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INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF THE COORDINATORS OF VOCATION PASTORAL AND FORMATION

Casa Divin Maestro (Ariccia), 14-21 September 2008

PARTICIPANTS

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2. Fr. Jose Pottayil, Vicar General
3. Fr. Juan Antonio Carrera, General Councilor
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5. Bro. Giuseppe Galli, General Councilor
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11. Fr. Gil Alinsangan (Philippine-Macau)
12. Fr. Toyonari Sawada (Japan)
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14. Fr. Domenico Soliman (Italy)
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16. Fr. José Antonio Pérez (Spain)
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18. Fr. Joselito Layug (Australia)
19. Fr. Hernando Jaramillo (Canada-France)
20. Fr. Philippe Mutu (Congo)
21. Bro. Matteo Yoo Seong (Korea)
22. Fr. Alexander Anantham (Great Britain-Ireland)
23. Fr. Witold Wisniowski (Poland)
24. Fr. Agostinho Correia de França (Portugal)
25. Fr. Albino Buitrago (Venezuela)
26. Fr. Roberto Ponti (Redactor of the Meeting)
27. Cl. Guido Colombo (Secretary).

FINAL REPORT

Premise. This text tries to give an account in a synthetic manner of the week of intense work about vocation pastoral and formation in the Society of Saint Paul carried out in Ariccia from 14 to 21 September 2008. On the background, as reference, we find **three reports**: that of the Superior General “A vocation and formation proposal for the Pauline mission today”, that of Fr. Juan Manuel Galaviz “Formation in integrality and for integrality for the Pauline mission” and finally that of Fr. Juan Antonio Carrera “Passion for the Pauline mission”. In the forefront is the work of knowing, assimilating, deepening and comparing (a good 25 hours) carried out in the **three linguistic/geographical groups** of the Coordinators (Europe-Congo, English Speaking World-Orient, Latin America). Important also is the intervention of Bro. Giuseppe Galli about the principal **documents** of the Congregation regarding vocation pastoral and formation.

The point of view utilized in this report is that of an interested and involved observer who seeks to join among them the passages of the discourse and to keep a first trace of them. Not everything can be reported; all the material produced by the groups will however remain available as complete documentation. Moreover, the challenges and lines of action of the three groups are reprised integrally in this document.

1. It is necessary to recall as point of departure the supernatural spirit that has motivated the hard work of the days and that at the end gives of them the authentic interpretative context. The prophet Isaiah reminds us that our ways are not the Lord’s ways, his ways are high above our ways (Is 55:8-10). The quotations of the Word of God in the report of the Superior General have illumined several aspects:

- the struggle won by Gideon, not due to the number of his soldiers but to the gift of God, says that **the numbers of men are not the numbers of God** (Jdg 7:1-25);

- the victory of David over the powerful Goliath tells of the **diversity between human categories and the divine will** (1Sam 17:1-57);
- the command of Jesus (Mt 28:19-20) involves Christians of all ages and says that **the harvest is not ours; the truth is “we are God’s collaborators”** (1Cor 3:9).

Definitely: it is necessary to trust in God as if all depended on Him and at the same time generously commit ourselves as if all depended on us (cf *Vita Consecrata*, 73).

2. To make evident also the **three objectives** listed by the Superior General:

- reaffirm the importance of vocation pastoral and formation;
- work out a documented analysis of what is being done in the vocation proposal and formation in each of the Circumscriptions;
- make new projects;

At the heart of the Pauline charism

3. Vocation promotion and formation are **vital areas** for the Congregation. “The works of God are done with men who are of God” says Fr. Alberione, and “the quantity and the quality of the Paulines make an impression in a determinate way on the interpretation and concrete way of living the integrality of the Pauline charism” has emphasized Fr. Sassi. Therefore, this first International Meeting of the Coordinators, on the wake of the *Seminar on Pauline Formation for the Mission* (1994), together with the launching of the *International Secretariat for Vocation Pastoral and Formation* (SIF), shows an attention that leads us not to the margin but to the heart of the Pauline charism: it is a necessary response of the Society of Saint Paul in view of the realization of its specific mission in the Church and in the world, according to the inspiration of the Founder.

