for only one country, it is made for the heart of Jesus Good Shepherd... The Institute is a body, like the Church, wherein every part has its own task, everyone working, but it is necessary that all cooperate... (PA53, 72).

On the occasion of the feast of Mary, mother of the Good Shepherd, in September 1942, our Founder delivers a talk to the Pastorelle, singularly beautiful, perhaps better prepared than usual. It seems a short treatise on his vision of the Church, seen from the point of view of the Good Shepherd: it is He who points out the apostolate. It is he who establishes teaches the rules. It is he who gives the necessary grace.

The greater good of the church is to have holy pastors, and

The pastor is holy by the measure with which he imitates Jesus Christ who said, “I am the Good Shepherd...”

Jesus who is way, that is model... “I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do” (Jn 13:15)... Jesus was the perfect example of individual, domestic, civic, religious and priestly virtues. Everyone can study his life; his is a perfect school. He tends us with his holy examples. Jesus is truth, he taught the truth loftiest truths, necessary for all, in an easy, practical manner... Jesus tends with his doctrine. Jesus Good Shepherd is life, because he makes us live with his own life... Jesus tends our hearts.

For having obtained all this, we owe our thanks to Mary who *has given the Divine Shepherd. Thus all the good that comes to us through the pastors has passed through Mary.*

Worthy of being quoted here also is the conclusion of this sermon because it seems addressed to the entire Pauline Family and not only to the Pastorelle: *To take care of vocation is the work of works. Because of this, we need much prayer, a lot of work, much teaching. Jesus Master, formator of the first pastors, is our example.*¹⁶⁷

IN THE RULE OF LIFE

Jesus Good Shepherd builds the community, we collaborate.

The basic characteristic of our charism is our sharing in Christ’s pastoral mission of building up the Christian community in union with the pastors of the Church (art. 5).

After the example of Peter and Paul:

Our inspiration for this mission comes from the apostles Peter and Paul: from the shepherd of the universal Church, we learn to serve God’s flock gratuitously and joyfully in fidelity to Christ and his Church; from the Apostle of the Gentiles, the courage that is needed to seek out evermore suitable forms of pastoral ministry.

A pastoral mission at the service of the Word:

¹⁶⁷ PA42, 77ff.

Our apostolic mission for the local Church is characterized by the service of the Word in evangelization and catechesis, liturgical animation, the training of pastoral leaders, as well as those other forms of service which conform to our charism in accord with the needs of time and place (art. 10).

In obedience and harmony:

We carry out our apostolic service in obedience to the bishop and in keeping with the pastoral orientation of the local Church (art. 12).

IN THE ACTS OF THE 6TH GENERAL CHAPTER

The Pastorelle, recognizing the Good Shepherd as Way to communion between God and the Church, are, in turn, called to be a 'sign' of Jesus Good Shepherd and hence they feel the demand "to assume as community the attitudes of Jesus Good Shepherd... in order to become witnesses within and without the Church, while taking up her journey." This is what was already being said in the Acts of the 5th General Chapter. The Church communion has a vocation and prophetic mission: and so the Congregation of the SJGS.

It is in the Church and for the Church that the Pastorelle live their pastoral ministry: *The pastoral ministry is set up by Christ on the fundamental category of service.* The Shepherd leads and guides his people until the supreme sacrifice.¹⁶⁸

The Pastoral Ministry is precisely the theme of the 6th General Chapter celebrated on July 1999. The theme: *Tend the people of God in the new millennium* has been chosen because Fr. Giacomo Alberione, since 1947, told the sisters: "Tend to and nourish the sheep of God. Yes. Always more and always better."¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, in the medal of the rosary that was being worn on the side, the Founder had wanted engraved the exhortation of Peter to the elders of the Church: "Pascite qui in vobis est gregem Dei" (Tend the flock of God in your midst) (*1Pt 5:2*).

Hence, like Jesus Good Shepherd, we feel the duty to serve humanity in the search for the full meaning of life and, in order to learn how to tend, we have the dual school of Paul and of Peter.

IN THE GENERAL PLAN OF FORMATION AND STUDIES

Also the ecclesiology, seen from the perspective of formation work, appears relevant and attentive to the times, once more according to the spirit of the Founder: "let's make our own *the ecclesiology of communion* of Vatican Council II..."

The most meaningful ecclesiological image for us Pastorelle is that of the *people of God in pilgrimage* through history.

The General Plan of Formation and Studies, in this part, broadly refers to the document *Lumen Gentium*, but it does not forget to affirm that: "our Founder, in presenting to us our mission in the Church, utilizes the image of the *family*. Just as in human life the collaboration of man and woman is necessary, so it is in the life in Christ and in the pastoral mission of the Church the reciprocity man-woman is necessary. Hence, the Parish

¹⁶⁸ Cf. *Atti del VI Capitolo Generale 1999*, pp. 53, 62, 69.

¹⁶⁹ PA47, 120.

emerges to be like the family of God's children. We understand "family-parish" in the sense of co-responsibility—solidarity—participation—reciprocity.¹⁷⁰

Eschatological dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

Also this dimension finds wide space in the specific preaching of the Primo Maestro to the Pastorelle.

Above all, Paradise is to be desired! It is a desire that produces the immediate fruit of making the present better. On 1 November 1938, that is, the first feast of All Saints in the history of the SJGS, the Founder indicates the three fruits of this feast:

More faith, more holiness of life, desire for Paradise... Yes, we must intensely desire paradise because that is our true home. Our Paradise. This desire and this constant thought of paradise... they help us to face whatever sacrifice is asked of us in life... Our offering must be total: not a fiber of our being, not a beat of our heart if not for the Lord. Thus shall we consume our energies only for his love, until the point of possessing him in eternal life, in paradise, with all the saints.¹⁷¹

Jesus Good Shepherd wants to lead souls not only till the Church but into the true fold: the heavenly fold. How many, but how many souls up there have been saved by the merits of Jesus Good Shepherd! We need suffrages so that the souls in purgatory may satisfy the desire of Jesus that all should go to heaven.

The Shepherd who makes the soul God's daughter, instructs her, enlightens her, nourishes her: he nourishes his fold. He forms the good Christian since childhood and as adult he follows him up till old age and assists him in moment of death. And when the soul has moved on to eternity, does he forget her? (PA 1, p. 25).

It would be interesting to put down here the whole sermon on the Last Things contained in APIV of 1949, p.201. It is a true treatise of eschatology from the pastoral point of view¹⁷² wherein the Parousia shall be an encounter of mercy.

IN THE RULE OF LIFE

In the Rule of life, although found only in few articles, the teaching of the Church and of Alberione on the "last things" are well shown.

We believe in the communion of Saints and we concretely express it with the duty of suffrages for deceased sisters (cf. art. 24).

We are witnesses of the world to come, and we confess that we do not have any other good on earth beside the Lord Jesus (cf. art. 38).

Finally: "Ultimately, in sickness and death, we come to see the complete fulfillment of our pastoral consecration and our total participation in the paschal mystery of death and resurrection that unfolds God's face to us" (art. 90).

¹⁷⁰ GPFS, p. 17-18.

¹⁷¹ PA38, 5.

¹⁷² Fr. Alberione says: "When doing the catechism, explain at length the last things..."

IN THE ACTS OF THE 6TH GENERAL CHAPTER

The eschatological dimension is not made very explicit in the chapter documents although it breathes the idea that the dream of God and of man to live in harmony, in relationship, in love, is a commitment that will never have an end if not in God's time and in the fulfillment of the human experience.

In the conclusion of the *Report* of the Superior General the maxim of the relationship between life and death is expressed: "The signs of life are within the signs of death, life does not come *after* death, but *is born of death*, because the Son has taken to himself our death. This is the heart of Christian life and it is the source of renewal of the religious life."¹⁷³

IN THE GENERAL PLAN OF FORMATION AND STUDIES

Not being able to trace a systematic treatment (nor, truly, a synthetic one) of eschatology, one can suppose that the GPFS has concentrated attention on earthly life, dealing as it should of formation, of religious life, and that it considers good formation an adequate prelude to beatific life.

* THE APOSTOLINE SISTERS

As it has been for all the Pauline foundations, also for the Apostoline Sisters Fr. Alberione was anxious to put, as center and key for understanding their vocation and mission, Christ Maser Way, Truth and Life. Witness to this are his numerous homilies, from where one can draw, under various aspects, how the whole human, Christian, eschatological life and the very reality of the Triune God, are to be read and understood in this Christological light.

In the journey of the Apostoline Sisters, these charismatic elements are found re-expressed and codified in the renewed Constitutions and in the Chapter Documents.

Trinitarian dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

From the texts emerges the frequent reference of Fr. Alberione to the mystery of the Trinity, "the greatest mystery of our faith" (arch. 162).

Our vital adherence opens to such a mystery because, thanks to it, we can grow "in virtue and in grace" (arch. 162).

Also as regards the Apostoline, we feel we could say that the Trinitarian dimension present in the homilies of Fr. Alberione is that which is considered previously as the divine

¹⁷³ *Atti VI Capitolo Generale 1999*, p. 80.

exemplarism. In our Founder the Trinitarian aspect finds its original expression in the Christocentric vision of Jesus Master Truth, Way and Life, with all the doctrinal, spiritual, practical implications that come from it.

Christ is the Master Truth, Way and Life, in fact, it is He who introduces us to the Trinity, reveals to us the face of the Father and enables us to embrace the life of the Spirit because he himself contains in himself this mystery (Truth=Jesus reveals the Father; Way=Jesus brings us to the Father; Life=Jesus gives the Spirit) and allows us to live him by accomplishing the mission that has been entrusted to us:

God's goodness, his power and his mercy became perceptible through the incarnation of the Son. "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9). Who sees me, which means Jesus, understands my words that are truth, and who sees my holiness, my way of life, my perfection, sees the perfection, the holiness of the Father, and he who sees how I work sees the heart of the Father (arch. 25bis). It always appears that we have in Master a right concept: that is, that Jesus is not only a teacher, but at the same time, the Way, the Truth, the Life... In him we arrive at the Most Holy Trinity! In Him there is his plan to accomplish, the plan of the Son of God incarnate and, that is, to glorify God the Father and to bring peace to men (arch. 50).

