

PAULINE IDENTITY: FIRM POINTS

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1. Priests and Brothers, consecrated for mission

Pauline identity is described as follows in the Chapter Documents: "Paulines are consecrated persons called by the love of Christ to witness to the Gospel and to serve the Church, announcing the fullness of the mystery of Christ to humanity through the means of social communication. As Priests and Brothers, they constitute a fraternal communion of life and share in the same religious vocation and in the same mission" (CD 32).

In the IV General Chapter of 1980, Paulines were defined as: "Persons called by God and consecrated to him in communion with other brothers in order to be 'St. Paul alive today', with the goal of "living and giving Christ the Way, Truth and Life to humanity through an evangelization serving of the means of social communication" (Acts, p.13).

Later the international seminar "Pauline Formation for Mission" (1994), offered this profile of the Pauline: "A missionary who communicates his profound experience of the whole Christ into the culture of communications" (Acts p.173).

Our Congregation is made up of a fraternal communion of Priests and Brothers who participate in the same religious consecration and in the same mission. The two vocations are co-essential: Pauline apostolate is not given without the presence of Pauline Priests associated to the episcopacy, and Pauline Brothers who multiply the word." In the framework of this specific apostolate, the task of the Pauline Priest by virtue of his ordination and association to the episcopacy, remains that of officially guaranteeing the preaching of the salvific message. Closely connected to this task is the presence and action of the Brother, who shares in the same mission of multiplying and diffusing the Word of God with the instruments of social communication" (RF 22-22.1).

In consequence, according to personal tendencies and preparation, they can have distinct and specific orientation in formation: of a pastoral nature (spiritual and sacramental guide and apostolic editorial competency) for Priests; and a respective professional nature for Brothers. To all members, however, "every expression and phase of medial evangelization, editorial, technical, marketing, is open to all" (RF 23).

This conviction of the Founder has bearing for all Paulines: "It is necessary to develop a complete human personality for one's salvation and for a more fruitful apostolate: mind, heart, will" (AD 22).

2. The "admirable Pauline Family"

The Founder thought of us as a family. Belonging to the Pauline Family is a charismatic element: "It pleased the Lord that I should still find myself in the possibility and condition of health to complete the Pauline Family... I can assure everyone that everything was always and alone accomplished by the light of the Tabernacle and in obedience" (UPS I, 375).

The different institutions of the Pauline Family have

- a common origin: the Tabernacle;
- a single spirit in a multiplicity of works: to live
Jesus Christ and serve the Church;
- convergent goals;
- the binding spiritual paternity of the same Founder.

The catechesis and reflection on the Pauline Family initiated by the Founder in 1953-54 (cfr. CISP 137ss; AD 33-35) and further developed in the Course of 1960 (cfr. UPS I, 19-20 and 371-382; II, 243-244; III, 180-191; IV, 212-221), can be considered rather exhaustive taking into account the deeper studies and examination annually promoted by the General Governments of the Pauline Family in their encounters in Ariccia.

It falls to the Society of St. Paul to carry out a "ministry of unity, since it is necessary that the original inspiration of the Founder endures, involved in a great process of multiple, unified forces which while preserving their own autonomy of government and administration, have their deepest roots in one foundational movement, and in one spirituality and mission" (RF 26.1).

The animation of the Aggregated Institutes (UPS III, 105-106) and of the Cooperators (AD 123), is the particular duty of the Society of St. Paul.

"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. This principle should be the constant inspiration of the whole of our apostolic activity, both in content and in project, as well as in choices that have to be made on a practical level" (Const. 86.1).

3. A Cristo-centric Apostolic Spirituality

Devotion to Jesus, the Divine Master, Way, Truth and Life, is to be considered the heart of Pauline spirituality. Enough to cite the following: "...God has granted us the immense richness of better understanding Jesus Christ. Let us accept what obliges us, that which constitutes the spirit and soul of the Institute: this is to live a devotion to Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life. (...) Now the will of God, the true acquisition of the Pauline spirit, lies in this which is the soul of the Congregation. (...) It is not a beautiful expression, nor a recommendation: it is the substance of the Congregation; it is of being or not being Paulines" (Pr DM 72-73).

Devotion to Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life, implies total self-dedication. It is the principle of integrality in every expression of life and action, and the qualifying mark of a Pauline.