A look at reality

4. To document the commitment of vocation promotion and formation that is realized in the eighteen Circumscriptions, it is necessary to start from the **social reality**, a varying and complex world situation. Here we can only think quickly about every geographical zone and every culture where the Society of Saint Paul works and be aware of the countless challenges, in particular that of the announcement of the **Gospel of Christ**, both where Christianity is already widespread and needs to renew itself, and where it is a minority and comes to face other faiths or – often – indifference. Within this social picture and these challenges, it is necessary to think about the **young generations**, with their problems, their new requests from the world of adults and with often weak support from their own families of origin.

5. At the same time, it is necessary to turn our eyes to the **Pauline charism**, with its potentialities until now perhaps only partly expressed and at any rate always to be explored, so as to make bear fruit places of practical realization of the charism on the **Paulines**, on the **communities** and on the **apostolate**. Even here we come face to face with the contradictory aspects of a journey towards unity of life in Christ and the ideal of the charism ever in the process of realization, together with all personal and relational deficiencies.

6. Society is to be studied, without presuming to know it. It is a commitment that cannot limit itself to some superficial hints. Among the **problematic aspects of the juvenile world** that must be considered and deepened according to the specificities of the various areas, are the following:

– **on the psychological level:** individualism, fragility, the result of immersion in the so-called virtual world and, in the midst of a boundless quantity of information, the inability to make choices;

– **on the social level:** the contradiction between total non-commitment and availability for others, between appearing exasperated, according to the consumerist style, with the cult of the body, and spontaneity; the use of drugs and the search for independence;

– **on the ethical level:** the lack of values received and of true points of reference;

– **on the religious level:** a certain refusal of the traditional, belonging to several proposals opposed to each other, the privatization of the bond of faith but also signs of neo-conservatism.

The complexity of this situation requires endowing ourselves with adequate analytical instruments.

Promotion of the Pauline vocation

7. Aware of their history and future, Paulines perceive the need to **organize themselves better so as to present their choice and their style of life** and so as to be able to accept and form young men to walk the road of the Pauline mission in the apostolate of communication: **Paulines of today to evangelize the men of today with the means of today.**

8. The number of confreres involved in vocation work is scarce. We are often taken by apostolic work and we do not succeed in connecting fully the apostolate with vocational witness. Our products and works are widely known, but not the people behind them. Our communities are not very credible, not very welcoming and not open to what is new. Hence, it is necessary to work together to create a **new vocational mentality** that sees everybody involved. Because of this, needed is the availability of all for formation at every age of life and stage of the Pauline journey, accepting the awareness of the continuous need to renew oneself and not to be satisfied with what has already been acquired.

9. Some structural situations actually **limit** vocation promotion:

- The distance or fracture between the Pauline reality and the world of the young.
- Little courage and energy in telling the reality of the Pauline charism.
- The difficulty in making understand the Pauline apostolate as true preaching and true mission for evangelization.
- In some geographical areas, slow population growth is evident: families have few children.

10. **Possibilities** also appear for the realization of vocation promotion:

- The sense of loss, the queries of the young and their natural search for realization are the base for the encounter with the faith proposal and, through the vocation proposal, with the Pauline charism.
- The organized realities of church movements, volunteer groups, national encounters of youth, membership in the local church, in the area of scholastic and university pastoral can be a fruitful terrain for promotion, in the same way as reciprocal support and collaboration with the institutes of the Pauline Family.
- An actual means of great visibility is the web with cross-mediality, a site much “inhabited” by young people.

Pauline integral formation

11. It is binding to give witness to the faith, to make known in today’s world religious vocation and in particular the Pauline vocation; even more difficult is to form young people who choose to start a journey and are welcomed in our communities. The **central criterion of Pauline formation is integrality**: the Pauline can and must be a man of communication, dynamic and balanced because he has reached in Christ the unity of his person and he conserves and makes it grow, harmonizing fraternal, spiritual and apostolic life.

- 12. One can reach the objective of a Pauline integral formation:
 - by a method and through some means of formation that are coherent with the authentic requirements of the Pauline life;
 - drawing indications from the genuine sources of the writings of the Founder;
 - taking care to choose and form formators adequately;
 - guaranteeing formative programs that harmonize spirituality, study, apostolate and Pauline poverty.