Christ Truth Way and Life reveals also our true face, image of the Trinity:

We call on to God as one and three in persons. Like each one of us is a single person and yet we have faculties, that is, the mind, the sentiment and the will. Always a single person, but there are three faculties in us: intelligence, heart and will (arch. 87).

We have to recognize the Trinity in ourselves and that is we have three faculties that is the mind, the sentiment, that is the will and nonetheless, mind, sentiment, will are in a single individual only (arch. 101).

Like Christ, also we came from the Father and we go back to the Father: in this *coming* of Christ from the Father his mission is accomplished, to which mission we Apostoline are also associated through our mission for vocations (cf. arch. 117).

Christ Truth, Way and Life, in the Word and in the Eucharist, nourishes this journey to holiness and apostolic commitment, by making us live in the Trinitarian space:

May Jesus Way Truth and Life enter into us as he is. It is especially after sacramental communion that we can think that he brings us grace and transforms us into him (arch. 100bis).

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

The reference to the Trinitarian God goes through our Constitutions beginning from the first statement regarding our identity: "Called and consecrated in Jesus Christ Master, Way and Truth and Life, revealer and mediator of the design of God the Father in the Holy Spirit." Just as Jesus was consecrated and sent by the Father for the salvation of the world, also we are consecrated in order to be sent and to live our mission that is "fully addressed to the Father in love"—the same Father who consecrates us more intimately to himself in order to be "a special inheritance" of the Trinity (cf. art. 24)—and "for this very reason, entirely dedicated to the saving service of Christ" through the vocation apostolate (cf. art. 87).

In the Trinitarian perspective of the initial synthesis (cf. art. 5) it is seen that "the universal plan of salvation, in spite of man's rejection 'since the beginning', has been reconstituted by God the Father by restoring everything in Christ who, being the Way, the Truth and the Life, is both the mediator and the fullness of revelation and of communion with God and among men. It is 'the fulfillment of the mystery hidden for ages in God's mind,'

who, through Christ, Word made flesh, in the Holy Spirit, makes mankind participant of his divine life...”

Thus Christ, the Apostle of the Father (cf. art. 82), the final ‘yes’ of God to man (cf. art. 115) is the key to access to the Father, through the Spirit. The vital adherence to Christ Way, Truth and Life introduces us into the mystery of the Trinitarian life. God the Father, providing Creator and our final End, reveals himself to us in Christ Truth, Word of God made man for our salvation, and through the Holy Spirit he brings about our sanctification. At the same time Christ Way is the only door through which, in the paschal gift of the Spirit, we have access to the Life of the Father (cf. art. 114). Thus Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, brings to reality our salvation through the offering of himself, which culminates in the paschal mystery of his death and resurrection, and with the effusion of his Spirit he entrusts to the apostles and, in them, to the Church the mission of continuing his saving work (cf. art. 82).

Through prayer, that “process of personal formation” is progressively done in us, a process that, through the Spirit, allows our whole being, mind, will and heart, to be more and more configured in Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life, thus making our spiritual and apostolic life fruitful (cf. art. 71). Jesus Christ Teacher, in whom the Father wanted to “recapitulate all things”, is in fact the perfect and vital model to which our formation must be constantly find inspiration (cf. art. 111).

The Trinitarian dimension is colored by the specificity of our vocational charism which is translated into a passionate and untiring commitment to let man meet “God who calls” (cf. art. 107), in a vital, dynamic relationship that involves one’s entire life and appeals to the person for a conscious and responsible response to the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit. The Word of God and the Eucharist are the propelling center of our whole life. The Spirit guides us in the prayerful listening to the Word, which is always an appeal of the Father, who solicits us in Christ to a faithful and persevering response. In the Eucharist, by eating of the same one bread and drinking of the one cup, by virtue of the Holy Spirit, we can become one body, a living sacrifice in Christ, in praise to the glory of the Father, in the continuous intercession with the Church for all men. In this manner we engraft ourselves, even more, “wild olives into the living olive of Christ-Eucharist” (cf. art. 9).

Our fraternal communion has its foundation in God, in the communion with the Three Divine Persons. From this original communion is born and is nourished communion in the *Church* (art. 51) and, through the following of Christ, Way, Truth and Life, our fraternal life enters into the dimension of the paschal mystery, so that it is continually regenerated by Christ (art. 61).

IN THE CHAPTER DOCUMENTS

The Chapter Document is entirely set up on the Christocentric-Trinitarian vision of Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life who, in revealing the Father, makes himself the *way* for us by making us his disciples and giving us the Spirit’s life (cf. art. 8). The Document traces our path towards holiness that is achieved in the conformation to Christ, revealer and mediator of God’s design in the Holy Spirit. This maturation and interior vitality are achieved through the initiative of the Father through the Son by the action of the Spirit,

thus leading us progressively to the “knowledge of the love of Christ that surpasses all knowledge” (cf. art. 30). The Word and the Eucharist help us to be totally inserted into the Master in order to know him, imitate him and love him ever more (cf. art. 23).

Anthropological dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

In the preaching of our Founder, it repeatedly emerges how man, after having committed sin, finds himself divided in himself, and it is only in the conformation to Christ that his unity is recomposed:

Now, in us, there is always this conflict between our being human with all the miseries of Adam that he left us with the original sin and our divine being that is Jesus Christ who lives in us. He, Jesus Christ, has in us the aspirations, the desires, the designs of the Father’s will, the love of the Father. Hence, do not be surprised with nature, which always drags you down. We must ask for the grace to always follow Jesus: “Vivit vero in me Christus” (Gal 2:20)... On the other hand, there is human life. Hence let us not be surprised of the voices of nature... Hence, on one hand there is pride and on the other, there is humility, Jesus Christ. On one hand there is anger, despite, and on the other, there is Jesus with his life, his goodness, his love of neighbor. Instead of anger, let there be peace, the meekness of Christ against anger and likewise, not envy but the desire that everyone, all be saints” (arch. 185)

It is Jesus Truth, Way and Life who reestablishes the mind, the will and the heart until the point of sanctifying them: “Let your brain be sanctified, let your imagination be sanctified... your hearing be sanctified, sanctified be your tongue, sanctified by your taste, sanctified be your sense of smell, sanctified be your sense of touch” (arch. 154). And what does this mean? “It means that for the soul, Jesus is enough, it seeks Jesus, wants Jesus, loves Jesus, gets along with Jesus and wants to live in Jesus: this is vocation” (arch. 123).

Only this itinerary of Christification allows us to reach that *integrality* of the person to which every Apostolina is called, to live what Fr. Alberione proposes as formation objective for the entire Pauline Family: the whole man in Christ for a total love of God.

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

Regarding the anthropological dimension, from our Constitutions, it clearly appears that “Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life, is the center around which our personality is built and unified. He is the form that vivifies our spiritual and religious identity. In him is brought to realization the harmonious development of our personality through integral formation of our entire being, mind, will heart” (art. 112). He, “the only Master of new humanity” (art. 5), “image of the invisible God,” and living “icon” of man, reveals to us, in our progressive journey to Christification, the truth of our being and the greatness of our vocation. Following him, we commit ourselves to imitate him in order that his image, engraved in our being by the Spirit, may shine in us according to the designs of the Father (cf. art. 113).

We seek to conform our person, mind, sentiment and will, to Jesus, the Master who forms in his school those who follow him so that they too may be “way, truth, and life” so that

also in us the Spirit may bring to reality what St. Paul was fully aware of: “It is no longer I that lives, but Christ who lives in me” (cf. art. 8). The precious heritage of the spirituality of the Pauline Family invites us to be and to work in fullness, that is, in sanctity: the same spirituality involves the whole of our person and our life through the “integral” Christ, in order to make us instruments suitable to accomplish the mission entrusted to us (cf. art. 14). Thus, our sanctification takes place in the progressive adherence of our whole being to this itinerary in God and with God that Fr. Alberione has indicated as a formative project for our entire existence (cf. art. 114).

Before Jesus-Eucharist, our person finds again its interior unity of mind, will, heart; our fraternal communion returns to its truth; our mission becomes a praying synthesis of our life given for vocations, because Christ transforms us more and more and lives in us (cf. art. 75). Finding again our interior truth, we go back to the Father’s heart, rich in mercy, who always awaits us; and the saving force of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, spotless Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, comes to communicate to us that mercy which is stronger than sin and death, source of the building up and renewed communion with the entire body of Christ (cf. art. 78).

To better know ourselves in Christ and to progress in the way to holiness, the practice of examination of conscience is indicated. It helps us to establish ourselves “in humility, disposes us to gratitude towards God, to sorrow for sins and to firm resolutions for the future. It is necessary for all” (cf. art. 77). This brings us to cultivate an ever greater, more mature and responsible awareness of our personal and common calling, which is indispensable for the proclamation of the “God who calls” (cf. art. 87).

The dialogical dimension of the man-God relationship finds its fulfillment in Christ, the One Called by the Father, and corresponds to the most profound nature of man who, in the intimate tension of call-response, perceives his being constitutionally “called” by Someone who transcends and at the same time “calls” him (cf. art. 88). In the discovery of his essential vocation to communion with God in Jesus Christ, in whom “the mystery of man finds light,” man is as if newly “expressed” to his own self. In this renewed awareness of self, which is like a new creation, man perceives the profound meaning of his vocation, of his profound meaning in life and in the universe.