"(The Congregation) is nourished of Christ through the Word of God and the

Eucharist. Prayer, study, apostolate, religious consecration are unified in him. It is from him that we communicate the fullness of the salvific mystery of God to humanity" (Const. 7).

"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'2 (Const. 11; LG 65)

Everyone is to consider St. Paul the Apostle as our father, teacher, exemplar and founder. In fact, this is what he is. The Society of St. Paul was born of him, nourished and given growth by him, took its spirit from him" (AD 2).

The example of our witnesses encourages us: the Founder, Blessed Timothy Giaccardo, the Venerable members of the Pauline Family, and many of the Pauline brothers and sisters of the earliest times.

Apostolic in essence, Pauline spirituality must incarnate itself in the works of the apostolate: "To enjoin the contemplative and active life is the most perfect way: to burn and give light! Twofold merit: one's own sanctification and zeal for the glory of God" (*San Paolo*, February 1953; CISP 649).

4. Community of life and mission

Our life in community is characterized by a type of specific apostolate. In fact "it was born of apostolate and in view of an apostolate" (UPS I, 285).

For us the community is a school of fraternity and communion, and of spiritual and apostolic growth (cfr UPS IV, 216-221).

The spirit that unites us is essentially that of a "family spirit" (cfr UPS IV, 212s).

Everything about our community life is imprinted with "Pauline color", which constitutes our "own spirit" (cfr UPS IV, 215).

"Common life is for joining together our strengths, intelligence, ability and ideas; and for submitting our thought, our work, our written article and our initiative in a determined office, etc. The opinions of others is heard and we correct and help one another so that there is something to take from the whole and something to set aside. Common life is made void when everyone does what they want" (Pr VI, 50).

In Pauline community each one exercises their own function: that of the superior consists in "carefully attending to the four wheels": holiness, study, apostolate, poverty (cfr UPS II, 117s; AD 100).

5. Everyone and everything for the apostolate

The mission of a Pauline implies:

- Announcing a message: the whole Christ for the whole person. "Everything lies here: to live Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life, and make the charity of Christ reach those populations that are without it and who long for it, giving them in fact the total Christ, Way, Truth and Life" (*San Paolo*, December 1957; CISP 862).
- to accomplish this through an evangelization with social communications. This is our specific mission and towards which all the aspects of our life are finalized (Const. 66).

For Father Alberione, preaching with these instruments is equivalent to oral

preaching. He expressed this conviction of his many times, especially in the book "Apostolato Stampa". In other words, for Father Alberione instrumental preaching is not to be understood simply as a help to oral preaching, or as an aid to it, but as true and authentic preaching. Consequently it is necessary:

1) to form apostolic persons in the way that Christ did with the apostles. Applying the formation of the Pauline personality to his Christological vision (the whole person for the whole Christ), the Founder referred to the metaphor of a cart supported by four wheels.

2) to enter into the culture of communications in the name of an efficacious evangelization. This derives from the nature of our mission: announcing the Gospel in modern language.

3) to acquire an integral apostolic professionalism. Evangelization through medial communication along with a style of witness filled with the experience of God and the professionalism to communicate it demands: creativity, editorial ability, group work, organizational capacity, the ability to direct persons and works, a mental openness to cultures and religions, a knowledge of languages, collaboration with the Pauline Family, animation of and the involvement of lay persons in mission, inculturation, flexibility of life, a capacity to read the signs of the times...

4) to be open to managerial structures with an apostolic spirit, the same spirit of those directly formed by Christ: conscious of a mandate together with life dedication to its announcement and a fortitude of life witness to the point of martyrdom.

6. Inculturation: an always renewed incarnation of the Christian message

Inculturation was a word unknown to Father Alberione. Instead he loved to speak of universality and a pastoral spirit.

His affirmations in regard to universality as found in AD 65 remain enlightening: "The (Pauline) Family is broadly opened to the whole world in its apostolate: study, apostolate, piety, action, publications. Publications for every category of persons, all questions and events are to be judged in the light of the Gospel; the aspirations are those of the Heart of Jesus in the Mass; in the one apostolate 'make Jesus Christ known' (cfr John 17,3), give light and support to every apostolate and good work; have all peoples at heart; let the presence of the Church be felt in every problem; a spirit of adaptation and understanding for every public and private necessity; all of cult, law, union of justice and charity".