13. Formative action finds its reason and goal in the Pauline mission: **we are Paulines in view of our mission**. Alongside theoretical and technical formation for the apostolate, practical exercise must not be lacking. The reference to **Saint Paul**, as inspiration and model of our apostolate, cannot be substituted. His example indicates the order of the contents to be communicated (and therefore offers a line for the choices of the studies of specialization): first of all, the Word of God in order to “exercise the charity of truth” and then all that is “true, noble, just, pure, amiable, praiseworthy...”. According to the editorial lines of the *International Technical Committee for the Apostolate* (CTIA), Word of God, Family and Communication are the areas that better respond to the Pauline commitment of evangelization today, in fidelity to the Church and to the world. Then we must not forget specialized formation for the organizational aspects of the apostolate and the necessary preparation and availability for **collaboration with the laity**.

14. The operative document to realize this trip is the *Iter Formationis*, proper of each Circumscription. Integrality must characterize and unite the plan of vocation animation and formation in connection with the *Pastoral Project of the Circumscription* and the *Apostolic Project*. On this level the attentive and previous assimilation of the general documents (above all the *Constitutions and Directory* and the *Ratio Formationis*) must leave space to concreteness and operativity, through indications that are realizable

and verifiable. The risks, signaled by analysis of the *Iter Formationis* in use, are: still remaining stuck to theory without succeeding to descend in the cultural, social and religious reality of the place where one operates and in the situation of the communities and the apostolate; to be wanting with respect to the goal of integrality.

15. Some necessities made known for formation:

- Receive the young men according to precise criteria of evaluation, taking care to know well the reality of their provenance.
- Stimulate to a personal encounter with Christ by means of the Word of God and the Eucharist.
- Offer a personalized accompaniment, paying attention to human maturation and to ability to work with a group.
- Present in a fitting way the Pauline spirituality and mission, the twofold vocation priest/disciple and guarantee a specific formation in communication.

The General Coordinator: commitments

16. The General Coordinator of Vocation Pastoral and of Formation of every Circumscription assumes a decisive role and responsibility in the realization of all these objectives. Step after step his figure is defining itself with greater clarity. He must give unity to all the action of vocation pastoral and formation, initial and permanent, in complementarity between ordinary canonical authority and delegated canonical authority, as indicated by the normative documents. The challenges and the lines of action expressed by the work of the three geographical/linguistic groups of the Coordinators manifest convergences that show the journey that the whole Congregation in its entirety must walk, in linguistic/geographical groups, in every Circumscription in particular, in order to lay foundations for new projects. Each of the three groups have formulated a page of commitments that will allow the work begun this week to have a follow-up.

Building the future

17. The work of the three groups – by means of a process of analysis and planning – has produced some “challenges” in the two spheres of vocation promotion and formation. To these challenges the same groups have tied the lines of action necessary to be able to deal with them. Some Circumscriptions have pointed out some particular challenges to be faced.

18. Emerging are these points of convergence, unitary aspects to bear in mind in the journey that the whole Congregation must accomplish:

- permanent formation and community lifestyle;
- the choice and preparation of formators and vocation animators;
- knowledge of the world of youth;
- intensification and qualification of vocation promotion;
- the need for coordinated activity on the international level through the intervention of the new international Secretariat for Vocation Pastoral and Formation.

The operative and “binding” value of these points is tied both to the fact that the first concerned are the Coordinators themselves who have singled them out and proposed them, and the fact that they are lines on the general level that are already present in the documents of the Congregation.

a. *Challenges and lines of action for vocation promotion*

I. ESW-Orient Group (India-Nigeria, Philippine-Macau, Japan, United States, Australia, Korea and Great Britain-Ireland)

1. *Activate permanent formation for the communities, so that they may be open, interested and active in vocation promotion.*

- (a) The Coordinator must inform and make the communities participants in the various activities of vocation promotion.

- (b) The Superiors of the communities must make their members sensitive to the big vocation problem and make their communities open and welcoming to those who are interested in our mission.

2. *Present the Paulines and their apostolate in the proposals of vocation promotion. As apostles of the media, use the means of technology to promote vocation, in order to show yourselves as true media professionals.*

- (a) The Coordinator, together with the Director General of the Apostolate, should use the means of our apostolate to make known to the people the Pauline life and mission.
- (b) The group of vocation animators should produce promotional material and programs and disseminate them, making use of centers of diffusion; also establish web contacts for vocation promotion.