In this perspective, Christ the Lord gives a definitive meaning to the life orientation of man; and with his Spirit, he guides every human being in the discernment of the various vocations, enabling him to respond to the gift of his call which corresponds to the most authentic realization of man himself in the sincere giving of self (cf. art. 95).

The primary purpose of formation is to bring those who are called, to live the religious life and to first discover and assimilate and afterwards deepen their specific identity as persons that God, through the ministry of the Church, consecrates to Himself through the public profession of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, obedience (cf. art. 109), in order to make themselves ever more conformed to the image of his Son.

For mutual and constructive service in the search of God’s will, it is important to create in our communities a constant atmosphere of listening and of dialogue, in the spirit of discernment, wherein each sister may express herself with authentic freedom and truth (cf. art. 48).

IN THE CHAPTER DOCUMENT

The process of Christification finds in formation one of its most privileged moment: it tends to create unity in the person and to vivify the human, spiritual, religious and apostolic identity (cf. art. 29). The awareness that Jesus wants “to form in his school” those whom he calls, so that they may know how to follow him and to conform themselves to him, is manifested as a need to promote an adequate formation for every sister who aims at her own integral growth.

The Document clearly shows how special attention is needed in order that everyone could better and always render fruitful the “potentials” received from God for the common good (cf. art. 41).

Ecclesiological dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

For Fr. Alberione, the ecclesial dimension is always present in his preaching:

Jesus lives in the Church, he is in the Church, he is the Word! He is the wisdom of the Father and is the word of the Father. Preaching is the word of Jesus. It is word, that is, Jesus Christ Truth that is communicated to us... The Church is formed of persons that are in God's grace: all together they are the Church. We are the Church! (arch. 151).

We work with Christ and we work in Christ, because we are with Christ. This is so because when one lives in grace, and especially in fervor, remember the words of St. Augustine: “Christus facti sumus,” we have been made Christ. Christ is whole not by himself, he is total when he lives in us, that is there is Christ plus us, and we make Jesus Christ, mystical body... In him one works and one performs what is good... (arch. 138bis).

Now God's people is the Church... (Jesus) gave the mission to the apostles: go and preach and make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19-20)... We need to expand our heart and hence pray for the entire humanity so that all may enter and become part of God's people... That is: a heart big as that of Jesus. Think of everyone, pray for all and expect that everyone becomes a part of God people, of the new people of God (arch. 151bis).

This being living parts in the Church, and serving the Church, for us Apostoline is made concrete in the work for all vocations, just as what Jesus has done.

We pray to Jesus Master and, generally, in our prayer we have this intention: to live his life. Thus we say Way, Truth and Life, that is all our being. In a special manner, this has to be concentrated in one's mind and to this end: that Jesus be our life, that is, our manner of seeking and forming vocations. When we speak of apostolate, in the first place, we have to do it: that the Divine Master when he went out of his private life, yes: “I am the Way,” that he teaches us the way the he himself followed. Second: “I am the Truth”: the things that one ought to say as regards vocation, regarding the height, the nobility and the preciousness of the vocation to the religious life and the apostolate--the truth that persuades. And third “the Way”: that Jesus accompanies us with his grace and that we have so much grace in our hearts to attract souls to God (arch. 40).

During these days we have meditated on this: how to imitate Jesus. We have considered especially how he has taught us to look for vocations, to form vocations and to pray for vocations, to confirm vocations and activate them. (arch. 98)

Work for vocations in the Church in this manner: “Your heart needs to open up, like the heart of Jesus. Jesus invites all men to salvation ‘Venite ad me omnes’... Bring souls to Jesus and since this is the life of consecration, of perfection, go to Jesus in our awareness of being called. Being called, is it not the most delicate and most important that could ever be? In you and through you. Yes, inasmuch

as life has two parts: consecration, that is gift of ourselves to God but since God has given us faculties, capacities, intelligence, memory, physical health, etc., once given back to God, God wants that we work for Him, that is that we understand with our intelligence, that we love vocations, that we feel the need of the Church and of humanity” (arch. 135).

In living the vocation apostolate, reference to Mary Queen of the Apostles is fundamental. Mary is “the Mother of the Divine Called One, of him whom the heavenly Father has sent to mankind” (arch. 135).

We call her Queen of the Apostles because she has accomplished the entire apostolate. There would never be any other apostle who accomplishes an apostolate that is so complete, so sublime, so total as Mary. Because the apostolate means *to give Jesus* and Mary gave him in a marvelous manner, which can never be surpassed. And, that is, she gave him as her son, she gave him as teacher of humanity, as redeemer of humanity, as host of humanity, as priest of humanity, as mediator between heaven and heart. Indeed! Mary gave Jesus. Oh! All forms of apostolate are in *giving Jesus*. And since we cannot do everything, each could not do everything, one becomes a part of the apostolate. Then the apostolate that gives the full Jesus to the world is the apostolate that gives Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life (arch. 65bis).

The vital adherence to Christ has in Paul the exemplary model: in fact, in him this adherence was total and hence Fr. Alberione sees in this saint the model of every apostle, capable of working and suffering and bearing fruits more than any other in order to bring all to live Christ (cf. arch. 110)

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

Our mission finds nourishment in the spirituality that Fr. Alberione wanted to give to the Pauline Family and to every Institution he founded. Participants of the only and universal mission that the Church receives from her Lord, we proclaim Jesus Christ and his Gospel through our specific charism which, expressed through the mission that the Church entrusts to us and that we exercise in his name, in communion with and at the service of the entire People of God: the service for vocations, with the specific commitment for the vocations to priestly ministry and for the vocations to the consecrated life in its various forms (cf. art. 7, 83, 85).

The mission, to which Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life, calls us is to place ourselves in his following so that, while he evangelizes, he calls the apostles and the disciples, and he sends them to proclaim his Gospel, just as he was sent by the Father; and it is a continuation of the example of the apostles, who in their turn called others to share with their apostolic ministry and they choose collaborators to proclaim salvation in Jesus (cf. art. 93).

Within the sphere of the universal call to salvation, God reaches man not in a general and vague manner, but in singular and personal one. Every man, in fact, is called by the love of God to life, and to the fullness of life in Christ, that is, to faith, through the Spirit by means of Baptism, that inserts him into that people “called by Jesus Christ” which is the Church. In her, every Christian is called in turn to holiness and to the proclamation of the “great deeds of God” (cf. art. 89) according to the vocational gift that the Spirit grants to each one for the good of all. Hence, our mission commits us to the entire people of God so that it may grow in the knowledge of being a people of “persons called” in Christ, in whom every Christian is “truly God’s child” and from him, he receives a particular vocation and mission (cf. art. 97). In fact, one of the more genuine expressions is precisely that of helping persons to “make truth” within themselves, in order to understand and

welcome that design of love that God, who “has loved us first”, has for every person, as a “blessing of Christ,” from eternity (cf. art. 96).

According to our spirituality, the vocational contents specific to our mission, that are rooted and whose center is Christ, find in Mary and in Paul two essential references.

Mary, whom we venerate in a special manner as Queen of the Apostles, is both our Mother and Teacher, “the first missionary of the Gospel” and “star of evangelization.” She is the one who from the Annunciation to Pentecost has fully achieved God’s calling. And in this total availability of faith and of service she does not only precede every person called, but accompanies him with her maternal love: “Mary is as if the Mother of vocations, and it is She who assists their formation” (art. 94). Hence, the Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, in her total adherence to the Father’s will, in her constant listening to the Word, in her maternal presence beside the first apostles and disciples of Jesus, is for us the continual inspiration in our whole life (cf. art. 11). To her we address ourselves also as Mother of the Church and hence Mother of fraternal communion (cf. art. 70), which is the expression of our ecclesial communion.

Paul, “established as herald, apostle and teacher” of the Gospel, as he defines himself at the end of his life, has had a most lively awareness of his own vocation and, with it, of the mission to which called him who “was pleased to reveal him his Son”. For his unconditional love for the Gospel lived “in Christ and in the Church”, St. Paul is a profoundly vital model for our mission (art. 94). Living “in Christ Jesus,” the Apostle Paul is an indefatigable builder of communion (cf. art. 70). For Fr. Alberione, he is the fundamental and constant orientation of his spiritual and apostolic life. He, who has searched and lived with passion and universality the mystery of Christ, is the witness of the power and of the grace of God, who has radically transformed him. Just as it is for the whole of the Pauline Family, so it is for us Apostoline, St. Paul is father and teacher, not only in the understanding and vital adherence to Christ’s mystery that he “thought of” in clear “vocational” terms, but also in his constant search and formation of men and women called to particular vocations and ministries at the service of the Church (cf. art. 13).

IN THE CHAPTER DOCUMENT

Jesus leads us to the Father by revealing to us the Father and communicating to us that infusion of the Father’s life, which is his design of love and the revelation of his will that passes into the depth of the charism transmitted to us by Fr. Alberione. In this interweaving of life, which conforms us ever more fully to Jesus Christ and is manifested in our vocational service to the Church and to men of today, is delineated our journey to holiness (cf. art. 18).

Jesus’ invitation: “Pray the Lord of the harvest...” appeals to us in all the expressions of life and goes into the heart of the problems of humanity. Together with the universality that accompanies our “life prayer,” aware that God’s gifts are totally free, we want to cultivate better in prayer for vocation the attitude of gratuitousness and esteem towards all those called and all the vocations in the Church (cf. art. 28).

In this manner we seek to ever better serve the Church and all those called (cf. art. 46), in the availability to respond to the solicitations of the Spirit and to the signs of the times

(cf. art 57). We feel, in fact, the urgency to ask ourselves over the vocational expectations of the world and on what has been asked of us in the inside and for the Church, in order to recognize the signs of God in history and in order to serve our poor, and in a special way the complex reality of youth (art. 68).

