



## *Anniversary of the election of Father Valdir José De Castro*

Dear Father Valdir,

we have reached the last year of our mandate of service in guiding the Congregation, with the journey of preparation for the next General Chapter already well underway. This does not mean, however, to reduce our commitment in the animation of the Congregation, but, on the contrary, to commit ourselves even more to completing the many projects started.

What to say to you, dear Father Valdir, in this circumstance? The thought immediately went to those years lived next to you and to the strong points on which you have spurred not only the Council to walk, but the whole Congregation with your annual letters and those sent to the Circumscriptions.

We recall what you told us in our first meeting of the General Council: «*We were not elected because we are the best in the Congregation, but we were elected for a service to the Congregation*». This service has been transformed, first of all, into special attention to people through listening, dialogue, tenderness and a smile, even in difficult and delicate situations; but also in the search for unity, despite the presence of the many differences, and in the paternal welcome towards each person to transmit hope and trust.

Another strong commitment of this mandate has been the search and the deepening of the identity of the “Pauline communicator”. An identity built on the Gospel, that feeds on the double table of the Word and the Eucharist adored and celebrated, being communicated primarily with one’s own person when it is full of evangelical spirit.

These are not celebratory or circumstantial words but they are words and behaviours that you, with your own testimony, have sown along all this time lived together with us and for which today we can thank God for having chosen you as our guide during these years. Years in which we witness an epochal change that asks and, indeed, requires a decisive change of mentality from us, a return to the Gospel as an essential style of our life, a rejuvenation of the charism given to us by our Founder, Blessed James Alberione.

The challenges that we must face, dear Father Valdir, and that sometimes make us suffer, you propose them to us as an opportunity to recognize new paths to which the Spirit pushes us, every Pauline and the whole Congregation.

The Lord, who reads the depths of our heart, bless you, assist you and always protect you.

With brotherly affection

Rome, 4 February 2020

*Father Vito Fracchiolla, Vicar General  
and the Councillors General*