3. *It is urgent for communities to single out and form adequately vocation animators.*

- (a) The Major Superior, after having consulted the communities, must identify the vocation promoters and take care of their preparation and formation.
- (b) The Major Superior must nominate as promoter of the Pauline vocation one who knows well the Pauline life and mission and is happy and enthusiastic in his vocation.

II. Latin American Group (Argentina-Chile-Perù, Brazil, Colombia-Ecuador-Panama, Mexico and Venezuela)

1. *It is urgent to open up to the world of youth*

- (a) The Coordinator with his team (of vocation animators and formators) and with the help of specialists, should organize every year a seminar of studies regarding the reality of youth in his Circumscription.
- (b) The équipe of vocation pastoral and formation should organize at least once a year, utilizing the availability of various apostolic centers, an encounter of young people.

2. *The need to work so that our communities may be welcoming and ready to receive the young is urgent.*

- (a) The Coordinator, in accord with the Major Superior, should give indications so that every community may prepare itself and make itself participant in the reception of the young.
- (b) The vocation équipe should animate the communities so that the first Sundays of the month and the Pauline feasts may be opportune times for the reception and visit of the young.

3. *The actuation of operative line 2.2.4 of the VIII General Chapter ("All the Circumscriptions, without exception, must have a vocation project...") is urgent.*

- (a) The Circumscription Government, within the next 6 months, should ask the Coordinator for a vocation plan in which are clearly indicated the Pauline criteria and he should evaluate it periodically.

III. Europe Group-Congo (Italy, Spain, Canada-France, Poland, Portugal and Congo)

1. *We must exert much effort on community life so that our communities become welcoming, fervent, believing, with a goal of faith to be reached, responsible and involved in the field of vocation.*

- (a) The Coordinator of Vocation Pastoral and Formation, in accord with the Superior of the Circumscription, should meet at least once or twice a year every community to inform it, animate it, motivate it and mobilize all the members in this field, also making the opportune verifications.
- (b) Every community should include in the elaboration of its community project, besides prayer, at least an initiative in the field of vocation, with an objective that is clear, applicable and verifiable.

2. *It is needful to find new spaces where to meet the young: university centers, volunteerism, the Internet, scouts, etc. Exploit their sensitivity to be available to do something for others, directing them and involving*

them in projects of evangelization. Find a way that is attractive, convincing and transparent in presenting our vocation, also using with competence our means.

- (a) Every Circumscription should elaborate a project of evangelization with the young people, favoring new spaces that are opening: universities, volunteerism, associations, the Internet, etc...
- (b) The International Secretariat for Vocation Pastoral and Formation should coordinate the making of a documentary that presents the proposal of Pauline life, taking into account the internationality of the Congregation.

3. It is necessary to prepare better the personnel dedicated to vocation promotion: it is necessary to augment quality in this sector.

- (a) The Superior of the Circumscription should carefully choose the animators, taking into account their personal qualities and providing for their suitable preparation through appropriate studies.
- (b) The Coordinator, in accord with the formators, should involve the juniors in an experience of vocation pastoral.

b. Challenges and lines of action for formation

I. ESW-Orient Group

1. Know, understand and help the young men in formation.

- (a) The équipe of formation should utilize the help of experts, to allow the communities to understand the young people of today.
- (b) Formators must have a more personal knowledge of the formandi, in such a way to be able to accompany them better.

2. Make the Pauline life and mission meaningful for the young men that have joined us. Convince them that our work is apostolate.

- (a) The Coordinator, together with the General Director of the Apostolate and involving the formators, should do in

such a way so that the formandi are gradually introduced and inserted in our apostolic activity.

- (b) The formators must do in such a way so that the formandi are involved in the realization of the Apostolic Project, to help them find their field of interest and competence.

3. Have a correct and practical program for one in permanent formation. But "the one who should undertake the program does not follow it; those who have least need of it, are chosen for permanent formation". Sometimes persons are so busy and important to be "chosen" for further formation...

- (a) The Coordinator should propose to the Major Superior suitable programs for permanent formation (cf VIII General Chapter. Operative line 2.1.1 and Service of Authority in the Society of Saint Paul. *Manual*, n. 434).
- (b) The Coordinator should study programs of permanent formation that are specifically "Pauline" and the modalities so that the members may participate in them.

