



TO THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION SUPERIORS AND DELEGATES
TO THE DELEGATES OF DEPENDENT HOUSES
TO THE SUPERIORS OF COMMUNITIES
TO ALL THE CONFRERES

*«Be glad in hope, constant in tribulation,
persevering in prayer» (Rom 12:12)*

Dear Brothers,

I offer each of you my fraternal greeting and I express my closeness to all – also on behalf of the General Government – in this time of trial that we live, due to the coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic.

I direct a special thought to our Confreres who, unfortunately, as our Secretary General has indicated last 1st April, are contaminated by the virus. We are sure that everyone is praying for them, so that they can face this trial with faith and serenity, in the certainty that everything will turn out for the best.

We are about to begin the Holy Week, a “time of grace” that call us to unite ourselves in prayer with the entire Church in the memory of the mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. Uniting ourselves with the Master, we can look with courage at the situations of suffering already present in various forms in the world and aggravated, this time, by a pandemic that is generating suffering and death, as well as fear and uncertainty.

Before such an image, the Holy Week motivates us more than ever to look at the dead and risen Jesus the meaning of all that is happening. In fact, we believe that *«we still have an anchor; in His cross we were saved: We have a rudder: In His cross we were rescued. We have hope: In His cross we were cleansed and embraced so that nothing and no one could separate us from his redeeming love»* (Papa Francesco).

Let us welcome this love as a gift, so as it will bring us to a real conversion, as Pope Francis reminds us in his prayer: *“Be converted”, “return to me with all your heart (Jl 2:12). This time of trial asks us to welcome it as a time to choose. It is not the time of your judgment but our judgment: the time to choose the thing that counts and that which passes, to separate that which is necessary to that which is not. It is the time to reset the way of life towards You, Lord, and towards others»*.

Let us make this prayer through the intercession of our Founder, Blessed James Alberione, whose birthday we celebrate today. He also confronted difficult situations in the course of the history of the admirable Pauline Family. It is enough to remember the First and Second World Wars in the last century, with all the consequences on the personal life, as well as the social, institutional and ecclesial life. Despite everything, in the light of

some fundamental choices reinforced especially by faith, he went ahead with those around him.

Let us thank the Lord for the gift of life of our Founder, which we certainly celebrate in this troubled time: *«Forward with courage! There will be days illumined by the sun, but there will also be days a little bit cloudy [...] Let us take advantage of these and of the others. Let us take advantage of the same temptations; let them be an awakening, a reminder: the Lord is with me!»* (Vademecum, 355).

Let us open our heart and our mind to the Spirit of the Lord, so that he may illumine us in carrying forward our mission with courage and, perhaps, to reinvent ourselves in many aspects of our life. With regard to this, certainly the actual situation caused by this pandemic brings us to do the traditional apostolate with more creativity, but at the same time to assume with greater audacity the digital technologies and social network.

At this time, it is also fundamental to follow the indications of the local health authorities, in such a way that everyone could give his personal contribution, together with all the components of society, to win over this pandemic. With regard to this, it is sad to receive news of some Paulines who do not obey the security measures, putting at risk his own life and those of the confreres. Let us remember that the rules are valid for all. We are not above the others.

This time brings us to also guard with care the people of God that the Lord has entrusted to us, especially the poor, who certainly find themselves in a more vulnerable situation. We are prophets not only to announce the Gospel with the means at our disposition, but also to promote life in all its aspects, recalling that *«God loves a cheerful giver»* (2Cor 9:7). Let us pray for all the victims of this pandemic and for their families, for our communities as well, for our lay collaborators and for the whole Pauline Family.

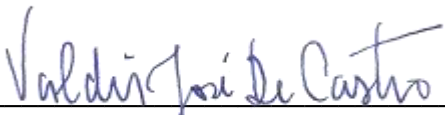
The Secretary General will continue to inform us on the consequences of the pandemic in our communities.

Dear Brother, let the twofold table – the Word and the Eucharist – be our point of unity and our bread along the journey. A fruitful Holy Week to all, in order to arrive at a joyful Easter!

Faternally,

Rome, 4 April 2020

136 years of the birth of Blessed James Alberione


Father Valdir José De Castro, ssp
Superior General