Eschatological dimension

IN THE TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE

Our consecrated life is given for the mission, which has to bear fruit in holiness, is entirely oriented to the definitive life in heaven: “There are difficulties, there are misunderstandings, there are sufferings, physical or moral, and there are also contradictions, perhaps persecutions, misunderstandings, but there is heaven, there is heaven! There, with these thoughts go on ahead always!” (arch. 44).

It is always the adherence to Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life that brings us to project ourselves into the eschatological dimension:

One shall see everything under that extraordinary light that the Son of God shall project in the soul so that the soul shall be raised to focus itself on God, know God much more profoundly, much more profoundly than one who has used his reason and deeply practiced his faith. ‘I am the Truth’: the truth that is unveiled, the same manner it is with reason, with the truths of faith and with the eternal vision of God. Then Jesus is still the Way, and the Way means that He has worked on earth, has kept a conduct that is useful for us as guide, that is useful as way. He is the Way, the Way that was started from the moment wherein the Son of God was made incarnate in Mary’s womb, at the moment that he went to sit at the right hand of the Father in heaven. He is our Way. Go through the same way where Jesus passed on earth, reach at the same end, that is, in heaven, beside Jesus, at the presence of Jesus, in contemplation. Then one will possess God... What will this virtue of ours produce, the virtue that keeps us close to Jesus Christ and live like Him? The possession of God, one will possess God, infinite wealth! ... Thus Jesus is our Life. The heart that loves God, the heart that is united with God, the soul that is full of grace, and which makes grace grow day by day through prayer and the sacraments, etc, ... it shall be in God’s joy... Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, the Life and paradise is to see God in Jesus Christ through the light of Jesus Christ. See him, possess him, love him and enjoy him (arch 44).

IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

In our Constitutions, it is underlined that consecrated life, inasmuch as “it belongs firmly” to the life of the Church and her holiness, and it joins to the Church “in a special manner” those who are called to it and to her mystery, “better manifests to all the believers the heavenly goods already present in this world, and better witnesses to the new and eternal life, acquired by the Redemption of Christ, and it better proclaims beforehand the future resurrection and the glory of the heavenly Kingdom,” towards which we are journeying, inasmuch as “we do not have a stable city on earth, but we seek that of the future” (cf. art. 19). Consecrated chastity, therefore, becomes a sign, a proclamation and prophecy of the covenant of eternal love of God that is fully manifested in the future resurrection and in life eternal. In this manner, therefore, this charismatic choice “brings the eschatological Kingdom of God to the life of all men in the conditions of temporality and makes it, in a certain manner, present in the midst of the world” (art. 23). With the vow of poverty, through the Spirit, we assimilate Christ, who in his life had nothing “to rest his

head on”, in order to receive and live with truth the beatitude that leads us to the Kingdom of heaven (cf. art. 40). And obedience becomes a special sign and witnessing of the full adherence to God indicated by Jesus to his disciples as the road that leads to the Kingdom (cf. art. 42).

From the original communion of the Three Divine Persons, communion is born and is nourished in the Church, which is the “people of God,” “gathered together by the unity of the Father, of the Son, of the Holy Spirit,” sign and instrument in Christ “of the intimate union with God and the unity of the entire humankind,” seed and beginning of the Kingdom, towards which it journeys as a pilgrim, in which the communion with God shall be perfect and shall have its fulfillment (cf. art. 51). Meanwhile, it is through ever liberated fraternal relationships, and hence ever more oblativ, that our common life can become a joyous experience of life together, a prophetic sign of humanity reconciled with Christ, eschatological witness of the hope that does not delude (cf. art. 62). In Jesus Christ, who defined himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life, man discovers the fullness and the definitive meaning of his own life. Everything is born of the Father and returns to the Father, for the fulfillment of the Kingdom, where our joy will be full in the perfect glorification of God, Father, Son, Holy Spirit (cf. art. 114).

While valuing health and considering it a precious gift of God, we accept from His hands, in the spirit of “prayer of offering” for vocations, sickness and infirmity, suffering and death, seeking to live in us the paschal mystery of Christ. We assist with very special concern the sick or infirm sisters who experience in their bodies the cross of Christ. We sustain them with the prayer of the whole community because, at the hour of the ultimate test, each one may abandon herself in the hands of the Father, in the expectation of the Spouse to which one has given her entire life in the hope of life eternal and in faith on the resurrection (cf. art. 66).

And inasmuch as the bond of charity that unites us on earth is perfected in eternity, we feel united with the sisters who precede us “with the sign of faith and who sleep the sleep of peace.” For them we offer suffrages in the certainty that the final fulfillment willed by God is not death, but life forever, wherein “we shall see him for what he is” (cf. art. 67).

IN THE CHAPTER DOCUMENT

The orientation of our life is defined by the call to holiness, which already leads us to live here on earth the eschatological goods.

Our entire personal and communitarian life must bear witness to the choice of the Kingdom (art. 87), by anticipating already in the now the love and the joy of future glory.

* THE AGGREGATED INSTITUTES

As regards the Aggregated Institutes, what has been mentioned regarding the Society of St. Paul is true for them. Through the formula of aggregation, they are closely bound to such Congregation with which they share spirituality, apostolic activity, style of formation, as well as the prospect of future reward.

In fact, the members of such Institutes:

- seek above all the conformation with the Divine Master, Way and Truth and Life, gift of the Father in the Holy Spirit (*Trinitarian dimension*);
- they offer themselves to Jesus Christ through the profession of the vows, with the totality of their own person, in order to graft into Him all their faculties: mind, will, heart (*Anthropological dimension*);
- they feel as living members “of the building of edifice of the Church”, and they actively work in order that Christ’s Mystical Body may be built in all the reachable environments (*Ecclesiological dimension*);
- they aim at achieving one day in heaven the vision of God, the possession of God, the joy of God (*Eschatological dimension*).

In the April 1958 issue of *San Paolo*, the Founder introduces the new Institutes of the Pauline Family, while pointing out that their contribution to the growth of the Kingdom cannot take place but in the integral Christ, Way and Truth and Life.

The Secular Institutes therefore respond to a need of the present hour, with new forms and very much suited to the new needs; the Secular Institutes open a new path of light and of love for the young people who want to collaborate in a more effective manner to the coming and the spread of God’s Kingdom in the Divine Master, Way, Truth and Life.

Thus, the *special* end of these Institutes cannot but be the same: to give to the world the whole Christ, his doctrine, his moral, his worship:

To serve and cooperate with the Church in giving Jesus Christ, Master, Way, Truth and Life to the world, with the spread of the Christian thought, of Christian morals and of the means of elevation of the individual and social life, particular in modern forms (*ibid*).

Addressing himself directly to the members of the Institutes, Fr. Alberione recommends, with his usual vigor, the need of establishing themselves in the authentic Pauline spirituality:

Our sanctification is the chosen sanctification in the more perfect way, that which constitutes the Pauline Spirituality: that is, in Jesus Christ Master, Way, Truth and Life. And then, through the devotion to Mary, go up, go up a little every day... “Way, Truth, Life: here is the foundation of true holiness. It is precisely the way that we have to live as Paulines. We must arrive at this point: “*Mihi vivere Christus est (Phil. 1:21)*, and “*Vivo autem, iam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus;* “it is no longer I that lives, but Christ Jesus lives in me” (*Gal 2:20*). And that is, Jesus Christ is in my brain, in my mind, I think like Him and, better yet, He thinks in me. And afterwards: that his will takes the place of ours and ours be guided by his will: that is that we are guided by the will of Jesus Christ. And, finally, participate with his life ever more abundantly, that is, with grace” (*MCS*, p. 412).

Members of these Institutes are committed to achieve a deep intimacy with the Lord Jesus by being involved with him with all the faculties of their own being:

Stay a while with Jesus, talk to him of our needs, express our love, our affection, entrust to him the whole of our being, mind, will and heart. And ask for the grace to live... in what way? “Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, to God the Almighty Father, in union with the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory.” Then, one grows in Jesus Christ, then one obtains through growth in Jesus Christ... (*MCS*, p. 382f).

Those belonging to the Institutes shall have in their heart the “great problem”: his/her own sanctification and the participation to the apostolate according to the Spirit of the Church:

Now the great problem! On one hand your dedication and your commitment to salvation there already are, and on the other hand I believe that the Lord is making many of you experience the call to a greater holiness. I also think that there is the invitation to the apostolate and not to a single aposto-

late, but to the direct apostolate according to the Spirit of the Church, hence the invitation to earn a much greater merit, as we shall explain in other instructions (*MCS*, p. 155).

Serve the Church, serve the souls. The religious life is a service: it is a service to souls, to people. Jesus Christ also washed the feet of the Apostles. And how can one explain the word “service”? One needs to understand it in the very sense that the Pope attributes to himself: “Servant of the servants of God”; he takes this name to himself: the servant of servants. That is, to serve souls that must serve God. This is the meaning; when one does an apostolate, he makes use of souls, he makes use of those who live the Christian life and the life of the apostolate (*MCS*, p. 444).

* THE ASSOCIATION OF PAULINE COOPERATORS

Also from the texts—in truth, very many!—with which Fr. Alberione delineated the figure and the physiognomy of the Pauline Cooperators, the theological vision that fuses the Founder’s proposal can be clearly seen, with the four known dimensions.

According to Fr. Alberione, the Cooperators are above all Christians committed to finding their own sanctification through a relationship of conformation to the Divine Master: they are “persons who have the sense of God” (*Trinitarian dimension*); they intend to submit to the Lord the totality of their person in the faculties of the mind, of the will and of the heart: “To educate the Cooperators means: to make them live, according to their state in life and to their possibilities and to what is possible; the Pauline life, the Pauline devotions, the Pauline mentality (*anthropological dimension*); they cooperate, in a multitude of forms of initiatives, to the growth of God’s Kingdom by serving the Church: “The cooperators work with the Church and for the Church” (*ecclesiological dimension*); they do not lose sight of the eternal happiness in God that awaits them at the end of their lives: “an eternal glory more abundant in heaven” (*eschatological dimension*).

