



**HOMILY OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL, FATHER DOMENICO SOLIMAN,
AT THE CLOSING MASS OF THE COURSE OF PREPARATION FOR PERPETUAL PROFESSION**

Dear brothers,

With this Eucharist, you conclude the Course of Preparation for Perpetual Profession. A few months ago, you began this journey with many expectations and hopes and today you look at your journey towards perpetual profession with more open eyes. You have deepened many themes of our Pauline life and, at the same time, you have had an experience of interculturality. With what new desires are you returning to your Circumscriptions? What has matured in you about our mission?

Continuing the journey towards the Nativity of the Lord, today's liturgy of the Word presents us with the initial text of the Gospel of Matthew, which describes the genealogy of Jesus. We know how much this list of names actually has a symbolic purpose: to contextualize the incarnation of the Son of God, also a son of Abraham and of a people chosen by God.

Within this passage, we find some very interesting ideas for our journey as Paulines. This page of Scripture also helps us to give substance to the passage of St Paul which was the leitmotif of our last General Chapter: *«Let yourselves be transformed by renewing your way of thinking»* (Rom 12:2). Reading and re-reading today's Gospel, we realize that men and women are mentioned who prepared the coming of Jesus. A list of men and women that ends with Joseph, the husband of Mary, who however did not "generate" Jesus. It is, therefore, a particular family tree because there is something unexpected, an exception, something special. Yes, in the history of salvation there is no linear, logical, predictable path, even if it would be very reassuring. Instead, God works in his own way, according to a way of thinking that also foresees discontinuity and for this very reason makes us experience qualitative leaps and the unthinkable. Try to see your life: is everything linear, logical, well organized? Were there not qualitative leaps, special moments, thanks to which the Lord passed and he called you and involved you in the Pauline life? Looking at our history we are amazed at God's action, we experience a gift received that exceeds our expectations, a gift that then leads us to be a gift for others, going forth Paulines, Pauline "editors". Like Mary Queen of the Apostles, she was the first "editor" of Jesus because she gave him to the world. In our history, what matters is to weave a lively and fruitful relationship with the Master and to experience the unexpected as the place where he passes, attracts us to himself, forms us, so deeply involves us to the point of saying like St Paul: *«It is no longer I who live, it is Christ who lives in me»* (Gal 2:20). Do we carry with us the yearning to live this path of conformation to Jesus?

At the same time, this Gospel passage helps us not to forget another aspect of the history of salvation: each person mentioned is closely related to the other, so there is who generates and who is generated. The evangelist Matthew shows us the relationship between these people, between generations and, in particular, between God and humanity with the birth of Jesus. It is life that proceeds in this way. To these names, we must add many others, all united by a relationship, thanks to which humanity meets the Messiah. In the list of names reported here, we glimpse the meaning

of our relationships with those who preceded us. Thanks to our parents we received life... thanks to Blessed James Alberione the Pauline Family was born. So no one is self-taught, a solitary walker. We are indebted to those who preceded us, as well as to those who walk with me today. This emphasis also brings us back to the words of Saint Paul (Rom 12:2), to the mentality we need. Walking together and in a synodal way, living our mission as a community and as a body is really a new way of thinking, of living. It is not a question of doing everything together but of living a communion that leads us to “generate” today Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life for today’s men in the culture of communication.

This experience lived here in Rome will surely bear fruit in your Pauline life. Which? It is difficult to say it today, but certainly, a greater awareness of the importance of walking together as a Congregation, as Paulines scattered throughout the world. Our apostolic and formative realities need to be lived with this vision of togetherness, of communion, where there is collaboration and a desire to help one another and share experiences and resources. Have a good journey full of hope and may the joy of being Pauline “editors” grow more and more in you, apostles who like Saint Paul and Blessed James Alberione give themselves so that Jesus is born in the history of every age and person.

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