Father Alberione dwelt at length on pastoral spirit during the meeting in Ariccia of 1960, whether referring to the universal apostolate of the Pauline Family, or whether in explaining the lines of Pauline editorial policy adapted to different peoples. "Love everyone, be conscious of everyone, work with the spirit of the Gospel: universality and mercy. 'Venite ad me omnes'. This was the spirit of St. Paul the Apostle, always tending towards peoples who did not yet have the light of Jesus Christ..." (UPS IV, 118).

According to a well known definition of Father Pedro Arrupe, inculturation means: "...the incarnation of the Christian message in the life of a concrete cultural area in such a way that this (Christian) experience not only succeeds in expressing itself through elements proper to the culture in question (such would only amount to superficial adaptation), but becomes a motivating principle, normative and unifying, for transforming and recreating this culture"(cfr *Acta Romana Societatis Jesu*, XVII,229-255).

Applying this principle to the need for adopting a corporate structure as an

instrument of apostolate, let this be underlined:

a) In the process of incarnating our mission in a technical-managerial reality, two irrefutable points of reference to be kept in mind are: a dynamic fidelity to the Founder, and an adequate response to concrete situations.

b) Involvement with the entrepreneurial/business world means that we question ourselves about our efforts to Christianize this world which is often so distant from the Christian vision of justice, love of truth, social concern.

7. International collaboration: a sign of the times

This reality is a sign of the times. Even if the term globalization didn't exist at the time, from the beginning of our Congregation Father Alberione proposed his own ideal in terms of a worldwide collaboration among Paulines spread across the globe.

Already in 1917, speaking to our first aspirants he said: "...The papers of all the world, our own, will help each other morally and materially with every means" (Diary of Giuseppe Timoteo Giaccardo, 19 October 1917).

After confirming this many times over the course of his life, Father Alberione strongly underlined this idea in Ariccia in 1960. Concluding his 12th conference of the first week, during which he had explored the mission of the Pauline Family in its widest sense, he said: "The whole world (euntes in mundum universum) can be compared to an immense parish, the parish of the Pope. This is your field, and in which workers of the Gospel continue to so good seed..." (cfr. UPS I, 368ss). The conference ended with the following "Three practical principles":

"1. The various institutes of the Pauline Family will have nourishment and vitality from the Pious Society of St. Paul. The more fervorous it will be, more so will be the other parts.

2. Today, more than in times past, organization is necessary in every sector, especially of an international character, and in a particular way for the apostolate. As favored sons and daughters of the Catholic Church, we are to be more catholic. Unite for the apostolate.

3. Let us understand and love one another: 'Congregavit nos amor Christi unus'. Willingly help one another with prayer and collaboration. Personal selfishness destroys the life of the community; social, political and familial selfishness directly destroys the Institute, or at the least condemns it to sterility.

"Always the prayer of the Divine Master: 'Ut unum sint' applied not only to one Institute alone, but lived in all of the immense Pauline parish whose limits are the world's boundaries, and for its flock those already within the olive and those to be brought to it" (UPS I, 382).

8. Creative fidelity: the constant adaptation of the charism to new situations

Creative fidelity means a constant research rather than a lying dormant approach to the charism of the Founder. It intends a commitment towards maintaining it vital "continuously transcribing it to the present, adapting it to the changing situations and conditions of time and environment" (cfr DC 45).

It treats of "an appeal to perseverance on the journey of holiness (... and) a like

appeal of striving for one's own competence in work, cultivating a dynamic fidelity towards our mission, adapting forms to new situations and diverse needs, all in full docility to divine inspiration and ecclesial discernment" (VC 37).

It is important to remember how the Founder intended fidelity. He referred it to all the aspects, dimensions and areas of Pauline life.

Let us make certain characteristics of the fidelity of the Founder our own:

to the Word, nourishment of the apostle and the principal content of evangelization;

to the Church, guarantee of doctrinal soundness. "That through the Church, the multiform wisdom of God will be manifested" (Ephesians 3,10).

to interior life and a life of prayer. We cannot forget the determining weight of contemplation in Father Alberione.

to his passion for wholeness and integrality: "The entire person in Christ for a total love of God" (AD 100).

to progress: grow, eagerly press forward, dynamism. Father Alberione was defined as the apostle of modern times.