The Cooperators are heads of families, serious and committed to the religious concern for their children: they are mothers dedicated to nourish at home and to keep the good spirit; they are teachers with ardent hearts that spend their lives and are consumed in educating. They are pious ladies of simple spirit, and are sisters consecrated to the love and the service of the heavenly spouse, and daughters who want to make a good use of their youth, priests and parish priests, so that the Pious Society of St. Paul may work at their side, in evangelizing the people with the Good Press...

The *Casa* prays for the cooperators and renders to God continuous thanks for the special gift that he gives them....

Prayer is the first cooperation. We desire very much the prayer of thanksgiving. Oh! May they multiply, those who thank the Lord for his continuous gifts, of the greater gift: vocation! St. Paul insisted much on acts of thanksgiving!” (*UCBS*, 15 settembre 1924).

The Cooperators are persons who have the sense of Christ, who have broader Christian instruction, a more lively faith. The Cooperators are those who leave better lives, those who have zeal and think of the good of souls; they are those who see in the Pauline Family an initiative, a religious organization that, while attending at becoming perfect, wants to give Jesus Christ to the world, his doctrine, with the modern means; press, cinema, radio, television...

They are persons who have two intentions:

1. Dedicate themselves to a better life, imitating as they can, the Pauline religious life. It is an elevation from a simply Christian life to a life that imitates the religious life as much as possible for those who live in families. The first condition for the Pauline Cooperator is to want to improve his/her life. It shall not be an improvised something: one walks degree by degree, but this is the principal intent.
2. They think of the souls of others. Let us not live in our own egoism; let’s do away with piety that restricts or perhaps is transformed into simple works or practices of piety done more or less well. The Pauline Cooperator considers the activity, the zeal of the Apostle Paul, he willingly reads his life, his letters and, thinking of the great labors of the Apostle in giving through Christ his own life, goes out a little from himself, looks around and, if he is intelligent, this looking pushes him

much ahead, through the Nations: “I ask you to offer prayers for all’ – it is said in the Scriptures. The Cooperator shall not only offer prayers, but shall act according to his convictions.

In 1908 I heard this invitation from my spiritual director: Always remember: *Annuerunt sociis*: you need to seek the help of persons. It was then that the care of cooperators was started.

Let me just mention in passing what should be broadly explained:

1. Recruit them. The more intelligent they are, the better.
2. Form them with instructions, with the bulletin
3. Organize them
4. Try to lead them to greater holiness, to improve their Christian life
5. Converge their strengths towards the goals of the Pauline Family, that is, the spread of Christian doctrine by the most modern means (*Prediche del Rev. Primo Maestro*, marzo-dicembre 1954, pp. 155ff).

The “Cooperators” in the publications apostolate are a family of seculars who:

- a. imitate the religious life of the Paulines according to their condition and in the apostolate;
- b. contribute to the publications-apostolate with prayers, with work, with offerings;
- c. constitute a family after the manner of a modern Third Order.

Hence:

1. Through instructions, exhortations, religious rites they have to form an elevated Christian life in the Pauline spirit. They shall practice poverty, chastity, obedience and zeal according to their state.
2. Encourage them to collaboration in publications; through prayer, especially with communion; meditation and adoration on the first Sunday of the month; with work, for example, bringing in vocations, editing, diffusion, etc.; with offering, for example, pensions, gifts in nature or in kind, work, etc...” (*SP*, Maggio 1957).

III. “CONGREGAVIT NOS IN UNUM CHRISTI AMOR”

(The Love of Christ has gathered us into one)

The journey we have accomplished till now has gone through the following stages:

1. a) The analysis of the life, the preaching and some of the writings of Fr. Alberione has shown us that the Founder, in giving life to the different institutions of the Pauline Family, has obeyed a plan that God was manifesting to him gradually, giving light to him step by step. We can meanwhile speak of a precise *unitary project* of the Pauline Family.
 - b) In its turn, every Institution of the Pauline Family has assumed the charism entrusted to it by the Founder, codifying it in its own Constitutions and the institute's official documents.
2. A reading, under a theological perspective, of the unitary project of the Pauline Family has led us to penetrate into the heart of the common heritage, has allowed us to identify its nucleus: *everything finds unity and synthesis in the Person of Christ Master Shepherd Way and Truth and Life*. It is how Fr. Alberione enunciates it with the Pauline expression, *Instaurare omnia in Christo*, and which he would have wanted to illustrate with an encyclopedia on Jesus Master. It is always the Lord Jesus who is the perfect image of God, one and three (Trinitarian dimension); who allows the human person, given to Him, to reach his perfection in the mind, in the will and in the heart (anthropological dimension); who continues his work of teaching, of example and of grace in the Church (ecclesiological dimension); who shall be possessed definitively by and shall glorify the blessed in heaven (eschatological dimension).

In this third part of our work, what remains that we analyze is the manner with which every individual Institute of the Pauline Family relates with the same Jesus Christ. This reflection shall allow each Institution to see the elements that it has in common with the others and, consequently, discover the elements that differentiate it and recognize them as specific to itself.

In other words: a comparative vision of the essential components shall allow every Institute to identify the aspects that it finds also in other Institutions—we shall call these *common heritage* – and the aspects that draws its own identity and *specificity*.

For this last section, the guiding word is that which the Founder has entrusted in AD in the chapter precisely entitled *The Pauline Family (AD 33-35)*: “Congregavit nos in unum.”¹⁷⁴ Recalling such words, Fr. Alberione intends to underline that, although there exist in the Pauline Family “separation” and “independence”, we need to put on the first place among them the “kinship bond”, the “close-knit collaboration among them on the spiritual, intellectual, moral and economic levels,” and “the exchange of prayers and help in many ways and, finally, the “sharing of joys and sorrows, and of the eternal reward.”

¹⁷⁴ “The love of Christ has brought us altogether...” Cf. Roman Missal, Mass of the Lord's Supper.

Common elements of the Pauline Family charismatic-ministerial identity

From a synchronized reading of the charismatic Family heritage, we recognize these elements *common* to all the Institutes, gathered according to the four coordinates:

Christocentric-Trinitarian dimension

- ✓ Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life is the only way to access the Trinity;
- ✓ The Trinity is Way, Truth and Life in Himself;
- ✓ Jesus Way, Truth and Life restores in damaged man the image of the Trinity in his mind, in his will, in his heart, and restores man to the primitive beauty, just as how he came out of the creating act of God; hence, man in Jesus Christ is a small Trinity;
- ✓ The Holy Spirit, by virtue of whom the Word of the Father took form in the virginal womb of Mary Most Holy, forms Jesus Christ in us;
- ✓ Inasmuch as he is Master and Shepherd, Jesus precedes us by seconding to the will of the Father from the incarnation to glorification;
- ✓ Jesus Christ, Divine Master, is the Wisdom of God, the definitive revelation of the Father whom we encounter in the Scriptures;
- ✓ Jesus forms us in his school of truth, virtue and goodness;
- ✓ Jesus Christ is at the center of the universal history as mediator *from* and *to* the life of the Most Holy Trinity;
- ✓ The Eucharistic mystery is the loftiest expression of the magisterium of Jesus Christ; the whole Pauline Family is born of the Tabernacle;
- ✓ Our fraternal communion and our spiritual life are fruits of the Trinitarian life;
- ✓ The life of every believer, of every Pauline man and woman has as the only goal “a great *Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus*, in honor of the Most Holy Trinity” (AD 183).

Anthropological dimension

- ✓ The principal commitment of the Pauline man or woman is to allow Jesus Christ to *take form* in his/her person;
- ✓ It is necessary that the whole of the human person be grafted in Jesus Christ: the mind grafted to Christ’s mind; the will, to Christ’s will; the heart, to Christ’s heart;

- ✓ We need to establish our whole being, mind, will, heart, body in Christ Way, Truth and Life;
- ✓ Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life formator for piety, study, apostolate, poverty;
- ✓ Jesus-Truth gives light to faith; Jesus-Way establishes hope; Jesus-Life nourishes charity;
- ✓ The principle of integrality of the human person is to form “The whole person in Jesus Christ, in view of loving God completely by means of one’s intelligence, will and heart and physical strength. Nature, grace and vocation: everything is for the apostolate” (AD 100).
- ✓ The Pauline apostle (man or woman) gives importance to human sciences: all that is good, amiable and good... (cf. *Phil* 4:8).
- ✓ The Pauline is a person open to the universality of cultures;
- ✓ The Pauline is a person aware of his/her poverty with great trust in God in the spirit of the Pact or Secret of Success;
- ✓ The commitment of the person is to give importance to creation and to the inventions of science as means of bringing God to man and man to God;
- ✓ Two are the fundamental attitudes of the Pauline: gratitude (*Magnificat*) and the awareness of his/her own inadequacies (*Miserere*).

Ecclesiological dimension

- ✓ The Church, Way and Truth and Life is Mother, Teacher and Guide who teaches, leads and sanctifies: dogma, morals and worship;
- ✓ The Pauline Family’s mission is to live Jesus and to serve the Church;
- ✓ The Pauline Family qualifies itself through a biblical, pastoral, social, liturgical, catechetical and universal spirit;
- ✓ By the measure with which our sense of belonging to the Pauline Family grows, our being Church becomes the visible sign for the people of God;
- ✓ The life of our persons and communities is in Christ and in the Church;
- ✓ To remain united with the Church is to remain united with Christ: it is thus that we are living and working members in the Church;
- ✓ The apostolate is a continuation of the work of Jesus Christ through the Church;
- ✓ For the apostolate, three elements are always required: knowledge, that is, the complex of truths to communicate; language, as means of diffusion; technology, as the complex of means that produce speedy and effective fruits;
- ✓ The apostle is a witness committed to let himself disappear in order to give voice to God and to present in the first place the doctrine of the Church: he is Way, Truth and Life.

