



## **"Let yourself be transformed" Looking at Each Other in Order to Walk Together**

(María Antonieta Cuadros B., IMSA)

The simplicity of certain unplanned events that suddenly burst before us bringing joy are experiences that usually mark our lives if we receive them with a sense of simplicity and gratitude. In other words, allowing ourselves to be transformed by these events. This is the value of these little things that, when put together and seen in retrospect, are usually true beacons of light. Almost, like when God looks at us to share his dreams with us to make us part of them, reminding us that we belong to him.

This is how it happened to me, in one of those cold Roman winter mornings, while reviewing some works of *Primo Maestro*, our Blessed James Alberione. I picked up a booklet of few pages, now yellowed by time. It looked like one simple write up, looking unimportant because of its size which, however, turned out to be a precious jewel. Its title: *Ai miei Piccoli Parrochiani* (Edition: Seventh. Publisher: *Scuola Tipografica Piccolo Operaio*, Alba 1921). Literally, my heart leapt for joy. It is a typical product of the work of the First Paulines! Yes, of the boys and the young people who shared the ideal of *Primo Maestro*, probably without fully understanding the importance of that moment, without realizing that they were making history and sowing the seed from which the lush tree of the Pauline family would sprout.

Turning very carefully the pages of this jewel in my hand, my imagination tussled with my feelings. How many days of learning, of trials, of talks, of advice, of prayers, of Rosaries, of intentions and many more which were surely shared with *Primo Maestro*, with the only desire to work for the Good Press? Some doing the learning, others that of teaching; but all of them focused on fulfilling the tasks entrusted to them which, over time, would become the rich heritage that we today safeguard and recreate with our voices, through the testimonies of the first members of the Pauline Family.

Interwoven with anecdotes, which surprise us even after 80 or more years, the experiences of our beloved Paulines enrich us by their vitality, sacrifice, and devotion as understood by Fr Alberione: a surrender that involves our whole being to the Father, in the following of Christ the Master, and under the gaze of the Queen of Apostles.

## Memory

We could say that the task is now almost solved. The many testimonies of brothers still present among us today and of those whose works we find in bookstores, libraries, and archives around the world are excellent proof that spending one's life in announcing Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, generates Life. This applies as well for those of us who, from our condition as lay persons, try to be a leaven in the dough. Being in the world, which is our parish, we give it the precious Pauline color which makes our life different every day.

The context has not changed much in essence and we realize this in this time of COVID pandemic that reveals our numerous shortcomings as human beings, each time increasingly alienated from God. The thirst for power, to have rather than to be, without recognizing ourselves as children, and in fact as much loved children. This distancing from God increases with the accelerated development of society, in which personal relationships, today more than ever, go through an electronic screen, due to the rapid growth of technology, especially in the field of communication.

## Challenge

Our roots are embedded in Fr Alberione who lived the family experience in which he learned to love God, held by the hand of Mary. The first Paulines referred to the HOUSE, which today the members of the Aggregated Institutes do the same. We feel at HOME, guided by the Society of St. Paul, and in intimate relationship with all the other Pauline Congregations and Institutes. Nothing compares to breathing the same air of HOME!

Our challenge is to be a Family. We were called to form a Family within the great human family, precisely to bring the truth and the light of the Gospel to this first cell of society. This is what our Prophet of Communication did: the first publications were aimed at children, women, and families. And how much we have to thank for the door-to-door work: I am not waiting for you; I am going to look for you and to listen to you. Something incredibly beautiful!

Of course, it is not a coincidence if we say that this is the great and fascinating responsibility and a challenge for our time: the urgency of the Good News, of the good news, of being Good News for the HUMAN FAMILY and for our own Religious Family.

In order to be good news, our personal stories, intertwined daily with the joys and sorrows of the world, must pass through the Heart of the Mother, the Queen of Apostles and of all Apostolates, as it has been with Fr Alberione. His life was marked by the love of God in a Marian key. He expected everything from her and was not disappointed. Do we do the same?

It is a precious love story that we are also called to live, turning our gaze to Fr Alberione who totally entrusted himself to God who is Love, Word, and Eucharist. We are called to boldly propose to Him each day with a new *Pact*, the Secret of Success, clinging to Mary's hands, contemplating creation given to us as a gift, with the Rosary beads.

We are called to dream big, more so and especially in this time of COVID. This is how the Master Theologian did it, always gazing upwards, fixing his gaze towards the goal, allowing himself to be transformed. It is not in vain that he built a Basilica with bricks and Rosaries.

Everything is prepared so that as a Family, as a Society of St. Paul and as Aggregated Institutes, we reach the goal together, embarking on a journey shared with joy and gratitude. Let us strain ahead, then!