

Rome, 19 March 2022

Dear brothers,

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus, a man of faith, of silence and of service, totally open to listening, with the heart, to the voice of God.

According to our Founder, Blessed Alberione, Saint Joseph *“is in a particular way the model and protector of our dear Disciples. Therefore his feast is their feast”* (CISP, p. 345). So, we address our best wishes to all our Disciples of the Divine Master on this day that also becomes an opportunity to deepen the vocation and role of the consecrated layperson in our Congregation.

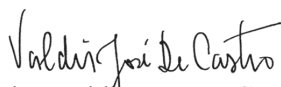
Their presence reminds us, first of all, that since the first centuries of Christianity, consecrated life has been predominantly secular, an expression of the lively desire of men and women to live the Gospel with the radicalism it proposes to all followers of Jesus. Their vocation leads us to look at some essential elements of consecrated life, values such as, for example, adherence to the Gospel and the charism of the Founder, the practice of the evangelical counsels, fraternal life, the prophetic function of witness and service.

Within our Congregation, as our Constitutions affirm, the presence of the Pauline Disciple *“is in the strictest terms, complementary and coessential to the priest’s. His characteristic role is that of being an active go-between of the word of God with regard to social communication ‘multiplying over and over’ the word that is preached”* (Art. 5).

We can say that if one of the two expressions of the Pauline identity is missing, there is no longer the Pauline as Don Alberione thought and wanted it. This must make us reflect seriously on the Vocation Promotion, so that the Pauline vocation is always presented in its double expression: priest and disciple, with the richness that each choice brings with it.

Finally, a peculiar fact of the Solemnity of Saint Joseph this year is that it occurs in the Year of the Family. We pray for our families, for the members of the Holy Family Institute and for all the families of the world. Everyone can find in Saint Joseph an intercessor, a guide and a support in times of difficulty.

Fraternally,

  
Father Valdir José De Castro  
Superior General