- ✓ The building of the Christian community is one preoccupation of the Pauline apostle;
- ✓ Consecration introduces one fully into the mystery of God's covenant with his people;
- ✓ In "working for the Church," the Pauline consecration sees to it that the forces are united and the dedication is complete (cf. AD 24);
- ✓ Mary Most Holy, disciple of the Divine Master, is the model of our mission: cooperate with the Church in giving Christ to the world;
- ✓ Secret of apostolic efficacy is Mary, way to Christ: "*via vitae, via humanitatis*";
- ✓ Jesus came as Teacher through Mary, Teacher;
- ✓ Mary is the queen of the apostles, Mother of the Church;
- ✓ Mary mother, teacher and queen of the apostles is the image of the Church;
- ✓ St. Paul is the most faithful interpreter of Jesus Christ and is held as father, teacher, example, founder of the Pauline Family;
- ✓ From St. Paul we learn the sense of Church and the Christian vision of the world and of history;
- ✓ From St. Paul, we take the "form" of the apostle: *donec formetur Christus...*
- ✓ The style of the apostle Paul who made himself "all things to all" (cf. *1Cor 9:22*) solicits us to enter into relationship with the different cultures in a climate of respect and freedom;
- ✓ St. Peter has been placed by Jesus Christ as head of the Church, in order to continue being the Way, the Truth and the Life in her;
- ✓ The Pauline apostolate is characterized by its fidelity to the magisterium of the Pope.

Eschatological dimension

- ✓ Issued from the hands of God, our life, like a journey of trial, must be a preparation for heaven: nourish the thought of paradise by considering things under the "light of eternity";
- ✓ Eternal life is the vision of God in Christ Truth, the possession of God in Christ Way and the enjoyment of God in Christ Life;
- ✓ Eternal happiness in heaven is the participation to the eternal joy with the Divine Master whom we imitated in life;
- ✓ Just as we were united, as a Family, in the profession of faith, so shall we be united in suffrage and in intercession;
- ✓ The Pauline apostolate undertaken on earth shall be continued in Heaven;

- ✓ The Eucharistic “visit” in its eschatological dimension anticipates the perfect communion of love with the Master;
- ✓ At the end of our life, the Father shall contemplate in us the *form* of the Son and He shall be pleased;
- ✓ Our beatitude in God shall above all be an exaltation of his mercy.

Specific aspects of the charism of individual Pauline Congregations

THE SOCIETY OF ST. PAUL

- The Society of St. Paul is the only Institution composed of priests and consecrated laymen: Priests and Disciples of the Divine Master. As brothers, together they constitute the *Paulines*: their union has been understood by the Founder as one having peculiar characteristics, an “innovation” of the Congregation (cf. Const. 5);
- Another element that characterizes the Society of St. Paul is that of having been willed by the Founder as the “Altrice” (nourisher) Congregation of all the Pauline Family: because of this, that the Superior General is “to take up the responsibility of relations with the other Pauline Congregations and Institutes” (*Const.* 201); “He is to promote unity among them in the spirit of the Founder, respecting and valuing the charism of each” (*ibid.*).
- Along this line, it is the role of the Pauline priest to be, within the Pauline Family, the spiritual animator through the ministry of the Word and of the Sacraments (cf. *Chap. Doc.* 33).
- Furthermore, concerning the anthropological dimension, the Society of St. Paul is the only *Religious Congregation* for men in the Pauline Family.

Other specific elements we live in common with the Daughters of St. Paul, with whom we share “a single mission” (Const. 86.1):

- With reference to the Person of Jesus, the Society of St. Paul as well as the Daughters of St. Paul, is characterized by its relationship with Jesus Master seen principally under the dimension of *Truth*: of him, revealer of the Father, the Society of St. Paul spreads “as if from above, the doctrine of Jesus Christ” (*AD* 34). Called to the mission of being communicators, the Paulines draw inspiration from the Master who, in order to become perfect *Communicator*, made himself like the recipients of his message (cf. *Chap. Doc.*, 32).
- Another charactering element of the Institute is its reference to the *Apostle Paul*: according to the Founder’s affirmation, St. Paul is to be considered “father, teacher, example, founder” (*AD* 2) not only of the Society of St Paul but of the entire Pauline Family. The Apostle Paul has been introduced to us by Fr. Alberione as the *mould* of every member of the Pauline Family: “Jesus Christ is the perfect original; Paul was made and made himself a mould for us; thereby, in him are we

forged in order to reproduce Christ” (*SP* ottobre 1954). Meanwhile, Paulines by assuming the universal heart of Paul, who made himself “all things to all in order to bring all to Christ” (*I Cor* 9:22), intend to embrace its apostolic urgency and to learn from him pastoral adaptation in order to contribute in the animation in Christ of all human values (cf. *Const.* 12).

- We still have to underline that the communitarian dimension of the life of Paulines “stems from the apostolate and in view of the apostolate” (*UPS* I, 285). This means that life in communion, aside from benefiting the common good of members, aims at “an organization that takes into consideration of this: ‘we are at the service of people’s souls’: we are “religious-apostles” (ibid).
- The Paulines feel the need of a new missionary thrust for the preaching of the Word of God and are aware that such preaching can reach all men uniquely *through the instruments of social communications*: press, movies, radio, television, audiovisuals, minimedia and the like. Our apostolate, meanwhile, is to be considered preaching, “side by side with oral preaching” (*SP* dic. 1963): not in the sense of being a subsidiary activity, accessory to the preaching, but a real *preaching*, that is the proposition of Christian truth in view of salvation.
- The Founder put a strong accent on the *pastoral* character of the apostolate: “pastoral loftiness”, “pastoral wisdom”, etc. The end of the Pious Society of St. Paul is to produce and give “press that does good,” “of press that is true evangelization of the people” (*Chap. Doc.* 90).

THE DAUGHTERS OF ST. PAUL

From the synthesis of the *common elements* that characterize the five Congregations of the Pauline Family, it appears that we share, as sons and daughters of the same Founder, many components.

In my reflection on the *specific elements* that characterize the Congregation of the Daughters of St. Paul compared to the other four Pauline Institutes, I noticed that there are few of these elements, some however are essential, because they concern our specific charism.

- We can describe our specific identity as follows: women called and consecrated to live in *Christ Master* Way and Truth and Life *in order to proclaim him with the means of media communications*; to live Christ the way *St. Paul*, model of our configuration to the Master and inspirer of our mission, understood, lived and communicated it; *St. Paul as mould* of our discipleship to Jesus Master. Because of this, the Daughter of St. Paul ought to have the heart of both mother and father: goodness and strength.
- To be *women-apostles* of Jesus Christ in the world of communication and hence to be above all *women of communication*. Because of this, an authentic *contemplative life* that sheds light and is spent *in the apostolic activity* of the media ought to distinguish us.

- More, according to the exhortation of the Founder: *To be women-apostles of humanity and apostles of unity.*
- We promote, for everyone and with all means of apostolate, what is true, just, pure, amiable. In the field of media communication, we assume courageously the latest forms and means of technology.
- What assures its specific apostolic physiognomy to our Institute is the *creative moment, is the love for editorial work* according to the Founder.
- Central nucleus of our prophetic vocation is *evangelization*. The character of the preaching that specifies us, that makes us mediators of salvation, witness and communicators of the word: *we bring the Truth in charity.*
- Also our *community life geared towards the specific mission*, aside from the growth of the person, is characterized by a simple, open, communicative, alert life style; to be *women on a journey*, as Fr. Alberione wanted us to be.
- What still differentiates us from the Society of St. Paul, with which we share the mission, is *our working as women* in a world characterized by the *multimedia* and *inter-religious culture*. Because of this, our formation must be oriented to universality, inculturation and to listening, always renewed, to the signs of the times.
- Finally, what distinguishes us in a special manner from the other Congregations for Women of the Pauline Family is a *closer collaboration on the level of apostolic activity* with the *Society of St. Paul*, having the same apostolic goal. It means working on the level of “relationship of reciprocity.”

THE PIOUS DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE MASTER

In the Pauline Family, the Congregation of the Pious Disciples is located, since its beginnings, in a vital relationship with the same.

- As a part of the big consecrated Pauline female presence, our presence is distinguished within the same presence by our explicit relationship with the Divine Master Jesus, center of the entire life of the Family; the very title “disciples of Jesus Master” reveals this direct and indispensable reference for our own identity.
- The *Christological* and *anthropological* components are the coordinates that support the place of the Pious Disciples in the Pauline Family and in the Church. With them the ecclesiological and eschatological components, which give meaning to their own ministry, are closely linked.
- Inasmuch as they are disciples like Mary of Nazareth and the women of the Gospel, they “take care of the Divine Master and of his ministers”¹⁷⁵ It is the primary responsibility of the Pious Disciples to see to it that every member of the Pauline Family listens to, follows, in total self-dedication, the only Master Jesus, Way, Truth and Life, and proclaims him to the world.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. *UCBS*, A. 6, no. 11 – 15 Novembre 1924, p. 20, quoted in *Primavera Paolina*, Ed. Paoline, 1983, p. 374.