4. Form our members for formation: not only for our internal formation, but also for the Pauline Institutes of consecrated secular life.

- (a) The Coordinator should identify the Paulines with attitude for formation and act so that they be formed in this area.
- (b) The Coordinator should choose specific courses of formation and see to it that the formators can attend them.

Particular challenges for Circumscriptions

1. In the United States: how do we insert in our activities and life those who have recently entered, but are already professionals?

- (a) Let the Coordinator guide the adult to be formed to have an apostolic mentality and to use his talent at the service of the Gospel.

2. In the Philippines: what apostolate must go on equal step with the studies of the young seminarians?

- (a) The Coordinator, together with the formators, should do in such a way that the Pauline apostolate becomes part of the academic program: for example, diffusion/marketing at an established day and hour, scripture and redaction, the preparation of multimedia programs...

3. *In India: Gather in one group the young men coming from different cultures, races and languages.*

- (a) The formators must support programs that help to satisfy mutual acceptance and understanding and motivate the formandi to assume the Pauline spirit.

4. *In Japan: Find ways to live with the elderly members and to help them maintain their youthful Pauline spirit.*

- (a) The Major Superior, together with the Coordinator, should promote an annual encounter of the elderly members at rest from their apostolic activities to inform them about the present situation of the apostolate and to talk with them about their situation.

II. Latin America

1. *Elaborate and realize a program of formation.*

- (a) At the start of the mandate of the Circumscription Government, the Coordinator, after having heard the exigencies of every community, should propose to the Superior of the Circumscription a program of permanent formation, to be evaluated every six months or – if necessary – replanned.
- (b) The General Government, through the International Secretariat for Vocation Pastoral and Formation, should organize every 2 years a month of Pauline formation, participated in by candidates to the perpetual profession and/or by perpetual professed of the last five 5 years.

2. *Establish specific parameters in the selection and qualification of formators.*

- (a) The linguistic/geographical organism in accord with the International Secretariat for Vocation Pastoral and For-

mation should program every two years at continental level a week of study about integral formation for formators and vocation animators.

- (b) The Coordinator, together with the Superior of the Circumscription, should spot among the juniors who has more inclination for the formation area, to support him and make sure for him special studies, before being a formator. Who however ought to have apostolic experience, psychological formation and solid charismatic formation.

3. *Specify in the process of formation the elements common to all the phases.*

- (a) The General Government should, through the International Secretariat for Vocation Pastoral and Formation, establish the common elements that must figure in all the phases of the Iter Formationis (particular attention to the study of languages).

4. *Guarantee continuity and graduality in the stages of formation.*

- (a) The Coordinator with the formator should guarantee the application of the dispositions of the Iter Formationis, in each phase of formation.
- (b) The Coordinators of the Ibero-American area should make present to their respective Major Superiors their indications regarding the plan of formation for the Ibero-American novitiate. The Major Superiors should define its contents.

III. Europe-Congo

1. *Bring to its original sense the exhortation of the Founder “live in continuous conversion” to conserve the freshness of the charism and enthusiasm. It is a challenge of permanent formation: to make of our communities formative places capable of answering in a competent way the expectations that come from the Church.*

- (a) Every community in the Community Project should guarantee the space programmed for the community initia-

tives in which all the members will participate. They are formative moments, moments of sharing, of fraternity and spirituality.

(b) The Coordinator, in dialog with the Superior, should single out the persons who can animate courses of formation (in particular for interpersonal relations).

2. *Single out and prepare the persons assigned in formation, so as to have members prepared and free to carry out this task.*

(a) The Superiors of Circumscription, in accord with the Coordinators, should choose the formators with care, taking into account their personal qualities and providing for their suitable preparation with appropriate studies.

3. *Integrate the Pauline specific formation within a basic intellectual formation. Integrate the charismatic formation, to communication and apostolate; at the same time integrate the juniors in the apostolate in a correct and effective way.*

(a) The International Secretariat should point out the fundamental texts of the Founder to be studied and deepened in the various stages of formation.

(b) The formators, in accord with the Coordinator, should elaborate in writing a personal project for every single junior, according to the criterion of integrality.