

- Do my contribution to the apostolate of communication justify the resources that the congregation has invested in me?
- Am I able to make personal sacrifice in my community for the sake of the Apostolate?

## 6. Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen. *(St. Francis of Assisi)*



## AN ART BORN FROM COMMUNION: PAULINE COMMUNITY LIFE

***Our Blessed Founder was convinced that the apostolate of the communication was a divine work and as such it has to be done by consecrated men and women who will be ready to give witness to this noble apostolate by virtue of their total commitment and witness of their lives. One of the fundamental aspects of the Pauline Consecrated life is the communitarian expression of its life and apostolate. As artisans of communication it is incumbent on every Pauline to be a person of communion as he strives to live his consecrated life in a religious community by his attitude of collaboration, hard work, sensitivity to the needs of the other and with a sense of personal sacrifice.***

### 1. From the Annual Letter of the Superior General

The meaning of consecrated life, and in particular of living in community, is intricately linked to communion. A community not of individuals who strive to be together, but of brothers who in mutual acceptance manifest the words of Jesus: “The love with which you loved me be in them, and I in them” (Jn 17:26)...There is a term that, although belonging to digital culture, due to its symbolic connotation has something to say also in relation to communion: “connecting.” Connection is the necessary prerequisite for responding to the human need for deep relationships. Connecting is an action that belongs to the “culture of encounter.” It presupposes that the request to get in touch is also met with explicit acceptance, which is essential for true communication to exist. In particular, connection expresses the Church’s desire to remain in contact with a society that is online, but often immersed in solitude, as it does not encounter anyone who testifies that it is possible to live for one another....

Connecting is offering the possibility of enjoying each other’s presence, it is

arousing the desire to share life, so that “that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of life, we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:1-3). (No 2, Second Part).

## 2. Encounter with the Word of God

*St Paul exhorts us as to how to use efficaciously our gifts, talents, abilities and opportunities that God our father has given us gratuitously for the benefit of everyone in our communities. However, if our talents are to be more useful in the context of our community living, we need to keep aside our pride and embrace the attitude of humility and openness.*

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your[a] faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. (Rom 12: 3-10)

## 3. The Teaching of the Church

*The Second Vatican Council, in its effort for a total renewal of consecrated life in the Church, exhorts through its document Perfectae Caritatis, that great importance has to be given to the community life as it provides a living testimony to the very essence of religious life as religious are called to be a prophetic sign to a divided world far removed from the love of God and love of neighbour.*

Common life, fashioned on the model of the early Church where the body of believers was united in heart and soul (cf. Acts 4:32), and given new force by the teaching of the Gospel, the sacred liturgy and especially the Eucharist, should continue to be lived in prayer and the communion of the same spirit. As members of Christ living together as brothers, religious should give pride of place in esteem to each other (cf. Rom 12:10) and bear each other’s burdens (cf. Gal 6:2). For the community, a true family gathered together in the name of the Lord by God’s love which has flooded the hearts of its members through the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 5:5), rejoices because He is present among them (cf. Mt 18:20). Moreover love sums up the whole law (cf. Rom 13:10), binds all together in perfect unity (cf. Col 3:14)

and by it we know that we have crossed over from death to life (cf. 1 John 3:14). Furthermore, the unity of the brethren is a visible pledge that Christ will return (cf. John 13:35; 17:21) and a source of great apostolic energy. (Perfectae Caritatis, 15)

## 4. Thought of the Founder

*For Bl. Alberione, community life was not merely a social structure but an indispensable component for the spiritual development of individual members and for the efficacy of the Pauline apostolate in the Church. According to him, living in community allowed individuals to grow in humility, charity, and mutual support. He saw community life as an environment where members could help each other in their spiritual journey, sharing both joys and challenges of everyday life.*

What does common life mean? It means unity of thought, unity of works, a single direction in speaking, unity of feelings, unity of purpose. All must contribute to the primary purpose and the secondary purpose: personal sanctification and apostolate. All! Let no one stand aside, let no one stand by and watch the others. Let there be no one who cannot do what one is capable of doing. If the cart is to move forward, everyone must push; and whoever has more strength will push more and whoever has less strength will push less, but everyone must push, no one must watch and judge...Every word of criticism divides and weakens, every word of encouragement, inspired by charity, unites and makes one walk towards perfection and toward good results in the apostolate. (Alle Figlie di San Paolo, 1954, chapter 25)

## 5. From the Word to Life

For a Pauline, community life is essential for forming a solid foundation in one’s personal relationship with Christ and to be effective in one’s apostolate. The enormity of the apostolate of communication should compel us to make a collaborative effort as we are called to carry out this great apostolate as individuals united in a shared purpose. A unified mission lived out in common life is particularly important in strengthening one’s vocation and to grow in holiness. The journey towards holiness is not only personal but also communitarian. As we live out our vocation in our own respective communities, we help one another to grow in the way of perfection. Thus, it is important to place greater emphasis on shared prayer, apostolate, and daily life to help one another to live according to the teachings of Jesus our Master.

- Am I appreciative of the greatness of the Pauline apostolate of communication and inspired by the exemplary life of the Blessed Founder whose life was an expression of the Pauline Mission?
- While our pioneers, with the limited resources they had, were truly artisans of communication in their time, how is it that we have become less effective communicators with all the latest technologies at our disposal?