- To them, in the articulated Pauline project, which is the Family, is entrusted principally the relationship with Jesus-Life of the world: in the Eucharist, source and peak of the whole life of the Church.
- The Pious Disciples are the guarantee of an indissoluble bond between the mystical depth and the Pauline missionary dynamics through the apostolate of uninterrupted Eucharistic adoration¹⁷⁶, in an exercise of solidarity in evangelization with the Brothers and the Sisters of the Family. To the Pious Disciples is entrusted the *laus perennis eucharistica*.
- Liturgy, as God's action for the welfare of the people and the response of the Christian community, is the place par excellence wherein the Life of grace, which is the redemption of Jesus Christ, reaches every person. It is the place of *communication* of Grace, of Truth and of Beauty. To live it, know it and make it known for an ever more active, responsible and conscious participation of all God's people originates from this primary relationship with Jesus-Life.
- And in view of this caring for Life, in the Pauline and ecclesial community, finds meaning our presence as formators and animators of different ministries, ordained or not, among God's people, prophetic, regal and priestly. Our womanly, consecrated presence beside the Brothers of the Society of St. Paul implies the mature awareness of *entrusting* proper to the dignity and the vocation of woman.¹⁷⁷ We recognize ourselves as the "guardian" of vocations in their arising, in their development, in the apostolic action, supporting them in the decline of strength and deferring suffrages beyond death.
- The primary relationship with Christ Master, Life of the world, makes of the Pious Disciples women of listening, of profound interior life and of courageous proclamation starting from those who, in the Church, have pastoral responsibilities. Just as it was with the women of whom the Gospels speak, those who followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, witnesses of his death and resurrection; Just as it was with the Christian women who lived beside the evangelizers of the "church of the origins in order to share with them the mission and the faith.

THE SISTERS OF JESUS GOOD SHEPHERD

- Also as regards the specific elements, we shall begin with a quotation from Fr. Alberione:

Do not copy one side of the life of Jesus, but his entire life, he who is Way, Truth and Life. *You are the sisters who, more than the others, copy the public life of our Savior; you feel more than the rest the need to share with his ministry as Pastor.* You are in the church precisely in order to give your

¹⁷⁶ The Pauline publications dating back to the twenty's and collected in *Primavera Paolina*, pp. 365-380, witness to the eucharistic ardor that burned in the House and the qualitative jump that took place with the fulfillment of Fr. Alberione's desire to have in the Casa the *laus perennis eucharistica*, entrusted to the Pious Disciples.

¹⁷⁷ Regarding this theme, see *Mulieris dignitatem* (1984): "Woman is strong because of her awareness of trust, strong due to the fact that God, 'entrusts man to her,' always and in all ways..." (no. 30).

help and your support to priests and thus to imitate the pastoral life of Jesus so that soon there may be one fold with one shepherd.¹⁷⁸

- And it is not by chance that Fr. Alberione wanted to leave us Chapter 10 of St. John's Gospel, and also the pastoral rule of the first letter of Peter, so that the Pastorelle might learn to "share" with the pastoral ministry of Jesus Good Shepherd Way Truth and Life, in whom is consummated the paschal mystery of the Son of God in order to gather into one people the dispersed children of God.
- After the pastuality of Christ Shepherd who knows and who gives his life for his sheep do the Pastorelle assume the characteristic of living in the midst of God's people, as mothers and sisters, after the example of Mary, so that the Christian community may be formed in it through the service of the Word in evangelization and in catechesis, through liturgical animation and the formation of pastoral workers. The personal and immediate contact; prayer that assumes, in faith, the story of faces and families, the solitude of the poor and the rich; the capacity of making ourselves neighbors in the daily life of our brethren to indicate the extraordinariness of God's work, these are some of the "treasures" that the gift of vocation has in store not by appearance, but faithful and authentic.
- Made part of the local Church as a community and by virtue of a mandate, the Pastorelle take to themselves the animation of the Christian community in communion of responsibility with the pastors, valuing and coordinating the different ministries, taking care of the relationship between the specificity of spheres and journeying together. It is then the ecclesiology of communion that guides our ministry that draws fidelity from Peter and study from Paul.
- The gratuitousness of love and the humility of knowing "to stay side-by-side" want to be united with wisdom that discerns and works, that looks at man without fearing his culture and its transformations, that rather gets educated in discovering there the communication with God because this communication may find voice in the interpersonal encounter, in the visibility of relationships, in the sharing of history, in the enabling to the instrumentality of time.
- At the spring of the paschal mystery, the Pastorella becomes mother, receiving the brothers; she expects the Pentecost of the Spirit, accompanying life in its participating sacramentally with the mystery of Christ, by incarnating a style of poverty, of essentiality, of joy.
- Fr. Giacomo Alberione did not miss to point out an inexhaustible source of consolation, for prayer and the life of the sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd: Psalm 23, that all of us consider the rule of Love.

THE APOSTOLINE SISTERS

The Queen of Apostles Institute for vocations, with its precise mission, together with the elements common to the whole Pauline Family, shows some specific aspects.

¹⁷⁸ G. Alberione, *All Sorgente*, p. 24

- Jesus Master Way Truth and Life is the One Called par excellence and it is he who calls and associates others to his mission: we feel having been called by the Master in order to call and to bring to the good news of vocation.
- Jesus Eucharist is he to whom we need to orient those who desire to deepen their Christian vocation, in particular those who are called to the vocations of special consecration.
- Jesus Way Truth and Life helps man find in himself the vocation design that comes from God, finds its realization in a specific vocation and its fulfillment in the return to the Trinity.
- The journey of vocation guidance and discernment is in order to bring “the whole man” to fulfillment, so that he may reach the fullness of his humanity by developing the potentials of his mind, will and heart and his gifts-talents.
- The Church, God’s people, is the community of those called that makes itself visible through the different vocations. In the common vocation for holiness, each is called, in a particular choice of life, to build the Church-communion.
- In the sphere of the common vocation to holiness the specific commitment is for vocations to the priestly ministry and for vocations to consecrated life in their various forms. A special attention goes for those who are living with difficulty their vocation.
- Prayer for vocations as a constitutive element of the mission according to the teaching of Jesus who explicitly invites to pray so that “the lord of the harvest may send workers for his harvest”, in the spirit of prayer of offering for vocations that Fr. Alberione has entrusted to the Apostoline.
- Mary is she who has fully accomplished God’s call. She is the mother of Jesus Called, she who formed him, who has accompanied the Church since her birth and continues to accompany her at all times. Mary is hence the mother of all vocations.
- Paul, in his vital adherence to the mystery of Christ, is father and formator of men and women called to special vocations and ministries at the service of the Church.
- The call to conform to Christ one’s whole existence, according to diverse vocations and charisms, expresses the eschatological perfection to which the Church tends.

THE AGGREGATED INSTITUTES

In the Pauline Family, the Aggregated Institutes are distinguished from the five Congregations above all for their “secularity”—their reason for being—and for their “aggregation.”

In particular:

- They are associated-aggregated in the work of evangelization of the Society of St. Paul;

- They are committed to live the Pauline Spirituality – the point of reference and of convergence;
- They dedicate themselves to the apostolate of the individual Pauline Congregations, making use also of their own profession;
- They work in certain social environments not easily accessible to pastors and religious;
- They profess the three vows according to their state in life;
- They do not have the obligation to live in communities;
- They maintain, as a non-essential characteristic, the “secret” regarding their belonging to the Institutes.

THE ASSOCIATION OF PAULINE COOPERATORS

Fr. Alberione’s idea of cooperation precedes the birth of his foundations.

According to the Primo Maestro, the Pauline Cooperator has precise duties: individual ones regarding formation of self and apostolic duties.

In particular:

- In order to become a Pauline Cooperator in the Pauline Family, one must have a clear awareness of his own vocation and lay mission and an adequate human-spiritual-apostolic Pauline formation.
- The Cooperators commit themselves to render at the service to the Gospel “the fastest and the most effective means” that progress offers through time, in order to proclaim Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life for every man and woman.
- The Cooperators, men and women, young and old, for their specific lay identity, are called to fulfill the Pauline Apostolate in all its expressions.
- Every Pauline Cooperator supports the apostolate of the Pauline Family through prayer, suffering, work, and offering.
- The belonging is expressed publicly through the “Promise” that personally commits one to assume the goals of the mission proper to the Pauline Family.

CONCLUSION

A SINGLE BODY IN CHRISTO ET IN ECCLESIA: AN OVERALL LOOK

In a meditation given, on the occasion of an extraordinary course of Spiritual Exercises, to the “elderly” sisters of the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master on May, 1963, Fr. Alberione presents once more the Pauline Family unitary project, drawing in broad lines the essential coordinates for the description of the charismatic and ministerial identity of the Family. He further reaffirms in this manner the intentional design executed in response to God’s will and to the needs of the Church and of people of our times.

We are quoting here the more salient parts. The quotation is obligingly long considering that it is a text of notable importance that deserves to be read with special attention:

Now, what is the composition of the Pauline Family?

We have not to measure it only in what is on the outside, that is; this year, this thing is added, that other thing, or Institute, has been added or it may be “The Union for vocations” or else “The Union for the Bible.” What matters is to consider that the Pauline life is “in Ecclesia” the way Jesus Christ, the Church, wanted it.

Hence Jesus wanted 12 Apostles. There, to them correspond the Priests. Jesus wanted 72 disciples. There, to them correspond the Disciples. Jesus wanted that we should go throughout the world, yes. And so there is the mission, the spirit of the mission in the whole world. Jesus wanted to be served by women. Mary is the first. And so, there are the sisters.

In this manner should the Institutes be considered: the Pious Society of St. Paul, the Family of the Disciples, the Gabrielites and the priests of the “Union of Jesus Priest” so that the apostolate for men is complete, to which we could add, then, the “Union of Cooperators” because everyone in the Church ought to cooperate...

And then, the Lord has disposed that woman be associated with the priestly zeal and so, the Institutes for women.... And so the association of the woman’s zeal with the priestly zeal, in proper measure because we all have the supernatural life from Jesus Christ. Hence: the Daughters of St. Paul, the Pious Disciples, the Pastorelle Sisters and the Apostoline Sisters...

Oh, the need for vocations. Vocations to the diocesan priesthood, vocations for the religious priesthood, vocations for the lay religious life, to the religious life of sisters.

And so the addition of the Annunciationists and the addition of the diocesan priests, inasmuch as not all can live in the convent, religious life, but we need to go to the people: “Go and preach”. The Gabrielites and the Annunciationists ought to remain in the world with the means of the world, for example, with the Christian school, with the means of the world and the world has schools... And Gabrielites and Annunciationists ought to exercise the apostolate with those means, that is, to sanctify the school, to make it Christian. And then teaching the sciences, the science that crowns the other sciences, is the science of Jesus Christ. Hence there are you have the men and women Cooperators who ought to sanctify the families. Hence “the Union of Christian Families...”

The Pauline Family mirrors the Church in its members, in its activities, in its apostolate, in its mission. Hence, it is not something casual, as if something else is added, something new, but it is a completion of the Pauline Family inasmuch as we have to live in Christ, as Jesus Christ has taught and has done and as the Church has taught and done.

Oh, hence, a single origin, all from Jesus Christ. And according to the time wherein we live because everything comes from the Host, starting from the night of passage from the last century to the century wherein we are living and hence, there, we had to accomplish that which is in the present century and is useful in the Church of God, to which we put ourselves in service, each one his/her part.

A single origin: Jesus Christ, Master, of whom we do not consider only one part, for example, his love for children, as there are Institutes for youth, for children, but we have to take the whole spirit, the life of Jesus Christ and, to consider it well: the Master, Way, Truth and Life. Hence the Institutes have to live a common spirit with one color that defines afterwards the details, but the general principals are all the same, that is, the spirituality is always in Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life.

An Institute may have more of one point: Life, just as you are, for the Eucharist, the adoration, the withdrawn spirit, we say, semi... semi-cloistered life, semi-active, complete. Oh, hence, liturgy and everything that concerns piety, life, the sacraments, etc. And some other Institute, instead, *Ego sum Veritas*: I am the Truth. Hence, the Pauline priests and the sisters Daughters of St. Paul, especially in order to enhance the quality, that is the propriety, what is better, what is Jesus: "I am the Truth," it is to be communicated, to be diffused. And then from the truth follows morals and hence the religious life, the Christian life. Oh, therefore, what is fundamental is common to all, to all the parts of the Pauline Family, to all the Institutes of the Pauline Family.

And so if we look into the bottom of the Constitutions of every Institute of the Pauline Family, we see a common foundation. And nonetheless in the Church of God there are many mansions just as many are the mansions in heaven. Hence, the foundation is the same: and in the manner of forming, of giving formation, and in the manner of performing piety, and in the manner of doing the apostolate, these fundamentally remain the same, that is, to give Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life. Also the government, in its parts, the Pauline Family in the Institutes of the Pauline Family. Hence many articles are the same: and the part that concerns the spirit; the second part that concerns the apostolate; the third part that concerns study; and the fourth part that concerns the human, Christian, religious formation.

The different things that are arranged, the various fundamental articles reflect always that which is the spirit of the Pauline Family: thus the Gabrielites, thus the other parts of the Institute. And when the priests of "Jesus Priest" come, they want that it be spoken of, that none other is preached, but the spirit, because they want to live the Pauline spirit, in their own way, according to the Canon Law and according to their special vocation. As regards sanctification: the Paulines; and as regards the apostolate: they are dependent on the diocesan authority.

Oh, the spiritual part, the study part, instruction, the apostolic part, the part of formation, also the government must reflect the same spirit. Hence, in the Constitutions that have been updated, when the Lord has willed that the Pauline Family be completed, then, also the government itself took the same form.

Oh, then, how is the government? The government is, in all its parts, that is in all the Institutes of the Pauline Family: he who is to guide is elected, and remains in office for 12 years; those who have to take part in the council, and they remain for 12 years. Then, he who is to guide, he who is at the head, and he who has to counsel, and he who has to collaborate, it is all described more or less and in the Constitutions of the Pious Society of St. Paul and in the Constitutions of those last born, that is, the Apostoline. All this because we form only one body in *Christo et in Ecclesia*.

And so we have this: we mirror ourselves in the Church, more than mirrored, life in Ecclesia, in *Christo et in Ecclesia*. The physical Christ, the mystical Christ in the Church. Hence, let each one consider himself/herself member of the Pauline Family.

Common origin: the tabernacle; common origin: the spirit; origin and also equal in the manner of presenting ourselves in the Church because the four parts have a relative value for each Institute, but fundamentally they are equal. And thus in presenting ourselves to the Christian people and to the non-Christian people.

Oh, then, a common origin, hence, the commitment for mutual, profound charity. Each one is part; let not an Institute be seen in itself, let it not be seen, because this would have an inadequate knowledge of things and inadequate, so to say, manner of speaking and of living. No, members of a mystical body that conforms itself with the mystical body that is the Church. This union. Hence, if we have to love all men, if we have to love Christians in particular: the Institutes that form the Pauline Family and the persons that are in the various Institutes, with great esteem, respect, collaboration.

And the priest has to do his part as regards the other parts of the Pauline Family, as regards the Institutes that compose the Pauline Family: he has to teach, he has to give directions, in general, through him who has to guide the Institute for men: and then the various activities have to be always according to the Pauline Spirit.

What is being asked? This is what is asked. This is the Pauline spirit: to live in Christ Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life, according to how St. Paul presents it and to feel that it is complete. Hence collaboration as much as can be done...

And think also of this: Pauline life that mirrors the Church; Pauline life in heaven where there are different mansions and respect also to the different mansions that we have on earth. A Pauline Family in heaven.¹⁷⁹

Meanwhile, the Pauline Family “mirrors the church in its members, in its activities, in its apostolate, in its mission.” Every new Institute which, through Fr. Alberione, has called to life has been for “the completion of the Pauline Family insofar as we have to live in Christ, as Jesus Christ has taught and has done and as the church has taught and done.”

The articulated and documented description of the different coordinates, on the part of each Institute as “member of the same body that is the Family,” allows us to capture the unity in the diversity and to relate the many forces to accomplish a single project that the Founder has pursued lucidly along the years, in reply to God’s voice: “the apostolate is always the same, that is, to give Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life.”¹⁸⁰

Other studies¹⁸¹ come to conclusion that the progressive formation of the Pauline Family suffered different orientations. To the original project of the press apostolate, or apostolate with the means of social communication, around which ran the first congregations for men and for women, Fr. Alberione substituted, through time, for stronger reasons—particularly, the difficulty with the Sacred Congregation of the Religious—with the project of “Family” different autonomous institutes, united by common origin, the same spirit, converging general end, in successful harmony between initial unity and successive autonomy.

Revisiting the experience of our Founder during the entire arc of his long life, appears evident instead a unitary project that develops gradually in faithfulness to God and to man of his time: to give Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life (the whole Christ) to all men, with all the means that progress and ingenuity places, from time to time, at our disposal.

The unifying element that connects the broad and creative arch of the foundational experience of Fr. Alberione is then given by the Person of Jesus Christ Way, Truth and life proclaimed to today’s world with the means of today, putting on the same level instrumental or medial preaching, to the oral preaching as it was understood by the consolidated ecclesial tradition. Now the preaching through media (or apostolate of the press) assumed at the same dignity as that of oral preaching as ecclesial ministry is certainly the most significant novelty, the originality that Fr. Alberione’s charism brings to the Church, but it cannot be said to be the Founder’s charism as such. Undoubtedly it appears to be a fruit, a *charismatic explication* of great significance, but the charism contains, by itself, a reference to the experience of the Spirit that ought to be located more at the root of all the movement: also here, as ever, the Spirit *tells* Jesus and *gives* Jesus! Thus the famous text of *Mutuae Relationis*, no. 11, along the path of *Evangelica Testificatio* of Paul VI, says it: “The same charism of Founders is revealed as an experience of the Spirit, transmitted to his own disciples in order that it be lived by this, cared for, deepened and constantly developed in harmony with the Body of Christ in perennial growth.”

¹⁷⁹ PD63, 162-166, 168.

¹⁸⁰ PD63, 165.

¹⁸¹ G. Rocca, *Elementi per la fisionomia di un Fondatore. Don Alberione I suoi Istituti*, in AA.VV. *L’Eredità cristocentrica di don Alberione*, EP 1989, pp. 65-136.

The night that divided the 1800 and the 1900, spent in Eucharist prayer, was witness to that *experience of the Spirit* given to the young Alberione; a spiritual event that would have repercussions, certainly also unforeseeable. In germinal form but definite was the covenant between God and the young Giacomo was nonetheless sanctioned:

Projecting himself mentally into the future he felt that in the new century generous people would experience what he was feeling; and that teamed up into an organization they could bring about what Toniolo kept on repeating: “Unite; if the enemy finds us alone he will defeat us one by one.”

He already had the trust of fellow clerics; he with them and they with him, all of them drawing from the Tabernacle.¹⁸²

It is this organicity at the service of the ecclesial community that distinguishes us as Family of Institutes and Congregations towards ever new frontiers of evangelization, all rooted in the only spring Jesus Christ, Eucharist, *sacramentum unitatis*.

Almost at the conclusion of his life, the Founder in fact did not get tired of inviting the members of the different Institutes to think, plan and work with the point of view of Family, *as members of one mystical body*: “Each one is a part: let not an Institute be seen by itself, let it not be seen, because this would be an inadequate knowledge of things... No, members of one mystical body that has been conformed with the mystical body that is the Church.”

It is undoubtedly a most valuable consequence for all of us; and, at the same time, a challenge to give it full realization.

¹⁸² AD 17-18.